such that it presages in itself the consummation of the Holy Spirit in Christ and His Church. Or as Susannah Herzl has said, the creation is "prophetic material", for it points to some future which is more complete.  

There are many voices, and by no means only radical ones, which believe that the maleness of Christ has no significance, neither in the matter of who may become a pastor nor even in the matter of the Savior's redemptive work. I would like to refer to three worthy proponents of such a view, make to each a short response, and then briefly develop my own thoughts. Professor Eric Gritsch, referring especially to Robert Jensen, writes that when Jesus called God "Father", he did not address a male God. Jesus' historical reality—as the revelation of God—transcends such and other designations into a genuine sphere of God-talk which no longer reflects the suspicions and broken relationships of sinful human creatures. The Gospel frees us from feeling guilty about the use of imperfect language and analogies which we need to express praise and thanks to the God who justifies the ungodly. To this we must simply say that in the New Testament the historical reality of Jesus—as the revelation of God—does not transcend the designation of God as "Father" and move us into "a genuine sphere of God-talk." Rather, it is precisely the historical reality of Jesus' humanity which reveals, not just God, but God as the Father, and therefore the name of "Father" becomes the Name addressed by those who, as Paul says in Romans 8, have received the Spirit of the adoption of sons (v. 15: pneuma huiothias). The God-talk of the Bible remains in every case concrete, creaturely, and historical. It does not fly off into some "genuine God-talk", and I suspect that this is so because the Bible does not believe that the things of creation need to be transcended for God to be rightly and truthfully spoken. Nor is this point vitiated by the fact that in the present age the things of creation bear the brokenness of sin. It is in the revelation of the Christ in the flesh, in his concrete humanity, that we see, in faith and in hope, the consummation of that given in the beginning.

Pastor George Murphy, in the article mentioned above, adduces a Christological consideration to argue that it is wrong to think of the pastoral representation of Christ only in masculine terms. He refers to the classical Christological doctrine of the anhypostasis of Christ's human nature. According to this doctrine, the flesh of Christ has no independent or autonomous personhood apart from the incarnation of the Word of God. In the incarnation, however, that flesh which possessed no personhood of its own received personhood by its assumption into the Person of the eternal Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity. Therefore, concludes Pastor Murphy, that humanity assumed by Christ is that humanity common to both men and women, and both can equally, therefore, represent Christ. Murphy is certainly correct in the view that the Christological doctrine of
Chalcedon, especially those aspects most beholden to Cyril of Alexandria, understood the term "flesh"—the Word became flesh—to be a generic term referring to human nature as a whole. Christ, the Word, did not unite to Himself only one individual but united to Himself the entire human race. Nonetheless, one ought not overlook the fact that the Chalcedonian Fathers developed their Christology in the light of the requirements of soteriology. Christ as the Savior of all must bear the humanity of all. Nevertheless, as post-Chalcedonian discussion indicates, the Fathers were alive to the dangers of conceiving the humanity of Christ in some Platonic fashion whereby Christ's humanity was some kind of abstraction and in no way a specific humanity. That would be the worst kind of monophysitism, a virtual denial of the true humanity of Christ. The Fathers who interpreted Chalcedon were equally of the opinion that Christ was a concrete human figure. The fact that Christ had assumed "human nature in general" did not exclude the fact that he was human within the specificities of a distinct human person, and that would have included Christ's reality as male. Therefore, while it was not an explicit feature of post-Chalcedonian discussion, the masculinity of Christ was implicitly asserted.

Finally, there is the recent book by Adrian Hastings, Professor of Theology at the University of Leeds, who likewise argues on the basis of the incarnation of Christ, specifically referring to the words of the Nicene Creed that the Christ was made "man", homo in the Latin and anthropos in the Greek, both terms meaning "generic humanity." Hastings argues: the issue is "whether God in being incarnationally particular does or does not mysteriously break through the bonds of any and every limitation thus imposed. If the male/female wall of binary division remains operative, any more than the Jew/Gentile wall of binary division, then not all is assumed, not all is redeemed." Again we need to say that while the generic humanity of Christ was affirmed by the creeds of the Church in order to assert the universal, all-encompassing salvific work of the Savior, the specific character of Christ's humanity was never denied, other than perhaps by those of an Apollinarian or Monophysite bent. But in Hastings too we see the antipathy of many toward the particularities and concretions of creation. Hastings notes no difference in the distinction between male and female and the distinction between Jew and Gentile. That one is a created distinction, present inherently in the organic unity of humanity, while the other is a contingent distinction which has arisen within the movement of history is apparently of no matter to Professor Hastings. Rather, he sees in both distinctions "walls of binary division." When that language is applied to the distinction of male and female, there is to be noted an unmistakable Manichaean negativism toward the creation as such. While making much show of being conversant with patristic Christology, Hastings is oblivious to the fact that the
Fathers asserted as an essential element of their Christology that Christ was the new Adam and as such the Head of a new humanity, a new humanity which, to be sure, encompassed all human beings, both male and female.

