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# Reasons Why Women Should Be Ordained



Pope Francis:

1. Pope Francis' theological understanding is that a priest, "acts in the person of Christ".
2. He does not like "clericalism," or the emphasis on the power and privilege of priesthood. He has spent a large part of his three years as Pope speaking out against arrogant priests who are more concerned with power than service.
3. Pope Francis says, "Women in the Church must be valued, not clericalized."
4. Pope Francis often speaks of the importance of lay people and women in leadership positions throughout the Church.
5. Pope Francis resents *machismo*, which is an especially resonant concept for a Latin American, and clericalism, an exaggerated emphasis on the power and privilege of the clergy, which is virtually this pope's personal *bête noire*.
6. Gender does matter for him.

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## Joan Chittister:

1. What do the people really need in a period when the sacraments are being lost in a sacramental church but all approaches to the question--even the admission that there is an admissible question about the nature and meaning of priesthood is being blocked, obstructed, denied, and suppressed?
  
2. There's a five year old girl who, when her parents answered her question about the absence of women priests in their parish with the flat explanation that "We don't have girl-priests in our church, darling," the little girl thought for a minute and then responded quite simply but sharply, "Then why do we go there?!"
  
3. Clearly, the church is changing even while it reasserts its changelessness. But static resistance is a far cry from the dynamism of the early church in which Prisca, and Lydia, and Thecla, and Phoebe and hundreds of women like them, opened house churches, walked as disciples of Paul, "constrained him," the scripture says, to serve a given region, instructed people in the faith and ministered to the fledgling Christian communities with no apology, no argument, no tricky theological shell games about whether they were ministering 'in persona Christi' or 'in nomine Christi'.
  
4. What do people really need? They need what they needed when the temple became more important than the Torah. They need what they needed when the faith was more a vision than an institution. They need what they have always needed: they need community, not patriarchal clericalism; they need the sacred, not the sexist; they need the human, not the homophobic. The people need more prophets of equality, not more pretenders to a priesthood of male privilege. They need discipleship, not canonical decrees.
  
5. If we seek the ordination that Jesus gives, we must pursue three things:
  - a) we must understand the nature of discipleship;
  - b) we must recognize the signs of true discipleship and
  - c) we must be willing to give ourselves over to what discipleship demands now.

To follow Jesus, in other words, is to follow the one who turns the world upside down, even the religious world.

6. The church that preaches the equality of women but does nothing to demonstrate it within its own structures, that proclaims a theology of equality but insists on an ecclesiology of superiority is out of sync with its best self and dangerously close to repeating the theological errors that underlay centuries of church sanctioned slavery.

7. The church must not only preach the gospel, it must not obstruct it. It must be what it says. It must demonstrate what it teaches.

8. The major question facing Christians today, perhaps, is what does discipleship mean in a church that doesn't want women anywhere except in the pews. If discipleship is reduced to maleness, what does that do to the rest of the Christian dispensation? If only men can really live discipleship to the fullest, what is the use of a woman aspiring to the discipleship baptism implies, demands, demonstrates in the life of Jesus at all? What does it mean for the women themselves who are faced with rejection, devaluation, and a debatable theology based on the remnants of a bad biology theologized? What do we do when a church proclaims the equality of women but builds itself on structures that assure their inequality?

9. To preach a theology of equality, to say that all persons are equal in God's sight but at the same time maintain a theology of inequality, a spirituality of domination, that bars half the human race on the basis of gender from the fullness of faith, that says that women have no place in the dominion of the church and the development of doctrine - and all of this in the name of God is to live a lie.

10. We must take discipleship seriously or we shall leave the church of the future with functionaries but without disciples. We cannot renew priesthood without renewing discipleship - our own as well as others.

11. As Pope John XXIII stated, "Whenever people discover that they have rights, they have the responsibility to claim them." And because Proverbs teaches clearly, "If the people will lead, the leaders will eventually follow." Therefore, what must we do now as priestly people? We must take responsibility. We must take back the church. We must lead leaders to the fullness of Christian life!

*[Read Joan Chittister's full address to the Women's Ordination Worldwide conference at Dublin, 2002:  
<http://womensordinationworldwide.org/dublin-2001/2014/2/2/joan-chittister-osb-discipleship-for-a-priestly-people-in-a-priestless-period/>]*

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## Wijngaards Institute:

1. One priesthood in Christ - Through baptism women and men share equally in the new priesthood of Christ.

This includes openness to Holy Orders.

2. Empowered to preside -

At the Last Supper Jesus empowered both women and men. Both can be ordained to preside at the Eucharist.

3. Cultural bias

- The Church's practice of not ordaining women as priests was based on a three-fold prejudice against women. This affected the judgment of Church leaders.

4. Women have been deacons - The Church gave women the full sacramental ordination of deacons. This proves women can be ordained.

5. The ability for women to be ordained has been present in the Church's latent Tradition.

One example is the age-long devotion to Mary as Priest. It shows that, according to the 'sense of the faithful', in Mary the ban against women has already been overcome.

6. The wider Church accepts women priests -

After serious study and prayer other Christian Churches now ordain women as priests. Though not everything other Churches do can be accepted by the Catholic Church, this converging consensus by believing Christians confirms that ordaining women is according to the mind of Christ.

7. Women too are, in fact, called to be priests - The fact that many responsible Catholic women discern in themselves a vocation to the priesthood is a sign of the Holy Spirit we may not ignore.

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## Matthew Fox:

**Like Luther, I present 95 theses** or in my case, 95 faith observations drawn from my 64 years of living and practicing religion and spirituality. I trust I am not alone in recognizing these truths. For me they represent a return to our origins, a return to the spirit and the teaching of Jesus and his prophetic ancestors, and of the Christ which was a spirit that Jesus' presence and teaching unleashed.

**Wie Luther stelle ich 95 Thesen** vor, oder in meinem Falle 95 Glaubensbeobachtungen, die aus den 64 Jahren meines Leben und meiner religiösen und spirituellen Praxis stammen. Ich bin sicher, daß ich mit der Erkenntnis dieser Wahrheiten nicht allein dastehe. Für mich stellen sie eine Rückkehr zu unseren Ursprüngen dar, eine Rückkehr zum Geist und der Lehre Jesu und seiner prophetischen Vorfahren, und zu dem Christus, dessen Geist durch die Gegenwart und Lehre Jesu entfaltet wurde.

1. God is both Mother and Father.

Gott ist Mutter und Vater.

2. At this time in history, God is more Mother than Father because the feminine is most missing and it is important to bring gender balance back.

In unserer Zeit ist Gott mehr Mutter als Vater, denn das Weibliche fehlt am meisten, und es ist wesentlich, das Gleichgewicht der Geschlechter wieder herzustellen.

3. God is always new, always young and always "in the beginning."

Gott ist immer neu, immer jung und immer „im Anfang“.

4. God the Punitive Father is not a God worth honoring but a false god and an idol that serves empire-builders. The notion of a punitive, all-male God, is contrary to the full nature of the Godhead who is as much female and motherly as it is masculine and fatherly.

Gott als strafender Vater ist keine anbetungswürdige Gottheit, sondern ein Götze, der den Imperialisten dient. Die Vorstellung eines strafenden, männlichen Gottes widerspricht dem umfassenden Wesen der Gottheit, die ebenso weiblich und mütterlich wie männlich und väterlich ist.

5. “All the names we give to God come from an understanding of ourselves.” (Eckhart)  
Thus people who worship a punitive father are themselves punitive.

“Alle Namen, die wir Gott geben, stammen aus unserem Selbstverständnis.” (Meister Eckhart\*) Deshalb sind diejenigen, die Gott als strafend bezeichnen, selbst strafend.

6. Theism (the idea that God is ‘out there’ or above and beyond the universe) is false. All things are in God and God is in all things (panentheism).

Der Theismus (die Vorstellung, daß Gott irgendwo ‘da draußen’ ist oder oberhalb oder außerhalb des Universums) ist falsch. Alle Dinge sind in Gott, und Gott ist in allen Dingen (Panentheismus).

7. Everyone is born a mystic and a lover who experiences the unity of things and all are called to keep this mystic or lover of life alive.

Jede und jeder ist als MystikerIn geboren und als LiebendeR, der oder die die Einheit aller Dinge erlebt und berufen ist, dieses Mystische und diese Lebensliebe lebendig zu erhalten.

8. All are called to be prophets which is to interfere with injustice.

Alle Menschen sind berufen Prophetinnen und Propheten zu sein, was bedeutet, sich in Ungerechtigkeit einzumischen.

9. Wisdom is Love of Life (See the Book of Wisdom: “This is wisdom: to love life” and Christ in John’s Gospel: “I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance.”)

Weisheit ist die Liebe zum Leben (siehe das Buch der Weisheit: „Weisheit heißt: das Leben zu lieben.“ und Christus im Johannes-Evangelium: „Ich bin gekommen, damit ihr das Leben habt, Leben in Fülle.“)

10. God loves all of creation and science can help us more deeply penetrate and appreciate the mysteries and wisdom of God in creation. Science is no enemy of true religion.

Gott liebt die ganze Schöpfung, und die Wissenschaft kann uns helfen, tiefer in die Mysterien und die Weisheit Gottes in der Schöpfung einzudringen. Wissenschaft ist kein Feind echter Religion.

11. Religion is not necessary but spirituality is.

Religion ist nicht notwendig, wohl aber Spiritualität.

12. “Jesus does not call us to a new religion but to life.” (Bonhoeffer) Spirituality is living life at a depth of newness and gratitude, courage and creativity, trust and letting go, compassion and justice.

“Jesus ruft uns nicht zu einer neuen Religion, sondern zum Leben” (nach Bonhoeffer\*). Spiritualität heißt, das Leben in tiefer Neuheit und Dankbarkeit zu leben, in Mut und Kreativität, Vertrauen und Gelassenheit, Mitgefühl und Gerechtigkeit.

13. Spirituality and religion are not the same thing any more than education and learning, law and justice, or commerce and stewardship are the same thing.

Spiritualität und Religion sind ebensowenig das gleiche, wie Bildung und Wissen, Gerechtigkeit und Gesetz oder Treuhänderschaft und Kommerz.

14. Christians must distinguish between God (masculine and history, liberation and salvation) and Godhead (feminine and mystery, being and non-action).

Christen müssen unterscheiden zwischen Gott (männlich und Geschichte, Befreiung und Erlösung) und Gottheit (weiblich und Mysterium, Sein und Nicht-Handeln).

