

Women and the Ministry

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God created mankind as man and woman. In creation, God provided various qualifications and gifts – different ones for men and women. The Apostle Paul in the so-called *Kephale* theology describes a sequence that rules, a sort of connection between heaven and earth, which is united in the creation. He says that God is the head of Christ, Christ is the glory of God (*doxa*) and the head of man. Man is the glory (*doxa*, brightness) of Christ and the head of the woman. Woman is the glory of man (*doxa*). The Father is not over the Son. Man is not over the woman, but they are different, not identical. Both have part in Christ in the same high degree, but in a different manner. This is expressed in this way, that the man has a special calling and the woman has another.

Man's special calling is in the apostolic office or ministerial office. This office has its basis in the testimony of God's Word so that we need not be in doubt that this calling of man is pleasing to God. Jesus himself instituted the apostolic office. He calls apostles. They are to be his, the Son's, representatives in the church. Here Jesus takes something that already is in place: the father, the rabbi, the teacher, the leader of the congregation, the house-father who blessed the gifts at the great festival meals, above all at the paschal banquet of the Passover lamb; and God hallows it by Christ and gives it his blessing. Jesus was himself a man, the Son who is the image of the Father. He called only men to be apostles, and at the institution of the Lord's Supper only men were present. It was to these apostles that Jesus gave the commission. It was to them that he gave the binding and loosing keys; it was on them that Jesus breathed and sent them out into the world to teach people all that he has commanded.

The apostles carried on in agreement with the order that Jesus himself had shown them, and chose a man to take the place of Judas as a new apostle. There was no thought of placing a woman there. Nor did any women come asking, Why can't I be an apostle? They were satisfied to follow the Lord's own example.

That this has an even deeper weight, we learn from the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:34. There, the apostle clearly states that this is the Lord's command and that it is decisive for salvation as to how we conduct ourselves toward this command. This is strongly confirmed in 1 Timothy 2:12.

Thus it is only men who can be called to the apostolic office. God calls his shepherds or pastors only and alone from among men. We can imagine a closed circle where only men can enter and where Christ holds the center. He calls his apostles and representatives in the church.

This call applies to all men. They have the possibility of being apostles because they are men – in accordance with the order of creation. But there are not many of them who end up being ministers, because few are chosen. Unfortunately, not all who become ministers or shepherds are true shepherds – there are found among them ungodly shepherds. But this has no influence on the means of grace. By the grace of God they continue to have effective power. But we cannot for that reason use God's means of grace as we ourselves desire, or let anyone who pleases distribute the sacrament. We have no promise from God that he blesses any such thing. He has given us a definite order, definite commands, and only when we follow them do we have the promise that God is with us and blesses what is taking place.

Into that closed circle, the apostolic office, within this calling, a woman cannot enter, precisely because she is not a man. This is the order of creation. If anyone insists that there is no difference between women and men, such a person is without a doubt both blind and deaf and has neither sense nor understanding.

Woman is not called to be an apostle. She has another calling, namely, motherhood. In that way it is in agreement with creation. God has blessed woman and made her mother. We need not doubt that this pleases God. Motherhood also can be set forth as a closed circle where Christ is at the center. Into this circle no man can come because he is not a woman.

In the New Testament, motherhood becomes something very special. The call to it becomes something holy, just as the calling to the apostolic office by Christ is holy. Christ is born of a woman. His whole human nature comes from her – hence he is a true man. This is an unbelievably great proclamation. God is born of a woman and comes to human beings so that human beings can come to God.

When God calls woman to her special calling, he also uses something that already is in place and hallows it. In this call to motherhood, all women are included because they are women. All women are potential mothers, even if not everyone can or desires to give birth to children. Man's calling, the apostolic office, and woman's calling, motherhood, both have salvatory significance for human beings. The shepherd, the minister, leads people to heaven; woman, the mother, gives birth to the Savior of the world.

On the basis of the order of creation, the man's calling to the apostolic office is not accessible to the woman. On the basis of the order of creation, the woman's calling to motherhood is not accessible to the man. Other gifts of grace or callings are to serve each other, the common priesthood, where we are called to witness to each other about God, to prophesy, to be able to heal by prayer, etc. None of these is dependent on the order of creation, but each is given to both women and men, girls and boys.

Since the order of creation cannot be abolished, women and girls who want to take part in the apostolic office and be ministers, thus put themselves outside of God's calling and blessing. They become nothing else than self-appointed apostles and only make it clear that they are dissatisfied with their lot and desire to become something which they never can become, namely, man. Whether there are women ministers or not is only a form of question that is already decided. There are no women ministers. Such a calling is not to be found, nor does it effect the special ministerial office.

