

## **Section IV: The Arguments For and Against**

## Perspectives on the Issue

In the previous section the Theological Task Force on Holy Orders (Task Force) presented two papers, which represent two general approaches to the Anglican way of living the Christian faith. Any title for these perspectives in the Anglican tradition inadequately describes them, but for the purposes of the report, we referred to them as the Evangelical and Catholic perspectives.

Our Province often speaks of three “streams” or “strands” rather than two, but the Charismatic strand has close historical ties to the Evangelical wing of the church, and we have observed that they share a common approach to ecclesiology and ordained ministry. The intention of this section is to help the Catholic and Evangelical perspectives understand each other, as a basis for further discussion.

This section concludes with a bibliography of sources recommended for further study, representing the arguments for and against the ordination of women among both Evangelical and Catholic scholars. Our goal is to present a way for the College of Bishops to consider these studies within the boundaries of an orthodox Anglican context. The College also is encouraged to reflect upon the ecclesiological and hermeneutical principles that have been previously presented and accepted by the bishops, as these arguments are considered.

Among both Evangelicals and Catholics there are voices for and against the ordination of women; however, those in favor of ordaining women are predominantly found in an Evangelical context, and those opposed to ordaining women represent the majority of Catholics. This report attempts to present the pro and con arguments within each perspective, recognizing that individual members of our province may consider their own perspective to be more nuanced than what is represented in this report. The goal of this report is to present the basic underlying principles, which guide Anglicans in determining whether or not to accept the ordination of women.

The breadth of tolerance for theological diversity is simultaneously a strength and weakness of Anglicanism. Our tradition is enriched by its embrace of the best that each perspective offers to the church; however, the coexistence of the Evangelical and Catholic perspectives has been a source of tension in each generation. When facing such tensions, Anglicans have sharply differed, even to the point of contradiction, over descriptions of ecclesiology and the sacraments. However, those differences rarely have had the consequence of one side rejecting the legitimacy of someone's ordination. As long as the accepted formularies were employed, differences in theological reflection on the formularies did not call into question the “validity” of a particular person's ordination.

Our report demonstrates that opposing views over the ordination of women within the tradition are drawing upon the same divergent principles of ecclesiology that have remained permissible within the Anglican fold. Regarding this issue, differing ecclesiologies and hermeneutical approaches have the painful consequence of leading adherents of one perspective to call into question the ordained ministry of women who are ordained on the basis of the other. The coexistence of both perspectives in our Province, as it pertains to this particular issue, presents a major challenge to unity.

It is important to note that the solution to the problem is not to be found in the discovery the single “right” or “best” argument. The existence of such an easy solution presupposes a uniform acceptance of the underlying principles of one of the aforementioned perspectives. Equally intelligent and theologically astute Anglicans may continue to arrive at their opposing positions, because these positions are derived from divergent starting points, regarding the interpretation of Scripture and the nature of the ordained ministry.

This is not to say that the church is locked into an impasse and cannot advance beyond the current situation; but in the process of dialogue, adherents to each perspective must be aware of the extent to which the other is grounded in presuppositions that are acceptable within the Anglican tradition. There will be more about this in the concluding statement of the Task Force’s final report to the College of Bishops.

## Anglican Evangelicals and Women's Ordination

Anglican Evangelicals in the modern world have articulated a Protestant doctrine of the Church, as the previous report has demonstrated. The Word of God is primary for the constitution and the well-being of the Church, which is a "congregation" of people called into salvation by that Word. The primary ministry of leaders in the Church is to preach and teach the Word of God. The details of their calling, ordination and ministry are at the discretion of the Church. Polity is an *adiaphoron*, an important matter but not one that is specified by Scripture. Therefore, the criterion for assessing this or that matter of polity is not whether Scripture teaches it explicitly, as if this or that detail were necessary for salvation. Rather, the issue is whether Scripture actually forbids the practice, or strongly implies its prohibition.

In the case of women's ordination, contemporary Anglican Evangelicals in the west do not agree about what the Scripture says. Does the Bible exclude women from leadership in the Church, or does it encourage their ministry in that capacity? The texts are few that speak directly to that issue, so a great deal depends upon inference. The central issue is "headship," namely whether or not the Bible teaches (explicitly or by inference) that men should have authority over women, or contrariwise that men and women should exercise leadership collegially. If the former, women should then be excluded from at least the higher offices in the Church that involve "headship," particularly the presbyterate and the episcopate (some would include the diaconate as well). If the latter, then there is no reason why qualified women should not be appointed to all three orders of leadership.

In 2003 the Anglican Mission in America (AMIA) published an excellent summary of the various Anglican arguments for and against women's ordination.<sup>1</sup> After introducing the issue of "headship," the report examined all the relevant texts ("pro" and "con") and showed how either side might interpret and/or draw inferences from each. Finally the report suggested eight options amongst which AMIA might choose, in reference to women's ordination. The report did not intend to settle the issue, but to inform AMIA's two sponsoring archbishops at the time, bringing them up to date on the controversy in the West. In particular, the report intended to offer an example of careful exegesis (by either side) of the relevant texts, which it did in exemplary fashion.<sup>2</sup>

The thoroughness and care of the AMIA report makes it unnecessary to repeat its excellent work here. Building on this careful and thoughtful work, the present paper will try to do three things:

1. To make some preliminary remarks about nomenclature - that is, how we will refer to either side in the controversy.
2. To discuss the impact of contemporary western society on both sides of the argument, showing that each position has been strongly influenced by societal and intellectual trends in the last fifty years. Both sides approach the Biblical texts with certain presuppositions. This paper will argue that in either case, the influence of current trends has been strong in shaping these assumptions. Therefore the matter is well worth bringing to consciousness.
3. To show how the presuppositions of each side influence their exegesis of relevant texts, by offering four examples of key texts in whose interpretation, prior assumptions lead to different conclusions.

## **The Matter of Names**

For the last forty years or so, amongst Protestants in the West, opponents of women's ordination have called themselves "complementarians." This term is useful as far as it goes, for it signals that men and women are different. Each sex has its particular strengths, and the two are meant to complement each other. But this term fails to make the correlative point (equally important to the "con" position) that because of these distinctions, God intends that men should exercise authority over women in the family and in the Church. In these domains, men rule and women submit. In God's order for each dimension, there is a hierarchy. Therefore in order to describe the "con" position accurately, we should call its proponents "hierarchical complementarians." The term is an ugly mouthful, but it is accurate - and serves better to distinguish the "con" position from the "pro."

In the past few decades, Protestant advocates of women's ordination have generally been content to call themselves "egalitarians." Again this term is useful as far as it goes, for it suggests the basic equality of women and men in Christ, as joint heirs of the Covenant. However, by itself the term "egalitarian" fails to capture the many differences between women and men. Therefore in order to indicate the permanent duality of the sexes ("male and female created He them") it is useful to add the word "complementarian" and call the proponents of women's ordination "egalitarian complementarians." Again this term is clumsy and infelicitous, but sometimes for the sake of truth we need to spell things out. From this point of view, the Kingdom of God transcends old patterns of dominance and subordination that were a result of the fall. God now intends men and women to "be filled with the Spirit...submitting one to another" and to share leadership in mutual and collegial partnership.<sup>3</sup>

In order to avoid tedious repetition throughout this paper, we will use the abbreviations "HC" and "EC" to denote the "con" and the "pro" viewpoints.

## **The Influence of Modern Western Society**

Women's lives have changed radically in the West since the Industrial Revolution, and especially in the past fifty years. Up until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, for most women in Europe and America, conditions of life had not altered much since Biblical times. Life expectancy seldom exceeded thirty-five years. Most women married, bore children every two or three years, and often died in childbirth. Their work in farming and housekeeping was crucial to the survival of their families. But their value and status in this regard did not qualify them for much formal education, or for leadership in business, politics or culture. Short life expectancy and the wheel of childbearing severely constrained women's opportunities outside the home, despite signal exceptions. Celibacy could allow women to become theologians like Julian of Norwich, rulers like Queen Elizabeth I, or heads of religious communities like Teresa of Avila. For the married majority of women, however, options outside the home were nil.<sup>4</sup>

Since the Industrial Revolution in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, women's worlds have expanded enormously (with an accelerating curve in the past fifty years). Women's life expectancy has risen from 35 to 80 and beyond in most western societies.<sup>5</sup> Fertility rates have dropped to 2.1, the replacement rate, and below this in many countries.<sup>6</sup> Women's access to higher education is now taken for granted, to the point at which women now outnumber men in undergraduate programs throughout the United States.<sup>7</sup> And graduate programs like law and medicine are now fully open to women. Roadblocks and glass ceilings still exist. But young women in western societies today can realistically count on access to all the secular professions, with a degree of confidence that even their grandmothers could not have assumed.

It is easy to see how ECs (the pro-women's ordination movement) have seen their expectations rise amidst these revolutionary changes. All the old physical and social constraints on women's leadership have dropped away. The contrast between the Greco-Roman world of New Testament times and western women's environment today could not be stronger. Women now have up to fifty years of post-childbearing life. Western societies all encourage women to aspire to careers in which their gifts and character determine their success, and in which their sex matters less and less. To recognize all this is not to accuse ECs of capitulating to Enlightenment libertarianism or of embracing the ideologies of radical feminism. But it is plain that women today (and their male advocates) regard Church leadership with assumptions formed in the modern western environment. Protestant Biblically-minded women will read Scripture from a perspective shaped in this world. They

will tend to read ambiguous texts with "egalitarian complementarian" eyeglasses. They will tend to view allegedly "prohibitive" texts as either correctives to specific abuses in the early Christian movement, or as tactical and temporary concessions to the ambient Greco-Roman patriarchy in the first century. To recognize modern provenance of EC assumptions is not to establish their truth or falsehood. But the environment is influential, in ways that need to be borne in mind and assessed in their exegesis of each text.

The impact of modern western society on the HCs (the "con" viewpoint) is less immediately obvious, but nevertheless just as profound. The "traditional" position on women's ordination in the West coalesced in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the decisions of the Fourth Lateran Council and the theological work of Thomas Aquinas. Building on Aristotle's biology, Aquinas viewed women as "defective men" whose innate mental inferiority rendered them unfit for the priesthood (other considerations quite aside, such as their inability to represent Christ in the Eucharist). This assumption of female inferiority remained constant in western Christendom (Roman Catholic and Protestant) through the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Women were simply not up to leadership in the Church or in society. Their physical constitution, their mental capacities, their emotional variability, all excluded them *a priori* from "headship." This negative assessment was the "traditional" view of women's leadership in western society up until the recent past.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1970s, however, certain Protestant theologians in America began to take a different tack. They quietly dropped the traditional assumption of innate female inferiority (and of course the sacramental considerations that excluded women from the Roman priesthood). Most of them kept silent on the issue of women in secular leadership. But beginning with George W. Knight in 1977, they offered a new perspective on relations between women and men in the family and in the Church. The two sexes are equal in the sight of God, they argued, and both were endowed with equally valuable gifts and talents - but qualities that were different and complementary. And God has ordained that men and women play different "roles" in the family and the Church (this was the first time the word "role" had been used to describe men's and women's differences). Man's "role" was to rule, to lead, and to protect. Women's "role" was to submit, to follow and to support. Some scholars have grounded these differences in physiology and psychology (the old "traditional" approach). But for the most part, HCs now base their belief in male headship on the command of God and on the analogy of the Trinity, as we shall see. Therefore they will approach ambiguous texts with hierarchical assumptions. And they view "prohibitive" texts as eternal and irrevocable decrees, establishing male headship and female subordination - at least in the family and in the Church.<sup>9</sup>

All of which is to say that both ECs and HCs exhibit the influence of modern western society in their views about women and men. Both are alike in that sense. Neither can claim a neutral perspective. Of course, to identify the provenance of their ideas - the

*Sitz im Leben* of their viewpoints - is not to establish the truth or falsehood of either. One must assess both views on the basis of the Biblical Story as a whole, and see which (if either) best fits the overall narrative. But nevertheless, the genesis of both perspectives in the modern West is significant, and worth notice.

## **Presuppositions and Exegetical Practice**

How do HC and EC perspectives work out, when it comes to interpreting the key passages on men and women in the Church and the family? Before looking at specific texts, and how they are treated, it is necessary to say a few more words about the assumptions that either side brings to the task.

### ***Opponents of Women's Ordination and the Doctrine of the Trinity***

Over the last twenty years, opponents of women's leadership have often grounded their belief in male headship on the relationship between the Son and the Father in the Trinity. In 1999 the Doctrine Commission of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney (Australia) issued a report entitled "The Doctrine of the Trinity and Its Bearing on the Relationship of Men and Women." The Report asserted not only that the Son voluntarily submitted himself to the Father in the Incarnation (as Philippians 2 describes) but that this subordination also characterizes the eternal relations between the pre-existent Son and the Father. In other words, the Report asserted:

"...a subordination which belongs to the eternal relationship between the persons of the Trinity, and not only to the humanity of Jesus in the Incarnation..."<sup>10</sup>

The Report argued that this perspective was not Arian, that in fact the Scriptures teach it, and the Church has held this view from the beginning. The Report concluded,

The Doctrine Commission agrees that the concept of "subordination" has significant implications. It concludes, furthermore, that the concept of "functional subordination," of equality in essence with order in relation, represents the long-held teaching of the church, and that it is securely based on the revelation of the Scriptures. This teaching should, therefore, determine our commitment both to the equality of men and women in creation and salvation, and also to appropriately biblical expressions of the functional difference between men and women in home and church.<sup>11</sup>

While the Diocese of Sydney conformed to the decision of the Australian Anglican Church in 1987, in allowing the ordination of women to the diaconate, it has repeatedly declined to conform to the national Church in ordaining women to the presbyterate and the episcopate. One apologist for Sydney Diocese has described this prohibition as a "line in the sand."<sup>12</sup> Given the prominence of Sydney Diocese in the GAFCON movement amongst orthodox Anglicans worldwide, it is not surprising that the Report's Trinitarian theology has been echoed elsewhere.