15. Christians must distinguish between Jesus (an historical figure) and Christ (the experience of God-in-all-things).

Christen müssen unterscheiden zwischen Jesus (einer historischen Gestalt) und Christus (der Erfahrung von Gott-in-allen-Dingen).

16. Christians must distinguish between Jesus and Paul.

Christen müssen zwischen Jesus und Paulus unterscheiden.

17. Jesus, not unlike many spiritual teachers, taught us that we are sons and daughters of God and are to act accordingly by becoming instruments of divine compassion.

Ähnlich anderen spirituellen Lehrern lehrte Jesus uns, daß wir Söhne und Töchter Gottes sind und uns deshalb als Werkzeuge des göttlichen Mitgefühls zu verhalten haben.

18. Ecojustice is a necessity for planetary survival and human ethics and without it we are crucifying the Christ all over again in the form of destruction of forests, waters, species, air and soil.

Ökologische Gerechtigkeit ist für das Überleben des Planeten und eine menschliche Ethik notwendig. Ohne eine solche kreuzigen wir den Christus immer wieder in Form der Zerstörung von Wäldern, Wasser, Spezies, Luft und Boden.

19. Sustainability is another word for justice, for what is just is sustainable and what is unjust is not.

Nachhaltigkeit ist ein anderes Wort für Gerechtigkeit, denn was gerecht ist, ist auch nachhaltig, und was ungerecht ist, nicht.

20. A preferential option for the poor, as found in the base community movement, is far closer to the teaching and spirit of Jesus than is a preferential option for the rich and powerful as found in, for example, Opus Dei.

Eine Option für die Armen, wie beispielsweise in der Bewegung der Basisgemeinden, ist der Lehre und dem Geist Jesu viel näher als die Option für die Reichen und Mächtigen, wie beispielsweise im Opus Dei.

21. Economic Justice requires the work of creativity to birth a system of economics that is global, respectful of the health and wealth of the earth systems and that works for all.

Ökonomische Gerechtigkeit braucht das Wirken der Kreativität, um ein Wirtschaftssystem hervorzubringen, das global ist, das Achtung hat vor der Gesundheit und dem Reichtum der planetaren Systeme und das für alle Menschen funktioniert.

22. Celebration and worship are key to human community and survival and such reminders of joy deserve new forms that speak in the language of the twenty-first century.

Feier und Kult sind Schlüssel zur menschlichen Gemeinschaft und zum Überleben. Derartige Anstöße zur Freude verdienen neue Formen, welche die Sprache des 21. Jahrhunderts sprechen.

23. Sexuality is a sacred act and a spiritual experience, a theophany (revelation of the Divine), a mystical experience. It is holy and deserves to be honored as such.

Sexualität ist eine heilige Handlung und eine spirituelle Erfahrung, eine Theophanie (Offenbarung des Göttlichen), eine mystische Erfahrung. Sie ist heilig und verdient es, als solche geehrt zu werden.

24. Creativity is both humanity's greatest gift and its most powerful weapon for evil and so it ought to be both encouraged and steered to humanity's most God-like activity which all religions agree is: Compassion.

Kreativität ist sowohl die größte Gabe der Menschheit wie auch ihre mächtigste Waffe für das Böse. Deshalb müssen wir zum Mitgefühl ermutigt und gelenkt werden, das – wie alle Religion übereinstimmend sagen – die gottesähnlichste Handlung der Menschheit ist.

25. There is a priesthood of all workers (all who are doing good work are midwives of grace and therefore priests) and this priesthood ought to be honored as sacred and workers should be instructed in spirituality in order to carry on their ministry effectively.

Es gibt eine Priesterschaft aller Arbeitenden (die gute Werke tun und Hebammen der Gnade sind und darum PriesterInnen), und diese Priesterschaft sollte als heilig geehrt werden, und die Arbeitenden sollten in Spiritualität unterrichtet werden, um ihr Amt wirksam ausüben zu können.

26. Empire-building is incompatible with Jesus' life and teaching and with Paul's life and teaching and with the teaching of holy religions.

Imperialismus ist nicht verträglich mit dem Leben und der Lehre Jesu und dem Leben und der Lehre des Paulus und mit der Lehre der heiligen Religionen.

27. Ideology is not theology and ideology endangers the faith because it replaces thinking with obedience, and distracts from the responsibility of theology to adapt the wisdom of the past to today's needs. Instead of theology it demands loyalty oaths to the past.

Ideologie ist keine Theologie, sondern gefährdet den Glauben, weil sie das Denken durch Gehorchen ersetzt und von der Verantwortung der Theologie ablenkt, die Weisheit der Vergangenheit an die heutigen Bedürfnisse anzupassen. Statt Theologie verlangt sie Loyalitäts-Eide auf die Vergangenheit.

28. Loyalty is not a sufficient criterion for ecclesial office—intelligence and proven conscience is.

Loyalität ist kein ausreichendes Kriterium für ein Kirchenamt – wohl aber Intelligenz und ein unter Beweis gestelltes Gewissen.

29. No matter how much the television media fawn over the pope and papacy because it makes good theater, the pope is not the church but has a ministry within the church. Papalolotry is a contemporary form of idolatry and must be resisted by all believers.

Ganz gleich wieviel die Fernsehanstalten den Papst und das Pontifikat hofieren, weil das eine gute Show macht, ist doch der Papst nicht die Kirche, sondern hat nur ein Amt innerhalb der Kirche. Pontifikalismus ist eine zeitgenössische Art des Götzendienstes, dem alle Gläubigen widerstehen müssen.

30. Creating a church of Sycophants is not a holy thing. Sycophants (Webster's dictionary defines them as "servile self-seeking flatterers") are not spiritual people for their only virtue is obedience. A Society of Sycophants — sycophant clergy, sycophant seminarians, sycophant bishops, sycophant cardinals, sycophant religious orders of Opus Dei, Legionees of Christ and Communion and Liberation, and the sycophant press—do not represent in any way the teachings or the person of the historical Jesus who chose to stand up to power rather than amassing it.

Eine Kirche von Sycophanten zu schaffen ist nichts Heiliges. Sycophanten (laut Lexikon „unterwürfige, sich selbst suchende Schmeichler“) sind keine spirituellen Menschen, denn ihre einzige Tugend ist der Gehorsam. Eine Gesellschaft der Sycophanten – sycophantischer Klerus, sycophantische Seminaristen, sycophantische Bischöfe, sycophantische Kardinäle, sycophantische religiöse Orden wie Opus Dei, die Legionäre Christi oder 'Gemeinschaft und Befreiung', sowie eine sycophantische Presse – vertreten in keiner Weise die Lehren oder die Person des historischen Jesus, der sich gegen die Macht aufgelehnt hat statt sie anzuhäufen.

31. Vows of pontifical secrecy are a certain way to corruption and cover-up in the church as in any human organization.

Pontifikale Verschwiegenheitseide sind in der Kirche ein ebenso sicherer Weg zur Korruption und Vertuschung wie in allen anderen menschlichen Organisationen.

32. Original sin is an ultimate expression of a punitive father God and is not a Biblical teaching. But original blessing (goodness and grace) is biblical.

Die Ursünde ist äußerster Ausdruck eines strafenden Vatergottes und keine biblische Lehre. Der ursprüngliche Segen (Güte und Gnade) aber ist biblisch.

33. The term “original wound” better describes the separation humans experience on leaving the womb and entering the world, a world that is often unjust and unwelcoming than does the term “original sin.”

Der Ausdruck „ursprüngliche Wunde“ beschreibt besser als „Ursünde“ die Trennung, die die Menschen beim Verlassen des Mutterleibes erleben und beim Betreten einer Welt, die oft ungerecht und abweisend ist.

34. Fascism and the compulsion to control is not the path of peace or compassion and those who practice fascism are not fitting models for sainthood. The seizing of the apparatus of canonization to canonize fascists is a stain on the church.

Faschismus und Kontrollzwang sind kein Weg zu Frieden oder Mitgefühl. Und diejenigen, die Faschismus praktizieren, sind keine passenden Vorbilder der Heiligkeit. Der Mißbrauch des Kanonisierungs-Apparates zur Kanonisierung von Faschisten ist ein Schandfleck auf der Kirche.

35. The Spirit of Jesus and other prophets calls people to simple life styles in order that “the people may live.”

Der Geist Jesu und anderer Propheten beruft die Menschen zu einem einfachen Lebensstil, damit „die Menschen leben mögen“.

36. Dancing, whose root meaning in many indigenous cultures is the same as breath or spirit, is a very ancient and appropriate form in which to pray.

Tanzen hat in vielen ursprünglichen Kulturen die gleiche Bedeutungswurzel wie Atmen oder Geist und ist eine sehr alte und angemessene Form des Betens.

37. To honor the ancestors and celebrate the communion of saints does not mean putting heroes on pedestals but rather honoring them by living out lives of imagination, courage and compassion in our own time, culture and historical moment as they did in theirs.

Die Vorfahren zu achten und die Gemeinschaft der Heiligen zu feiern, bedeutet nicht, Helden auf ein Podest zu heben, sondern sie dadurch zu ehren, daß wir in unserer eigenen Zeit, Kultur und Geschichte phantasievoll, mutig und mitfühlend leben, wie sie es in ihrer taten.

38. A diversity of interpretation of the Jesus event and the Christ experience is altogether expected and welcomed as it was in the earliest days of the church.

Wie in der Frühzeit der Kirche ist eine Deutungsvielfalt für die Ereignisse um Jesus und die Christus-Erfahrung erwartungsgemäß und erwünscht.

39. Therefore unity of church does not mean conformity. There is unity in diversity. Coerced unity is not unity.

Einheit der Kirche bedeutet deshalb nicht Konformität. Es gibt eine Einheit in der Vielfalt. Erzwungene Einheit ist keine Einheit.

40. The Holy Spirit is perfectly capable of working through participatory democracy in church structures and hierarchical modes of being can indeed interfere with the work of the Spirit.

Der Heilige Geist ist durchaus in der Lage in partizipatorisch demokratischen Kirchenstrukturen zu wirken; und hierarchische Modelle können das Wirken des Geistes auch behindern.

41. The body is an awe-filled sacred Temple of God and this does not mean it is untouchable but rather that all its dimensions, well named by the seven charkas, are as holy as the others.

