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Women and the Ministry: A Case for Theological Seriousness

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The theology of Christian ministry is an area in which we are too readily tempted to avoid discussion of first principles. It is too complicated,¹ too generally unsettling and too distracting when we are hard-pressed by practical urgencies. The result is that the Church's debating and decision-making, on internal and ecumenical matters alike, becomes sterile and polarized (I am thinking primarily of my own church, but I expect others in other contexts will share something of this perception). There are quite a few who would say that, at the moment, a theology of (ordained) ministry is neither possible nor desirable: we have inherited a jumble of rather irrational structures and practices which we are slowly - and *pragmatically* - learning to adjust and rationalize or even modernize; and in this sort of situation, we are inevitably going to treat all theological perspectives on ministry as provisional. The corollary, which some would draw out in so many words, is that, if we don't know theologically just what ministry is, there can be no good theological reasons for *not* doing anything that looks attractive in practical terms. Over against this stands what appears to be a complex, sophisticated and self-assured theology of the nature of priestly ministry, insisting upon the *responsibility* of theology to the data of revelation and on the need for what might be called a christological control upon the Church's practice. We have no business to regard the Church's theology of ministry as provisional: like all else in the Church, it is under the judgement of the Incarnate Word. If the ordained minister is not to be reduced to the level of a professional manager or administrator, or even *just* a delegate of the Christian congregation, we need a firmer grounding for our theological vision in our under-

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standing of the person of Christ. If Christ exercises no control on our theologizing, then we had better admit that we have abandoned any attempt at continuity with mainstream Christian tradition.²

As a matter of fact, I believe it is important to recognize that this polarity is real enough. If we had to choose between a Church tolerably confident of what it has to say and seeking only for effective means of saying it, and a Church constantly engaged in an internal dialogue and critique of itself, an exploration to discover what is central to its being, I should say that it is the latter which is the more authentic - a Church which understands that part of what it is *offering* to humanity is the possibility of living in such a mode. What the Church 'has to say' is never a simple verbal message: it is an invitation to entrust your life to a certain vision of the possibilities of humanity in union with God. And to entrust yourself in this way is to put your thinking and experience, your reactions and your initiatives daily into question, under the judgement of the central creative memory of Jesus Christ, present in his Spirit to his community. When objectors to the ordination of women to the priesthood insist that the Church must make sure that it has built into its aspects of its life and order which keep it attentive to the priority of revealed truth in Jesus, I agree entirely with the implied concern.

This is sometimes expressed in terms of the need for the Church to represent to itself Christ as Head or as Bridegroom - as the *source* of its intelligible life and unity, as partner in a relationship aiming at fertility. We should not think simply in terms of a charism of leadership or co-ordination,³ but of something which 'ministers' to the Church the remembrance that Christ is not a part of *its* life, that the Church exists because of an initiative outside itself which it never assimilates or masters.⁴ This is superbly summed up in some words of Hans Urs von Balthasar (I retain his masculine pronouns!):

This is the first quality that the priest I am looking for would have to have; for he would have to be a priest, or at any rate he would have to have been commissioned and authorized from above, by Christ, to confront me with God's incarnate word in such a

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manner that I can be sure that it is not I who am making use of it; I have to know that I have not from the very outset emasculated it by psychologizing, interpreting, demythologizing it away to such an extent that it can no longer create in me what it wills.⁵

I want to suggest in this essay that it is possible to see this kind of understanding of public ministry in the Church as actually pressing *towards* the ordination of women to the priesthood rather than otherwise; and that if those eager to see women exercising priestly ministry were concerned to develop a theology of ministry which took such considerations seriously, it just might be possible for the present deadlock in debate to be broken a little - if only because it would make it plain that the issue between proponents and opponents of the priesthood of women is not *necessarily* to do with 'fidelity to the doctrine of the incarnation'⁶ or to the sense of the Church's existence 'under judgement'.⁷

