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Item Type	Article
Authors	Reeve, John W.
Publisher	Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies
Rights	Creative Commons Copyright (CC 2.5)
Download date	2026-11-09 21:57:05
Link to Item	http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12424/238262

Journal of Asia Adventist Seminary 15.2 (2012): 197-220.

TRAJECTORIES OF WOMEN'S ORDINATION IN HISTORY

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1. Introduction: Peter Lombard and the Sacramental System

The twelfth-century theologian, Peter Lombard, is best known for his sentence collection made up of quotations from authorities on the topic of his systematic arguments. As collector and exegete he empowered his arguments with proof texts and examples from both canonical Scripture and from the fathers of the Church.[1] His resulting work, the four books of *The Sentences*,[2] became the basis and curriculum of theological studies in the emerging European universities for centuries afterward.[3] Peter Lombard's *Sentences* were the foundation and model for Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologica*. They were also the basic curriculum at Oxford where John Wyclif wrote his initial Christological work as a commentary on book 3 of *The Sentences*.[4] Even Martin Luther lectured on *The Sentences* as a major part of his education in Erfurt.[5] Lombard's *Sentences* were made the basis of the curriculum not because he was always considered to be right when taking sides in the arguments within scholastic theology, but because of his coherent, systematic presentation of the issues as well as the breadth of his quotations from the early fathers.[6] Lombard was at

1 Marcia L. Colish, "Peter Lombard," in *The Medieval Theologians* (ed. G. R. Evans; Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 169.

2 Peter Lombard, Sentences

3 Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual tradition: 400-1400* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 282.

4 Gillian R. Evans, *John Wyclif: Myth and Reality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 211.

5 Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483-1521* (trans. James L. Schaaf; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985), 93.

6 Colish, "Peter Lombard," 182; Colish, *Medieval Foundations*, 286.

times considered more useful than right. This is why John Calvin, who usually used Lombard as a negative example, quoted him so many times in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.[7] Yet, Lombard was treated, by many generations of scholars that followed him, as the repository of the theological tradition of the Christian Church, including his descriptions of sacramental theology. The first three books of *The Sentences* cover the Trinity, creation, and the incarnation. It is the fourth book, on the sacraments, including ordination, that most concerns us here.

The main tenets of Peter Lombard's sacramental theology are detailed in his fourth book of *The Sentences*, which is made up of 50 distinctions, or issues, that need clarification. Here, after an initial Distinction differentiating sign from sacrament, he organizes the seven sacraments of the sacramental system of salvation developed in Christian tradition into the five which pertain to all Christians and the two that pertain to only some Christians. He introduces and discusses the first five sacraments, pertaining to all Christians, in the sequence in which Christians of his day received them: baptism (Distinctions 2-6), confirmation (Distinction 7), the Eucharist (Distinctions 8-13), Penance (Distinctions 14-22), and Extreme Unction (Distinction 23). The last two sacraments, Ecclesiastical Orders (Distinctions 24-25) and Marriage (Distinctions 26-42), are taken up last because they do not involve all Christians. The remaining distinctions (43-50) concern eschatological issues, or things pertaining to the last judgment and the post judgment realities.

In the first Distinction, as well as in the treatment of several of these sacraments, Lombard addresses his definition of the nature and function of a sacrament. He perceives that each sacrament moves Christians along their journey from the realm of sin (*regio dissimilitudinis*, the region of dissimilarity with God and self)[8] back toward the likeness of God. This progress in grace is possible because, for Lombard, grace is both contained and conveyed in the sacraments.[9] But Peter Lombard starts with understanding the sign (*sacramentum tantum*, only the sacrament) and the sacrament (*res sacramentum*, the thing of the sacrament); or more precisely, with the medium (accident) and the thing (*res*) of the sacrament. In other words, he denotes that the medium, which is the physical manipulation and the speaking with the mouth, are merely the motions of the sacrament. The real thing, the spiritual change that cannot be

[7] Calvin quoted the writers of the Early Church through Lombard at least 45 times, and at least 43 times he quoted Lombard's own words. Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999), 59 and 65.

[8] See Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.10.

[9] Colish, "Peter Lombard," 178.

physically seen is the spiritual aspect of the rite: what he terms the *res*, or thing, of the sacrament.

In distinction 24 Lombard turns his attention to the ecclesiastical orders and sacred ordination. Seven orders are recognized (chap.3). They are described in increasing hierarchy or "ecclesiastical degrees:" door-keeper, lector, exorcist, acolyte, subdeacon, deacon, and priest (Chap. 5-11). The top two orders, deacons and priests, are in a different category than the lower ones because they handle the things associated with the altar. The priest consecrates and performs the sacraments while the deacon dispenses and assists. So Chapter 12 summarizes that "two alone are called sacred," and suggests that this is because the primitive Church had only two orders, and the Apostles only ordained these two. Chapter 13 pushes on to define the sacred character of the highest orders as having "some mark, that is, something sacred, by which spiritual power and office are granted to the one ordained. And so the spiritual character, when a promotion of power is made, is called an order or degree." He then clarifies that they "are called sacraments, because a sacred thing [*res*] is conferred in receiving them, that is, grace, which the actions and words carried out at ordination signify." So the actual motions of ordaining a deacon or priest/elder is understood to signify the sacred; but the *res*, the sacred thing, is conferred because the ordination is a sacrament , which changes the character of the one ordained into a being of higher spiritual power.

The bishop is considered as within the order of priests, specifically at the top of the order as high priest (chap 11). Furthermore, the bishops are divided into four levels (chap 17) with the pontiff at the very height of the hierarchy (chap 16, 17) as the "highest priest." It is interesting to note that these highest levels of bishops are not modeled after the OT priesthood and sanctuary the way the deacons, priests and bishops are modeled after the Levites, priests and high priest. Rather, they are modeled after the Roman priests of Jupiter called flamens. Lombard quotes Isidore (chap 17.3) describing that the distinction among the higher bishops "appears to have been introduced by the pagans, who called some of the priests simply flamens, others archflamens, and yet others protoflamens." The Christian hierarchical priesthood models these pagan hierarchies.

