

Contents

Editorial		114
-----------	--	-----

Articles

Joshua Pfeiffer	The resistance preaching of Hermann Sasse in the Third Reich	116
Maurice Schild	‘Under the shadow of your wings’: Jochen Klepper on his eighty years anniversary	127
Andrew Pfeiffer	Guilt, shame, and life in Christ	132
Jo Bertil R. Vaernesbranden	Optimality theory: LCANZ and the ordination of women—a case study	143
Anna Nürnberger	Female ordination: biblical, confessional and hermeneutical perspectives	155

Book reviews

Kathy Matuschka	James B. Vigen and Sarah Hinlicky Wilson. <i>Nenilava, Prophetess of Madagascar: Her Life and the Ongoing Revival She Inspired</i> . Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2021.	168
Stephen Nuske	Erik Varden. <i>Entering the Twofold Mystery—On Christian Conversion</i> . London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2022.	170

Learning for Life		173
--------------------------	--	-----

Optimality Theory: LCA NZ and the ordination of women—a case study

Jo Bertil R. Vaernesbranden

The present article is written from the following presupposition: Whatever the outcome of the synod in February 2023 (and the next synods), significant disagreement will remain within the LCA NZ over the ordering of ministry and especially the issue of the ordination of women. Despite excellent efforts by proponents of opposing views, chances are a significant minority (majority?) will walk away from the authority of the church gathering feeling distraught and disappointed. What, then? On a personal and ecclesial level there are decisions to be made, and a way forward must be found in order for the Yea and the Nay to remain within LCA NZ and remain one body.

Not as an attempt to solve the disagreement, neither as an occasion to state my own view(s), but as an attempt at facilitating reciprocal understanding, I suggest the aid of Optimality Theory. Optimality Theory is a theory developed within linguistics, as a framework for framing opposition. Why use linguistic theory in theology, you might ask. The reply might be, as Dutch theologian Johannes van der Ven writes of the intradisciplinary model he proposes, that in so doing one ‘does what theology has always done throughout history: to take up and critically assimilate new methods and techniques developed in other areas of science, with a view to their theological development by theologians themselves.’¹ Hence the attempt to put a linguistic theory to work in theology.²

1 Johannes van der Ven, *Practical Theology: An Empirical Approach* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1998), 89. Van der Ven views his model in opposition to 1) the monodisciplinary model (one discipline alone), 2) the multidisciplinary model (several distinct and non-interacting disciplines) and 3) the interdisciplinary model (several distinct and interacting disciplines).

2 The suggestion of using precisely *linguistic* theory in theology also receives support from the fact that faith, as Luther suggests, operates much as a language does: Faith, as the mode we live in, provides the words which give us the eyes to see reality for what it is. The gospel is the key for tuning our sensory apparatus; without it, Christ is dead and the kingdom is nowhere to be seen; with it, Christ is alive and the kingdom is everywhere. See for example the early Luther’s statements in *Dictata super psalterium*: ‘Hence it is no wonder that the senseless do not know, because these counsels and ways which God works in them altogether under the appearance of the opposite are veiled. For it appears differently on the outside from what is done inwardly. [...] Behold, in the spirits and in the inner man God produces glory, salvation, riches, beauty, and inestimable strength. But on the outside nothing of this appears; indeed, everything appears as the opposite. He abandons them in disgrace, weakness, lack of riches, contempt, and filth, yea, even unto death. But when the senseless, who cannot see beyond this, see this, will they not fail to understand and know the thoughts of God? For they are understood only by faith, which comes from the Spirit. So, then, when the saints inwardly receive these magnificent gifts of God, they receive the opposite on the outside.’ LW 11:229–230. And: ‘Faith is the reason why we cannot demonstrate our goods in any other way than by the Word, because faith has to do with things that do not appear, things that cannot be taught, shown, and pointed out except by the Word. Therefore it is called the “evidence of things that do not appear” (Heb 11:1), because it shows us future things, which we possess by faith as the substance of future things.’ LW 11:407. Lastly: ‘For what is future in appearance is in a mystery; what is future in reality is in a sign; what will be in the open is in what is hidden; what will be in sight is in faith; what will be set forth is in the testimony; what will be in fulfillment is in the promise.’ LW 11:542–543. More recently, George Lindbeck has pursued the idea (and metaphors) that theology functions as

