

**THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN
AND
THE ANGLICAN-EPISCOPAL EXPERIENCE:
THE ROAD TO SCHISM**

by

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A Case Study

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INTRODUCTION

In January, 1987, this writer received a reply from the Rev. James Brice Clark in answer to a request for information concerning the experience of the Episcopal Church with respect to the ordination of women priests. Included in his reply was the following:

[The ordination of women to the priesthood] was a tragic decision for our church. . . there has been one conflict after another...unfortunately the bishops have been for it, this is an ultra liberal body. . I can't tell you what a mess it is.¹

No greater example of polarization over this issue is available than that of the Anglican-Episcopal Church.² The ordination of women to the Episcopal priesthood has shaken the ecclesiastical structure of the Episcopal Church and has put that Church on the agonizing road to schism.

The format of this case study will be: 1- A survey of contemporary events connected with the ordination of women in the Episcopal experience, 2- A survey of divergent approaches to the Bible the issue has exposed, 3- A brief survey of the issue in the Church of Sweden, and, 4- Conclusions and implications that may help the Seventh-day Adventist Church avoid the turmoil and schism which our Episcopal brethren have suffered.

SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

The contemporary history of the issue concerning the ordination of women in the Anglican-Episcopal Church can be divided into three segments, from the 1940's to 1964, from 1964 to 1976, and from 1976 to 1987.

1940's to 1964

The first ordination of a woman priest within the Anglican communion took place in the Hong Kong diocese of the Church in China. It was considered an emergency situation as male candidates simply were not available during the war. Outraged English bishops forced her to resign and the issue went into a period of hiatus until the 1960's when the bishop of the Hong Kong diocese began to raise the issue again.³

During these decades the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Massachusetts enrolled women for the first time in the Bachelor of Divinity program.

1964 to 1976

TURNING POINT. The turning point within Anglicanism came in 1964 when the St. Louis General Convention changed the wording of Canon Law regarding the status of deaconesses from "appointed" to "ordered." Which meant that ordaining women as deaconesses conferred on them what is referred to as holy orders. On the basis of that action Bishop James Pike of California took it upon himself to recognize a woman as *deacon* by virtue of her prior ordination as deaconess.

These events led to the establishment by the House of Bishops of a Committee to Study the Proper Place of Women in the Ministry of the Church. The report of this committee was presented to the House of Bishops in October 1966 and read, in part:

to oppose the ordination of women is either to hold that the whole trend of modern culture is wrong in its attitude toward the place of women in society, or to maintain that the unique character of the ordained ministry makes that ministry a special case and justifies the exclusion of women from it.⁴

The report made no distinction between women in society and women in the Church, and took culture and social trends to be more authoritative than Scripture.

By 1969 agitation had reached the level where the House of Bishops, meeting in South Bend, Indiana, set up a commission on ordination which was to report back to the Houston Convention in 1970 with recommendations.

At the 1970 General Convention a number of significant steps were taken. The commission appointed the previous year recommended full and immediate ordination of women to the priesthood, which was voted down by the clergy. However, the most far-reaching actions were changes made in Canon Law declaring deaconesses within the diaconate thus ratifying their ordination as deacons. This was a historic step paving the way for women to be ordained as priests as women ordained as deacons were now considered in the sacred ministry.⁵

With the action of 1970, some bishops in N. America began to unilaterally ordain women as priests.

In 1971 the Anglican Consultative Council, which meets between Lambeth Conferences (held once each decade with delegates from the entire Anglican/Episcopal Church), met in Limuru, Kenya, and *"by an incredibly close margin (24-22) the bishops, clergy and laity decided that any bishop in the communion, with the approval of his provincial or national synod, could ordain a woman to the priesthood."*⁶

It needs to be underlined that the Council was not legislative only advisory, and any subsequent actions taken were thus not officially sanctioned. Eight months later Bishop Baker of Hong Kong ordained two women as priests. The fact that all dioceses remained in fellowship with Hong Kong made the Bishop's action acceptable if not official. This resulted in a commission being established in the Episcopal Church in America to study the issue so that it could be on the agenda at the 1973 General Convention at Louisville.

OPPOSITION GROWS. By 1973 the actual situation of women in the Church had been quietly changing. Gradually, however, an awakening as to the implications of what was happening began to develop among conservatives and opposition increased as the debate slowly shifted from abstract questions about female ability to theological questions.

In 1973 the Anglican Consultative Council met in Dublin and reaffirmed its previous recommendation at Limuru. However, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in Louisville rejected the ordination of women to the priesthood which led to extreme bitterness on the part of women deacons.⁷

Three retired bishops, in July 1974, ordained eleven women to the priesthood in Philadelphia (now referred to as the *Philadelphia Eleven*), though asked not to do so by the Presiding Bishop and the bishop of the diocese of

Pennsylvania. This flagrant action brought the matter to center stage as it challenged the authority structure and ultimately served to alter the face of the Episcopal Church. A few weeks later the House of Bishops, meeting in Chicago, reprimanded the three bishops and stated that the *"necessary conditions for valid ordination to the priesthood were not fulfilled."*⁸

This reprimand by the House of Bishops was severely criticized by Betty Medsger, who had served as press aide for the Philadelphia Eleven. She compliments the bishops that ordained the women as champions for justice and equal rights and compares the issue to the civil rights campaign of the 50's and 60's. She writes: *"Many, including bishops, are simply unable to face the ordination of women as a justice issue; thus their slowness."*⁹

She further compares opponents to the notorious Bull Connor, and what she considered to be the obstructionist House of Bishops with governor George Wallace, chiding the liberal Bishops because they did not act more forcefully.¹⁰ Medsger did not even pretend to approach the issue from a Biblical perspective, only on the basis of justice and human rights.

CANONICAL CHARGES. Four theologians disputed the ruling by the House of Bishops saying that the ordination was irregular but valid. Four members of the House of Bishops brought canonical charges against the three bishops who ordained the women. Other charges were brought against parish pastors who invited some of the newly ordained women priests to celebrate eucharist in their parishes. Enthusiasts urged women deacons to seek immediate ordination as priests. In the midst of the ecclesiastical trials that ensued in 1975 the Anglican Church of Canada approved the ordination of women priests, which only added fuel to the growing fire of emotion and distress.

One of the trials was that of the Rev. William Wendt, Rector of the controversial Church of St. Stephen and the Incarnation in Washington. He had invited one of the Philadelphia Eleven to celebrate eucharist in defiance of the House of Bishops request that nothing further be done until after the General Convention in 1976 when the issue would again be on the agenda.¹¹ Charged with disobedience, Wendt's defense was freedom of conscience. He was found guilty and formally admonished.¹² He was in trouble later in planning to perform the marriage ceremony of two male homosexuals, one of which, a graduate of Wesley Seminary, wished to be ordained an Episcopal priest.¹³

Another issue of considerable importance that emerged during the trial was that of congregationalism. It was asked:

*To what degree can local churches order their own affairs? The high-church or Anglo-Catholic faction wants power concentrated at the top. The Wendt defense witnesses represent increasing numbers who have an opposite viewpoint, and it colors the way they see women's ordination.*¹⁴

An extremely dramatic moment in the trial was the citation of contempt issued by the judges against Presiding Bishop John M. Allin who failed to appear to testify. He was known to have personal convictions opposed to the ordination of women.

SHARP DIVISION. As 1976 approached the Anglican-Episcopal Church was sharply divided over the issue. Lines were beginning to be clearly drawn. Some proponents called for bishops to ordain women at once, and the Rev.

Jane Hwang Hsien Yuen was invited from Hong Kong to celebrate the eucharist at the Church of the Epiphany in Washington on May 4, 1975.

It becomes obvious as one studies the record of these events that the structure of ecclesiastical authority and responsibility was breaking down under the pressure, and a spirit of anarchy was taking over. What would happen if the 1976 General Convention voted against the ordination of women priests and bishops? One author prophesied:

The eleven women who claim priestly orders as a result of the July 29 ordination in Philadelphia will probably receive--and accept--many more invitations to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. It is even possible that one or more of them might accept a call to become rector of an Episcopal parish, defying any canonical authority the diocesan bishop might have to veto such a call. A negative vote in Minnesota might move one or more bishops to "regularize" the ordinations of some of the women ordained in Philadelphia and cause more bishops to go ahead and ordain more women to the priesthood, authorizing them to function as priests in the local diocese as well.¹⁵

If the Convention approved canonical changes authorizing ordination of women as priests and bishops *"the often-hinted-at question of schism in the church will most likely have to be dealt with."*¹⁶ Opponents of ordination insisted that such a decision would constitute a breach of faith and order within the Anglican-Episcopal communion and as such would be schismatic. In other words the Church would no longer be recognized as orthodox or as the Anglican-Episcopal Church which would by that action separate itself from the Apostolic Church.

Such was the situation as 1976 drew near, which posed many serious questions for Episcopalians. Such as: Can I remain and grow in a Church that is out of step with my thinking and convictions? When should I fight for what I believe is right and when should I yield to the will of others? What should I do if I cannot remain loyal to the contemporary teachings of the Church? Should I change, or should I leave? These are the very kind of questions Adventist evangelism forces individuals to ask when they are exposed to Bible truth. How can faithful Adventists avoid asking the same questions if faced with teaching and practice they believe is out of harmony with Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy?

1976 to 1987

DECISIVE CONVENTION. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church met in Minneapolis in 1976 with a troubled and tension-ridden spirit, some delegates possessed by a foreboding sense of doom. The Convention would be decisive and no-one could foresee the consequences. The dramatic moment of voting on an issue that had held the church embroiled in emotional controversy and debate for many years was approaching. Voting was preceded by five minutes of silent prayer, not so much for guidance in the present but *"for the time afterward."* A reporter described the scene:

Ordinarily, few settings seem less godly than a drafty, barnlike, noisy convention hall filled with articulate Episcopalians legislating

*the church's often mundane business. But for five long minutes the deputies on the floor and the partisans in the gallery kept an altogether godly silence, broken only by the whir of the air conditioning system and the snap of shutters as photographers sought to record the images of men and women close to tears, some with their arms around each other. And then, when it was over, a muted rejoicing.*¹⁷

Two alternative approaches were available, a constitutional amendment requiring ratification by two subsequent General Conventions, which would mean no legal ordinations of women could take place until 1979, or a change in the canons which would make ordinations possible as of January 1, 1977. The Convention took the canonical route after three days of bitterly contested debate, and voted approval. Following the action:

*Thirty-eight bishops and an unknown number of deputies signed a statement saying the vote didn't mean anything. They would stay in the church as conscientious objectors, and they wouldn't recognize the priesthood of any woman--ever. . . Their hands were tied by Truth.*¹⁸

Many opponents indicated that the action served only to cause a conflict between obedience to conscience and obedience to the Church. Though the action was taken, *"the issue of women's ordination will continue to be a source of divisiveness."*¹⁹ There would be some dioceses and bishops accepting women priests, and others that would not. Priests and bishops could very well be declared *persona non grata* outside of their own diocese, litigations ensue as the more militant women take bishops, dioceses and local churches to court over hiring practices.