Distinction 25 addresses the issue of a sacrament conferred by a heretic. Cyprian, Jerome, Leo I, Gregory I and Innocent I all are quoted as suggesting that such a sacrament would be invalid because of the moral character of the one ordaining (Chap. 1-6). However, it is Augustine's argument that holds sway saying that the sacrament, even if conferred by a heretic, must be valid because of the *ordo*, the spiritual character of the one ordaining (chap 7-10). The ordination (*ordo*) contains the spiritual thing (*res*).

It was during the 12th and 13th Centuries that the fully developed sacramental system was completed in Roman Catholicism. Peter Lombard was a significant contributor in this process. It was at the Fourth Lateran Council in Rome in 1215 that the term "transubstantiation" was first voted into canon law as part of the creed in an Ecumenical Council.[10] Transubstantiation describes the ontological change of the elements of bread and wine that physically look and feel unchanged. It is a spiritual change that cannot be perceived by physical perceptions. With transubstantiation completing the full ontological sacramental conceptualization of the false system of salvation, the understanding of the ontological change of priests in the sacrament of ordination into a spiritual class distinct from, and spiritually above, the laity was also complete. Ordination conceived as a sacrament, as a part of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic sacramental system and part of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, became a solid part of the Catholic Christian tradition at this time.

How did this sacramental system of salvation led by a mystogogically changed priesthood which is so foreign to the biblical understanding of salvation or the NT conceptualization of the leadership of the Christian Church come to be? There is a vast difference and distance between the teachings of the Bible and this sacramental, hierarchical system. This false system of salvation is essentially what the Protestant Reformation was protesting against. What started the trajectories that ended at this point? How do these trajectories differ from the trajectories of the Bible concerning women and Christian leadership?

This paper seeks to highlight the Biblical trajectories relating to women and Christian leadership which contrasted with the ancient cultural understandings of women and leadership, compare them with the trajectories of the early Christian tradition, and then attempt an answer to the complex question of the causes for the shaping of the trajectories in the Christian tradition. The study is conducted to help towards a

[10] Fourth Lateran Council, Canon 1: There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation. In which there is the same priest and sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed *(transsubstantiatio)* by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood, so that to realize the mystery of unity we may receive of Him what He has received of us. And this sacrament no one can effect except the priest who has been duly ordained in accordance with the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ Himself gave to the Apostles and their successors. Quoted from "The Canons of the Fourth Lateran Council, 1215" in *Medieval Sourcebook: Twelfth Ecumenical Council: Lateran IV 1215* (Fordham University website, July 2013), http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/lateran4.asp.

conclusion on the question of women's ordination in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

2. Biblical Trajectory Toward Women in Leadership

2.1. OT Status of Women Higher Than in Surrounding Cultures

Though portraying many patriarchal elements, the Old Testament contains correctives to the blatant attitudes against women in the surrounding cultures. A quick comparison of some of Moses' statements and rulings with those of the Code of Hammurabi illustrates the distance between the two on their understandings of the status of women in their societies. In the Mosaic law, for example, women are allowed to own or inherit property and, except for slaves, cannot be sold.[11] Even the all-male particular priesthood of the OT Sanctuary may have been all-male intentionally as a polemic against the sexual cultic priestesses of the surrounding cultures.[12]

More indicative of trajectories toward an egalitarian relationship between men and women, specifically regarding leadership, is the occasional practice in the OT of showing women active in leadership. From Miriam's prophetic and worship-leading roles among women (Exod 15:20, 21) to Deborah's leadership as judge and military commander (Judg 4-5; especially 4:4, 5, 14, and 5:7), the OT has numerous examples of women taking leading roles.[13] The ideal woman of Prov 31 is concerned with her household, but functions with confidence in the public sphere in buying and selling of land and goods (Prov 31:16, 18, 24).

2.2. NT Status of Women Also Higher Than in the Greco-Roman Culture

Whereas Jesus did not include any women within the twelve disciples, women were integral to his ministry and, in fact, were the financial backing for his ministry (Luke 8:1-3). Mary, Joanna and Susanna are

[11] See, for example, laws 177 and 178 of Hammurabi. W. W. Davies, *The Codes of Hammurabi and Moses* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1905), 80, 81.

[12] John H. Otwell, *And Sarah Laughed* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 155.

[13] Jo Ann Davidson, "Women in Scripture: A Survey and Evaluation" in Nancy Vyhmeister, Ed., *Women in Ministry* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998), 157-186.

specifically called by name in conjunction with the twelve as being with Jesus as he traveled in Galilee. These stayed with him throughout his ministry and were even attendant on his death, garnering two mentions by Luke in contrast to the absence of the twelve at the crucifixion and burial (Luke 24:49, 55, 56). It was also to these women that Jesus first revealed himself after the resurrection (Matt 28:9, 10; Mark 16:9-11). It was through these women that Jesus sent the truth of his resurrection to the unbelieving eleven (Luke 24:9-11; John 20:18). These women were also listed in Acts as among the 120 joined in constant prayer (Acts 1:14) and who were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) in fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:17-21).

Paul also refers to Women among the leaders and workers for the Church. Nine women are named in Romans 16,[14] including Phoebe,[15] Priscilla and Junia[16] being three who seem to have particular leadership roles. In Philippians, Euodia and Syntyche are implored to be in agreement at the same time they are praised as "fellow workers" who have contended by Paul's side in the cause of the gospel (Phil 4:2, 3).

Another place in the NT where women's leadership in the Christian Church is evident is in the Johannine epistles. The "chosen lady" addressed in John's 2nd letter (2 John 1, 13) may well be the leader of a house church in the province of Asia (now in western Turkey). As in the OT, there are many different authors representing women in many different leadership roles in the NT.

2.3. NT Church Leadership

In the NT, Church leadership is recognized by the church body in the form of gifts given by the Holy Spirit to fulfill necessary functions in the Church. The gifts are given to all of the body of Christ, with no class or gender qualifications (1 Cor 12:7). By the command of Jesus, those accepting authority functions among Christians are not to "lord it over" the others but to serve (Matt 20:25, 26). Paul concurs with this, referring to

[14] "The overall impression one gets from Romans 16 is that not only were a wide variety of women involved in the work of the church, but also that they were doing a wide variety of things including missionary work, carrying letters, serving in charitable tasks as deaconesses, providing aid or shelter for traveling apostles, . . . we see here a picture of a vibrant, multi-faceted Church using the gifts and graces of both men and women to spread the gospel." Ben Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, SNTSMS 59 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 116.

