

The LCMS on the Role of Women in the Church

1. Historical Background
2. "Woman Suffrage in the Church" (CTCR Report, 1968)
 - a. Six Conclusions
 1. We find nothing in Scripture which prohibits women from exercising the franchise in voters' assemblies.
 2. Those statements of Scripture which direct women to keep silent in the church, and which prohibit them to teach and to exercise authority over men, we understand to mean that women ought not to hold the pastoral office.
 3. Such passages, we hold, indicate that women ought not to hold any other office in the church whose function it is to assist the pastor in the exercise and administration of the Office of the Keys.
 4. The principles set forth in such passages, we believe, apply also to holding any other kind of office in the institutional structures of the church which might involve women in a violation of the order of creation.
 5. We find no statement in Scripture which prohibits women from holding office on the boards and committees of Synod whether such offices are filled by election or by appointment.
 6. We conclude that the Synod itself and the congregations of the Synod are at liberty to alter their constitutions and their practices to conform to these declarations if they believe that such changes are in the best interest of the congregation and of the church at large.
 - b. 1969 Resolution 2-17
3. Opinion of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (1971 *CW*, 244)
4. "Women in the Church: Scriptural Principles and Ecclesial Practice" (CTCR Report, 1985)
 - a. Four Scriptural Principles
 1. *Man and woman are equal in having the same relationship to God and to nature. (p. 20)*
 2. *Distinctive identities for man and woman in their relation to each other were assigned by God at creation. These identities are not nullified by Christ's redemption, and they should be reflected in the church. (p. 27)*
 3. *Subordination, when applied to the relationship of woman and man in the church, expresses a divinely established relationship in which one looks to the other, but not in a domineering sense. Subordination is for the sake of orderliness and unity. (p. 32)*
 4. *The creational pattern of male headship requires that woman not hold the formal position of the authoritative public teaching office in the church, that is, the office of pastor. (p. 37)*

- b. *Women have all the God-given rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the priesthood of all believers that men do. God's people are called priests not to confer status but to commission all of them to declare His deeds of salvation. All Christians have been given the responsibility to live their Christian faith in their several callings, including the responsibility to profess and share the Christian faith and to judge all doctrine. (p. 38)*
 - c. *The inspired writers of Scripture do not discuss the implications of the order of creation for life in the civil estate. In Lutheran theology there is general agreement on the necessity of distinguishing carefully between that which happens in the civil sphere and that which takes place in the spiritual sphere. (p. 38)*
5. "The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices" (CTCR Report, 1994)
- On the one hand, we must take care not to diminish in any way two valid themes. On the other hand, we must take care not to diminish in any way what the Bible teaches about the full possession by men and women, equally, of the rights and privileges of the priesthood of believers. At the same time, we must remain faithful to biblical teaching regarding the uniqueness of God's gift of the pastoral office, and the divinely given requirements which circumscribe it. (p. 8)*
6. "To Affirm the Conclusion of the 1994 CTCR Report *The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices*" (pp. 24-26)
7. "Guidelines for the Service of Women in Congregational Offices" (Guidelines for Congregations, January 2005, pp. 19-23)

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