

## V. Service of Women in the Church (Order of Creation)



- **Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions are very clear that life within the Christian congregation should be governed in accord with the doctrine of the Order of Creation.** Because it is indeed an Order of Creation it must apply to all of God’s creation not just the pastoral office, not just the home, not just the church, but the world too. Today The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has condoned and officially adopted a position that limits the Order of Creation to the pastoral office and the home. As a consequence of this denial, women may serve as elders, congregational presidents and vice-presidents, may assist with communion distribution, and publicly proclaim the Word of God in worship services by reading Holy Scripture. Such changes within the LCMS represent a capitulation to the culture, deny the third use of the Law, and promote Gospel Reductionism, which our Synod previously rejected. We reject these errors.
- **Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions clearly teach that women are not to occupy the Office of the Holy Ministry.** Yet today some pastors in our Synod have been allowed to remain on our Ministers of Religion – Ordained roster while publicly stating their belief that it is proper to ordain women into the pastoral office – and this without correction or removal. We reject the toleration of this error.

### 1. Passages from Scripture that testify about doctrine of the Order of Creation. [\* Pages 4-5]

Genesis 1:27-28	I Corinthians 14:33-37
Matthew 19:4	I Timothy 2:11-14
Ephesians 5:22-33	I Timothy 3:2-5
I Corinthians 11:7-9, 11-12	I Peter 3:5

### 2. The Lutheran Confessions and the Church since the time of the Apostles. [\* Pages 5-6]

Many liberal theologians both within and outside of the LCMS have indicated that the Lutheran Confessions remain silent regarding the ordination of women into the pastoral office. In fact, their silence speaks volumes. They are silent precisely because this was never an issue in contention between any of the theologians of that day. Male only ordination has always presumed that the practice of the historic and biblical Church would never consider the ordination of women. Thus the subject was never addressed.

The three oldest Christian groups: Eastern Orthodox, Coptic Christian, and Roman Catholic retain the orthodox practice of reserving the Office of Pastor or Priest to men to this day.

“Ordination of women is a monumental turn in the history of the Church. Yet the practice is not a progressive step forward; it is a veering away from the received tradition of the Church. It puts those church bodies that practice it on dangerous ground, for it indicates that they are out of step not only with two thousand years of Christian history but with the will of the Lord of the Church.” (*Women Pastors? The Ordination of Women in Biblical Lutheran Perspective*, a Collection of Essays edited by Matthew C. Harrison and John T. Pless, Introduction to Historical Studies, p.107.)

### 3. The History of the LCMS. [\* Pages 6-8]

**1908, *Der Lutheraner*** (the official newsletter of the LCMS) strongly condemned the decision of the Finnish Suomi Synod to allow woman suffrage in their congregations as “an unlutheran and unbiblical innovation” which could not be reconciled with the directives of the holy apostle Paul on the position of women in the church. The newsletter unequivocally asserted the clarity and direct applicability of I Cor. 14:34, 35 and I Tim. 2:12 and warned of dire consequences for those who disregarded these texts. ...”

**1959 – San Francisco** - Floor Committee 3 submitted a report, which concluded:

Any congregation in the membership of Synod now or applying for membership which grants woman suffrage is urged to reconsider this practice in the light of Scripture... and to consider the danger of offense to others and to conform to the historic position of Synod in this matter.



**1965 – Detroit** - This convention passed the following resolution:

**Resolved,** That we adopt the following statement for guidance in this matter:

On the basis of 1 Cor. 14:34-35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 we hold that God forbids women publicly to preach and teach the Word to men and to hold any office or vote in the church where this involves exercising authority over men with

respect to the public administration of the Office of the Keys. We regard this principle as of binding force also today because 1 Tim. 2:11-15 refers to what God established at creation.

**1967 – New York** - The convention passed a resolution that allowed women to serve on Synodical boards, commissions, and committees for the first time.

**Resolved**, that the Synod declare women eligible to serve as advisory on synodical boards, commissions, and committees within the framework of Scriptural principals; and be it further

**Resolved**, that women be granted such membership ... by appointment only.

**1969 – Denver** - Woman suffrage was officially sanctioned. Most congregations of the LCMS church now have some form of woman suffrage.

**2004 – St. Louis** – Resolution 3-08A is passed declaring that women may serve as elders, congregational presidents, and vice presidents. During this convention a question from the floor was asked whether or not this also meant that women could read the lections and assist with the distribution of Holy Communion. In both instances the question was answered in the affirmative.



**4. Evidence for the Existence of this Error.** [\* Pages 8-14]

In our Synod there are many pastors on the clergy roster who openly advocate and/or support women’s ordination and they have not been placed under discipline by their ecclesiastical supervisor nor removed from our roster.

a. Dr. Matthew Becker (former professor at Concordia, Portland, now Valparaiso, Indiana), in his paper, “Female Teachers of Theology,” dated “Reformation 2005” in his “Concluding Theses” writes:

“15. There is no legitimate biblical or dogmatic rationale for why women ought not serve as teachers of theology in a university or seminary.”

b. Rev. Arnold Voigt in his paper “...because it is a woman” posted on the DayStar website at: <http://www.day-star.net/journal/3-3-voigt.htm> and distributed to the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, writes:

“...Whenever, then, a person is called by God to pastoral ministry, we honor God by honoring that gift. To be subordinated because of an accident of birth such as gender, or even skin color, is to be unfairly and un-Christlike determined to be inferior.”

c. Rev. Karl Wyneken, Emeritus, in Volume 3 of the *DayStar Journal*, Pentecost 2007, comments in his article, “Let’s Include Women in the Pastoral Office”:

... “It is the contention of this study that there is no ‘heavenly reason’ to exclude women from the pastoral office. That means it is a human option. But that option, for very compelling reasons, is no longer appropriate or advisable. There is no ‘earthly reason’ either to persist with our present policy that needlessly discriminates against women.”

**5. The ACELC Concerns.** [\* Pages 14-15]

In the LCMS, the Synod’s progression from all male congregational leadership and solely male pastors has been subjected to incremental changes which continue unabated to this day. First, women were made to be non-voting, advisory members of Synodical administrative boards (1965). Then women suffrage was approved (1969). Then it became permissible to have women read Scripture lessons (the public proclamation of the Word), assist with the distribution of the Lord’s Supper (the public administration of the Sacraments), and then at the Synod’s 2004 convention women were authorized to serve as Elders, congregational presidents and vice presidents.

Each time those within the Synod desiring to advance the involvement of women into formerly prohibited activities (especially involvement in the public worship of the Church), continued to demand further “study” as an instrument of change toward the next hoped for incremental step.

\* Asterisks refer to page numbers in the ACELC *Evidence of Errors in the LCMS: V. Service of Women in the Church (Order of Creation)* document. You are encouraged to download the entire document from <http://www.ancelc.net/> → Key Documents → ACELC Admonition and Error Documents. The online version contains the full text of all Bible passages, Lutheran Confession citations, examples, quotations and sources for all the citations and quotes.