[15] Darius Jankiewicz, "Phoebe: Was She an Early Church Leader?" *Ministry* (April 2013): 10-13.

[16] Nancy Vhymeister, "Junia the Apostle" *Ministry* (July 2013): 6-9.

himself and other Christian leaders, of both genders, using serving and fellowship terminology (1Cor 3:5; Phil 1:1, 4:3; Rom 16). In this conceptualization of leadership, the NT presents a very different trajectory of the development of leadership than the surrounding, Greco-Roman culture. Holy Spirit gifted leadership is not according to class or gender, nor is it of a quality to dominate or be in authority "over" others. In the Greco-Roman world, governmental leadership was both of these. Only the males of the Senatorial class could govern provinces or be in the Roman Senate, and the quality of the authority was hierarchical authority "over" the other citizens and people of the provinces.

In the Christian leadership visualized in the NT, Christ is the only head of the Church, the only high priest and the only particular priest. All other priestly roles are shared by all believers. There is no indication in the NT that the Christian ministry, the leadership of the Christian Church, was to be modeled after the OT particular priesthood. Rather this was decisively dissolved by God at the death of Christ when He tore the curtain in the temple from top to bottom (Matt 27:51).

3. Women in the Early Church Era

Women were clearly recorded in the NT as being in leadership positions in the Church. Yet by the end of the Fourth Century women in leadership were rare and relegated to the lower positions in the emerging hierarchical, priestly structure. This raises the question of what caused this shift away from women in leadership.

There were at least two major social pressures in the Second and Third Centuries which influenced Christians away from women in leadership in the Church: 1. World View: direct pressure against women taking leadership roles in society; 2. Sacerdotalism and Priesthood: the conceptualization of the Christian ministry as a hierarchical priesthood continuing the OT particular priesthood.

3.1. Direct Cultural Pressure Against Women in Leadership

3.1.1. House Churches to Public Structures: Women and Apologetics

Direct cultural pressure against women in leadership in the Christian Church began to be felt in the late First and early Second Centuries when Christianity outgrew its house church structure and began to develop into

public institutions with public buildings.[17] Also, because Christianity was a fast-growing religion, through time it came under greater public notice and scrutiny. As such, a major motivator in this shift was apologetic in nature. Christians did not want to bring public embarrassment onto the Church. The Second and Third Century Christian apologists wrote a genre of defense literature aimed at presenting Christianity in a positive light to their neighbors, the public, the very public that was the object of their evangelistic thrust.

Several important changes came to Christianity in response to public accusations, changes which became integral parts of Christian tradition. In regard to these early changes away from biblical teaching and practice Mervin Maxwell often remarked, "The speed with which the Early Church tobogganed into apostasy can take your breath away." Three of these changes in particular very quickly made fundamental changes to the teachings of the Bible.

3.1.2. Three Deviations From NT Teachings and Practice

The first example of a deviation from the NT that became a part of Christian tradition concerns the Sabbath. Nowhere in the NT is there any suggestion on the part of Jesus or Paul that the Sabbath should be replaced by Sunday. Yet by about A. D. 150 we have at least two Christian writers in two different metropolitan churches illustrating such a change. The *Epistle of Barnabas*, chapter 15, argues against the weekly Sabbath and in favor of keeping the eighth day, the day after Sabbath in honor of the resurrection of Jesus. Justin Martyr, in his *First Apology* chapter 67, describes for his stated audience, the Emperor of Rome, what he represents as a typical Christian worship service, on the first day of the week. Justin also argues against weekly Sabbath keeping in his *Dialogue with Trypho* (12, 18, 21-24). The argument arises as to how representative Justin and the *Epistle of Barnabas* were of Early Christian practice, even in their home cities of Rome and Alexandria. Also, there is clear evidence that for centuries afterward many Christians kept both Sabbath and Sunday.[18] Yet Sunday, not the seventh day Sabbath became the standard

[17] Carolyn Osiek and Margaret Y. MacDonald, *A Woman's Place: House Churches in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).

[18] Kenneth A. Strand, "The Sabbath and Sunday in the Second Through the Fifth Centuries" in *The Sabbath in Scripture and History*, ed. Kenneth A. Strand (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1982), 323-332; Kenneth A. Strand, "Some Notes on the Sabbath Fast in Early Christianity," *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 3 (1965), 172.

Christian day of worship throughout the world, though with exceptions, and is currently well-known to be Christian tradition. It is very telling to see how far the evangelical Protestants go to find a NT teaching in favor of first-day worship and against seventh-day worship as they try to defend this Christian tradition against the Bible.[19]

So why is the change from Sabbath to Sunday in Christian tradition an example of societal and cultural pressure? Because, the Christian relationship to the Jews was changed by the shift in public sentiment after the three Jewish rebellions which occurred in A.D. 70, 118 and 135. Roman law had protected the Jewish religion as an ancient and respected religion before these three rebellions. After the Bar Kokhba rebellion around 135, however, Imperial law and public sentiment had changed. Hadrian made laws against the Jews ever inhabiting Jerusalem again, and public sentiment recognized connection to the Jews as tantamount to being a traitor to Rome and ungrateful of the advantages proffered. The Sabbath, along with circumcision and avoidance of pork, was a well-known defining characteristic of Judaism. The Sabbath functioned as a border issue between Jews and the surrounding cultures. Leaving behind the Sabbath was a defensive act of separation from the Jews, and was not based on fear of imprisonment or death. It would not seem logical that Christians who are willing to die for their faith in Christ, such as Justin Martyr, would shrink from the Sabbath out of fear of death. This Christian separation from the Sabbath of the Jews seems based more on fear of bringing public shame to Christianity (and themselves).