When we find in the gospels the commissions from Jesus to the apostles (Matthew 16.19; 18.18; John 20.22-3) empowering them to act as something like judges in the rabbinical courts, we are reminded that the early Christian communities made an allowance for the exercise of a disciplinary power recalling believers to faithfulness. This is obvious enough from the epistles of Paul and John and the writer to the Hebrews, but what is important in the gospel passages is the immediate association of this with the primary apostolic commission. The apostolate, the foundational ministry for the community, by which the resurrection witness continues to break through human frontiers to create a new and united humanity, is also a ministry of discernment and discrimination *within* the community. It is empowered to 'retain' sin as well as to remit it: to declare to the Church its unfaithfulness to its calling, its unconvertedness. If the apostolate is, under God, what draws together the community of faith and equips it to continue the mission and ministry of Christ in the world, it must also be what keeps alive the question of the community's integrity, by

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challenging its practice in the name of the gospel - to which, of course, the apostolate is no less answerable.

A Church concerned about its integrity will be concerned that there are those who minister to it in this way - by a witness of edification and criticism together, a ministry pressing the question, 'What sort of community is this meant to be?', at the same moment in which it summons the community to active loyalty to Christ in the world. This can (and should) be said without binding us to simplistic ideas of the absolute identity of character and office between the Twelve and the ordained ministry of later generations, let alone to the conviction that the 'historic threefold ministry' or anything like it was consciously envisaged and deliberately constituted by Jesus of Nazareth.⁸ What matters is rather that we understand that we have no knowledge of a Church without 'apostolic' ministering at its heart; how that apostolic service was first organized and transmitted, we can have little or no certainty. The 'institutionalizing' of this ministry by the end of the first century was, however, not just a betrayal of primitive liberty (though no such step ever occurs without some of the ambiguity of all political process⁹); as soon as the question is raised of *public* criteria for recognizing the continuing identity of a community (the question, 'How do we know we're still engaged in the same project/conversation/way of life?'), some considerations about institutionalized succession are bound to come in. Schillebeeckx puts it concisely:

A community without a good, matter-of-fact pastoral institutionalization of its ministry (a development of it in changed circumstances) runs the risk of losing for good the apostolicity and thus ultimately the Christian character of its origin, inspiration and orientation - and in the last resort its own identity. Ministry is connected with a special concern for the preservation of the Christian identity of the community in constantly changing circumstances.¹⁰

And Balthasar characteristically asks: 'How could a Christian who remains ever a sinner have the confidence to guarantee his or her complete ecclesiastical obedience on the basis of purely charismatic order . . .?'¹¹ - which is not to say that ordained

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ministry is a system for securing conformity (however easily it is distorted into that), but that our 'obedience' to Christ and his gospel, our response, our attention, our willingness to be shaped and changed by it and not to lose sight of it in the vicissitudes of history, is more than a question of private conviction. Living our Christian lives with a measure of self-trust and authority involves being part of a 'public' process, aware of itself and its history; the institutionalizing of ministry (like the formation of the canon of Scripture) has, from very early on, been a vital part of that historical self-awareness which (in an ideal world!) should serve or empower the authority of believing women and men, and deliver them from the tyrannies of individual feeling and unspoken, unchecked manipulation (by me or by others), and in this sense is clearly pastoral as well as prophetic.

If this is correct, the 'apostolic' ministry is that ministry whose special province is both to gather the believing community around the centre which it proclaims, the preaching of the resurrection, and *in* that gathering, to make sure that this community is critically aware of itself. The 'apostolate' is a ministry representing the fact that the Church is *called*, and is answerable for its fidelity to this call. In this sense, apostolic ministry may occur in a variety of contexts and by way of a variety of structures,¹² but Catholic Christianity (from which description I do not mean to exclude the churches of the Reformation) has held to the conviction that a faithful Church will recognize and secure certain structures defined very directly in terms of this ministry. The ordained - i.e. the 'ordered', recognized, legitimized - ministry is there, most simply, to minister to the Church's very identity.