In our own reflections we wish to advance two arguments. (1) In discussion concerning the continuing relevance of gender the relation between the “order of creation” and the “order of redemption” often arises. Many think that the “order of redemption,” transcending and transforming the “order of creation,” presents a different configuration of human existence altogether. Many others, and here I would classify most Missouri-Synod Lutherans, think of the “order of creation” as the implanted will of God in the structure of things and as such it is the expression of God’s immutable will. The “order of redemption,” on the other hand, constitutes a new existence in a new world brought by Christ, and this existence is determined by grace. This is, in fact, the very posturing of these two “orders” in the 1985 CTCR document, “Women in the Church.” Here, to be sure, the “order of creation” is said to be sanctified and hallowed by Christ’s work. There is between the two “orders” a relationship of continuity (the first is not destroyed in the second, but continues as sanctified in the second). Yet, one searches in vain in the CTCR document for any organic relationship between the “order of creation” and the “order of redemption” whereby the purposes of God for the world in Christ are already envisioned, presaged, and prophesied in the “order of creation” itself. I have already referred to the striking phraseology of Susannah Herzel’s that the creation is “prophetic material” pointing to some greater and more complete future. Along that same line, I would like to suggest that the creating activity of God and the redeeming activity of God are not two qualitatively distinct ways of the divine working, but that they are organically related. The way God works creatively (and this from the beginning) and the way God works redemptively are not intrinsically different but are united in intention and purpose. Perhaps one can express the point like this: the redemptive work of God brings the creative work of God, presently under the alien dominion of sin and death, to its intended purpose and goal. If this is the case, then the “order of creation” is not transformed in the “order of redemption” but is rather illuminated in the “order of redemption”. We perceive the “order of creation” most clearly in the “order of redemption.” That Christ, the Head of the new humanity, was male was not due, therefore, to some requirement to maintain the “order of creation.” It is not that Christ was a male human person because in the “order of creation” God had given headship and authority to the man, Adam. Rather, God who created humankind in order that He might have communion with it in and through His Word gave the headship of humanity to the man, Adam, in view of the eschatological goal of humanity which is Christ and His Church. Because in the final purpose and telos
of God for the world the man Jesus Christ was to be the Head of his Body, the Church (which relates to Christ as Bride to Bridegroom), God in the beginning gave Adam to be head to Eve. As Paul says, “the head of woman is the man” (I Cor. 11:3), and “Adam was created first (or perhaps “as the first”), then Eve” (I Tim. 2:13). This makes perfectly good sense of two passages of Paul. The first we have already clearly implied, Eph 5:23-33. As is evident in this passage, Paul is implicitly appealing to the creation story of man and woman in Genesis 2. This passage intimately combines the creation of Eve from Adam, the recognition of Adam that the woman is “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” and the unity they have together as “one flesh” in the marriage bond. That Adam possesses “headship” within this “one flesh” of the marriage bond is clear. However, in Ephesians 5 Paul’s point is not that Christ’s love for his Bride, the Church, is patterned after what was to be the case between Adam and Eve in the Garden. Rather, it is in view of Christ’s love for his Bride, the Church, that husbands are to love their wives and that wives are to be subject to their husbands as to their head. The true marriage was not that marriage in the Garden. The true marriage is that between Christ and the Church. All other marriages (including that first one in the Garden)—and this is true the more marriages are blessed by love—are faint images and icons of that Marriage of the Lamb with his Bride, the Church.

The second passage is Rom. 5:14 where Adam is explicitly called “the type of the One who is to come (hos estin typos tou mellontos). Here we see more explicitly yet that what transpired in the Garden was in view of that perfect speaking of God when the Word himself would become man and be, as the Second Adam, also the perfect Adam. Adam in himself was prophetic; he pointed toward the Christ who was to come as the man Jesus. It is utterly erroneous, therefore, to think that the “order of creation” has been overcome in the “order of redemption,” for it was in view of the “order of redemption” that the “order of creation” itself was ordered the way it was. The “order of creation” is not merely sanctified and hallowed in the “order of redemption.” The “order of creation” comes to its own completion, to its intended goal and end in the “order of redemption”.

(2) Finally, we turn again to the fact that in Paul’s discussion of the relation between man and woman the story of the creation of man and woman in Genesis 2 is foundational. Adam was created first; then Eve (I Tim. 2:13). Paul’s language in I Cor. 11:8 is more vivid and more instructive: “man is not from woman, but woman from man” (gyne ex andros). Adam is the source of woman’s being; she is bone from his bone and flesh from his flesh (ostoun ek ton osteon mou kai sarx ek tas sarkos nou; Gen. 2:23 LXX). Adam does not, therefore, relate to Eve merely in terms of a temporal sequence: he was first and she was second. Rather,
he relates to Eve as one who has a posture, a position, a vocation vis-a-vis Eve, a vocation which earlier in I Corinthians 11 is indicated by calling the man "the head" of woman (v. 3). What "headship" in part means can be discerned in Col. 2:19 where Christ as "Head" is the One "from whom" (ex hou) the whole body (here, the Church) is nourished and receives its growth. Being "head" includes the notion (at least in Biblical usage) of source from which another's being, life, and sustenance is derived. Not insignificantly, therefore, Paul can designate Jesus as "the last Adam" who became "a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). Adam is the one from whom Eve's life is derived and to whom Eve relates as to the source of her life. That such derivation does not involve essential inequality is clear: Eve, coming from Adam, relates to him as "bone from his bone and flesh from his flesh." Yet, this relationship of equals is not a relationship of independent and autonomous equals. It is a relationship of equals which has its own intrinsic and organic order and which is not given to interchangeability and mutual reciprocity. It is a relationship of equals established in and through the creating of God and consists in the bestowal of the self of one upon another and the corresponding receiving by the other of the one's self-giving. Adam relates to Eve as the one who gives of himself to her. Eve relates to Adam as the one who receives Adam's self-giving.

