

The Role of Women Teachers in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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The very title of this paper inevitably raises the question whether there are indeed any roles at all that the New Testament recognizes or prescribes. Certainly from the history of the past, we can see that the church has thought that it ascertains such roles as citizen and civil authority, the role of church members and those who rule over them, the role of parents and children, the role of husbands and wives. Similarly the historic Christian church has upheld the role relationships of males and females in the ruling and teaching functions of the church. Today many of these role relationships are being challenged and are under attack. The Scriptural principles formerly held are now considered erroneous. In fact, it would be safe to say that a majority of the churches no longer hold the male and female roles of ruling and teaching in the church.

To demonstrate, consider this recent *Newsweek* magazine article on religion:

“Women should keep silence in the churches,” thundered St. Paul to the Corinthians, but recently his words have fallen on deaf ears. In the past few years the fight for women’s ordination has shaken almost every Western religion. Two percent of all ministers in the United States are now women, and female enrollment in some seminaries has jumped to more than 30%. Women are now resorting to legal complaints and lobbying groups in their struggle for ecclesiastical equal rights, but changing church law is only half the battle. Women ministers still face a 2,000-year-old religious tradition of male exclusivity.

This struggle was brought to your attention during the last year when women in the Episcopal Church were ordained to the priesthood over the objections of certain church leaders. A bitter Episcopal controversy came to a head. The leadership voted to censure the three bishops who had performed these irregular ordinations of women in Philadelphia a year ago and decried the actions of another bishop who ordained four more women in Washington, D. C. last month.

Newsweek goes on to say that “while most bishops favor the principle of women’s ordination, they object to ordinations that have been performed without the approval of the diocese.”

Vigorous discussions in Germany and the Scandinavian countries in recent years have led the Lutherans to abandon their earlier position concerning the role of women. Similar studies took place in the United States of America and resulted in a predominance of American Lutherans following the Europeans. Most of the older American denominations have also altered their previous positions. One might be tempted to generalize that the more liberal wing of the church has abandoned the historic Christian position, while many of the more conservative denominations have altered their position.

However, by now you have understood that our discussion has concentrated upon the role of the woman in the pulpit as preacher and teacher of the congregation, while the topic of our essay is really the role of the woman teacher in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. When we examine the role of the woman teacher in our synod in the light of the Scriptures, we immediately come to a recognition that we are really dealing with the role of the woman and the church. Therefore, it is necessary for us to examine the entire topic of the role of the woman in the teaching and ruling function of the church.

I. The Role of Women According to God's Word

The Scripture itself provides us with the framework within which any and all differences or role relationships must be seen and considered. Galatians 3:28 states: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Here the Apostle, recognizing the differences between the Jew and the Gentile and male and female, affirms that these are brought into the one new being in Christ Jesus, so that they are all one. With this Word God removes any ethnic, national, racial, social, or sexual characteristic as determinative of one's spiritual standing in Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ and nothing else brings one into spiritual unity with Christ and into equality with all who are Christ's. We may therefore point out that the New Testament faithfully reflects the Old Testament teaching of Genesis 1:27: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them." The image quality is equally present in the human as male and female. Thus by both creation and now also by the redemption that renews that created image quality, the unity and quality of male and female are most fundamentally reaffirmed.

The Apostle Peter also affirms this co-equality and unity when he speaks to husbands advising them of their wives as "heirs with you of the gracious gift of life." (1 Peter 3:7) We can also remind ourselves that Scripture teaches that Christ died for all (2 Corinthians 5:15. and 1 Timothy 2:6), that Christ came to save the lost human race (Luke 19:10), and that the whole world was reconciled in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19). Again, the Apostle Paul states that "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus," when you were united with Jesus in baptism, no matter whether you are male or female. (Galatians 3:26-28) The relationship or role of woman is one of equality with man when speaking of eternity.