Der Körper ist ein ehrfurchtsvoller Tempel Gottes. Und das bedeutet nicht, daß er unberührbar sei, sondern daß alle seine Dimensionen – benannt als die sieben Chakren – gleichermaßen heilig sind.

42. Thus our connection with the earth (first chakra) is holy; and our sexuality (second chakra) is holy; and our moral outrage (third chakra) is holy; and our love that stands up to fear (fourth chakra) is holy; and our prophetic voice that speaks out is holy (fifth chakra); and our intuition and intelligence (sixth chakra) are holy; and our gifts we extend to the community of light beings and ancestors (seventh chakra) are holy.

Deshalb ist unsere Verbindung mit der Erde heilig (erstes Chakra); und unsere Sexualität ist heilig (zweites Chakra); und unsere moralische Empörung ist heilig (drittes Chakra); und unsere Liebe, die sich gegen die Angst stellt, ist heilig (viertes Chakra); und unsere prophetisch sich äußernde Stimme ist heilig (fünftes Chakra); und unsere Intuition und Intelligenz sind heilig (sechstes Chakra); und unsere Gaben, mit denen wir an der Gemeinschaft der Lichtwesen und Vorfahren teilhaben, sind heilig (siebentes Chakra).

43. The prejudice of rationalism and left-brain located in the head must be balanced by attention to the lower charkas as equal places for wisdom and truth and Spirit to act.

Das Vorurteil des Rationalismus und der nur im Kopf angesiedelten linken Hirnhälfte muß ein Gleichgewicht finden mit einer Aufmerksamkeit auf die unteren Chakren, die ebenso

Weisheit und Wahrheit und handelnden Geist verkörpern.

44. The central chakra, compassion, is the test of the health of all the others which are meant to serve it for “by their fruits you will know them” (Jesus).

Das zentrale Chakra, das Mitgefühl, ist der Prüfstein für die Gesundheit aller anderen, die ihm dienen sollen, denn „an ihren Früchten werdet ihr sie erkennen“ (Jesus).

45. “Joy is the human’s noblest act.” (Aquinas) Is our culture and its professions, education and religion, promoting joy?

“Freude ist das edelste Werk des Menschen.” (Thomas von Aquin) Fördern unsere Kultur und ihre Berufe, die Bildung und Religion wirklich Freude?

46. The human psyche is made for the cosmos and will not be satisfied until the two are re-united and awe, the beginning of wisdom, results from this reunion.

Die menschliche Seele ist für den Kosmos geschaffen und wird nicht zufrieden sein, solange diese beiden nicht vereint sind und Ehrfurcht, der Beginn der Weisheit, aus dieser Verbindung entsteht.

47. The four paths named in the creation spiritual tradition more fully name the mystical/prophetic spiritual journey of Jesus and the Jewish tradition than do the three paths of purgation, illumination and union which do not derive from the Jewish and Biblical tradition.

Die vier von der Schöpfungstradition benannten Pfade repräsentieren die mystisch-prophetische geistige Reise Jesu und der jüdischen Überlieferung besser als die drei Pfade der Läuterung, Erleuchtung und Vereinigung, die nicht aus der jüdischen und biblischen Tradition stammen.

48. Thus it can be said that God is experienced in experiences of ecstasy, joy, wonder and delight (via positiva).

Deshalb kann man sagen, daß Gott in einer Erfahrung der Ekstase, der Freude, des Staunens und der Begeisterung erlebt wird (via positiva).

49. God is experienced in darkness, chaos, nothingness, suffering, silence and in learning to let go and let be (via negativa).

Gott wird erlebt in Dunkelheit, Chaos, Nichtigkeit, Leiden, Stille und im Erlernen des Geschehen- und Seinlassens (via negativa).

50. God is experienced in acts of creativity and co-creation (via creativa).

Gott wird erfahren in Taten der Kreativität und der Mitschöpfung (via creativa).

51. All people are born creative. It is spirituality's task to encourage holy imagination for all are born in the "image and likeness" of the Creative One and "the fierce power of imagination is a gift from God." (Kaballah)

Alle Menschen werden kreativ geboren. Es ist eine Aufgabe der Spiritualität die heilige Phantasie zu ermuntern, denn alle sind "im Ebenbilde" des Schöpferischen geboren und "die wilde Kraft der Vorstellung ist eine Gabe Gottes" (Kabbala).

52. If you can talk you can sing; if you can walk you can dance; if you can talk you are an artist. (African proverb and Native American saying)

Wenn du sprechen kannst, kannst du auch singen: wenn du gehen kannst, kannst du auch tanzen; wenn du sprechen kannst, bist du ein Künstler. (Afrikanisches und indianisches Sprichwort)

53. God is experienced in our struggle for justice, healing, compassion and celebration (via transformativa).

Gott wird erlebt in unserem Kampf für Gerechtigkeit, Heilung, Mitgefühl und Feier (via transformativa).

54. The Holy Spirit works through all cultures and all spiritual traditions and blows "where it wills" and is not the exclusive domain of any one tradition and never has been.

Der Heilige Geist wirkt durch alle Kulturen und alle spirituellen Überlieferungen und "weht wo er will" und ist und war niemals einer Tradition exklusiv vorbehalten.

55. God speaks today as in the past through all religions and all cultures and all faith traditions none of which is perfect and an exclusive avenue to truth but all of which can learn from each other.

Gott spricht heute wie in der Vergangenheit durch alle Religionen und alle Kulturen und alle Glaubensüberlieferungen, die alle nicht vollkommene oder alleinige Wege zur Wahrheitsind, sondern alle voneinander lernen können.

56. Therefore Interfaith or Deep Ecumenism are a necessary part of spiritual praxis and awareness in our time.

Deshalb ist eine glaubensübergreifende oder Tiefenökumene notwendiger Teil einer zeitgemäßen spirituellen Praxis und Bewußtheit.

57. Since the “number one obstacle to interfaith is a bad relationship with one’s own faith,” (the Dalai Lama) it is important that Christians know their own mystical and prophetic tradition, one that is larger than a religion of empire and its punitive father images of God.

Da “das Haupthindernis für eine Glaubensbegegnung eine schlechte Beziehung zum eigenen Glauben ist” (der Dalai Lama), ist es für Christen wichtig, ihre eigene mystische und prophetische Tradition kennenzulernen, die umfassender ist als eine Religion des Imperiums und ihr strafend väterliches Gottesbild.

58. The cosmos is God’s holy Temple and our holy home.

Der Kosmos ist Gottes heiliger Tempel und unsere heilige Heimat.

59. Fourteen billion years of evolution and unfolding of the universe bespeak the intimate sacredness of all that is.

Milliarden Jahre Evolution und Entfaltung des Universums weisen auf die innerste Heiligkeit allen Seins hin.

60. All that is is holy and all that is is related for all being in our universe began as one being just before the fireball erupted.

Alles, was ist, ist heilig, und alles, was ist, steht zueinander in Beziehung, denn alles Sein in diesem Universum begann als ein Sein, bevor der Urknall geschah.

61. Interconnectivity is not only a law of physics and of nature but also forms the basis of community and of compassion. Compassion is the working out of our shared

interconnectivity both as to our shared joy and our shared suffering and struggle for justice.

Wechselseitige Verbundenheit ist nicht nur ein physikalisches und Naturgesetz, sondern stellt auch die Grundlage unserer Gesellschaft und des Mitgefühls dar. Mitgefühl ist die Umsetzung unserer gegenseitigen Verbundenheit sowohl in bezug auf unsere gemeinsame Freude wie auch in bezug auf unser gemeinsames Leid und unseren Kampf um Gerechtigkeit.

62. The universe does not suffer from a shortage of grace and no religious institution is to see its task as rationing grace. Grace is abundant in God's universe.

Das Universum leidet nicht an einem Mangel an Gnade und keine religiöse Institution darf ihre Aufgabe in der Rationierung von Gnade sehen. In Gottes Welt gibt es genügend Gnade.

63. Creation, Incarnation and Resurrection are continuously happening on a cosmic as well as a personal scale. So too are Life, Death and Resurrection (regeneration and reincarnation) happening on a cosmic scale as well as a personal one.

Schöpfung, Inkarnation und Auferstehung geschehen auf kosmischer wie auf persönlicher Ebene ständig. Und das gilt auch für Leben, Tod und Auferstehung (Regeneration und Reinkarnation), die in kosmischem wie persönlichem Maßstab geschehen.

64. Biophilia or Love of Life is everyone's daily task.

Biophilie oder Liebe zum Leben ist unser aller tägliche Aufgabe.

65. Necrophilia or love of death is to be opposed in self and society in all its forms.

Der Nekrophilie oder Todesliebe muß in uns selbst und in der Gesellschaft in allen Formen widerstanden werden.

66. Evil can happen through every people, every nation, every tribe, and every individual human and so vigilance and self-criticism and institutional criticism are always called for.

Das Böse kann durch jede Nation, jedes Volk, jeden Stamm und jedes Individuum geschehen. Deshalb sind Wachsamkeit, Selbstkritik und institutionelle Kritik jederzeit gefragt.

67. Not all who call themselves “Christian” deserve that name just as “not all who say ‘Lord, Lord’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven” (Jesus).

Nicht alle, die sich als „Christen“ bezeichnen, verdienen diesen Namen auch, wie auch nicht alle, „die `Herr, Herr´ sagen, ins Himmelreich eingehen werden“ (Jesus).

68. Pedophilia is a terrible wrong but its cover-up by hierarchy is even more despicable.

Pädophilie ist ein furchtbares Vergehen, aber ihre Vertuschung durch die Hierarchie ist noch abscheulicher.

69. Loyalty and obedience are never a greater virtue than conscience and justice.

Loyalität und Gehorsam sind niemals größere Tugenden als Gewissen und Gerechtigkeit.

70. Jesus said nothing about condoms, birth control or homosexuality.

Jesus hat nie etwas über Kondome, Geburtenkontrolle oder Homosexualität gesagt.

71. A church that is more preoccupied with sexual wrongs than with wrongs of injustice is itself sick.

Eine Kirche, die sich mehr mit sexuellem Fehlverhalten als mit Ungerechtigkeit beschäftigt, ist selbst krank.

72. Since homosexuality is found among 464 species and in 8 percent of any given human population, it is altogether natural for those who are born that way and is a gift from God and nature to the greater community.