This relationship of giving and receiving between Adam and Eve relates to fundamental differences between the Biblical creation narrative and the pagan creation accounts of the ancient Near East. First of all, in creation accounts of the ancient Near East (such as in the Babylonian Enuma Elish) human beings are created to be servants of the gods. However, in the Genesis account, God creates mankind and gives to it the blessings of a good earth and dominion over the earth. God creates mankind in order to be Servant to it. As Creator God gives to His creatures all those good things they need for this body and life. Already in creation, therefore, God is Lord precisely in His servanthood. He is Lord in His bestowal of life, both in the giving and in the sustaining of life.

Secondly, ancient creation myths frequently derived the existence of the earth from female deities. These deities were usually nature/harvest deities and were the symbolic representations of the mysterious force of the life and fecundity of the earth. The natural cycle of springtime and harvest was understood to be divine, and the natural potency and fertility of the earth were ritually divinized, the gods and goddesses being portrayed as frankly sexual beings who lusted, mated, gave birth, and were the fathers and mothers of the creatures they procreated. In such a view the rhythms of the goddess and of religious life were governed by repetition, by times and seasons. Being governed by the repetition of the seasons these goddess religions had no function
ing concept of the future nor of divine purpose. The idea of a divine Mother, therefore, is associated with the idea of a divine earth. The distinction between God and the creation is compromised, and the notion of God's transcendence is lost. But with the loss of the distinction between God and the world there is the corresponding loss of the ideas of divine grace (God wills to love) and of hope (in divine purpose and in the possibility of newness).  

In view of such pagan ideas the theological structure implicit in naming God "Father" begins to be evident. We should, however, be aware of the important fact that the question of God's "Fatherhood" and the question of His masculinity are entirely distinct. The Church has always been aware of the divine prohibition given in Deut. 4:15-16: "Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a graven image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female." The pagan nature religions surrounding ancient Israel found their opposite in the Old Testament worship which excluded the depiction of God as either male or female. It was, in fact, against the heresy of Arianism that the Church most clearly detailed its belief that the Triune God is transcendent to all creaturely categories, including that of male and female. The Christian Church does not worship a male god, nor does it worship a female goddess.  

This does not mean, however, that the Christian does not worship God the Father and God the Son. For very decidedly the Church does worship God the Father and God the Son. The prophets and the apostles and the Church have simply been careful to remove God from any notion of father as a physical progenitor. God's fatherhood realizes itself apart from any motherhood. Therefore, while God is Father, there is no reality in God's being which can properly bear the designation "Mother". This fact is especially evidenced by the language and narrative of the New Testament, but it is by no means absent in the Old Testament. Every Semitic religion in the ancient Near East, with the exception of Israel, had goddesses. One indication of this is the practice of giving personal names which consist of a god's name plus the word for "father", "mother", "brother", "sister". For example, from Babylon one finds the name, Ummi-Ishtar "my mother is Ishtar", or Samas-abī "my father is Samas". However, among the Hebrews there are many names in which "father" occurs, but there are none in which "mother" occurs. From the Hebrew names we may mention Abijah ("Yahweh is my father"), Joab ("Yahweh is father"), Eliab ("El is father") and Abiel ("father is El").  

How central the fatherhood of God is to Biblical understanding is indicated by God's choosing of Abram to be the progenitor of the chosen people. In the midst of a culture which possessed
numerous female deities God calls Abram, which means "exalted father" or "the father is exalted". It is to Abram that God chooses to make His promises of redemption for the nations, and in so doing God changes Abram's name to Abraham "father of many nations":

The Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.... Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to You and to your descendants after you" (Gen. 17:1-7)

God makes His fatherhood known by choosing a man to be "father" of many. But what is important to note is that God's fatherhood is indicated by His free and gratuitous election of Abraham, and in him of Israel. God related to Abraham as a distinct Other who, while free and possessing transcendent autonomy ("God Almighty"), chooses to focus and to direct His love to a particular people and on behalf of a particular people. By making covenant with Abraham, God in effect adopts Abraham and his descendents and makes them His own. And this God does without any corresponding divine motherhood. God's fatherhood is indicated independently of any cooperating participation by another. God literally makes Abraham and his descendents to be His sons. It is this prevenient, free, and willing making of a people that we term grace (see Deut. 7:6-8). Precisely as the God of grace is God "Father". Graciously, as a father, God takes Abraham out of the nations, the tribes, and the families of the earth and makes Abraham himself to be a nation in that Abraham becomes father in the stead of Him who is Father. Abraham is released from the earthly ties of blood and family relationship and is oriented toward a future not determined by earthly bonds but by the everlasting covenant of grace and mercy in which God everlastingly chooses to be the God of Abraham and his descendents.