The AMIA Report of 2003 contains a carefully worded statement (in the "con" section apropos women's ordination) that also appeals to the doctrine of the Trinity in support of male headship. This passage is worth quoting in full.

In the triune life of God, as Scripture teaches and the Eastern Orthodox tradition often reminds us, there is a hierarchy among equals. An eternal headship and submission are lived out in the divine life of love. God the Father is by nature Father in His triune life. He is the eternal, loving fountainhead of the Trinity. He is eternally the Father of the Son and the primary source of the being of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Son is ever delighted to do the Father's will. Submission to the Father is what good sons do in biblical perspective, whether they are sons among human beings or the Son in the Trinity. The Spirit is always the Spirit of the Father proceeding to us through the Son and thus the Spirit of Christ.

The main point we want to note is that loving headship and submission are eternal in the life of God. They are qualities, therefore, of the eternal order of things. This is always true of God; it is His eternal triune nature. This has consequences for God's act of creation. God's own nature and attributes provide the pattern for His act of creation and particularly for the order and life of those made in His image and likeness, men and women. We can expect to find headship and submission in the way that we have been created in relation to one another.<sup>13</sup>

Despite the care with which both the Sydney Report and this AMIA statement were crafted, it is not surprising that this appeal to the Trinity in favor of male headship has occasioned some controversy.

While Anglican opponents of women's "headship" agree on the general Biblical prohibition, they are not all of one mind on the practical implications of that prohibition in terms of Holy Orders. Sydney Diocese and the erstwhile AMIA allow ordination of women to the diaconate, evidently of the mind that the latter is a subordinate order. Jason Patterson

of the AMIA has argued that in fact the diaconate involves certain leadership responsibilities, and that women should not be deacons, though they may be deaconesses. This is also the position of the Reformed Episcopal Church.<sup>14</sup> At the other end of the spectrum, the late John Stott and the Reform.UK movement argue that women may be ordained to the diaconate and the presbyterate, but may not serve as rectors or in any capacities (e.g. as archdeacons) in which they hold authority over men.<sup>15</sup>

Nevertheless proponents of the HC position remain unified in the conviction that headship and subordination characterize the deepest structure of reality, and so they approach the relevant Biblical texts with that assumption. We shall see how that presupposition works out in practice below. But first we should look at objections to the HC Trinitarian appeal, and at the alternative assumptions that Anglican proponents of women's ordination bring to the Scriptural texts.

### *Advocates of Women's Ordination and the Ministry of Jesus*

One of the most eminent Anglican advocates of women's ordination is the Australian theologian Kevin Giles. Originally from Sydney Diocese and a graduate of Sydney's Moore Theological College, Giles now pastors a church in the Diocese of Melbourne. From that safe distance he has published voluminously on the Sydney doctrine of the Trinity. In his first book on the subject he argued that although Sydney theologians ...would insist on their orthodoxy and would claim that they are not Arians in the classic sense, their assertion that the Son is subordinate in his person/nature/essence/being (or in his "subsistence"), and that the three persons of the Trinity are set in an *eternal* hierarchical order, leaves them in a very ambiguous situation at best.<sup>16</sup> Giles goes on to argue at length that neither the Creeds nor the Fathers nor the Reformers offer any support for the Sydney position that the Son is eternally "functionally" subordinate to the Father. No major theologian or creedal document has ever supported this "eternal role subordination" of the Son, Giles argues, and he proceeds to document this contention at great length. His main points are that Sydney Trinitarian theology is false to Scripture, eccentric to tradition, and intended to support the Diocese's assertion of male headship and female subordination.

In fact in the last twenty years, there has been a turn away from appealing to the Trinity in support of any human program or policy, of whatever kind. Anglican theologian Sarah Coakley has observed that advocates of the "social doctrine of the Trinity" have appealed to the Three Persons as "imitable prototypes" for egalitarian human relations. Coakley referred to this argument as "a new idolatrous project of social utopianism."<sup>17</sup> Other theologians have critiqued the tendency to project ideal human relations onto the Trinity, and then argue back from the Trinity to support the kind of society that they desire! This circular reasoning also assumes that we know enough about the immanent Trinity to say very much at all, and also that the analogy between the divine Persons and human beings is remotely apt.

For all these reasons, Anglican proponents of women's ordination have steered clear of stating their case on the basis of the Trinity. A much more sustainable argument for the EC position can be made from the Incarnation, they argue, and from the actual ministry of Jesus, about which we are blessed to know a great deal.<sup>18</sup>

The ministry of Jesus is in fact the lens through which Anglican ECs read the passages about women in the New Testament. In the Kingdom of God that Jesus inaugurates, he reverses the centuries-old deprecation of women in Israel since the Fall. Jesus invariably treats women with courtesy and respect. He accepts them as his disciples, meaning that he welcomes them into training to be future leaders. And finally he entrusts to Mary Magdalene the honor of announcing his resurrection to the twelve and the other disciples, making her the apostle to the apostles. Jesus enacts a revolution in the history of Israel in his treatment of women. But of course it is not entirely new, for Jesus is actually restoring the original order of Creation, in which women and men together shared the image of God, and together exercised the responsibility that God gave them to rule the earth.

Amongst all the Anglican theologians who have celebrated the restored status of women in the Kingdom, Ken Bailey offers the most culturally sensitive insight into the Jewish world of the first century. In his *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, he speaks of "the radical new departure that Jesus inaugurated in relation to the equality of men and women."<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere Bailey describes the typically negative attitude toward women in late Second Temple Judaism, quoting Ben Sirach.

A man's spite is preferable to a woman's kindness; women give rise to shame and reproach.<sup>20</sup>

Bailey comments,

By way of summary, Ben Sirach sees women as distinctly inferior. Except for one's wife, women are considered to be a source of evil and thus to be avoided.<sup>21</sup>

Conversely, Jesus points to his disciples and says, "Here are my mother and my brothers." Clearly his disciples include both men and women. Then Jesus and his disciples travel around Galilee with a group of influential women who "provided for them out of their means." Even today in rural Middle Eastern society, says Bailey, this free association of women and men would be culturally impossible; but not for Jesus. Finally Jesus specifically accepts Mary of Bethany into the men's part of the house, and firmly approves of her assumption of a man's place, studying under the rabbi to become a teacher herself.<sup>22</sup>

Other Anglican scholars echo Bailey's reading of these texts. Commenting on Jesus' acceptance of Mary as a teacher-in-training, N.T. Wright, says:

That, no doubt, is at least part of the reason we find so many women in positions of leadership, initiative and responsibility in the early church.<sup>23</sup>

And Wright says apropos of Jesus choosing males as the original twelve apostles,

...there comes a time in the story when the disciples all forsake Jesus and run away; at that point, long before the rehabilitation of Peter and the others, it is the women who come first to the tomb, who are the first to see the risen Jesus, and who are the first to be entrusted with the news that he has been raised from the dead...This is of incalculable significance. Mary Magdalene and the others are apostles to the apostles.<sup>24</sup>

Grant LeMarquand echoes Tom Wright's argument for the importance of the women at the Resurrection.

They were the primary witnesses of the saving events of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. All four of the gospel writers are careful to mention the presence of the women at these events, even when most of the twelve, except for the beloved disciple (according to John's Gospel) have fled the scene.<sup>25</sup>

So the events of Jesus' life are the center of salvation history for Anglican ECs, and the lens through which they view the Bible's teaching on men and women.

One final point is important. From the Anglican EC point of view, the Bible's overall view of relations between men and women is not simply that they are equal. Far less does the Bible argue for an undifferentiated androgyny. The partnership of men and women is more subtle and complex than that. Anglican theologian Elaine Storkey argues for "four different underlying paradigms, which are used interchangeably to describe the relationship between men and women" in Scripture. (1) The first is difference. "Eve is not the same as Adam. She is *isha* to his *ish*. Man and woman are different in terms of procreation..." and every society underscores this difference by a myriad of cultural signals. (2) Then there is sameness, or similarity. Adam exclaims, "Here at last is bone of my bone..." Men and women receive the same command to oversee creation. They bear the same moral responsibilities. They are equally worthy of their children's respect. Finally in Joel's prophecy they are equally eligible for the Spirit's gifts. (3) Likewise there is complementarity. "Correlation, reciprocity,

symmetry are all built into the way male and female echo each other. Complementarity does not imply hierarchy... It is premised on the reciprocation and completion of female by male, and male by female." (4) Finally there is union. In marriage the two are "one flesh." Together they are "one" in the Body of Christ, just as they are in unity as the Bride of Christ. We need to bear in mind the full richness and complexity of the Bible's teaching vis-a-vis men and women, or we risk distorting it by lopsided or exclusive emphasis on one or the other.<sup>26</sup>

## **The Exegesis of Specific Texts**

Here we offer just four examples of specific texts, recognized by Anglicans on both sides as crucial to the Bible's teaching on men and women. All quotations are from the AMIA report, and there is no need to repeat the committee's careful work. Proponents of either side may not agree in every respect with the arguments offered "pro" and "con" by the AMIA committee, but the viewpoints are typical enough for the sake of comparison.

### **Genesis 1 and 2**

The AMIA report deals in great length and depth with the Creation story, and shows how ECs and HCs come to different conclusions about many texts. Here, for instance, are, the opposing views of Genesis 2:18 "I will make a helper suitable for him."

#### ***The "Pro" viewpoint***

God declares that he will make a helper "ezer" suitable for Adam. "Helper" in Scripture does not necessarily mean inferior or subordinate. God is frequently spoken of as our "helper" or the "helper of Israel." There are other words in Hebrew that make it clear when the helper is a subordinate, but they were not chosen to describe the one who will be created as Adam's helper. "Helper might be better translated "partner" as a companion that will share in the work that is to be done.

This helper will be a suitable helper "fit for him," a helpmeet. The Hebrew word is "knegdow" and does not imply a subordinate. In the Septuagint Greek translation of the text, "kata" with the accusative is used which means "in accordance with" or "corresponding to." The Latin Vulgate uses "homoiousios" which means "of like nature." The emphasis of the helper's suitability is on likeness not on subordination. Subordination must not be read into the text when it is not there.<sup>27</sup>

#### ***The "Con" perspective***

The reference to being created to be a "helper" ("ezer") for Adam in context also makes the point of his headship and her submission. It is true that a superior can be a helper to an inferior. God often serves as a helper to Israel

and all the “sons of Adam,” to all human beings. A man can help a man, or a woman can help a woman, or a parent can help a child: but it is not said that the very creation of one was in order to be the helper of the other. That, however is precisely what is said here of the creation of the woman. Having made that point, we must quickly add that since the woman is created in the “image of God,” her dignity and her gifting are not fully defined by nor exhausted in the marriage partnership with the man: she is, however, centrally oriented and created for that relationship and service. In the context of mutual belonging and equal dignity, an order of leadership, assistance and of governing oversight and willing submission is built into Creation.<sup>28</sup>

### **I Corinthians 11:2-16**

Here the AMIA report examines the difficult passage about head coverings (or perhaps hair styles?) in the context of Paul’s exhortation to the Corinthians, not to allow their liberty in Christ to become selfish license, and to observe propriety in worship. Here are the variant interpretations of I Corinthians 11:3.

#### ***The “Pro” viewpoint:***

What then is the meaning of the order that St. Paul writes? It is the chronological order of the sources. At the Creation by the Word or Son, Christ becomes Head of man, At the Creation of Eve from Adam, the man becomes the source or head of Eve. Lastly, at the Incarnation of the Son, the Father becomes Head of the Incarnate Son, Jesus the Christ. Only when viewed from the perspective of source does the order make sense.

The point of verse 11:3 is to state the principle upon which the Apostle will exhort the women to return to wearing the veil or shawl. The principle is this: we are to behave in public and in corporate worship in a manner which brings glory to our Head and evidences our grateful response for the initiation and nurture we receive. Since our Head has called us into being and nourishes us as men or as women, this honoring of headship on our part will give us evidence of and due respect to our maleness or femaleness.<sup>29</sup>

#### ***The “Con” perspective:***

How are we to understand the meaning of “head” in this verse, given the order (a) of Christ as Head of man, (b) the man as head of woman and (c) God as Head of Christ? Some have suggested this is a temporal order of initiation; and, therefore, “source is the only connotation in the text. But that is far from evident and in the end will not hold. It could just as well be that the Apostle wished to place the headship of man and the submission of the

woman in the bracket of Christ's headship and Christ's submission for it is Christ Who is our model and enabler of both. In that case, both authority and source would be involved in the use of "head."<sup>30</sup>

### **I Corinthians 11:33-35**

This passage contains the words, "women should keep silent in the churches." Here are two different interpretations, offered by ECs and HCs respectively

#### ***The "Pro" viewpoint***

This interpretation of the text sees it in the words of the Apostle Paul, but does not see it setting forth the universal principle that all women should not speak in the corporate worship of the Church. Rather the principle the Apostle is concerned to state and apply is that in corporate worship everything must be done "decently and in order" so that the entire body of Christ might be edified. He states this principle time and again, and it is uppermost in his mind as he describes to the disciples in Corinth how they should use the gift of tongues and prophecy...

...there are the insensitive, married women of our text. They too are to be silent. These women are interrupting the worship of the Church by asking too many questions as well as inappropriate questions for that setting. They have mistaken their new freedom in Christ for license to act in a self-centered manner, as if the Word of God were primarily addressed to them and not to the whole body of believers. True, they may prophesy, but they must do that decently and in due order. In all things, they are to be submissive to the elders directing the worship of the Church. If they have questions, they must wait until they are home to discuss them with their husbands. If they are spiritual Christian women, they will recognize that what the Apostle requires is a "command of the Lord" and comply. If they do not, they will be disciplined.