Before the year was out St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Denver seceded from the denomination. Suspended from his priestly functions by his bishop, the Rector of St. Mary's said: *"I'm not leaving my church; it is leaving me."*²⁰

When it came to the matter of what was to be done with the "ordinations" of the Philadelphia Eleven, the House of Bishops voted to require reordination under the canonical changes. This decision was felt to be unsatisfactory and so on the second day the House of Bishops dramatically reversed itself, rescinding its action of the day before thus regularizing the ordinations not by reordination but by a "public event" during which the women would recite an oath of loyalty to the Church.²¹

SCHISM. In November 1977 1,750 Episcopalians, unable to live with the 1976 decision, met in St. Louis to begin the formation of a new Anglican-Episcopal denomination. A statement entitled *Affirmation of St. Louis* was adopted which stated that preceding Episcopal conventions had brought about schism *"by their unlawful attempts to alter faith, order, and morality."* Signers further declared that they would not recognize actions taken against them by either the Episcopal Church or the Anglican Church of Canada, stating:

*We affirm that the claim of any schismatic person or body against any church member, clerical or lay, for his witness to the whole faith is with no authority of Christ's true church, and any such inhibition, deposition, or discipline is absolutely null and void.*²²

Observers believed that the expected split would be the largest in Anglican-Episcopal history.

Resentment still lingered among many opponents who did not leave the established church, and a growing number were *"troubled by the mounting pressures to permit ordination of avowed homosexuals."*²³ The House of Bishops, concerned about developing schism, meeting in Florida in October, 1977, adopted a conscience clause specifying that no-one should be coerced into recognizing, or penalized for not recognizing women priests. That action permitted *"a bishop to refuse to ordain women, and it also allows him to bar women ordained elsewhere from serving in his diocese--even if a parish in his diocese wants to employ one."*²⁴ This was an obvious attempt to heal the deep division that existed.

Another issue emerging from the debate was that of the authority of bishops. Bishop Wetmore of New York articulated this issue when he remarked: *"We are on the edge of lawlessness. Never again will this house be able to discipline any of its members on any question."*²⁵ The House of Bishops was unable to discipline one of its own members who had ordained a professed lesbian to the priesthood in January, 1977. Nor did they discipline the three bishops who ordained the Philadelphia Eleven.

LEADERSHIP CRISIS. One of the most tragic elements of the trauma and punishment Episcopalians inflicted upon themselves over this issue was the lack of firm and determined leadership on the part of the Presiding Bishop, John M. Allin, when it was most needed. At the October, 1977, meeting of the House of Bishops he exploded a bombshell when, in his opening address, he announced that he remained unconvinced that women have a place in the priesthood, that he would neither ordain a woman nor participate in the consecration of a woman bishop. The bishops were incredulous at the spectacle of the Presiding Bishop in violation of what had become canon law. His prior public neutrality constituted abdication of duty in the face of his church's anguish. He would have done his church the best service if he had stated his position in Minneapolis unequivocally and been prepared to take the consequences. Too late he found the courage to speak up when the specter of schism became a reality. Too late he was willing to declare himself in order to move the church to a position more acceptable to the whole church. *"This action is typical of the failure of ordained church leaders to accept the responsibility for their actions and to act decisively in setting direction in the church."*²⁶

In spite of their incredulity, and the leadership crisis the Presiding Bishop precipitated, the House of Bishops endorsed his position and did not request his resignation, choosing instead to interpret it as a gesture of reconciliation toward those who chose to leave the church. In addition to the emerging issue concerning the ordination of homosexual priests, which the House of Bishops failed to aggressively address (probably because the action to ordain women removed the hermeneutic which would allow denial), the bishops faced the deeper problem of how to lead a church that was turning toward participatory democracy and pluralism. In refusing to act on the homosexuality issue they did in effect act, for it left ordained homosexuals free to function. Which poses the question of how any institution can survive if its leaders do not uphold its basic tenets.

The belated willingness of the Presiding Bishop to be martyred for the sake of unity sounded hollow and, of course, failed as it was bound to do. In response to the conscience clause which was the only fallout from the Presiding Bishop's bombshell, the Rev. James O. Mote of Denver said: *"The*

conscience clause doesn't mean anything; by voting to ordain women, the church has embraced heresy."²⁷ By then the two camps were irreconcilable, the goodwill of the Presiding Bishop notwithstanding. Proponents of ordination for women felt he betrayed them, and opponents felt his words were too little too late.

RELATED ISSUES. The ordination of women was not the only issue troubling conservative Episcopalians. It was the fuse that set off the explosion. The Episcopal Church has been slowly moving away from many traditional positions of morality. The indissolubility of marriage was revoked in 1973. In 1976 a moderate position was taken on abortion, and the new views reflecting contemporary liberal mores on sexuality and homosexuality have caused suspicion and hostility.²⁸

On January 28, 1978 four men were consecrated as the first bishops of the Church tentatively called the Anglican Church of North America. They led more than 25,000 members, in 70 plus parishes, who left the established Church because of liberal trends. In October of 1978 the first convention of the new denomination was held in Dallas and the name Anglican Catholic Church was chosen.

Unity has always been a high ideal among Episcopalians, but it was not present by the 1979 General Convention as the Church moved steadily toward pluralism. Consensus was still lacking on three central issues: the use of the new Book of Common Prayer, the ordination of women, and the ordination of homosexuals which came hot on the heels of the women's ordination issue. By 1979 there were still bishops refusing to ordain women, male priests who would not work with them, and laity that would walk out of a service rather than receive the sacraments from a woman priest. The 1979 Convention did pass the recommendation of the Standing Commission on Human Affairs and Health, which read in part: *"we believe it is not appropriate for this Church to ordain a practicing homosexual, or any person who is engaged in heterosexual relations outside of marriage."*²⁹ At the same time the recommendation seemed to hold open the possibility for the ordination of homosexuals *"whose behavior the Church considers wholesome."* Obviously the recommendation was two-faced and both upset and gave hope to gays. Nobody was pleased with it.

In the booth area of the convention hall both pro and con views concerning homosexuality distributed literature. The pro's insisting that a person's sexuality was a gift from God, and the con's insisting that homosexuality is a sin on the basis of Scripture such as Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and Leviticus 18:22-30. After the schism caused by the approval of the ordination of women in 1976 it would be safe to anticipate that many more laymen, priests and bishops would leave if the Church approved the ordination of homosexuals. However, as with the former issue we can expect the latter issue to reappear until and unless an unequivocal stand is taken, which will require the kind of conservative leadership lacking in the previous decision.

It reappeared in a dual sense when a woman was nominated as a candidate for the office of Bishop of Alaska in November 1981. Out of six nominees she was the only woman and during a questioning session for all the candidates she responded to a question regarding the ordination of homosexuals by saying

she would not have any special criteria of sexuality for the one kind of ministry called priesthood that did not apply to all other kinds of ministry exercised in the Body of Christ. If gay people are baptiz-

ed, confirmed, serve as acolytes, lay readers, teachers, choir members, servants to the world for peace and justice, then they should also be considered for all other kinds of ministry. The other five candidates all said they would not ordain gays.³¹

She considered the active support of the ordination of women to be credentials for service and once told her Bishop that a female candidate for membership on the Commission on Ministry she chaired, who was opposed to the ordination of women, was unacceptable. The lady was not elected Bishop of Alaska.

It is probable that this female candidate for the episcopate reflected the opinions of the majority of female Episcopal priests. A national study of women priests indicates that:

Eight out of ten women priests do not believe that practicing homosexuality is sinful. . . 85% believe practicing homosexuals can be priests. . . 87% do not believe premarital sex a "sin". . . 73% approve of abortion in general.³²

Given the hermeneutic that made possible their ordination these women priests were being consistent in its application.

But the question was far from being settled. On the side of ordaining homosexuals came a *Statement of Conscience* signed by 23 bishops and 136 deputies in which they announced defiance of the action taken at the 1979 convention. The statement expressed gratitude for the ministry of ordained homosexuals in which was seen a "redeeming quality." It was an affirmation for ordained homosexuals who were believed to suffer under the hostility of society. Thus the Church's stand on the ordination of homosexuals had the potential for more turmoil as it moved ever closer to a reflection of cultural trends.

DISTRESS INCREASES. Six years after the 1976 Minneapolis decision to approve of women priests, the following statement was released by the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania:

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania, as now constituted, believing (in the majority), that women are not appropriate subjects for ordination to the presbyterate of this church, wishes to state that it will not recommend female postulants for candidacy to the priesthood, or recommend them for ordination to the priesthood. This statement is to be communicated to our bishop, the Commission of Ministry, the Board of Examining Chaplains, and clergy of the diocese.³³

The author of the article in which the statement appeared complains that the committee, and possibly the Diocese, was taking a position in opposition to what had become Canon Law and saw this as a breach of authority. However, supporters of women's ordination had been doing this for many years on the basis of conscience and in defiance of the authority of bishops and of what was then Canon Law prohibiting such ordinations. The writer rightly says: "Those who plead conscience must be prepared to count the cost of their action." The author then identified a critical issue facing the Episcopal

Church: *"Who really does have the final authority to interpret and uphold the National Church Canons?"*

The 10th Anniversary of the ordination of the Philadelphia Eleven was celebrated on July 29, 1984 in Philadelphia, at which time a call was issued to *"urgently and with dispatch"* proceed to the election and consecration of women bishops. Such action was seen as the only way to bring wholeness to a fragmented ministry.³⁴

By 1985 the liberal climate in the Church was such that gay priests were ready to expose themselves and risk the consequences. An article by an avowed homosexual priest appeared in *The Witness* in September 1985, in which he indicated that his soul was scarred not by the sin of homosexuality but by its non-acceptance by society and church. He spoke of being called by God to be *"in solidarity with other oppressed minorities, and to demand with them and for them social justice and civil rights."* He justified his homosexuality on the basis of *"what God has fashioned."* Which, of course, is inconsistent with the Scriptures.