It is in the election of Israel that God the Father becomes, in Abraham, Father to the people of Israel. And this thematic is central also to the message of the New Testament. For example, the Prologue of the Gospel of John makes clear that the people of God are not made by means of a natural, sexual fatherhood, but by the will of God: "to all who received him, who believed in his
name, he gave power to become the children of God; who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13). Similarly, Paul indicates that the Christian is the child of Abraham by faith and that therefore the Gentiles, and not only the Jews, have access to the grace of the Gospel (Romans 4). That God the Father becomes our father through the free and gracious adoption of us in Christ is nicely summarized in Rom. 8:15, which refers to our baptisms: “For you did not receive the Spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of sonship by whom we cry ‘Abba, Father’” (γινθεῖν ἐκ τῆς πνεύματος τοῦ υἱοθετήσεως ὑμῶν. ἐν τούτῳ γὰρ φωνεῖτε, ἀββᾶ, πάτερ). The Greek word translated “sonship” really means “adopted as son” or “placed into sonship”. In our baptisms into Christ, therefore, we receive the Holy Spirit whereby we are made sons of the Father (by the Father’s gracious adopting of us) and for that reason we call God “Father”. It is not incidental, therefore, that in the earliest commentaries on the Lord’s Prayer the introductory words “Our Father” were explained by language reminiscent of Christian baptism (Tertullian, Cyprian).

Now what does all of this have to do with the maleness of Jesus? As we have noted, against the subordinationism of Arianism the Church Fathers frequently asserted that true and proper fatherhood belongs to God alone. However, fatherhood is proper to God because He eternally generates the divine Son. This generation of the Son from the Father is not a generation on the basis of will. That would be the position of the Arians, and moreover such a generation of the Son from the Father would be like the creaturely begetting of a son by a human father. Rather, the eternal generation of the Son from the Father involves what is sometimes called a “communication of essence” whereby the Godhead of the Father is imparted to the Son so that the Son is “of one substance with the Father” (Nicene Creed). It is, therefore, in the Son that the Father, so to speak, moves out of Himself and resides in another. It is the Son who bears in Himself the Father.

As is well known, it is New Testament witness that the eternal Son of the Father became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14). The significance of this is that in the human person of Jesus Christ the heavenly Father comes to us. The divine Father declares His will to be our Father in the person of His Incarnate Son. It is the man Jesus who brings the heavenly Father to the world. Or, in the striking words of Irenaeus (c. 180 A.D.), “all saw the Father in the Son; for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father.” Such remarks are in strict agreement with the words of Jesus himself: “He who has seen me has seen the Father .... Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me” (John 14:9-11). Now the Father reveals Himself in the incarnate Son, that is, in the specific
humanity which the Son assumed into Himself. That concrete humanity was, however, a male humanity. And it is evident why that was so. Within the order of creation it is in fact the male member of the human race who may, as God wills it, become a father. The male human being alone has the natural capacity to be a father. Within the human order, therefore, it is the masculine image which is naturally apt to connote fatherhood. Indeed, a feminine image is naturally unsuited as an image and indication of fatherhood, for a woman can not by nature be a father. Nevertheless, it was precisely the purpose of Christ's incarnate life, death, and resurrection that He bring the Father and restore us again as children of the Father. It was in view of the very purpose of Christ's redemptive coming, therefore, that He took upon Himself a male humanity. Christ's being a male was not accidental, nor was it mere accommodation to patriarchal culture. As the eternal Son of the Father, who bears in Himself the Father's divine essence, He came to a sinful and mortal humanity in order to communicate and to give to the world that which He Himself possesses, namely, the relation of Son to the Father. And this relation of Son to the Father Christ gives in and through His humanity. The flesh of Christ was not merely some abstract, passive human "stuff" which Christ took on and assumed. It was, so to speak, the active envisagement of the Father. The flesh of Christ was, and is, the means by which the divine Father becomes Father for us. Christ in His concrete humanity remains the means by which the Father moves out of Himself in order to make us sons in His Son, the new and second Adam. Christ's flesh is not merely a dumb instrument, but it is itself flesh of the Word and therefore it speaks, "Here is your Father. Whoever sees me sees the Father, for I and the Father are one." The flesh of Christ is the active source of that new life which the Father gives by begetting us anew, as John 1:13 speaks of it: "Whoever believed in His name, He gave power to become the children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." Since God so created the human race that it would be the male member who can be father, to be male is by revelation the proper mode of the incarnate Son who brings and manifests the divine Father.39