The concern here is stopping their disturbing behavior so that all will be done decently and in order and the entire Church will benefit from the words spoken in the worship of the Church. The issue is not male headship and female submission. That issue arose with the Fall and has been done away with by the coming of Christ.<sup>31</sup>

### *The “Con” perspective:*

The clue (i.e. to the interpretation of this text) is given to us in these words, “*For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, even as the Law says.*” (14:34). What is not permitted is a speaking that contradicts the Law. The “Law” referred to here most likely refers to the Old Testament and particularly the account of the creation of man and woman in Chapter 2 of Genesis. This concerns the subordinate role of women in the family and Church. It is a speaking that is shameful in that it violates the due order of things as established in Creation. Here, as in every other time, he addresses the role of women in relationship to men. The Apostle is concerned with God’s ordering of the man as head and the woman as supportive and submissive to his leadership. The “Law” referred to here is most likely the Old Testament and particularly the account of the creation of man and woman in Chapter 2 of Genesis. Submission in this text refers to women submitting to the elders of the church as well as to their husbands with regard to speaking in the Church.<sup>32</sup>

### **I Timothy 2:11-15**

This is the passage most often cited in the debate over women’s ministries in the Church. It contains the words often translated, “I do not permit women to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent” (I Timothy 2:12 NIV). The translation of almost every word is disputed by either side, as well as the intention of the whole text.

### *The “Pro” viewpoint:*

- a. “*Let a woman learn in silence...*”: Note that the Apostle commands that women be permitted to learn, and that they seize the opportunity to learn. This command extends far beyond women merely listening to the Word in worship settings; it implies serious study. The word Paul uses for “silence” (*hesuchia*) is not a word that intimates total silence but rather refers to a quietness and attitude that is appropriate for learning. As rabbinical students sit at the feet of the rabbi to learn, so women are to do the same with the teachers at Ephesus. Paul is far from wishing to retain and observe pre-Christian synagogue traditions regarding women in the Church that would neglect or discourage their study of the Word of God.
- b. “*In full submission*”: This is Paul’s requirement that women respect those set in authority over the congregation.

- c. When Paul states, “*I do not permit...*,” he puts it in the present continuous tense. It could better be translated, “I am not now permitting.” This seems to imply that at a future time, when conditions had been met, he would permit women to teach.
- d. “to teach”: This refers to teaching in a formal manner in the worship of the Church. Often when the Apostle speaks of teaching, he exhorts the whole congregation to teach one another (Col 3:16). But here, as in the pastoral epistles generally, more formal teaching in the context of worship is in view. Only qualified people are to teach.
- e. “...to have authority over men”: Paul does not use the traditional word for “authority” (*exousia*) but rather a word that is used only once in the New Testament, *authentein*. It can be interpreted to mean to usurp authority or to “lord it over” another. Paul does not permit women to grasp the authority to teach away from those placed over the congregation and thereby usurp their authority. This simply leads to chaos and error.<sup>33</sup>

***The “Con” perspective:***

- a. “*I permit no woman to teach*”: This is, as already noted, in the present continuing which might suggest that at a later point he might be willing to allow a woman to teach. It could also mean “I do not now nor will ever permit a woman to teach.” which would assert an absolute refusal to women to teach. The context points in the latter direction because: (i) The mention of submission points to a male headship and female submission that St. Paul does not believe is a temporary matter, short of the Second Coming of Christ, as we have often seen. (ii) He will appeal to Creation in the next verse, and we are all part of the continuing order of Creation.
- b. “*To teach*”: What sort of teaching and what sort of audience is a woman not permitted to teach? It cannot mean that a woman is to be utterly silent in the corporate worship and public worship life of the congregation. In I Corinthians 11, we listened to the Apostle instruct women in the manner in which they should be veiled when bringing a prophecy. Later in this Epistle, the Apostle tells older women to teach younger women. In many places, teaching is considered the task of the whole body of Christ, both men and women. Therefore, it must be some specific type of teaching in which women are not permitted to engage. Since this applies only to women, and since the Apostle appeals to the order of Creation by referring to submission

- c. and appealing to Genesis 2, it most likely refers to that form of teaching which is reserved for the elders of the congregation, for the “presbyteroi/episcopoi.” This is confirmed by the second prohibition “*nor to have authority over men,*”
- d. “*nor to have authority over men*”: The word for authority here is “authentein” which appears only here in the New Testament. Some have suggested it is a particular kind of authority the Apostle has in mind such as a usurped authority. They suggest that if he had authority in general in mind he would have used “exousia,” a term he uses more frequently. However, two things indicate that it is simple governance or basic authority that the Apostle intends: 1. It is difficult to say that the Apostle uses “exousia” usually for he only uses it three times in all of his writings, which is too little usage to read a great deal into his writing a different word. 2. Linguistic study of the use of the word “authentein in the culture of St. Paul’s day indicate that it does not mean ‘usurped authority’ but simply ‘authority.’”

What St. Paul is saying is that women are not to exercise headship or governance over men in the congregation or in the family. The point is not that ungodly, untaught women should not teach or domineering women should not usurp authority over men but that women per se should not teach authoritatively, nor should serve in positions of headship over men in the congregation. When it comes to areas where the elders are exercising authority, the women are to learn in silence and in all submission. This interpretation is confirmed by the Apostle’s appeal to Genesis 2 and 3.<sup>34</sup>

These quotations do not exhaust what the AMIA said in its “pro” and “con” presentations on the four texts cited above. Neither do these quotations exhaust what Anglican scholars have written on these texts! And finally the AMIA Report discussed many other passages of Scripture in a similar fashion, offering arguments on the one side and the other. The quotations above are simply meant to exemplify the way in which presuppositions on either side lead to different exegetical conclusions.

The result is a “text jam.” Both sides identify the same passages as important for understanding the relationships of men and women. But the interpretations they offer are in stark contradiction. The intention of this paper has not been to adjudicate the dispute, but simply to point it out, to suggest the rival assumptions from which it arises, and to offer examples of the “text jam.” There are gifted and Christ-centered believers and scholars in both camps, no doubt with more distinguished qualifications than those of the present Task Force on Holy Orders who can continue to wrestle with the impasse.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> "A Report of the Study Concerning the Ordination of Women Undertaken by the Anglican Mission in America: A survey of the Leading Theological Convictions," unpublished paper by the Rt. Rev. John H. Rodgers and the Women's Ordination Study Team (July 31, 2003): available online at [www.vulcanhammer.org/island/w.pdf](http://www.vulcanhammer.org/island/w.pdf).
- <sup>2</sup> AMIA's sponsoring archbishops were the Most Rev. Ping Chung Yong of South East Asia and the Most Rev. Emmanuel Kolini of Rwanda.
- <sup>3</sup> Ephesians 5: 18, 21. The terms referred to above were first suggested by Kevin Giles in "The Genesis of Confusion: How 'Complementarians' Have Corrupted Communication," *Priscilla Papers* 29/1 (Winter, 2015), 27.
- <sup>4</sup> Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (Princeton University Press, 1996), chapter 5 examines the sociological context of Christian women in the 1st century Roman Empire. See Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference* (Baker, 2001), chapter 1 for modernity and the concomitant changes in women's situation.
- <sup>5</sup> Women's life expectancy in the USA averaged 80.3 in 2016: [worldlifeexpectancy.com/usa/life-expectancy-female](http://worldlifeexpectancy.com/usa/life-expectancy-female) (10/18/16).
- <sup>6</sup> [data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN?) (10/18/16).
- <sup>7</sup> "Men account for only 42 percent of college graduates..." Susan Chira, "Men Need Help," *New York Times*, Sunday Review, 6 (October 23, 2016).
- <sup>8</sup> Kevin Giles, *The Trinity & Subordination* (InterVarsity Press, 2002), 145-168.
- <sup>9</sup> Giles, "The Genesis of Confusion," 22-23 and his documentation of this development.
- <sup>10</sup> "The Doctrine of the Trinity and Its Bearing on the Relationship of Men and Women," the 1999 Sydney Anglican Diocesan Doctrine Commission Report, Appendix B in Giles, *The Trinity & Subordination*, 127.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.
- <sup>12</sup> Michael P. Jensen, *Sydney Anglicanism: An Apology* (Wipf & Stock, 2012), 126.
- <sup>13</sup> AMIA Report, 23.
- <sup>14</sup> Personal communication from the Rt. Rev. David Hicks, who also supplied the Patterson paper: J.S.S. Patterson, "Ordaining Women as Deacons: A Reappraisal of the Anglican Mission in America's Policy" (unpublished paper, 7.19.2006).
- <sup>15</sup> John Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 4th edition (Zondervan, 2006), chapter 12; [reform.org.uk/about/thereformcovenant](http://reform.org.uk/about/thereformcovenant) (10/18/16).
- <sup>16</sup> Giles, *the Trinity & Subordination*, 80. For an updated version of Giles's argument, see his *Jesus and the Father* (Zondervan, 2006).
- <sup>17</sup> Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity'* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 270.
- <sup>18</sup> See for example Karen Kilby, "Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity," *New Blackfriars* 81 (2000), 432-445; Kathryn Tanner, "Social Trinitarianism and Its Critics," in Giulio Maspero and Robert Wozniak, editors, *Rethinking Trinitarian Theology* (Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2012), chapter 16.
- <sup>19</sup> Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* (InterVarsity Press, 2008), 189. Although the late beloved Ken Bailey was technically in Presbyterian orders, he served for many years as Canon Theologian in the Anglican Diocese of Pittsburgh (and so qualifies for inclusion here, amongst Anglican authors).
- <sup>20</sup> Kenneth Bailey, "Women in Ben Sirach and the New Testament," in *For Me to Live: Essays in Honor of James Leon Kelso* (Dinnon/Liederbach, 1972).
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Bailey, "Women in the New Testament: A Middle Eastern Cultural View," *Theology Matters* 6/1 (Jan/Feb 2000) 2.

<sup>23</sup> N.T. Wright, *Surprised By Scripture* (HarperOne, 2014), 70.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>25</sup> Grant LeMarquand, "The Leadership of Women in the Bible: One Protestant's View of the Ordination of Women," unpublished paper delivered to the Pan-Africa Association of Catholic Exegetes, September, 2015, 8. LeMarquand is Anglican Bishop for the Horn of Africa and Emeritus Professor of Biblical Studies, Trinity School for Ministry, Ambridge, PA.<sup>26</sup> Elaine Storkey, *Origins of Difference: The Gender Debate Revisited* (Baker, 2001), 129-131.

<sup>27</sup> AMIA Report, 43.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

## Anglo-Catholics and the Ordination of Women

The following paper aims to summarize the debate over the ordination of women within ‘Catholic’ or ‘High Church’ Anglicanism. It is intended as a ‘sequel’ of sorts to the corresponding paper in Appendix 3 of the Task Force’s Phase 3 report. That paper discussed the three distinctives of the High Church understanding of Holy Orders: the apostolic succession, the spiritual mark or ‘character’ of ordination, and the role of the priest *in persona Christi*. Two of these three points are reflected in the arguments here. The apostolic succession corresponds to the argument from tradition, which is the central issue in the debate. This is expanded upon by arguments concerning the symbolic role of the priest, including the priest’s representation of Christ, and by arguments concerning the Church’s relationship to the culture. The remaining topic from the previous paper, the ‘mark’ imparted in ordination, does not factor into the arguments for or against and so is not discussed in the main body of this paper. (It does, however, have a significant effect on how the conclusion is understood and is discussed in the previous section.)

Some clarifications are in order before proceeding to the main body of the paper. First, although the topic in question here is the ordination of women to the priesthood or presbyterate, it will be noted that several of the sources are specifically addressed to the matter of the consecration of women as bishops. It will be recalled from the preceding section, however, that bishops and priests are generally understood as sharing the same kind of ministry; the difference between the two orders is principally in the scope of their authority. Thus, the arguments made regarding the consecration of women to the episcopate also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the question of the priesthood, differing mainly in the degree to which disagreement is felt.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, deacons do not share this ‘kind’ of ministry. There are those who hold that ordination is a single sacrament, and that therefore all three orders must be treated alike. Likewise, it may be argued, parallel to considerations on the priesthood, that tradition uniformly supports a male ordained diaconate, and that the deacon may be considered a symbol of Christ the servant, just as the presbyter symbolizes Christ the priest. Such arguments entail that women should not be ordained as deacons, though they may serve as non-ordained deaconesses. However, there did exist a female diaconate in the early church, the exact nature of which is contested; and deacons do not hold jurisdiction or (generally) exercise a sacramental ministry. Some who oppose the ordination of women as priests and bishops, therefore, see in these points precedent or theological justification for allowing the ordination of women to the diaconate. In any case, because of the distinctions between diaconal and presbyteral ministry, the ramifications of ordaining women to the diaconate are considerably less significant than the implications of ordaining them to the priesthood and the episcopate.

For this reason, women's ordination to the diaconate has received less attention overall, and will not be further discussed in this paper.

A second note relates to the scope of the discussion. 'Anglo-Catholic' is a term with a wide range of meanings, particularly with regard to history, but also in present use. As used here, it is intended to reflect the 'side' of Anglicanism which reflects the three principles mentioned in the first paragraph. It is the *arguments* particularly which are in question; it is not claimed that every Anglican writer presented here *is* an Anglo-Catholic; only that their arguments fall within this range of concerns. Moreover, traditionalists frequently hold that to be truly 'Catholic,' one's position should be consistent with both past tradition and the wider Church in the apostolic succession, and thus that proponents of women's ordination, by definition, *cannot* be Anglo-Catholic. This paper leaves that debate to one side. Rather, a range of perspectives will be presented, in order to give 'the lay of the land' in what might broadly be referred to as sacramentalist Anglican discussion of the ordination of women. The 'land,' as it lays, is admittedly broader than the boundaries of Anglo-Catholicism as it finds expression in the Anglican Church in North America. This is particularly the case with regards to feminist perspectives. To limit the discussion to what falls within these ecclesiastical borders, however, would be a dual disservice: it would, on the one hand, provide a truncated and imbalanced view of the discussion's dynamics; on the other, it would deprive the reader of considering some of the most vigorous arguments against the traditionalist position. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that no particular argument in favor of women's ordination is, by its inclusion here, attributed to any supporters of the practice within the Anglican Church in North America.