Let us begin by sketching out the basic structure of Optimality Theory.³ Optimality Theory, like other theories in phonology with which it shares its architecture, seeks to account for the fact that we do not pronounce words and phrases exactly as we find them in their lexical form. There is, in other words, no absolute one-to-one symmetry between input (the lexical form) and output (how words and phrases are pronounced in context). The input and the output levels seem to adhere to different demands. The input level wants maximum clarity, the output level wants maximum sensitivity to context.⁴

These demands often conflict, and it is the aim of Optimality Theory to account for these conflicts and their resulting alternations. In order to do so, Optimality Theory operates with *constraints*. A constraint is in Optimality Theory what limits the field of candidates (alternatives) according to a principle or value. In theory we could imagine all kinds of ways to pronounce a word or conduct theology. In reality we are only going to consider the most relevant alternatives. A constraint is thereby a principle of discernment upon which to judge among competing candidates. Constraints come in two kinds. There is on the one hand *faithfulness* constraints, which seek to preserve the symmetry between input and output, 'demanding *exact replication* of the input along some specified structural dimension', and there is on the other hand *markedness* constraints, which 'evaluate *output* representations only, penalizing them for the presence of certain configurations.'⁵ In theology this would translate into the balancing act of remaining faithful to our heritage yet not cultivating it for the past, but for the present (and the future).⁶

From surface language data, the way people actually speak, it is clear that constraints do not always apply. This makes it difficult to do what Generative Phonology does, namely to operate with constraints in the shape of unbreakable rules. Rules would, then, have to be context-specific in order to account for their application in certain contexts and non-application in others. Against this, Optimality Theory operates with violable constraints, and seeks to account for surface variation through constraint ranking. That is, 'constraints are *prioritized* with respect to each other on a language-specific basis.'⁷ Rather than having different rules for different contexts, the constraints are the same no matter the context, but their ranking is not.

the grammar of the language of faith. See George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1984).

- 3 Optimality Theory originated with Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky, *Optimality Theory: Constraint Interaction in Generative Grammar* (Rutgers Optimality Archive: Rutgers University, 2002 [1993]). My understanding of Optimality Theory is in addition based on René Kager, *Optimality Theory*, Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Here I use a more easily accessible text by Alan Prince and Paul Smolensky, 'Optimality Theory in Phonology,' (Unpublished manuscript, 2002).
- 4 As Prince and Smolensky write, 'it is only because the demands of the phonetic and the lexical interfaces *conflict* that the grammar has a role for an active phonology which generates alternations.' Prince and Smolensky, 'Optimality Theory in Phonology,' 2 (emphasis in original).
- 5 *Ibid.*, 2 (emphasis in original). See also *ibid.*, 3: 'Any individual constraint offers a clear judgment, but the aggregate has many contending voices. How shall we find the concord of this discord?'
- 6 Conceptually it is important to establish that there is such a thing as too much faithfulness, not just too much markedness. This goes for linguistics as well as theology.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 3 (emphasis in original).

Thus, Optimality Theory accounts for the phonological surface ‘output’ (for example the way a particular word is pronounced in Australia as opposed to, say, England) by running all possible candidates (alternatives) through a set of violable constraints ranked according to the particular linguistic context in question. The optimal candidate is the candidate which violates—if any—the least important constraints.

In making the transfer from a linguistic to a theological context, it is worth noting that support can be drawn from sources closer to home. Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997) was a philosopher and historian who, having experienced both the Russian revolution and World War II, worked extensively with the concept of ‘utopia.’ His point is that we cannot take one value, however good, and pursue it to the very end. This is Berlin’s way of saying that violable constraints work better than unbreakable rules. For us humans, the quest for purity (utopia) in its radicality might call for the deployment of tools and strategies which in reality run counter to the values we seek to protect, and this not just in a collateral sense but in a conceptual sense.