And now, finally, we come to the relevance all of this has for the Office of the Public Ministry, for the question of the ordination of women into it, and for the question of women performing those functions which are distinctive of the Office of pastor. We begin with the assertion of the Augsburg Confession that the Office of the Public Ministry is the office of the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.40 It is important to note that this assertion of the constitutive functions of the pastoral office comes immediately after the article on Justification through faith (Art. 4) which is itself intimately connected with the article on the Person of Jesus Christ (Art. 3). When, however, the
Augustana begins to speak of the Office of preaching and the sacraments, it says, "In order that we might obtain this [justifying] faith, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments was instituted." That is, the Office of preaching and administering the sacraments is instrumental in the granting of justifying faith to the believer in which we have the new life of the Holy Spirit. The preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments are the means whereby Christ Himself comes, and it is the pastor who preaches and the pastor who administers the sacraments who is representative of Christ and who speaks His voice. But as we have noted, Christ does not come only to bring Himself. He came in the flesh and He comes in the preaching of the Gospel and in the administration of the sacraments as the One who brings the Father. The pastoral office is that office which God has placed in His Church and by which and through which He continues to engender sons of God. For those who hear the preached Gospel in faith and for those who receive in faith the Body and the Blood of Christ given and shed for them for the forgiveness of sins, God continues to be "Father" in the Christ who speaks and gives Himself. Just as it is the person of the incarnate Son who in His male humanity communicates to us the Father's grace, so also it is proper and right—and this in terms of the whole salvific economy of God from the beginning—that the human instrument of the Father's grace in Christ, in the concreteness of male humanity, be an image of the incarnate Image of the eternal Father.

We need to reflect upon the inner and organic connections which bind the speaking of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments to the inner life of the most Holy Trinity. The God who is Trinity has not kept Himself hidden from us, but for us and for our salvation has made Himself known in the coming of the Son. The movement of the Father outside Himself whereby He imparts His very being to Another, namely the Son, finds its analogue in the creation of Eve whereby the bone of Adam's bone and the flesh of Adam's flesh was imparted to Eve. And as the divine Son is a distinct Other, and yet an equal Other, so also was Eve a distinct other, and yet an equal other. We see the selfsame economy in the movement of the Father in Christ toward the world whereby Christ, as the new Adam, became a "life-giving spirit" and brought to pass the new Eve, which is the Church. And we see finally the selfsame economy in the movement of the Father in Christ by means of preaching and the sacraments, whereby children of God are engendered by grace through faith. Where the pastor forgives our sins, where the pastor preaches the Gospel, and where the pastor gives to us the Body and Blood of Christ, there the heavenly Father, who wills that we be His children, graciously and alone makes us to be His children, or, as Paul says, children of Abraham by faith (Romans 4). In the context of the pastoral office a male pastor remains the apt representative of the
Father's grace whereby all, male and female alike, hear the words of Christ and become the Bride of the Groom.

As illustrative of the above position we take a couple of contexts from our Lutheran liturgy. First of all, we adduce the confession and absolution of sins. At the beginning of the worship service, the people say, "If we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." It becomes immediately clear who "God" really is when the pastor continues, "Let us then confess our sins to God the Father" (italics added). It is, then, to the Father that the people confess their sins, and this is further indicated by the fact that the confession of sins which follows concludes with the prayer that God will forgive, renew and lead us "for the sake of your Son." When, therefore, the pastor, upon the confession of the people, speaks the words of forgiveness, it is clear that he speaks the Father's forgiveness, which, to be sure, has been mediated through the Son and the Holy Spirit. The pastor, standing "in the stead of Christ", stands for the Father.

Secondly, we take a look at the prayer spoken at the conclusion of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The prayer is addressed to "God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in loving-kindness sent your only-begotten Son into the flesh", and the prayer gives thanks to God the Father that "for [Christ's] sake you have given us pardon and peace in this sacrament." From this language it is clear that the prayer regards the ultimate Giver of the sacrament, that is, of the Body and Blood of Christ, to be the Father. It is the Father who for us and because of our sins gave His Son up unto death. Here then also it is evident that the pastor who administers and gives the Body and the Blood of Christ in the sacrament ought be representative of the Father who gives His Son for us.

To conclude we take note of the thought of two theologians who, although taking a different emphasis than we have taken, yet conclude that the ordination of women is improper or at least unwise. Regin Prenter, a Danish Lutheran theologian, has argued that the prohibitions of Paul (against women teaching in the Church) are not merely commandments which are culturally determined and may not have lasting relevance. They are commandments "which intend to preserve the right and pertinent tradition of the Gospel." They are similar to the commandments of Jesus, such as the command to baptize, or to "do" the Lord's Supper, or to evangelize. Such "commandments of the Gospel" ("Gebote des Evangeliurns") command the ways in which the Gospel properly is carried forth or preserved within the Church.
Since the Gospel, argues Prenter, is a unity of the event of salvation history and its application through means, the external form of the means is not left to us but is given to us from the salvific history. The commandments of Paul concerning the role of Christian women in the Christian worship assembly are just such "commandments of the Gospel." Paul speaks commandments which are analogous to Christ's commands to baptize and to celebrate the Lord's Supper in that they intend, like Christ's, to order the continuing life of the Church in such a way that the reality of the Gospel and the new life it engenders is sustained and maintained. Concerning the institution of the means of grace, argues Prenter, one may not merely regard them as activities and therefore believe that only their form is binding upon the Church. One must also consider the office which administers the means of grace and the form in which it was instituted. "If the history of salvation and the means of grace are something historically given, then they must be continued [in the Church] in the same way in which they were historically given." In this view, therefore, the fact that Christ gave the command to baptize and to celebrate the Lord's Supper to his apostles is not indifferent to the question of who may properly administer the sacraments in the on-going life of the Church.

