

T H E R O A D T O W O M E N ' S O R D I N A T I O N

Franklin A. Gronemeyer

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
Senior Church History
Section A
Prof. Fredrick
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Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11831 W. Seminary Drive. 65W
Madison, Wisconsin

The Road To Women's Ordination

Introduction

There are many sayings about "history" that are true. "The more things change, the more they stay the same." The world has been around a long time that this quote is true. It is so true that we hear, "History often repeats itself." Because it does we can learn a lot from history. Things often follow a set pattern and by looking back into history we are able to predict with some accuracy what might happen. Once a pattern is started, it is much easier to continue down that path than it is to turn back and change it. Change is not impossible, just difficult. Now, we cannot see into the future, because what starts out in one pattern may be changed by other events. This paper will look at the events that led to women's ordination into the public ministry of the Lutheran Church of America. We will first look at the beginning when women were submissive in the church, until we reach the decision which allowed them into the public ministry. With that model in mind we will see if the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is on the same course. And if they are, see just how far they are on that same pattern of events.

I. LCA

A. Augustana Synod

We start by looking at the Lutheran Church of America to get our model pattern. The one problem with this is that the LCA first got its start in 1962. Four church bodies united

together: 1)The American Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2)the Augustana Synod, 3)the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church, and 4)the United Lutheran Church in America. Our model must go beyond 1962 and start in one of these four churches. The ULCA would be the best place, because it was the prime mover in the newly formed synod. Here is where a second problem develops. There was a limited source of information (at least for me) from the minutes of their Synod conventions. For these four churches to unite, they must have been close in their doctrinal stance. Instead of following the ULCA, we will look back at the Augustana Synod.

The Augustana Synod worked on these ideas a long time, longer than one may think. Discussion of women in the church started already in 1866. Because it goes back so far, the minutes of some of the first conventions were not available to me, but I was able to locate the index found in the Augustana's last convention minutes.

The Augustana Synod held their 103rd and last convention from June 25-27, 1962 at Cobo Hall in Detroit,MI. In the aforementioned index is a list of the major events of their synod. On pages 644-645 of that index is the heading of "Women" followed by a list of issues concerning women. The discussion of women in the church was an issue at their 1866 convention (Minutes, 1866, p. 37). It stated that women are in the priesthood of all believers. Here this Scriptural principle is stressed, but in 1872 (Minutes, 1872, p. 24) some thought that women should vote in the congregation. It must have been a new idea, because it was rejected. In 1894 (Minutes, 1894, p. 27) some in the

Augustana Synod were worried about where this would lead. They warned against women as preachers. Also in 1901 (Minutes, 1901, p. 97) women's right to vote in the congregation's constitution was again rejected.

But in 1907 (Minutes, 1907, p. 141) women were granted the right to vote in the constitution of the congregation. In 1910 (Minutes, 1901, p. 208) this right to vote was extended to the synod level. The right to vote in the synod was given to only one woman delegate. This must have created a stir, because in the following year 1911 (Minutes, 1911, p. 155) the granted right of women to vote in the congregation was stressed.

Now the argument goes, if a woman can vote in the congregation, why not serve on a board. In 1915 (Minutes, 1915, p. 176) this was discussed, but was denied. In 1926 (Minutes, 1926, p. 168) and 1927 (Minutes, 1927, p. 191) the idea of women as board members was disapproved. But this was changed when in 1929 (Minutes, 1929, p. 221) a request for a woman member on the Board of Augustana College and Theological Seminary was granted.

After 12 years had gone by, it was approved for women to enter the home mission fields at the Augustana's 82nd Convention. The Minutes read,

10. That Synod approves of the plan of the Board of Home Missions to use women missionaries on its fields, and that the following rules be adopted as a guide for the selection and activity of women missionaries:

(1) A woman missionary shall be called for a period of one year as a time, until she has served two successive years, after which she may be called for a period of two years. She shall then be publicly commissioned by the Board of Home Missions.

(2) All applications of candidates for positions as women missionaries must be submitted to the Woman's Missionary Society of the Augustana Synod for approval. (Minutes, 1941, pp. 139-140).