Da Homosexualität sich bei 464 Spezies und bei 8 % jeder menschlichen Population findet, handelt es sich bei denen, die so geboren sind, um eine völlig natürliche Sache, um eine Gabe Gottes und der Natur für die größere Gemeinschaft.

73. Homophobia in any form is a serious sin against love of neighbor, a sin of ignorance of the richness and diversity of God's creation as well as a sin of exclusion.

Homophobie ist in jeder Form eine ernste Sünde gegen die Nächstenliebe, eine Sünde gegen den Reichtum und die Vielfalt in Gottes Schöpfung wie auch eine Sünde der Ausgrenzung.

74. Racism, Sexism and militarism are also serious sins.

Rassismus, Sexismus und Militarismus sind ebenfalls ernsthafte Sünden.

75. Poverty for the many and luxury for the few is not right or sustainable.

Armut für die vielen und Luxus für wenige ist weder rechtens noch nachhaltig.

76. Consumerism is today's version of gluttony and needs to be confronted by creating an economic system that works for all peoples and all earth's creatures.

Konsumismus ist die zeitgenössische Variante der Genußsucht und muß dadurch nicht Frage gestellt werden, daß ein Wirtschaftssystem aufgebaut wird, das allen Völkern und allen Wesen der Erde dient.

77. Seminaries as we know them, with their excessive emphasis on left-brain work, often kill and corrupt the mystical soul of the young instead of encouraging the mysticism and prophetic consciousness that is there. They should be replaced by wisdom schools.

Die Universitäten, wie wir sie heute kennen, mit ihrer extremen Betonung der linken Hirnhälfte, töten und korrumpieren die mystische Seele der Jugend statt das vorhandene mystische und prophetische Bewußtsein zu ermutigen. Sie sollten durch Weisheitsschulen ersetzt werden.

78. Inner work is required of us all. Therefore spiritual practices of meditation should be available to all and this helps in calming the reptilian brain. Silence or contemplation and learning to be still can and ought to be taught to all children and adults.

Innere Arbeit ist von uns allen gefordert. Deshalb sollten allen Menschen spirituelle Praktiken und Meditationen zugänglich sein und dabei helfen, das Reptiliengehirn zu beruhigen. Alle Kinder und Erwachsenen sollten Stille oder Kontemplation und Stillwerden lernen.

79. Outer work needs to flow from our inner work just as action flows from non-action and true action from being.

Die äußere Arbeit muß von unserer inneren Arbeit ausfließen, so wie Handlung aus dem Nicht-Handeln entsteht und wahres Handeln aus dem Sein.

80. A wise test of right action is this: What is the effect of this action on people seven generations from today?

Eine weise Prüfung für rechtes Handeln ist: Wie ist die Wirkung dieser Handlung auf die Menschen der siebten Generation nach uns?

81. Another test of right action is this: Is what I am doing, is what we are doing, beautiful or not?

Ein anderer Test für rechtes Handeln ist: Ist meine Handlung, ist unsere Handlung schön?

82. Eros, the passion for living, is a virtue that combats acedia or the lack of energy to begin new things and is also expressed as depression, cynicism or sloth (also known as “couchpotatoitis”).

Eros, die Leidenschaft für das Leben, ist eine Tugend, die der Trägheit entgegenwirkt oder dem Energiemangel, Neues zu beginnen, der sich auch als Depression, Zynismus und Faulheit ausdrückt.

83. The Dark Night of the Soul descends on us all and the proper response is not addiction such as shopping, alcohol, drugs, TV, sex or religion but rather to be with the darkness and learn from it.

Die dunkle Nacht der Seele befällt uns alle; und die angemessene Antwort darauf besteht nicht in einem Suchtverhalten wie Einkaufen, Alkohol, Drogen, TV, Sex oder Religion, sondern darin, mit der Dunkelheit zu gehen und daraus zu lernen.

84. The Dark Night of the Soul is a learning place of great depth. Stillness is required.  
Die dunkle Nacht der Seele ist ein Ort sehr tiefen Lernens. Dazu bedarf es der Stille.

85. Not only is there a Dark Night of the Soul but also a Dark Night of Society and a Dark Night of our Species.

Es gibt nicht nur eine dunkle Nacht der Seele, sondern auch eine dunkle Nacht der Gesellschaft und eine dunkle Nacht unserer Spezies, der Menschheit.

86. Chaos is a friend and a teacher and an integral part or prelude to new birth. Therefore it is not to be feared or compulsively controlled.

Chaos ist ein Freund und Lehrer und ein notwendiger Teil oder ein Vorspiel jeder Neugeburt. Deshalb braucht man es nicht zu fürchten oder zwanghaft zu kontrollieren.

87. Authentic science can and must be one of humanity's sources of wisdom for it is a source of sacred awe, of childlike wonder, and of truth.

Echte Wissenschaft kann und muß eine der Weisheitsquellen der Menschheit sein, denn sie ist eine Quelle heiliger Ehrfurcht, kindlichen Staunens und der Wahrheit.

88. When science teaches that matter is “frozen light” (physicist David Bohm) it is freeing human thought from scapegoating flesh as something evil and instead reassuring us that all things are light. This same teaching is found in the Christian Gospels (Christ is the light in all things) and in Buddhist teaching (the Buddha nature is in all things). Therefore, flesh does not sin; it is our choices that are sometimes off center.

Wenn die Wissenschaft lehrt, daß Materie „gefrorenes Licht“ sei (Physiker David Bohm), dann befreit sie damit die Menschheit davon, das Fleisch zum Sündenbock des Bösen zu machen und versichert uns statt dessen, daß alle Dinge Licht sind. Die gleiche Lehre findet sich in den Evangelien (Christus ist das Licht in allen Dingen) und in den buddhistischen Lehren (die Buddha-Natur ist in allen Dingen). Deshalb ist das Fleisch nicht sündig; unsere Entscheidungen sind es, die manchmal an der Sache vorbeigehen.

89. The proper objects of the human heart are truth and justice (Aquinas) and all people have a right to these through healthy education and healthy government.

Die angemessenen Ziele des menschlichen Herzens sind Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit (Thomas von Aquin), und alle Menschen haben ein Recht, mit Hilfe von gesunder Bildung und gesunder Regierung dahin zu gelangen.

90. “God” is only one name for the Divine One and there are an infinite number of names for God and Godhead and still God “has no name and will never be given a name.” (Eckhart)

“Gott” ist nur ein Name des Göttlichen. Es gibt unzählige Namen für Gott und die Gottheit, und doch „hat Gott keinen Namen und wird niemals benannt werden“ (Meister Eckhart)

91. Three highways into the heart are silence and love and grief.

Drei Wege ins Herz sind die Stille, die Liebe und die Trauer.

92. The grief in the human heart needs to be attended to by rituals and practices that, when practiced, will lessen anger and allow creativity to flow anew.

Wir müssen uns mit Hilfe von Ritualen und Übungen um die Trauer im menschlichen Herzen kümmern, die die Wut mindern und die Kreativität wieder in Fluß bringen.

93. Two highways out of the heart are creativity and acts of justice and compassion.

Zwei Wege aus unserem Herzen sind die Kreativität und Taten der Gerechtigkeit und des Mitgefühls.

94. Since angels learn exclusively by intuition, when we develop our powers of intuition we can expect to meet angels along the way.

Da Engel ausschließlich durch Intuition lernen, können wir bei der Entwicklung unserer intuitiven Kräfte damit rechnen, Engeln zu begegnen.

95. True intelligence includes feeling, sensitivity, beauty, the gift of nourishment and humor which is a gift of the Spirit, paradox, being its sister.

Echte Intelligenz umfaßt Gefühle, Sensibilität, Schönheit, die Gabe der Zuwendung und des Humors, der eine Geisteskraft ist, mit der Paradoxie als Schwester.

*[See also: <http://www.matthewfox.org/95-theses/>]*

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## **Emil Kutarna:**

1. Contemporary science contradicts St. Thomas Aquinas' theory about women being "misbegotten males".
2. It's time for the Church to give up its outdated, mediaeval position about women.
3. The longer the Church maintains it's outdated ideas about women, the longer will people see the Church to be irrelevant.
4. How can a Church that is deemed to be irrelevant preach the Good News?
5. John Paul II may have closed the door on women's ordination. This doesn't mean Pope Francis can't open a window to dialogue.
6. Women's ordination is not a matter of doing women a favour. It's a matter of JUSTICE.

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## **David M. Scholer:**

Top Ten Reasons Why Men Should Not Be Ordained:

10. A man's place is in the army.
9. For men who have children, their duties might distract them from the responsibilities of being a parent.
8. Their physical build indicates that men are more suited to tasks such as chopping down trees and wrestling mountain lions. It would be "unnatural" for them to do other forms of work.
7. Man was created before woman. It is therefore obvious that man was a prototype. Thus, they represent an experiment, rather than the crowning achievement of creation.
6. Men are too emotional to be priests or pastors. This is easily demonstrated by their

conduct at football games and watching basketball tournaments.

5. Some men are handsome; they will distract women worshipers.

4. To be ordained pastor is to nurture the congregation. But this is not a traditional male role. Rather, throughout history, women have been considered to be not only more skilled than men at nurturing, but also more frequently attracted to it. This makes them the obvious choice for ordination.

3. Men are overly prone to violence. No really manly man wants to settle disputes by any means other than by fighting about it. Thus, they would be poor role models, as well as being dangerously unstable in positions of leadership.

2. Men can still be involved in church activities, even without being ordained. They can sweep paths, repair the church roof, and maybe even lead the singing on Father's Day. By confining themselves to such traditional male roles, they can still be vitally important in the life of the Church.

1. In the New Testament account, the person who betrayed Jesus was a man. Thus, his lack of faith and ensuing punishment stands as a symbol of the subordinated position that all men should take.

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**

## Ben Witherington:

### Why Arguments against Women in Ministry Aren't Biblical

1) Women can't be ministers, because only males can be priests offering the sacrifice of the Mass etc. The root problem with this argument is that the NT is perfectly clear that apostles, prophets, teachers, evangelists, elders, deacons ARE NOT PRIESTS IN THE NT. There is no need for a separate order of priests in the NT because Christ's sacrifice made obsolete the entire OT sacerdotal system of priests, temples and sacrifices. The only priesthoods we hear about in the NT are: 1) the priesthood of all believers, which of course includes women, and 2) the heavenly high priesthood of Christ (see Hebrews). There is no new priesthood between these two carried over from the OT or inaugurated in the NT era. Indeed the whole language of sacrifice and temple is spiritualized in the NT to refer to our offering of ourselves or our praise to God, and the Temple is described in various places in the NT (cf. 1 Cor. 3-6), as either the believer's body, or the whole community of Christ in which Christ and the Spirit dwell. The problem here is essentially a hermeneutical one. Somewhere along the way about the time when the church became a licit religion under Constantine the OT hermeneutic took over, a hermeneutic which saw churches as temples, the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice, ministers as priests, the Lord's Day as the sabbath, and so on. This did a grave dis-service to the newness of the new covenant and its facets and features, and the net result was an exclusion of women from various ministries, on grounds the writers of the NT would have rejected outright.