The second theologian is James I. Packer, a prominent evangelical theologian with English roots. In a recent article he summons the evangelical community to rethink its somewhat precipitous rush toward the ordination of women into the presbyterate (roughly corresponding to our pastoral office). He presents four arguments. 1) The Reformation principle of the authority of Scripture includes the idea of the sufficiency of Scripture. Yet, despite the clear affirmation of women by Jesus, the New Testament nowhere indicates that women functioned as presbyters. Obedience to the Scriptures seems to indicate that it is unwarranted to introduce a practice in the exercise of the presbyteral office which is not indicated in the sufficient Scriptures.

2) Packer's second argument is that Christ is the true minister in all Christian ministry, and that the words and acts of Christ's ministers are the "medium of his personal ministry to us." Packer's comments at this point are worthy of quotation.

"Since the Son of God was incarnate as a male, it will always be easier, other things being equal, to realize and remember that Christ is ministering in person if his human agent and representative is also male... Stated structures of ministry should be designed to create and sustain with fullest force faith knowledge that Christ is the true minister. Presbyteral leadership by women, therefore, is not the best option. That one male is best represented by another male is a matter of
common sense; that Jesus’ maleness is basic to his role as our incarnate Savior is a matter of biblical revelation... To minimize the maleness shows a degree of failure to grasp the space-time reality and redemptive significance of the Incarnation; to argue that gender is irrelevant to ministry shows that one is forgetting the representative role of presbyteral leadership.”

It is of especial interest that an evangelical theologian of Packer’s stature makes this kind of argument, for it is sometimes claimed that such an argument, for it is sometimes claimed that such an argument represents a Romanizing tendency or is mere speculation. Those who make such claims may wish to take Packer’s exhortation to heart and to think again about the implications of the doctrines of creation and of the incarnation for the reality of the Church and its life as a renewed humanity.

3) One cannot rightly ignore the significance of gender. Male and female are set in a “nonreversible relation” in which leadership responsibility is given primarily to the man. Since presbyters are set apart for authoritative leadership, it is most proper that “paternal pastoral oversight” be reserved for designated Christian men.

4) The example of Mary as a supreme model of devotion and of developing discipleship is final proof of the “non-necessity of ordination for a woman who wishes to serve the Father and the Son, and of the significance that can attach to unordained roles and informal ministries.”

A concluding word: In matters of faith it is always a question of faithfulness, not of sight. The distinction of male and female and the Biblical model for their mutual and complementary, but nonreciprocal relationship is a datum of revelation and must therefore be held by the perception of faith. That Christ is the Incarnate Son in whom we come to know the Father and to be known by the Father is similarly a datum of revelation and recognize this only by the Spirit. And finally that Paul is an apostle of the Word who was entrusted by the Word to speak of the Church and to found the Church upon his apostolic testimony and activity, that too is of faith. But because all of these things are of faith and not of sight, because they are of God and not of the world, they are easily forgotten and lost when the Church no longer with the requisite rigor nor with the requisite creedal interest finds it necessary to think on these things. A “know-nothing” hermeneutic which finds itself satisfied when explicit and particular prohibitions are wanting in Scripture will not be competent to inquire after the inner and organic relation between word and act, between what the incarnate Word did and what the Church must do to be faithful to the Gospel. It remains the unavoidable task
of the Church to inquire after its practice and to lay bare the theological and evangelical dimensions of those it does which are significant for preserving and making vivid the Gospel of a new creation.

End Notes


2. For the full Origen quotation, see Cryson, *Ministry of Women*, pp. 28-29.


6. WA 8.424.30-33: "ita mulieres Paulus prohibet loqui, non simpliciter, sed in Ecclesia, nempe ubi sunt viri potentes loqui, ut ne confundatur honestas et ordo, cum vir multis modis sit prae muliere idoneus ad loquendum et magis eum deceat." See also the discussion of John Gerhard concerning the question of whether women also must be brought into the ministry (*Loci Theologici*, Locus 23). He gives five reasons for an answer of "No." Among them: "man has better judgment, greater discretion and a faster pace than woman"; also, quoting Epiphanius, "woman is a deceitful sort, prone to error and endowed with humble intelligence." Here Gerhard gives explanations (*rationes*) for the presence of Paul's prohibitions, which explanations are indeed very likely founded upon his own historical context, and—let us say it forthrightly—an androcentric viewpoint. Obviously, such argument bears no persuasive power today.