While there is ample room for more literature on the subject of women's ordination, there is nonetheless sufficient material to preclude an exhaustive account of every argument made on either side of the debate. The arguments presented here are therefore the major recurring arguments - or, indeed, categories of argument - represented by several sources. This is especially true of the traditional position, which presents a unified front on its central arguments. Supporters of women's ordination, in contrast, are primarily responding to the traditionalist stance; as a result, while certain common principles can be discerned, there are a wider range of responses. This paper therefore claims to offer a comprehensive view of the main points of discussion; readers should be mindful, however, that a number of particular arguments, some of them important, have not met the criteria for inclusion in this paper. The major Anglican and ecumenical sources included in the accompanying bibliography are strongly recommended for further reading.

For the most part, the voices presented here come from within Anglicanism. There are, however, a few exceptions; for details on individual writers or documents mentioned in this text, please refer to the annotated bibliography included in this section.

## The Traditionalist Argument

### *Scripture and Tradition*

The preceding paper on the High Church tradition noted that the apostolic succession has a dual role: to carry on the ministry of the Church instituted by Christ, but also to serve as a reminder of the Church's accountability to Christ against other competing sources of authority. As such, it may be seen as the embodiment of the Church's tradition. Tradition is, on the one hand, the 'handing on' (1 Cor. 11:23, 15:3) of the 'faith once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3); but it is also (in the words of Russian Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky) 'the critical spirit of the Church' - charged with distinguishing the true tradition or 'handing on' of the Gospel from mere accretions of time, habit, and culture.<sup>2</sup> Insofar as it concerns the 'handing on' of the Church's faith and practice, however, the element of continuity is important. This is the core of traditionalist objections to the ordination of women. The Church may not believe or do anything that departs from what it has received from Christ. Given the unanimous practice of orthodox Christianity in maintaining a male priesthood for nineteen centuries, to now ordain women as priests is outside what the Church has received, and is therefore beyond the Church's authority.

The core of the Church's tradition is the Gospel - and therefore, in the matter of ordination, the example of Jesus himself. Jesus is the Son of God, and in his incarnation the fullness of God's revelation on earth. In his earthly ministry, therefore, he was not constrained by merely cultural considerations, but was completely free in his actions. This is indeed evident in his interactions with women, which demonstrate a degree of respect for them that is out of step with prevailing attitudes of his time. Nonetheless, in choosing his twelve apostles, he chose twelve men. If the ministry of the twelve has any bearing on the ministry of bishops and priests, even by analogy, then this example is strong precedent for an all-male ministry. Indeed, if (as many Anglo-Catholics would hold) there is some sort of continuity between the apostolic ministry and Holy Orders as we now have received them, to ordain women contrary to this example is, in fact, to alter the institution of Christ - and implicitly, to second-guess his judgment. Was Jesus, in fact, merely a first-century Jew subject to cultural foibles and prejudices which we have now escaped?

Also in Scripture is the Pauline prohibition against allowing women to teach in the Church (1 Cor. 14:34, 1 Tim. 2:12). This is generally understood among traditionalist Catholics, *not* as barring women from any act of instruction, but as excluding them from an office of setting forth and maintaining the Church's teaching, analogous to that held nowadays by the ordained ministry. However, just as Christ showed an unprecedented regard for the dignity of women, Paul also clearly sets forth (e.g. Gal. 3:28) the equality of women with men before God. The restriction of ordination to men, therefore, is not a matter of equality, but one of order. This can be seen, for instance, in Mascall's discussion of 1 Cor. 11:3.

[W]e are told that the head of the woman is man, and the head of every man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. This does not, of course, mean that in all three cases headship is exercised in precisely the same way; to use the technical terms, 'headship' is an analogical and not a univocal concept. But neither is it purely equivocal, or there would be no force in making the comparison. And if the headship of God over Christ is the archetype of both Christ's headship over the man and the man's headship over the woman, no implication of servile subjection is possible. The fundamental relation of Christ to the Father is not one of inferiority but of filiality and derived equality. The fundamental relation of the Christian man to Christ is not one of inferiority but of membership and reception of communicated sonship. And behind St Paul's thought about the man and the woman we must surely see the story of the creation of Eve from the side of Adam, in which the fundamental relation is not one of inferiority but of mutual perfection and of derived partnership: "I will make him a help meet for him." [Gen. 2:18]

The thought is carried even further in the magnificent sixth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, in which husbands are exhorted to love their wives with that same self-giving love with which Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it. Throughout, superordination is manifested not in tyranny but in self-giving; subordination is manifested not in servility but in receptiveness and response. If women are incapable of receiving Holy Orders, it cannot be just because they are, in the vulgar sense of the word, *subordinate* to men, but because of the particular way in which masculinity and femininity are involved in the whole dispensation of redemption.<sup>3</sup>

The appeal to tradition, however, concerns not just Scripture, but the question, *how has Scripture been received in the Church?* The Church, having received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, was to be guided 'into all truth;' therefore its consistent practice is a testimony to the right interpretation and application of Scripture. So, beginning with Christ's calling of the apostles, the traditionalist position points to an unbroken tradition of all-male clergy over the first 1900-plus years of the Church.<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that female priests were unheard of: they did emerge from time to time in heretical sects such as Montanism (which pretended the authority of prophecy to overturn Scripture and the received order of the Church) and the various branches of Gnosticism (which denied the value of the body in favor of a purely 'spiritual' religion).<sup>5</sup> Mainstream orthodox Christianity, however, rejected the practice - not just by appeal to commonly held assumptions, but by appealing to the example of Christ and the teaching of Paul.<sup>6</sup> The ordination of women as presbyters or bishops was not something that had been received from Christ and the apostles. Thus, *Consecrated Women?* suggests that there has in fact already been a 'reception process' for the ordination of women - in the strict sense, a period of testing to see whether the whole Church would recognize the practice as

consistent with the received deposit of faith - and that it has been rejected.<sup>7</sup>

The question of 'reception,' however, raises matters of ecumenism. Since the 1980s, Anglicans have frequently framed the debate over women's ordination as a 'reception process,' in which Anglicans are presumably leading the way with regard to a new practice which will eventually be accepted by the wider Church.<sup>8</sup> Anglicans have never claimed the ministry to be exclusively their own. Cranmer's preface to the ordinal, rather than establishing a new Anglican ministry, expresses the desire that the 'orders of ministers' which have been 'in Christ's Church' 'from the apostles' time' 'be continued ... in the Church of England.' By definition, then, our ministry is shared with others who likewise 'continue' the same orders in their churches. 'Reception,' therefore, cannot be merely an inter-Anglican process - it must include the other churches who share the three-fold order of ministry. Yet these churches are for the most part opposed to the ordination of women; and the Roman Catholic Church has ruled (and deemed the judgment infallible) that the example of Christ and the tradition of the Church prohibit the ordination of women to the priesthood. Any such ecumenical consent to the ordination of women would therefore seem to be not only unlikely, but definitively impossible. Traditionalists point out that, in this context, reception has become essentially an inter-Anglican affair (sometimes, cynically, a matter of waiting for traditionalism to die out); it is not in reality leadership of the wider Church, but a unilateral change to the ministry. This effectively makes a lie of Cranmer's assertion that Anglican orders are not merely our own but the continuation *in* Anglicanism of the orders of the Church Catholic.

There remains, however, the consideration of tradition's other aspect - not continuity, but criticism. From the traditional side of the argument, the question might be stated, if women's ordination was not received from Christ, where then does it come from? Unanimously, traditionalists point to the surrounding culture. Kirk (in particular) recounts the importance of maintaining cultural relevance in the debates leading up to the ordination of women in the Church of England; he also goes deeper than most, tracing the lineage of the case for women's ordination, through feminism more generally, to Enlightenment principles which were originally articulated in explicit opposition to Christianity.<sup>9</sup> Other traditionalist accounts do not deal as much with the historical lineage of present ideas, but it is widely noted that women's ordination is (at the very least) 'in step' with cultural changes of the twentieth century - an observation coupled with the question of whether we are indeed so much more enlightened now than in ages past. In particular, traditionalists point to human sexual difference as a fundamental reality of creation - which is redeemed, not removed, in Christ's work of salvation. As Bridge notes, this view of humanity as inherently sexual is fundamentally opposed to the essentially neuter vision of humanity (i.e. the interchangeability rather than the fundamental difference and complementarity-within-equality of the sexes) which undergirds the arguments for both women's ordination and same-sex marriage.<sup>10</sup> In a similar vein, Lewis draws a distinction between professional work which is 'artificial' and concerned primarily with 'doing the job,' and roles which are more

human, such as courtship and dancing, which emphasize interpersonal (and gendered) relationality: the life of the Church, for Lewis, is the most human thing of all.

### *The symbolism of the priesthood*

This emphasis on the Church's life as human and relational, points towards a second area of argument regarding the ordination of women - specifically, the symbolic nature of the priesthood. It should be noted, this is not generally presented as an argument in its own right against the ordination of women, but rather as a supporting argument to the principal argument from Scripture and tradition. If Christ's example in choosing the twelve sets precedent for the Church's practice of ordination, the male priesthood and episcopate are therefore to be understood as reflecting the will of God; but God's will is not arbitrary. Thus, there is a presumption that the tradition *has* an underlying rationale to its practice, even if that reason has not been teased out until the controversy of the past few decades. Traditionalist Anglo-Catholics, together with Roman Catholics and the Orthodox, reject out of hand any supposed inferiority of women, and therefore have generally turned to the question of what is communicated symbolically by the sex of the priest. To repeat Mascall's words, the reason for the tradition of the all-male priesthood must lie in 'the particular way in which masculinity and femininity are involved in the whole dispensation of redemption.'<sup>11</sup>

The most prominent aspect of this discussion (particularly because of the emphasis given to it in the declaration *Inter insigniores* of Pope Paul VI) is the appeal to the priest as standing *in persona Christi*. This concept is not exclusively symbolic in its origin (in Andrewes, for instance, it is primarily a matter of the priest's authority to act on Christ's behalf), but it has always been susceptible to a symbolic interpretation - a symbolic connection between the priest (or bishop) and Christ has been noted as early as ca. 100 A.D., in the letters of Ignatius and Clement. This long tradition of seeing the priest as a symbol of Christ has thus been brought to bear on the question of whether or not women can be ordained.

The argument from the priest's symbolic representation of Christ begins with the incarnation. In the act of creation, God made humanity male and female. Christ, therefore, becoming fully human in the incarnation, *necessarily* had to become incarnate *either* as a male or a female—and *did* in fact become incarnate as a man. Had he taken on an abstract humanity which reflected neither sex (or both), he would not in fact have been fully and perfectly human, in accordance with the understanding of humanity set out in Genesis 1-2. Moreover, the range of types and prophecies which he fulfilled were a set of masculine images - the new Adam, the son of David, the great High Priest, the sacrificial victim, and the bridegroom, among others. Indeed, Genesis 3:15 promises a male descendant who will bruise the serpent's head. That Christ became human as a *man* is therefore a necessary aspect of his incarnation.

The priest, as the long tradition of the Church's teaching indicates, functions as a symbol of Christ. Generally speaking, symbols shape our understanding of that which they represent. The question, then, with regard to the question of women's ordination, is what the biological sex of the priest suggests about Jesus. Jesus was incarnate as a man, and the ordination of men is clearly consistent with this. Traditionalists argue, however, that to have a woman as a symbol of Christ suggests a female Christ; a mixed-sex priesthood taken as a whole suggests a Christ who is either neuter or hermaphroditic. Women's ordination therefore presents a symbol that is at odds with the doctrine of the incarnation.

The priest's representation of Christ, however, is not the only direction symbolic arguments can take. The older argument - advanced first by C.S. Lewis in the 1940s - concerns the priest as a symbol of the Father (also an ancient tradition in the Church). While it is granted that God is beyond human definition and biological sex, he has nonetheless consistently revealed himself under masculine language; Christ himself addresses God as 'Father.' A male priest naturally fits with the masculine symbolism under which God has chosen to reveal himself, but a female priest complicates this symbolism. Consequently, in Lewis's oft-cited argument, to ordain women to the priesthood entails (not perhaps logically, but as a matter of consistency within the system of symbols by which we think of God) that we pray to God as 'Our Mother, who art in heaven.'<sup>12</sup> Female priests are thus held to be suggestive of a mother goddess, rather than God the Father.<sup>13</sup>

## Critical Arguments

### *Scripture and Tradition*

Proponents of the ordination of women who work within a more-or-less 'catholic' framework tend to recognize the weight of the Church's tradition and the symbolic nature of the priesthood. However, they are critical of the traditionalist argument in a number of ways. Thus, with regard to the Church's tradition, they reject appeals to the example of Christ as inappropriate: the twelve were in fact men - a necessity of their role as the symbolic 'patriarchs' of the new Israel, as traditionalists also recognize - but it was equally necessary to that symbolism that they were Jewish. This has not, however, precluded the Church from ordaining Gentiles!<sup>14</sup> Moreover, long practice is not always correct. It took eighteen centuries for the Church to act decisively against slavery; why should it not take nineteen for the Church to realize the implications of the Gospel with regard to gender equality? Indeed, until the twentieth century, the 'traditional' explanation for the prohibition on women's ordination was that women were supposedly inferior to men - in Loades's memorable phrase, that women were 'intermittently bleeding half-wits.'<sup>15</sup> Since this view is no longer accepted, even among 'traditional' Christians, it is not clear that the position which it

supported can continue to stand.