The Home Mission Board requested women as missionaries. It was approved.

At the 91st Convention held at Washington, D.C. on June 6-11, 1950 the Committee on Resolutions submitted this resolution concerning women on the Board of Trustees.

Resolved, that Section 2 of Article V of the constitution for the congregations of the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church be amended to read as follows: Section 2, Article V: "Members of the Church Council and of the Board of Trustees shall be known for their Christian life and character and well qualified for their respective duties. The members of the Church Council shall be chosen from the men of the congregation and the members of the Board of Trustees may consist of both men and women." (Minutes, 1950, p. 381).

Resolution 4 was referred to the Committee on Constitutions for further study. The next year on June 12-17, 1951 at Galesburg, IL the 92nd Convention adopted the report from the Committee on Constitutions which said,

2. The Committee was asked to make recommendations in the proposed constitution for congregations which would make it possible for women to serve on the Board of Trustees in the local congregation. The Committee recommends that the proposed constitution for congregations be altered to make this possible by deleting the word "men" in Article V, Section 2, and adding the following sentence to this section. "The members of the Church Council shall be chosen from the men of the congregation, and the members of the Board of Trustees may be men or women." (Minutes, 1951, pp. 352-353).

The Augustana had started with the idea of women being silent in the church, but that was changed in 1907. When they left the Scriptural stance on women things began to change.

They had started on a new course, one in which they would not turn back. The Augustana Synod held their last convention June 25-27, 1962 in Detroit. The next day they became part of the LCA. Their first convention was held June 28-July 1, 1962. The LCA followed and completed the course.

B. The LCA

The pattern so far had gone very far. Women already had received the power to vote both in the congregation and synod and also the power to be on the board of trustees. Women also had the duties of missionary. From that point there was only one step left, that of women's ordination. At the LCA's third convention held in 1966 the study of women was given to the Commission on the Comprehensive Study of the Doctrine of the Ministry. "That the action of the convention directing the president to appoint a committee to study the role of women in the ministry be rescinded, and that the studies called for in that action be assigned to the commission to continue the comprehensive study of the doctrine of the ministry. (Minutes, 1966, p. 627).

Two years later in 1968 at their next convention the Commission gave this report concerning women.

3. A subcommittee has begun a study of the role of women in the church, including the issue of the ordination of women. The commission is agreed that it can see no biblical or theological reasons for denying ordination to women. The commission will continue its study of the issue. (Minutes, 1968, pp. 755-756).

They were in favor of ordination. Then the LCA made their monumental step in 1970. The synod adopted the commission's

report. In the commission's preface it says,

Who is a minister? What is the church? Once upon a time it may have been easy to answer these questions. Today, in a time of dramatic social change, the search for human community and the quest for authority challenge earlier definitions. Can ministry to a congregation be considered normative in these days of specialized chaplaincies and experimental missions? Must ministry be full-time, or are "tentmaking" ministries possible? Should women be ordained?

One biblical affirmation has governed our thinking: all Christians are ministers. Therefore the word "ministry" cannot be reserved for the work of ordained clergy. Ministry is the task of the whole people of God (Matthew 5:13-16, Romans 12:1-8, 1 Peter 1:9-10, 2 Corinthians 5:18-21). Every Christian is called to minister to his neighbor in the world, and this calling to ministry is performed through the Christian's life and work. It stems from the freedom given to all of us in baptism. In this sense the "Doctrine of the Ministry" applies to all Christians.

This renewed appreciation of lay ministry, however, has only intensified the need to re-examine the role of the ordained minister. Among all the tasks he performs, which tasks are uniquely his? Does he have any functions that differ from those of other baptized Christians? How essential is he in a society where others can communicate more effectively, counsel more expertly, and raise money more efficiently? Who needs him and for what? In short, what is his "identity"? (Minutes, 1970, pp. 428-429).

Following the Preface is the Position Statements. The important ones are numbers 2, 4, and 5.

