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AOC POLICY LETTER 1407-23

DATE: 23 July 2014 Anno Domini
TO: All Concerned Christians
SUBJECT: Ordination and Consecration of Women to Holy Orders

It is the policy of the Anglican Orthodox Church, based on biblical principles and the doctrinal guidance of the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, to reject the ordination or consecration of women in Holy Orders. The Reformation Church of England would never have considered such an ordination, and neither does the Anglican Orthodox Church who follows in her example. There are several reasons for this policy, the greatest of which is Scriptural. The great theologian, Richard Hooker, described the theology of the Church as being three dimensional, a kind of trifoil as he put it:

“What Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth. That which the Church by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define to be true or good, must in congruity of reason over-rule all other inferior judgments whatsoever” (Laws, Book V, 8:2; Folger Edition 2:39,8-14).

Scripture	We believe that Holy Scripture is the inerrant Word of God;
Reason & Logic	Reason is necessary for the understanding and application of scripture in all the areas in which scripture might be applied;
Tradition	Those practices handed down from century to century of the early church fathers.

I will explain these three pillars of our doctrine and theology in order listed above.

SCRIPTURE

Our theology must be based on Holy Scripture, first and foremost. The Holy Scriptures in no place provide for the ordination of women to the ministry. In fact, it explicitly forbids the same. It should be noted at the outset the Bible gives no principle or standard in one part that is at enmity with that counsel in all other parts of God's Word. We have no apostolic example given by our Lord in which women were called to follow in apostolic authority. All were men. Let us examine an isolated verse in the Bible that is often used by the advocates of female ordination to justify ordination of women: *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”* (Gal 3:27-28) What is Paul speaking of here? Does he speak of the called ministry being open to both men and women? Certainly not! He is referring to the privileges of salvation and admittance to the Church. Whether man, woman, or child, we all may be chosen to share in the Kingdom of Heaven. *“And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”* (Gal 3:29) We become the Children of God according to His promise.

This same counsel is given in a number of other parts of the New Testament – all pointing to the same purpose. *“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”* (1 Cor 12:13) Clearly, this refers to the same principle as given in Galatians 3:28. It stipulates the acceptance into the membership of the Bride of Christ. Here is another Scripture text that alludes to that same acceptance into the Body of Christ: *“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.”* (Col 3:9-11) These verses dispel the notion Paul is opening the door for the call of women as pastors and preachers.

So what Scripture forbids a woman to preach and teach over a man? *“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”* (1 Tim 2:11-14) Read these lines carefully and you will find that Paul is not issuing a mere local policy for Ephesus, but a general biblical principle. His justification for this principle is not due to worship of temple gods and idols, such as Artemis, because he bases his argument on the events occurring at the beginning in the Garden at Eden. What was that principle?

We must go back to the Types and Shadows given in Scripture for the perfect realization to come. Remember that Christ is foreshadowed by the Pascal Lamb of Exodus. The Church is foreshadowed by the institution of marriage which was the first that God instituted. Woman was created of the same Body and substance of man. They would leave their fathers and mothers and cleave to one another and become ‘one flesh.’ How beautiful is this picture of the Church. And who is the Head of the Church? The Lord Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom and Head of His Church in the same way that the man was to be the head of the family – ruling in Godly example. Like Christ, Adam loved his wife Eve. He loved her unto death itself. Though he was not deceived, it is likely that he partook of the forbidden fruit in order to share that cardinal rule of love given by the faithful Ruth: *“And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.”* (Ruth 1:16-17) If Adam was not deceived, why else would he share the fate of his beloved Eve?

The woman, Eve, was deceived – not her husband Adam. Because of her disobedience, she was fated to suffer the pains of childbirth and eventual death. This passed upon all women just as was her inclination to be deceived. Women have different natures from men (thank the Lord). They have nurturing spirits, and they are far more tolerant – even of false teachers. Men are stubborn and skeptical. They are not better than women – in fact, they are probably a couple of rungs on that ladder below in compassion – but men are less likely to be scammed by a ten-horned false preacher than are women. Women always try to find the goodness in another while men, sadly, may be looking for the chink in the other’s armor. This is natural because God intended man

to be the tender of crops, the hunter for food, and the defender of the home; while women are the keepers of the castle and the nurturers of innocent life.

Let us observe other passages that demonstrate the ministry of the Word as male-only, but first, allow me to stipulate that Scripture gives abundant counsel to both men and women to minister to others and to give testimony of the hope that is in them. The limitation, however, is to the teaching and preaching ministry. Women are to teach the Word to their children, to other women (Titus 2:3-5), and defend the Word of God with friends and neighbors; however, they are not to take to the pulpit to preach and exercise authority in preaching to men.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” (Eph 5:22-33)

The above passage from Ephesians is Paul’s explanation of how the model for marriage is related to that of the Church. The man (like Christ) is to love his wife (the Church) so much that he is willing to lay down his life for her in exactly the same way that Christ laid down his life for His Bride (the Church). When distinctions between the roles of men and women are blurred, only confusion and disorder can ensue. If there is no difference in the role of men and women in the Church, how about the marriage? Sooner, or later, the flood gates of sin are flung broadly open and such sins as homosexual marriage seems justified by the same reasoning. Then comes, after the ordination of women, the push for the ordination of homosexuals. Homosexuality is more than a common sin – it is an abomination in the eyes of the Lord. (Lev 18:22, Romans 1) But blurring the distinctive roles of men and women opens the gateway for this abomination.

