

EXPLORATIONS AND RESPONSES

SCRIPTURAL/THEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT AGAINST WOMEN'S ORDINATION (SIMPLY STATED) AND RESPONSES

Although this essay focuses mainly on the issue of women's ordination in the Roman Catholic Church, it raises questions of ecumenical concerns. A 1977 monograph (*Christ and His Bride*)¹ by John Saward, an Anglican, clearly illustrates the ecumenical ramifications of the issue. He wrote:

In the last two years [1975-1977], two provinces of the Anglican Communion have ordained women — the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican Church in Canada. The response of Catholic Christendom has been immediate and uncompromising. Two letters from Pope Paul to Dr Coggan [the Archbishop of Canterbury] have reaffirmed the Church's reasons for not ordaining women and described the Anglican ordinations as 'an element of grave difficulty' in Anglican-Roman Catholic dialogue, a grave 'new obstacle and threat' on the path to Christian reconciliation.² Similar sentiments were expressed by the Orthodox members of the Anglican-Orthodox Joint Doctrinal Discussion in Moscow in July 1976.³

Saward then referred specifically to the 1976 Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood" (*Inter insigniores*),⁴ which he called "the firmest

¹ John Saward, *Christ and His Bride* (London: Church Literature Association, 1977).

² See *The Replies of the Leaders of Certain Churches to Letters from the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood with Extracts from the Archbishop's Letter* (London: Church Literature Association, 1976), pp. 1-2, 3-4. (In Saward, *Christ and His Bride*, the pages to the *Replies* document read "2,3" but should read "1-2, 3-4.")

³ *Replies*, p. 6

⁴ "*Inter insigniores*" (October 15, 1976), in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 69

and clearest theological statement [against women's ordination]" and which he characterized as "a major instance of the Catholic consensus, the *sobornost*, of the [Church in the] West and East." Saward wrote:

The firmest and clearest theological statement came in October 1976 from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, which, in a Declaration and Official Commentary, rehearsed the fundamental theological objections to women's ordination. Apart from its relevance to the present debate, the document *Inter insigniores* is a major instance of the Catholic consensus, the *sobornost* of the West and East, for it explicitly refers to the 'remarkable unanimity' of the Churches of the East on this question of women's ordination; while the Ecumenical Patriarch in his declaration to Dr Coggan at Constantinople in April 1977,⁵ expressed his 'joy' at the firm witness of the Roman Catholic Church against the possibility of women's ordination, which he described as 'anti-apostolic.'⁶

Traditionally, in the Lutheran, Anglican, and Orthodox churches, those who support exclusive male ordination employ at least two arguments used by the Roman Church: the argument relating to the representative function of the ordained minister as the bridegroom of the church, the bride, and the argument relating to the tradition of the apostolic charge as exclusively male.⁷ Regarding the Lutheran Church

(February 28, 1977): 98-116. E.T.: "Vatican Declaration: Women in the Ministerial Priesthood," *Origins* 6 (February 3, 1977): 517, 519-524. A text of the Declaration is also found in Leonard Swidler and Arlene Swidler, eds., *Women Pr'ests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration* (New York and Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 37-47. In what follows, references to the *Declaration* will be made to the *Origins* version.

⁵ See Saward, *Christ and His Bride*, p. 2. On p. 15, n. 6, Saward gave as his source a pamphlet, *Pilgrim of Unity* (London, 1977), n.p., on Archbishop Coggan's journey to Rome, Constantinople, and Geneva.

⁶ Saward, *Christ and his Bride*, pp. 1-2. For a recent presentation of the case against women's ordination in the Anglican Church, see Michael Harper, *Equal and Different: Male and Female in Church and Family* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994).

⁷ The threat to unity (as seen above) is also an argument used by these churches in favor of exclusive male ordination. Regarding the argument based on the apostolic charge, see an excellent critique in Hans von Campenhausen,

of Sweden, these arguments have been discussed by Brita Stendahl in her book, *The Force of Tradition*.⁸ Regarding the Orthodox and Anglican churches, the arguments were stated clearly in a consultation recommended by the 1963 Montreal Fourth World Conference on Faith and Order.⁹ The Orthodox¹⁰ emphasize the representative function, whereas the Anglicans appeal to the apostolic charge.¹¹ In an appendix

Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries, tr. J. A. Baker (London: Adam and Charles Black; Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969 [orig.: *Kirchliches Amt und geistliche Vollmacht* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1953)]), especially "The Apostles," pp. 12-29; and "Apostolic Authority," pp. 30-54. See also Edward Schillebeeckx, *Ministry* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1981), especially "The Story of New Testament Communities," pp. 5-37; Karl Rahner, *Concern for the Church* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 35-47; and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Twelve," in Swidler and Swidler, *Women Priests*, pp. 114-122.