2. Ministry is entrusted to the whole people of God, not only to the ordained ministers. In the Christian tradition baptism serves as the individual's "calling" to the task of ministry. (See #4.) This calling is realized in his occupation as well as in all other areas of his life. The Christian's distinctive style of life is the individual expression of the ministry of God's people in the world.

4. The "call" is a summons to exercise this official, representative ministry in a specific situation upon the initiative and at the discretion of the church. "Call" is distinct from "calling" for which every Christian is responsible. (See #2.)

5. Ordination, therefore, designates a member of the church as qualified by professional education and

personal endowments to serve in the official, representative ministry. It presupposes a call. (See #4.) Both men and women are eligible for call and ordination. (Minutes, 1970, p. 432).

The final step was when the LCA adopted the commission's recommendations in the LCA Bylaws. Women could be ordained ministers by a simple change in the wording of the Bylaws.

1. That Section II, Item 1 of the LCA Bylaws be amended by striking the word "man" and inserting the word "person":
 Item 1. A minister of this church shall be a (man) person whose soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, and educational qualifications have been examined and approved in the manner prescribed in the constitution, and who has been properly ordained; who accepts and adheres to the Confession of Faith of this church; who is diligent and faithful in the exercise of his ministry; and whose life and conduct are above reproach. He shall comply with the constitution, bylaws and enactments of this church and of the synod of which he is a member and shall participate actively in their undertakings for Christ's Kingdom. (Minutes, 1970, p. 433).

This is the model which we will follow. It is a very simple model. With this we will compare it to the events in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

II. LCMS

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod had in the past held to the Biblical position of women being silent and not usurp authority over men. But after a while there were those who disagreed with that position. The LCMS made resolutions in order to strengthen their Biblical stance and to help those who disagreed to understand it as the synod did. In 1953 at the 42nd convention Resolution 27 was given.

Whereas, It is a general principle of Holy Scripture that women should not usurp authority over men in the home and in the church; and

Whereas, Synod has based its position in the field of woman suffrage in the church on this general principle of the Bible, as expressed in various passages, including 1 Cor. 14:34 and 1 Tim. 2:11, 12; and

Whereas, However, there is a sincere difference of opinion among clergy and laity concerning the full and correct application of these texts to the question of woman suffrage in the church, as indicated by Unprinted Memorials 21 and 47; and

Whereas, Many women of our Church are eager to be of greatest service to their Lord in the church; therefore be it

Resolved, That the President of Synod appoint a committee of five members to prepare for the next convention a thorough exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 14, 1 Timothy 2, and all other applicable texts as they relate to the question of woman suffrage in our congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That, in the meantime, our congregations be urged to continue the present practice of our Synod in restricting the privileges of voting membership to qualified male communicants.

NOTE: Synod by a rising vote expressed its esteem for the women of the Church and their work. (Proceedings, 1953, pp. 483-484).

At the next convention in 1956 the Committee on Woman's Suffrage gave Resolution 22.

Whereas, The committee authorized by the 1953 Houston Convention and appointed by the synodical President to prepare for this convention a thorough exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 14, 1 Timothy 2, and all other applicable texts as they relate to the question of woman suffrage in our congregations, has completed its task; and

Whereas, The committee does not state that it finds woman suffrage in our congregations forbidden in express words in the Scriptures, but emphatically warns against any anti-Scriptural practice whereby the headship of man to woman in the affairs of the church would be surrendered; and

Whereas, The committee commends our synodical position urging congregations to administer their affairs through the male voters' meetings as Scripture-sanctioned and time-tested; and

Whereas, The committee recommends that Synod urge all congregations to conform to this established procedure of male voters' meetings; and

Whereas, The committee sees great advantages in giving full information to all members of the church and also in getting the opinion and suggestions of the women on important issues; and

Whereas, Above all, the committee urges continued diligent study of the Scriptural teachings relative to these matters, with special reference to the Order of Redemption and the Order of Creation; therefore be it

Resolved, (a) That we express our sincere gratitude to the committee for the faithful effort expended and for the diligent and careful execution of its assignment; and be it further