Less than a month after he wrote the article the author resigned at the urging of the senior pastor of his parish who stated that he had *"breached trust with the parish."*³⁵ The whole episode caused much anguish for the 28-year old priest, the senior pastor, and the entire congregation. Agony caused by the fact that the Church was not upholding Biblical principles in a determined manner.

The position of the editorial board of *The Witness* on this issue was revealed by an open letter to the newly elected Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Edmond L. Browning, in the September 1986 issue. The letter referred to the homosexual priest's dismissal as a *"moral scandal,"* and rested the case on the fact that the Episcopal Church was ordaining women to the priesthood. The letter stated: *"This is the repetition of a pattern seen in the issue of the ordination of women, where favorable votes in the House of Bishops anticipated by some years the positive position the Church finally took."* The letter closed with an appeal for the Presiding Bishop to *"encourage the Bishops to accept, ordain and deploy persons who are qualified, irrespective of their sexual preference."*

In his response to that letter, which appeared in the same issue of *The Witness*, the Presiding Bishop took no unequivocal position either way. Which prompted a letter from Malcolm Boyd of Santa Monica, California, indicating what he felt the Presiding Bishop might have said. He put these words into the Bishop's mouth: *"It is tragic that a number of sincere women and men who have offered themselves to Jesus Christ in the form of ministry since then have been--how shall I put it? clobbered--in the ordination process itself."*³⁶

LIBERAL SWING CONTINUES. The election of Browning as Presiding Bishop at the 1985 General Convention held in Anaheim, California, signaled the swing, in the eyes of conservative observers, to an even far more liberal stance than is common for the Episcopal Church. It was apparently what the delegates wanted as his election was confirmed by a roar of ayes.³⁷ This was followed, as might then be expected, by an overwhelming decision to approve the consecration of a woman Bishop should one be elected.

Narrowly defeated was a resolution stating *explicitly* that sexual orientation would not be a barrier to ordination. In reporting on this action *The Witness* again revealed its editorial position by saying: *"The defeat on the sexual orientation and ordination resolution was clearly related to some lingering homophobia among lay people at the convention."*³⁸ Homophobia had

become the sin, not *homosexuality*. Have our Episcopal friends reached the point where sin will rule in the church and the ancient prophecy fulfilled when good is called evil and evil called good?

The convention did pass a resolution stating that no one could be denied rights or status in the Church because of "*race, color, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, or age.*" Which action, no doubt for many, was seen as a foot-in-the-door for the eventual approval of homosexual priests. The two actions were clearly contradictory. What accounted for this extreme liberal swing? The laity, bishops, and many theologians had become more concerned with social justice and human rights than commitment to the Scriptures as Word of God.

A major contributing factor for this liberal swing was the lack of determined leadership on the part of the retiring conservative Presiding Bishop Allin. Another major contributing factor was happily reported by *The Witness*:

*Some of the shift in the tone of the convention is clearly attributable to the fact that women, who are 55% of the membership of the Episcopal Church, have finally made their way into its highest councils in significant numbers.*³⁹

It is possible to imagine the scenario in a conservative Church where membership and ministry is denied to those who smoke, use drugs, and drink alcohol, but not to homosexuals. How long would such restrictions last viewed on the same basis of justice, human rights, and cultural norms that have been used in arguments for the ordination of women? One female gay remarked: "*Indeed, it is church tradition and teaching which too often is used to justify social policies which discriminate against us.*"⁴⁰ In other words, the Church is responsible not homosexuality.

DESPERATE RESPONSE. In desperate response to the campaign for the election and consecration of a woman bishop, 16 conservative bishops signed *A Statement of Witness* in which they said: "*Even in the face of a majority in the House of Bishops holding a contrary view we will not be driven from this position.*"⁴¹ In spite of the statement's strong ecumenism the reader cannot but note the anguish, the appeal to Scripture, the determination to stand firm on what was believed to be the Biblical position in the face of great odds.

In 1986 St. Michael's Episcopal Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma, requested the Bishop of London, Graham Leonard, to be its bishop. He has since paid a pastoral visit to the Church in spite of the fact that the Bishop of Oklahoma declared him *persona non grata* in Oklahoma, as did the Presiding Bishop. However, the Bishop of Pennsylvania assured the Bishop of London that he was most welcome in his diocese. By that time such declarations by bishops had absolutely no authority whatsoever and bordered on the ludicrous. The State of Oklahoma even got into the act when the Governor proclaimed the visiting prelate honorary Territorial Marshall.

The election of a female Bishop would have far greater negative consequences than the 1976 decision to ordain women priests, for the simple reason that the episcopate is recognized as the visible sign of unity. The consecration of one not accepted by the whole Anglican/Episcopal communion would become an instrument of disunity.

The Bishop of Ft. Worth, Texas, desperately fearful of further schism made the following appeal to the House of Bishops:

The concern we expressed to our Primate has to do with the expected election and consecration of women to the episcopate and related matters. The question we put to him was how to provide for those Bishops, Dioceses and hundreds of isolated parishes and clergy who cannot in conscience accept this new development. We are in severe pain and anxiety and represent many within the Church who have been holding on since 1976 trying to live with the decision of the Minneapolis General Convention without compromising firmly held beliefs. The time is rapidly approaching when this will be impossible.

It is because of our love of and devotion to the Episcopal Church that we ask your help to seek a solution to our dilemma. We have remained faithful to the Episcopal Church and have not followed the path of schism. An end run around the problem and into schism would be a quick and easy thing to achieve and the finances are available in ample quantity. But that is not what we want.

What we are asking for is a mode of accommodation for our position within the Episcopal Church. To quote my brother, Jack Spong, from his recent paper on the subject of women in the priesthood and the episcopate, "it is important that the leaders of the Church be aware of those who cannot accept the decision of the body, but who want to continue as part of the body and assist them in finding ways to do just that." Newark goes on to say that this can be done in a limited and partial way, leaning heavily upon canonical imperatives.

But we hope for a more positive solution--one which will allow for the nurturing and growth of those who are called to our position and one that does not have to be maintained by mace and moat. [He may have in mind the radical position of some bishops and priests of the Church of Sweden, to which we will refer later in this paper.]

Is there a way we may maintain a covenant of fellowship even though we must differ fundamentally on this issue concerning the episcopate? Is there a way of satisfying the consciences of all parties and trespassing upon none while keeping lines of communication and bonds of common service open? Is there a way of laying the foundation of good will which will greatly ease future reconciliation once the mind of Christ in this matter has been made clear to us all? Could not solutions grounded in pastoral principles be seen as a gift from God which would greatly enhance Anglican comprehensiveness, end the siege mentality of the past decade, bring peace, and strengthen the Church's witness? It is our hope that you will help solve this grave problem and that we undertake to manage and control events rather than to be managed by them in the heat of emotion.⁴²

Desperation continues in that bishops of the Episcopal Church who remain opposed to the ordination of women priests are proposing a church-within-a-

church as a way to allow them to remain Episcopalians. This would be a non-geographical entity. They are continuing to strive for arrangements which would allow them to remain in the Church as the thought of schism is so extremely painful.⁴³

By April 1987 there was growing anticipation that a woman would be consecrated bishop in the next few years, which has intensified dissension among Episcopalians. After more than 10 years there remains a considerable number of constituents, priests, and some bishops, who have never accepted the changes made in 1976. There are at least 14 dioceses that will not ordain women. The possibility of even more schism still looms over the Episcopal Church.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

ANGLICAN/EPISCOPAL DIVISION. The issue of women priests served to drive a wedge between the Anglican Church of England and its counterpart the Episcopal Church in the United States.

In July 1979 the Church of England ruled that women priests ordained elsewhere within the Anglican/Episcopal tradition would not be allowed to celebrate the Eucharist in England. That action drove

*some Anglicans who are not normally numbered among lawbreakers and defiers of authority to the conclusion that they are not morally bound by the General Synod's action and are free to provide facilities--encouragement even--for women priests who wish to celebrate holy communion during their stay in England.*⁴⁴

This would pose serious problems for the bishops of the Church of England, as it did for the bishops in the United States, who have the obligation to uphold and enforce Canon Law.

At the 1986 General Synod of the Anglican Church held in York another attempt to allow such female priests to celebrate eucharist in England was again defeated. Therefore, since 1979 the Church of England has not recognized the ordinations of women performed by bishops in the United States or elsewhere. Women priests are consequently not in altar fellowship with the Church of England and a division exists.

The Rev. Richard H. Mansfield, an American priest, who identifies this as "a major division," refuses to participate in any clergy exchanges with the Church of England as a protest because "the Church of England has disrupted the ecclesiastical order, communion and unity of the Anglican Communion," and has threatened "the very existence of the Anglican communion."⁴⁵ He considers those who have managed to keep the Church of England faithful to Scripture to be the troublemakers!

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CONSEQUENCES. The leader of the opposition to the ordination of women in the Church of England is the Bishop of London, Graham Leonard, whose seat is the famous St. Paul's Cathedral. He has waged an ardent campaign to avoid what he fears will be schism and disruption in the Church of England should women be ordained. Among the items discussed at the 1986 General Synod were options such as a dissenting parish's right to claim the services of a bishop other than its diocesan bishop if the latter ordained women, and also the provision of homes for dissentient priests who

might be compelled to abandon their pastorates. Such options envisioned a totally shattered Church. The Bishop of London remarked that the issue

*exposes with clarity and realism the deeply distressing situation which would confront us if legislation to ordain women to the priesthood in this country were implemented. Perhaps some of us who cannot accept it are to blame for the fact that the reality of the situation has only just been recognized.*⁴⁶

In reporting on the General Synod mentioned above, *The Episcopalian* says: "With the fear of a split Church quite serious, a committee had even prepared a paper which set out how two Churches of England might legally coexist."⁴⁷

The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church have been involved in serious reunification dialogue for over twenty years and have appeared to be making progress. Visits have been exchanged by highest ranking officials of both communions, including a visit by the Anglican Primate to the Roman Pontiff. In spite of the strong desire for reunion on the part of Anglicans it is most revealing that so many of them are willing to jeopardize that goal for the sake of the ordination of women. This elicited from Pope John Paul the comment, in a letter to Archbishop Robert Runcie dated December 20, 1984, that "the increase in the number of Anglican Churches which admit, or are preparing to admit, women to priestly ordination constitutes, in the eyes of the Catholic Church, an increasingly serious obstacle to that progress."⁴⁸

In a letter to Pope John Paul, dated December 11, 1985, Archbishop Runcie admitted that "the question of the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood is a divisive matter not only between our churches but also within them." It is a subject "surrounded by controversy."⁴⁹ Cardinal Willebrand's forceful reply was: "It must be clearly stated that this is a theological issue and cannot be resolved on sociological or cultural grounds."⁵⁰

As the March 1987 meeting of the General Synod approached, with the February 6 endorsement of women priests by the Anglican Bishop's as a backdrop, the Bishop of London warned "that if the Church of England should recognize a female bishop anywhere in the Anglican world, all pretensions to orthodoxy would vanish and he could not continue as a member."⁵¹ He has collected 18,000 signatures from conservative Anglicans who would be ready to follow him into an independent Church if women priests are approved.