⁸ Brita Stendahl, *The Force of Tradition: A Case Study of Women Priests in Sweden* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), especially "Arguments and Decisions," pp. 65-79. Regarding the Lutheran Church, see David P. Scaer, "Against the Ordination of Women," *Lutheran Forum* 25 (February, 1991): 14.

⁹ *Concerning the Ordination of Women* (Geneva: World Council of Churches [Faith and Order, and the Department of Men and Women in the Church, Family, and Society], 1964), p. 63; see Constance F. Parvey, "Stir in the Ecumenical Movement: The Ordination of Women," App. 2 in Stendahl, *Force of Tradition*, pp. 146-147.

¹⁰ For an Orthodox perspective, see, e.g., Thomas Hopko, ed., *Women and the Priesthood* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1983). See also John Meyendorff, "The Orthodox Churches," in Michael P. Hamilton and Nancy S. Montgomery, eds., *The Ordination of Women, Pro and Con* (New York: Morehouse-Barlow Co., [1975]), pp. 128-134. In addition, see Roman Cholij, "Considerations from the Eastern Church on Women and the Priesthood," in James Tolhurst, ed., *Man, Woman, and Priesthood* (Leominster, Herts., U.K.: Gracewing Fowler Wright Books; Bloomington, IN: Fowler Wright Books, Meyer Stone, Inc., 1989), pp. 86-120; and Gennadios Limouris, ed., *The Place of Women in the Orthodox Church and the Question of the Ordination of Women* (Katerini, Greece: Tertios Publications, 1992). Finally, see a plea for reconsidering women's ordination in Orthodoxy: Elizabeth Behr-Sigel, *The Ministry of Women in the Church*, tr. Steven Bigham (Redondo Beach, CA: Arkwood Publications, 1991 [orig.: *Le ministère de la femme dans l'église* (Paris: Cerf, 1987)]).

¹¹ *Concerning the Ordination of Women*, pp. 68-69 (in Parvey, "Stir in the Ecumenical Movement: The Ordination of Women," p. 147. See also John Saward, *The Case against the Ordination of Women* (London: Church Literature Association, and the Church Union, 1975); Hamilton and Montgomery, *Ordination of Women, Pro and Con*; Tolhurst, *Man, Woman, and Priesthood*; *The Ministry of Women in the Christian Church*,

to Stendahl's book, Constance F. Parvey presented a historical survey of the emergence of the women's ordination movement in the midst of ecclesiastical and patriarchal opposition, be it Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, or Roman Catholic.¹²

Regarding the traditional Roman Catholic view against women's ordination, no one, to date,¹³ has expressed that view more succinctly and clearly than (Yves Congar, O.P.), the eminent French ecclesiologist.¹⁴ During May, 1975, I

Tract #5, (a statement produced by the Orange County, CA, chapter and adopted by the legislative body of the Episcopal Synod of America, May 1, 1993); and "Crisis over Apostolic Ministry," in *The Episcopal Church in Crisis*, 3rd ed. (Fort Worth, TX: The Episcopal Synod of America, note d.), pp. 11-23.

¹² Parvey, "Stir in the Ecumenical Movement: The Ordination of Women," pp. 139-174.

¹³ Including Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Pope John Paul II. (Ed. This was my judgment in 1995. My judgment has not changed in spite of the publications of: (1) the Apostolic Letter "Ordinatio Sacerdotalis" of John Paul II to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone," May 22, 1994, [Copyright © *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*]; and (2) the Prefect of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith*, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's *Responsum ad Dubium Concerning the Teaching Contained in Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, October 28, 1995; *Dubium*: Whether the teaching that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women, which is presented in the Apostolic Letter [Ordinatio Sacerdotalis](#) to be held definitively, is to be understood as belonging to the deposit of faith; *Responsum*: In the affirmative [from www.wf-f.org].)

