

The New Testament and the Ordination of Women

H.P. Hamann.

The Lutheran Church of Australia has taken a very definite position on the matter of the ordination of women to the Holy Ministry. The Theses of Agreement, which forms part of the Document of Union, states very briefly and very categorically:

Though women prophets were used by the Spirit of God in the Old as well as in the New Testament, 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14 prohibit a woman from being called into the office of the public ministry for the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. This apostolic rule is binding on all Christendom; hereby her rights as a member of the spiritual priesthood are in no wise impaired.

These words were formulated early in the 1950s, when the agitation about and for female ordination had hardly begun, which explains the brevity of the Theses on this matter. This present essay is concerned only with the position and teaching of the New Testament, not with other important aspects of the issue, like its ecumenical implications, the question of historical continuity, and others which are all involved in any ecclesiastical decision. However, the New Testament position is the most important aspect of the whole problem and that which is finally decisive. For, it is taken for granted and as beyond all debate, here, as in all articles of this Journal, that the Sacred Scripture is source and judge of all teachers and teachings. It is also taken for granted, but perhaps it needs restatement, that the authority enunciated does not mean merely showing that the NT in such-and-such a place takes such a position on the ordination of women, but also that such a position is in line with, harmonious with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is clear from a position like the one enunciated that arguments drawn from reason, experience, or a humanistic philosophy can have no authority when measured against the statements of the Word of God. These arguments dare not be ignored; on the contrary, they must be taken seriously, examined, refuted. They may lead us to a closer examination even of the Scriptural texts themselves; they may lead us to make sure that what may be a traditional exegesis is not merely traditional, without being in fact true and accurate. But these arguments of human reason enjoy no final authority, they are not a final source of truth beyond which we cannot go.

It is not very likely that the reader will find something new in these lines. Too much has been written on this subject from various points of view for anything not to have been said that is really of value. All that can reasonably be expected are a new emphasis and a new ordering of material that is on the whole well-known.

1.

The first assertion or thesis to be put forward in this paper is: *The New Testament gives no support at all for the ordination of women.* Ordination I define as authorization and commissioning to do the work of a pastor or minister of the church, a task involving control and pastoral care of a congregation, the public, independent teaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the public carrying out of the task of announcing the absolution or, on occasion, the retention of sins. Offices exactly corresponding to this definition cannot be shown to have existed in the New Testament, but something approximating it, closely enough for our present purposes, is presupposed in a direction like that of Paul to the elders of Ephesus: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28 RSV).

The plain fact is that there is no example in the NT of any woman occupying such an office. Christ chose only men to be His close disciples, the Twelve. Only men were in the 70 (72) sent out to go before Him and assist Him in His mission. Only men took part in the last Passover, where Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, in spite of the fact that the Passover was celebrated in families. There are no female counterparts to Timothy, Titus, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus Justus, and Epaphras. Only men appear among the larger group of apostles. A number of editors accent *Iouanian* in Rom. 16:7 so as to get the name "Junia"; however, there seems little likelihood that they can be right, and the masculine "Junias" of the RSV is the right translation, also in view of all the masculine forms in the verse mentioned.

Women are entrusted with all sorts of important functions in the life of the church, but always in a subordinate or supporting or private role. Women look after Jesus and His disciples, Luke 8:1-3. Paul also is supported by a number of women. Lydia provided him with a base of operations. Priscilla (or Prisca) instructed the gifted Apollos besides being a help to the apostle Paul in other ways. Since she is always mentioned before her husband Aquila, she seems indeed to have been the more prominent of the two. Phoebe, the deaconess of the church in Cenchreae, was entrusted with the important letter to the Romans. Of especial interest are Euodia and Syntyche, of whom it is said that "they laboured side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers" (Phil. 4:3 RSV). In spite of this high praise and association with a number of mostly-nameless male workers, these women are not described as having an independent charge. No woman appears in the NT as carrying out an independent pastoral charge, as defined above. There may conceivably be an explanation for this state of affairs. However, it is clear that the fact itself is not at all favourable for those pressing for the ordination of women. It is, rather, something to be explained away, if possible.