2) Women can't be ministers because then they would have headship over men, including their husbands—and this will never do, and is a violation of the household codes in the NT. This argument is often complex and at the heart of it is an essential confusion of what the NT says about order in the physical family and home, and order in the family of faith, wherever it may meet. It is certainly true that texts like Col.3-4 and Ephes. 5-6 and other texts in 1 Pet. for example do talk about the structure of the physical family. As I have argued at length, the patriarchal family was the existing reality in the NT world, and what you discover when you compare what is in the NT and what is outside the NT, is that Paul and others are working hard to change the existing structures in a more Christian direction. Paul, for example, has to start with his audience where they are, and then persuade them to change. And you can see this process at work in Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians. For example, though the language of headship and submission is certainly used in these texts the trajectory of the argument is intended to: 1) place more and more strictures on the head of the household to limit his power and the way he relates to his wife, his children and his slaves; 2) make the head of the household aware that women, children and slaves are in fact persons created in God's image, not chattel or property. This becomes especially clear in Philemon when Paul urges Philemon to manumit Onesimus on the basis of the fact that he is "no longer a

slave, but rather a brother in Christ". Paul is working to place the leaven of the Gospel into pre-existing relationships and change them. Similarly with the roles of husbands and wives, in Ephes. 5.21ff. Paul calls all Christians to mutual submission to each other, one form of which is wives to husbands, and then the exhortation 'husbands love your wives as Christ did the church, giving himself....' can be seen for what it is— a form of self-sacrificial submission and service. Submission is no longer gender specific or unilateral as Paul offers third order moral discourse here, working for change (see my commentary on Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon— Eerdmans). Furthermore, we need to keep steadily in mind that what determines or should determine the leadership structures in the church is not gender but rather gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. The family of faith is not identical with the physical family, and gender is no determinant of roles in it. Gender of course does affect some roles in the Christian family, but that is irrelevant when it comes to the discussion of the leadership structure of the church. This is why we should not be surprised to find even in Paul's letters examples of women teachers, evangelist, prophetesses, deacons, and apostles. Paul is not one who is interested in baptizing the existing fallen patriarchal order and calling it good. One of the tell tale signs of Paul's views on such matters can be seen in what he says about baptism— it is not a gender specific sign that we have for the new covenant unlike the one for the old covenant, and Paul adds that in Christ there is no 'male and female' just as there is no Jew or Gentile, slave or free. The implications of this are enormous. The change in the covenant sign signals the change in the nature of the covenant when it comes to men and women.

3) Women can't be Christian ministers because specific passages in the NT prohibit it. Here, especially for very conservative Protestants is the nub of the matter. It is believed that 1 Cor. 14.33b-36 and 1 Tim. 2.8-15 prohibit women from teaching and preaching in the church. I will not bring up the hypocrisy of some of these arguments that make nice distinctions like— "its o.k. for women to teach or lead a Bible study in the home, but not in the church building." (this word just in— there were no church buildings in the NT era, they met in homes!), or even worse 'its o.k. for women to teach and preach on the mission field where it's necessary, but not here in America where it isn't.' Again the logic here is completely bogus and not based on anything in Scripture at all. But what about those texts?

1 Cor. 14.33b-36 (assuming that it is an original part of this letter, which many scholars doubt on textual grounds. I disagree with the doubters) is part of a large problem solving letter. Paul is correcting problems as they arise in the house churches in Corinth. One such problem is caused by some women, apparently just some wives, who are interrupting the time of prophesying by asking questions. Now Paul has already said in 1 Cor. 11 that women are allowed to pray and prophesy in Christian worship if they wear headcoverings to hide their 'glory' (i.e. hair), since only God's glory should be visible in

worship, and he is not renegeing on that permission in 1 Cor. 14.33b-36. The largely Gentile congregation in Corinth brought with them into the church their pre-existing assumptions about prophecy and what was appropriate when approaching a prophet or prophetess. The oracle at nearby Delphi for example was a consultative prophetess. People would go to her to ask questions like— Should I marry this man, or Should I buy this land etc. and the oracle would give an answer. Thus it was natural for some Corinthians to think that when prophets spoke in their assemblies, they had a right to ask them questions. Paul's response is no— “worship time is not Q+A time, and you are interrupting the prophets. If you have questions asks your man (probably husband) at home. There is a time and place for such questions, but Christian worship isn't it. The reason Paul corrects women/wives in this case is not because they are women but because they are in this instance causing this problem, of course. A couple of other points about this text need to be noted: 1) the text says nothing about women submitting to men. The call here is for these women to be silent and in submission as even the Law says. O.K. where in the OT is there a commandment for women to be silent and submit to men? Answer NOWHERE. Its not in the Pentateuch at all, or for that matter elsewhere. What Paul is talking about is being silent in the presence of God and listening to his inspired words, in this case coming from the prophets and prophetesses! “The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence (and listen)’ ... and be in submission to God's teaching.

What about 1 Tim. 2.8-15? This is sometimes, wrongly, seen as the ultimate proof that women should not be ministers. But again this ignores the context and nuances of the text, which of course is the major problem with proof-texting anyway. Paul here is giving Timothy some instructions about how to handle his fledgling new converts probably in Ephesus (see my commentary on the Pastoral Epistles– Letters and Homilies for Gentile Christians Vol. One IVP). Now the problem as it surfaces in 1 Tim. 2.8-15 clearly has to do with particular women, high status women who have fancy clothes and hairstyles and are expecting right off the bat to be teachers of one and all in the church. The proof that this is once more a corrective passage, dealing with problems is seen from the outset— First Paul corrects grumbling men whom he wants to pray, then he corrects these high status women. Paul is an equal opportunity corrector of men and women when they are in error. In regard to his correction of women, something needs to be said about high status women in cities like Ephesus. What we know about such women is that they played vital roles in the Greco-Roman religious festivals, temples, worship services. They were priestesses, they were prophetesses, they were teachers, healers, keepers of the eternal flame, etc. It is then not surprising that such high status women would expect to be able, once they converted to Christ, to do the same sorts of things in the church. The problem was, they needed to be properly instructed and learn before they began to instruct others, whether male or female. This is a good principle for all of us to follow. I once had a student who was getting frustrated in a seminary class because of all that he was required to learn, much of which he thought was

unnecessary, and he came up to me and said— “I don’t know why I need to learn all this stuff first. Why I can just get up in the pulpit and the Spirit will give me utterance.” I replied— “Yes Charlie, you can do that, but its a pity you aren’t giving the Holy Spirit more to work with!” In essence, Paul is saying the same thing to these women in Ephesus— they need to learn before they teach.

Here are some details about the exegesis of 1 Tim. 2.8-15. Once again nothing is said about women submitting to men here. The Greek is clear enough. Here the word for ‘quietness’ is used rather than the word for silence, and once again the issue is their being in submission to the authoritative teaching of Timothy and others. Secondly the Greek verb “I am not now permitting” as Phil Payne has shown over and over again, is not a verb that implies an infinite extension of this refusal to permit. It means what it says “I am not presently permitting...” Why not? Because the women needed to learn before they taught. Thirdly, the Greek, since we are dealing with a text where a correction of behavior is being offered should be translated as follows “I am not currently permitting women (in this case the women referred to with the hairdos and bling and expensive attire) to teach or usurp authority over the (authorized) men. This is a prohibition of an abuse of a privilege, It does not rule out the possibility of a later authorization of a proper use of the privilege of offering Christian teaching, indeed we hear elsewhere in the Pastorals about more mature Christian women doing some teaching. The verb *authenteo* here is a rare one, meaning either to exercise authority, or to usurp authority, and it occurs on here in the NT. Here is a good example of why you can’t study the language of the Bible in isolation from its larger context, in this case the context of usage elsewhere in Greek. Elsewhere, in a corrective context the verb refers to an abuse of power, a usurping of some role or function that others have. It does here as well.

4) Finally, what about the argument from creation, from the story of Eve? Paul is assuming some in his audience know the story very well. The story is as follows in the Hebrew— only Adam is instructed about the prohibition in regard to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and it was his duty to properly instruct Eve, as she was not around when that prohibition was given. As the story develops, it is clear enough that Eve had not been properly instructed. She talks about not touching the fruit of the tree, which was not part of the original prohibition. Now the very ‘deceived’ here is an important one, only used in Paul in connection with Eve and the Fall. A person who is not properly instructed, is easily deceived, and may take action that is disastrous. Such was the case with Eve. She is the perfect example to give to the high status women in Ephesus— they needed to properly be instructed before they took any action. I would remind you as well that on a literal reading of the Genesis story, Adam was right there with Eve on this occasion and could have and should have stopped her, but he did not do so. Eve plucked the fruit, and Adam dropped the ball as the authoritative teacher for the

occasion. This is no doubt why it is Adam who is blamed for the Fall in Rom. 5.12-21. Paul then goes on to offer an alternative— “but now women shall be saved by the child-bearing” or possibly it reads “women shall be kept safe through the child-bearing”. What Paul is certainly not doing here is talking about salvation for women by baby-making!! So either of the two renderings I suggested are possible. I tend to favor the interpretation that the definite article before childbearing points to a specific birth— Jesus’ by means of Mary. So Mary is Eve in reverse. She obeys the voice of the angel, is the handmaiden of the Lord, unlike Eve. The other possibility is that Paul is saying that the curse on women (pain and danger in child-bearing) can be reversed in Christ if they remain faithful Christians and trust the Lord. In either case, this text is not a prohibition of all women in all times in all situations preaching and teaching. It is a very specific prohibition, and doubtless Paul would say the same thing to women or men today who try to teach or preach the Word of God without properly learning it first!! One more thing about the Genesis story. The author tells us that the effects of the Fall is patriarchy. It was not God original creation order design. The text tells us that part of the original curse (not the original blessing) on Eve will be “your desire will be for your husband, and he will lord it over you!!” So to love and to cherish degenerates into to desire and dominate!!! This is the effect of sin on the relationship, not inherent gender properties or qualities of the relationship.