In some traditions this ministry has been conceived primarily as a teaching office; but, to the extent that the Church ministers to its identity and its truthfulness in public worship and sacrament, and to the extent that regular or 'ordered' worship relates to the presence of the 'ordered' minister, the apostolic ministry is more than that of preacher or teacher.

Public worship is the concrete place in which the community, assembling out of its diaspora in the world, achieves and renews its

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kind of tribe, with office, wealth and privilege passing in hereditary succession; the result was, of course, a still more dramatically separate body, structurally independent of 'external' ties and loyalties. The Reformation sought to undo this by stressing an austere functionalism in the ministerial office (the 'teaching elder' model); and the result of this was the emergence of the minister-as-bourgeois-professional (on the Continent, anyway, and perhaps in Scotland; England was, as usual, much more confused, less interested in professionalism, more inclined to assimilate its clergy to the minor aristocracy and the squirearchy¹⁵).

The point is, that throughout the Church's history the 'otherness' and 'distance' of the person called by God through the Church to offer it words and signs for its identity, its truth to itself, is constantly assimilated to the otherness and distance of social or cultural differentiation. And if that is happening, the independence and sovereignty of God's call to the Church can come to be trapped and silenced by its association with purely contingent gulfs and differences. Worst of all, it can come to be seen as an instrument of active oppression, an ideological tool. In such circumstances, the 'apostolic' ministry has practically ceased to be apostolic in any sense: it fulfils its responsibility neither to the Church nor to the world.

We are familiar enough with this problem as it arises in connection with class divisions in Britain. The almost universal situation in which parishes in the inner city or the council estate are ministered to by clergy who are middle-class by background or education or both presents difficulties to which there are no simple and quick solutions. Fr Paul Bull of Mirfield lamented at the turn of the century that England possessed 'a class priesthood with a money qualification';¹⁶ and although this is no longer strictly true in immediate economic terms, it remains true at the cultural level. There is plenty of impressive solidarity in action, but, in the nature of the case, it rarely grows directly out of shared experience and common social interest. The priest is still someone who has *chosen* to identify; in other words, some of the viciously divisive effects of class/cultural difference can be overcome, but there is, nonetheless, no obvious way of disentangling the necessarily

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distinct perspective of someone given the responsibility of speaking to a community as a whole about its integrity and the perspective possessed by someone in virtue of a more 'advantaged' upbringing, which can communicate itself as élitist and judgemental. I do not suppose we shall ever get this entirely right, certainly not in our present class-ridden social and educational structures. We can do little more than to recognize the problem candidly and to encourage any steps, however small, which help to equip a ministry rooted in its native local and social concerns, yet resistant to parochialism and capable of prophecy without merely *cultural alienation*.¹⁷

If we understand what the judgement of the gospel means, we are bound to recognize that the relation of liberator to liberated, saviour to saved, can never be the same as the relation of one *human group* to another. When we delude ourselves that it is, we risk taking away the gospel's power to change the relations between human persons and groups. Gradually, we have become more sensitive to this (if not more successful in dealing with it) in the sphere of the more 'obvious' sorts of human division, racial, cultural and social; we have heard enough about the dangers of identifying religion with middle-class values in this country or identifying the Church with colonialism in the mission field. These are the clichés of every Christian liberal. What I want to insist on is that this sort of perspective needs a firm theological edge if it is to be more than liberal cliché; it needs, in fact, a constant attention to the ways in which faith both informs and is activated by our experience of an unhealed or unconverted humanity, inside and outside the Church - an attention which should issue in a theology which takes seriously the importance of a continuing critical engagement with the central challenge of *revelation*, the givenness of that memory of God's Word crucified and raised, which questions and interrupts our world. And such an attention involves hard thinking about ministry and apostolicity, and a readiness to carry the critique of existing ministry into less 'obvious' areas.