The role of woman is also recognized as being one of wife and mother. Above, when we spoke of Peter's instruction that both husband and wife are joint heirs of the gracious gift of life, we take note that this teaching of spiritual equality is found in the midst of the passage which speaks of a distinct role relationship of husband to wife. Specifically, Peter says, "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands." (1 Peter 3:1) He further states, "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as the weaker partner." (1 Peter 3:7) This terminology would seem to be Peter's way of stating the femininity of the woman in relation to the masculinity of the man, in terms of a comparison with no derogation intended. The Apostle Peter therefore has joined in one statement the equality of man and woman in regard to salvation and the difference in masculinity and femininity as a result of God's creative activity in order. Spiritual equality may not be negated by sexual differences. Nor can this oneness in Christ remove the role relationships into which we were created as man and woman. We immediately recognize this truth from our marriage ceremonies performed in our churches. In the presence of God the man and woman vow faithfulness according to the creation order.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies...For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. (Ephesians 5:21-31)

Since in the Scripture we find God's teaching concerning the role of the woman in marriage, it is also not unexpected to find teachings concerning the role of the woman in the church, especially in regard to her teaching and/or ruling position. Three passages of the Scripture immediately come to mind: 1 Timothy 2:11-15, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, and 1 Corinthians 14:34-38.

The setting for 1 Timothy 2:11-15 is a letter of Paul written to Timothy giving him instruction about life in the church. He informs Timothy concerning the conduct of men in the house of God. He gives instruction that men ought to be responsible for leading the prayer life of the congregation. He then turns to the women of

the congregation and speaks about their modesty of dress, repudiates womanly ostentation and advises adornment of good works.

Paul begins with a general statement, “A woman should learn in quietness and full submission.” This is followed by a definite negative command: “I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent.” In these words Paul is saying that he does not permit the woman to teach nor to have dominion over the man. The prohibition he is stating is neither absolute nor unqualified, but it is specifically that she as a woman must not engage in such activities in relation to a man. The prohibition is not that a woman may not teach anyone, but that she may not teach the man and have authority over the man in the life of the church. Then Paul states reasons for these words. “For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner.” The first reason is that the order of creation of man and woman is determined in God’s Word. The order is based upon the fact that man was first formed, then woman from the man. The second argument is related to the fall and the fact that woman was beguiled. We immediately note that no cultural reason is given or even alluded to in this passage, but rather the most basic fundamental reasons which are always germane to men and women, God’s order of creation. Paul thus follows the example of Jesus Christ in dealing with the basic question of the relation of man and woman.

In 1 Corinthians 11, Paul deals with the apparent freedom that Corinthian women felt in their new position as children of God. Paul wishes to instruct them concerning God’s ordained and expressed order of beings by nature. Paul argues that the freedom in Christ does not allow us to overturn this order and does not give authority to the Corinthian congregation to practice other than the Word instructs. Paul states his argument about role relationships of men and women on the basis of headship.

“Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.” (1 Corinthians 11:3) By stating this, Paul has established the priority of headship by appealing to the fact that Christ is the Head of man and the fact that God is the Head of Christ according to Christ’s incarnate nature. In that he sandwiches the fact that man, the male, is the head of the woman. The headship of God in relation to the humiliated Christ in no way detracts from or is detrimental to His person as Eternal God. By this statement Paul is not teaching or denying that Christ is God equal to the Father. Rather, the Headship of God in reference to Christ can be readily seen and affirmed on the basis of Philippians 2, where we understand the humiliation of Christ in assumption of a human nature. Therefore, this statement is no threat to Christ’s identity. So, also, then, we can conclude that according to the order of God’s creation the head of the woman is the man. This headship of the man in no way detracts from the woman and her place in God’s order. The Apostle further focuses his argument by contrasting glory which man and woman each displays. He says, “Man is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. For the man did not come from woman, but woman from man; neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.” (1 Corinthians 11:7-9) Here Paul is explicitly referring to Genesis 2 where Moses gives the account of the creation of woman from man as his helper. “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him.” (Genesis 2:18) To put it in a composite of words from Genesis and 1 Corinthians, man was not created to help and be the helper for woman, the woman was created to help and be the helper for man. Later in the same chapter, Paul states the mutual dependence of the man and the woman on each other, explaining the fact that God intended man and woman to be for each other. Yet, this does not negate the previous argument that there is a role relationship between man and woman.