Opponents of the traditional view therefore apply the critical use of tradition to the past, whereas traditionalists appeal primarily to continuity. In like fashion, they argue for continuity with Scriptural ideas in more recent attitudes, whereas traditionalists apply criticism. Thus, they emphasize the theological equality given to women in the New Testament, and point out the role of women as witnesses of the resurrection (implicitly alluding to the qualifications of an apostle in Acts 1:21). The ordination of women, therefore, is the outworking over time of these elements which were received in the New Testament. Indeed, though the Church's *practice* of ordaining only men to the priesthood is consistent, Beattie points out a line of devotional reflection in Roman Catholicism (suppressed by the Vatican, however, in the early twentieth century) attributing a priestly role to Mary in offering her Son to God and to the world.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to ecumenism, critics of the traditional position point out that it matters very much *with whom* one intends to pursue ecumenism: with many of what are known in the United States as the 'mainline' denominations, prohibition against the ordination of women would prove to be as much an obstacle to ecumenism as allowing it would be with more traditional denominations. Moreover, at least with regard to Rome, Anglican orders as a whole have been ruled invalid since the 1890s, well before the ordination of women was a concern. Whatever Anglicans may claim, as long as *Apostolicae curae* remains its official position, the Roman Church does not see the two churches as sharing the same ministry.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, supporters of women's ordination point out repeatedly the fact that women can do the job. Indeed, ordaining women has numerous practical benefits. Many women exercise ministries of spiritual advice and counsel; why bar them from also offering absolution?<sup>18</sup> One parish (discussed by Beattie) saw a marked increase in single mothers bringing their children for baptism under a female priest; this suggests that whereas an exclusively male clergy can be alienating to some women, ordaining women can create a 'safe space' for some of the more vulnerable members of society.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, it does not help in bringing people into the Church when the Church's values are out of step with society: Beattie therefore pointedly accuses the Roman hierarchy of 'bringing the Church into disrepute and damaging its credibility for an increasing number of modern believers.'<sup>20</sup>

### *The symbolism of the priesthood*

For the most part, 'catholic' proponents of the ordination of women recognize the importance of a symbolic dimension to the ordained ministry. However, they are adamantly opposed to the traditionalist emphasis on the maleness of Christ in the incarnation. Galatians 3:28 is frequently cited, as is the saying, 'what is not assumed is not saved.'<sup>21</sup> As Beattie outlines the argument, so long as women were seen as inherently flawed, it was

natural that Christ as the 'perfect human' should be male; but with the recognition of women's equality in society, to insist on the maleness of Christ as an essential part of the incarnation effectively excludes women from salvation. If Christ only assumed male humanity, female humanity would be unredeemed.<sup>22</sup> Since the old appeal to the inferiority of women is no longer maintained, even by traditionalists, the traditionalist appeal to symbolism is generally cast as a defensive irrationality of men who are afraid of losing their power, even though the intellectual foundations of patriarchy have been removed.<sup>23</sup>

Though proponents of women's ordination make a consistent argument against the traditional position, there is no one approach to a positive view of the priesthood's symbolism. Responding to Lewis's description of human masculinity as a 'uniform' more or less inadequately worn by all men except Christ, Loades asks whether biological sex is aptly described as a 'uniform,' and whether the 'uniform' in the case of the priesthood might not be the sacrament of order itself.<sup>24</sup> That is to say, why must the role of a priest in symbolizing Christ depend on biological sex, rather than on ordination? Alternatively, Ware has noted that in the Eastern Orthodox liturgy the consecration of the eucharistic elements is not through the action of Christ at the words of institution (spoken by the priest) but through the descent of the Spirit in response to the prayer of the congregation (again, spoken by the priest).<sup>25</sup> Taking up this line of thought, some have proposed that the priest be seen, not as *in persona Christi*, but as *in persona ecclesiae* - alleviating concerns about the sex of the celebrant, and indeed reinforcing a positive case for the ordination of women, given the femininity often attributed to the Church.<sup>26</sup> In a more radical line of thought, Beattie proposes a Marian symbolism for female priests (based on the tradition noted above), as a complement to the Christological symbolism of male clergy. The most dramatic position is MacKinnon's who holds that women's ordination 'enlarges' our understanding of Christ.<sup>27</sup>

Less is said regarding the priest's second symbolic role of representing God the Father. It is frequently noted that there are instances of feminine language referring to God in Scripture, and that therefore the use of exclusively male imagery for God is not required; nor (as Loades points out) does ordaining women in any way *require* a change in how we speak (or think) about God.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, another case study discussed by Beattie argues that the ordination of women 'creates space for the female ... in *imago Dei*.'<sup>29</sup>

## Review of the Arguments

Having presented the two positions with their respective arguments on the role of tradition, and on the symbolic nature of the priesthood, the remaining task is to give an assessment of the argument. This will be done by examining the two major categories of the argument in three steps: first, by locating the principle points of divergence between the two perspectives; second, by evaluating the strength of the respective arguments on these points; and finally, by identifying some unanswered questions that emerge.

## *Scripture and Tradition*

The first observation which can be offered on the argument from Scripture and tradition is that the arguments of the two sides are mirror opposites: traditionalists insist on continuity with the past, and apply criticism to present attempts to alter it; their critics apply criticism to the past, and argue for continuity between modern developments and central concerns of the Gospel, which (it is claimed) have lain undeveloped until the present day. At a slightly lower level, it can further be noted that in fact the traditionalist side rejects the past reasoning against which their critics direct most of their animosity - that is, any supposition of the inequality of women. The debate with regard to the past, then, is whether the longstanding tradition of a male priesthood is a practice received from Christ, though unfortunately misunderstood for a long period of time (the traditionalist perspective); or whether it is the embodiment of a wrong view of women, which has now lost its intellectual grounding and which deserves to fall along with the ideas which supported it. Thus, the first root-level question is whether the male priesthood is a practice independent of ideas used to explain it, or whether it is the result of a certain set of ideas. Stated more generally, can a practice on its own be significant, or only as the expression of an idea?

This points to a second difference between the two positions. For traditionalists, what is at stake is a continuity of *practice*; their critics claim a (developing) continuity of *idea*. The traditionalist claim of continuity is straightforward. However, their critics claim is less so. First, critics of the traditional position claim to argue for 'continuity' of a sort, when in fact they are critiquing an opposed idea held over several centuries of intervening time; at best, their claim is not so much *continuity* as *reclamation*. And it is fairly drastic in its scope: the period from which a true vision of gender and the ministry is to be reclaimed comprises most of the Church's history, including several formative centuries. Admittedly, rejecting one aspect of the patristic understanding of the Church need not entail rejecting other theological developments of the period. Still, the question remains: can such a rejection really allow for 'continuity' of any sort?

Proponents of women's ordination do claim, however, to be in 'continuity' through a process of development with ideas of the equality of women found in Scripture - Jesus' equal treatment of various women, his appearing first to women after the Resurrection, and Paul's attitudes, particularly as reflected in Gal. 3:28 ("There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"). Additionally, they claim to be working out the implications of the patristic Christological axiom, 'What is not assumed is not saved.' There is thus a claim of logical (if not historical) continuity with elements in the past and in Christian tradition. However, these points are not beyond rebuttal. Kirk has made a compelling argument that while both Jesus and Paul showed considerable respect to women, neither showed any interest in upending the social

order (in Paul's case, he makes this argument with regard to each of the pairs in Gal. 3:28); similarly, the early fathers who showed such a concern for Jesus' full humanity never drew the conclusion from it that women should be ordained.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, traditionalists generally respond that both the passage from Galatians and the axiom about the incarnation are statements about salvation, not order. Finally, it may be observed that while there is a recognizable continuity between the meaning attributed to these passages and the position held by supporters of women's ordination, Jesus' choice of twelve male apostles, Paul's teaching on the role of women in the Church, and the lack of any evidence for women's ordination in the early centuries of the Church all seem for the most part to be established facts. This raises the concern that the interpretation given to these passages risks setting the teaching of Jesus and Paul against their practice. The critical position, therefore, faces two questions about its asserted continuity. First, is it fair to claim continuity, in light of the long period between the New Testament and the twentieth century in which no version of their position was held? And second, are their positions actually continuous with the Scriptures they cite, or are these passages wrongly applied?

It was also noted, however, that the notion of tradition as continuity also involves an ecumenical aspect - continuity, as it were, across the whole Church Catholic in the present, as well as continuity with the past. Supporters of women's ordination, as we have noted, observe that the bearing of ecumenism on this subject depends very much on whom you wish to have ecumenical relations with. This is indeed pertinent; but it does not quite address the traditionalist concern in this matter. Ecumenical relations are important to anyone who takes seriously Christ's wish, 'that they all may be one;' and traditional Anglo-Catholics are naturally drawn to value relationships with denominations which share similar views on the Church, the ministry, and the sacraments (namely, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and the Old Catholics). But the primary ecumenical concern of traditionalists is not with ecumenical *relationship* but with ecumenical *consent* (sometimes referred to as 'catholic consent'). Anglicanism is not its own faith, but an expression of the 'faith once delivered;' it is not its own Church, but part of the Church Catholic. This reality is embodied in the ordained ministry. Anglican orders are not our own orders, but those of the wider Church; yet if they do not belong to us, how can we change our ordination practices without wider consent? Despite Anglican claims of catholicity, however, we do have deep disagreements with these churches, which are not just political but theological; and indeed, in the case of Rome (as critics have noted), which have led to the rejection of Anglican claims to share a common order. If we do not defer to these other Churches on these other points of theology, why should we do so here? Traditionalists might respond, that points of interpretation differ from points of practice: there may be differing views on the Eucharist, for instance, but the same thing is *done*. This is, however, a judgment call. What weight should be given to the understanding of other churches with regard to women's ordination?

Tradition, however, also has a critical aspect. In this regard, proponents of women's ordination criticize past belief and its associated practice; traditionalists criticize the present. Here the positions are reversed: the criticisms made of past negative attitudes towards women are fairly straightforward, and are conceded even by traditionalists themselves. The traditionalist position, however, seems to be set on supporting the equality of women in word, while simultaneously rejecting one application of it in practice - an apparent contradiction. Traditionalists respond by emphasizing that equality does not entail interchangeability. This is where Lewis's contrast between the 'artificial' and the 'human' comes into play, providing a rubric for where the sexes may be interchangeable (since in some aspects of life equality obviously entails that they are, e.g. business). This contrast has some appeal beyond the question who might be ordained: if marriage is simply a matter of romantic attraction, emotional support, and perhaps 'compatibility,' the qualifications must be simply that those practical criteria are met - the candidate must be able to 'do the job,' regardless of biological sex. If, on the other hand, there is something more to it (however this 'something' might elude definition), *who* is involved, including their biological sex, is as important as *what* they do. It is on this principle that the parallel is often drawn between same-sex marriage and women's ordination - not as if they were moral equivalents, but because the same principle of interchangeability is operative in both. However, it should be acknowledged that the claim that ordination is something 'human' rather than 'artificial' (as Lewis uses the terms) often clashes with experience. Though theological arguments can be made to the contrary, the Church is for most people less like a family than it is a provider of pastoral services wedded to a hierarchical bureaucracy, in both respects seemingly 'artificial.' There are pastoral and administrative tasks to be done; women *can* do the job, and to exclude them from a large part of this hierarchy is, in fact, to *make* them inferior. It therefore needs to be asked, do traditionalists have sufficient grounds for counting marriage and the family as the same kind of thing, where equality does *not* entail interchangeability? And if they do, what needs to change for the Church's actual daily life to reflect this? If traditionalists are in fact committed to the equality of women, how is this to be reflected in the life of the Church including its structures of authority and its decision-making bodies?

Beneath the whole question of tradition, however, lies the fundamental question: do we learn from the past in order to correct the present; or learn from the present in order to correct what has been inherited from the past? Inevitably, we must do both; but the difference as to which is primary should not be mistaken as simply a matter of personal preference. It is, rather, a difference of attitude as to the role of theology. For Mascall, on the traditional side, 'Christian theology advances by trying to penetrate more fully than before into the theological meaning of the Church's life and practice, rather than by discarding as trivial those elements of them which it has not so far thought out.'<sup>31</sup> For Loades, however, 'revelation is an ongoing dialogue between God and humanity, developed in a living tradition involving imagination and social growth, which graciously invites our response in humanly inclusive ways, each of which acts as a corrective to the other.'<sup>32</sup> Traditionalists hold that,

though the old explanation based on women's inequality is obviously inadequate, we have received a clear example from Christ, and a clear practice throughout the tradition, which it is our job not to change but to seek to understand more deeply. Their critics, however, believe that those elements of the tradition—not just beliefs, but practices—which have supported inequality demand critique and correction; and this criticism is, in fact, a legitimate expression of continuity with the tradition. The question, then is this: Is it the Church's task to keep the practices which we have delivered, to live within them, and to expand our understanding of them; or is it to participate in an ongoing process of growth which, though it must always be connected to the central reality of Christ, may lead beyond the old ways, or even to rejecting them?

### *The symbolism of the Priesthood*

Turning then to the arguments from the symbolism of the priesthood, it is first worthwhile noting that both sides largely agree that there is a symbolic aspect of the priesthood which is at stake in the ordination of women. The issues here are two-fold. (1) Does the traditionalist position represent Christ in a way that effectively excludes half of humanity from salvation? And (2) does the symbolism of women's ordination effectively undermine orthodox belief in the incarnation, and in the nature of God as he has revealed himself?

For supporters of women's ordination, the traditionalist emphasis on Christ's incarnation *as a man* cuts against the principle, 'what is not assumed is not saved.' If Christ became *a man*, rather than *human*, only male humanity was assumed and therefore saved; women are left out. Rather, they would insist that Christ became *human*, and that as both men and women are human, both men and women can adequately represent Christ. Leaving aside for now the propriety (or not) of an ordained woman as a symbol of Christ, it is worthwhile to clarify the traditionalist position.

The traditionalist position is that Christ's incarnation as a human necessarily involved his being incarnate as a man. They do not separate humanity into two natures, a 'female human nature' and a 'male human nature.'<sup>33</sup> Humanity shares (as in classical Christology) one human nature. It is this human nature which Christ took, and it is the whole human nature which is redeemed. However, human nature occurs in two kinds, male and female, such that a full and perfect expression of this nature is necessarily in one of the two kinds. To be human is, certain anomalies notwithstanding, to be either male or female. This can, in fact, help elucidate why traditionalists seem generally unconcerned by the criticism that Jesus was not only male but Jewish. Race and ethnicity are features of human society - somewhat subjective and variable ones, at that - not fundamental and universally experienced characteristics of human nature.<sup>34</sup> To call sexual differentiation a fundamental characteristic of human nature, however, does not entail that there are two distinct humanities. The

traditionalist emphasis on the maleness of Jesus, therefore, does not result, as their critics claim, in the exclusion of women from salvation. (Part of the confusion on this point, however, is due to a lack of work done on this aspect of theological anthropology, as Loades is keen to point out).<sup>35</sup>

There remains, then, the question of what effects the ordination of women has on the symbolism of the priesthood. Several proposals from its proponents can be ruled out in short order. Assertions as to the way in which women's ordination can 'enlarge' our understanding of God seem for the most part to run blithely into the teeth of the traditionalist argument: if an all- male priesthood inadequately represents God, it is difficult to see how a male Christ can be any more adequate (cf. John 1:18). That Christ *was* male is an inescapable fact of the incarnation; and while there are biblical instances of feminine imagery referring to God, they are quite rare, and provide insufficient grounds for altering the received practice of referring to God in the masculine.<sup>36</sup> It may be axiomatically true that our understanding of Christ and of God is inadequate; it is doubtful, however, whether the particular direction of which these voices propose for expansion would be congenial to the theological disposition of the Anglican Church in North America.

