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WOMEN'S DIGNITY OR CHURCH TRADITION? CHRISTIAN ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE DEBATE ABOUT THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN

Abstract. The question of the ordination of women not only separates Christian denominations. It becomes increasingly divisive within individual churches and communities. This is why the problem of women's ordination remains in the contemporary ecumenical movement one of the most difficult issues to deal with. Although it has been fully accepted in many Christian churches and communities, other Christian groups still oppose to adopt this practice and its theological justification. A Christian ecumenical discussion on this topic involves many specific questions related to various branches of theology and ethics.

This article aims to present the anthropological context of the debate. The issue of women's ordination and its relation to church tradition is frequently addressed from the point of view of Christian anthropology and ethics. Therefore the article is intended to show that above-mentioned controversy is rooted in different understanding of human dignity, especially when it comes to its connection to church tradition and to contemporary social phenomena.

Key words: ordination of women; human dignity; Christian anthropology; gender justice; ecumenism.

1. INTRODUCTION

On 26th January 2015 the first woman was consecrated as a bishop in the Church of England. The Right Reverend Libby Lane, aged 48, became the new bishop of Stockport. The ceremony of her consecration took place at York Minster in the presence of more than 1,000 people. During the celebration John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York, said that he had been “praying and working for this day.”¹ According to Rt Revd Libby Lane's words, her

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¹ *Libby Lane: First female Church of England bishop consecrated*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-30974547> (accessed: 10.01.2016); Colin BUCHANAN, “Comment: Current questions in episcopal consecrations,” *Theology* 118 (2015), 4: 278–279.

consecration was not a revolution in the church but rather a sign of the continuity of the church ministry. She said: “My consecration service is not really about me. With echoes of practice which has been in place for hundreds of years in the church, it is a reminder that what I am about to embark on is shared by the bishops around me, by those who have gone before me and those who will come after.”²

By that act of the episcopal consecration of a woman the Church of England achieved its aim of the full participation of women in the ordained ministry, which began with the decision of the General Synod of the Church of England to ordain women as priests (in 1992).³ This new decision of the General Synod, voted on 14th July 2014, aligned the Church of England with many other churches of the Anglican Communion⁴ as well as the majority of Protestant churches and communities, including the episcopate, which practise women’s ordination. However, at the same time, having taken that decision the Church of England moves away from other, more conservative Christian churches and communities, like the Catholic or Orthodox Churches. In terms of their official teaching, granting women the right to be ordained as bishops ruptures the continuity of church tradition in its focal point which is the notion of ‘apostolic succession’ transmitted from the Apostles to their successors, that is bishops, who must be men too, as were Jesus and the Apostles.⁵ Any rupture in the so-understood ‘apostolic succession’ must call into serious question the sacramental and institutional structure of the church.

In this contemporary controversy amongst Christians, which is not only at theological/theoretical level, but also at the level of church praxis, two different and incompatible types of reasoning can be distinguished. The first one is based on the idea of human dignity, which involves the equality of men and women in all areas of church life. This theoretical assumption is related to another ethical and practical question (from the Christian point of view, at least): “What would Jesus do today?” The second one, much more

² Rt Revd Libby Lane consecrated at York Minster, <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2015/01/rt-revd-libby-lane-consecrated-at-york-minster.aspx> (accessed: 10.01.2016).

³ *The women priests debate*, <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/women-bishops/the-women-priests-debate.aspx> (access: 10.01.2016).

⁴ *Women Bishops*, <https://www.churchofengland.org/our-views/women-bishops/the-women-bishops-debate.aspx> (access: 10.01.2016).

⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19940522_ordinatio-sacerdotalis.html (accessed: 10.01.2016).

conservative, is based on the idea that the church tradition has been unalterable and uninterrupted since the Apostolic times. In this type of reasoning the question is: "How to preserve the unchanged church of Jesus Christ in a changing world?"

The question of the ordination of women not only separates Christian denominations but it also becomes increasingly divisive within individual churches and communities.⁶ This is why this problem remains one of the most difficult issues to deal with in the contemporary ecumenical movement. Although it has been fully accepted in many Christian churches and communities, other Christian groups still oppose the adoption of this practice and its theological justification. The Christian ecumenical discussion on this topic involves many specific questions related to various branches of theology and ethics. However, this article has a much more modest aim. The issue of women's ordination and its relation to church tradition is addressed here from the point of view of Christian anthropology and ethics. This article is intended to show that the above-mentioned controversy is rooted in different understanding of human dignity, especially when it comes to its connection to church tradition and to contemporary social phenomena.