We now turn to 1 Corinthians 14:34-38. This passage is set in the midst of the chapter in which the Apostle authoritatively regulates the use of spiritual gifts and summarizes at the end of the chapter, “But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.” Accordingly, he sets forth instructions concerning speaking in tongues, prophecy, and the public worship service. Then he speaks about the role of the woman and states, “Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.” (1 Corinthians 14:34)

Paul is instructing that the women are prohibited from speaking in the public worship service because it would be a violation of God’s order in terms of her role in reference to men. Verse 34 is thus the broad

prohibition of public teaching in the church for the woman. So that the woman, however, may learn, Paul further states, “If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.” (1 Corinthians 14:35)

The appeal here is made on the basis of subordination. This subjection is taught by the “law.” The law is here the creation order spoken of in Genesis 2. To violate what is taught in God’s law is considered shameful. With pointed and crisp questions, Paul now shows that they must not suppose that they originated God’s Word and order at Corinth or that this congregation alone had some new word from God contrary to the understanding and practice in all the other churches. So he says, “Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing you is the Lord’s command.” (1 Corinthians 14:36-37)

In these Scripture selections, we see laid down a universally normative regulation which prohibits women from teaching the church and from ruling and teaching men in the church. The reason that the prohibition is universal is because it is grounded in God’s creation order and arrangement between men and women. It should be carefully noted that the passages considered are not illustrations but commands. The word here amplified is not timebound historically and culturally. Nor is it a relevant argument that applies to one day or to that age. Rather, it is established on the basis of God’s creation of man and woman and the relationships that God put into the lives of his creatures.

As we said in the beginning, these role relationships are under strong attack today. In fact, it would be safe to say that a majority of churches no longer consider as valid these role relationships. For example, Marlin Van Elderin, Managing Editor of the *Reformed Journal*, said he could not welcome a woman pastor but added, “I consider this...to reflect a defect in my character. Theoretically I can’t argue against it.” Another religion magazine editor admitted that “mentally my mind says yes, emotionally I hesitate, and logically I don’t know.”

Ever since rationalism made its inroad attacks against Christianity, the followers of this modern approach to the Bible will admit often that theologically they don’t know what the Bible has to say.

But more damaging are those statements from the churches that attack the Scripture teaching. For example, Richard Pierard, author professor of history, and member of the Christian Reformed Church, says that he is not opposed to women in the clergy. In talking about the subordinate position of women according to the New Testament, he says, “I am appalled at the large number of books and articles that continue to pour from evangelical presses propagating this outdated concept.” A Catholic professor of Sociology at Marquette University says of the same subject, “The culture of ancient Corinth and the Greco-Roman Empire of the First Century teaches subordination of women.” He added that “we live under a different socio-cultural system today.”

Another religion magazine editor, Jim Wallis, summed up his attitude in the statement: “Distorted exegesis must no longer be used by men to support a status quo that subordinates women.” And again one church leader put it, the church needs to “challenge and refute the sexist doctrine so latent in our faith as practiced today.”

Therefore, we find in our time of women’s rights organizations that some women’s rights champions have made it into the pulpit. The Reverend Joyce Rimes, a pastor at Morningside Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, states her thoughts in this way: “Some people say I’m a pioneer but I’m a revolutionary. I used to feel a woman would rather be wearing the white gown than the black one. Now I say, ‘doggone it, they’d like to have both.’”

Newsweek magazine in its article about women in the pulpit stated that some resentment is found in congregations against such women. *Newsweek* calls these confrontations angry surprises. “I don’t want you,” screamed a woman parishioner at Rev. Elizabeth Rice of Boston. “I want a minister. I want a big, strong man.” Another of Rice’s parishioners told her she had “no right” to preach. “Paul was God’s apostle,” he told her, “and he said it was wrong for women to speak in the church.” Mrs. Rice responded with surprise that the Bible would say such a thing.

As rationalism has taken hold of the mind of the modern church today, it is not surprising to find that for example, the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ, the Disciples of Christ, and the United

Presbyterian Church have changed their stance in the role of the woman. These mainline Protestant denominations consider it demeaning that the woman should be asked in the marriage ceremony to “obey” her husband. To consider that the woman should be barred from holding office in the church, voting at meetings, or even mounting the pulpit to deliver the Word of God to the congregation is considered part of the cultural change necessary for our times. Women who consider themselves Christians and authors have set forth their defense of women’s liberation in books. For example, Leatha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty have set forth their understanding of the Biblical basis for women’s liberation in a book entitled, *All Were Meant to Be, A Biblical Approach to Women’s Liberation*. They take a vigorous position in their book for women’s liberation and would see Paul’s view of ruling and teaching as culturally relative not meant for our day and also affirm an “equalitarian” marriage.