Resolved, (b) That we recognize the problems involved in applying these texts of Scripture to woman suffrage in our congregations and all the issues involved therein; and be it further

Resolved, (c) That in view of these problems Synod urge all its members to study the God-pleasing place of woman in home and church with renewed diligence and zeal; and be it further

Resolved, (d) That all congregations who administer their affairs through the male voters' meeting be urged to continue this policy, but to inform the entire membership on the transactions of the voters' meetings, and to impress upon the men the importance of utilizing this blessed privilege of suffrage to the utmost to the glory of God and the welfare of the church; and be it further

Resolved, (e) That we urge any congregation in the membership of Synod now, or applying for membership, which grants woman suffrage, to reconsider this practice in the light of Scripture and the glorious position of woman in marriage and in the home, and also in the light of the consequences of such practice in the history of the church, and to consider the danger of offense to others and to conform to the historic position of Synod in this matter; and be it further

Resolved, (f) That a standing committee of three members be appointed by the Praesidium of Synod which will continue to study this entire area of the place of woman in the church and which will provide guidance and direction through pamphlets, brochures, books, correspondence, and direct consultation wherever desired; and be it finally

Resolved, (g) That we urge all our members, male and female, to pray that our Synod may ever deal rightly in this area to the fullest use of the talents of Christian women for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom and to the glory of His name.

The ten who voted in the negative were encouraged to give the reasons for their negative vote to the Secretary, as a matter of record. (Proceedings, 1956, pp. 569-571).

Again at the 44th convention in 1959 this position was still debated, but it remained the same. Resolution 8 said,

...Resolved, That in order to maintain the interest of the entire membership of our congregations in the affairs of the church, each congregation be encouraged to set up a system whereby, on matters which affect the whole congregation, all groups and individuals that are not directly represented in the voters' assembly may have opportunity to express their opinions and wishes prior to action on the matter by the voters' assembly; and be it finally

Resolved, That we urge all congregations which grant woman suffrage, whether now members of Synod or applying for membership, to recognize the validity of Synod's historic position and to reconsider their practice with the view to bringing it into harmony with this position. (Proceedings, 1959, pp. 190-191).

Six years later this was still an issue. All the actions of the past did not help, but the LCMS still held its ground.

Resolution 2-36 said,

Whereas, One of God's gifts to His church is the large number of faithful women who perform many and varied services to the congregation in loving obedience to their Lord; and

Whereas, In previous conventions the Synod has, after a study in depth by a special committee, repeatedly and at length stated its position on the place of woman in the church according to Scripture; and

Whereas, Requests have come for clarification of the Synod's position on this matter; and

Whereas, Scripture is the only norm for solving the problems confronting us in our church life; therefore be it

Resolved, That we adopt the following statement for guidance in this matter:

1. On the basis of 1 Cor. 14:34, 35 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 we hold that God forbids women publicly to preach and teach the Word to men and to hold any office or vote in the church where this involves exercising authority over men with respect to the public administration of the Office of the Keys. We regard this principle as of binding force also today because 1 Tim. 2:11-15 refers to what God established at creation.

2. As stated at the St. Paul convention in 1956 and at the San Francisco convention in 1959, we consider woman suffrage in the church contrary to

Scripture only when it violates the above-mentioned Scriptural principles.

3. In Gal. 3:28 St. Paul speaks of the redeemed children of God and their blessed relationship with Christ and with one another. This blessed relationship through faith does not cancel the order God has established at the time of creation but sanctifies and hallows it. (Proceedings, 1965, p. 103).

Four years later everything changed. Resolution 2-17 changed everything. With this decision the LCMS started down the same path as the Augustana did in 1907.