The only text supplying anything like support for female ordination is Gal. 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." In fact, the text has been hailed as a "breakthrough" in this whole question. Far from being a breakthrough, it does not even dent the NT wall against the ordination of women. The previous verse, v.27, in the Galatians paragraph runs: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The declaration of the next verse, then, has to do with the oneness of all those who are in Christ, infants included. Paul could quite easily have gone on: "there is neither young nor old" . . . "for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The oneness of man and woman in Christ, as baptized members of the body of Christ, as co-sharers of the eschatological Kingdom — this is what is asserted here. The fact of baptism and oneness in Christ's body allows no argument as to the proper ordering of the church. Nor does it annul the facts of life in this aeon into which we are all born. It does not suddenly eliminate the fact of sex. Believing and baptized women do not suddenly cease to be women. Schlier has made the very appropriate comment in his work on Galatians:

Once this limitation (i.e. that of v.27) of the assertion in v.28 is recognized, then one will refrain from drawing from it direct conclusions for the ordering of the ministerial office or of society. For the ministry does not rest directly on baptism, but on the call into it, and society is never identical with the body of Christ.

However important Gal. 3:28 is for the relation of men and women in the church, and for the proper respect and dignity they are to accord one another, it does not speak of female ordination directly or indirectly.

The most that could be supported by Gal. 3:28 would, so it seems to me, be pastoral activity of women in cases of real emergency. If somewhere, sometime, because of extraordinary circumstances, there just were no men capable of carrying out the pastoral office, and there happened to be a woman or women available capable of fulfilling the office, there would be nothing to prevent such an abnormal

functioning of a woman as a pastor. The welfare of the church there would be the supreme law, and the oneness of man and woman in Christ might well then be involved as a reason for such a non-normal action. It would be the understood thing in that situation that the abnormal activity of the emergency woman "pastor" would cease as soon as the normal order of ministry could be restored. Acceptance by the church of the validity of the ministrations of women in emergency situations would be a confession of the wide principle of Gal. 3:28, and also obedience to the apostolic direction for the normal ordering of the church in this matter. To this apostolic direction we now turn.

2.

The second thesis or assertion to be put forward in this paper is that *there is specific NT prohibition of the ordination of women.*

This prohibition is contained in the well-known texts of 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14. There is a close connection between these two short paragraphs and the whole teaching contained in them may best be unfolded by a parallel display of the corresponding phrases in both.

1 Corinthians 14 (RSV)

v.34 "they are not permitted to speak"

"but should be subordinate"

v.35 "If there is anything they desire to know" [*mathein*]

"let them ask their husbands at home"

v.34 "as even the law says"

*1 Timothy 2 (RSV)*v.12 "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men" (! *andros*, singular in Greek)

"she is to keep silent"

v.11 "Let a woman learn (*manthanetō*)

"in silence with all submissiveness"

vv. 14-15 Adam and Eve in creation and sin.

There are two ways of judging a comparison like this. The critical and suspicious scholar judges 1 Timothy as non-Pauline, in spite of the evidence which quite definitely supports the Pauline authorship. (The epistle would still be rightly regarded as Pauline if we adopt the attractive suggestion that Paul made use of an amanuensis who worked with some freedom.) The critical scholar often goes on to draw the conclusion that the similar material of 1 Corinthians has been modelled on that of 1 Timothy and has been interpolated into the text of 1 Cor. 14, without leaving a trace in the manuscripts of the text which did not contain the interpolation. If, on the other hand, you are simple, uncritical, and unsuspecting, then the correspondence between 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy shows a consistent attitude of St. Paul extending over a number of years, and, if anything, increasing in firmness. Without pursuing the matter further and without any more demonstration, I shall assume that the latter position is the surer one historically and operate from that base.

If we have the same writer in both letters writing on the same matter, we have the right to allow one text to explain the other, and especially to let the clearer or more definite throw light on the less precise. So 1 Tim. 2 is the key for the understanding of 1 Cor. 14. One of the difficulties of the passage in 1 Cor. 14 is the statement of v.34. This seems to prohibit all speaking of women in congregational assemblies, and this in turn is a fruitful source of many problems. The immediate difficulty, if 1 Cor. 14:34 is understood as a blanket prohibition of all speaking by women in congregational assemblies, is that we have apparently an irremovable contradiction between 1 Cor. 11:2-16 and 14:34. The former permits a speaking (*lalein*) by the prophetess, the second forbids all speaking (*lalein*) on the part of women.