Since the theory of evolution has been widely accepted by countless Christians in good faith, it is not surprising then to find them feeling that there is an equality in the role relationships between man and woman. Arguments such as, “look how diligently the women work in the church,” or “consider how many more women than men are supporting the church,” or “how many more are in attendance on a Sunday,” have proven to be convincing arguments for many congregations as they change their position on the role relationship. Even the old cry of “no taxation without representation” has been used to defend the right of a woman to take part in her congregation, to voice her opinion, to teach a Bible class, or to do whatever she is called to do. Since the church is willing to take her money, then let it also be willing to listen to her. All these arguments appeal to the culture of our times and to a logical approach to a question. However, they disagree with what the Word of God says and therefore must be rejected.

II. The Role of Woman as Teacher

In the sphere of the family and the home, the woman fulfills her God-given role accomplishing truly great things in caring for her husband and bringing up her children in Christ. It is in this way that the woman achieves genuine happiness and satisfaction in fulfilling the role God has given. That is why the Scripture teaches that the younger women are to marry, bear children, and guide the home. (1 Timothy 5:14) The Scripture also advises the older women to be sober, to love their husbands, to raise their children, and to be Christian in their lives. (Titus 2:2-5)

Let no one underrate the dignity and worth of the housewife’s calling. Let no one underestimate the importance of the work of raising tomorrow’s generation. The tendency in our day to berate the woman’s role in the home is a primary cause of the degeneration of moral life in America. The Christian woman gives immeasurable influence to the home in molding the character of children, teaching her children of Jesus, creating good prayer habits, correcting the children according to the Word. Being a constant example of righteousness makes the woman a greater influence for young children than the man in the home. God has bestowed great honor on womanhood by choosing the woman to bear the Messiah, Jesus.

The service and sacrifice of women and consecration and devotion exemplified in the Scriptures are commendable. Christian women of all times do well to emulate the worthy examples found in the Scriptures of pious and God-fearing women.

Against this background we now turn our attention to the role of the woman as a professional Christian teacher. Paul’s words that we have quoted previously do not forbid women to teach. In fact, Paul instructed older women to set an example and teach the younger women. The responsibility of the woman to teach children is beautifully exemplified in Lois and Eunice teaching young Timothy at home. His character molded by his mother and grandmother enabled him to be an excellent companion and successor to Paul in the early Christian world.

In addition to teaching children in the home, women who have the commitment and the natural ability to teach children are employed by our congregation in the church. These women may serve as Sunday School teachers, Christian day school teachers, or even Bible teachers of children in part-time school. Calling of women as these teachers does not overthrow the Bible principle that women are not to exercise authority over

men. The use of these legitimate talents is necessary for the wellbeing of the church. God gives characteristics, qualities, and abilities to women to reach children, particularly little ones, rarely found in a man. However, the Bible does not precisely define when a child becomes a man and therefore, we must ask the questions: Up to what student age level may we utilize women as teachers in our Christian schools without violating Christian principles? May we call them to teach classes above the elementary level? Is it proper to have women teachers in our Christian high schools and colleges?.

The answer to these questions is well-defined by Professor Wilbert R. Gawrisch in an essay that he wrote for the 1968 convention of one of our Districts. It is entitled, "The Place of Women in the Life and Work of the Church." Seminary Professor Gawrisch states,

The Bible does not, of course, define precisely the time when a child becomes a man. But here Christian judgment as well as a sensitivity to and an appreciation for the basic issue that the woman is not to usurp authority over the man will be our guide. That we as a Synod have been sensitive to this principle in the past is evident from the fact that we have been very cautious about calling women teachers on the high school or college level. They are the exception rather than the rule. We have generally considered it advisable even to have men as teachers on the upper elementary level, though perhaps not exclusively for this reason.