As I have learned over many years.... the problem in the church is not strong and gifted women. We need all those we can get, and were it not for them, many churches would have closed long ago. I remember so vividly meeting the babooshkas— the grandmothers in the Moscow Baptist Church, who had stopped Stalin from closing the church by standing in the door and not letting his troops enter and close it down. Thank God for strong, gifted women in the church. No, the problem in the church is not strong women, but rather weak men who feel threatened by strong women, and have tried various means, even by dubious exegesis to prohibit them from exercising their gifts and graces in the church.

If you want more along these lines, see my commentaries or my lay person’s summary *Women and the Genesis of Christianity*, (Cambridge Press). Enough said.

*[Read more at <http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/bibleandculture/2009/10/why-arguments-against-women-in-ministry-arent-biblical.html#p5sf4LAQR2pyroFQ.99>]*

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## **Fr. Wojciech Giertych, Pope Benedict XVI's personal theologian:**

1. "Every baptized person, both male and female, participates in the priesthood of Christ through the sacrament of baptism, drawing the fruits of the paschal mystery to one's own soul," he said. "And maybe in some sense we could say that, in this, women are more apt to draw from the mystery of Christ, by the quality of their prayer life, by the quality of their faith."
2. Women are better able than men to perceive the "proximity of God" and enter into a relationship with him, Giertych said, pointing to the privileged role played by women in the New Testament.
3. "Women have a special access to the heart of Jesus," he said, "in a very vivid way of approaching him, of touching him, of praying with him, of pouring ointment on his head, of kissing his feet."
4. "The mission of the woman in the church is to convince the male that power is not most important in the church, not even sacramental power," he said. "What is most important is the encounter with the living God through faith and charity."

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## FutureChurch:

1. I thought Jesus ordained men and so only men can be priests. How can women be ordained if this is so?

Jesus didn't actually ordain anyone. In fact, priesthood and eucharistic worship did not resemble what we know until the fourth century. Jesus came in the rich prophetic tradition of Israel to call Judaism to repentance and fidelity to the new reign of God being born through him. In this context, Jesus appointed 12 apostles as new leaders for the 12 tribes of the restored Israel. The category of "the Twelve" was limited to Jesus' time, and was not continued by the early Christian communities. These grew rapidly in the Gentile world and most converts were not Jews. Worship nevertheless developed along the lines of Jewish table fellowship in house churches, often the homes of women. Worship was prophetic and charismatic in style, and both women and men provided leadership. This was in keeping with what the first followers of Jesus had known of him and his person and mission.

While Jesus did not ordain anyone, he did call both women and men to discipleship. Luke's gospel (8:1-3) reports that Mary Magdalen, Joanna, and Susanna were among the women who travelled with Jesus, and supported his ministry from their own resources. That these women are mentioned by name is significant. Women are normally not mentioned in ancient writings because they were valued solely because of their relationship to the male patriarchal household. If a woman is mentioned by name in first century writings it is either because she had significant wealth, or had achieved some social prominence.

Mary of Magdala figures prominently in all four Resurrection accounts and has been called "The Apostle to the Apostles." It is upon her testimony that the proclamation of the Resurrection rests. Women disciples are the last to see Jesus at this death, and the first to see him risen. This is regarded as one of the most telling arguments for the historicity of the Resurrection accounts. Had the accounts been fabricated by over-zealous male disciples, women would never have been featured witnesses because in Judaic culture only men were able to give legal testimony. Paul's writings (which pre-date the Gospel accounts) show women serving as prophets (Philip's daughters), deacons (Phoebe), missionaries (Prisca), and leaders of local communities (Lydia). One is even

called an apostle (Junia). Women in the Pauline churches clearly were called and chosen for discipleship and leadership.

2. Is it true that we've never had women priests in the Church?

There is significant evidence that there were churches in the fourth to sixth centuries that remained in communion with Rome and also had women priests. Dr. Giorgio Otranto, Director of the Institute for Classical and Christian Studies at the University of Bari, Italy, discovered iconographic evidence of women presiding over the Eucharist in ancient catacomb frescos. Otranto cites a letter from fifth century Pope Gelasius I scolding bishops in southern Italy for allowing women "to officiate at the sacred altars, and to take part in all matters imputed to the offices of the male sex..." He also points to the letters of a ninth century Italian bishop, Atto of Vercelli, substantiating the use of the word "presbytera" to refer to women priests.

In the early 1970s Roman Catholic married and women priests were ordained in Czechoslovakia by Bishop Felix M. Davidek to meet the needs of the underground church, in which single males were highly suspect, and to minister to Catholic women in prison.

3. Does the Church have the authority to change the tradition of male-only priesthood?

Historically, the Church has made many changes in what had previously been regarded as authoritative teachings from tradition. One example in the early Jewish-Christian community was the decision not to require circumcision for Gentile converts. Later examples include changes regarding usury, slavery, the revolution of the earth around the sun, evolution, the respect due the Jewish people, and the use of Latin in seminaries and for worship.

4. How can a woman image Christ who was male?

St. Paul says that all Christians, both male and female, share in and make up Christ's risen body, not by imaging the maleness of Jesus, but by participating in the paschal

mystery through Baptism. Galatians 3:28, an early Christian Baptismal formula, tells us "There is no longer Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male and female...all are one in Christ Jesus." Both women and men image Christ.

#### 5. Is there a shortage of priestly vocations?

There is no shortage of vocations if we count everyone who experiences a call to priestly ministry. There are numerous married and single women and men who feel called to priesthood, but not necessarily to celibacy. Many qualified women experience a call to priestly ministry, but because of their gender, have never been given the opportunity to test their vocation. They have received the same or more advanced academic degrees as male candidates, and have met the psychological, spiritual, and pastoral prerequisites for ordination. If we were to stop excluding so many of our members from consideration for ordination; respect celibacy as an option for those called to it, rather than impose it on everyone; and restructure ourselves along lines of equality and mutuality, the "vocation shortage" would disappear.

#### 6. Is it true that only women in the United States are concerned about ordination?

Women in all parts of the world feel called to priestly ministry. In her book *Like Bread, their Voices Rise* (1993), Sr. Frances Bernard O'Connor, CSC, shares her interviews with women from Bangladesh, Uganda, and Brazil. Women in all of these countries state that they too feel called to ordination, and believe women should be allowed to exercise priestly leadership. Women and men from England, Ireland, Belgium, Australia, Germany, France, Canada, and the Netherlands have organized to work for women's ordination.

#### 7. What will happen to ecumenism if women are ordained?

Virtually all Protestant denominations, as well as reformed Judaism, have women serving as priests, ministers, or rabbis. The Second Vatican Council's Decree on Ecumenism acknowledges the action of the Holy Spirit in other denominations (Ch. 1, Art. 3); and states "Whatever is wrought by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of

our separated brothers and sisters can contribute to our own edification." (Ch. 1, Art. 4). It would seem that Catholicism has something to learn in our journey to ecumenism.

8. Will parishes close if nothing is done?

By the year 2005 there will be a 40% decline in priests, according to demographers Schoenherr and Young in their book, *Full Pews and Empty Altars* (1993). At the same time there will be a 65% increase in Catholics. We will have more and more priestless parishes and more and more substitutions of communion services for the Eucharist. Catholics will have the same worship service for which the Council of Trent condemned Martin Luther in the 16th century. By doing nothing, we are essentially saying that the male celibate priesthood is more important to us than the Mass.

9. How can I do anything? The Church is not a democracy... doesn't loyalty to the Church require silence?

There are many things we can do as loyal Catholics. True loyalty to the Church requires us to speak out when we believe we are not living up to the ideals and practice of Jesus. Both Vatican II and the Revised Code of Canon Law affirm the rights of the laity to make their needs and views known on matters which concern the good of the Church. (Lumen Gentium 37; Canon 212, par. 3).

Here are some ways you can help in the ongoing reform and renewal of our pilgrim Church:

Join one or several Church reform groups working on including women in a renewed priestly ministry. (For example: Women's Ordination Conference, Call To Action, FutureChurch, Priests for Equality, or Catholics Speak Out.)

Write or visit your local bishop and express your concern. Write to the Women's Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Send them a copy of this flyer and tell them of your belief in the equality of women in ministry and Church decision-making.

Start a church reform organization in your area. Contact WOC (703/352-1006), CTA (773-404-0004/), or FutureChurch (216/228-0869) for information about how to proceed.

Make these brochures available in your faith community, and invite a local speaker to give a program to you parish group, base community, or prayer group. (See local contact stamped below). Consider using this information to write an op-ed piece or letter to the editor in your hometown newspaper.

*[See also: <https://www.futurechurch.org/questions-and-answers-about-womens-ordination#two>]*

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## Libbie Mitchell:

Reason #1: Jesus had women apostles.

Joan Mitchell, a Sister of St. Joseph, said women were a part of the original company of Jesus. “I think it’s been commonly accepted that there were originally 12 apostles; those were very important. But, for example, in Luke 8:1-3, there’s a list of men apostles, followed by 8:3, which is a list of the women who were part of the company.”

Not only were women a part of the original group, but they were also present at the Last Supper. Women were always part of Jesus’ community meals, so the Last Supper- a Paschal meal- was no exception.

Reason #2: Jesus was, and is, a contradiction of masculinity.

In the gospels, the writers depicted Jesus as a feminine communicator and a feminist. He rejected competition, violence, aggression, and the patriarchy at the time. He promoted humility, peace, and quiet patience in the face of injustice and suffering, and openly had concern for all, especially the oppressed. If the priest’s role is to spread The Word and “do [works] in commemoration of [him]”, why is the Church making masculinity a norm for priesthood when Jesus contradicted masculinity himself?

Reason #3: Serving God in any form shouldn’t be gender specific.

Serving as a priest wasn’t always gender-specific.

“In the first thousand years of the church, women had these roles. They certainly were deacons, and a lot of scholars say they were more than that. They were often co-presiders, and co-leaders in these communities,” says Mitchell.

These women are mentioned explicitly in Scripture, such as Acts 1:12-14, 18:24-26 and Romans 16:1-16. Not only did the women have a priestly role in the church, but they were also highly significant as apostles in Jesus’ story.