Lest there be any doubt, up until it was removed in the 1979 edition, the Book of Common Prayer has in its Ordinal concerning the Consecration of Bishops a passage from Saint Paul’s First letter to Timothy, Chapter 3:

- 3 This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.
- 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;
- 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;
- 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;
- 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the

church of God?)

6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

In Scripture, words have meaning, they cannot be changed without changing the meaning of the passages. The Word of God is timeless and **no variableness, neither shadow of turning.** (*James 1:17*)

See how much the counsel of God we will need to change to make the Bible compatible with man's word instead of the absolute and immutable Word that is spoken by God: **"This is a true saying, If a man (must change to woman) desire the office of a bishop, he (must be changed to she) desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband (must be changed to wife) of one wife (must be changed to husband), vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his (must be changed to her) own house, having his (her) children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man (changed to woman) know not how to rule his (her) own house, how shall he (she) take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he (she) fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he (she) must have a good report of them which are without; lest he (she) fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."** (1 Tim 3:1-7) As you can see, this passage of seven verses must be changed in twelve places to make it compatible with the wicked will of man. You can find a modern translation that is willing to risk the wrath of God in changing the word to be politically correct, but let me so this: There is no political correctness in Hell. Here is your warning, silly modernist: *"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."* (Rev 22:18-19) Even the Ordinal of the ancient church uses the wording that is scriptural.

REASON & LOGIC

Reason is necessary for the understanding and application of scripture in all the areas in which scripture might be applied. Reason is God's greatest gift to human beings, enabling them to understand God's plan for the whole of reality, to situate themselves within it and to specify proper moral forms of human activity.

Reason means the clarity of Scripture, accessible through human thought. Revisionist moderns have taken "Reason" to refer to rational thinking over against the implied obscurity or irrelevancy of Scriptures. Rather the true meaning is that Scripture is clear and easily understandable in everything it speaks about and Church decisions should be subject to the "plain reading" of the text. Reason, after all is a gift of God, which enables us to understand God's plan for life through, not separate from, Scripture.

We live in perilous times. Men and women have forgotten the foundation stones of family and society in general. Tradition and reason lie bound upon the altar of modernism and humanism. Man no longer desires to accept the wisdom of the ancients. He feels that he is capable of making decisions more refined than five thousand years of the collective wisdoms of the ancients. Real education has been sacrificed for a new and

crass INDOCTRINATION. Independent thought is regarded as passe'. Man is free to abandon the wisdom of the fathers and launch out into what he considers 'uncharted waters.' But those waters are not 'uncharted.' They have been charted from the days of the Garden at Eden when man chose to eat of the wrong tree and forego eating of that Tree of Life which represented Christ. These 'unknown waters' were charted at Sodom and Gomorrah, at the palace of King David the night of his consort with Bathsheba, at the Last supper when Judas received the sop, and a million times since. Every deviation from Holy Scripture, and the reasoning required to understand that Scripture, leads deeper and deeper into the abyss. Like flies to the lamp, men hurry to their spiritual demise.

Logic will tell you that a good tree will bring forth good fruit. (Matt 7:17) Where is the good fruit of the ECUSA or CoE today? Are the morals of society lifted up? Are men better today with the luke-warm churches than they were 100 or more years ago with those Churches that stood fast by the Word of God? What is the testimony of these churches that ordain women first and next practicing homosexuals? Does it make any sense? A young minister told me a few weeks ago that "Common Sense" has become "Uncommon." He was absolutely right. While the church was still united in one Body of the West, the ecumenical councils did not recognize female ordination.

TRADITION

Where we cannot find guidance in scripture or draw a conclusion from rational deduction, we look to the tradition of the Church. We are all newcomers to the Church. Our Church is a direct descendant of the Church established in England early in the first century. When we evaluate our understanding Holy Scripture, we should compare our understanding to that of the early Church fathers ere apostasy and heretical teachings were so profuse.

There is no evidence to suggest that the early church ordained women at any time to the preaching ministry? We need not point out that they would have found the notion abhorrent to say the least. It was never done in the early Church, and neither was the great sin of homosexuality even mentioned for the offense the thought would cause. Neither did the Reformers accept such ordination of women to Holy Orders. The Reformed Church of England was apostolic in nature. No apostle was female. So no female could have aspired to the office of Deacon, Priest, or Bishop.

SUMMARY

It is high time the Church return to that ancient Landmark (God's Word) and the old paths wherein our fathers walked, for it is the GOOD way. Let us stop experimenting with deviate interpretations of Scripture and get back to the Bible as our Constitution written.

The AOC will never recognize the ordination of women to the Diaconate, the Priesthood, or to the Bishopric. We will not recognize, or condone either, the ordination of men who consider themselves to be 'homosexual' to the same Holy Orders listed. Every Bishop and Clergyman of the AOC agrees with this policy by conscience and faith.

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