Isaiah Berlin writes: ‘If, as I believe, the ends of men are many, and not all of them are in principle compatible with each other, then the possibility of conflict—and of tragedy—can never wholly be eliminated from human life, either personal or social.’⁸ Elsewhere he also writes: ‘Some of the Great Goods cannot live together. That is a conceptual truth. We are doomed to choose, and every choice may entail an irreparable loss.’⁹ This is so because ‘we are faced with choices between ends equally ultimate, and claims equally absolute, the realisation of some of which must inevitably involve the sacrifice of others.’¹⁰

That is, we should hold our ideals high without being blind to the sacrifices—whether material or conceptual—they involve for us and/or for others. In a Christian context, we are used to thinking that all good things convene in the triune God, and that by seeking the Father, the Son and the Spirit we seek a perfect union of non-conflicting values. Berlin’s perspective might be a timely reminder not to leave the suffering Christ out of the equation in picturing the perfect union.

Isaiah Berlin worked with general history, but there are those who mention similar ideas also in the field of theological history. Natalia Nowakowska in her book *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther* shows how in modern times doctrine has come to refer to ‘non-

8 Isaiah Berlin, *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1997), 239.

9 Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (London: John Murray, 1990), 13.

10 Isaiah Berlin, *Four Essays on Liberty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 213–214. As Joshua Cherniss and Henry Hardy write: ‘The idea of a perfect whole, the ultimate solution, is not only unattainable in practice, but also conceptually incoherent. To avert or overcome conflicts between values once and for all would require the transformation, which amounted to the abandonment, of those values themselves.’ Joshua Cherniss, and Henry Hardy, ‘Isaiah Berlin,’ (2022 [2004]) *Online Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entry on Isaiah Berlin, accessed Sept 27, 2022. Also, as biographer Michael Ignatieff writes, in the eyes of Berlin ‘the crimes of the century [the 20th century] were the result of a faith in final solutions, and hence the failure to be reconciled to the limits of human reason and to the inevitability of loss and error.’ Michael Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life* (London: Vintage, 2000), 285.

negotiable, core beliefs held by Christians'.¹¹ This she views as an unfortunate modern development, deviating from the way doctrine, *doctrina*, in late medieval sources is understood as 'learning' or 'teaching', 'interchangeable with *opiniones*'.¹² As Nowakowska writes: 'Doctrines, in the world of late medieval theological speculation, were there to be tested, debated, and weighed up.'¹³ That is, within the multifaceted and plurivocal late medieval world, disputations and disputes were not in and of themselves considered a threat to the *status quo*. They were simply part of the *modus operandi* of the church, and as such played an integral role in maintaining her theological heritage.

In moving to our present-day context, therefore, let us not be discouraged simply by the fact that we find disputes within the church. Disputes are not in and of themselves signs of decay, but could equally well be signs of life: The church has not lost willpower or voice(s), but is alive and kicking, and debates the issues before her! One such issue, perhaps *the* issue over the last twenty years, regards the ordination of women. In the remainder of this article I will look briefly at the issue from the perspective of Optimality Theory.

As a first observation, let us note that in the LCANZ and in Lutheran churches worldwide, the same input – canon, creeds and confessions – does not always lead to the same output.¹⁴ Some will, on the balance of things say 'yes' to the ordination of women, others will say 'no'. This means that in various contexts within the Lutheran family of churches and believers, despite the same constraints guiding our theological reasoning, we end up with dissimilar (opposing) opinions or doctrines on the surface level. That is to say, two persons might truly share the same concern for the best exegesis of the relevant passages, the same concern for application of Lutheran hermeneutics, and a similar concern for gender equality, and *yet disagree* on the question of ordination of women in the LCANZ.