*[For further information on these reasons, see:*

*<http://www.stkateswheel.com/2016/12/02/why-cant-women-be-priests/>]*

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## Luis T. Gutiérrez:

1. *Catechism 1577* is not a literal but a literalist interpretation of the twelve male apostles. It ignores that Jesus was making a choice in the context of his earthly mission to the people of Israel, taking into account what they "knew" about governance ("twelve patriarchs") and about sex/gender ("women are defective males"). It is absurd to keep insisting that such a contingent choice is normative after the resurrection and Pentecost.
2. *Catechism 1598* literally says that the exclusively male priesthood is a choice (first sentence) and who has the authority to make the choice (second sentence).
3. *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* was an undoubtedly well intended edict to support the doctrine of *Catechism 1577* and reaffirm apostolic authority, but the time has come to end the hiatus on further discussion of this doctrine. Apostolic succession is not contingent on masculinity. Stone walling on this issue is doing much harm to the body of Christ and to the entire community of creation.
4. The *Theology of the Body* (TOB) provides a sound foundation, but must be extended to all the seven sacraments, including HOLY ORDERS. The TOB is not about man versus woman; it is about man and woman sharing the same homogeneous flesh and living in interpersonal communion. The TOB is about difference in unity, a unitive complementarity, not a complementarity of gender stereotypes. For the redemption, and the sacramental economy, the embodied masculinity of Jesus is as incidental as the color of his eyes. All human differences, including sex and gender differences, were restored to the original "unity in diversity" by the redemption of the body. Any baptized person, male or female, can be ordained to act *in persona Christi*. All ministries must be discerned based on vocation, not gender.
5. Even in the conjugal act, genital complementarity is for attaining unity ("one flesh"). The analogy of the "bridegroom" and the "bride" should not be reduced to patriarchal gender stereotypes that are no longer conducive to the glory of God and the good of souls. The Christ-Church mystery is not simply a patriarchy. It is not insignificant that Ephesians 5:22-33 is rarely chosen anymore as a reading in Catholic weddings. It is time to put an end to the pseudo-ontological complementarian nonsense in the sacramental life of the Church.
6. *Canon 1024* is, in effect, an artificial contraceptive (if not an abortifacient) of female priestly vocations. Aborting vocations is almost as bad as aborting babies. For the new evangelization, we need women deacons, women priests, and women bishops.
7. Are we integrally pro-life from conception to natural death? Do we really care about "integral human development" and "integral ecology"? Can we effectively promote this agenda while still having a church hierarchy that is an image of patriarchal ideology rather than Trinitarian communion?

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## **Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance:**

1. The Original Disciples: According to most Christians' interpretation of the Gospels, Jesus called 12 individuals to be his disciples. Most or all probably shared 9 factors in common. They were: bearded, dark skinned, Aramaic speaking, married, male, Jewish, residents of Palestine, without much formal education and the parent of one or more children.

Various Christian denominations have deviated from these factors in the selection of clergy. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, has ordained clean-shaven and bearded priests; candidates of all races, speaking many languages; usually single but sometimes married, etc. In other ways (marital status, religion, citizenship, education) the church requires its priests to be opposite to the original disciples. But Roman Catholic and many other conservative denominations still maintain the necessity that all of their pastors, priests and ministers must be male.

2. Treatment of Women in Bible Times: Some liberal theologians point to differences in the treatment of women in the Bible. Before Jesus' ministry and women's roles were very severely restricted in Jewish society.

During his ministry, he treated women and men equally, even though it offended many people. The Gospels describe about 10 of Jesus' followers in some detail. About half were men; half were women. After his execution, the growing Christian movements appear to have continued Jesus' practices towards women. But the church gradually reverted to the earlier policy of treating women as inferior beings, in the 1st century CE. This led to the almost complete suppression of women in later centuries. The church and government reduced the status of women to the inferior standard of the Jewish, Roman and Greek societies of the time. Women were gradually denied access to positions of authority, and restricted limited and rigidly defined roles. This largely continued into modern times, until the rise of the feminist movement.

3. General comments on 1 Timothy: Conservative theologians believe in the inerrancy of the Bible. The author of 1 Timothy unambiguously restricts the role of women to minor tasks within the church. Thus many believe that women must not be considered eligible for ordination today.

Many liberal theologians regard 1 Timothy as a later forgery. They note the numerous references in the Bible, in early Christian writings that never made it into the Bible, and in archaeological evidence which show that women did indeed play an active leadership, ministering and teaching roles in the very early Christian church. Quoting Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza:

"The Pauline literature and Acts still allow us to recognize that women were among the most prominent missionaries and leaders in the early Christian movement, They were apostles and ministers like Paul, and some were his co-workers. They were teachers, preachers and competitors in the race for the gospel."

Liberal theologians believe that 1 and 2 Timothy were written by unknown authors in the second century CE, many decades after Paul died. Some further speculate that one of the purposes of the forgeries was to "subvert Paul's radicalism," and to reinstall "conventional patriarchal attitudes towards women." 1

4. General Comments on 1 Corinthians: Conservatives generally interpret 1 Corinthians 14 as limiting all women's speech during services. Paul's statement is clear and unambiguous. And if women are not allowed to speak, then they obviously cannot be pastors, ministers or priests.

Liberals might point out that St. Paul's statements would be in conflict with the historical evidence of female leadership in the early church. In other passages in his Epistles, Paul acknowledges that there were female apostles and ministers. He also referred to women prophesizing in church. They might conclude that the restrictions in Corinthians were most likely intended to control specific actions by some women, at some churches, and at a particular time. They would not necessarily have been intended to refer to the status of women today. Many liberals believe that the passage 1 Corinthians 14:34b-35 was inserted into the original writing by an unknown person at an unknown date. Since it was not part of the original writing, it cannot be considered authoritative.

5. The Priestly Function: Those opposing the ordination of women would note that throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, and from the early Christian church to the present time, the priestly function has only been performed by men. In ancient times, only men of a specific Jewish tribe could act as priests. Those promoting female ordination point out that Jesus broke with the tradition of male superiority on numerous occasions, and that Paul acknowledged female apostles, co-workers and ministers. It was only in the 2nd century that the doors once more closed on women's ordination. By once more allowing women to be priests and ministers, they would argue, we are returning to Jesus' pattern of gender equality.

6. Effect on Denominational Stability: One argument that is often used against female ordination is that it might weaken or split the denomination. This is an argument that has considerable validity, as does the parallel arguments about ordination of gays and lesbians. In fact, every major ethical debate in recent decades has created major intra-denominational stresses: slavery in the 19th century, racial integration in the late 1950's, inter-racial marriage in the mid 1960's, and now ordination of women, gays and lesbians.

7. Representation of Christ: J.I. Packer argues that a pastor or priest represents Christ when he ministers to individual members of his flock. Since Jesus was undeniably male, then the ideal form of the pastor is to also be male. "That one male is best represented by another male is a matter of common sense." Liberals might argue that God has traditionally male properties (lawgiver, judge, etc) as well as traditionally female properties (creator, healer, etc). Thus God can be represented by either a man or a woman. Genesis 1:27 states this clearly. The fact that Jesus became a human being is of primary importance; that he was male is incidental. If Jesus were female, the daughter of God; she could still have been crucified and resurrected. Nothing fundamental would really change in the gospel.

8. Genesis 1:27 describes how "...God created man in his own image...male and female he created them." Thus a man reflects the image of God as much as a woman does. The ideal church structure would thus appear to have both male and female pastors, in order to fully reflect the different aspects of God. A pastor must minister to both men and women. By both male and female clergy available, each church member has the opportunity to deal with a pastor of whichever gender they feel most comfortable.

9. Alternative Roles for Women: Packer cites Genesis 2:20, and suggests that women were created by God to be helpers to men. He feels that women should be confined to the roles of pastoral assistants, ministers of music, youth directors, [and] educational ministers. These roles have "the effect of supplementing and supporting [the male pastor's]...own preaching and teaching... None of this... requires ordination as a presbyter." Most English translations of Genesis 2:20 describe Eve as a "helper." And a helper is normally regarded as a person of lower stature to the "helpee." But some (e.g. New Living Translation, Today's English Version) use the term "companion." - thus indicating that Eve had an equal stature to Adam. The original Hebrew word does not have a connotation of inferiority.

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## Richard Davidson:

1. Genesis 1 teaches us that male and female participate equally in the image of God. "So God created man [humankind] in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen 1:27).

This basic passage gives no hint of a divine creation order. Here man and woman are fully equal, with no subordination of one to the other. We find that this description of the relationship between man and woman holds throughout Scripture and beyond. No inspired writer—not Moses, Jesus, Paul, or Ellen White—teaches the creation headship of man over woman. Nor has this position ever been accepted in historic Adventism.

Those who oppose the ordination of women ultimately base their argument on the creation headship of man over woman. Their case, however, rests on a fundamental misinterpretation of Gen 1-3.

2. Genesis 2 reinforces Genesis 1. In Gen 2 woman is the climax, the crowning work of creation. She is created from a rib from Adam's side, to show that she is "to stand by his side as an equal" (Gen 2:21- 22; PP 46). She is man's 'ēzer k'negdô ("helpmeet for him," Gen 2:18 KJV), which in the original does not denote a subordinate helper or assistant. Elsewhere in Scripture it is most often God Himself who is called 'ēzer ("helper") (Exod 18:4; Deut 33:7, 26; Ps 33:20; 70:5; 115:9, 10, 11). The phrase 'ēzer k'negdô in Gen 2 means no less than an equal counterpart, a "partner" (Gen 2:18, 22 NEB).

Contrary to popular argument, Adam does not name the woman (and thereby exercise authority over her) before the Fall in Gen 2:23. The "divine passives" in this verse imply in Hebrew thought that the designation "woman" comes from God, not from man (see Jacques Doukhan, *The Genesis Creation Story* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1978], 46-47). Adam does not name Eve till after the Fall (Gen 3:20).

In short, Gen 2 contains no creation order subordinating woman to man or restricting her from entering into full and equal participation with man in any ministry to which God may call her. For further detailed analysis, see Richard Davidson, "Sexuality in the Beginning: Gen 1–2," chap. 1 of *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), 15–54.

3. Subjection or submission of wife to husband comes about only after the Fall. A subjection of Eve to Adam is mentioned in Gen 3. God says to Eve: "Your desire shall be to your husband and he shall rule over your" (Gen 3:16). But it is crucial to recognize that the subjection of Eve to Adam comes after the Fall. Furthermore, it is limited to the husband-wife relationship, and therefore does not involve a general subordination of women to men.