¹⁴ On October 30, 1994, Pope John Paul II elevated Fr. Yves Congar to the rank of cardinal. At the age of ninety and suffering from multiple sclerosis for more than twenty years, Congar now resides as a patient at Les Invalides in Paris. Hence, he was unable to go to Rome to receive the cardinalate insignias from the pope. On December 11, 1994, I received a message through the Internet from the Rev. Dr. Dirk Van Damme, O.P. (University of Fribourg), a transcription of the report from that day's *Le Monde* (my translation):

During a ceremony at the Church of Saint-Louis des Invalides, Thursday, December 8 [1994] in Paris, Father Yves Congar, 90, received from the hands of the Dutch Cardinal Willebrands, the pope's special envoy, the insignias of the rank of cardinal. Also present at this ceremony were: Cardinal Lustiger, Archbishop of Paris; Bishop Dubost, Chaplain to the Armed Forces; Pastor Stewart, President of the Protestant Federation of France; Bishop Jérémie of the Orthodox Inter-Episcopal Committee; and

interviewed Congar (on tape) on the issue of women's ordination at the Couvent St-Jacques in Paris. Among several questions, I asked about his view on the ordination of women. He began by affirming: "I am against a women presbyterate: *solus vir baptizatus* [a baptized male only]." He then continued: "At any rate, I absolutely do not know whether [the *solus vir baptizatus*] is of divine right or not." He further explained: "There is but the fact: [namely] Jesus did not make women apostles. The apostles did not make women apostles. In the Bible," Congar stated, "authority is always masculine."

I pressed Congar to explain: "There is no other explanation but the fact," he said. "However," he added, "if I want to give a reason, and if I want to reason the fact, personally I do it in the following line [of thought]. In

numerous Dominicans.

It is a well-known fact that the eleventh-century papal creation of the college of cardinals has all but destroyed episcopal collegiality in the Roman Church. Congar himself attested to this fact in his *Ministères et communion ecclésiale* (Paris: Cerf, 1971), pp. 109-117. Nevertheless, if one takes into account the persecution Congar suffered under Pius XII (see Jean-Pierre Jossua, *Le Pere Congar: La théologie au service du Peuple de Dieu* [Paris: Cerf, 1967], pp. 33-35), it is indeed 'poetic justice' that it should be John Paul II who elevated Congar to the cardinalate. According to Van Damme (*via* Internet, November 1, 1994), Congar had refused from Paul VI the honor of being named a cardinal. (Ed. The latter is not substantiated.) About Congar's persecution on the part of the "Church that he loves," see Yves Congar, *This Church That I Love* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1969); see also Thomas O'Meara, "'Raid on the Dominicans': The Repression of 1954," *America* 170 (February 5, 1994): 8-16. Regarding Congar's view on women's ordination, see Yves Congar, "Bulletin de Théologie: Les ministères—Les femmes et les Ministères Ordonnés," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques* 58 (October, 1974): pp. 638-642; and idem, "Simples Réflexions," *Vie Consacrée*, vol. 44 (1972), pp. 310-314. (These last two references I found in *Pro and Con on Ordination of Women: Report and Papers from the Anglican-Roman Catholic Consultation: 1975*, which, without any further specific reference, is to be found in the Harvard Divinity School Library, Cambridge, MA [BV 676.A58]).

Scripture, the relationship between God and God's people —between Christ and the church — is described as a spousal relationship. That does not sexualize God or Christ. Christ is not the spouse of the church because he has a penis, because he is male.¹⁵ So, since in the sacrament of the Alliance (the Eucharist), the priest represents Christ—he also has a sacramental value of representation before the community, as Christ has with the church—it seems to me," Congar concluded, "that if it were a woman [who celebrated the Eucharist] there would be something somewhat disturbing [*il y aurait quelque chose d'un peu troublé*]." ¹⁶ Nonetheless, Congar confessed to me

¹⁵ This is a point of disagreement between Congar and the 1976 Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood" (*Inter insigniores*). The *Declaration* claims implicitly that Christ is spouse of the church because he is male. It explains that, in the Eucharist, the priest does not *act in persona propria* (in his own name), but *in persona Christi* ("taking the role of Christ, to the point of being his very image [Christ's], when he [the priest] pronounces the words of consecration"). Since factually, the Incarnation of the Word took place according to the male sex—for the consecration "to happen"—the ordained priest must bear a "natural [physical] resemblance" with Christ and, therefore, must be male (*see Origins*, pp. 522-523, under heading "5. The Ministerial Priesthood in the Light of the Mystery of Christ"). John Paul II's May 30, 1994, apostolic letter, "*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*" —which bans women's ordination — does not refer to the "natural resemblance" with Christ. He referred to the "12 men [apostles]" as "specifically and intimately associated with the mission of the Incarnate Word himself" and to those they chose [only men] as carrying on "the apostles' mission of representing Christ the Lord and Redeemer" (*National Catholic Reporter* 30 [June 17, 1994]: 7, #2).