The second example of a deviation from the teachings and principles of the NT that became a part of Christian tradition consists of hell and the immortality of the soul. The Bible teaches that humans are continually dependent on God for life, and that we humans have a unified anthropology: we do not have souls, rather, we are living souls. However, even before the end of the First Century after the birth of Christ we find that Clement of Rome, in chapter five of his letter to the Corinthians known as *First Clement*, already represents Peter and Paul as living in heaven. This suggests an early Christian accommodation to a Platonic view of worthy humans gaining an immediate ascent of the soul to the divine realm upon death. Possibly even more telling is the development of the concept of hell within Christianity. Tatian, writing his *Oration to the Greeks* around A.D. 170, insisted on two things that seem incompatible: that the human soul is not immortal (13.1), and that after the resurrection of the wicked these would remain forever in a constant state of punishment which he calls a deathless death (14.5). Theophilus of Antioch

[19] Ranko Stefanovic, "'The Lord's Day' of Revelation 1:10 in the Current Debate," *AUSS* 49.2 (2011), 261-284.

and Irenaeus, two of his contemporaries have similar views of human dependence on God for life, yet they seem to view eternal punishing as a necessity so as to not be seen as soft on sin.[20] In his three books *To Autolycus*, Theophilus argues that the Greek poets and philosophers got their ideas about judgment from the Hebrew prophets (2.37) and extols the extreme retributive punishment of the wicked described by the Sybil as true, useful, just and profitable to all (2.36). In view of Christianity's doctrine of forgiveness, a presentation of a robust judgment on sin in the afterlife could allay a public perception of Christians as immoral and, therefore, as bad citizens.

Similar to the Sabbath, hell and immortality of the soul end up being the overwhelming tradition of Christianity. It takes care and attention to detail to demonstrate the true teaching of the Bible against this Christian tradition shared by nearly all Christians, especially those who are biblically conservative. Again, it was not fear of punishment that caused Christians to accept hell and the immortality of the soul but fear of casting dispersion on Christianity as being immoral and soft on sin.

A third deviation from New Testament teaching and practice that can be used to demonstrate the Second and Third century shift away from the New Testament and toward Christian tradition is the practice of women in Christian leadership. The New Testament shows many women in leadership roles. From Mary taking the message of the risen Lord from the tomb to the gathered disciples, and the woman at the well taking the message of the Messiah to her townspeople, to Priscilla, Lydia, Junia, Phoebe, Euodia and Syntyche, thanked and corrected by Paul as ministers, apostles and deacons, all these are examples of women Christian teachers and leaders reported in the New Testament. Yet, almost every one of them has been meticulously played down in importance by Christians throughout history who sought to defend the traditions of the Church. So the early deviations of the Christian Church away from the teachings and practice of the Bible concerning Sabbath, hell, and women in leadership laid the foundations of non-biblical traditions that needed correction.

3.1.3. Greco-Roman View of Women as Subject by Nature

The first of the two identified social pressures that led toward the Christian tradition of women not being allowed leading roles in the

[20] John W. Reeve, "The Theological Anthropology of Theophilus of Antioch: Immortality and Resurrection in the Context of Judgment" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009), 236.

Church was that the Greco-Roman culture viewed women as of a different class and kind than men, and subject by nature to being ruled. This caused a direct societal pressure against women in leadership which made women in the Christian institutional structures to be viewed negatively by the Greco-Roman super culture. This direct pressure against women in leadership roles throughout society is part of the world view of the patriarchal Greco-Roman culture. It is the assumed right thing with multigenerational underpinnings. For the Roman of Paul's day, it just seemed a part of nature that men, rather than women, should be in charge.

One source which demonstrates a rationale for this patriarchal view of leadership from the philosophical and academic sphere is Aristotle's hierarchy of being. The bottom of the hierarchy is pure material: rocks and minerals. Next up is plant life followed by the "lower" animals which swim, creep and crawl. Above them are the more upright animals such as quadrupeds. Above these are the animals who can walk on two feet in an actual upright position. Humans top the animals with the *daemons* above them in the semi-divine realm. At the pinnacle of the hierarchy of being comes the unmoved Mover, the first cause, the transcendent One, or God. Aristotle, along with many of the philosophers of his age, was a monotheist and his prime Mover topped the hierarchy. Within this hierarchy another division of levels is spelled out based on the male and female genders, with the males being above the females within the hierarchy. This is considered a natural law based on the observation of male dominance in most of the higher animals. Also, the class system of humans fits into the hierarchy: slaves at the bottom, the masses next, and both are topped by the ruling classes. This complex hierarchy of humans within the overall hierarchy of being is best illustrated by a passage in Aristotle's book *Politics*, 1.5.3-8 (1260a)[21] where he is discussing proper

[21] "First of all then as to slaves the difficulty might be raised, does a slave possess any other excellence, besides his merits as a tool and a servant, more valuable than these, for instance temperance, courage, justice and any of the other moral virtues, or has he no excellence beside his bodily service? For either way there is a difficulty; if slaves do possess moral virtue, wherein will they differ from freemen? Or if they do not, this is strange, as they are human beings and participate in reason.

And nearly the same is the question also raised about the woman and the child: have they too virtues, and ought a woman be temperate, brave and just, and can a child be intemperate or temperate, or not? This point therefore requires general consideration in relation to natural ruler and subject: is virtue the same for ruler and ruled, or different? If it is proper for both to partake in nobility of character, how could it be proper for the one to rule and the other to be ruled unconditionally? We cannot say that the difference is to be one of degree, for ruling and being ruled differ in kind, and the difference of degree is not a difference in kind at all. Whereas

household management by the male ruler of the slaves, women and children.

Aristotle asks whether a slave has value beyond that of a tool. After concluding that the slave does, as a human, have moral virtues, Aristotle then asks a similar question of a woman or child. Again he concludes that, as humans, they too have moral virtues. The next logical question that follows, given Aristotle's conceptualization of class and gender, is whether virtue is the same for the "natural ruler and the subject"? Then Aristotle asks the penetrating question. "If it is proper for both to partake in nobility of character, how could it be proper for the one to rule and the other to be ruled unconditionally?" In our world, many would answer

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if on the contrary it is proper for the one to have moral nobility but not for the other, this is surprising. For if the ruler is not temperate and just, how will he rule well? And if the ruled, how will he obey well? If intemperate and cowardly he will not perform any of the duties of his position.