Beattie's proposal of a Marian symbolism for the priesthood avoids such problems, but faces others which also remove it from serious consideration. Principally, it relies on notions which have been suppressed within the Roman Catholic Church (her own tradition); and though her ideas have found some traction among sympathetic Anglicans, it is doubtful that such an approach would gain ground in Anglicanism broadly considered, given that tradition's historically protestant emphasis on the sole priesthood of Christ.

There remain, then, two proposals which are not inherently problematic. The first of these is the understanding of the priest as *in persona ecclesiae*, based on the Orthodox understanding of the eucharistic consecration as taking place in response to the prayer of the congregation, offered by the priest. This is generally stated in opposition to a Western understanding of the priest as *in persona Christi*, effecting the consecration by reciting (on Christ's behalf, or as Christ's agent) the words of institution. The difficulty in this position is that it seems to misunderstand the meaning of the priest's role *in persona Christi*. Specifically, the priest is *in persona Christi* not only in the Eucharist, but as a result of his role in the whole life of the congregation; the Eucharist is a focal point in which this is especially apparent, but not an isolated case. This broad understanding of the minister's role in the community is clearly the concern, for instance, in *Inter insigniores*, and is articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as *in persona Christi capitis*, 'in the person of Christ the head.'<sup>37</sup> That is, the priest's ministry is to lead the congregation - particularly, but not exclusively, in the Eucharist—on behalf of Christ who is head of the whole body. This is, it may be noted, very much consistent with the earlier Anglican tradition discussed previously, which emphasized the priest's ministry *in persona Christi* more in the pastoral context of absolution than in the

liturgical context of the Eucharist, and with the *Lux Mundi* school which emphasized that the priesthood of Christ is *shared* by the Church and *expressed* on the Church's behalf by the ministerial priesthood. However, this raises the question for those who hold that the priest acts *in persona ecclesiae*, whether the priest can act on behalf of the Church without also acting on behalf of Christ, the head of the Church. It is doubtful whether the Church can be considered apart from its union with Christ, and so it seems that envisioning the priest as *in persona ecclesiae* does not, in the end, evade the questions surrounding the priest's function *in persona Christi*.

The remaining question, however, is whether women's ordination necessarily entails a change to the symbolic meaning of the priesthood. Is it not more appropriate, to revisit Loades's questions, for Christological symbolism to lie in the office (rather than the person or biological sex) of the priest? And why should ordaining women *necessarily* imply addressing God as 'Our Mother?' Or, to combine both questions into one, why must the ordination of women change the symbolism of the priesthood in the ways which traditionalists claim? There is no easy answer. A traditionalist could reply, it is not so easy in matters of symbolism to sever the connection between an office and the person who holds it, which is true. On the other hand, a critic might point out that the Christian faith is made up of doctrines or hermeneutical rules which limit legitimate interpretation on a range of subjects, and have done so successfully almost from the beginning, which is also true. In the end, it is an open question whether the connection or the limitation would prove a more resilient influence on the symbolism of the priesthood. Symbolism, after all, is a matter of psychology, association, and interpretation, rather than of logical consequence. It is worth remembering the stakes in this debate, however: traditionalists need only provide a plausible rationale to accompany their main argument from tradition; their critics, however, need to deflect the charge of teaching error. An indefinite conclusion on this point is unsatisfactory for both sides, but likely weighs in favor of the traditionalist.

## Conclusion

Traditionalist Anglo-Catholicism claims that the practice of ordaining only men to the priesthood is established on the precedent of Christ, upheld by Scripture, and received through an unbroken tradition in the Church down the centuries. The ordination of women, therefore, is not to be permitted. It is this appeal to tradition which is the primary argument against the ordination of women; but unless God is thought to be arbitrary, the received practice implicitly asks for some rationale. Traditionalists insist firmly on the equality of women, and reject old explanations of this practice which rooted it in inequality. Therefore, as a secondary argument in explanation of the first, they turn to the question of how the biological sex of the celebrant might affect the symbolism associating the priest with both Christ and the Father. Because Christ took humanity as a man, and because God chose to

reveal himself under predominantly masculine language, mixing the female sex with a set of symbols referring to both is, effectively, a form of false teaching.

The value placed on continuity and symbolism, however, is not unique to the traditionalist position. Some who share these overarching commitments have been critical of the traditionalist argument. They maintain, instead, that the long tradition of a male priesthood is a human imposition of patriarchy, and that true continuity with the teachings of the New Testament lies in upholding the full equality of women, including their ordination to the priesthood. With regard to symbolism, they argue that making Christ's biological sex an essential feature of the incarnation effectively cuts women off from salvation, and offer a number of alternatives.

When the two positions are considered together, however, a number of questions emerge. On the one hand, advocates of women's ordination need to answer, just what kind of continuity is it that skips over ninety percent of the time between source and fulfilment—particularly when that time is measured not in days or years but in centuries? On the other hand, while the traditionalist vision of a differentiated equality of the sexes might work well enough within an organic understanding of the Church, the Church presents itself in fact as an institution rather than a family. If their emphasis on the equality of the sexes is not mere lip-service, then, they are faced with the question, what can be done either to make the church less institutional in its everyday life, to reflect differentiated equality in the decision making processes of the Church, or both?

Beyond these difficulties for both sides, however, there are also questions of a broader nature regarding the outlook of the Church:

- To what extent do theological ideas interpret practices; and to what extent do the Church's practices reflect ideas? In the matter of women's ordination, should the longstanding practice determine our thinking, or does it depend upon the ideas that have supported it?
- What weight should be given to the understanding of other Churches with regard to women's ordination? Do Anglicans, on our own, have the authority to change ordination practices in a way that is not accepted by other Churches which share our form of ordained ministry?
- What should be the Church's fundamental attitude towards its received practices—one of preservation and understanding, or one of renovation and correction? Where is the appropriate balance between learning from the past and learning from the present?

- Is the ordained ministry primarily a job with various pastoral and administrative duties to perform, or a personal role within a set of relationships in the Church?
- Is a hermeneutical limit likely to be effective in preventing wrong symbolic interpretations of women's ordination? Or does the need for such a limit indicate that this change should be avoided in the first place?

## Women's Ordination and the Character of the Ministry

As noted at the beginning of this paper, the third feature of the Anglo-Catholic understanding of Holy Orders - the mark or 'character' of the ministry - has been omitted from the main discussion, as it does not bear on the question of whether or not to ordain women. It does affect, however, the way that many traditionalist Anglo-Catholics understand the ministry of ordained women. This understanding draws on the technical requirements for the validity of the sacrament. These are often summed up as form, matter and intent; but also include, in a full account, a valid minister and subject. In ordination, the form, matter, and intent are the prayer of ordination, the laying on of hands, and the intent to confer Holy Orders; the valid minister is a bishop in the apostolic succession. However, because the witness of Scripture and Tradition do not provide for the ordination of women, a female ordinand is seen as an invalid subject. The ordination itself is therefore seen as invalid, and the mark or 'character' of Holy Orders is not imparted. The pastoral significance of this is that several sacraments (most notably the Eucharist and absolution) require a validly ordained priest as the minister. This leads to the painful conclusion that when these sacraments are administered by an ordained woman, they are invalid: there is no covenantal assurance of God's grace, and (at worst) there is perhaps no sacramental grace given at all.<sup>38</sup> Given the potentially drastic consequences, traditionalists generally insist on a standard of evidence in favor of women's ordination which is 'beyond a reasonable doubt.'

While this is, for traditionalists, a *consequence* of the argument against the ordination of women, a few of their critics have attacked it as a part of their counter-argument. The most developed argument on this point belongs to MacKinnon, who argues that the traditionalist position is 'distorted, even heretically innovative.'<sup>39</sup> For MacKinnon, the traditionalist's argument from symbolism entails 'that Christ's real presence is to be sought neither in the action nor in the consecrated elements, but in the person of the priest;' rather, '[t]he Eucharist is not a Passion play in which the part of Jesus would need to be played by a male.'<sup>40</sup> Traditional sacramental theology has emphasized that neither the moral state nor even the beliefs of the minister affect the validity of the sacraments (the principle that validity is *ex opere operato*, held by the Church since the Donatist controversy and upheld in Article 26); the traditionalist position, he believes, makes the biological sex of the celebrant a qualification of sacramental validity in a way that violates this consensus.<sup>41</sup>

MacKinnon's argument involves several misunderstandings, and is therefore not successful. It is nonetheless useful for clearing up these points of potential confusion, which largely involve the argument from symbolism discussed above. First, while the question of what makes a eucharistic celebrant an *appropriate* symbol of Christ was not asked until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, this symbolism in itself has been recognized in the Church for at least nineteen centuries. Needless to say, never in that time has the recognition of the celebrant as a symbol

of Christ resulted in anyone viewing the celebrant (instead of the consecrated elements) as the focal point of the eucharistic presence; the claim that traditionalists now effectively hold this view is simply bizarre.

Second, the traditionalist concern for *symbolism* should not be confused with *reenactment*. This confusion accounts, at least in part, for the notion that the eucharistic presence has been transferred to the celebrant; MacKinnon states that the ‘emphasis has shifted altogether from the bread and wine,’ to the celebrant’s ability ‘to achieve a *mimesis* of Christ’s sacrifice.’ However, a symbol, in the sense that is concerned here, is neither a reenactment or direct representation, nor an arbitrary label attached to an otherwise unrelated image. Rather it is (Merriam-Webster) ‘something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance.’ So, both by the proximity of the Last Supper to the Passion, and through the direct meaning of the words of institution, the Eucharist is a symbol of Christ’s death; taken in the context of the biblical imagery of the feast, it is also a symbol of the heavenly banquet. Christ is the self-offered sacrifice of the cross; but also the ceremonial leader at the last supper, the host of the heavenly feast, and the great high Priest who leads the prayers and worship of the redeemed. The eucharistic celebrant, in virtue of being the ritual ‘host’ of the sacramental meal as well as the leader of the congregation’s worship, stands in a role analogous to that of Christ in these respects (not with regard to Christ as victim), and so is a symbol of Christ ‘by reason of relationship’ and ‘association.’ The traditionalist claim is that the ordination of women to the priesthood brings into this network of associations a new element—the female sex—that risks introducing confusion into the wider system of symbolic connections. Importantly, however, it is not principally a matter of ‘resemblance,’ and the priest is *not* seen as being in any way a reenactor or representative of Christ’s self-offering; indeed, he is not generally seen even as replicating the Last Supper - the Eucharist is a remembrance and a participation, but not a reenactment.

Finally, MacKinnon’s charge that traditionalist concerns about the sex of the celebrant violate the principle *ex opere operato* is based on a sadly muddled interpretation of the traditionalist position: in his argument, traditionalists hold that:

- (a) a woman cannot validly celebrate the Eucharist due to her inability to symbolize Christ; therefore
- (b) women cannot be ordained.

On the contrary, however, traditionalists *actually* hold that

- (a) a woman cannot be ordained due to her inability to symbolize Christ; therefore
- (b) women cannot celebrate the Eucharist.<sup>42</sup>

With cause (women cannot be ordained) and effect (women cannot celebrate the Eucharist) in proper order, the charge that traditionalists are violating long-held principles of sacramental theology is obviated. (To use the Articles of Religion as landmarks, traditionalist views about the ministry of ordained women have more to do with Article 23 than with Article 26).

MacKinnon's argument is framed as a response to the traditionalists' argument from symbolism; the final point of our analysis showed, however, that what is involved in the ability of a woman priest to celebrate a valid Eucharist is not any argument for or against ordination, but (in the most direct sense) whether or not the ordination 'takes.' The proper inquiry on this point, then, is indicated by Loades, who notes that of the seven sacraments, ordination is the only one in which grace is held by some to 'slither off' half the potential recipients; and this is, in itself, a curiosity which demands explanation.<sup>43</sup> This question is less flamboyant than MacKinnon's criticism, but also more useful in sorting out the traditionalist concern with regard to the 'mark' of ordination. A possible clarification could be drawn from Andrewes's distinction, that ordination does not confer *gratia gratum faciens* (saving or sanctifying grace) but rather confers something akin to *gratia gratis data* (grace for a particular ministry). The proper comparison, with regard to the kind of grace in question, lies more with the charismatic gifts than with the other sacraments. This is some help - there is no expectation that charismatic gifts will be uniformly or universally received, even by those who seek them out. However, there are two new questions that result. First, the giving or not of charismatic 'graces' may relate to any number of things, according to God's wisdom; but it would be very odd indeed for someone to propose that certain gifts were given only to men. Second - the particular point which Loades has in view - charismatic graces are not conferred by a sacrament, whereas ordination is; and a sacrament is generally held to be a 'sure' and 'effectual' means of conveying the grace in question (see Article 25). With regard to the first point, it is worth recalling that Andrewes sees the grace of ordination as specifically *gratia gratis data* 'of the office.' The distinguishing feature, then, in why the graces of ordination might or might not be imparted lies in the question, who may rightly hold the office? And with regard to the second question, it may be noted that sacraments do not give grace in a merely mechanical fashion - a willfully impenitent recipient of Baptism or the Eucharist, for instance, is not held to receive the *grace* of the sacrament, regardless of whatever else may be involved. It comes back to the matter of who may rightly receive the sacrament. And so, in the end, answering Loades' question demonstrates that questions about the grace of ordination ultimately point back to the central discussion of this paper - whether or not women can be ordained.