¹⁶ Might this "something somewhat disturbing" be (for Congar) the female/female (rather than the male/female correspondence) that would "disturb" the spousal analogy especially at Mass (the sacrament of the Alliance) were a woman priest to preside? The analogy then would be that of Christ/wife (rather than Christ/husband) and church/wife. In other words, there would exist "on each side" of the altar a female signification. During the Eucharist (the church's celebration of its covenant with Christ) the church/wife would be consummating her relationship with the Christ/ wife—a ritual that would constitute (at least symbolically) a lesbian relationship—a prospect all the more "disturbing" for opponents of women's ordination since the Declaration goes beyond the realm of the symbolic. In fact, it verges on declaring the relationship between the male Christ and the male priest (during the sacrament of the Alliance) to

categorically that if one day the Catholic Church were to change its mind and approve of women's ordination, he would accept the Church's decision.

Congar's arguments against women's ordination—arguments expressed succinctly and clearly—are precisely those proposed by the 1976 Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's "Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood" (to which John Paul II referred in his May 30, 1994, apostolic letter *Ordinatio sacerdotalis*).¹⁷ The Declaration affirms the *solus vir baptizatus* as the nonnegotiable condition for admission to ordination. To support its thesis, the Declaration lists the following reasons (which are Congar's reasons): the Church's constant tradition, the attitude of Christ, the practice of the apostles, the Christ/husband and church/wife faith-analogy, the mystery of the church, and—the decisive argument according to the Roman Church—the authority of the Church's magisterium. The Declaration states: "In the final analysis it is *the church*, through the voice of her magisterium, that, in these various domains [such as the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood] decides what can change and what must

be of a physical nature—a potential additional moral "problem" for the Roman Congregation! I personally consider the spousal analogy—as used in the Declaration—to be flawed. The reason is that the analogy is internally inconsistent. On the one hand, the Declaration insists that the priest must have a "natural resemblance" with Christ (i.e., that the priest must be male)—and, therefore, that Christ as husband relates to the church in a physical and univocal sense, not in a symbolic and analogical way; on the other hand, the Declaration considers the church as Christ's wife in a symbolic and analogical sense. For, as wife, the church includes both men and women. In other words, in the Declaration, the analogy of attribution exists only on "one side of the altar," viz., the laity's side. On "the other side" univocity perdures, not analogy. Ironically, consistent Vatican logic—were the analogy of attribution univocal on both "sides of the altar" —would erect an exclusive female "laity" (as it erects an exclusive male "ordained" priesthood) with no place within the church for "nonordained" males!

¹⁷ *"Ordinatio Sacerdotalis,"* especially ##1 and 2.

remain immutable."¹⁸

— I must note, however, that even some bishops are overtly taking a second look at the Church magisterium that excludes women from the priesthood. For example, Bishop Francis Murphy wrote recently:

For fifteen years I have experienced and felt the profound pain of women over their exclusion from the sacrament of Holy Orders.... Today, I can say that I am personally in favor of the ordination of women into a renewed priestly ministry. I believe this issue to be as important as the issue Paul raised with Peter; namely, the admission of Gentiles into Christianity. Women's calls, as well as men's, should be tested. Justice demands it. The pastoral needs of the church require it.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Origins*, p. 522, #4 (my emphasis). In the 1976 *Declaration*, the text continues: "When [the Church] cannot accept certain changes, it is because she knows that she is bound by Christ's manner of acting." I interpret the 1976 *Declaration* against women's ordination as church law regarding which the Catholic Church "is bound by Christ's manner of acting." In "*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*," however, John Paul II clearly considered the ban on women's ordination to be of divine law: "I declare," he wrote, "that the church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women." According to John Paul II the object of his declaration is "a matter which pertains to the church's divine constitution" (#4). Is Pope John Paul contradicting Pope Paul? (Ratzinger's interpretation of *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* explicitly declares the latter as part of the *deposit of faith*, i.e. as an infallible statement. Ratzinger writes: "This teaching requires definitive assent, since, founded on the written Word of God, and from the beginning constantly preserved and applied in the Tradition of the Church, it has been set forth infallibly by the ordinary and universal Magisterium (cf. Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen gentium* 25, 2). Thus, in the present circumstances, the Roman Pontiff, exercising his proper office of confirming the brethren (cf. Lk 22:32), has handed on this same teaching by a formal declaration, explicitly stating what is to be held always, everywhere, and by all, as belonging to the deposit of the faith." (Ratzinger's *Dubium/Responsum*).