Following five hours of debate, the General Synod of the Anglican Church voted in March, 1987, to draw up legislation to make possible the eventual ordination of women. The legislation would include safeguards for conscientious objectors. Two-thirds majorities will be needed in all three of the Synod's houses--bishops, clergy, laity--before it could become a binding decision. The earliest that such approval could come is July 1991.⁵²

Based on a recent sociological study there is probably no question of how the laity of the Church of England would vote on the issue:

Of the Anglican church members who had already participated in the discussions of the ordination of women, about 78 per cent stated that they had resolved the issue in favor of ordaining women. In the absence of any previous involvement in such discussions, however, significantly fewer members [61 per cent] were willing to

*endorse the idea. This pattern implies that the more the issues are discussed openly, the more church members are likely to come down on the side of endorsing women's ordination.*⁵³

The disturbing thing is that the opinions expressed by the laity did not take into account Biblical teaching on the issue, but rested on the fact that *"these changes in religious life are to be understood in relation to broader changes taking place in the social context around the churches."*⁵⁴ To what changes in the social context does the study refer?

*The movement [to modify traditional sex roles in organized religion] itself, reflects the impact of secularizing forces. Each time members of the churches participating in the study considered the women-in-ministry issue, their actions had been preceded by changes in sex roles in society outside of the churches. Those secular alterations in gender-specific expectations for behavior appear to have constituted an important impetus for challenging traditional sex roles in the churches. The transformation of consciousness of who men and women are and what they are expected or allowed to do began in secular society and then spilled over into religious institutions. In this sense the women-in-ministry movement itself is a "modernizing" and "secularizing" phenomenon.*⁵⁵

It is unfortunate, and does not speak very highly of the Biblical literacy among Anglican laity, that *"most lay church members are well prepared to accept the implications of the sex role changes which accompany the influence of modern consciousness on religious organizations."*⁵⁶ To what extent the new feminist religion has influenced this acceptance is hard to say. However, when a female with the credentials of a professor of theology in a major protestant seminary, using christian symbols and language, espouses views that are flagrantly unbiblical, she is, unfortunately, listened to by many impressionable people. Especially when she claims to speak for feminists *"who seek to reclaim aspects of the biblical tradition, Jewish and Christian, but who also recognize the need both to go back behind biblical religion and to transcend it."*⁵⁷

Obviously, the issue concerning the ordination of women priests in the Anglican/Episcopal experience has been profoundly painful and destructive, and will continue to be so. That they would welcome the intercessory prayers of fellow Christians goes without saying.

DIVERGENT APPROACHES

LIBERAL VIEW (Called *progressive* by some adherents). Historically, as far as liberal Anglicans are concerned, and since the time of Henry VIII, both a fundamentalist view of Scripture and an infallible magisterium have been rejected. Which means that neither Bible nor Pope have the last word. This has led some thinkers to take the position that it is not possible to define in a narrow sense just how God may lead the Church, and also leaves the door open for the influence of secular thinking on theology. It has also led to the belief that all theology must be pastoral in nature, that is to say it must be based on a pastoral concern for the life of the Church as opposed to being Biblically literal. The Scriptures are

*the words which Christian people have spoken about the Word of God and the deeds which they have done in His name. As such they must be evaluated, understood, and interpreted by the church in every time and place. . . For us Anglicans Holy Scripture has a primary and fundamental authority because it is the witness of the apostolic community to the event of Christ. It provides us with the first theological interpretation of Jesus by the church, and with the beginning of the history of the church as it developed after the Lord's resurrection. . . and Anglicans have generally insisted that one section or part cannot be interpreted out of its historical context. Because we have seen Scripture as a historical document we have taken seriously the consequences of a scientific investigation of its sources and development.*⁵⁸

Added to Scripture as history is the history of the Church, which is the history of the Church's interpretation of the Christ event as the developing faith of the christian community understood it. This is another way of saying that truth is confessional, that truth is whatever a believing community confesses it to be. In such an understanding the "faith" of the community is more authoritative than Scripture. The only reliance on Scripture has to do with its intent, to preach Christ. For liberal Anglicans it is this history, or tradition, that has provided the custom that women should not be ordained.

In the light of this understanding the only question which must be decided is whether that custom should now be abandoned and a new tradition established. If the pastoral life of the Church requires the priestly ministry of women then they should be ordained. Only in this way can the Church fulfill its apostolic commission in a new age.

In this view the creation story of Genesis 1 is all-important. There the picture is of men and women created as equals. Which is seen by pro-ordinationists as superior to Genesis 2-3, and as the basis on which Paul argues that in Christ there is no "male and female." (Gal. 3:28)

The method is applied in this way:

*Why did Paul believe in subordination [of women]? Not because he first read it in scripture, but because he first took for granted the mores of the society in which he lived, and then he looked around for a scripture text to justify it. Advocates of the ordination of women should not feel too badly when their opponents accuse them of capitulating to the spirit of the age (women's lib and all that). After all, Paul did very much the same thing.*⁵⁹

However, such a principle of interpretation applied to Galatians 3:28 demolishes that text too! Which, of course, is unacceptable so the texts must be chosen to which the principle is and is not applied. It is applied to the Pauline texts that restrict the pastoral office to men, it is *not* applied to Gal. 3:28.

Another way of getting around the matter is to conclude that Paul did not write the restrictive texts, only texts like Gal. 3:28 which represents the "mature" Paul. Restrictive texts are pseudo-pauline and probably inserted into the context by a member of the "Pauline school" who sacrificed the woman of

Gal. 3:28 to the gnostic mores of contemporary society. Because we live in a far more enlightened and Christian society "we should be able today to implement Gal. 3:28 as has not been possible since Paul."⁶⁰

When the Church focuses only on the intent of Scripture, to the virtual exclusion of its content, it finds itself in the position of a Michelangelo chipping away at a block of marble trying to find the statue within and ending up with only "God is love."

Liberal theological premises justifying and requiring ordination of women within the Anglican communion were enunciated by Archbishop Runcie in a letter to Cardinal Willebrand at the Vatican:

*The eternal Word assumed human flesh so that this humanity might be redeemed and taken up into the life of the triune God. As He shares our humanity, we share His divinity. This humanity taken by the Word is inclusive of women or half the human race would not share in redemption. The priesthood must then be representative of this humanity as the priest represents the priestly nature of the whole body. The priest stands in a sacramental relationship with Christ in whom, as High Priest, humanity is redeemed. Because His humanity includes male and female the priesthood should be open to women in order to perfectly demonstrate His inclusive high priesthood. This representational nature of priesthood is weakened by an exclusively male priesthood.*⁶¹

Thus priesthood primarily represents humanity rather than divinity. This poses a unique theological problem for Anglicans who, together with many evangelical protestants, have held the view that the minister is not primarily a representative of the people but, as herald proclaiming the Word of God, is a representative of Christ.

Pro-ordinationists attach great significance to what is referred to as the cultural conditioning of the Biblical text and, consequently, the necessity for cultural adaptation. That is to say, the Bible writers, such as Paul, were so heavily influenced by the patriarchal culture of their day that any texts denying the pastoral office to women cannot be accepted as normative in the twentieth century. Issues such as justice and human rights overrule such chauvinistic views.

SENSUAL NOTE. Denise G. Haines brought a sensual note into the picture when she stated that female priests are more adequate guardians of the mystery of the faith, especially when they preside at Eucharist: "She embodies the myth of Eve and all the sister myths that interpret women as fleshly and sexually seductive."⁶² Another writer, J. L. Burrows, in an article entitled "Americans Get Religion In The New Age," alerts us to the dangers inherent in this kind of thinking as he warns of a movement determined to replace the masculine God of the Judeo/Christian tradition, who is seen to promote authoritarianism, centralized power and hierarchical social organization, with a feminine spirituality. Such a paradigm would "restore creation and heal humanity's alienation. And with a nurturing goddess as the cultural image of deity, decentralized power and egalitarian social organization will emerge."⁶³

Burrows refers to an article in *UTNE READER* by Deena Metzger in which Aphrodite was resurrected. Of that article Burrows says it was

a serious and reasoned argument for the reinstatement of the holy prostitute as the conduit of the sacred. Metzger, however, does not simply have temple attendants in mind. She is advocating the role for all women as a means for resacrilizing the body and regaining spiritual power lost with the advent of patriarchal religion. Entertaining her ideas is shocking enough. But the responses the article received were even more disturbing. Although some objected strenuously, others unabashedly applauded.

While this may be the radical edge of the New Age Movement it ought to be enough to alert Christians to the fact that an attempt is being made to influence American culture, including its churches, to think in ways that glorify self, deny the reality of human depravity, and preach the idea that contentless experience is ultimate truth. In the face of this kind of thing Christians must all the more submit to the Scriptures and proclaim Biblical alternatives.

It ought to alert Christians to danger when the "fallen" becomes the ideal, or when the sin-conditioned exception becomes the rule. This is what happens when secular ideals are accepted as normative for the Church as well as culture. Christians must hold to the belief that such ideals contribute to the decomposition of Church and society. The kind of decomposition described by Paul in the first chapter of Romans.

CONSERVATIVE VIEW (called *traditional* by some detractors). In contradiction to the above there is among Anglicans a deep reverence for the Holy Scriptures. For example, in commenting on the issue of women priests The Rev. James Brice Clark said that to ordain them would mean the Episcopal Church would be "following the world without the safeguards of Scripture and apostolic tradition."⁶⁴ The Rev. Robert F. Waggoner wrote:

In accepting the ordination of women, the Episcopal Church is saying that the norms of Scripture are no longer definitive for the Church. A perusal of such passages as 1 Timothy 2:12; 3:2f and Titus 1:5-6, make it clear that they are being ignored on the question. If Scripture is no longer authoritative for the Church, then there is no objective authority and "anything goes.". . . It all comes down to the authority of Scripture. Can we pick and choose what we want from the written revelation of God to man with impunity and ignore what goes against the current of the spirit of the age? In conclusion, then, the question of the ordination of women seems to point us to a long overdue examination of our view of the authority of Scripture for the Episcopal Church. If we choose to abandon it we may then do what we please."⁶⁵

For such Anglicans the question is whether or not the Church accepts the finality of the revelation in Christ and the apostolic character of the Church. They want to belong to the same Church founded by Christ, and that Church remains faithful to the written Word of God. For them Christian tradition can be described as the internal continuity that exists between the New Testament and the life of the Church in any age. To ordain women conflicts with that continuity. If Jesus wanted to make women apostles He would have done so in spite of contemporary cultural conditions. The incar-

nate Word was not mistaken and twentieth century thinkers are certainly no more wise than He.