In Optimality Theory, such variation is accounted for by means of (stratal) ordering of constraints. In the following I will treat *sola scriptura*, *sola gratia* and *sola fide* as principles of discernment, that is, as constraints, and show how different surface level positions – like 'yes' and 'no' to the ordination of women – entail different ordering and interpretation of and interaction between the three constraints.¹⁵ These constraints are an important part

11 Natalia Nowakowska, *King Sigismund of Poland and Martin Luther: The Reformation before Confessionalization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 21. In her view, even George Lindbeck offers a fairly inflexible view of doctrine in that he 'offers a formulation [of doctrine] with an emphasis on belief: 'communally authoritative teachings, readings, beliefs and practices that are considered essential to the identity and welfare of the group''. See *ibid.*, 21.

12 *Ibid.*, 21.

13 *Ibid.*, 29. Nowakowska distinguishes conceptually between 'doctrine-belief' (the conception nowadays) and 'doctrine-academic opinion' (the late medieval conception). See *ibid.*, 30. As a case in point, Nowakowska shows how Luther's teachings were received in Poland. In the Catholic kingdom of Poland of Luther's day, away from the Holy Roman Empire, 'Lutheranism was not consistently identified as a heresy' but rather 'understood as transgressive chiefly for its schismatic impulses'. *Ibid.*, 15.

14 For more on this issue, see Stephen Hultgren, 'Canon, creeds and confessions: an exercise in Lutheran hermeneutics,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 46, no. 1 (May 2012): 26–50.

15 In formulating these as constraints, I follow the lead of Lorenz B. Puntel, who in his 'strukturel-

of our Lutheran heritage, and can—by way of creative usage—in our context be related to ordination in that 1) the ministry to be ordained to has its roots in the teachings and commandments of Jesus recorded in the Scriptures, and is not done primarily on the basis of tradition (*sola scriptura*), 2) the person to be ordained believes oneself called to ministry on the basis of one's faith, not primarily one's works (*sola fide*) and 3) the church body sees and recognises that person's ministry on the basis of grace, not primarily merit (*sola gratia*).¹⁶

I will now identify some quotes from the previous *LTJ* issue which portray a leaning towards each of these *solas*, coupled with an analysis in the mold of Optimality Theory. We begin with the principle of *sola scriptura*, considered to be 'the ruling rule' (*norma normans*) to which other rules must yield. It is also the constraint most easily associated with faithfulness constraints, maintaining the identity between input and output. We can illustrate the principle of *sola scriptura* as *norma normans* in an empty table similar to the ones in Optimality Theory, with *sola scriptura* making up its own stratum:

systematische Philosophie' seeks to formulate what he labels '*Primsätze*', sentences that seeks to avoid subject-predicate sentences and the associated substance ontology. See Lorenz B. Puntel and Emmanuel Tourpe, *Philosophie als systematischer Diskurs: Dialoge über die Grundlagen einer Theorie der Seienden, des Seins und des Absoluten* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 2014), 102: 'Nur Sätze ohne die Subjekt-Prädikat-Struktur können kohärenterweise eine nicht-akzeptierbare Substanzontologie vermeiden. Dann aber ist das Kontextprinzip so etwas wie eine Selbstverständlichkeit, denn die Primsätze haben keine subsententialen Komponenten, die für sich eine eigene Bedeutung oder einen eigenen semantischen Wert beanspruchen können.' What Puntel labels Primsätze carries the structure of 'Es verhält sich so daß es regnet.' Puntel's point is that in sentences of this kind the first 'Es' ('it') refers to Being (beyond the totality of all there is; Puntel labels it 'the universe of discourse', all that could possibly be said), whereas the second 'it' refers to a specific point of fact, a particular (way of) being. To use the formal notation of Puntel's Primsätze we can phrase our constraints as such:

Es verhält sich so daß es lautet (*sola scriptura*)

Es verhält sich so daß es hört (*sola fide*)

Es verhält sich so daß es ereignet (*sola gratia*).