¹⁹ P. Francis Murphy, "Let's Start Over: A Bishop Appraises the Pastoral on Women," *Commonweal* 119 (September 25, 1992): 14. See also Michael H. Kenny, "Which Way the Pastoral?" *America* 167 (August 22, 1992): 76-77; Kenneth Untener, "Forum—The Ordination of Women: Can the Horizons Widen?" *Worship* 65 (January, 1991): 50-

Bishops Kenneth Untener and Michael Kenny have also expressed reservations about an all-male priesthood. For example, Untener in *Worship* presented a critique of the expression *in persona Christi* as it is used in many Church documents to describe the role of the priest in the Eucharist, with the added corollary (in the Declaration) that because Christ is male so must priests be. Untener believes that St. Jerome mistranslated 2 Cor. 2:10, the apparent source of *in persona Christi*. According to Untener, 2 Cor. 2:10 should be translated "in the presence of Christ" (Jerusalem Bible/Revised New American Bible) or "before Christ" (New American Bible), not "in the person of Christ." (In Greek, one reads: *en prosopo Christou*.) At any rate, Untener concludes his essay with his main point:

[T]he phrase "in persona Christi" [has] been used much more frequently in recent times. More significantly, there has been a major shift in the way it is interpreted. Thomas Aquinas interpreted it in terms of instrumental causality. A major shift came about when "in persona Christi" was used to describe the priest as taking the *role* of Christ, that is, not simply representing him²⁰ as an ambassador represents

59, and Kenneth Untener's article in *Season*, a quarterly publication of the Saginaw, Michigan, diocese (Fall, 1992), which was quoted in "Bishop Untener 3rd to Challenge Male Priesthood," *National Catholic Reporter* 28 (October 23, 1992): 3.

²⁰ Congar equally speaks of the priest in the Eucharist as "representing" Christ, which appears to translate *in persona Christi* with the expression as a representative of Christ. Congar adds that the priest "represents" also the community that participates in the Eucharist. In her *Ministry of Women in the Church*, Behr-Sigel offers the Orthodox position on this issue and concludes with her own questions about "maleness" and priesthood: "The ordained minister does not produce the Lord's real presence. He is rather ordained to this service, 'sent' in the succession of the first apostles and is only the witness of the presence. He pronounces the words of institution and is called upon to give himself totally to this action. He equally asks that the Holy Spirit be sent on the assembly and on the gifts offered. In the words of St. John Chrysostom, he 'loans his tongue and his hands' to the Lord but also to his Church which is called to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. If this is the essence of the Church's faith as witnessed to by the words of the liturgy, is not the maleness of the priest thereby relativized? Might we not also say that, assuming a unity of faith, the greater or lesser importance given to this masculinity corresponds to different and relative accentuations accorded to it by various cultures?" (p. 179).

someone . . . but "impersonating" Christ in somewhat the same way that an actor takes on a role "in the person of" someone else. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [in the Declaration] interprets it in the latter way when it says: "His [Christ's] role must be taken by a man." Based on the historical and liturgical meaning of that phrase,²¹ such an interpretation is open to much discussion.

Also referring to the connection made by the Declaration between *in persona Christi* and the maleness of priests (because Christ was male), Bishop Kenny remarked: "But here is where I lose it.... I can't make that leap because it seems to be making too much of the maleness of Christ." He added: "I am not denying Jesus' manhood. I simply question how significant His gender is to His role as Saviour/Priest."²²

In 451 C.E., the Council of Chalcedon answered Kenny's question. According to the Council, as far as salvation goes, Christ's humanity is not to be sexualized. The issue intended *directly* by Chalcedon was to insure that Jesus' human nature be confessed as genuinely and completely human. Consequently, to describe Christ's consubstantiality with humans, the Council used the Greek expression "*anthropos*" (Latin: *homo*), which has a generic meaning: "*man / human being / woman / man,*" not "*male*" (Greek, *aner*).²³ Thus, one may argue that, although Jesus is male,

²¹ Unterner, "Ordination of Women," pp. 58-59.