Whereas, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, in accordance with Resolutions 2-05 and 2-06 of the New York convention, made "a detailed and exhaustive study of the entire question of woman suffrage in the church" and of "the matter of full membership of women on synodical boards, commissions, and committees"; and

Whereas, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations has submitted its report (CW, pp. 514-522); therefore be it

Resolved, That we express gratitude to the Commission on Theology and Church Relations for this study; and be it further

Resolved, That we commend this study, as well as the study of the special committee reported in the Proceedings, 1956 (pp. 553-569), to all congregations of the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod accept the following declarations as guides on this matter:

1. Those statements of Scripture which direct women to keep silent in the church and which prohibit them to teach and to exercise authority over men, we understand to mean that women ought not to hold the pastoral office or serve in any other capacity involving the distinctive functions of this office.

2. The principles set forth in such passages, we believe, prohibit holding any other kind of office or membership on boards or committees in the institutional structures of a congregation, only if this involves women in a violation of the order of creation. We hold that they do not prohibit full membership of women on synodical boards, commissions, and committees. The manner of filling an office or establishing membership on a board or commission, in congregations or in the Synod, has no prohibitory Scriptural implications.

3. We hold likewise that Scripture does not prohibit women from exercising the franchise in congregational or synodical assemblies.

4. We therefore conclude that the Synod itself and the congregations of the Synod are at liberty to alter their policies and practices in regard to women's involvement in the work of the church according to these declarations, provided the polity developed conforms to the general Scriptural principles that women neither hold the pastoral office nor "exercise authority over men"; and be it finally

Resolved, That in the implementation of any changes in this area of women's ministry in the church we urge cautious and deliberate action in the spirit of Christian love. (Proceedings, 1965, pp. 88-89).

Because women now had the right to vote in the congregation and hold office, there were those who wanted to go farther and ordain women, but the LCMS withheld that right at the next convention in 1971 with Resolution 2-04.

...Whereas, God has in the past richly blessed His church with many dedicated women and ample opportunities for their service in the church; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm its position that the Word of God does not permit women to hold the pastoral office or serve in any capacity involving distinctive functions of this office; and be it also

Resolved, That we thank God for the countless blessings to His church through the service of women. (Proceedings, 1971).

At the 1973 convention the President of the Synod was directed to form the Task Force on Women. In 1975 this task force brought forward Resolution 3-07 "To Utilize Women's Gifts."

Whereas, The Task Force on Women has served the Synod faithfully; and

Whereas, The Task Force on Women has through careful investigation brought to the attention of the Synod through a report many valuable insights; therefore be it

Resolved, That the convention rejoice that progress is being made in utilizing more fully the gifts of women in Christian witness, service, education, and contributions to policy making; and be it further

Resolved, That the convention encourage all congregations, Districts, and synodwide departments and agencies to examine their existing structures and procedures and to develop plans to make any necessary changes in:

- a. personnel practices (hiring, promotion, salarying, etc.), to conform with the Synod's personnel policies;
- b. systems of nominating, electing, and appointing men and women to decision-making bodies, and methods of recruiting and selecting persons for full-time staff positions;
- c. images and role models of men and women portrayed in church curricula, publications, and actual styles of operation;
- d. language used in worship materials; and be it finally

Resolved, That all the people of God use all opportunities to put the gifts of the Spirit to work in their daily lives, in the church, and in witness and service to others in the world. (Proceedings, 1975, p. 99).

In 1981 the LCMS urged completion of the study of women, again in 1983 the study on the role of women in the church was given priority, because some wanted to limit and others wanted to extend the role of women. By 1986 things were becoming unclear on the role of women in the church, so the LCMS reaffirmed their position with Resolution 3-09.

Whereas, There are various interpretations regarding the service of women in the life of the church today; and

Whereas, The question of the proper role of women in the life of the church is one which has stimulated much theological discussion; and

Whereas, The service of women in the church is a subject of serious and deep concern in our Synod; and

Whereas, Our synod seeks to be faithful to what the Scriptures teach on this subject so that there be God-pleasing harmony within the church; and

Whereas, The Commission on Theology and Church Relations has completed its study, "Women in the Church," and distributed it widely; therefore be it

Resolved, That we thank God for the many gifts and blessings that He has bestowed on the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod through the faithful service of women; and be it further