This is precisely the consistent interpretation of Ellen White (see especially PP 58-59, 1T 307-308, and 3T 484) and The SDA Bible Commentary. The servant headship of the husband prescribed in this passage can no more be broadened to men-women relationships in general than can the sexual desire of the wife be broadened to mean the sexual desire of all women for all men. For further detailed analysis, see Davidson, "Sexuality and the Fall: Genesis 3," in *Flame of Yahweh*, pp. 55–80.

4. Paul's writings maintain the Eden model. Paul gives much instruction regarding the relationship between husbands and wives. As can be seen in particular by 1 Tim 2:14 (see also 1 Cor 14:34 and PP 58-59), it is ultimately in light of Gen 3:16 that he indicates the "head of a woman is her husband" (1 Cor 11:3) and calls upon wives to "be subject in everything to their husbands" (Eph 5:24). Such passages as 1 Cor 11:3-12, 1 Cor 14:34-35, and 1 Tim 2:11-12 all concern the issue of the submission of wives to their husbands and not of women to men in general.

Furthermore, in 1 Tim 2:13 Paul is not arguing for a creation headship of man over woman as has often been assumed. Rather, he is correcting a false syncretistic theology in Ephesus which claimed that woman was created first and man fell first, and therefore women are superior to men. Because of this false theology, wives were apparently domineering over their husbands in public church meetings. (For a careful analysis of the evidence for these conclusions, see Gordon P. Hugenberger, "Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Tim 2:8–15, *JETS* 35 [1992]: 341–360; and Sharon Gritz, *Paul, Woman Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of The Religious and Cultural Milieu of The First Century* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991].)

Paul's counsel for husbands and wives cannot be extended to the relationship of men and women in general. The apostle himself shows how the marriage relationship applies to the church. Husband headship in the home is not equated with male headship in the church. Rather, the Husband/Head of the church is Christ, and all the church--including males--are His "bride," equally submissive to Him (Eph 5:21-23).

5. In the Old Testament we see numerous women in leadership roles over men, thus confirming Genesis 1. Witness Deborah (Judges 4 and 5), one of the judges over the people of Israel-- women and men. Witness the leadership role of Miriam (Exod 15:20-21), Huldah (2 Kgs 22:13-14; 2 Chr 34:22-28), Esther, and others (e.g., Exod 38:8; 1 Sam 2:22; 2 Kings 8:1-6; Ps 68:11; Jer 31:22).

Although in OT Israel there did exist social inequalities for women, reflecting a perversion of the divine ideal set forth in Gen 1, yet nonetheless there are no legal restrictions barring women from positions of influence, leadership, and authority over

men.

With regard to the priesthood, Adam and Eve were appointed priests in the Garden of Eden before the Fall, and reconfirmed as such after the Fall (see discussion and evidence in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 47–48, 57–58). God's original plan was that all Israel be a "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6). Because of Israel's sin, an alternate plan was given in which even most men were also excluded--except for one family in one tribe in Israel. Yet in the New Testament the Gospel restores God's original plan. Not a few male priests, but once more the "priesthood of all believers" (1 Pet 2:5, 9; Rev 1:6).

6. Jesus called His people back to the original plan regarding the role of women. In the NT Jesus Himself set the tone for the Gospel restoration by pointing His hearers to God's original plan "from the beginning" (Matt 19:8). He did not move precipitously, upsetting the very fabric of Jewish culture; He did not ordain women as His immediate disciples, just as He did not ordain Gentiles. But He pointed the way toward the Edenic ideal in His revolutionary treatment and exaltation of women (see John 4:7-30; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:1-3; Matt 15:21- 28; John 20:1-18, etc.).

7. The Gospel ideal is the return to the Eden model. Paul emphatically declared: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). This is not merely a statement on equal access to salvation among various groups (cf. Gal 2:11-15; Eph 2:14-15). Rather, it specifically singles out those three relationships in which the Jews had perverted God's original plan of Gen 1 by making one group subordinate to another: (1) Jew-Gentile, (2) slave-master, and (3) male-female. By using the rare NT terms "male-female" (*arsen-thēly*) instead of "husband-wife" (*anēr-gunē*) Paul establishes a link with Gen 1:27 and thus shows how the Gospel calls us back to the divine ideal, which has no place for general subordination of females to males. Thus, Paul's choice of terminology upholds the equality of men and women in the church, without changing the position of the husband as head of the family.

Within the cultural restraints of his day, Paul and the early church (like Jesus) did not act precipitously. The subordination of Gentiles was difficult to root out (even in Peter! [Gal 2:11-14]). Slavery was not immediately abolished in the church (see Eph 6:5-9; Col 3:22; Phlm 12: 1 Tim 6:1). Likewise, women did not immediately receive full and equal participation with men in the ministry of the church. However, Phoebe is mentioned as a "deacon" (Rom 16:1) Junia was a female apostle (Rom 16:7), and the leaders of the church at Philippi were women (Phil 4:2–3). Priscilla assumed an authoritative teaching role over men (Acts 18), and the "Elect Lady" (2 John) may well have been a prominent church leader with a congregation under her care. (See discussion of these persons, with bibliography, in Davidson, *Flame of Yahweh*, 649–650.)

Paul's list of qualifications for elders framed in the masculine gender ("husband of one wife"--literally, "a one-wife husband"--[1 Tim 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9]) does not exclude women from serving as elders any more than the masculine gender throughout the Ten Commandments (Exod 20; see esp. vs. 17) exempts women from obedience. Rather, these passages are again upholding the Edenic ideal--the principle of monogamy (Gen 2:24).

God does not speak directly to the question of the ordination of women in the NT, just as He does not deal directly with the abolition of slavery, with vegetarianism, abstinence from alcohol, and many other issues based on principles set forth "from the beginning." But He has given clear Biblical principles to guide our decision-making.

In these last days, when the fullness of the everlasting Gospel is to be preached, God has called His church to return to His original blueprint for every area of our lives: our diet, our day of worship--and the three human relationships mentioned in Gal 3. Our church has already taken courageous stands against slavery and racial prejudice. God also calls us to return to the Edenic ideal for male-female relationships that allows women equal access to the gifts of the Spirit for ministry (Joel 2:28-30; Eph 4:11-13).

*[Read more at: <http://spectrummagazine.org/node/2305>]*

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**

## Summary of the two positions



*Rome's Arguments Throughout, I use the term Rome to indicate both the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Holy Father.*

Counter Arguments



### Scripture

- \* Jesus Christ set a permanent norm by omitting women from the apostolic team.
- \* Paul excluded women from teaching and presiding in the Christian assembly.

[Click here!](#)

### Scripture

- \* Because of the need of the moment Christ did not choose a woman. But he made women, in principle, equal partners in his priesthood.
- \* Paul's prohibitions concern only local communities. He taught the equality of women in Christ.

[Click here!](#)

### Tradition

Faithful to an unbroken tradition, the Church has never felt that priestly ordination can be conferred upon women.

[Click here!](#)

### Tradition

Women were not ordained because of wide-spread *social and religious* prejudices against women.

[Click here!](#)

### Theology

Only male priests can adequately represent Christ who was a man.

[Click here!](#)

### Theology

Christ is not adequately represented in his priesthood by male priests alone.

[Click here!](#)

### Authority

The Church cannot extend the priesthood to women.

[Click here!](#)

### Authority

The Church has the power to ordain women.

[Click here!](#)

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## Women's Ordination Conference:

10.) A priest's job is to serve the people of God — it's not about gender (or for that matter, marital status or sexual orientation).

9.) The Second Vatican Council calls for all discrimination to be eliminated.

- “Every type of discrimination ... based on sex ... is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent” — *Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, #29*

8.) Women were prominent leaders in Jesus' ministry. In all four gospels, Mary Magdalene was the first witness to the most important event in Christianity — the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

7.) There is a severe worldwide shortage of priests and an increasing number of women called to ordained ministry.

- Fact: Between 1975 and 2005, the worldwide Catholic population increased by 57%, from 709.6 million to 1.12 billion, but the number of priests remained about the same, with an increase of 0.4%. — *Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate*

6.) The Bible includes many passages depicting women as leaders in early Christianity.

- “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon (*diakonos*) of the church at Cenchrea.” — *Romans 16:1*

5.) Archaeological discoveries provide evidence that women served as deacons, priests, and bishops in early Christianity.

4.) In the 20th century, women have been ordained to the Roman Catholic priesthood.

- Fact: On December 28, 1970, Bishop Felix Davidek ordained Ludmila Javorova a priest in the underground church of Communist Czechoslovakia. In 1991, Cardinal Miloslav Vlk of Prague confirmed that five other women were also ordained as priests during that time.

3.) In 1976, the Pontifical Biblical Commission determined that there is no biblical reason to prohibit women's ordination.

2.) Because women and men are created in God's image, both may represent Christ as priests.

- “Humankind was created as God’s reflection: in the divine image God created them, female and male, God made them.” — *Genesis 1:27*

1.) Through baptism in Christ, the distinctions between women and men disappear, so women should also be able to answer God’s call to priestly ministry.

- "In Christ there is no Jew or Greek, slave or citizen, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus." — *Galatians 3:28*

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**



## Roy Bourgeois:

### 1. Dignity and equality

As Catholics, we are taught that both men and women are created equal “in the image of God” (Genesis 1: 27). Then, through baptism, “It is through faith that you are God’s sons and daughters. . . . There is neither male nor female. In Christ Jesus you are all one” (Galatians 3: 26-28). Women and men are endowed equally with intellectual and moral capacity.

### 2. Vocation and ordination

A 1976 report by the Pontifical Biblical Commission found no justification for prohibiting women from being priests. The 17-member Commission voted unanimously that “the New Testament does not settle in a clear way and once and for all whether women can be ordained priests.” their power and privilege.

### 3. Primacy of conscience and prophetic obedience

John Paul II concludes in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* that there should be no debate about the ordination of women. The prohibition against female ordination “is to be definitively held by all the Church’s faithful.”

For Catholics—who believe in the primacy of conscience—this is problematical. Conscience is sacred because it is our lifeline to God, independent of hierarchy. Conscience gives us a sense of right and wrong and encourages us to do the right thing.

[Read more at <http://www.womensordination.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Why-Women-Should-Be-Priests.pdf>]

**Therefore, women should be ordained.**