9. Some women who have been honored by this title are Mary Magdalene; the martyr Thekla; Helen, the mother of Emperor Constantine; and Nina, missionary to the Georgians.
10. We wish to distinguish clearly this task from the search for some ‘general tendency’ or ‘main thrust’ of Scripture which is then used to interpret or even to critique explicit statements of Scripture. It is a common method of many feminist writers to gather Biblical data which speaks of spiritual equality, mutual love, and the like, and then to declare that there is a general thrust in the Bible to level out all differences and distinctions, especially those based on gender. This ‘general thrust’ becomes a hermeneutical tool to void specific Biblical statements, like those of Paul, of abiding significance. We seek rather to ascertain the theological structure of the Bible’s own witness (one might say the creedal structure of the Bible) which gives theological content to Paul’s exhortations.


12. Letty M. Russell, Household of Freedom: Authority in Feminist Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), p. 18. Russell speaks of living out of “a vision of God’s intention for a mended creation.” In an important sense, she writes, Christian feminists “only have this future” since patriarchal structures as such that reconstruction of woman’s place “requires a utopian faith that understands God’s future as an impulse for change in the present.” Russell borrows the phrase “utopic envisagement” from Beverly Harrison.

13. For example, Paul Jewett admits that he is uncertain “what it means to be a man in distinction to a woman or a woman in distinction to a man” (Man as male and female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1975), p. 178).


17. For the athnach, see J. Weingreen, A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew, 2nd edition (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 21. There is the opinion that an athnach indicates simply a pause in a verse and no more. However, even if that is so, the athnach in Gen. 1:27 indicates a pause within a narrative, so that what comes second cannot simply introduce a novum. The “male and female” after the athnach indicates the content of “man” before the athnach.

18. We note as well that the duality of male and female is already indicated in v. 26 of Genesis 1. There God determines to create “man” (adam, anthropon: singular) in His image and to give “them” (plural) dominion over the creatures (Hebrew: radah; LXX: arxetosan).
19. In his commentary on Gen. 1:27b Claus Westermann makes this same point: "the division of the sexes belongs to the immediate creation of humanity. A consequence of this is that there can be no question of an 'essence of man' apart from existence as two sexes. Humanity exists in community, as one beside the other, and there can only be anything like humanity and human relations where the human species exists in twos. W. Zimmerli is exaggerating when he writes in his commentary: 'A human being in isolation is only half a human being.' A lone human being remains a complete human being in his lonesomeness. What is being said here is that a human being must be seen as one whose destiny it is to live in community; people have been created to live with each other. This is what human existence means and what human institutions and structures show. Every theoretical and institutional separation of man and woman, every deliberate detachment of male from female, can endanger the very existence of humanity as determined by creation" (Genesis 1-11: A Commentary, translated by John J. Scullion [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984], p. 160).


21. Paul Jewett asserts that there was a cultural and historical necessity for Christ to come as a male but no theological necessity (Man as male and female, pp. 168f.). Similarly, Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty: "Given the setting of patriarchal Judaism, Jesus had to be a male (All We're Meant to Be[Waco, Texas: 1975], p. 177).

22. See Apology 7.29; also Augustana 28.21f.: Apol. 7.47: 12.40.

23. Hauke, Women in the Priesthood?, p. 336. This book is an extremely helpful book and with considerable erudition covers a wealth of material, addressing virtually all aspects of the feminist question: Biblical, historical, philosophical, sociological, biological, psychological, etc. Yet, on occasion, as in the section of the priest's representation of Christ, Hauke advances a very distinctive Roman Catholic viewpoint which is unacceptable. A further example: "This imaging relationship [of the priest to Christ] has its foundation in the sacrament of ordination to the priesthood, through which, in a way that goes beyond baptism by virtue of its character indelebilis, an ontological approximation to Christ is realized" (p. 338).


26. Note how George Florovsky speaks about the relation between the human word and the divine Word in the Bible: "When divine truths are expressed in
human language, the words themselves are transformed… The Word of God is not diminished when it resounds in human language. On the contrary the human word is transformed, and as it were transfigured because of the fact that it pleased God to speak in a human language* (Quoted in Deborah Belonick, *Feminism in Christianity: An Orthodox Christian Response* [Syosset, NY: 1983], p. 11f). The doctrine of the incarnation determines the way Florovsky understands the words of Scripture: the Word became flesh, so that the flesh of Christ was itself Word. Concerning the Scriptures one might put the same thought like this: The Word of God became human word, so that the human words of Scripture are Word of God. We cannot trade this “Nicene” way of thinking about the words and narratives of the Bible for the “adoptionism” of Gritsch’s way of thinking.

27. Murphy, "For the Ordination of Women," p. 8.

28. See, for example, the Christological reflections of Theodore the Studite (+826 A.D.) in his *Refutations* of the Iconoclasts: “For Christ did not become a mere man (yivlo’), nor is it orthodox to say that He assumed a particular man, but rather that He assumed man in general, or the whole human nature” (*ton kath holou aetoi taen olaen phusin; Refutations* 1.4; also 3.17: *taen katholou phusin*).

29. The passage of Theodore the Studite, quoted in note 28, continues with these comments: “It must be said, however, that this whole human nature was contemplated in an individual manner (*taen en atomo theopoumenaen*), so that He is seen and described, touched and circumscribed, eats and drinks, matures and grows, works and rests, sleeps and wakes, hunger and thirsts, weeps and sweats, and whatever else one does or suffers who is in all respects a man” (*Refutations* 1.4; also 3.17).