2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARGUMENTATION IN CHRISTIAN REFLECTIONS ON WOMEN'S ORDINATION

The contemporary Christian movement for women's ordination is based on many grounds. Its protagonists, belonging to various Christian denominations, can provide several theological, ethical, and sociological arguments in support of their efforts. Given this diversity of arguments or the multiplicity of levels of reflection, it seems that in the public debate political and social reasons come to the fore, as if they were the most important. Perhaps, in the popular media coverage, politically based dissent within church communities is clearer and easier to understand. However, any attempt to depict this movement as a political current, which struggles for the emancipation of women within contemporary Christianity, may distort its true significance. Indeed, there are some politically motivated 'activists' who seek to ignite a revolution in the church, but most of the men and women who work for women's ordination are truly faith-motivated. They understand this com-

⁶ Lisa SOWLE CAHILL, *Sex, Gender, and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005⁶), 7–8.

mitment as their faithfulness to the gospel. Meanwhile, some political misunderstandings related to the issue of women's ordination have a strong influence on the position of the opponents to any change or reform in the church. In diverse attempts to reform the church doctrine and practice concerning the ordination they see 'this world's' pressure on the church. And whilst it is a Christian obligation to reject 'this world', whose 'prince' is the devil (cf. John 12:31), every sign of the world's influence on the church should be rejected without considering its righteousness or motivation. Such an attitude can be seen very clearly in the conservative Christian circles, especially when they openly reject any discussion on gender issues in the church teaching and practice because they believe that any change would entail the destruction of the very nature of the church. In this sense one can understand some strong opinions of two well-known Orthodox theologians, Alexander Schmemmann and Thomas Hopko. For Schmemmann the ordination of women is "a radical and irreparable mutilation of the entire faith, the rejection of the whole Scripture and, needless to say, the end of all dialogues."⁷ Hopko, for his part, says that "the acceptance of women priests involves a fundamental and radical rejection of the very substance of the biblical and Christian understanding of God and creation."⁸ How can this be true? Is it possible that so many Christians, and entire Christian communities "mutilate their faith", "reject the whole Scripture", or even "reject the very substance of the biblical and Christian understanding of God"? Or perhaps, their opponents, while repeating Schmemmann's and Hopko's positions, do not understand the very motivation of all the Christian men and women who work for women's ordination? Even if one is against this practice, it is important to comprehend its roots, which are much more 'anthropological' than 'political', and much more 'biblical' than 'worldly'.

Above and beyond all other reasons, the main motivation of those who work for women's ordination is the promotion of human dignity and human rights. As Mary Aquin O'Neill says, "at the heart of the Christian teaching about being human is the belief that to be human is to be created in the image and likeness of God."⁹ According to Christian anthropology, deeply

⁷ Alexander SCHMEMMANN, *Concerning Women's Ordination – a letter to an episcopal friend*, <http://www.episcopalnet.org/TRACTS/ConcerningOrdination.html> (accessed: 10.01.2016).

⁸ Cited in: Thomas F. BEST, "The Community Study: Where Do We Go From Here?," *The Ecumenical Review* 40 (1988), 1: 55.

⁹ Mary AQUIN O'NEILL, "The Mystery of Being Human Together," in *Freeing Theology. The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 140.

rooted in the biblical tradition, human dignity results from the creation of human beings in God's image and likeness (cf. Genesis 1:27). The creation of man and woman in God's image constitutes a fundamental basis for the human dignity that is equal for men and women. They are equally loved by their Creator who bestows on them equal personhood and promises them equal grace in Jesus Christ (cf. Galatians 3:28). Hence, any manifestation of exclusion or oppression of a certain part of humankind on the basis of their gender identity, ethnicity or social position leads to the denial of human dignity.