It is evident therefore that both must possess virtue, but that there are differences in their virtue (as also there are differences between those who are by nature rulers and ruled). And of this we straightway find an indication in connexion with the soul; for the soul by nature contains a part that rules and a part that is ruled, to which we assign different virtues, that is, the virtues of the rational and the irrational. It is clear then that the case is the same also with the other instances of ruler and ruled. Hence there are by nature various classes of rulers and ruled. For the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child in a different way. And all possess the various parts of the soul, but possess them in different ways; for the slave has not got the deliberative part at all, and the female has it, but without full authority, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form. Hence the ruler must possess intellectual virtue in completeness (for any work, taken absolutely, belongs to the master-craftsman, and rational principle is a master-craftsman); while each of the other parties must have that share of this virtue which is appropriate to them.

We must suppose therefore that the same necessarily holds good of the moral virtues: all must partake of them, but not in the same way, but in such measure as is proper to each in relation to his own function. Hence it is manifest that all the persons mentioned have a moral virtue of their own, and that the temperance of a woman and that of a man are not the same, their courage and justice, as Socrates thought, but the one is the courage of command, and the other is that of subordination, and the case is similar with the other virtues.

And this is also clear when we examine the matter more in detail, for it is misleading to give a general definition of virtue, as some do, who say that virtue is being in good condition as regards the soul or acting uprightly or the like; those who enumerate the virtues of different persons separately, as Gorgias does, are much more correct than those who define virtue in that way. Hence we must hold that all of these persons have their appropriate virtues, as the poet said of woman: 'Silence gives grace to woman'—though that is not the case likewise with a man." Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.5.3-8 (Rackham, LCL).

this question with a strong, "No, it is not proper!" But for Aristotle, and those that for over 2000 years followed his conclusions from nature, the answer was a qualified "yes, it is proper," on account of differences in the makeup of their souls. Aristotle goes on to argue that there is a difference in kind between the souls of those who naturally rule, that is, ruling class males, and of those who are naturally subjugated, namely, slaves, women and children. "For the free rules the slave, the male the female, and the man the child." This is natural, Aristotle says, because the souls of the rulers have "the virtues of the rational" while the souls of the subjugated have virtues of "the irrational." A further explanation details that "the slave has not the deliberative part at all, the female has it, but without full authority, while the child has it, but in an undeveloped form." So Aristotle's hierarchy of being includes the details of the hierarchy between classes of humans which he defines as differences in kind, and ends up with a few rulers and many subjugated peoples. Like the slave is subjugated to the ruling class, the female is subjugated to the male because her soul lacks in rational and deliberative parts and is, therefore, naturally of a kind to be ruled.

This goes along very well with the differences between the male and female humans in the writings of Aristotle's teacher, Plato, who stressed the intellectual nature of the male and the sensual nature of the female. Whereas it is obvious that there are differences between males and females, it is a difficult jump to accept this Platonic philosophical view of the differences as being hierarchical. In his dialogue on the *Republic*, 431c, Plato pens Socrates as saying,

> Furthermore, pleasures, pains, and appetites that are numerous and multifarious are things one would especially find in children, women, household slaves, and in the so-called free members of the masses—that is, the inferior people.

In the next statement of Socrates, the contrast of the few in the ruling class is given as those who are led by "rational calculation." This suggests that the ruling class, made up of a few high-born males, were more intellectual by nature than the slaves and women. One could summarize the Platonic view of male and female as the male being by nature intellectual (oriented toward the intelligible world and the divine) while the female is by nature sensual (oriented toward the sense-perceptible, or earthly, and emotional). And, he adds the value judgment of the earthly being inferior to the heavenly, so the female is inferior to the male.

So, women, according to Plato and Aristotle, are of a different kind and class, and are subjugated to men by nature.

How does thought and belief from the fourth-century before Christ affect the trajectory in the Early Church as they develop their Church

leadership and interpret the writings of the NT? It affects it very much because, the science and philosophy of the first centuries of the Christian era was almost entirely based on Middle Platonic philosophy. Early in the First-Century B.C., Antiochus of Ascalon[22] broke with his teacher in the Platonic Academy, Philo of Larissa, with what he called a return from the Skeptical Academy to the Old Academy. Antiochus included the teachings of Aristotle and the Stoic, Zeno of Citium, with Plato's teaching in the Academy, or Platonic school of philosophy. This became the dominant school of philosophy and the dominant thought of the Greco-Roman culture until the Third-Century A.D. when Plotinus[23] moved the Academy in a new direction, still highly influenced by Plato and Aristotle, which was called Neoplatonism. So the dominant thought during the earliest centuries of the Christian Church has come to be called Middle Platonism,[24] and includes ideas and doctrines from Platonic, Peripatetic (from Aristotle), and Stoic (from Zeno)systems of thought. The Early Church theologians followed this Platonic school as well, as can be seen in Augustine's grand book *The City of God*, book 8, where he rails against all philosophy as false knowledge and at the end makes an exception for the Platonic school, praising it for its truth. So the hierarchy of being, with its class and gender hierarchies within humanity, was part of the dominant world view in the infancy and childhood of Christianity. However, Jesus placed the ideal for Christian leadership in stark contrast to the surrounding cultural hierarchical leadership practices: "it should not be so among you" (Matt 20:25-28). Paul also did not just copy the thought of the day as evidenced by the many women in leadership that he referenced in his writings (especially Rom 16).

This hierarchy of being was treated as a moral compass, that which orientates all moral activity and decisions. It became the philosophical underpinnings within the political realm as well.

When faced with securing the structures of society as part of the *Pax Romana*, Caesar Augustus considered male dominance in the home and society through the *pater familias* system to be the basis of his defense against chaos and anarchy. The Peace of Rome depended upon the traditional structures of society to ensure stability. Stability was vital in the Roman system because about five percent of the population was

[22] See "Antiochus of Ascalon" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at plato.stanford.edu, revised Oct 4, 2011.

[23] See "Plotinus" in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at plato.stanford.edu, revised Sep 15, 2012.

[24] See "Middle Platonism" in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* at plato.stanfordwww.iep.utm.edu, viewed Jul 19, 2013.

ruling the other 95 percent for the benefit of the five percent. Any instability would threaten the whole system because the five percent were continually vulnerable. However, the system worked because the world view of the whole population stood on the social and religious structures built, at least partially, on the idea of male dominance in the hierarchy of being. Thus, the New Testament idea of women taking part in leadership was generally considered subversive to the stability of society.

