

# Orthodox Theological Criteria from 1 Peter for Women's Ordination in the Church

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## ABSTRACT

The Orthodox Church's discussion on the ordination of women involves not only theology, history, and tradition, but also society. Non-Christian societies offer complimentary, alternative, and sometimes ambiguous views on the issues central to the ordination of women. Matters such as male and female identity, leadership structure, and human value enter ecclesial dialogue not only from inside Orthodox and non-Orthodox Churches but also from the outside. Thus, in the context of the church's relation to non-Christian culture, what theological criteria should the church use to examine the issue of women's ordination? Orthodox theologians have overlooked a valuable source of evidence when answering this question, namely, the epistle of First Peter. The Apostle Peter wrote to Christians who were asking questions regarding their role as the Church in a secular society. Thus, while the epistle does not directly address women's ordination, it contextually resembles the church's twenty-first century situation. In this paper I will examine the theological criteria that Peter used to guide the church. How did he employ canonical, liturgical, Trinitarian, Christological, ecclesiological, eschatological, and sociological theologies? I will then consider the significance of his criteria for the current question of women's ordination in the Orthodox Church and Theology.