

AlbertMohler.com

# Missouri Synod Lutherans Defend Biblical Requirements for Ministry

Tuesday, May 17, 2005

Missed by many observers, a task force of the [Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod](#) recently released a report on men and women in the church. The report, [The Service of Women in Congregational and Synodical Offices](#), came in response to a 2004 action by the denomination, requesting clarification on crucial issues related to how women can properly and biblically serve in the church. The Lutheran report makes a proper distinction between offices revealed in the Bible and administrative offices developed by the church. Standing on firm biblical authority and their own church tradition, the task force report affirmed that the teaching office [specifically, the pastor] is limited to men, and went further to specify that roles allied to the teaching office, such as elders, must also be men. Women may properly serve in any number of other positions and may fulfill many other responsibilities. The text is carefully constructed. Consider this statement: “In their relationship to one another as followers of Jesus and members of His family, all questions of rank or authority and the insistence on individual “rights” must be set aside (Mark 10:35–45; John 13:16–17). Rather, in their common life together, they are to give themselves to each other in humble and loving service (Phil. 2:1–4), seeking ways in which they might encourage each other to good works (Heb. 10:24). When we speak, therefore, of the service of women in the church we are referring in the first instance to nothing else than the common work that belongs to all Christians which they faithfully and joyfully accomplish until the Lord comes (Phil. 4:4–7).” As the report makes clear, the office of pastor is biblically limited to men: “In addition to the moral and vocational qualifications required of those divinely placed into this high office in the church (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 3:5–9), the Scriptures teach that the incumbent of the pastoral office must be a man.” But, the report also offers an important and eloquent statement about the unity of all believers in Christ, and our common call to service. “The Scriptures without qualification affirm that all believing Christians, both men and women, are priests of God (1 Peter 2:9; Rev. 1:6). Through Baptism God has made them all, equally and without distinctions of importance or value, members of the one body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12–13; Gal. 3:27–28; Rom. 12:5). No one is baptized to be either man or woman.” In striking this balance, the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod has offered the whole church an important witness. Their balance comes very close to the statement adopted by the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) in 2000 as it adopted a revised version of the [Baptist Faith and Message](#): “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.”

---

Content Copyright © 2002-2010, R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