So we come at last to the question of women and the ordained

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ministry. The analogy is clear: the gospel is no more to be bound to sexual 'otherness' than it is to any other human system of division. Here, however, the objection is raised, 'Is sexual differentiation the same sort of thing as difference of race or class or whatever?' Over some sorts of distinction between persons we have a measure of control, but not over this. Therefore (the argument runs) it would be hasty to conclude that the heavily masculine imagery of Christian tradition and the maleness of Jesus are contingent or peripheral matters; if we are here dealing with a differentiation built into the created order, is it not likely that God would use this fact as an intrinsic part of what he wills to reveal to us? Some aspects of Jesus' historical identity are unquestionably matters of indifference; but here is a fundamental either/or (the presence or absence of the Y chromosome). Is God unconcerned with this aspect of Jesus' humanity?

A number of modern Christologists have held that there is a radical affinity between human nature and the Person of the Word. If this is so, may it not be that not only the humanity of Jesus but also the sexual mode under which he assumed it reflects a real aspect of the eternal Word? Or must we say, on the other hand, that the eternal Word transcends the particularity of his incarnate maleness *in precisely the same way* as he transcends the particularity of his incarnate first-century Palestinian Jewishness?¹⁸

Remarks like this are almost always followed by reassurances that this has nothing to do with questions of power or superiority. We are speaking *only* of symbolic functions.¹⁹ Now I don't believe these reassurances are dishonest, or even that the whole argument is contemptible rationalization; there are important worries being aired about the theological significance of the *particular*, the concrete historicity of God's speech with us in Jesus.²⁰ But there is a good deal more to be said, and I shall try to say at least some of it in the last few pages of this essay.

1. The male-female polarity is genetically determined.²¹ So are other human differences at the biological level. It is a mistake to assume instantly that this difference is (because of its undeniably important nature, practically and symbolically) of

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another order entirely. In other words, it is one of a number of biological 'givens'; and, as with others, its role in determining behaviour or personality structure is unclear. We should tread cautiously here, as the debates surrounding this sort of question are vastly wide-ranging. But it should be enough to note that it is possible to say that Jesus' *biological* maleness is not theologically all-important without suggesting either that the particularity of his humanity is of no interest (and there are, after all, other genetic facts about him that we pay no attention to) or that sexual differentiation is of no anthropological concern or is a matter of culture and socialization or is wholly under our control, etc.

2. In the world as it actually is, we do not find biological male-female polarity existing in a social vacuum. Women and men do not have only 'biological' relations, so to speak. Their difference is deeply bound up in speech and culture, it has been mythologized and institutionalized, it expresses itself in terms of power, dependence and independence, *economics*.²² It is essential to realize this: talk of symbolic function based on 'natural distinction', which ignores the *facts* of human social relations, is dangerously naive. It is a matter of fact that nearly all arguments in theology appealing to the order of nature on this matter have been constructed in the context of male domination, i.e. they are not ideologically innocent. The same is almost bound to be true of arguments based on symbolism in the societies we know. 'Natural differences can only come to mean social inequality in an unequal society',²³ 'symbolic' differences run the same risk.

This may sound harsh. But I do not mean to suggest that symbols are either unimportant or oppressive. On the contrary, it is because they *are* so important and have such creative potential that we need to see as clearly as we can what they mean and how they work in the actual historical circumstances we find ourselves in. It is always tempting to think that we who 'operate' the symbols control their meaning. But we have learned, in the Church, how little this is true: generations of instruction on infant baptism have not broken through a set of often extraordinarily non-Christian ('para-Christian?') ideas

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and expectations in the minds of most people. And a decision to cut this Gordian knot by operating a highly selective and rigorist policy is also to make a symbolic statement we don't control - often a statement heard and experienced as élitist and exclusive, particularly by those who are already feeling marginal, powerless, shut out.