The conservative view is perhaps best represented by a woman theologian, who says:

Upon close investigation of the theology that underlies, sustains and produces the symbol of the female priest, we find that we are faced with a theological revolution, not an evolution. The theology that buttresses the female priesthood is at times little more than philosophy extracted from the women's movement, which was adopted and accepted by some as "theology" to support the ordination of women. Moreover, this underlying "feminist theology" cannot be identified as being within the Judeo-Christian tradition, understood as the tradition of the people who have their roots in the Bible and the councils of the Church. This feminist theology is in fact so opposed to the Bible and the tradition of the Christian Church that one may say that two different world views, two visions of God and humanity, are present. And since there is such a wide divergence between the two theological systems, only one can claim to be truly in the Spirit of Jesus Christ; the two viewpoints are too distinct for both to be called "Christian." One is forced to speak either in the category of "feminist-liberationist priesthood" or of "male-Christian priesthood," when given the fact that the female priesthood is based on a theology in opposition to traditional doctrines of the Church and the creative and salvific acts of God.

Accordingly, admitting women to the priesthood should not be the main issue of debate. The question of women's ordination should not be an endless quarrel about whether women are "good enough," "clean enough" or "smart enough" to wear vestments, carry chalices, marry, baptize, counsel, preach or theologize as well as men. To be sure women are. The question is much deeper than that. The point is that the theological arguments supporting the ordination of women ultimately are opposed to the Christian faith and its teachings about salvation. Furthermore, it can be illustrated that this theology shares a secular feminist philosophy, strengthened by the women's movement. In other words, a secular ideology, and not the Holy Spirit, is the fuel for the theology behind the female priesthood, and this has caused basic distortions in traditional Christian doctrine.

The concept of female priesthood is the tip of a great iceberg of theological misconceptions underlying it; it is primarily a theological, rather than a social, psychological or political issue.⁶⁶

The anti-ordinationist, or conservative, view can be summarized by saying that it attaches great significance to the inspiration of the Biblical text as revelation and is reluctant to adjust its plain teaching for the sake of cultural demands.

UNDERLYING ISSUE. No person who writes on this subject comes to it without conviction about truth. All data and materials are interpreted in light of that conviction. This does not suggest either dishonesty or prejudice, but that each one's vision is shaped by a tradition. But how has the tradition

been formed? Has it been formed on the basis of the Bible, or on the basis of philosophy, culture, and/or atheist/humanist views? There are those in every Church who find it easy to identify, on the basis of a scientific world view, with what they see as new and beneficial in culture as the work of the Holy Spirit while rejecting the past as out of harmony with the will of God, and thus do not hesitate to reject Scripture itself by a radical reinterpretation.

Robert K. Johnston is right when he says:

*behind the apparent differences in approach and opinion regarding the women's issue are opposing principles for interpreting Scripture—i.e., different hermeneutics. Here is the real issue facing evangelical theology as it seeks to answer women's questions.*⁶⁷

THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN

In Sweden the ordination of women aroused a bitter controversy and struggle in the 1950's which is not over yet, more than 30 years later. A survey of the experience of the Lutheran State Church of Sweden, whose polity is episcopal, is included because it presents another vivid example of the potential for schism.

CHURCH AND STATE. In Sweden the problem was compounded by the fact that the Church has close historical ties with the State that are deeply rooted, a major factor in bringing the matter to a conclusion albeit a far from satisfactory one for many.

In 1863 when the Swedish Parliament was reconstructed and the feudal four estates were abolished in favor of a two-chamber legislature, included was provision for a Church Assembly. Though Parliament retained the power to make Church law, the Church Assembly had veto power over Parliamentary legislation effecting the Church. Up until 1982 membership in the Church Assembly was equal between clergy and laity. After 1982 balance of power shifted due to an increase in lay membership and the fact that bishops were no longer automatic members, retaining voice but no vote.

Given this relationship between Church and State it is not surprising that the issue of ordaining women arose in Parliament in 1923, but without any substantive action taken. After the equal rights law was passed in 1945, Parliament requested a new study. The report of an appointed study commission became the basis for the debates and actions of the Church Assemblies of 1957 and 1958.

When the Parliamentary commission's report was published, in which the majority favored the ordination of women, the following statement was signed by all the professors of New Testament exegesis in Uppsala and Lund, with only one exception:

We the undersigned declare herewith as our definite opinion resting on careful research that to introduce to the Church a ministry of so called women priests would constitute a departure from faithful obedience to Holy Scripture. Both Jesus's choice of his apostles and Paul's words about the place of women in the congregation are built on principle and are independent of time-bound circumstances and views. The current proposal of allowing women to enter the priest-

*hood of the Church of Sweden must therefore be said to entail serious exegetical obstacles.*⁶⁸

The report of the Parliamentary commission went to all thirteen dioceses and was rejected by twelve. In consequence the press became more and more sarcastic and the women's movement demanded quick action. Books were published by both sides and lines were being fast drawn. The issue was between those who saw the Bible as literally normative, and those who believed that only the spirit of the New Testament was critical. The latter believed the Bible required reinterpretation if the Holy Spirit were to be able to speak to the modern world through the Church.

DIVERGENT HERMENEUTICS. Krister Stendahl was of the opinion that Swedish hermeneutics, termed "*realistic interpretation*," used by Swedish scholars to combat the forces of theological liberalism for some time prior to 1958, needed the influence of Bultmann and form criticism. That influence, of course, made it possible for him to say that "*everything [in the Bible] is conditioned by the actual situation of the time. . . Jesus and Paul shared the exegetical and cultural presuppositions of their time.*"⁶⁹

The application of Krister Stendahl's form of realistic interpretation to the "*neither male nor female*" of Galatians 3:28 leads him to say: "*in Christ, by baptism and hence in the church--not only in faith--something has happened which transcends the Law itself and thereby even the order of creation.*"⁷⁰ Hence Paul can be seen to break through the restrictive nature of his time and circumstances to articulate truth that stands above the Law, above the order of creation, and above 1 Cor. 14:33-38 and 1 Tim. 2:11-3:7. Scripture is put at odds with Scripture by such a hermeneutic, and Paul is made to be opposition to Paul.

Swedish scholarship was slow, in Krister Stendahl's opinion, in facing the whole problem of hermeneutics and of the demand for demythologizing Scripture ala Bultmann. One is led to ask if this was an attempt on his part to shame the Swedish New Testament scholars into "*modernism*," by implying that they lacked the esoteric knowledge achieved by more sophisticated thinkers and the so-called realistic interpreters influenced by form criticism and the historical-critical method? It is clear that he, looking down his theological nose at his fellow Swedes, arrogantly considered the realistic interpretation of the New Testament scholars, without the influence of Bultmann and form-criticism, as "*serious hermeneutical naivete.*"⁷¹

Conservatives held that Genesis 2 and 3 teach that women's subordination is part of the order of creation and that Paul's counsel in 1 Cor. 11:3-15 was based on this understanding. Liberals were of the opinion that Paul's anthropology is a reflection of his culture and thus not possible for modern times. They exalted Genesis 1:26-27, and claimed that Paul's anthropology in Gal. 3:27-28 rested upon it and thus superceded the culture of his time. The latter saw the matter, therefore, only in terms of justice and equal rights.

In contrast to the Anglican/Episcopal experience, opponents in the Church of Sweden made little use of arguments from tradition, which we would expect from Lutherans. Concern was that arguments be Biblical and deal with relevant texts. Supporters argued that "*the tradition within the church depends on the Holy Spirit. The church is the place where the Holy Spirit renews the tradition and finds pathways to the future.*"⁷²

In spite of these differences both sides agreed that the Bible is normative, but each interpreted it in divergent ways. No doubt it was a surprise to

many scholars, priests, and bishops that such a divergence of hermeneutics existed within the Church. The issue forced the divergence to the surface. It is not so surprising, given the fact of such divergent hermeneutics, that within a Lutheran tradition startling questions were being raised concerning the normativeness of the writings of the Reformers and the Lutheran Confessions. Thus the issue became, rather was from the start though it went unrecognized until the issue forced it into the open, a struggle between two divergent ways of interpreting the Bible. They were not simply different, but divergent and incompatible ways. *"First and foremost,"* says Brita Stendahl, *"the arguments concerned the Bible."*⁷³

THE CONSCIENCE CLAUSE. Delegates being elected to the Church Assembly along political rather than ecclesiastical lines, and taking into account the very vocal secular press on the issue, it was a foregone conclusion that the 1958 Church Assembly ratified the bill adopted in Parliament. The ordination of women became the law of the land. How was that possible with such scholarly conviction standing in the way? The answer, of course, lies in the nature of the relationship between Church and State.

Included in the law, hopefully to ease tensions, was a conscience clause which read in part:

*But since it is vital for the work of the church in and among our people to avoid a churchsplitting separation . . . a priest shall not be forced to act in his ministry in a manner which obviously would violate his conscience because of the conviction he holds in this question. Neither may the priestly vows be so interpreted that a person who is opposed to women priests should not be able to give them.*⁷⁴

This action did not end opposition and division within the Church. As Krister Stendahl says: *"The debate in Sweden was a bitter one, and the 1958 decision has caused a most serious schism within the Church of Sweden. I, for one, would not like to transplant such misery on to the American scene."*⁷⁵ In fact the struggle grew even more fierce as opponents of the ordination of women used the protection of the conscience clause to harass women priests in a very unchristian manner. This virtually forced the government to bring the issue before the Church Assembly again in 1982. As far as Parliament was concerned the issue was no longer the ordination of women, which had become law in 1958, but whether the Church would abide by the equal rights law of 1945 and repeal the conscience clause.