16 For more on the triad of *solas*, see Willem van Vlastuin, 'Sola scriptura: The relevance of Luther's use of sola scriptura in De Servo Arbitrio,' in *Sola Scriptura: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Scripture, Authority, and Hermeneutics*, eds. Hans Burger, Arnold Huijgen and Eric Peels, Studies in Reformed Theology (Leiden: Brill, 2018) and Hendrik van den Belt, 'Sola scriptura: an inadequate slogan for the authority of scripture,' *Calvin Theological Journal* 51 (2016): 204–226. According to the latter, 'The three-fold confession "Scripture alone, grace alone, and faith alone" is in fact not much older than one hundred years and originated in the circles of radical Lutheranism.' *Ibid.*, 206. Gerhard Ebeling somewhat supports such a view when he, in the words of van den Belt, writes that '*sola scriptura* as a "formal principle" [...] goes back to the beginning of the nineteenth century.' See *ibid.*, 207, n. 209. Van der Belt concludes: 'Broadly speaking, then, the Lutheran Reformation moves from *gratia* via *fides* to *scriptura*. Luther's appeal to Scripture is a means to protect the doctrine of grace, received through faith without works, from the power of the church.' *Ibid.*, 209. The *solas* are not only historically connected, but also conceptually. For example, van Vlastuin writes that 'it appears that *sola scriptura* in Luther's theology cannot be isolated from personal faith. [...] [T]he ultimate peace of people's conscience was not to be found in a certain interpretation of an abstract scripture, but in the *viva vox* of a personal God.' See van Vlastuin, 'Sola scriptura,' 251–252. Lastly, a thoughtful reminder from van den Belt: 'The core of the Reformation debate was about the right understanding of the relationship between grace and merit. Even better, it was about grace and freedom, about the right relationship of faith to works and the right relationship between Scripture and tradition. The word *sola* pulls this relationship apart in advance.' van den Belt, 'Sola scriptura,' 225.

Model 1:¹⁷

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura		
Sola gratia		
Sola fide		

The first position to consider in such a matrix is the one of Adam D. Hensley when he argues that 'there is just one office of oversight responsible for teaching and preaching in the church', and that 'not everyone is eligible for this office'.¹⁸ The ones that are not eligible includes women as a group, since 'Paul has [...] explained that "it is not permitted for a woman *to teach* or have authority over a man" when instructing Christian men and women concerning their participation in worship.'¹⁹ The basis for Hensley's argument, which is his interpretation of the *sola scriptura*-principle, is that 'not all "exegesese" are equally *exegetical* or attentive to that most basic Lutheran hermeneutical concerns: the plain sense of the text.'²⁰

There is in our analysis two possible interpretations of Hensley's position. The first one can be illustrated thus:

Model 2a:

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura	Violation	
Sola gratia		
Sola fide		

17 The darker shade of gray indicates a higher stratum. In this model, *sola scriptura* overrules *sola gratia* and *sola fide*.

18 Adam D. Hensley, '(God's) ordering of ministry in the church,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 (Aug 2022): 54.

19 Ibid., 55.

20 Ibid., 56. How are we—in theory and in praxis—to agree on what is to constitute the plain sense of the text? Tania Nelson writes: 'The LCANZ has long considered that the issue of ordination of both women and men should be decided on the basis of scripture, as is the practice for all doctrinal matters, however when biblical scholars come to conflicting conclusions on the issue, when does reading scripture through the lens of a missional/cultural hermeneutic better serve the debate?' Tania Nelson, 'Implications of the call for gender equality on God's mission through the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand: a socio-cultural analysis,' *ibid*: 99. As an aside to her position she also writes: 'The view, in some areas of the church, that God created women to be submissive to men and that this submission is part of the created order of the world, and not a cultural practice or a result of sin entering the world, will continue to tarnish God's mission in Australia and New Zealand through His church as long as that view persists.' Ibid., 97. What to some is that which 'our Lord has commanded us for our blessing' (Hensley, '(God's) ordering of ministry in the church,' 57; see also Adam D. Hensley, 'Divine blessing and order in marriage and the church,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 54, no. 1 [May 2020]: 43–59) is to others something which might 'tarnish God's mission' (Nelson, 'Implications of the call for gender equality,' 97).