Some of the ways of getting around the difficulty within Corinthians are less than convincing: that prophetesses represented an exceptional situation (1 Cor. 14 has only prophets in mind, since only the masculine is used there), and that they had to be given permission to speak because "the Spirit was not to be quenched, nor prophesying despised," 1 Thess. 5:19-20 — so that the whole direction represented an unwilling concession on the part of the apostle; that St. Paul has only a home situation in mind in 1 Cor. 11; that Paul unawares to himself wrote inconsistently. Among the unsuccessful ways of getting around the difficulty is that which argues that *lalein* in 1 Cor. 14:34 is related to the idea of congregational order, which is Paul's big concern in the context in which the prohibition concerning speaking is found. *Lalein* is then understood as referring to undisciplined interjections or foolish chatter. But would Paul have permitted *men* to take part in undisciplined interjections or foolish chatter? Wouldn't their *lalein*, if that is meaning of the word, have upset congregational order as much as the same activity by women? Or is the suggestion that women only are given to this sort of *lalein*? I hardly think that Else Kähler, where I first saw this suggestion, would have *that* in mind (*Die Frau in den paulinischen Briefen*. Zürich/Frankfurt am Main: Gotthelf Verlag, 1960). There is a second and more important reason why the suggested solution of the problem is unsatisfactory. *Lalein* is not really contrasted with the idea of order. The contrast in the Greek sentence marked by the *ou gar . . . alla* sets in opposition *lalein* and *hypotassesthōsan*, speaking and being subordinate. A speaking is involved which is the opposite of being subordinate, a speaking with authority, teaching, preaching with the implicit demand for obedience. The parallel in 1 Tim. supports this understanding of *lalein* to the hilt. In 1 Tim. Paul does not use *lalein* but *didaskhein*, *authentēin andros*, teaching and having authority over men. So, understanding 1 Cor. 14 in the light of 1 Tim. 2, we see that *lalein* is a sign of a ruling position, the behaviour of a dominant person, and it is not to be taken literally as meaning any sort of speaking in church.

The understanding of *lalein* suggested by the parallel in 1 Tim. 2 is supported by a further argument. We are still concerned in part with the apparent contradiction between 1 Cor. 11 and 1 Cor. 14. Now, the contradiction is eliminated if we fix on the apostle's real concern in both chapters. In 1 Cor. 11 he is evidently not concerned about the speaking of prophetesses at all, but about their head-covering; in 1 Cor. 14 he is concerned with speaking only in so far as it is a sign of authority. In both passages he is concerned about the same thing really, the subordinate relation of women to men as part of the creation. It is only by accident that a contradiction has come about or seems to have come about. Margaret E. Thrall (*The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood*) points out the true relation as follows:

Both the matter and the style of the verses (1 Cor. 14:34-35) are Pauline. The demand that women should be in subjection fits in with what the apostle has previously said about the man as the head of woman, and here, as in Chapter 11, reference is made to the Genesis narrative for support. There is contradiction only if we suppose that *lalein* refers specifically to prophetic utterance, which it need not do, apart from the context.

There is, of course, a problem of context here. The verses of 1 Cor. 14 with which we have been dealing do not very well fit the context in which they are found. The context, both that which precedes and that which follows, has to do with congregational order. And we have seen that the attempt to make vv. 34-35 fit into the scheme of order is a failure. Some textual witnesses, the Greek manuscripts D and G, some manuscripts of the Old Latin or Itala, and certain Church Fathers, have these verses right at the end of the chapter, after v. 40, where they stand as a kind of appendix or postscript. They actually don't fit much better there than they do in their present position, but one sees the reason for the change of position. Either of two explanations can account for the awkwardness of vv. 34-35 in their present context. It is possible that Paul inserted the material in its present place at a later stage of composition of the letter. There are examples of this having occurred in other letters of the apostle. Romans 9-11 interrupts the smooth course of the argument proceeding from chapter 8 to chapter 12; if we had never seen chapters 9-11 in our copies of Romans we would never have noticed their absence! Gal. 4:21-31 looks very much like an afterthought, as does Phil. 3:2-4:1. The repeated use of *lalein*, *sigato* in previous verses, and of *hypotassetai* in v. 32 would suggest the present place for the insertion of this new, but heterogeneous material. Or, again, Paul could have from the very beginning included vv. 34-35 where they are because of the association of the words just mentioned. The value that Paul saw in the material itself would have been more important to him than its lack of aptness for the context. I think the second of the two suggestions more likely. And, in any case, no one expects perfect logical arrangement in a letter, and we are never upset by even jumbles of ideas in a letter when we know where it comes from.

The upshot of this investigation into these two key passages, 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-14, is that they both teach the same thing, that a ruling, authoritative role in the church is not for women, is unbecoming to them, in fact (*aischron*, 14:35). The pastoral office, the highest office in the church, where the pastor represents Christ Himself, would be the obvious case in our modern church-life which would be affected by the apostolic injunction. If it did not apply to the pastoral office it could not be applied to any. We shall touch on this point again at a later stage of this essay.