The recognition of the equal dignity of men and women enables us to build just social and political structures at every level of organization. It also refers to church structures and institutions. One can even say that Christian communities should be an example of respect for the dignity of every man and woman if they want to be authentic in their witness. Presenting the theological basis of the Ecumenical Decade for Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998), launched by the World Council of Churches, Franklyn J. Balasundaram wrote: "God created males and females, [...] God created them in God's own image or likeness. [...] God created a community of males and females, persons in their own right, as partners, equally gifted in every way. As God's creation, males and females are created with dignity and worth and entitled to life in all its fullness. Human community is possible only with women and men."¹⁰ These words still remain important, especially when Christians should oppose any social, political or ecclesial circumstances in which human dignity is jeopardized.

One can say that it is obvious. However, recognition and promotion of equal dignity of men and women still remains a challenge for the church. On the one hand, the official teaching of Christian denominations supports human dignity and rejects any sign of women's oppression. The church never officially took the position that denied the equal humanity of women. Nevertheless, there have been some ambiguities and doubts in the history of Christian thought. Androcentrism can be evidently seen in the New Testament, particularly in St. Paul's letters. Classical Catholic theology (for example that of St. Thomas Aquinas) presented the male sex as normative for humanity, even if, at the same time, it upheld the idea of equality of all human beings in terms of their redemption, salvation and ultimate destiny in Christ.¹¹ For centuries, these ambiguities made Christian structures and

¹⁰ Franklyn J. BALASUNDARAM, "The Theological Basis of the Decade," *The Ecumenical Review* 46 (1994), 2: 145.

¹¹ M. AQUIN O'NEILL, *The Mystery of Being Human Together*, 147-48.

institutions generally male-dominated, therefore official theology could hardly affect unfair church practices. In this context Pauline Webb observes that “even though on the evidence it would seem that the religious instinct is more deeply implanted in women than in men, at least judging by the way women in every culture have guarded and handed on the religious traditions, yet religion too has become a male-dominated sphere with a patriarchal structure and with concepts related to male experience and expressed in male symbolism which women have increasingly come to feel exclusive and derogatory. [...] In the Christian church, though the Gospels record a radically new attitude to women on the part of Jesus himself, one that astounded even his close disciples, in church tradition women have been denied access to the priesthood and the sanctuary.”¹²

Today’s reaffirmation of women’s dignity in the official Christian teaching can also provoke some confusion or at least uncertainties. For example, Catholic theological anthropology emphasizes the inalienable value of each human person. This idea is apparent in John Paul II’s teaching, especially in his Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (on the dignity and vocation of women)¹³ or in his well-known series of catechesis “Man and Woman He Created Them.”¹⁴ However, even amongst Catholic theologians there are those who see some difficulties related to the present Catholic idea of complementarity of man and woman.¹⁵ Elizabeth A. Johnson notes that the affirmation of equal dignity of women is accompanied by the idea of ‘women’s special nature’. She says: “women’s true vocation is motherhood,

¹² Pauline WEBB, “Gender as an Issue,” *The Ecumenical Review* 40 (1988), 1: 12.

¹³ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* on the Dignity and Vocation of Women, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_15081988_mulieris-dignitatem_en.html (access: 10.01.2016).

¹⁴ JOHN PAUL II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2006).

¹⁵ Mary Aquin O’Neill writes: “Such thinking and teaching leads to a two-nature anthropology, a vision of human being as divided into two distinct kinds, each with identifiable differences that become normative for the sex. This anthropology of complementarity, as it came to be known, posits a theology in which the sexes complete one another, not only on the level of reproduction, but in the full range of human existence: social, intellectual, psychological, spiritual. There is a male way of being and a female way, and these can be known from an examination of the bodies of the two and given a fair degree of specificity. Thus men are supposed to be, by nature, active, rational, wilful, autonomous beings whose direction goes outward into the world; women are to be passive, intuitive, emotional, connected beings whose natural inclination is inward. This bipolar vision of the sexes leads to an equally bipolar understanding of their respective places, namely, the world and the home.” *The Mystery of Being Human Together*, 149.

whether physical or spiritual [...], women should develop certain characteristics that will enable them to live their true vocation to the utmost.”¹⁶ But this concept of equality of women serves, according to Johnson, “to deny them opportunities for equal partnership in society.”¹⁷ In this perspective, such an understanding of the equality of women would be one of the main reasons for denying women access to the priesthood.