An illustration of Christian women in leadership being viewed as subversive by a Roman governing official can be found in the correspondence between the Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger, then governing the province of Bythinia and Pontus on the southern shore of the Black Sea. Pliny described a passive approach to dealing with accused Christians that did not seek Christians out in order to punish them, but only dealt with Christians if someone accused them in his court. Trajan responded by agreeing that this was a good policy for Rome. The letters contain an interesting contact point between Christians as a minority group and a super-culture concerned with maintaining control. In pointing out the subversive elements of the Christians, Pliny includes such things as unauthorized meetings taking place at times outside of normal public hours. He also considers Christians to be immoral and superstitious on the basis of having women leaders, which he referred to as *ministrae*, a term Pliny used in the male form to refer to ministers of state a number of times in his official correspondence. In this circumstance he had two Christian women *ministrae* tortured, and when they would not give up their faith and offer the sacrifice he had them killed.[25].

3.1.4. Christian Tradition Follows the Greco-Roman View of Women as Subject by Nature

A century later, in 203, when the Roman Emperor Septimius Severus was taking a more active policy against Christians by seeking them out, we find an illustration of the Christian acceptance of the Greco-Roman view of women as of a different class and kind in the Christian reaction to the death of female martyrs described in the martyr story of *Perpetua and Felicitus*. These two women were said to have died valiantly with their faith intact and were duly praised by the Christian author of the story. It is significant to note that Perpetua was described in this circumstance in male terms, specifically as having "manly valor."[26] Assumedly this was because her valor virtue went beyond a woman's normal valor virtue as

[25] Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae* 10.96, 97

[26] Osiek and MacDonald, *A Woman's Place*, 135.

given by nature to women, who are naturally ruled, which Aristotle described as a "partial share," of the virtue. This is an example of Christians sliding away from the biblical trajectory of being a correction to the cultural misconceptions of women. Instead, Christians mirrored the Greco-Roman view of women.

There are many other examples of Christians adopting the Middle Platonic/Greco-Roman worldview on women as of a different class and different kind. This trajectory away from the biblical view of man and woman created in the image of God is heralded poignantly by Tertullian. He used 1 Tim 2 to generalize the unworthiness of women as well as to disqualify them from Christian ministry. In the first section in *On the Apparel of Women* Tertullian released a venomous statement about women based on his reading of 1 Tim 2: "And do you not know that each of you are an Eve? The sentence of God on this sex of yours lives in this age: the guilt must of necessity live too. You are the devil's gateway: you are the unsealer of that tree: you are the first deserter of the divine law: you are she who persuaded him whom the devil was not valiant enough to attack. You destroyed so easily God's image, man." Though he does not actually say it, Tertullian here suggests that females are not in the image of God and are, therefore, of a different class and kind than males.

John Chrysostom takes the negative rhetoric against women even farther. Although he insists in his *Discourse 4 On Genesis* that women share "the equality of honor" with men, in *Discourse 2 On Genesis* he revealed that he believed that the image of God "is not meant in regard to essence, but in regard to authority" and "this only the man has, the woman has it no longer. For he is subjected to no one, while she is subjected to him."[27] Chrysostom uses Paul (1Cor 11:7-11) to say that women are not in the image of God, but are instead subjected to men, of a different class and kind.

Augustine, in his *Literal Commentary on Genesis* (11.42) argues similarly, with even clearer Platonic language. Referring to the deception of the serpent, Augustine declares that the "man endowed with a spiritual mind" would not have believed the deception, but the one deceived was the "woman who is of small intelligence and who perhaps still lives more in accordance with the promptings of the inferior flesh than by superior reason." Augustine then asks, "Is this why the apostle Paul does not attribute the image of God to her?"[28] Again, Augustine uses his reading of Paul to cast upon women the lower class, and even lower spiritual class,

[27] Quoted from: Elizabeth Clark, *Women in the Early Church* (Message of the Fathers of the Church 13; ed. Thomas Halton; Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983), 34, 35.

[28] Ibid., 40.

understanding of Platonism and the Greco-Roman worldview. The tradition of the Church was building a barrier to a right reading of scripture in regard to women.

Even when the things being said about a woman are extremely positive, the same class and kind differences are evident. Gregory of Nyssa, when describing a conversation with a friend about the final hours of his beloved sister Macrina, for whom his respect is transparent, gave her the following compliment: "It was a woman who was the subject of our discourse, if indeed you can say 'a woman,' for I do not know if it is appropriate to call her by a name taken from nature when she surpassed that nature."[29]

The trajectory of the OT and NT showing women in more positive roles than the surrounding cultures allowed was truncated and turned aside by the Early Church which followed instead the trajectories of the Greco-Roman world. The direct cultural pressure against Christian women in leadership during the Second and Third Centuries led to the Church fathers developing a tradition that bowed to the surrounding culture. Again, this deviation from the teachings and practices of the NT followed the pattern of giving up the Sabbath and accepting the immortality of the soul.

3.2. Sacerdotalism and Priesthood: Adoption of the OT Particular Priesthood Excludes Women

The second form of social and cultural pressure against women in Christian leadership came from a pagan understanding of the Lord's Supper and salvation. This was most notable in the rise of the notion that the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, was a sacrifice repeatedly offered to God rather than a remembering of the once-offered sacrifice of Christ (Heb 10:12) on our behalf. With the continued *cultus* of a sacrifice arose the need for a priesthood. The OT model of the particular priesthood was adopted and placed over the NT conception of Christian ministry. Also, the hierarchical nature of the Roman Empire came to be reflected in Church governance as well.

During the first half of the second century, the Christian Eucharist came to be perceived as a sacrifice offered to God. Ignatius of Antioch, in his *Epistle to the Ephesians* 5, used sacrificial language metaphorically to denote the church as the place of the sacrifice. Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 41, 117) and the *Didache* (14) made the overt connection of the Christian Eucharist with the universal sacrifice prophesied in Mal 1:11. The Eucharist

[29] Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Macrina* 1, quoted in Clark, *Women in the Early Church*, 236.

provided the fixed *cultus* for priestly activity, so familiar to the pagan backgrounds of the new Christians. Judaism and most of the pagan religions from which the new believers came believed in sacrifices offered to God by a specific priesthood. This familiarity could have been part of the influence leading to the perception of the Eucharist as a sacrifice.