For the moment, we must address ourselves to an important and common objection to the use of these texts in the ordination-of-women question. It is asserted by many writers with considerable confidence that the Pauline restriction on the activity of women in the church was meant only as a direction for that time and that place, being determined by social customs of the day, and that it is a mistake to see in Paul's prohibition a directive for the church of today. Frequently, Paul's prohibition of unveiled women in church is seen as a parallel case. We disregard the latter prohibition — why insist on the former?

It is not easy to assess the evidence about women's status in the society of Paul's day. Are we to think of Jewish, Greek, or Roman society? Were there local variations of importance? On the whole, we should not be far wrong in supposing that Paul had Jewish Jerusalem society in mind. The role of Jewish women in worship both in the Old Testament and in New Testament times was restricted. Israel never had priestesses, although women took part in various folk festivals, in sacrificial meals, and in the Passover. Women were not allowed beyond the court of the women when they attended the temple services. They attended the services of the synagogue, but their place was behind a screen, and they were only listeners. On the other hand, women were quite prominent in heathen cults, not only in the family cult, but also in the public cults. From the point of view of the heathen, Paul's limitation on the activity of women in worship might well have appeared abnormal, as contrary to the customs of the day! Even from the Jewish point of view, some of Paul's rules for

worship might have seemed opposed to prevailing custom, as, for example, his observation that men should worship with their heads uncovered, 1 Cor. 11:4. Peter Brunner, accordingly, makes the statements:

Quite often his (Paul's) instructions seem directly opposed to that which was the custom in the synagogue or in the Hellenistic world. When seen in relationship to their day, the New Testament injunctions against women taking an active role in the congregation represent exactly a rejection of those practices that were current in the social surroundings. Thus it is not at all certain that Paul in this passage (1 Cor. 11:2-12) has taken as his standard one of the then prevailing value judgments as to what is decent and proper for a woman. It seems much more likely to me that the reason behind Paul's considering this kind of conduct as shameful is because it violates the express will of God. (See *The Ministry and the Ministry of Women*, [St. Louis: Concordia, 1971], p. 23.)

That Paul is concerned about the will of God and not about prevailing custom both in 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2 seems evident from the fact that he appeals to the Old Testament as the solid basis for his directions. In the former passage he writes: "For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says." In the latter passage, he refers first to the creation of Eve as subsequent to that of Adam, and then to the role of Eve in the Fall; she was tempted, deceived, not Adam. The point of Paul in these two references of 1 Tim. 2 to Adam and Eve is the subordinate position of Eve: she was created second, i.e., to help and serve Adam — the mere succession of time is surely not the point — and she is mentally (morally?) inferior. The specifics of Paul's argument are certainly not very happy or convincing, but the appeal to the Old Testament and to the beginning of things surely is important. It shows, at the least, that he is not arguing on the basis of custom. He sees God's will behind his decision. The same appeal to the will of God comes out, of course, in his reference to the law in 1 Cor. 14:34. It is doubtful which passage or passages of the Old Testament Paul has in mind, whether Gen. 3:16 or 18:12, or perhaps, better still, passages like Lev. 12; 27:1-5; Num. 30. It may even be that he has only the general tenor of the Old Testament in mind.

Then, too, we must not forget 1 Cor. 14:37: "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a *command of the Lord*." It seems necessary to relate this assertion to the whole of the preceding exposition of the chapter, including the statements of vv. 34-35.

We should note also that Paul argues differently on the matter of proper womanly conduct in church in the two chapters of 1 Corinthians, i.e. 11 and 14. In the case of the demand for silence and the non-assumption of authority in ch. 14 he appeals, as has been just shown, to the will of God and the command of the Lord. He does not do this in the case of head-covering. He makes important statements in connection with it, statements to which we shall turn in the third section of this essay, but he does not finally say: "You must wear veils, you women, because that is the will of God." When he has come to the end of his involved, and even tortuous, argumentation calling for the acceptance of veils by the Corinthian women, he finally does, almost in desperation, leave the matter with an appeal to *custom*: "However, if you insist on arguing, let me tell you, there is no such custom among us, or in any of the congregations of God's people" (1 Cor. 11:16 NEB). Paul, then, does not see his demand that women keep silence in the church as a demand limited by time, place, custom! The prohibition of Paul stands, as far he is concerned, on the law and will of God.