The way to read this table would be to say that ‘Yes to the ordination of women’ violates the constraint of *sola scriptura* and that none of the other constraints apply. That is, scripture forbids women to be ordained, whereas the nature of their ministry and their calling is left ambiguous: it can point in both directions, but scripture settles the issue.

The stronger variant of this position would of course be to say:

Model 2b:

	‘Yes’ to Ordination of Women	‘No’ to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura	Violation	
Sola gratia	Violation	
Sola fide	Violation	

Here the three *solas* are in harmony: the scriptures command only men to the office of ordained ministry, but apart from that and independently it is also seen from the ministry of women and from the way they cultivate their calling that women cannot be ordained (even if scripture were to be ambiguous on the issue). On its own merit, only men receive an inner calling and an outer calling.

The other way to interpret Hensley’s position looks like this:

Model 3:

	‘Yes’ to Ordination of Women	‘No’ to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura	Fatal violation	
Sola gratia		Violation
Sola fide		Violation

Here the difference is that since *sola scriptura* is ranked above *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, the violation of the latter is possible and must be tolerated. That is: if a woman experiences a call to ordained ministry, that experience simply cannot—in the name of *sola scriptura*—be accepted (trusted) as the final word, and hence must be reinterpreted.²¹ The same goes for *sola gratia*: even if a church body thinks it recognises in a woman the gifts associated with ordained ministry and wants to give her an outer calling, that recognition and wish to call must also be reinterpreted.

The benefit of the second interpretation of Hensley’s position (model 3) is that it acknowledges that ‘No to ordination of women’ by necessity entails a reinterpretation of the testimonies of women who say they have a calling to ordained ministry as well as a reinterpretation of the arguments and practices of church bodies that do, in fact—on the basis of the very same canon, creeds and Lutheran confessions—put forward outer

²¹ Hensley seems to indicate that maybe she is rather being called to be a deaconess, since that role is not denied women by scripture. See Hensley, ‘(God’s) ordering of ministry in the church,’ 56.

callings to women.²²

We move on to consider the two other constraints or concerns, more easily associated with markedness constraints. These constraints regulate the fact that things—while they remain the same things—change. That is, these constraints regulate an identity in difference.²³ The first of these is *sola gratia*. This is the concern of Tim Jarick when he asks: '[A]re our eyes open and attentive to where God is working and growing his Word of grace amongst our communities? And is our ordering of these ministries allowing the called to be gifted and the gifted to be called?'²⁴ Here we see illustrated the perspective of identifying the graceful gifts present in the Christian community, also those aligned with ordained ministry. Helga Jansons explicitly links this to the issue of the ordination of women: 'If Australian Lutherans are challenged with a shortage of pastors and a decline in membership, now is the time to ask what God might be up to. Perhaps it is time to consider how in many other places around God's world, the Spirit is working mightily through both female and male pastors and lay people in many different roles. [...] Anywhere that we see God at work in and through the most unlikely people, we should encourage and support that person or community. Who are we to hinder God's Holy Spirit!'²⁵

As with the previous position, this can also be interpreted in various ways. The first way would be like this:

Model 4:

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola gratia		Fatal violation
Sola scriptura	Violation	
Sola fide		

That is; the testimony of the grace-filled ministry of women who either are in the office of ministry or show the gifts aligned with it, testifies to the presence and work of the Spirit in such a way that the ordination of women should not be denied, even if one were to say

22 As for example The Church of Norway, the Church of Sweden, the Church of Denmark and the Church of Finland (all Lutheran) do.