In Dean Nils Johansson's book on 1 Corinthians 11 and the ordination of women (*Women and the Church's Ministry*, trans. C. J. Catanzaro, privately published), it is firmly established that this whole section is a unity. In 1 Corinthians 13, about love's hymn of praise, it is said that the entire chapter is a praise only and alone to Christ and his work. It is not speaking of love as an ideological concept, but "love" (*agape*) means Christ. Love-*agape* = Christ.

Everything the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 13 is a polemic against *gnosis*, human wisdom. He puts *gnosis* in opposition to *agape*, human wisdom in opposition to Christ. Paul here opposes those who apply their human wisdom to assert a much-too-great freedom, a freedom that becomes an offense to the weak. Johansson states that in this chapter Paul means that all gifts of grace, for example, *gnosis*, wisdom, must be placed under *agape*, under Christ, in order to have any worth. The apostle states that all must be done in Christ, in *agape*; otherwise, it is without worth and not normative. No gift of grace must set itself over or above Christ, for then it becomes something evil.

How does it come about that there are women who perform the apostolic office in the outward church in spite of being forbidden by God? Indeed, that is due to the fact that *gnosis*, human wisdom, has set itself above God, above Christ, above *agape*. It is not done in Christ, but above, beyond Christ. This so-called human wisdom that has brought forth a female ministerial office comes precisely from this human wisdom, equality, democracy, socialism.

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession XV, there is a reference to human traditions in the church. There are, for example, orders in the church about worship services that have been established by people, but that have no direct basis in the Bible – rituals, times for worship services, rubrics about repentance, etc. It says that these orders of worship (liturgy) established by the fathers are indeed something good, which we ought to follow for the sake of order, *if they do not violate God's Word. Furthermore, these orders must not be regarded as decisive for salvation.*

Accordingly, we have to come to the judgment that the woman's right to perform the apostolic office is a "human tradition," a regulation in the church that has been established by human beings.

There is no basis in Scripture for this human tradition. Nor do we find in the Bible any pious woman who performs this office, or even one who asked for permission to perform it. On the contrary, there are direct prohibitions in God's Word regarding such an arrangement – 1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12. This arrangement established by human beings in the church stands in opposition to the Word of God and belongs to human traditions that we are not to follow. It is not of God, but of the antichrist, of the devil.

The apostle Paul makes us aware that the prohibition of woman ministers is a commandment from God (1 Cor 14:37), and we learn to know that what position we take toward it is decisive for salvation (which is in no way an innovation in the 1990s, but was an actuality already in the time of the apostles). The apostle states: “If there is anyone who does not acknowledge this prohibition, he will not himself be acknowledged (by God).”

Women ministers in the church is an arrangement that is in conflict with God’s Word, an order that has set itself above God and has been introduced in his church, a kind of an office that God has forbidden. It is a regulation we must oppose because it is in opposition to God’s Word. Moreover, it is clear that this regulation is considered by its supporters to be of significance for salvation, justification, because there is a clearly formulated and practiced attack, a prohibition, against all those who do not acknowledge this new order and who refuse to bow to it. Article XV of the Apology cites St. Paul, Romans 14:23: “Whatsoever is not from faith is sin” (Ap XV, 17). When these services do not have any testimony in God’s Word, then conscience must doubt whether they please God. Indeed, why is there need of many words in a matter that is so clear? If our opponents maintain such human worship as earning justification, grace, forgiveness of sins, they establish really the kingdom of antichrist. The antichrist’s kingdom is a new worship of God, devised by human authority, which casts out Christ.

Our fathers in our apostolic church did not know such a god who calls women to the apostolic office. It is a new god who is worshiped here – woman-god, socialism’s god, a god of human reason, a new god, and a new belief. It is not Christianity but another religion.

Since women pastors are a human order in the church that conflicts with God’s Word, a woman cannot be considered to be among the ungodly pastors, who, thanks be to God’s grace in spite of their ungodliness, administer a valid sacrament. Women do not have the binding and loosing key, and can therefore neither bind nor loose a person in respect to sin. Those who attend the Lord’s Table administered by women have not received absolution.

The Lord’s Supper administered by a woman has no blessing. She is not leading people to God, but away from God. The one they are serving in their female-pastoral office is not God, but the devil, antichrist.

Doctor of Theology Tom G. A. Hardt writes in an essay, “The Evangelical Office”: “Since God in his word prohibits female pastors, the administering of the means of grace that on each side of the pulpit builds on a definite violation of God’s order, in no way becomes justifying, but destructive. That the means of grace remain valid, insofar as word and elements are present, does not increase or lessen the guilt thereby brought forth.” A woman pastor’s administration of the sacrament will, therefore, lead people directly to condemnation.

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