3.

One might get the impression that the prohibition of female leadership in the church is something of an arbitrary opinion of the apostle, one unrelated to his theology or to the Gospel generally — that is, if one judges solely from the sudden and unprepared way in which his statements appear in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy.

However, such an impression would be a wrong one, for Paul's views on this matter are embedded in his theology of creation, the fall of man, and the redemption through Jesus Christ. This whole web of thought, which we might call the theology of female ordination, has been specially carefully worked out by Peter Brunner in the work mentioned earlier, and what follows now is a mere resume of his thoughts in the chapter headed "Place of Woman in Creation."

Brunner's chief passages are 1 Cor. 11:2-16, Genesis 2, and Eph. 5:22-33. From the passage in 1 Corinthians he derives his term "*kephale*-structure."

The man is the head of the woman; Christ is the head of the man; God is the head of Christ. The "head" is that which is prior, that which determines, that which leads....It involves the kind of relationship for which one can never substitute a polar *schema*. (p. 25)

The actual relationship of woman according to this fundamental order is that she is "from" man and "for the sake of man." And these positions cannot be interchanged.

Only where the woman in her concrete practical relationships lives what she is by virtue of the creaturely existence given her in the creation is she a woman as God meant her to be. (p. 27)

This *kephale*-structure is visible also in the event of the Fall. Eve heard through Adam, of the command of God concerning the tree that was not to be eaten of, Gen. 2:16-18. Eve was less capable of preserving these original words of God since she did not hear the word of God directly, but by way of Adam. And her fall into sin did not become the fall of man (*homo!*) till it also became the sin of Adam.

The first Adam proved himself also to be the "head," in that sin and death entered into the world through him. The statement in 1 Tim. 2:14 must be amplified by Rom. 5:12, and this must be said: To be sure, Adam was led astray through Eve, but through Adam the fall was "fulfilled." (p. 28)

And, finally, the *kephale*-structure is seen also in the redemption, but an eschatological quality has been given to it. In Eph. 5:22-33 the relationship between man and woman is compared to the relationship between Christ and His church.

Three events join in a mysterious way to determine the relationship of man and woman to each other: the creation in the beginning, the original fall into sin with the resulting judgment on it, and the saving act of Christ with its fruits. (p. 29)

The event of Christ does not eliminate the relationship between man and woman that was given at the creation. The *kephale*-structure still remains, but through the new Christ-church reality, and in it, that relation begins to be transformed.

Despite the individual differences of the various forms of subordination, the subordination of the woman to the man is mysteriously bound up with the subordination of the church to Christ and Christ to the Father....The Christian woman could not mistake or belie the dignity that is hers in a more basic manner than by attempting to step out of the *kephale*-structure that governs her relationship with the man and by trying to usurp and assume the place accorded to him either in the church or in marriage. (p. 30)

In contrast with this reading of the new reality in Christ, a reading which sees the new as transforming the orders of creation from within without trying to remove them, is another view which would like to see the new eliminate the old where it can be done, now, in this life. This comes out very clearly in a major article by John Reumann, "What in Scripture Speaks to the Ordination of Women," *Concordia Theological Monthly* XLIV,1 (January 1973), He writes:

At several points it has been suggested that the meaning of key texts depends on the eschatological stance involved. If the new age has come, then the old order is changed, and "in Christ" the new obtains. If, on the other hand, we are still in the old order or not fully in Christ in the new, then the orders of creation still hold, at least in some respects. (p. 29)

The statements of Paul in 1 Cor. 11 and 14 are understood by Reumann as showing Paul between new and old, concerned about the introduction of the new (1 Cor. 11 — which allows women prophetesses to speak) and at the same time "invoking the order of the original creation as a restraint on going too far too fast (1 Cor. 14). And the conclusion Reumann draws is as follows:

It follows that in our vastly changed day and generation the ordination of women is often culturally more easy and obvious than in Paul's, and that Biblically there is a case for allowing it. Church leaders must ask whether the movement toward it is a prompting of the Spirit or whether one should continue to cling to the old and to the traditions long established. If they conclude for the work of the Spirit in drawing women into the ministry, these leaders still have the duty of regulating it, for the edification of the church and its mission, for the sake of good order, and to show that, while the new has dawned for believers, all is not yet the fullness of the kingdom. (p. 30)