If we use symbols, we must learn to cope with their uncomfortable uncontrollability and to live with the consequences of using them. If we want to argue the 'women's issue' in symbolic terms, we need to see what we are doing in the society we are in. Intentions apart, what if the real effect of such a symbolic argument is to reinforce patterns of inequality and/or to produce deep hurt and alienation? What if this makes it harder for women (real and particular women) to belong in the Church, to see it as a community of liberty or reconciliation? What if it is heard simply to echo what is heard in the world, a systematic devaluing of human female experience? *Of course* we are talking about individual or 'subjective' perceptions and responses here; but these are part of the Church's pastoral agenda. There is at least a strong case for saying that this kind of language and symbolism, stressing the centrality of Christ's masculinity, makes it impossible for many people not otherwise spectacularly silly or wicked to hear the Word of God, because it ignores their real and present human situation. If God designed it so that the maleness of Jesus expressed a basic symbolic structure, and straightforwardly revealed some vital fact about the divine, he did so in the context of a heavily patriarchal society: is it not inevitable that, if we think in these terms, we shall present a God who endorses that kind of society? - unless we ascribe to God an unconcern with the practical outworking of symbolism comparable to that of some of his theological witnesses.

3. The idea that the relation of men to the humanity of Jesus is different from that of women is a corollary of the 'symbolic' argument, and a rather odd and unorthodox one. The point has been made²⁴ that the patristic conviction of the Word's assumption of humanity-as-such in the incarnation leaves little room for such a differentiation. Even the most rampantly

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misogynistic of the Fathers do not suggest outright that women are 'in Christ' otherwise than men. The notion of celibate women acquiring honorary maleness in their virtue is found here and there, but not given a christological grounding.²⁵

What is more, if we go back to my earlier point, the necessity of not identifying the liberator-liberated relation with the relation between any two human groups, we have an enormous difficulty in the suggestion that men and women relate differently to the person of the liberator. How could this ever be expressed in terms that did not imply that femaleness is a bondage from which the male (unilaterally and not mutually) liberates?

4. Part of the problem here stems from the fact that the relation of the man Jesus to the Word and the Father is seen as a kind of simple 'linear' manifestation. Some feminist theologians have explored the idea that the maleness of Jesus might matter in another way. Perhaps, it is suggested, only a male representative of God could in his person and his fate so *challenge* the assumption of a kinship between the masculine power structures of the world and the power of God to liberate women and men alike from the tyranny of patriarchal authority. Rosemary Ruether speaks of a 'kenosis of patriarchy',²⁶ Angela West describes the story of Jesus as a memory which 'presents God as the ultimate contradiction to the worship of male power, and mocks all gods and goddesses, who are nothing more than this'.²⁷

If this is a viable theological idea, its force is that Jesus' maleness is important because, as a *crucified* or *marginal* or *powerless* maleness, it represents as dramatically as possible the 'otherness' and the judgement of God's Word upon the world's patterns of dominance. It does not manifest but subverts the 'maleness' of God. Its symbolic importance is not in being a timeless image but in its pertinence to specific social forms. Thus it does not imply different levels or kinds of ontological relationship between women, men, and the Word Incarnate; it makes the same point as is made by saying that, while God in Christ identifies with all human beings, this identification becomes a critical and challenging matter when

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grasped in relation to the poor and the rejected. It is not that the poor are ontologically more God-like, but that their cause is made to be God's own. To see God's relation to or solidarity with the poor is to see the tragedy and inhumanity of poverty. If God, the God of liberty and fulfilment, is 'with' the poor, it can only be as the impetus to a protesting hope, because of the experienced contradiction between liberty-and-fulfilment and the actual condition of poverty. So with the meaning of Jesus' maleness; God is not shown more womanlike than manlike by the humiliation and death of Jesus (which would then turn into a kind of revenge fantasy), man-in-the-abstract is not judged more severely than woman-in-the-abstract. But man-as-wielder-of-power is judged by the God whose embodiment among us refuses that sort of authority, and in some sense may be said to have spoken for the cause of women, as he speaks for all victims (but also in his actual practice as remembered by the Church).