It was Cyprian of Carthage and his experiences surrounding the Decian persecution in 249-251 that clarified for Catholics the relationship between salvation and the Church. In the aftermath of the persecution, a confused congregation that had looked to the martyrs and those in prison as confessors for spiritual direction and even forgiveness now had to deal with their bishop, Cyprian, who had fled the city during the persecution. When he returned, he had to reestablish order in the church when his own moral authority was in question. He called a synod of bishops, of which he was the leader as the metropolitan bishop of the province of North Africa, and asserted his official authority to reestablish the unity of the Church. In his treatise entitled *On the Unity of the Church*, he, and the bishops of the synod, summarized three principles of Catholic Church order:

1. *You cannot have God as your Father unless you have the Church as your Mother.*

This attested to his belief, that was gaining universal appeal, that salvation is only available through the Church. Through baptism and the Eucharist the Church offered salvation to its members.

2. *The Church is defined by and identified with the bishop.*

This emphasized the concept of a class distinction between the laity and the clergy. It also emphasized the single head at the top of the spiritual hierarchy.

3. *Only the Bishop can forgive sins.*

This placed the spiritual authority of salvation firmly into the hands of the bishops alone, it denied that either the confessors or the presbyters on their own authority could offer God's grace. This concept is built on Tertullian's understanding of the *ordinatio*, which set the bishop up as the high priest.[30]

In the Fourth and Fifth Centuries, the development of the mystagogical understanding of Church buildings, altars, the Eucharist, and priests by Ambrose of Milan, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom and others set the stage for the ever-heightening understanding of sacerdotalism of all things connected with salvation. An example of this can be found in Gregory's sermon *On the Baptism of Christ*:

[30] For a more thorough discussion see John W. Reeve, "The Presbyter: Jewish Elder to Christian Priest" (M.A.Thesis, Andrews University, 1997), 43-79.

> For this holy altar, too, by which I stand, is stone, ordinary in its nature, nowise different from the other slabs of stone that build our houses and adorn our pavements; but seeing that it was consecrated to the service of God, and received the benediction, it is a holy table, an altar undefiled, no longer touched by the hands of all, but of the priests alone, and that with reverence. The bread again is at first common bread, but when the sacramental action consecrates it, it is called, and becomes, the Body of Christ. So with the sacramental oil; so with the wine: though before the benediction they are of little value, each of them, after the sanctification bestowed by the Spirit, has its several operation [*sic*]. The same power of the word, again, also makes the priest venerable and honourable, separated, by the new blessing bestowed upon him, from his community with the mass of men. While but yesterday he was one of the mass, one of the people, he is suddenly rendered a guide, a president, a teacher of righteousness, an instructor in hidden mysteries; and this he does without being at all changed in body or form; but, while continuing to be in all appearance the man he was before, being, by some unseen power and grace, transformed in respect of his unseen soul to the higher condition.[31]

This higher condition was seen as off limits to women both on account of the difference in class and kind between women and men as well as on the basis of the OT particular priesthood being exclusively male. It would have been seen as a sacrilege as bad as that of Korah, Dathan and Abiram recorded in Numbers 16 to view a woman as a priest under these influences. One might ask, however, whether making the Christian ministry into a priesthood not called for by God falls into the same category. Usurping priestly functions, such as Gideon did when he set up his ephod at Ophrah (Judg 8:27) never turns out well. The NT understanding of the particular priesthood does not involve the ministry, but rather Christ alone is high priest and head of the Church.

4. Exceptions to the Exclusion of Women in Christian Leadership and the Force of Tradition

Though most of the Christian church followed the majority in the abandonment of women in leadership, especially ordained offices, there were some exceptions. Deaconesses were ordained for a thousand years before the practice was largely shut down in the 12th Century. Once the

31 Gregory of Nyssa *On the Baptism of Christ* (NPNF, 5:519).

practice was no longer generally accepted the tendency was to deny that it ever had been done. A major difficulty in this denial lay in the clear recording in *Canon* 15 of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 that Women who were to be ordained as deaconesses should be 40 years old. This difficulty was subverted, by Rufinus of Bologna in his *Summa Decretorum* 28.1.23, by the assertion that all the ordinations of women were not to the altar, but to some other ministry in the church.[32] In this way, it was made to seem that there had never been any "real ordinations" of women.

Other exceptions to the exclusion of women from Christian leadership include wives of bishops, presbyters and deacons who were ordained with their husbands and served with them. These would be ordained under the same term as their husband, except for the feminine ending: Episcopae, Presbyterae and deaconesses.[33] Abbesses, as leaders of women's monasteries were also ordained, with the level of deaconesses.

The best late-antique text we have extant which shows evidence of a minority view of Christians attempting to maintain a biblical view of women in ministry against the tide of tradition is from the Council of Laodicea around the year 364. There is confusion about almost everything concerning this council and this canon. First, there is ambiguity concerning when or whether the council met, or if the canons are just a collection from different councils. Then, the Greek term used for "ordain" is not the established (by this time) term for ordain, *cheirotonia* (meaning "vote" or "raise the hand"), but the more biblical term for designation to an office, *kathistasthai* (meaning "to be appointed"). Also, the term for "elder" used here is not *presbyter* or *presbyterae*, but *presbytides*. A more ambiguous term that may mean "old woman" or an "official female elder;"[34] though it would seem strange for an old woman "to be appointed" to be an old woman. At any rate, whatever was happening was causing enough furor to try to shut it down with canons from some council. It is interesting to note that this same set of canons, those associated with a council at Laodicea, rejects the keeping of Sabbath and denotes which books are in the biblical canon. So the list of canons is not without import.

[32] See discussion in Gary Macy, "Defining Women Out of Ordination" in *The Hidden History of Women's Ordination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 89-110, 214.

[33] Ibid., 74-77.

[34] See discussion in Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek, *Ordained Women in the Early Church* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 163-202.