The Church Assembly did repeal the conscience clause and, as Brita Stendahl says: *"those who were on the side of opposition worried about what would happen to them. They pleaded for consideration and respect. . . They would not feel at home in any other church."*⁷⁶

SECULAR POWER. Here is a clear case where the power of the State, even though democratic in principle, virtually forced the Church to bow to the will of the State. Power was in the hands of citizens elected to Parliament and Church Assembly who, in the majority, were nominal members of the State Church or not members at all. Who without any deep Biblical or faith convictions decided a decisive religious issue. Because the State was responsible for paying the salaries of priests, Bishops, and university professors, including theological faculties, their voices were effectively silenced with a few courag-

eous exceptions. One of which was retired bishop Bo Giertz who said in an interview with Brita Stendahl:

The greatest weakness is. . . that the church has become so insecure about its creed. . . There prevails great uncertainty about what the authority of the Word of God means and to what it obliges us. These are the consequences of long-lasting maladies within the church that we experience today. What is special to this conflict is that the different beliefs lead to different ways of acting them out that cannot be unified. As long as we act in the same manner (concerning the office of priesthood and sacraments), it is not noticed whether the underlying beliefs differ, and it is easy to work side by side. Now for the first time in our church we act differently. Two incompatible ways. . . the concession that the church gave the state in 1958 has given many the idea that everything in the church's teaching is relative and negotiable and that we in the church will finally have to conform to public opinion. We have since 1958 really experienced a downward slide within the church concerning both Christian faith and Christian life that nobody believed was possible at the beginning of the fifties. However, that cannot be blamed on this issue alone but on the general insecurity and submissiveness that stamps the church and its leadership.⁷⁷

As far as the Church and its thinkers were concerned, following 1982 a way would have to be found, though it is hardly likely, to interpret the relevant Pauline texts so that it would be possible to live in two worlds: the world of a State dominated by militant secularism, and the world of Lutheran/Protestant adherence to *sola scriptura*. One positive outcome of the debate in Sweden was the forcing of the Church of Sweden to face up to the constitutional reality of its existence and the move toward disestablishment of the Church gained strength.

In commenting on the decision to ordain women in the Church of Sweden, Nils Johansson says:

The spiritual implications of the ordination of women have not been taken seriously enough. There are dangers for the bishops, the ordinands, and the people. Some bishops have probably been honestly convinced that it was right to ordain women. Many others have instinctively felt that it was somehow wrong, without being able to give theological reasons. It is clear that it is dangerous for a person to act in so serious a matter without full confidence of acting in accordance with the will of Christ who instituted the ministry. It is also cruel to the women involved. . . The deep cleavage in the Church persists unabated.⁷⁸

Brita Stendahl observed that the ordination of some very capable women has served to isolate them and prevent them from making the kind of contribution to the Church that theological training has provided, and which they made prior to ordination without any difficulty. Politically the tendency has been to elect and consecrate bishops who are willing to ordain women.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the Anglican/Episcopal experience and their agonizing road to schism, as well as that of the Church of Sweden, the following conclusions and implications can be drawn.

1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church must look for more ways to include women in the supportive ministry of the Church, as well as ways to meet the special needs of women in the Church such as those who elect the single life. This must be done, however, in ways that do not compromise the integrity of Scripture. Dependable guidelines are available in the essay by William Fagal entitled *Ellen White and the Role of Women in the Church*. (Available at the White Estate Research Center).

2. With the specter of schism hovering in the background the temptation to surrender to demands in spite of Biblical restrictions must be reckoned with. To surrender to such demands, without careful study of Scripture, would seriously compromise SDA adherence to *sola scriptura*. Faithfulness to Scripture requires a certain bravery on the part of the Church and its leadership.

3. In addressing use of the historical/critical method of Bible interpretation, the following was approved by the Annual Council of the General Conference on October 12, 1986:

Even a modified use of this [historical/critical] method that retains the principle of criticism which subordinates the Bible to human reason is unacceptable to Adventists. The historical/critical method minimizes the need for faith in God and obedience to His commandments. In addition, because such a method deemphasizes the divine element in the Bible as an inspired book (including its resultant unity) and depreciates or misunderstands apocalyptic prophecy and the eschatological portions of the Bible, we urge Adventist Bible students to avoid relying on the use of the presuppositions and the resultant deductions associated with the historical/critical method.

This was courageous action and should constantly be reaffirmed. One could wish that the language was stronger and the method outrightly rejected. Some things need to stay decided. As Walter Wink says: "*Historical biblical criticism is bankrupt.*" He says further:

the historical-critical method had a vested interest in undermining the Bible's authority. . . it operated as a background for the demystification of religious tradition. . . it required functional atheism for its practice. . . its attempted mastery of the object was operationally analogous to the myth of Satan and the legend of Faust. . . By detaching the text from the stream of my existence, biblical criticism has hurled it into an objectified past. Such a past is an infinite regress. No amount of devoted study can bring it back. . . the modernist was not so interested in being changed by

his reading of the Bible, as in changing the way the Bible was read in order to conform it to the modern spirit.⁷⁹

It might prove helpful to refresh our memories of the 1974 Bible Conference sponsored by the North American Division. I still recall with pleasure the confidence I felt as I listened to respected Adventist theologians and scholars present the kind of studies I had learned to expect from thinkers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The conference reinforced my conviction that I had found a secure Bible-based spiritual home. It was my understanding that the intention of the conference was to counteract the dangers inherent in the historical/critical method. The following are representative examples of the confident hermeneutics espoused by the 1974 Bible conference.

Dr. Gerhard Hasel said:

The distinctions between Hebrew and Greek thought are not to lead to such misconceptions which maintain that whereas the Bible writers lived within a world of thought different from modern thought and western culture, ours is superior and theirs inferior, irrelevant and of no significance. Such erroneous notions must be fought off vigorously.⁸⁰

At the heart of Christian faith is the certainty that God Himself has spoken in Scripture. . . the Bible has God as its Author. . . The nature of Biblical inspiration and scriptural authority demands that the Bible be regarded as the "unerring standard" (MH, 462) by which human ideas--whether in the realm of philosophy, science, or tradition--are tested. . . methods of modern critical interpretation of Scripture have broken away from the Protestant principle of sola scriptura. . . Modern rational-critical study of the Bible employs admittedly external keys that deny in principle the self-interpretation of Scripture, and thus undermine the authority of the Bible. Proper recognition of the uniqueness of the Bible with its divine authorship and human writers demands that it not be interpreted by external means such as tradition, philosophy, science, and the like but be allowed to function as its own interpreter.⁸¹

The guiding principle [of interpretation] can thus never be an extrinsic or external one, whether it be tradition, philosophy, or anything else. Any external or extrinsic principle of interpretation will lead to some distortion of the Biblical message. . . It is important to emphasize that the meaning for the faith of men today cannot be something completely different from the meaning intended by the biblical writers for their contemporaries. Any attempt to understand the biblical authors that fails to recognize a basic homogeneity between the interpreter's meaning "now" and the meaning of the message "then" fails to bring their inspired messages to men of today.⁸²

The methodology is, rather, that of the self-interpretation of Scripture, with its emphasis on the literal meaning of the text (unless a figure, symbol, etc., is used) and due emphasis on philological, his-

torical, and theological research joined to empathy for Christian faith.⁸³

Dr. Raoul Dederen stated:

Observe, for instance, the way in which they [the apostles] describe the origin of their message: "I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). Because he is conscious, as an apostle, of speaking with the authority of the Lord, already in his earliest epistle Paul adjures his readers "by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brethren" (1 Th. 5:27). The apostle's written word had real authority, even to the point that his command expressed in an epistle determines the character and limits of Christian fellowship; "If any one refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him..." (2 Th. 3:14). What the apostles write is to be recognized as constituting the command of the Lord; "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord" affirms the same apostle (1 Cor. 14:37).⁸⁴

The apostles wrote with authority. They reprimand, rebuke, instruct. They command and they ask that the Christian believers agree with them, to "walk in the same manner" as they were walking. . . The apostles and the early Church recognized the divinely given authority of those writings.⁸⁵

In the Pauline passages prohibiting a woman from occupying the ecclesiastical office of pastor (1 Cor. 14; 1 Tim. 2 and 3), the language is not typological, figurative, symbolic, or poetic. It is clear prose. The only way the words can be made to mean other than their literal intent is to search for a "principle" which appears to justify other than a literal meaning. Deculturation lies ready at hand for the fertile mind looking for a way out of an unacceptable "thus saith the Lord." Fitted into the contemporary concern for human justice and equal rights it appears to make sense. Except for one salient fact--it obscures in a fog of clever rhetoric the plain meaning of Paul's words, the fact that, as an apostle who spoke with revelational authority, he said what he meant and meant what he said.

The Bible Conference was summarized by Dr. Norval Pease in his discussion of interpreting the Bible for preaching. Beginning with the principle of *sola scriptura*, he listed seven principles of interpretation. Principle #6 was that "the message of the Bible must be interpreted literally unless it is obviously figurative."⁸⁶

The Bible conference upheld the view that (1) any extrinsic principle, such as culture, applied to the interpretation of the Bible will lead to a distortion of its message, that (2) Paul spoke with apostolic authority therefore what he said in every instance was Word of God, and that (3) the Biblical text is to be interpreted literally unless it is obviously figurative. There is no reason to believe that the Seventh-day Adventist Church has officially altered its hermeneutics since 1974.

4. Granting wishes and demands not in harmony with Scripture does not bring peace, only greater demands. This is why the issue of homosexuality in the Church is waiting in the wings. The battle will be fought where the line is drawn.

5. Schism for Episcopalians is one thing, for Adventists, because of the remnant concept, it would be quite another. If a schism were to occur within the Adventist tradition, which segment would be the Biblical remnant? This is not an irrelevant question. In the Adventist understanding of eschatology it is critical to know wherein the remnant exists. In terms of evangelism, schism would utterly destroy credibility with respect to the remnant, to the Adventist faith representing the last and final Church on earth.

6. While it is certainly possible, and even desirable, to learn from other churches, the fact that some of them ordain women ought not influence the Seventh-day Adventist Church in its decision-making process. After all, from our perspective they are "fallen" churches. Perhaps we are being given another opportunity by the Lord to remain true to the Biblical witness, to the Truth, and to remain distinctive.

7. In Sweden the issue was finally settled by legislation. Some may see such an approach as an advantage, but this is certainly not an option for Adventists who have had religious liberty as a primary concern. We have the Word of God, the sure word of prophecy, and under the Holy Spirit the power of persuasion. *"Truth must be defended and the kingdom of God advanced as it would be were Christ in person on this earth."*⁸⁷

*God means that truth shall be brought to the front and become the subject of examination and discussion, even through the contempt placed upon it. The minds of the people must be agitated; every controversy, every reproach, every effort to restrict liberty of conscience, is God's means of awakening minds that otherwise might slumber.*⁸⁸

8. The matter of freedom of conscience must be carefully considered by the Church for whom religious liberty is vital. Should the Seventh-day Adventist Church decide to ordain women pastors what would a minister do whose conscience prohibits him from accepting women as ordained pastors or as local elders? What would happen to him if he refused to ordain women elders, or serve with an ordained woman on a pastoral staff even though she was appointed by a Conference Committee? Must he submit to a practice he believes to be in contradiction to Scriptural authority? Will he be placed in the unenviable position of having to choose between Scriptural and Conference authority and loyalty? Would the Church put itself in the position of coercing all of its ministers to follow a practice many of them might believe unsupported by the Word of God?