23 For more on this, see Martin Heidegger's texts on identity and difference. He writes: 'Wenn das Denken, von einer Sache angesprochen, dieser nachgeht, kann es ihm geschehen, daß es sich unterwegs wandelt.' He adds in a footnote: '—d.h. aus dem stetig entsprechenden Einblick in die *Sache*—dann eignet der Sache einer Macht der Verwandlung—inwiefern?' Martin Heidegger, 'Identität und Differenz,' in *Gesamtausgabe. Band 11: Identität und Differenz* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2006 [1957]), 33. Markedness constraints, therefore, belong in the equation not by force, but by fact. See also Prince, 'Optimality Theory in Phonology,' 1. Interestingly, Prince and Smolensky suspect that 'a learning bias exists in favor of ranking Markedness above Faithfulness constrains.' *Ibid.*, 14.

24 Tim Jarick, 'Ministry and ministry workers in Lutheran schools,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 (Aug 2022): 66.

25 Helga Jansons, 'Lutheran church leadership—always being made new!,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 (Aug 2022): 88.

that scripture denies it.

The second variation of this would be:

Model 5:

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura		
Sola gratia		Violation
Sola fide		

This entails saying: Scripture does not speak directly to the issue of ordination of women, but the fact that women are gifted with the gifts associated with ordained ministry means we should ordain women.

The third interpretation, in which *sola gratia* sheds light on *sola scriptura*, would be:

Model 6:

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura		Fatal violation
Sola gratia		Violation
Sola fide		

Here the authority of scripture above other constraints is acknowledged. But in difference from the first position, the scriptures are read—even in their plain sense—as saying that gender imbalance is part of the curse, not the blessing, and that working towards gender balance—even with regards to the office of ministry—is doing the restorative work of God.²⁶

The last constraint that we will look at is *sola fide*. This is the concern associated with faith arousing in us a call to serve. Alison Short touches on this aspect when she writes: 'At the local level, barriers exist, such as ordained minister and intensive theological approvals [...] Such barriers can lead to a "why bother" approach by members who already have busy professional lives and feel that their knowledge and contributions, as valued by secular society, are not even seen and certainly not valued within [the] context of the Lutheran church in Australia.'²⁷ The issue Alison Short here raises is of the office of ministry *hindering* the outworking of the call to serve.

26 Helga Jansons: 'In Christ we have a new creation, and the broken relationships with God and each other can be restored to the original intention of Genesis 1:26-30 where men and women were created equal and helpers to each other.' *Ibid.*, 86. See also Hultgren, 'Canon, creeds and confessions,' 41, who writes that in a qualified way, 'from a canonical perspective, one could use Genesis 3:16 as a critical lever against 1 Corinthians 14:33–36 and 1 Timothy 2:11–14.'

27 Alison Short, 'Beyond an earthly reign: changing custom to meet context,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 (Aug 2022): 90.

Short further speaks for bottom-up approach when she writes: 'It is time to embrace and apply this early church mentality of inclusiveness, mutual respect and inherent collaboration from a grass-roots, lay church foundation in order to save our organised church in Australia.'²⁸ She further adds that 'ordained ministers and other gatekeepers may need to open up more space and shed their assumed power to allow lay and minority members to express and practice their ideas, rather than be "shot down in flames" or mansplained at first breath.'²⁹

This working from below might also affect who does pastoral ministry. As Noel Due writes of Roland Allen's view of voluntary non-ordained clergy, 'the role of such "voluntary clergy", should include the celebration of the sacraments, along with the preaching of the gospel.'³⁰ This would probably, in our context, entail opening up the office of ministry to women, since women already function in the role of voluntary clergy.

If we were to put this in a table, we will once again give three interpretations. The first would look like this:

Model 7:

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola fide		Fatal violation
Sola scriptura	Violation	
Sola gratia		

The way to read this would be to say that a denial of the ordination of women entails hindering the called to serve in their calling, even if the scriptures in certain passages were to indicate a 'no' to the ordination of women.