On the high school level, women teachers, for the most part, are serving in our Christian schools in the commercial, home economics, or physical education departments; areas in which they deal principally with girls. In our colleges we employ them in the capacity of deans of women, library assistants, or music teachers. It is our conviction, of course, that in our Christian schools all those who teach, whether it be history, English, science, mathematics, or other branches of learning, are also ministers of the Gospel. In these classes, too, as well as in the religion classes, the Gospel is served and taught. That we have been hesitant and cautious about calling women to teach English or history, for example, on the high school level and beyond where they would be teaching both boys and girls is wise. In this area we will want above all else to be conscious of the will of God. While we will not, therefore, on the one hand, arbitrarily prescribe limits or impose restrictions in a mechanical, legalistic way where none have been set down by the Word of God, we will also, on the other hand, ever bear in mind the basic principle that the woman is not to exercise authority over the man. Acting according to this principle, we will then exercise Christian discretion, consideration for the brethren, and an earnest concern for the over-all welfare of the church. Above all, we will ever be on guard against acting on the basis of expediency. We will not permit the fact, for example, that a woman teacher may be obtained more easily and, possibly, even at a lower salary, determine our course.

The fact that women teachers are serving in our Lutheran high schools is found from these general statistics of the 1974-75 school year:

Fox Valley used 4 women teachers in a faculty of 28	Manitowoc - 3 of 16	Shoreland - 2 of 8
Lakeside - 4 out of 20	Michigan - 3 of 10	Winnebago - 3 of 15
Onalaska - 2 of 17	St. Croix - 4 of 14	Milwaukee - 9 of 65

The statistics reflect that our schools are sensitive to this principle of calling women teachers on the high school level.

The sole concern for following this practice in our congregations is the welfare of the church. Our aim is to protect ourselves from disobedience for only when we obediently follow the Word will we prosper and flourish. Divine wisdom has given the instructions that flow from His insight to the peculiar nature and characteristics and qualities, abilities and limitations we possess. We are reminded of Paul's instruction in

Romans 12 where we are referred to as members of the Body of Christ, and He distinctly points out that not all members have the same function or contribute in the same way. Each makes its own contribution to the welfare of the whole according to the ability it has. It is God's will accordingly that in the church the special gifts that He has given to each sex be utilized to the best advantage for the welfare and benefit of the entire church. Professor Gawrisch has aptly summarized our convictions when he said:

That women, too, as members of Christ's church have the commission to make disciples of all nations, that they, too, are to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, that they, too, are to be witnesses for Christ in their daily personal and private life hardly needs to be said. The limitations and restrictions which God Himself has put on their activity in the life and work of the church have to do only with public teaching or preaching, and then only insofar as the principle of not exercising authority over men may come into consideration.

Former Seminary Professor William Henkel made these reflections on our topic that deserve to be repeated:

Before God there is neither male nor female, but we are all one in Christ Jesus. Neither men as such nor women as such please Him. God is pleased by whoever is in Christ through faith, regardless of sex. He who preaches legalistically will prefer to extol the superiority of man. That is again factually wrong. Scripture, generally speaking, knows nothing of a superiority of man and an inferiority of Woman; Scripture hasn't given man the public office of teaching and ruling in the Church because he is perhaps a nobler, more capable, and more worthy creature than woman. God has assigned to man a different position in the public life of the congregation than to woman because their gifts differ, and both should be good stewards of their gifts. They should use them where they can accomplish the most with them and work the greatest blessing. The gifts of both are precious and given for the Gospel's sake; therefore they should not be wasted but used, each one directed to its fitting sphere of activity. What Scripture teaches about the duty of woman in church life is an elaboration and practical application of 1 Peter 4:10: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." And so this also belongs to the evangelical treatment of our question, that one preaches that the instructions which Scripture gives to woman for her church activity only want to show her how she can attain the goal which she, as a Christian, has according to the new man set for herself, namely, to serve God in His kingdom there where she can accomplish the most with her gifts and produce the most fruits.

Let us reemphasize that the women teachers of our Synod are serving in the public ministry of the Word. They have a divine call to teach the children committed to their care. Romans 10:15 teaches the necessity of this call, even as the Augsburg Confession states that "no one should publicly teach in the church...unless he be regularly called." The women teachers act in behalf of fellow Christians as their representatives. The authorization into this public teaching ministry is conferred upon them by the congregation through a formal call. That this teaching is one of the various kinds of ministries in the church is evidenced by Scripture in the listing of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers," and others. (Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Corinthians 12:28)

From the Bible, we also see that women served the church in various types of ministries. For example, we remember the four daughters of Philip, the Evangelist, who preached the Word of God. We remember Paul warmly commending Phoebe in the congregation at Rome for serving the church. We think of Priscilla, the wife of Aquila, as mentioned by Luke. There are other additional references such as Euodias and Syntyche as women who labored in the Gospel. The prophet Joel had foretold this even as Peter cites in his Pentecost sermon: "I

will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.” (Acts 2:17, Joel 2:28) Prophesying is teaching in the proper sense of the word. The women of our Christian schools are included in the fulfillment of this prophecy.