Resolved, That the 1986 convention, of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod reaffirm Res. 2-17 of the 1969 convention, which states that "Those statements of Scripture which direct women to keep silent in the church and which prohibit them to teach and to exercise authority over men, we understand to mean that women

ought not to hold the pastoral office or serve in any other capacity involving the distinctive function of this office," and which also grants permission to the Synod and its congregations to institute woman suffrage and to permit women to hold office in the Synod or congregation by election or appointment; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm its position as stated in the 1970 statement of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (1971 Convention Workbook, p. 244) which declares that women "may hold voting membership in the congregation and serve as officers and as members of boards and committees as long as these positions are not directly involved in the specific functions of the pastoral office (preaching, public administration of the Sacraments, church discipline) and as long as this service does not violate the order of creation (usurping authority over men)"; and be it further

Resolved, That we commend and encourage the continued service of women to our Lord and His church, including service on the boards, committees, and commissions of the Synod, districts, and congregations of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod in accordance with His will as set forth in the Holy Scriptures; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod commend to its congregations for continued study and discussion the CTCR document "Women in the Church," as well as the forthcoming report of the President's Commission on Women; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Synod respect those congregations that have determined that woman suffrage is not expedient in their situation as well as those for whom woman suffrage is expedient, so that our walk together may continue in harmony and that we "maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). (Proceedings, 1986, p. 144).

At the last convention in 1989 there were no big changes or decisions. Most of things that were brought up had to do with clarifying their position. The previous resolutions did not always make things clear while some congregations did not follow them, but did their own thing. To help understand some of the confusion here is a sampling of some of the resolutions that are found in the Convention Workbook. On those wanting

further change we read 3-89A concerning Holy Communion.

Whereas, The precious body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was first carried by a woman; and

Whereas, Our Lord Jesus Christ by word and example fully included women in His ministry; and

Whereas, Jesus first entrusted the Good News of the resurrection to women; and

Whereas, The apostolic church extensively involved women in service roles; and

Whereas, Both men and women were included among the believers who broke bread in the fellowship or agape meals of the New Testament church; and

Whereas, The means of grace are made efficacious only by the work of the Holy Spirit, and those who distribute the Sacrament do not limit its efficaciousness; and

Whereas, Assisting with the distribution of the elements at our Lord's Supper does not necessarily constitute a distinctive function of the pastoral office; and

Whereas, Prohibiting female distribution assistants might imply an improper and un-Lutheran understanding of pastoral authority as it relates to the one who assists in the distribution of the elements; and

Whereas, The matter of female distribution assistants is not a doctrinal matter; and

Whereas, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has no official position on who may help distribute the Sacrament; and

Whereas, Disagreement on the issue of female distribution assistants need not be divisive of fellowship with our brothers and sister; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Commission on Theology and Church Relations be encouraged to remove its "strong recommendation" against the assistance of women in distributing the elements at Holy Communion; and be it further

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod affirm the role of distribution assistants as an appropriate avenue of service for both laymen and by women which may be decided upon at the congregational level. (Workbook, 1989, p. 195).

Concerning worship is 3-91.

Whereas, The Gospel images and expectations of women--particularly those associated with the incarnation, the resurrection, and the ministry of Jesus--present strong and persistent recognition of the active and vital roles of service that women can offer to our Lord and to others; and

Whereas, The use of lay assisting ministers, both

female and male is permitted within the rubrics of Lutheran Worship; and

Whereas, The reading of the lessons, except the Gospel, and the leading of the prayers of the people are appropriate for lay assisting ministers, both female and male; and

Whereas, It is the responsibility of all Christian men and women to pray, praise, and proclaim the Word of God; and

Whereas, The denial of women's participation in responsible worship leadership role impoverishes the church as a whole; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod affirm worship practices and policies within congregations that recognize and reflect the value of the diverse gifts that both women and men contribute to worship leadership. (Workbook, 1989, pp. 195-196).

And concerning congregational offices we find 3-95.