The other way to interpret this position is:

Model 8:

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura		
Sola gratia		
Sola fide		Violation

Here the interpretation would be that since women receive a calling to ordained ministry and scripture is ambiguous on the ordination of women, we should ordain women.

28 Alison Short, 'Beyond an earthly reign,' 91.

29 Ibid., 91.

30 Noel Due, 'Back to the future? Talking about Roland Allen in the LCANZ,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 (Aug 2022): 79.

The third and final interpretation is:

Model 9:

	'Yes' to Ordination of Women	'No' to Ordination of Women
Sola scriptura		Fatal violation
Sola gratia		
Sola fide		Violation

The way to read this would be to say that a denial of the ordination of women entails hindering the called to serve in their calling, thus meaning only a 'yes' to the ordination of women respects the biblical notion of a community of an 'early church mentality of inclusiveness, mutual respect and inherent collaboration from a grass-roots, lay church foundation'.³¹ Here, like in model 6, the at least theoretically possible elevation of the markedness constraint—in our case, *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, to the upper level, bleeds into the understanding of scripture in such a way that the understanding of scripture is changed. *Sola scriptura as norma normans* is the end product of a hermeneutical process during which *sola scriptura as norma normans* has been temporarily suspended. Though scripture does not change, we might afterwards see something new in it.

Based on the preceding we can summarize in the following way: 'No' to the ordination of women factually entails reinterpreting the testimony of women with a calling to ordained ministry as well as the church bodies who call them. 'Yes' to the ordination of women factually entails at some point in the hermeneutical process ranking *sola fide* and/or *sola gratia* above *sola scriptura*. Yet, both positions might in the end respect the status of *sola scriptura as norma normans*.

In the end and in the final instance, I think the question is one of Spirit and temporality. That is, of how the Spirit acts in the process of establishing truth. Is the work of the Spirit to confirm or reveal in an individual's heart the meaning and intention of a particular biblical passage, thus adding inner certainty to outer word? Is rather the work of the Spirit to guide the (interpreted and interpreting) community out of which the Scriptures grew and to which the Scriptures continually come? Is the Spirit at work inside and outside the Christian community, with the Scriptures continually being revealed in the light of the continuous history of the triune God? All (or none) of the above?³²

31 Short, 'Beyond an earthly reign,' 91.

32 Roger Whittall touches on the role of the Spirit when he writes: 'Under the Spirit's guidance, the responsibility for the ordering of ministry now [amongst Lutherans] rests within the churches themselves. Here and now, in contemporary Australia, the challenge for the LCAZ is to honour the teaching inherent in its confession at the same time as we re-examine its possibilities in the midst of a twin resource crisis: the dwindling numbers of both pastors and people.' Roger Whittall, 'Ordering the church's ministry: Luther's priorities,' *Lutheran Theological Journal* 56, no. 2 (Aug 2022): 102–103. Luther's view, according to Whittall, is that 'the church's seven-fold ministry is the common possession of all Christians—women and men, young and old—in which all participate on the basis of their baptism and according to their particular calling, life-situation and abilities. There are no other spiritual qualifications needed.' *Ibid.*, 103–104. Still, '[t]he need for order in the church remains, as a God-given gift and a fruit of its unity

This is not the time and place for such a discussion. What I have merely touched on here is various concerns at play in the LCANZ in its discussion on the ordination of women. I believe our heritage from Luther has left us with a gap between scripture and Spirit, a gap necessitating a leap. We cope as best as we can as individuals and communities, sometimes making a leap in faith, sometimes in grace, and sometimes in scripture (scriptural understanding). Whatever we do, let it be a leap in the Spirit, the one under whose guidance we live and move, until the day comes when it is all clear for all of us.

in Christ. However much we may feel impelled to adapt our structures of church and ministry to more flexible, inclusive and responsive ways of working, it is important that whoever serves publicly in the church's name does so with the assent, approval, and co-operation of the whole community.' *Ibid.*, 104.