What about Conference presidents, or Committees, who might find themselves in the same position? Or congregations? Could an ordained woman be barred from service in a Division, a Union, a Conference, which believes her ordination out of harmony with Biblical teaching? The Anglican/Episcopal

experience, as well as that of the Church of Sweden, ought to give pause to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

9. The Anglican/Episcopal experience, and the leadership crisis that was precipitated by the Presiding Bishop, reveals just how vital decisive leadership is when the church is faced with extreme crisis. It is incumbent upon the highest leadership authorities in the Church to take decisive stands when the clear teaching of the Word of God is threatened or ignored.

In writing of Aaron's missed leadership opportunity, Ellen White says:

Here Aaron's deficiency as a leader or governor of Israel is seen. The people beset him to make them gods to go before them into Egypt. Here was an opportunity for Aaron to show his faith and unwavering confidence in God, and with firmness and decision to meet the proposition of the people. But his natural desire to please and to yield to the people led him to sacrifice the honor of God. He requested them to bring their ornaments to him and he wrought out for them a golden calf . . . and to this senseless god he made an altar and proclaimed on the morrow a feast to the Lord. All restraint seemed to be removed from the people. They offered burnt offerings to the golden calf, and a spirit of levity took possession of them.

In contrast, she says of Moses:

The true general then takes his position for God. . . Here Moses defines genuine consecration as obedience to God, to stand in vindication of the right and show a readiness to carry out the purpose of God in the most unpleasant duties, showing that the claims of God are higher than the claims of friends or the lives of the nearest relatives.

She writes further:

Those who stand in defense of the honor of God and maintain the purity of truth at any cost will have manifold trials, as did our Saviour in the wilderness of temptation. While those who have yielding temperaments, who have not courage to condemn wrong, but keep silent when their influence is needed to stand in defense of the right against any pressure, may avoid many heartaches and escape many perplexities, they will also lose a very rich reward, if not their own souls. Those who are in harmony with God, and who through faith in Him receive strength to resist wrong and stand in defense of the right, will always have severe conflicts and will frequently have to stand almost alone. But precious victories will be theirs while they make God their dependence.⁸⁹

10. If a Church, or its members, does not adhere to the Bible it can anticipate a gradual decline in spiritual power and influence. Can we afford this at the turn of the century when we may very well be on the threshold of our greatest impact on the world? It would be a disastrous blow to our claims

of resting on Biblical authority alone for our doctrines, our faith and our life. The fact that the SDA Church is not growing as rapidly in N. America as in other parts of the world cannot be attributed to a lack of progress in following the lead of secular society.

11. Can this Church hold out for Bible truth in the face of strong secular/cultural pressure? It has held out against Papal Rome and evangelical Protestantism, has absorbed with courage, because it stood fast on the Bible, accusations of legalism and heterodoxy. Neither the beast nor its image have struck terror into Biblical Adventism. Nor shall the anti-christian feminist movement, nor the fact that in contradiction to Scripture so many of the "fallen" churches have surrendered.

12. It is obvious that opinions concerning ordination of women and homosexuality are interrelated and consistent. A liberal view of the one precludes a liberal view of the other. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to be aware of this relationship. Should the Seventh-day Adventist Church decide to ordain women it would not be long before it would be faced with demands by gays. Having discarded traditional hermeneutics in favor of secular/cultural hermeneutics, it would find itself with no Biblical basis from which to speak. (See *Kinship Connection*, Publication of Seventh-day Adventist Gay Men and Women and Their Friends, J. Vicki Shelton, editor, P.O. Box 3480, Los Angeles, CA. 90078-3840. *Kinship Connection* is not just an appeal for understanding and ministry. It is an active promotion of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle among Adventists, even *promiscuous* homosexuality, and acceptance in the Church without transformation.)

13. There is certainly nothing sacred about masculinity as opposed to femininity. But there is something sacred about the Word of God and what it commands and forbids. We go against it at our peril. The opinion is held by some that neither side on this issue can claim to be Biblically right. But would that not be inconsistent with historic Adventism, which has been claiming such Biblical rightness for 150 years? There is a right and a wrong position on this issue, that can be determined on the basis of Scripture. Truth is not arrived at existentially, but by revelation and faith in that revelation.

14. We need to state clearly that eldership does not constitute a step toward the pastoral office. Perhaps we could avoid some confusion were we to make a more clear distinction between the pastoral office and that of the lay elder.

15. The action of the Church permitting congregations to decide whether or not to ordain local women elders has placed many faithful pastors, who sincerely believe that the Bible does not support such ordinations, in a very unpleasant situation. The Church can best support that kind of pastor by rescinding its previous action relative to congregations deciding the issue of women as local elders. It is imperative to recognize that ordination, whether of local elders or pastors, is a theological issue and decisions that are doctrinal in nature are for the whole church in General Conference session to decide.

16. Some Adventists have assured this writer that the SDA Church would never support homosexual congregations, but one can have no confidence in such assurances. Enthusiasts repeat that no further steps are likely. Yet history demonstrates that further steps often do follow, as the Anglican/Episcopal experience so dramatically demonstrates. An inch becomes a mile. To adopt hermeneutics which makes possible the ordination of women is to fling wide the door.

17. There seems to be an eagerness to appeal to everything but Scripture today. The Bible has become a stumblingblock to the ordination of women, so it must either be reinterpreted, or discarded altogether as an ancient and irrelevant document hopelessly influenced by patriarchal culture and rabbinic tradition. But we have this prediction, warning, and counsel:

Men in this age of the world act as if they were at liberty to question the words of the Infinite, to review His decisions and statutes, endorsing, revising, reshaping, and annulling, at their pleasure. If they cannot misconstrue, misinterpret, or alter God's plain decisions, or bend it to please the multitude and themselves, they break it. We are never safe while we are guided by human opinions; but we are safe when we are guided by a 'Thus saith the Lord.' We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to any lower standard than the decision of an infallible Judge. Those who make God their guide, and His Word their counselor, follow the lamp of life. God's living oracles guide their feet in straight paths. Those who are thus led do not dare judge the Word of God, but ever hold that His Word judges them. They get their faith and their religion from His Word.⁹⁰

Seventh-day Adventists must reject what the feminist theology of liberation calls the "hermeneutic of suspicion," which assumes that the Biblical text has no canonical status but are historical artifacts of a particular period of mankind's history which was androcentric. The authority of the Bible does not rest upon whether it agrees or can be made to agree with feminist views.

18. We must all be feminists in the sense that we wish for women the fullest possible expression and enjoyment of their femininity, of their dignity and rights as women, their freedom to find the fulfillment of that which God has made them. However, it must be said that the drive for ordination on the part of women puts it in terms of a power struggle. By doing so its roots in the secular feminist movement are betrayed. For they see themselves as the unfortunate victims of a power hierarchy which deprives them of what they consider to be rightful roles in the Church. They have transferred the sexism that has oppressed them in secular society to the Church. This is foundational to their demands for decision-making power.

Such a view of the Church degrades it and sees it only in political terms rather than as the body of Christ committed to obedience to the Word of God. In such a view the person is the individual center of human rights, and freedom is the ability to do what one wants, or feels called, to do. Conflicts are resolved by seizing power, which means control over other people, so that one's own individual rights and freedom can be enjoyed. To be under the

authority of someone else, governmental or ecclesiastical, is considered oppressive and restrictive of one's human fulfillment and freedom.

19. Opponents of the ordination of women have been accused of chauvinism, obstructionism, injustice, bigotry, anti-feminism, and divisiveness; their scholarship has been ridiculed as unsophisticated and uninformed. Even ridiculed for bringing Scripture to bear on the issue, and for making a distinction between a human right and the will of God. However, neither those who are proponents, nor those that are opponents, ought to be judged divisive. *It is the issue itself that is divisive.* Opponents of the ordination of women within the Adventist Church have already been branded as "divisive." But, as one author puts it, "*why should it be considered 'divisive' to test popular teachings against the Bible?*"⁹¹ It is not morally wrong or reactionary to oppose change when that change is not in harmony with Scripture. Not to oppose such change would be morally wrong.

20. The plea has been heard that the Church must recognize and accept what God is doing, moving certain women that He has gifted into the ordained ministry. That plea must be seen against the following scenario: By far the majority of Christians in the world are Sunday keepers who for centuries have been convinced that God has moved Christianity to the abandonment of the Sabbath. Adventists are a minority holdout for the Biblical Sabbath. Does this mean that Adventists should now recognize *what God has been doing* in the rest of Christianity and join them in Sunday observance, and by so doing go out of existence?

21. The Anglican Church has never been as strongly committed to Scripture as has the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Tradition has played a major role in determining doctrine and morality. Thus it is no wonder that the majority of its laity have no objections to women priests. It becomes the simple matter of changing, and adjusting to new, tradition. But for the Seventh-day Adventist Church doctrine and morality have been determined by Scripture. If the Seventh-day Adventist Church wishes to capitulate to secular forces it can do so, but then it should not justify its actions on the basis of a hermeneutic that provides only the appearance of Biblical authority.

22. Both the proponents and opponents of women's ordination would perhaps agree on one thing; the Seventh-day Adventist Church may have reached another major crossroad in its doctrinal history. Which way will it go? Will it reaffirm the belief that Biblical arguments are persuasive? One of the dangers the Church faces is the idea that it is immune from apostasy and from the pervading inroads of secularism.

NOTES

1. In the *Christian Century* (Sept. 26, 1986), Clark wrote that the ordination of women "*has hurt the Episcopal Church. We have gained no new converts because of it. We have lost conservative members. We have suffered schisms, with at least six new dissident Episcopal Churches being formed.*"

2. The Church of England is known as the Anglican Church, in Canada as the Anglican Church of Canada, and its extension in the United States is called the Episcopal Church. Though these Churches are independent of one another they have very close doctrinal and ecclesiastical ties. The Episcopal Church in the U.S.A. has its own presiding bishop, whereas the Archbishop of Canterbury presides over the Church of England and is titular head of all Anglican/Episcopalians.

3. Emily C. Hewitt and Suzanne R. Hiatt, *Women Priests Yes or No* (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), pp. 10-11.