²² Kenny, "Which Way the Pastoral?" p. 76.

²³ Chalcedon stated that "we confess one and the same our Lord Jesus Christ ... [that he is] the same perfect in godhead, the same perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, the same of a reasonable soul and body; homoousios with the Father in godhead, and the same homoousios with us in manhood" (Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*, vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition [100-600]* [Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971], pp. 263-264). Even though "manhood" is used by Pelikan to translate "*anthropos/homo*," it remains that in Chalcedon "manhood" must be taken generically to mean "human" (male/female), not just "male." For Chalcedon, the point is that Christ saves what he has assumed; and, since he has assumed a nature that is human, then he saves all that is human (Irenaeus, *Ad Haereses*, V, Chs 14 and 21; referred to in Untener, "Ordination of Women," p. 57). (There are controversies about these two Greek words (*ανθρωπος* [humankind] and *ανηρ* [male/man] as to their respective meanings in the Greek language. See, for

his gender (maleness) has no significance in his role as Savior/Priest. It is Jesus' humanity that holds a salvific significance. In other words, if the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith wishes to insist that one must have a "natural resemblance" with Christ in order to preside at the Eucharist, then it must conclude that no baptized Roman Catholic should be refused ordination and, consequently, be denied the eucharistic presidency *because of gender*. All Christians "resemble Christ naturally," not because of their gender but because of their humanity wherein both males and females are included.

Finally, opponents of women's ordination should revisit what they refer to as the "scriptural fact" (namely, Jesus did not make women apostles; the apostles did not make women apostles; and authority in the Bible is always masculine). St. Paul (the only Second Testament writer who claims to know what an "apostle" is) called himself "apostle" for two reasons: he had seen the Risen Christ, and he was commissioned by him to preach the gospel (Gal. 1:11-12). So did the women in Matthew's and John's Gospels: they personally saw the Risen Christ and received directly from him the commission to preach the gospel of the Resurrection (Mt. 28:8-10 and Jn. 20:16-18). In fact, according to both Matthew and John, these women were not only first to see the Risen Christ and first to be commissioned by him but also first to convert the first post-resurrection unbelievers who happened to be the male pre-

example, www.hellpage.com/greek%20aner.htm "Can Greek *aner* [άνηρ/man] mean "person"?"; "The Big Question: Should the Bible Be Politically Correct?" [debate between Scott Munger, V.P. of translation at the *International Bible Society* and Wayne Grudem, of the *Phoenix Seminary* (<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/0201/29/ltn.12.html>); and Michael D. Marlowe, "The Ambiguity of 'Anthropos'," (<http://www.bible-researcher.com/anthropos.html>.)

resurrection apostles—referred to by Jesus himself as "my brothers" in Matthew and "the brethren" in John. That explains why Mary Magdalene is "the Apostle to the Apostles."²⁴

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²⁴. See Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles," *UTS Journal*, April, 1975, pp. 22-23. She has also written: "Since the tradition of Mary Magdalene's primacy in apostolic witness [see Matthew and John and, to a lesser extent, Mark's long ending (16:9-11)] challenged the Petrine tradition [Lk. 24:35 and 1 1Cor.15:3-5], it is remarkable that it has survived in two independent streams of the Gospel tradition [Matthew and John]" (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* [New York: Crossroad, 1983], p. 332). Behr-Sigel (from an Orthodox standpoint) has stated: "Among Jesus' most intimate friends, we find women as well as men. Beside the 'disciple Jesus loved,' Peter, James and John, we have Martha, Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala who, on Easter morning, recognized the Master just by the tone of his voice when he pronounced her name" (Behr-Sigel, *Ministry of Women in the Church* p. 63). Metropolitan of Sourouzh (Great Britain) Anthony Bloom wrote in his 1987 preface to Behr-Sigel's book: "The question of the ordination of women to the priesthood has only recently been asked. For us Orthodox, the question comes 'from the outside.' It must become for us a question that is asked 'from the inside.' This question requires of us all an interior freedom and a deep communion with the vision and will of God, in a prayerful silence. I hope that this book [*Ministry of Women in the Church*] will be the beginning of a humble but bold awakening on the part of men and women" (p. xiv in the E.T.)