31. One should note 1 Cor. 11:3 which says that God is “head” of Christ. God and Christ, too, relate to one another as equals, but within a relationship of “begetting” and “being begotten”. The Father is Father of the Son. He is not nor can become Son. The order bespeaks the position of relation one has toward the other.

32. It is to be noted how often feminist writers explicitly reject the idea of God’s transcendence as an essential element of a patriarchal point of view.

33. See Ken Wesche, “God: Beyond Gender, Reflections on the Patristic Doctrine of God and Feminist Theology,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 30 (1986): 291-308. The Arians subordinated the Son to the Father by denying the Son’s equal divinity with the Father. They interpreted the Son’s relation to the Father in strict analogy to the sonship and fatherhood of creatures. Since a human (male) father is temporally prior to his son and wills to beget a son, so also the Father is naturally prior to the Son and relates to the Son by will. Indeed, just as a human male need not be a father but becomes a father, so also God is not Father but becomes Father by willing the Son. Orthodox trinitarian belief asserts that God is Father in the eternal generation of the Son who is the true Image of the Father since He participates in the Father’s essence/deity (the “of one substance with the Father”.

36
of the Nicene Creed).

34. Abijah ("Yahweh is my father") is the name of two women in the Old Testament. Other names include Ahijah ("my brother is Yahweh"). Joah ("my brother is Yahweh"), and Malchijah ("my king is Yahweh"). Among Hebrew names there is no occurrence of "my sister is Yahweh" or "Yahweh is queen". Paul V. Mankowski, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, writes: "Of the 55 recorded Hebrew sentence names which are composed of the name YHWH and a verb, each shows the masculine form of that verb" (Unpublished paper).

35. It is interesting to note that the very words spoken to Adam and Eve "be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) are the words used of God's "multiplying" of Abraham and making him "exceedingly fruitful" (Gen. 17:2;6). Already in Abraham a new humanity based upon God's gracious election, that is, upon God's fatherhood, begins. This new humanity will find its fulfillment and completion in the true "son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1), who is also the true Son of the Father. The order of redemption is based upon a fatherhood but without a corresponding motherhood.

36. The image of "mother" is incapable of connoting this Biblical idea of grace and the idea of purpose (eschatology) which accompanies it. The earth is not free in its giving forth of fruit and harvest. It is in the nature of the earth to bear harvest. A seed is planted and the earth naturally nurtures the seed and eventually bears fruit. The earth is not gracious in doing so; it must by its nature do so. So it is also with woman. When a male seed is implanted in her, she does not will to bear a child. Her nature is such that she nurtures that seed and eventually bears a child, and this sometimes quite against her will (as we know from the abortion debate). It is important to grasp this important point of Biblical imagery and nomenclature, for in the present context of feminized theology the idea of nurture is frequently advanced as the equivalent of grace.

37. For example, Athanasius, Orations against the Arians 1.21: after noting that among creatures fatherhood and sonship are characterized by serial succession (a son of a father becomes in turn the father of a son, and so on) and division of nature he continues, "Thus it belongs to the Godhead alone, that the Father is properly father, and the Son properly son, and in Them, and Them only, does it hold that the Father is ever Father and the Son ever Son" (NPNF, 2nd series, 4.319); Gregory of Nazianzus, Theological Oration 3.6: "He is Father in the absolute sense, for He is not also Son: just as the Son is Son in the absolute sense, because He is not also Father. These names do not belong to us in the absolute sense, because we are both and not one more than the other" (NPNF, 2nd series, 7.302). For the creature, fatherhood is a work, a function. But for God fatherhood is a principle of being, what is called a hypostatic or personal subsistence of being. God is Father; human males may become fathers or not, as they will.

38. Irenaeus, Against the Heresies 4.6.6 (ANF 1.469).

39. It would be false to say that there is something autonomously inherent or ontologically present in maleness which makes it alone apt to image and indicate God's fatherhood. As the orthodox Church Fathers were wont to say, God does
not pattern Himself after the creature, but the creature is patterned after God. Human fatherhood is a pale image of the eternal Fatherhood which is God's. What we can say and what we must say is this: according to His will as our Creator, God so ordered His creation that it is the male and not the female who can be a father. And for that reason, hidden in the will of the Creator, it was Christ's male humanity which was the apt and proper humanity for Him to possess in order for Him to manifest to us His eternal Father.

40. Augsburg Confession, article 5 (Tappert, p. 31).


42. Lutheran Worship, p. 174.


44. Absence of explicit prohibition concerning women pastors or, say, the distribution of the Lord's Supper by women is sometimes regarded as sufficient cause for declaring the Bible unclear or the practice not contrary to the Scriptures. In its 1985 report, "Women in the Church", the CTCR rightly said that "everything depends on the nature of functions assigned to various offices" (p. 46). Any precipitous declarations that a practice is not contrary to the Scriptures without first theologically reflecting upon the nature of the function is to fail the Church in the necessary task of theological and confessional leadership.