5. Protestant Reformation Continues Much of Christian Tradition in Christian Ministry

In the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century, there was a strong rejection of the sacramental system as the way of salvation. The reformers denied that receiving the sacrament of the transubstantiated bread was the objective receiving of salvation through the Church, and that excommunication from the Church was the objective loss of salvation. In doing this they moved the understanding of salvation away from the trajectory built up from Justin Martyr, through Cyprian and Augustine, on through Peter Lombard to the 4th Lateran Council in the 13th Century. They moved the concept of salvation away from Roman Catholic sacramentalism and toward a biblical understanding. Seventh-day Adventists applaud and emulate this much needed reform. However, not all the reformers reformed as far toward the Bible and away from the sacramental system of salvation as might be hoped. Take the elements of the Lord's Supper for example.[35] Zwingli, and later the Anabaptists, tended to visualize the elements of the Eucharist non-sacramentally. They insisted on a purely symbolic relationship between Christ and the bread and the wine. For Zwingli, the presence of Christ at the Lord's Supper was in the hearts of the believers, the emblems of the body and blood are signs. They were important signs, but only signs. By contrast, Luther, though he shared the critique of the Catholic transubstantiation with Zwingli, argued that there was real presence in the elements of the Eucharist. Luther coined the term consubstantiation, which showed a high degree of sacramental retention in his view. Calvin is described by Schaff as having a view of the Eucharist that is half way between those of Luther and Zwingli, a *via media*, or "middle way."[36] Anglicans, seeking their own *via media* between Calvinism and Catholicism ended up somewhere between Calvin and Luther on a continuum of increasing sacramental conceptualization:

Zwingli	Calvin	Anglicans	Luther	Catholics
pure symbol	via media or middle way	consubstantiation		transubstantiation

35 For a classic discussion of three major reformers on the Eucharist see Philip Schaff, "The Eucharistic Theories Compared. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin" in *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 7 (public domain reprint edition from Amazon: Nabu Press, 2010), section 111.

36 Ibid.

Seventh-day Adventists have never been uniform on the conceptualization of the Lord' Supper. Some have viewed it like Zwingli and some like Calvin, with most spread out somewhere between these two.

The reformers moved away from the trajectory of the Catholic tradition on the relative sacramentality of the Eucharist. They had a similar shift away from the sacramentally ordained Catholic priesthood that, through the bishops, orchestrated the sacramental system of salvation through the Church. However, here too there was often not enough reform toward a NT conception of the Christian ministry.

The Lutherans kept a sacramental priesthood including confession, though the idea of repentance was reformed. The Reformed churches, following Calvin, tended to drop the priesthood altogether in favor of ministers or pastors, but retained some sacerdotal understanding of ordination as involving a special grace given only to ministers. The Anglicans, also being heavily influenced by Calvinism, retained the priesthood like the Lutherans, but had a less-heightened view of the sacramental nature, placing them, again, between the Lutheran and the Reformed traditions. The Anabaptist groups tended to reject all the *res*, or "spiritual thing," of the sacraments and conceive of the ministry as not separated from the laity by class, but merely by function. In this way they had an anti-sacramental view similar to Zwingli's on the elements of the Eucharist. In most protestant churches, then, the reform of the sacramental and hierarchical nature of the Christian ministry did not break enough with the Catholic tradition and completely adopt a biblical view. So a line can be added to the above chart to show which nomenclature each of these main Christian traditions have chosen to represent their leadership.

Zwingli	Calvin	Anglicans	Luther	Catholics
pure symbol	via media or middle way	consubstantiation		transubstantiation
Minister	Minister	Priest	Priest	Priest

Once again, Seventh-day Adventists are within the part of the continuum from Zwingli and the Anabaptists to Calvin, with some moving toward the more sacerdotal end. There has never been complete agreement on the relative sacramentalism concerning the Adventist ministry. Since the 1850's there has been in Adventism those who have visualized some *res*, or spiritual change in ordination, and those who viewed ordination as pure sign, with no *res*, no class elevation of the clergy. The conceptualization of the ministry and ordination was not a focus of the young denomination and the early Adventists left it undefined and

simply held to a functional ministry without a lot of details.[37] Adventist practice has therefore varied greatly from place to place. In some countries that are strongly Catholic or Orthodox the Adventists have tended to see more sacramentalism, while other places have tended to see less. But even Adventists in Protestant areas are not exempt. The fundamentalist Evangelicals have tended to make the traditional Christian view of women as subject to men by nature a tenet of their current thought. Many have joined the Catholics in arguing against women in the Christian clergy. So, even Adventists in protestant settings have felt pressure to move toward a heightened sacramentalism.

It is unfortunate that the force of the Early Christian tradition adopting the Greco-Roman view of women meant that the society coming out of the Middle Ages assumed the nature of women defined by Aristotle and Plato as of a different class and kind, and as lacking in the intellectual and spiritual virtues. This, along with the traditional reading of Paul concerning women, following Tertullian, John Chrysostom and Augustine, caused the Christian Churches arising from the Protestant Reformation to not give serious consideration to women in leadership.

6. Conclusion

A vexing question is now commanding Seventh-day Adventists attention: Can there be co-existence between those who do not share exact conclusions on women in ministry? Is unity possible without uniformity on this issue? Adventist history and Adventist practical theology both suggest that the answer is "yes." First from history: Adventists have thrived in the last forty years in a world-wide fellowship of great diversity. The denomination has done well in terms of church growth, including evangelism and missions as the church surpasses 17 million members. Adventists have grown strong in the area of education both in discipleship training and educating for lifelong service in dozens of colleges and universities. Adventist institutions and administration are effective and well respected. Whereas there are struggles and challenges, the church is larger and stronger today than four decades ago, all while having great diversity in thought and action on women as local elders. This historical strength, in spite of strong disagreements on women elders, is due in large part to Adventist practical theology. Seventh-day Adventists have a functional rather than an ontological understanding of the Christian ministry. There is no dependence on ontologically elevated ministers to mediate forgiveness. The ministers lead, educate and inspire,

[37] Denis Kaiser, "paper title," forthcoming in *Andrews University Seminary Studies.*

but they do not have authority over salvation. As such, there can be very different nuances of ministry practice without endangering any member's relationship with God. There have been churches with women elders and other churches without women elders side by side for decades without much ill effect. Over 40 years of practice shows this issue need not divide the church. The same allowance can be made with ordained women pastors wherever they can practically function as ministers within the local society. Yes, Seventh-day Adventists can have unity even if there is not uniformity on this issue.