Thus, Christian conservative anthropological reasoning related to the issue of women's ordination comes full circle. Both denying the equal dignity of women and affirming it with a differentiation ('women's special nature') can be used as an argument against the admission of women to the priesthood.¹⁸ Meanwhile, Christians who yearn for the full equality of men and women in the church maintain that it results from the equal human dignity of each person. If the personhood of men and women is really equal, it cannot be differentiated on the basis of their gender difference. If so, even if one can adequately speak about a 'specific vocation' of men and women in the Christian community, such a vocation should not be a reason for banning women from certain aspects of church life. Every human being, man or woman, is unique; yet this uniqueness cannot justify any differentiation of their value as a person and a child of God. If social, economic and ethnic differences between Christians cannot be grounds to differentiate their place in the Christian community, neither can gender differences. And if natural differences between human beings (the gender difference is only one of them) might determine various roles within the church, would it be just to designate different tasks or responsibilities on the basis of social status, age or ethnicity of the believers?

When Christian churches and communities demand the equal treatment of women in all dimensions of social life as well as fighting together against women's discrimination and oppression, one should ask about the situation within the churches themselves. Do they ensure and encourage the full participation of women in church life, in church structures and institutions? Do they allow their participation in the exercise of authority? Do they listen to the voice of women in the process of formulating (or reformulating) their

¹⁶ Elizabeth A. JOHNSON, “Imaging God, Embodying Christ: Women as a Sign of the Times,” in *The Church Women Want. Catholic Women in Dialogue*, ed. Elizabeth A. Johnson (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2013), 53.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁸ Sara BUTLER, “Embodiment: Women and Men, Equal and Complementary,” in *The Church Women Want*, 36.

doctrine and ethical teaching? Both conservative and liberal Christian denominations would respond in the affirmative to these questions even if the details of their responses were very different. For those who struggle for women's ordination the true participation of women in the church life is not possible without their admission to the priesthood. As the Rev. Janet E. Crawford writes, "it is not possible to discuss the participation of women in the church without reference to the question of the ordination of women. Neither is it easy to discuss the ordination of women in an ecumenical context. [...] an increasing number of churches have decided that there is no biblical or theological reason against the ordination of women, and a number have processed to ordain women. However, many still hold that the tradition of the church in this regard cannot be changed and that this is not a matter of discrimination against women but of profound theological conviction."¹⁹ One can disagree with this opinion and still maintain their appreciation for the equal dignity of men and women within the church. However, no one can reliably deny that in the centre of this argument there is a biblical rooted Christian anthropology based on the faith that every human being is God's beloved child.

3. THE ORDINATION OF WOMEN AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PROMOTING WOMEN'S DIGNITY

There are some well-known theologians who, like Elizabeth A. Johnson, note with concern, that "the denial of women's dignity as fully and equally created in the image of God pervades the tradition. As with any prejudice, once this gets put into place structurally, it begins to shape consciousness; after a while it is taken for granted. Over time women internalize the self-image that the oppressive system feeds them and instinctively think of themselves as less than worthy. Not all women do this – we have always had feisty women who refused that definition. But it becomes a pervasive idea that affects all the generations in some way."²⁰ Undermining the dignity of women, including limiting women's participation in the life of the church, remains a problem that is not confined to a specific period in the history of Christianity. Feminist theologians believe that the church is deeply marked

¹⁹ Janet CRAWFORD, "The Community of Women and Men in the Church: Where Are We Now?," *The Ecumenical Review* 40 (1988), 1: 44.

²⁰ E.A. JOHNSON, "Imaging God, Embodying Christ," 50.

by patriarchy, and therefore women are generally alienated and rejected in the life of Christian community.²¹ Certainly, this is not an indisputable thesis. One could present arguments denying the scale and consequences of this phenomenon within different churches and communities. Nevertheless, in contemporary discussion about the place of women in the church many Christian thinkers recognize the need for some changes in order to make the church more just and peaceful so that it can be a credible witness to the gospel in the world.