When a woman teacher begins her call in a congregation, she is inducted into office, as is our practice. The basic nature of this ceremony is essentially no different than an ordination or installation. These are merely customs of the church and not divinely commanded rites. The difference lies only in the use we make of these three terms. The term “ordination” is only employed in the ministry when a pastor, beginning his first call, is ordained into office. Subsequently, he is installed as he moves from call to call. The term “installation” is also used to describe the ceremony of a male teacher beginning his call in a new congregation. The third term “induction” is the name of the ceremony that we commonly use for a woman teacher or a person with a provisional call such as a tutor, an assistant instructor, or a person who is limiting service by a period of time, usually one year.

A further responsibility of the woman teacher may also be that of directing the choir or playing organ at the public worship service. To consider the propriety of this practice, let us again remind ourselves of the Scripture instruction. Notice that Paul makes a contrast between speaking and being under obedience. He instructed the Corinthian congregation to have the women desist from their speaking because they had abused their privilege and had ignored the creation order of their role. However, not all speaking is thereby forbidden, but only that kind of speaking that conflicts with the principle of woman’s role. Any speaking which does not undermine or overthrow the God-ordained relationship between men and women is not prohibited. For example, the men and women of the congregation join together in singing, confessing their faith, reading a Psalm, or in prayer, and they are not, thereby, overthrowing the order of creation. Again, if a woman is asked to exercise a particular gift or talent that God has given her in a mixed group or in a group of men, when no man is present who is capable, she may there instruct or pray as circumstances require. Such cases will naturally be exceptional but are not forbidden by the Word. This may occur, for example, when women cooperate in work of evangelism, care for the sick, and such other activities in the congregation. When the women are rendering a service at the request of men, they are thereby not exercising authority over them. Rather, the Christian woman will humbly put that gift for the Lord which the Lord has given her at the disposal of the whole church, including the men, and render that in a spirit of love. Consequently, when a congregation asks a woman to play the piano or organ at a public service or to direct the choir, she is doing this at the specific request of the congregation. If she has this ability, and no man is able or willing to do it, she may gladly render this service in all humility, and the order of God’s creation is not subverted by her cooperation.

These examples are applications for practical responses to the Word of God. In handling such questions, a Christian is always conscious of God’s will and the evangelical application of that will to the life of the church. God does not wish us to mechanically or legalistically use His Word but to employ Christian judgment in an evangelical way. For example, when Paul says that the husband is to be the head of the home and the wife to be in obedience to him, it does not necessarily follow that she may not correct her husband for wrong-doing by admonishing with the Word of God. When the congregation is engaged in a building program, it is not disobedient to the Word of God for the women to be asked to design the kitchen or to render their judgment in the choice of colors in the decoration of the building. May a husband not ask his wife her opinion before he assumes a new job? Or may a woman not have the responsibility to manage the budget or the checkbook of the family if she has a greater ability than her husband?

The Christian woman will always want to be conscious of her station in life. If men are present who can speak, she will out of deference to them generally remain silent in an assembly of the church, but if no men are present who are capable of praying or teaching, she will willingly serve with her God-given gifts in a God-pleasing way by showing her respect at all times for God’s order of creation.

A woman teacher will therefore participate in faculty meetings at her school. She will participate in discussions with her fellow teachers to carry on the educational program of the congregation. It would be not only foolish, but impossible, to try to operate a school without hearing the opinions and suggestions of the women teachers. The woman teacher may also, upon request, attend meetings of the congregation’s Board of

Education and report on such matters in which she is personally involved. She may certainly render advice in matters relating to her work.

Women teachers may also obviously participate in teachers' conferences, such as this one. Just as the faculty meetings are necessary on the local level, so conferences are of great value in offering opportunity for joint consultation and encouragement in the area of Christian teaching. Usually at these conferences, the veteran teachers give counsel, instruction and help to their younger colleagues. Women teachers may therefore give encouragement and information for the general edification of the conference, as may be done in a local congregation. If a woman is tempted to step out of her proper role, the presiding officer or pastor would be obliged to give a tactful reminder concerning God's will and order.