However, raising the question from the angle of whether or not the grace of ordination is imparted raises an important point. There is, on the one hand, the claim that the Church *cannot* ordain women, and on the other, the claim that the Church *should* do so. What can easily be missed, however, in the argument between these two positions, is that

there are, in fact, two questions: *can* the Church, and *should* the Church ordain women? The position under discussion so far in this appendix is that the Church *cannot* and *should not*; the position of those who support women's ordination is that it *can* and *should*. Presumably, anyone who believes that the Church *should* but *cannot* is not within the Church—or will not be for long. There remains, however, the position which holds that the Church *can*, but *should not*. This is not discussed much in the literature surrounding women's ordination, although it is presumably the unspoken position of those who sympathize, in whole or in part, with traditionalist arguments against the ordination of women, but who are content to get along in practical terms, including the recognition of sacramental ministry, with women who have been ordained. There are, however, several possible grounds for holding this position:

1. As a question of *interpretation*, it could be held that with (arguably) no clear prohibition in Scripture, the Church has authority to ordain women; but given Scriptural precedent to the contrary and the weight of tradition, this should not be done without grave necessity.
2. For those with whom *ecumenical consent* weighs heavily, it might be concluded (on whatever grounds) that the Church as a whole might be able to ordain women, but that particular Churches do not have authority to do so without prior consensus on the part of the whole Church.
3. Those who are concerned for the *standard of proof* might accept female clergy as validly ordained if they believe there is a 'preponderance of the evidence' in favor of women's ordination, but still believe that the Church should not ordain women if this evidence is not 'beyond a reasonable doubt.'
4. Finally, an individual might differ in their views as to the *requirements* for validity, and so consider that validity is not an issue with regard to women who were ordained in good faith; even if they believe that on the basis of Scripture and tradition (or on some other grounds) the Church does not have the authority to allow this.

There are therefore a number of grounds (which are not mutually exclusive) for concluding that women *can* be ordained, but *should not*; they reflect, more or less, various ways of being partially convinced by the traditionalist argument, while differing in one or more aspects. Like the claim that women cannot be validly ordained, this position also points back to the previous discussions, particularly those regarding Scripture and tradition. In most cases the reference is explicit. Even where it is not, however, the fact remains that questions about the 'mark' of ordination are, in themselves, concerned with the consequences of women's ordination, whereas the prior discussions of tradition and symbolism bear directly on the question of practice itself.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> To be precise, the ordination of women to the episcopate has a much deeper effect regarding the recognition of orders and the interchangeability of the ministry, due to the role of the bishop in maintaining the unity of the Church, and in ordination. See Jonathan Baker, ed., *Consecrated Women?* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004) 8.3.3-4; but compare note 139 in Colin Podmore, ed., *Fathers in God?* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2015), 163.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Kallistos Ware, 'Man, Woman, and the Priesthood of Christ,' in Elizabeth Behr-Sigel and Kallistos Ware, *the Ordination of Women in the Orthodox Church* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2002), 66

<sup>3</sup> Mascal, 'Women and the Priesthood of the Church' (London: The Church Literature Association, 1960), 33-34.

<sup>4</sup> Among the roughly orthodox branches of Christianity, the first women were only ordained in the 1800s, and then only in denominations which did not claim to maintain the historic three-fold order of the Church's ministry. Among denominations which do hold to this order, the ordination of women has emerged only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Among Anglicans, the first woman to be ordained was Florence Li Tim-Oi, ordained in Hong Kong as an emergency provision in 1944; but her ordination was condemned by the Lambeth Conference in 1948, and she was suspended from the priestly ministry until reinstated in 1970.

<sup>5</sup> G.R. Bridge, *Women and the Apostolic Ministry?* (Parry Sound, ON: The Convent Society, 1997), 51-54.

<sup>6</sup> See especially Sara Butler, *The Catholic Priesthood and Women* (Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2006), 60-66.

<sup>7</sup> *Consecrated Women*, 8.4.7.

<sup>8</sup> 'Reception' is the process—particularly important in Roman Catholicism and, after Vatican II, adopted in ecumenical discussion—by which a new doctrine or practice becomes formally accepted throughout the whole Church. The idea of a 'reception process' for women's ordination was set forth by Archbishop Robert Runcie in his address to the 1988 Lambeth Conference. On its subsequent development, see *Consecrated Women?* 8.4.3. For a fuller discussion see the essays in Paul Avis, ed., *Seeking the Truth of Change in the Church* (London: T and T Clark, 2004), especially Paul Richardson, 'Reception and Division in the Church,' 123-138.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Kirk, *Without Precedent* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 1-8.

<sup>10</sup> Bridge, 109-111. Cf. Mascal, *Women and the Priesthood*, 26-28; *Women Priests?* (London: The Church Literature Association, 1972), 11-13.

<sup>11</sup> Mascal, 'Women and the Priesthood,' 34.

<sup>12</sup> C.S. Lewis, 'Priestesses in the Church?' in *Undeceptions* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1971), 193-194.

<sup>13</sup> Several sources buttress this with appeals to history and anthropology—religions with an all-male priesthood have typically held a transcendent view of God, whereas religions with mixed-sex clergy have tended to be polytheistic or pantheistic. In particular, it is noted that the religion of Israel, with its all-male priesthood, emerged in a polytheistic environment dominated by the Mesopotamian/Canaanite mother goddess Ishtar (Ashtaroth); Christianity similarly emerged in a Mediterranean context in which the Roman-Egyptian mystery cult of Isis was particularly popular. While this approach is rejected by some (e.g. Richardson), it is however embraced by Beattie, who argues that paganism is now sufficiently distant that Christianity should overcome its inherited fear of the feminine. See the appendix by E.O. James in Mascal, 'Women and the Priesthood,' 36-39; *Consecrated Women*, 3.2.4, 7; Alan Richardson, 'Women and the Priesthood,' in *Lambeth Essays on Ministry*, ed. A.M. Ramsey (London: SPCK, 1969), 75-76; Tina Beattie, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate* (London: Continuum, 2002), 202-204.

<sup>14</sup> Richardson, 75-76; Donald MacKinnon, 'The *Icon Christi* and Eucharistic Theology,' *Theology* (March/April 1992): 110.

- <sup>15</sup> Ann Loades, 'Women in the Episcopate?' *Anvil* 21 no. 2 (2004): 118.
- <sup>16</sup> Beattie, God's Mother, 197-202.
- <sup>17</sup> Loades, 'Women,' 116.
- <sup>18</sup> MacKinnon, 111.
- <sup>19</sup> Beattie, 'Vision and Vulnerability,' in *Exchanges of Grace* (London: SCM Press, 2008), 239-242.
- <sup>20</sup> Beattie, God's Mother, 202.
- <sup>21</sup> A paraphrase of Gregory of Nazianzus, 'that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved,' in 'Letter to Cledonius the Priest Against Apollinarius,' accessible online at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf207.iv.ii.iii.html>.
- <sup>22</sup> Beattie, God's Mother, 71.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 202; MacKinnon, 112.
- <sup>24</sup> Loades, 'On Gender,' in *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis*, ed. MacSwain and Ward (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 167.
- <sup>25</sup> Ware, 85-86.
- <sup>26</sup> E.g. by William Witt, who blogs at [willgwitt.org](http://willgwitt.org).
- <sup>27</sup> MacKinnon, 113.
- <sup>28</sup> Loades, 'On Gender,' 166-167.
- <sup>29</sup> Quoted in Beattie, 'Vision,' 244.
- <sup>30</sup> Kirk, 48-65, 126-128.
- <sup>31</sup> Mascall, 'Women and the Priesthood,' 6.
- <sup>32</sup> Loades, 'On Gender,' 167.
- <sup>33</sup> Mascall does use such language, but it is for purposes of drawing a contrast between *person* and *nature* in the incarnation and not in the sense criticized here. It is however, language that is prone to misinterpretation and should be avoided. See Mascall, 'Women and the Priesthood,' 26.
- <sup>34</sup> Christian Art serves to illustrate the point: the representation of Jesus and other biblical characters with local physical features is a long and time-honored tradition, in contrast to modern artistic expressions which have experimented with Jesus' sex. Representations of Jesus as northern European, African, or Asian are far from being as provocative as Edwina Sandys' *Christa*.
- <sup>35</sup> Loades, 'Women in the Episcopate?' 114, 119.
- <sup>36</sup> So, for instance, Isaiah 66:13 is the only passage which uses the word 'mother' in describing God, although a few other uses of maternal imagery can be found (e.g. Matt. 23:37). In contrast, maternal imagery is widely used of God's people.
- <sup>37</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1142. Available online at [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\\_\\_\\_P37.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P37.HTM).
- <sup>38</sup> For a nuanced statement, see 'Communion, Catholicity and a Catholic Life' (London: Forward in Faith, 2015), §2.1-2.9. Available online at [http://www.sswsh.com/uploads/A\\_Catholic\\_Life\\_for\\_web.pdf](http://www.sswsh.com/uploads/A_Catholic_Life_for_web.pdf).
- <sup>39</sup> MacKinnon, 112.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid., 110.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> As noted above, symbolism is a subordinate concern for many who hold the traditional position. However, it is emphasized here in order to make a clear comparison with MacKinnon.
- <sup>43</sup> Loades, 'Women,' 117.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Women's Ordination from an Evangelical Perspective

*In addition to the works by Anglican scholars that already cited, here are some major works by Protestant authors on this topic.*

#### Books in favor of Women's Ordination

##### *Collections of Essays*

Mickelsen, Alvera (editor), *Women, Authority & the Bible*. InterVarsity Press, 1986.

An early collection of papers by evangelical Protestant authors with responses from their evangelical colleagues. The essays treat Biblical authority and headship, and certain key passages in I Corinthians 11 and 14, and I Timothy 2 that bear on the topic.

Pierce, Ronald W. and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis (editors), *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, Second Edition (InterVarsity Press, 2005).

Now the standard collection, of evangelical Protestant essays treating all the major topics (exegetical, theological, hermeneutical, cultural and historical) thoroughly and clearly.

##### *General Works on Women in the New Testament and the Early Church*

Bauckham, Richard, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels*. Eerdmans, 2002.

Bauckham argues persuasively for the leadership ministries of women in the New Testament.

Cooper, Kate, *Band of Angels: The Forgotten World of Early Christian Women*. The Overlook Press, 2013.

Cooper says that because the domestic sphere in Greco-Roman society was explicitly "women's world," and because the early Christian house churches were located in that world, women's leadership was both logical and prominent in the first 150 years of the Christian movement.

Keener, Craig S., *Paul, Women & Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*. Hendrickson Publishers, 1992.

Keener surveys the central texts: I Corinthians 11:1-16, I Corinthians 14:34-35, Ephesians 5:18-33, I Timothy 2:9-15. (*See below for more detailed studies on each of these passages.*)

Macy, Gary, *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

Macy's thesis is that before the 12th century, ordination in Western Christianity was more functional (i.e. induction into a certain ministry) and missiological than sacramental, and included women in certain orders. The 12th century church (in its spirit of systematization) linked ordination closely to the Mass, and excluded women from all orders.

Payne, Philip B., *Man and Woman, One in Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Paul's Letters*. Zondervan, 2009

Like the volume by Craig Keener (above), Payne's work surveys the central texts in great detail, emphasizing the first-century situations into which Paul spoke correctively. Payne shows that the so-called "prohibitive texts" address specific abuses and errors at the time, and do not in the least exclude women's leadership, then or now.

Witherington, Ben III, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.

An early, but still valuable, survey of women's place in Greco-Roman society, and the world of the early Christian house churches where women's leadership flourished.

### ***Commentaries on I Corinthians (11:1-16 and 14:34-34)***

Peppiatt, Lucy, *Women and Worship at Corinth: Paul's Rhetorical Arguments in I Corinthians*. Cascade Books, 2015.

Peppiatt explores the possibility that the "headship" passage in I Corinthians 11:3-10 may be a quotation to which Paul is responding, and that his own teaching begins in verse 11.

Thiselton, Anthony C., *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Eerdmans, 2000: in *The New International Greek Testament Commentary*).

Thiselton's commentary is huge and exhaustive, arguing in great detail for the need to read Paul's teaching in the context of Corinth in the 50s AD, and not as a deliberate and timeless prohibition of women's leadership.

Witherington, Ben III, *Conflict & Community in Corinth: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on I and II Corinthians*. Eerdmans, 1995.

Witherington offers perceptive observations on Paul's intentions, in the two "problematical" texts that appear to prohibit women's leadership in the house church context.

### ***Commentaries on I Timothy 2: 8-8-15***

Fee, Gordon D., *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*. Baker Books, 2011.

Fee offers brief but useful comments on verses 11-12, to the effect that Paul was addressing a specific abuse in Ephesus (women "domineering" over men, interpreting *authentein* in a pejorative sense) and not offering a universal or eternal prohibition of women's teaching ministry.

Kroeger, Catherine Clark and Richard Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking I Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*. Baker Book House, 1992.

This was the groundbreaking study that explored the context of Artemis-worship in Ephesus, its influence on women in the Ephesian house churches, and Paul's desire to correct certain errors in teaching and practice that Christian women were importing from their environment.

Wright, N.T., *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*. InterVarsity Press, 2009

A useful short collection of Bible studies for individuals and small groups. Wright's words summarize the general tendency of evangelical Protestant exegesis of I Timothy 2:

*"I believe the apostle was saying that on the one hand women should be trained and educated in the faith (in contrast to much of the Roman Empire), but that on the other hand Christianity should not become a cult like that of Artemis in*

*Ephesus, where women did the leading and kept the men in line. Men should not lord it over women, nor women over men"* (page 19).

## **Books containing a variety of views**

### ***Collections of Essays***

Clouse, Bonnidell and Robert G., eds., *Women in Ministry: Four Views*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1989.

Written from an evangelical Protestant perspective, the editors have four authors who present arguments for and against women in ministry from different perspectives. The most interesting aspect of this work is that the editors included a rebuttal section where the scholars could critique, refute, or correct each other's arguments.