In this quest for credibility of the church the anthropological issues are extremely important. If one accepts the idea that there is a single human nature shared by women and men, they must reject any attempt to differentiate two distinct human natures, one superior and the other inferior.²² This theoretical approach should have its practical consequences in the church organization. As Susan Muto notes, strong statements condemning violence against women, issued by diverse Christian institutions and organizations in order to uphold women's dignity, should be related to an attempt to re-examine "the role of women in the church in decision making and other ministerial positions".²³ For this reason feminist theologians often remain very critical of traditional church structures. Sometimes their statements and claims are very tough which makes it difficult to accept them unconditionally. Perhaps it is the case of Rosemary Radford Ruether who "understands liberation from patriarchy as dismantling the clerical power structure that prevents women from exercising free, responsible adulthood in the church".²⁴ Nonetheless, such hard and controversial statements express a genuine desire to help the church in its mission. According to Mary E. Hines, "to call for justice in the world the church must itself first be just. If church structure is in service of mission, then without just internal structures the church's mission in the world will not be credible".²⁵ This should be kept in mind in the contemporary debate about the ordination of women. The main problems of Christian anthropology are focused here.²⁶

²¹ Mary E. HINES, "Community for Liberation," in *Freeing Theology*, 167–168.

²² M. AQUIN O'NEILL, *The Mystery of Being Human Together*, 149.

²³ Susan MUTO, "Called to Holiness as Women of the Church," in *The Church Women Want*, 12.

²⁴ M.E. HINES, "Community for Liberation," 167.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Mary Aquin O'Neill notes that "theologians who oppose the ordination of women do so on the basis of a dual anthropology that depends on belief in the unchanging structures of nature, and on an understanding that revelation, tradition, theology, and ethics are oriented toward the past. [. . .] On the other hand, the theology undergirding arguments for the ordination of women most

Theologians who support the ordination of women believe that it is a “sign of the times” for the church. By the admission of women to the priesthood and episcopacy, the church may firmly express the equality of men and women in the Christian community. The act of ordination confirms women’s specific gifts for the church and for its mission in the world. This acknowledgement of the ministry of women (as an ordained ministry) in the church reaffirms their equal vocation to the apostolate, not only through the Christian witness of everyday life, but also through the specific ministry of preaching the Word of God and celebrating the sacraments. Woman’s presiding at the Eucharist, made possible by the act of ordination, is the highest expression of appreciation of the dignity of women, as long as the Eucharist expresses the unity of a celebrating community with the entire church and with Christ himself. The ordination confirms that a woman, acting *in persona Christi* by virtue of her priestly vocation, can be an ‘instrument’ and a visible ‘sign’ of this unity whose author is Christ.

Of course, such a vision of women’s ordained ministry in the church encounters serious resistance from conservative theologians. While entirely confirming the equal dignity and vocation of women in the church, they argue that the ordination is not the ‘human right’. If so, any changes in the doctrine and practice related to the ordination, particularly the admission of women to the ordained ministry, cannot be the way to express Christian engagement on behalf of women.²⁷ This is why Pope John Paul II, who repeatedly highlighted the dignity of all human beings and the vocation of women in the church, in his Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (in 1994) claimed that the church does not have the authority to “confer priestly ordination on women.”²⁸ At the same time he reminded us that “the New Testament and the whole history of the Church give ample evidence of the presence in the Church of women, true disciples, witnesses to Christ in the family and in society, as well as in total consecration to the service of God

often assumes a single anthropology. This theological anthropology emphasizes history and experience rather than nature and is open to dialogue with other human sciences. For the Christian theologian the issue is not whether one adopts a two-nature or a one-nature anthropology [...]. The issue is rather how to imagine the oneness that is to obtain between the sexes.” *The Mystery of Being Human Together*, 150.

²⁷ Elizabeth BUCAR, “Feminist Contributions to Traditional Moral Knowledge: Rhetorical (Inter)Play of Clerics and Women,” in: *Feminist Catholic Theological Ethics. Conversations in the World Church*, ed. Linda Hogan, A.E. Orobator (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014), 249.

²⁸ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone, n. 4.

and of the Gospel.”²⁹ In this regard, there is hardly a relation between the dignity of women and the doctrine and practice of ordination. The dignity of women is confirmed by their place in the apostolic mission of the church: “They are the holy martyrs, virgins and mothers of families, who bravely bore witness to their faith and passed on the Church’s faith and tradition by bringing up their children in the spirit of the Gospel.”³⁰ They share the same vocation to holiness, which is, from the Christian point of view, the highest determinant of human dignity (“The greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven are not the ministers but the saints”³¹). In this perspective, the issue of ordination is related to the church constant tradition, especially in the context of apostolic succession.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Christian churches and communities are very divided on the issue of the ordination of women. The introduction of this practice, with a new theological justification, in certain denominations hampers, or even paralyzes, the ecumenical dialogue. The ordination of women is seen as a rupture in the church tradition and a change made against Christ’s will for the church. At the same time, the refusal to introduce the ordination of women in the more conservative churches (like the Catholic Church or the Orthodox Church) raises the question about their attitude towards women and consequently about the credibility of their witness.