It is hardly a sound eschatology that lies behind the words of Reumann just quoted. We are not to see the new order in Christ as gradually transforming the old orders of creation, until the new order of things has completely dispossessed the old. A true understanding of the New Testament rather sees the old order of creation, in fact, the old order of creation as ruined by sin, continuing till the end when Christ returns, while the new order of things in Christ ("the old has passed away, behold, the new has come," 2 Cor. 5:17) runs parallel with the old — there is an overlapping of the two aeons — till that same return of Christ. But the new is there in faith, not sight. Nothing of the new is visible, demonstrable: not Christ, not the Spirit, not the *Una Sancta*, not the new birth in Baptism, not the body and blood of the Sacrament, not the forgiveness of sins — nothing. All these are realities, and faith is sure of them, because of the Word of God, but they are all hidden in this world, where what is visible is exactly what has been there from the beginning. There is a realism about this proper view of eschatology which stands in marked contrast to the wishful thinking and enthusiasm of all eschatologies which look for a change of the present world's basic structure. The same realism should be applied to the whole question of women's liberation.

4.

The final section of this essay is really an appendix, or rather, two appendixes. The first takes up for brief comment two common objections to the teaching of St. Paul as presented and defended in this essay.

The first objection is that the church is inconsistent in prohibiting the ordination of women while allowing women a whole host of other activities which are just as contrary to the apostolic directive as the pastorate. Reumann, for instance, in the essay mentioned earlier, says in respect of the 1 Timothy 2 passage:

If 2:11-12 forbids their ordination, it also precludes their praying, prophesying, perhaps even singing or speaking liturgical response and teaching males. At the least one must grant that the Jewish synagogal attitude toward women of the early Christian period, here imported into a "church order," has scarcely been universally observed in worship, church schools, and so forth. (p. 21)

If the exegesis proposed above is right, viz., that the kind of speaking and teaching involved is that which is of an independent kind, characteristic of authority, then the objection seems to lose much of its force. One would be right in making the observation that the pastoral office is the most obvious example of that independent, authoritative activity which the apostle declares is not for women. Here we must start in the application of Paul's prohibition. However much else of our customary churchly activity is involved, would have to be examined, each function for itself; but most of the items mentioned by Reumann and others, I should say, would not fall under Paul's rule. The second appendix below suggests a quite considerable scope for women's gifts in the church.

Another objection to the view defended in this essay is very much like the first. It, too, has to deal with inconsistency. It is held that, if the church rejects the ordination of women on the basis of the arguments derived from St. Paul, then it should protest against women taking up positions of authority in non-ecclesiastical spheres, in society and in politics. The answer here is in part that, if anywhere, then at least in the church Christians should insist on the role of women which fits the created order. Not every development in the world can be changed or even challenged by the church, but a witness to the proper state of affairs can be given by what goes on in the church. And the complaint of the prophet may not be so far off the mark: "My people — children are their oppressors and women rule over them" (Is. 3:12).

The second appendix is merely an enumeration of possible roles for women in the church taken from the work by Peter Brunner referred to in this essay a number of times already. He writes:

With no dogmatic difficulties, the following functions can be separated from the pastoral office and can be organized into an official assisting ministry into which a woman with theological training can be installed through prayer and the laying on of hands:

1. the Christian instruction of the catechumens, also confirmation instruction, above all the training of groups of members, also the introduction to the interpretation of the Scriptures that takes the form of a Bible study;
2. baptizing those who have been approved by the pastor of the congregation, and the dispensing of the cup at the Lord's Supper;
3. home visitations and visits to the sick with the care and counselling that is involved, in fact, individual counselling, particularly with women, and also in hospitals and prisons;
4. devotions in houses such as retreat centres, hospitals, prisons, and charitable institutions;
5. assisting in the training of other official orders such as catechists, congregational helpers, deacons, and deaconesses;
- c. cooperating in the maintenance of correct doctrine through theological research. (pp. 36-37)

We end with the observation with which we began. The Christian's guide in this matter, as in all others, is the Sacred Scripture and not any human philosophy nor the popular clamour of the day. Christian women, like Christian men, will be led by "the command of the Lord". They will be submissive to the better knowledge and understanding of Him who at the beginning created them male and female. Insistence on rights in any case, except in certain exceptional circumstances like Paul's appeal to his Roman citizenship in the face of unjust treatment, Acts 16:37, is not a Christian virtue, Matt. 5:38-42. Christ our Lord did not come to be served but to serve, and the whole of the Christian life, every Christian's life, is to be seen as an *imitatio Christi*. "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave" (Matt. 20:25-27). No life of faith, lived in this spirit of service and submission to the will of God, can be without the blessing of God.