Beck, James R. and Blomberg, Craig L., eds., *Two Views on Women in Ministry*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.

This volume is particularly helpful, not only the four essays (Craig S. Keener and Linda L. Belleville for the Egalitarian position and Thomas R. Schreiner and Ann L. Bowman for the Complementarian position), but also Blomberg's concluding essay.

## **Books not in favor of women's ordination**

### ***Collections of Essays***

Piper, John and Grudem, Wayne, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1991.

Especially helpful since it interacts specifically with the case made by those taking the Bible seriously on the other side. It also makes an attempt at exploring how to apply this teaching.

### ***General Works on Women in the New Testament and the Early Church***

Mitchell, Patrick, *The Scandal of Gender: Early Christian Teaching on the Man and the Woman*. Salisbury, Mass.: Regina Orthodox Press, 1998.

A presentation of early Christian views on the roles of men and women using primary sources from that era.

*Works discussing Men's and Women's roles in the Church and Society*

Clark, Stephen B., *Man and Woman in Christ: An Examination of the Roles of Men and Women in Light of Scripture and the Social Sciences*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant, 1980.

A serious examination of Scripture and the sociological, anthropological and historical issues of the roles of men and women as society made the transition from traditional to technological and the changed from perceiving masculine and feminine roles from defined to free individuals. This work is valuable as a conservative evangelical response to the argument that those who resist a redefinition of women's roles have ignored the sociological and anthropological issues.

Harper, Michael, *Equal and Different: Male and Female in Church and Family*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1994.

Harper, an Anglican priest and key figure in the Anglican Pentecostal movement, left the Anglican Church in the 1990's over what he saw as ignoring of the clear teaching of Scripture, especially on the issue of women's ordination. This book outlines the facts he saw as most significant in his spiritual journey from indifference over the issue to a clear conviction that women's ordination was unacceptable in light of the teachings of Scripture and the testimony of the historic church. Harper's presentation of early church history benefits from citing the historical references directly, rather than relying on other authors' opinions and summaries of them.

Hurley, James B., *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981.

This book approaches Scripture from a Reformed perspective and attempts to develop Biblical principles of the roles of men and women, taking into account the cultural perspectives of the time the passages were written. It also attempts to show how these principles can be applied in a variety of modern situations.

### *Works discussing relevant Scripture Passages*

Hauke, Manfred, *Women in the Priesthood?: A Systematic Analysis in the Light of the Order of Creation and Redemption*, tr. David Kipp. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986.

While neither evangelical, nor Anglican, Hauke presents a thorough and ecumenical examination of the issue. This book is valuable to evangelicals for its scholarly discussion of the biblical issue of created order and the implications that this teaching has for the theology and doctrine of the Church.

Köstenberger, Andreas J., Schreiner, Thomas R., and Baldwin, H. Scott, eds., *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1Timothy 2:9-15*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.

A thorough and scholarly analysis of the Greek of this passage, coming to the conclusion that the best translation supports a complementarian view of the roles of men and women and a traditional view of the roles of men and women in the life of the Church.

### *Studies and Articles*

"A Report of the Study Concerning the Ordination of Women Undertaken by the Anglican Mission in America: A survey of the Leading Theological Convictions," unpublished paper by the Rt. Rev. John H. Rodgers and the Women's Ordination Study Team (July 31, 2003): available online at [www.vulcanhammer.org/island/w.pdf](http://www.vulcanhammer.org/island/w.pdf)

"The Doctrine of the Trinity and Its Bearing on the Relationship of Men and Women," the 1999 Sydney Anglican Diocesan Doctrine Commission Report: available on line at <http://www.sds.asn.au/Site/104629.asp?ph=cp>

"Women, Ordination and the Bible", written by Rod Whitacre, 28August 2014: available on line at [http://www.tsm.edu/2014/09/03/women\\_ordination\\_and\\_the\\_bible/](http://www.tsm.edu/2014/09/03/women_ordination_and_the_bible/)

This article details the reasons from Scripture that moved this Trinity faculty member from being a supporter of women's ordination to the conviction that Scripture does not support it as a practice in the Church.

## Women's Ordination from an Anglo-catholic Perspective

### *General Anglican Sources*

[Church of England]. *The Priesthood of the Ordained Ministry*. London: Church House Publishing, 1986.

Study by the Church of England regarding the Anglican understanding of Holy Orders.

[Church of England]. *The Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: A Second Report by the House of Bishops of the General Synod of the Church of England*. London: Church House Publishing, 1988.

Study by the Church of England into the theological arguments for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood.

[Church of England]. *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate*. London: Church House Publishing, 2004.

The so-called 'Rochester Report,' considering the arguments for and against the ordination of women to the episcopate in the Church of England.

Avis, Paul, ed. *Seeking the Truth of Change in the Church: Reception, Communion and the Ordination of Women*. London: T and T Clark, 2004.

A collection of essays edited by noted ecclesiological scholar Paul Avis, into the concepts of 'reception' and communion as they relate specifically to the Anglican discussions of the ordination of women.

### *Catholic Perspective—Notable Sources*

*The works listed below are both significant for their contribution to the arguments over women's ordination, and should be easy to access.*

Beattie, Tina. *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate: A Marian Narrative of Women's Salvation*. London: Continuum, 2002.

Tina Beattie is a lay Roman Catholic theologian, but her work has received approbation from feminist theologians within Anglicanism. This work offers one of the most robust expositions of the Catholic feminist position available. Chapters three

and eight specifically discuss the ordination of women. Respectively, these chapters review difficulties in the official Roman Catholic position, and advance the argument for a Marian priesthood of women.

Kirk, Geoffrey. *Without Precedent: Scripture, Tradition, and the Ordination of Women*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016.

Kirk examines the biblical and historical precedents cited in support of the ordination of women, arguing that none of them are sufficient to bear the weight placed on them, and that the ordination of women is rather a capitulation to anti-Christian values in Western culture. Topics covered include Christ's treatment of women, Galatians 3:28, Junia, and Mary Magdalene. Although he is now in the Roman Ordinariate, Kirk previously served within the Church of England and was in the leadership of Forward in Faith UK; he therefore addresses the topic from the perspective of the debates within the Church of England.

Lewis, C.S. 'Priestesses in the Church?' In *Undeceptions: Essays on Theology and Ethics*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1971. 191-196. Also printed in *God in the Dock*.

Lewis's essay is the earliest argument with regard to a symbolic dimension of the priesthood, and still holds an important place in the discussion today. Lewis acknowledges the rational arguments in favor of women's ordination, but holds that revelation is supra-rational, and that human nature has an impenetrable, mysterious aspect to it which should not be taken lightly. Taken together, these elements raise the concern that women's ordination violates certain mysteries of creation which are indicated by God's choice to reveal himself in predominantly masculine language.

Loades, Ann. 'On Women.' In *The Cambridge Companion to C.S. Lewis*, ed. Robert MacSwain and Michael Ward. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 160-173.

Loades offers a critical response to Lewis's essay, arguing that women's ordination need not have the effects Lewis fears. The Church has not, historically, limited itself to *only* the language of Scripture in talking about God; so why should a change to priestly symbolism about God be a violation, rather than an enrichment?

Mascall, E.L. 'Women Priests?' London: The Church Literature Association, 1972. Available online at [http://trushare.com/Mascall Women Priests.htm](http://trushare.com/Mascall%20Women%20Priests.htm) and elsewhere.

This essay, which reflects Mascall's developed thought on the ordination of women, is frequently referred to by Anglo-Catholics. In it, Mascall reviews the early development of the discussion of women's ordination within Anglicanism, makes

arguments from tradition, the difference of the sexes (particularly in light of cultural change), and revisits Lewis's argument from symbolism. The essay concludes with a long discussion of the views of Swiss Reformed theologian Jean-Jacques von Allmen.

Podmore, Colin, ed. *Fathers in God? Resources for Reflection on Women in the Episcopate*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2015.

*Fathers in God* is a compilation of the materials from the traditionalist Anglo-Catholic side of the women bishops debate in the Church of England in the early 2000s. It includes the Anglo-Catholic section of the so-called Rochester Report (*Women Bishops in the Church of England?* Chaired by then Bishop of Rochester Michael Nazir-Ali), together with the theological material from *Consecrated Women* (see below), and the 2006 address of Cardinal Kasper to the English House of Bishops on the ecumenical ramifications of the ordination of women.

### *Ecumenical Sources*

[Paul VI.] *Inter insigniores (Declaration on the Question of Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood)*. Rome: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1976. Available online at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19761015\\_inter-insigniores\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19761015_inter-insigniores_en.html).

[John Paul II.] *Ordinatio sacerdotalis (Apostolic Letter of John Paul II to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone)*. Rome: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1992. Available online at [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1994/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19940522\\_ordinatio-sacerdotalis.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19940522_ordinatio-sacerdotalis.html).

[John Paul II.] *Responsum ad propositum dubitum Concerning the Teaching Contained in 'Ordinatio sacerdotalis.'* Rome: Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1995. Available online at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19951028\\_dubium-ordinatio-sac\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19951028_dubium-ordinatio-sac_en.html).

The three documents given above outline the official Roman Catholic position on the ordination of women. *Inter insigniores* gives the argument from tradition, supported by the argument from the priest's role *in persona Christi*; *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* reviews these arguments and states the conclusion, principally from the argument concerning tradition, that the ordination of women is a change which lies beyond the authority of the Church to make. The *Responsum ad dubitum* clarifies that the teaching of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* is to be considered infallible.

Butler, Sr. Sara. *The Catholic Priesthood and Women: A Guide to the Teaching of the Church*. Chicago: Hillenbrand Books, 2007.

Butler's work is widely regarded as the best guide to the official position of the Roman Catholic Church. Of particular note is her review of the patristic discussion of women's ordination.

Behr-Sigel, Elizabeth and Kallistos Ware, *The Ordination of Women in the Orthodox Church*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2000.

Eastern Orthodoxy, unlike Roman Catholicism, has not produced any definitive rulings on the question of women's ordination, although there is a general consensus that the practice is not to be adopted. This book contains essays by each of the authors discussing the historical development of the discussion within Orthodoxy as well as its theological aspects. Behr-Sigel and Ware both hold a liberal position - meaning, within the context of Orthodoxy, that they are primarily arguing against closing discussion of the question prematurely. In particular, they note that a clear understanding of what women's ministry should be is especially important for those Orthodox churches which are in contact with Western culture, and that many of the Orthodox arguments to date have relied heavily on Western positions, rather than being developed from within the Orthodox tradition.

### ***Catholic Perspective—Other Sources***

*The sources included here were read for the above paper; however, they either make relatively minor contributions, or may be difficult to acquire due either due to 'in house' publishing, or publication in academic journals. Consecrated Women is the exception: it is both a major contribution, and easy to acquire; however, its theological content is included in Fathers in God?, listed above.*

Baker, Jonathan, ed. *Consecrated Women? A Contribution to the Women Bishops Debate*. Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2004.

*Consecrated Women* is a Forward in Faith UK document released alongside the Rochester Report, presenting the arguments for the traditionalist position in considerable depth. Topics covered include the example of Christ, God as Father, headship, the marriage imagery of Scripture, priesthood in the Old and New Testaments, ministry in the early Church, and the nature of the episcopate. It also includes the legal framework of a proposal for a separate traditionalist province within the Church of England, in addition to the provinces of Canterbury and York.

Beattie, Tina. 'Vision and Vulnerability: The Significance of Sacramentality and the Woman Priest for Feminist Theology.' In *Exchanges of Grace: Essays in Honour of Ann Loades*. London: SCM Press, 2008. 235-249.

In this essay, Beattie examines two PhD theses by women priests which examine the effects of their ministry in their parishes in the Church of England.

Bridge, G.R. *Women and the Apostolic Ministry?* Parry Sound, ON: The Convent Society, 1997.

Bridge's short study examines the arguments against women's ordination from Scripture (including the doctrine of creation), tradition, and sacramental validity, as well as noting the ramifications of the practice in terms of ecumenism and the social and political dimensions of the debate.

Loades, Ann. 'Women in the Episcopate?' *Annal* 21 no. 2 (2004): 113-119.

In this short article, Loades reviews her participation on the Church of England commission on women in the episcopate, and outlines several of the standard objections to the traditionalist position.

MacKinnon, Donald. 'The *Icon Christi* and Eucharistic Theology.' *Theology* (March/April 1992): 109-113.

MacKinnon takes aim at the connection drawn by traditionalist Anglo-Catholics between the ordination of women and sacramental validity, arguing that their position is a potentially heretical innovation.

Mascall, E.L. 'Women and the Priesthood of the Church.' London: The Church Literature Association, 1960.

This essay emphasizes the equality of men and women in the New Testament. However Mascall notes that Christ chose twelve male apostles, and that the Christian life is not a matter of general categories, but of personal enactment which is necessarily gendered. The sexes are equal but different, and this is reflected in the requirement that only men can be ordained. This essay represents an earlier stage of Mascall's thought on the ordination of women, as seen in his treatment of 'protestant' views which contrasts with the later essay given above.

Richardson, Alan. 'Women and the Priesthood.' In *Lambeth Essays on Ministry: Essays Written for the Lambeth Conference 1968*. Ed. Arthur Michael Ramsey. London: SPCK, 1969. 75-78.

Richardson rejects several traditionalist arguments as ‘non-theological,’ and notes that women’s ordination is consistent with the ‘priesthood of all believers.’ However, he notes the lack of precedent and wonders whether such a change might not require wider ecumenical authority than a single church can claim.

Underhill, Evelyn. ‘Ideals of the Ministry of Women.’ In *Mixed Pasture: Twelve Essays and Addresses*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock 2015. 113-122.

The earliest source included here, Underhill’s 1932 address to a conference on women’s ministry states her opposition to women’s ordination on the grounds of tradition, and the opinion that only an ecumenical consensus among those who shared the three-fold order of ministry could change this tradition. Additionally, she holds that preoccupation with ordained status distracts from what is necessary for a real, effective growth in the ministry of women.