4. *Ibid*, p. 111.

5. To say that there is no relationship either theologically or practically between the ordination of women as local elders and the ordination of women to the pastoral office is to fail to recognize the significance of ordination as well as the tendency to justify present action on the basis of previous action. For the Seventh-day Adventist Church to approve the ordination of women local elders means the eventual ordination of women pastors.

6. Michael P. Hamilton and Nancy S. Montgomery, editors, *The Ordination of Women Pro and Con* (New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co., 1975), p. 145. This book is especially valuable in that it discusses the rediscovery of the New Testament diaconate, which historically led to the establishment of orders for deacons and deaconesses, and which is bringing some drastic changes in this ancient order of ministry. Confusion exists even within the Anglican communion when it comes to the diaconate. For over 100 years it has been seen as merely a step to the priesthood. Women in the Anglican Church, since 1964, have been regularly ordained to the diaconate using the term *deacon* rather than *deaconess*. It is that ordination which opened the door to the priesthood, thus revealing the relationship between the two ordinations. Furthermore, there is no Biblical warrant for the ordination of deaconesses which are not even mentioned by the Church Fathers as a special group until the third century. For the Seventh-day Adventist Church the relationship has to do with elders rather than deacons, which is a step to the ordained ministry in the minds of many.

7. The action of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in approving the ordination of women as local elders may have put it in the same position.

8. Hamilton and Montgomery, p. 159.

9. *Christianity and Crisis*, (August 18, 1975), p. 190.

10. A liberal bishop, The Rt. Rev. John M. Krumm of Southern Ohio, replied to Medsger in the September, 1975 issue of *Christianity in Crisis* (p. 228), defending the responsibility and duty of bishops to interpret and administer canon law. He wrote: "There might come a time, I admit, when the repeated refusal of the General Convention to remedy this injustice might cause some of us to resign our responsibility as bishops and to go so far as to create a new branch of the Episcopal Church. But most of us are not willing to take that step until we have made at least one more effort in 1976." He was critical of

Medsger's drawing a parallel with the civil rights struggle of the 60's.

11. A similar situation to that of the Seventh-day Adventist Church which declared a moratorium on ordained local women elders conducting baptisms until after the 1990 General Conference, ignored by the unilateral action of Loma Linda University Church on December 20, 1986 when the female associate pastor conducted two baptisms with the concurrence of the pastoral staff and the church board. In commenting on the event, Steve Cooper, the Religion Editor of the San Bernardino SUN, (Dec. 12, 1986), said: "*As a strictly political matter, the move was made easier because of the size and influence of the Loma Linda church. With 5,600 members and the actions backed by a unanimous vote of leadership, denominational critics may find it difficult to challenge the legitimacy of [the female pastor's] authority.*"

12. *Christian Century*, (January 28, 1976), p. 63.

13. *Christianity Today*, (December 17, 1976), p. 37.

14. *Christianity Today*, (May 23, 1975), p. 57.

15. Hamilton and Montgomery, p. 164.

16. *Ibid*, p. 165.

17. *Christian Century* (September 29, 1976), p. 803.

18. *Christianity and Crisis*, (October 18, 1976), p. 233.

19. *Christianity Today*, (October 8, 1976), p. 50.

20. *Christianity Today*, (December 17, 1976), p. 37.

21. Which testifies that if an ecclesiastical body has due cause it need not hesitate to reverse itself.

22. *Christianity Today*, (October 7, 1977), p. 60.

23. *Christianity Today*, (November 4, 1977), p. 46.

24. *Christianity Today*, (November 4, 1977), p. 46.

25. *Ibid*, p. 47.

26. *Christian Century*, (October 16, 1977), p. 1052.

27. *Christianity in Crisis*, (November 28, 1977), p. 283.

28. A penetrating analysis of the Catholic, evangelical, liberal, and charismatic forces shaping the Episcopal Church today is "*The Episcopal Church: Conflict and Cohesion*," by Earl H. Brill in *Christian Century* (January 18, 1978).

29. *Christian Century*, (October 10, 1979), p. 964.
30. *Christianity Today*, (October 19, 1979), p.38.
31. *The Witness*, (February 1981), p. 7.
32. John H. Morgan, *Women Priests* (Bristol, Indiana: Wyndham Hall Press, 1985), pp. 69-70.
33. *The Witness*, (November, 1982), p. 18.
34. *The Witness*, (July 1984), p. 9.
35. *The Witness*, (December 1985), p. 20.
36. *The Witness*, (November 1986), p. 2.
37. *The Witness*, (October 1985), p. 6.
38. *Ibid*, p. 7.
39. *Ibid*.
40. *The Witness*, (November 1986), p. 3.
41. *The Living Church*, (September 7, 1986), p. 6.
42. *The Living Church*, (October 19, 1986).
43. *Ecumenical Press Service*, (March 11-20, 1987).
44. *Christian Century*, (September 19, 1979). An organization called the Movement for the ordination of Women (MOW) has members who "believe that women will be ordained in the Church of England only if some people take the law into their own hands." *Christian Century*, (August 13, 1986), p. 878.
45. *Witness*, (March 1987), pp. 16-17.
46. *Christian Century*, (August 13, 1986), p. 878.
47. September, 1986, p. 18.
48. *The Evangelical Catholic*, (October 1986).
49. *Origins*, (July 17, 1986), p. 155.
50. *Ibid*, p. 159.
51. *Time*, (March 2, 1987), p. 43.
52. *Ecumenical Press Service*, (March 11-20, 1987).

53. Edward C. Lehman, Jr., *Women Clergy In England* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987), pp. 65-66.

54. *Ibid*, p. 9.

55. *Ibid*, p. 27. For Lehman the term *secularization* means "the process of taking a skeptical or relativistic posture toward aspects of society and culture previously considered 'given' and imalleable. Instead of viewing human institutions as sacred or beyond question, modern secular consciousness relates to them as mundane and open to question." (p. 4.) The reader must remain alert to the fact that Lehman sees the church only as a human institution, a social phenomenon and that it thereby can legitimately adjust to the modern secular consciousness. Unfortunately, too many of the Church's thinkers see the Church in the same way.

56. *Ibid*, p. 67. One would have cause for extreme alarm were this true among Seventh-day Adventists as well. Were it so, it would constitute the need to listen even more closely to the prophetic voice.

57. Rosemary Radford Reuther, *Women-Church* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985), pp. 3-4. The book includes an extensive series of liturgical orders based on the theology of the new feminine religion. One of them is entitled *Coming-Out Rite For A Lesbian*, introduced by: "This rite is designed to celebrate the new birth that occurs for a woman who comes out to herself and her community and affirms her identity as a lesbian woman." (p. 173.) Reuther is professor of theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, is married and the mother of three grown children.

58. Marianne H. Micks and Charles B. Price, editors, *Toward A New Theology of Ordination: Essays On The Ordination of Women* (Somerville, Massachusetts: Green, Hadden and Co., 1976), p. 63.

59. *Ibid*, p. 5-6.

60. *Ibid*, p. 10.

61. *Origin*, (July 17, 1986).

62. *Christian Century*, (October 15, 1986). Haines is archdeacon for the Diocese of Newark, New Jersey, highest ranking woman priest in the Episcopal Church to date.

63. *Christianity Today*, (May, 1986).

64. *Nebraska Churchman*, (December, 1972).

65. *The Evangelical Catholic*, (November, 1986).

66. Thomas Hopko, editor, *Women and the Priesthood* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983), "The Spirit of the Female Priest" by Deborah Belonick, pp. 137-138. Belonick is a graduate of St. Vladimir's Seminary and serves on the Faith and Order Commission of the National

Council of Churches.

67. Robert K. Johnston, *Evangelicals at an Impasse*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979), p. 50.

68. Brita Stendahl, *The Force of Tradition*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 69.

69. Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 13. It was K. Stendahl's opinion that the realistic interpreter questions whether "timeless truth" can really be applied to Scripture. Thus he would not see Jesus' selection of twelve MEN as normative for all time. We might observe that this method of interpretation has been applied to the Sabbath by most evangelicals, who are being consistent in their application of this hermeneutic to the Pauline texts which then only appear to reserve the pastoral office to men. The SDA position on the Sabbath can only be strengthened by a courageous rejection of this hermeneutic, and be weakened by its adoption. Adventists cannot afford to accommodate secular forces.

70. *Ibid*, p. 34.

71. *Ibid*, p. 35.

72. *Ibid*, p. 72.

73. Brita Stendahl, p. 70. See also Krister Stendahl, *The Bible and the Role of Women*, p. 1.

74. *Ibid*, p. 75.

75. Krister Stendahl, p. 1. K. Stendahl resisted pressure to get involved in the growing movement in the U.S.A., but he finally convinced himself to do so because of the pluralistic nature of American culture.

76. Brita Stendahl, p. 78.

77. *Ibid*, p. 12.

78. Nils Johansson, *Women and the Church's Ministry*, (No publisher or date of publication), p. 10. Johansson was assistant professor of New Testament exegesis at the University of Lund. Trained in liberal european exegesis he initially supported the ordination of women. However, after doing extensive research, he was convinced that he could not support it and became an outspoken defender of Biblical faith.

79. *The Bible In Human Transformation*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973), pp. 1-13.

80. Gerhard Hasel, from the *Notebook* prepared by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Biblical Research Committee, 1974, the article entitled "General Principles of Biblical Interpretation," p. 2. (Emphasis supplied.)

81. Gerhard Hasel, *A Symposium On Biblical Hermeneutics*, edited by Gordon M. Hyde, Biblical Research Committee of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1974, pp. 164-165.
82. *Ibid*, p. 184. (Emphasis supplied.)
83. *Ibid*. (Emphasis supplied.)
84. Raoul Dederen, from the *Notebook*, the article entitled "*Toward A Seventh-day Adventist Theology of Revelation-Inspiration*," p. 14. (Emphasis supplied.) Note the context of the quote from 1 Cor. 14:37, it is Paul's counsel concerning the activity of women in the worship services of the church.
85. *Ibid*, p. 14. (Emphasis supplied.) The early Church recognized the authority of the apostle's writing not because it agreed with contemporary culture but because they recognized the divine origin as revelation.
86. *A Symposium*, p. 259.
87. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 211.
88. Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 33.
89. Ellen G. White, *Testimonies*, Vol. 3, pp. 296-303.
90. Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, (February 21, 1899).
91. Dave Hunt, *Beyond Seduction* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1987), p. 3. The author also perceptively comments: "*Unfortunately, the more convincing the evidence the more opposition it arouses in those who refuse to accept its implications.*" (p. 11.)