Whereas, The opportunities for service by women in the church have increased significantly within our Synod and its member congregations in recent years; and

Whereas, Many congregations are experiencing the joys and blessings of service provided by women in all elective congregational offices; and

Whereas, It is stated in Rom. 12:4-6, "For just as in a single human body there are many limbs and organs, all with different functions, so all of us, united with Christ, form one body, serving individually as limbs and organs to one another. The gifts we possess differ as they are allotted to us by God's grace, and must be exercised accordingly" (NEB); and

Whereas, The official synodical position has nevertheless continued to limit the services women may provide, thereby forfeiting some of the gifts of leadership and service; therefore be it

Resolved, that women's eligibility for service in all offices of the congregation be recognized by the Synod; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be encouraged to revise their constitutions to provide this opportunity for additional service by women. (Workbook, 1989, pp. 196-197).

On the other side there are those who want to reverse what the synod has already done. Concerning women's suffrage there is 3-81.

Whereas, Holy Scripture unequivocally declares that women are to be silent in the church, are not allowed to speak, should learn in silence, and are not to have authority over a man (1 Cor. 14:33-38; 1 Tim. 2:11-14); and

Whereas, The act of voting in a congregational assembly charged with the governance of the church does constitute an exercise of authority; and

Whereas, Scripture indicates that men only were involved in that use of authority in the formal decision-making process in the early church (Acts 1:16 and the Greek word, aner); and

Whereas, If the right to vote in congregational assemblies charged with the governance of the church is extended to women also, this puts women in the position of exercising authority over men, which is contrary to the clearly expressed will of God in His Holy Word; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod repent of the action taken at its 1969 Denver convention and return to its previous Scriptural position regarding women's suffrage. (Workbook, 1989, p. 193).

Concerning the office of elder we look at 3-86A.

Whereas, The existence of women elders within some congregations continues; and

Whereas, At least one synodical district in 1985, even went so far as to resolve that women shall be eligible to serve in any capacity save that of pastor; and

Whereas, Congregational boards of elders frequently serve to assist in carrying out ecclesiastical authority, a function from which Scripture precludes women; and

Whereas, The practice of permitting women to serve in such capacity is an offense to the unity of the church, in practice; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm again its position precluding women from serving in such capacity, first adopted by the 1969 Denver Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That congregations be urged to comply with this resolution, lest offensive division persist in the Synod. (Workbook, 1989, p. 194).

And finally the opposition to women's ordination there is 3-99.

Whereas, At past conventions of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod some delegates have voted in favor of ordaining women for the office of the public ministry; and

Whereas, The Scriptures clearly do not allow this view to even be considered as a possibility in the church; therefore be it

Resolved, That if the issue of ordaining women be brought to the floor of the convention and if delegates vote affirmatively, that these delegates be asked to meet with their respective District Presidents who will guide them to a correct understanding of this issue; and be it further

Resolved, That the District Presidents who are unwilling to clearly articulate the correct Scriptural teaching regarding the office of the public ministry and who may hold this office meet with the synodical President, who will work with them unless they persistly adhere to the false teaching, at which time the synodical President may need to request that the District President remove himself from office. (Workbook, 1989, p. 198).

As you can see there is disagreement on the LCMS' next move. As you can clearly see the LCMS is following the same pattern that the LCA did. The LCA first allowed women to vote and to hold office. Then they were allow to perform some of the duties of a pastor which before were forbidden. From that point because they were doing many of the pastor's duties, all that was left was to change the name of the woman from lay person to pastor. The LCMS is at that point. They have women suffrage and women holding office. They do have women performing some of the pastor's duties in some churches like being lectors, distributing communion, even to giving a sermon. Although there is opposition to these practices with time the opposition will diminish. Then there will be nothing to stop those who are in favor of women's ordination.

Conclusion

History often follows the same course time and time again. With time the events will be the same. The pattern can be

changed, but only with a great struggle and a fight. We pray that the Lord will help those who uphold his Holy Scriptures. We pray that he gives them perseverance in order to reverse the established pattern and return to the truth of God's Word.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
1000 Wisconsin Ave. Milwaukee, Wis.
43000