This is a scheme which needs more development and clarification, certainly; but it is a highly significant response to the accusation that the priestly ordination of women demands a theology which neglects the humanity of Jesus. Here the contours of Jesus' historical identity (including his maleness) are central, but not in a way which could provide justification for a continuation of male-centred symbolism of the undialectical, iconic kind defended by the opponents of women's ordination. The *last* thing you can do with the maleness of Jesus on this account is to abstract to its biological essence and turn it into a theoretical basis for uncontroverted male power-and-symbol structures.

5. A final, related point: I have argued that ordained ministry is there to address the unfulfilment and unconvertedness of the Church, to speak to the Church in the name of the Kingdom. It needs therefore to speak to the Church on behalf of the poor and excluded - and specifically of those whom the Church itself *causes* to be 'poor and excluded', to feel devalued, rejected or dehumanized. Can this be done with any credibility if the ordained ministry expresses no solidarity with such people? And these are questions not only about women, or homo-

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sexuals, or divorcees, but about all whose history is marked down by the Church as failure, whose experience is sealed off from the exercise of 'professional pastoring'. This, if anything, is the way to make pastoral ministry dramatically unprophetic.

The preceding section is, in a way, a long parenthesis. If the point is accepted that a ministry which ministers the transcendent and paradoxical power of the Word of God in Jesus must never be identified structurally with purely worldly forms of differentiation, it should be obvious that restricted access to this ministry is a contradiction, which risks turning God into a thing in the world, transcendence into contingent strangeness. (It's like the assumption that worship which conveys 'the transcendent' *must* be dominated by what is contingently, culturally, strange; I entirely accept the role of the 'strange' in good and imaginative worship, but should hesitate to identify the presence of any one form of it with a direction towards the transcendent.) However, a good many people have an anxiety - not necessarily stupid or frivolous - that the assimilation of sexual differentiation to other kinds of distinction opens the door to some sort of disregard for God's purposes as expressed in history and the flesh. This anxiety needs hearing and answering, and I have tried to contribute something towards an answer. Those who have linked this anxiety with theories about the symbolic importance of Jesus' maleness have, on the whole, made the link in a fairly tentative and exploratory way, and this encourages me to think that a reply is worthwhile: there *might* be a conversation to continue. Perhaps I am too sanguine. All the same, if a book or an essay on this topic is worth writing at all, it must be in the hope that we have not yet completely stopped listening to each other in the Church.

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Notes

1. The literature on the theology of ministry is notoriously vast. T.F. O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry* (New York, Paulist Press, 1983), lists some surveys on p. 211.
2. This sort of argument is stated in a number of the contributions to P. Moore (ed.), *Man, Woman and Priesthood*, SPCK, 1978. See especially the papers by E.L. Mascall, Kallistos Ware, and Gilbert Russell and Margaret Dewey.
3. O'Meara (op. cit., ch. 6) occasionally comes near to saying this; and cf. E. Schillebeeckx, *Ministry: A Case for Change* (SCM, 1981), pp. 134-9. But both writers make it very clear that they are not simply using pragmatic or 'worldly' notions of leadership. For some critical remarks on 'leadership' from a feminist viewpoint, see Sara Maitland, *A Map of the New Country* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 121.
4. Cf. my *Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel* (Darton Longman and Todd, 1982), ch. 4, for further reflections on this.
5. H.U. von Balthasar, *Elucidations* (SPCK, 1975), p. 107 (from an essay on 'The priest I want').
6. Many critics of feminist theology seem to think that the work of a radical 'post-Christian' separatist like Mary Daly is typical or normative or the inevitable implication of a commitment to the ordination of women. Even a cursory acquaintance with what is actually being said and written by feminist theologians should show how mistaken this assumption is.
7. I should perhaps add that, as I want to address the theological points at issue, I have said nothing about the so-called 'practical' or 'ecumenical' arguments. I believe that the onus of proof is on those who claim that such considerations ought to outweigh *positive* theological reasons for change.
8. On the complex points at issue here, E. Schweizer, *Church Order in the New Testament* (SCM, 1961), remains one of the best guides available. Part 1, A, section 2 deals with Jesus' own aims.
9. Graham Shaw, *The Cost of Authority* (SCM, 1982), is sobering reading (even if grotesquely overstated at times) on the manipulative power-politics sometimes discernible behind NT texts.
10. Schillebeeckx, op. cit., p. 24.
11. From an essay in *Pneuma and Institution*, Einsiedeln, 1974; quoted from *The von Balthasar Reader*, ed. M. Kehl and W. Löser (T. & T. Clark, 1983), p. 272.
12. A point which Barth used as part of his polemical insistence on the dangers of established clerical 'order' of any kind. See his discussion in *Church Dogmatics* IV.2, T. & T. Clark.