The choice of a man as the presiding officer of the conference is further evidence that God's order of creation is understood and respected. This would also be true when the conference acts upon business concerning the church at large. If the conference wishes to memorialize the Synod, or wishes to address an official request to some officer within the Synod, it would again be in evidence of God's creation order that such memorial or letter be addressed by the presiding officer or male member of the conference rather than by a woman secretary. Therefore, if a woman is chosen as secretary of the conference, she will wisely address such official correspondence of the conference in the name of the presiding Chairman.

Also, in respect to God's creation order, our congregations select a male as principal of the school. In such cases where there is no male principal, the pastor usually acts as a principal in the congregation. The reason for this is not that a woman could not be principal over fellow women teachers, but rather that this office requires the principal to act in behalf of the congregation as its representative to the District and Synod; and also in behalf of the school to the local congregation and its respective boards. Consequently, since occasions for subverting God's creation order would occur with a woman acting as principal, it is our custom that males only be principals of our schools.

Recently our Synod has adopted a woman Teacher Consultant position. In this role a woman teacher employs her talents and experience in giving counsel and advice to younger women teachers, primarily those of the lower elementary grades. She accompanies the male school visitor for the purpose of assisting him in giving encouragement, help and suggestions related to the matter of education. Since she will work as the consultant only with other women teachers, this is certainly in harmony with the Scripture.

A final consideration concerning our women teachers in the Synod is the subject of salary. The Scripture teaches that "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should receive their living from the Gospel." (1 Corinthians 9:14) Those who dedicate their lives to the teaching ministry are to be supported by those among whom they work. The teachers' motive of service is love for God and the good of the kingdom. Although teachers recognize that they will not be rewarded equal to the standard of public education, yet they understand that they are fulfilling a high calling in Christ by their service.

At this past summer's Synod convention, a resolution was adopted in accordance with the request of the Department of Labor that equal pay be given for equal work. The practical meaning of this resolution is that male and female teachers in the Synod will be given the same salary. Therefore, beginning on January 1, 1976, there will be one salary schedule for mission congregations with fringe benefits and housing according to need. Increments are given on the basis of experience. An additional allowance is provided for those who have the added responsibility of a principalship. Self-supporting congregations are encouraged to adopt a similar schedule as requested by the Department of Labor. This is certainly in agreement with the Scriptural principle that "the worker deserves his wages." (1 Timothy 5:18) The Department of Labor has approved the arrangement whereby a congregation makes provisions for housing according to need. Male teachers who are married must provide for a family and will thereby be furnished housing. Married women teachers normally do not receive housing because their husbands provide them with a home. Single teachers, both male and female, will not be provided housing since they do not support a family. Medical insurance will be provided by the congregation for all its workers with the exception of those who already are covered, as for example, married women covered by their husbands' employers. Social Security will usually be another fringe benefit. Some inequities will inevitably arise from this new system. Christian congregations will, however, try to be fair. Annually the

congregation needs to review the compensation they give to their called workers, especially in these times of inflation. The congregation should also consider special circumstances of its called workers when unusual financial burdens fall upon their teachers creating special hardships. Paul reminds us to “carry each other’s burdens and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)

In conclusion, let us summarize the thoughts that we have gleaned from the study of Scripture and the practical application to the principles of contemporary church life. To us who submit to the Scripture as the rule and norm of our lives, there is no question concerning the role of the woman within the Christian church. On the one hand, she is equally a child of God as anyone else. On the other hand, in the ruling and teaching function of the church, she has a specific role that God has ordained. In respect to that role, she is not to seek to rule the church nor demand a voice in the administration of the churches affairs. In the field of teaching, she will cheerfully recognize certain limitations that God has placed upon her, and not seek to set these aside. There is a vast area of service in which the Christian woman can properly make a significant contribution to the growth and advancement, to the spiritual life and work, to the worship and welfare of the church. May you, the female saints of the Christian Church, and woman teachers of our District, continue to evidence your obedience to the Word of God as you have in the past, and may you, by God’s grace, continue to render invaluable service to the kingdom of God in our midst.

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