Both parties of this inter-Christian dispute have serious grounds for their positions.³² Both claim to respect and promote the dignity of women and their rights in the church and society. Even if one analyzes only the anthropological context of this debate, it seems evident that both parties have different points of departure on the issue and unavoidably come to different conclusions. For those who desire and demand the ordination of women, it is a necessary measure for ensuring the credibility of the church in the world, especially in the ‘era of women’s rights’, which are seen as a condition *sine qua non* for a just society. Those who oppose the ordination of women try to preserve the unchanged church of Jesus Christ in a constantly changing

²⁹ Ibid., n. 3

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² T.F. BEST, “The Community Study: Where Do We Go From Here?,” 55.

world. The church, if it wants to be true, does not need to adapt itself to constantly changing needs of the society. By preserving its tradition, including the institutional shape of the church, which is believed to have been established by Jesus Christ, the church seeks to maintain its identity, which is also a condition *sine qua non* for a credible Christian mission in the world.

Currently, there is no simple solution to this problem. That is why ecumenical organizations, such as the Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches, encourage further theological dialogue and a common ecumenical study and reflection.³³ In this ecumenical study and reflection there are some essential questions that have to be posed by both 'conservatives' and 'progressives.' What is the relation between the ordination of women and their place (or vocation) in the church? Is the ordination the 'human right' or rather the recognition of God's call by the Christian community in the unity with the church in time and space, which is possible on the basis of the uninterrupted apostolic tradition? Does the refusal of ordination of women not contradict the Christian belief that all the baptized are called to service and witness?

In raising and answering these (and many others) questions there should be another indispensable condition. All who believe in Christ, despite their different opinions, confessional traditions and sensibilities, need to avoid false accusations and stereotypes that make any dialogue impossible or fruitless. It seems crucial to resist any temptation to condemn those who think differently. Instead of this, it is important to recognize true Christians in them.

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³³ WCC COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER, "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry," part Ministry, n. 18, commentary, in: *The Ecumenical Movement. An Anthology of Key Texts and Voices*, ed. Michael Kinnamon and Brian E. Cope (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002²), 193

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GODNOŚĆ KOBIECZY TRADYCJA KOŚCIELNA?
ANTROPOLOGIA CHRZEŚCIJAŃSKA W DEBACIE
NA TEMAT ORDYNACJI KOBIECZY

Streszczenie

Kwestia ordynacji kobiet nie tylko dzieli denominacje chrześcijańskie. Ma ona również coraz bardziej dzielący charakter, jeśli chodzi o wewnętrzne napięcia w poszczególnych Kościołach i Wspólnotach. Dlatego też problem ordynacji kobiet pozostaje we współczesnym ruchu ekumenicznym jednym z najtrudniejszych tematów do refleksji. Chociaż ordynacja kobiet została w pełni zaakceptowana w wielu chrześcijańskich Kościołach i Wspólnotach, inne grupy chrześcijańskie wciąż sprzeciwiają się uznaniu tej praktyki i jej teologicznemu uzasadnieniu. Chrześcijańska dyskusja ekumeniczna na ten temat zakłada wiele szczegółowych kwestii odnoszących się do różnych elementów teologii i etyki.

Artykuł ma na celu przedstawienie antropologicznego kontekstu tej dyskusji. Kwestia ordynacji kobiet i jej relacji do tradycji kościelnej jest często poruszana z punktu widzenia antropologii i etyki chrześcijańskiej. Stąd artykuł zmierza do ukazania, że wspomniana dyskusja zakorzeniona jest w różniącej się interpretacji godności ludzkiej, zwłaszcza jeśli chodzi o jej związek z tradycją kościelną i współczesnymi zjawiskami społecznymi.

Słowa kluczowe: ordynacja kobiet; godność człowieka; antropologia chrześcijańska; sprawiedliwość płciowa; ekumenizm.