sinful, and Christ has died for all—there is no distinction there. However, you are not permitted to negotiate treaties and wage war because that is not your station. For this world, distinctions remain.

So also men and women: they are equally redeemed by Jesus, but have different stations and responsibilities in this world —and the station of "pastor" is reserved by God for men. This is in keeping with Ephesians 5:22-25: man models Christ by speaking the Word to Christ's bride, the Church. Woman models the Church by gladly hearing the Word of Christ, the Bridegroom.

This is why historic Lutheranism has faithfully taught, "In other respects, indeed, we are all equal in the sight of God, but among ourselves there must be this sort of inequality and proper distinction" (Large Catechism, 4th Commandment).

Jesus created distinctions and honored them. He declared that teachers are superior to disciples and masters are greater than servants (Matt. 10:24). He commanded obedience to Caesar (Matt 22:21) and submitted to Pontius Pilate (John 19:10-11); if He came to abolish distinctions, He would not have—should not have—done so.

To follow Jesus is to follow His Word. To follow Jesus, then, is to study the Scriptures and maintain the Lord's distinctions between men and women—and to rejoice that He has died to redeem all equally. May we in the LCMS continue faithfully to follow Jesus.

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# *"Men and Women in the Church"*

## The LC-MS: Are We Still Following Jesus?

"***My sheep hear My voice … and they follow Me.***" (John 10:27, NKJ)

### 6A — MANY TODAY SUGGEST

On the basis of Galatians 3:28 that Christ has abolished all earthly distinctions and so there should be no distinctions between the roles of men and women in life and the church.

### WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Many today contend that there should be no distinctions between the roles of men and women in life and the Church, and that this truly follows Jesus. However, on the basis of the order of creation (1 Timothy 2:3), the LCMS historically has followed the doctrine and practice that the whole Christian Church kept for 2000 years, maintaining divinely revealed distinctions between men and women. These distinctions include, but are not limited to, ordaining only men into the holy ministry. They extend even to family relationships. "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror" (1 Peter 3:6).

This is hardly a popular or attractive doctrine to the world, which labels such faithfulness to be sexist, chauvinist or unloving. Therefore, the Church must always, unfortunately, devote energy away from proclaiming the Gospel to defending the Word. Sometimes, Christians are confronted with demonstrations which demand the ordination of women immediately. Other times, the strategy to change is incremental, changing the "rights" of women in the Church little by little; until finally, the ordination of women seems only logical, even if it is still not Scriptural.

Fundamental to all these issues is the question: what distinctions has God established between men and women? To follow Jesus is to follow His Word. Therefore we must ask: what does His Word say?

## The Scriptures in Question

Those who suggest that there should be no distinctions between men and women in the Church often point to Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." The argument sounds simple: since God clearly makes no distinction between male and female, neither should we.

Those who maintain that there are distinctions between men and women point to several Bible texts. Among them:

- "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." (1 Tim. 2:11-14)
- "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her." (Eph. 5:22-25)
- "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror" (1 Peter 3:6).

These passages keep distinctions between men and women. Wives, like the Church, submit. Husbands, like Christ, love. Each is done in service to the other.

## Contradiction, Culture or Agreement?

Are there distinctions between men and women or not? Can Galatians 3:28 be reconciled with the others? There are three possible answers:

The first answer is that the passages contradict. This means that the Bible contradicts itself and can no longer be trusted, and Christians no longer have a foundation for doctrine.

The second is the more confusing cultural argument: while Paul felt that the Galatians were ready to dissolve male-female distinctions, the Christians in Timothy's care were not—perhaps because of the local worship of the goddess Artemis. Therefore, distinctions between men and women were only cultural, and the time comes when Christians become "mature" enough to dissolve those differences. (Logically, then, keeping those distinctions is a sign of Christian immaturity, especially when so many churches have abolished them.) An example of this in their minds would be the admonitions concerning slavery. However, those distinctions were cultural: one might be born a slave, but he is not created a slave, whereas male and femaleness are creaturely distinctions of the creator.

This leaves the third answer, one which honors the agreement of God's Word.

## Grace and Stations

The third answer is this: these texts do not contradict each other, but speak of different things. Galatians 3:28 speaks of the grace won by Jesus on the cross: He has died for all, be they Jew or Gentile, male or female, young or old. Jesus died for all, and does not divide His grace from some to others. The other passages speak of stations in this life, which are to be kept for good order. For instance, consider a family. Parents supervise children—not the other way around. Where parents treat toddlers as equals or allow children to run wild, chaos and trouble follow. These distinctions must be preserved for the good of all. As far as grace is concerned, however, there is no distinction: parents and children are equally sinful and equally forgiven by Jesus.

Likewise, in Christ there is no distinction between you and world leaders, including the President of the United States. All are