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13. Gerhard Bauer, 'Karl Barths Vorstellungen von der Ordnung der Gemeinde und die kirchlichen Ordnungen der EKID', in *Theologie zwischen Gestern und Morgen: Interpretationen und Anfragen zum Werk Karl Barths*, ed. W. Dantine and K. Lüthi (Munich, Kaiser Verlag, 1968), p. 141. The quotation in the text is from Schweizer, op. cit., Part 2, section 27.
14. However, I am hesitant about endorsing the distinction between 'pastoral' and 'prophetic' ministry uncritically. 'Pastoral' means more than 'consolatory', 'prophetic' more than 'unsettling'.
15. In chapter 83 of Trollope's *Last Chronicle of Barset*, Mr Crawley reports Archdeacon Grantly's acknowledgement of, not a shared priestly ministry, but a common social status. "'We stand'", said he, "on the only perfect level on which such men can meet each other. We are both gentlemen."
16. G.L. Prestige, *The Life of Charles Gore* (Heinemann, 1935), p. 218.
17. The experience of the emergence of something like a genuinely locally-rooted priestly ministry in the (Anglican) Episcopal Area of Stepney in the 1970s is one such small but encouraging sign.
18. E.L. Mascall, *Whatever Happened to the Human Mind?* (SPCK, 1980), p. 146.
19. Fr Mascall refers to the speculative and brilliantly ingenious essay of Père Louis Bouyer, *Mystère et ministères de la femme* (Paris, Aubier, 1976), for further suggestions about symbolism; though even he admits that P. Bouyer is rather hermetic at times.
20. For what it's worth, I should perhaps say that these were the considerations which for several years prevented me from supporting the ordination of women to the priesthood. I have not changed my mind about their importance but about their implications.
21. In one obvious sense (the presence or absence of the Y chromosome). But the relation between genetic, gonadal and genital sexual differentiation is far from simple: 'biology' means more than genetics. For a clear and useful survey of the question, see *Women and Sex Roles: A Social Psychological Perspective*, by Irene H. Frieze, Jacquelynne E. Parsons, Paula B. Johnson, Diane N. Ruble and Gail L. Zellman (New York, Norton, 1978), pp. 83-94.
22. Various studies in Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz, Roslyn McCullagh (eds.), *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective*, CSE Books, 1981.
23. *ibid.*, p. 39, from an essay by Verena Stolcke on 'Women's Labours: the Naturalization of Social Inequality and Women's Subordination'.
24. Authoritatively by Richard Norris, see essay no. 5.

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25. On patristic attitudes, see Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church', in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. R.R. Ruether, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1974.
26. *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston, Beacon Press/London, SCM Press, 1983), pp. 134-8.
27. 'A Faith for Feminists', in *Walking on the Water: Women Talk About Spirituality*, ed. Jo Garcia and Sara Maitland (Virago, 1983), p. 88.