

WOMEN AND RELIGION: A SURVEY OF SIGNIFICANT LITERATURE, 1965-1974¹

In the past, THEOLOGICAL STUDIES articles surveying one sort or another of theological literature have sometimes included a disclaimer to the effect that the piece, for various reasons, cannot do justice to the immense body of recent items in print on the topic. The problem in the present case is staggering. Not only are bibliographies on women and religion expanding with great rapidity, but the time span from which to select examples is significantly larger than that ordinarily inspected by *TS* surveys. In the light of these limitations, what I shall endeavor to supply amounts to a rough guide to a vast and growing territory. Many books and articles will be omitted for lack of space or because they escaped my attention, but what will be mentioned is deemed of significance either because it provides a glimpse into how the women's movement is affecting religious institutions or because it deals with the specifically theological issues raised by the liberation experience.

The March 1972 issue of *TS* contains a useful discussion of literature on women's liberation, approached under the aspects of the oppression of women, its causes, and some proposed solutions. In that article Richard A. McCormick, S.J., rightly underscores the moral dimension of the issues raised by feminism, observing that the Church has contributed to the oppression of women by its theology and practice, and agreeing with Daniel Maguire that women's liberation is of prime importance for contemporary ethics because it is inherently concerned with the central question "What does human mean?" Without repeating McCormick's work, I will focus on four sorts of literature on women and religion: (1) general analyses of the current situation; (2) historical analyses; (3) works on selected issues: church law, liturgy, ministry, ordination, and models for Christian life; (4) constructive efforts and radical challenges.

GENERAL ANALYSES OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The time span covered by this survey is framed at one end by the present, at the other by the period when Vatican II was drawing to a close. During this decade there has been a development of thinking with regard to women and religion, and to some extent an alteration in church practice concerning women. In view of this, analyses of the situation "current" at any point in the decade are likely to vary from those

¹ Where possible, relevant 1975 publications have been mentioned also. Bibliographic material on women and religion is included in many of the volumes cited in this survey. In addition, cf. *Genesis III* for Nov.-Dec. 1972; *Origins* for Feb. 24, 1972 and May 18, 1972; *Liturgy* for Dec. 1973, Nov. 1974, and May 1975.

"current" a bit earlier or later, and for this reason it is instructive to compare some of the earlier works with the more recent.

The conciliar documents themselves barely touch on the issue of women's equality. Indeed, the index to the Abbott edition² lists only five references under "women," four of which refer to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*), and the other to the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*Apostolicam actuositatem*). *Gaudium et spes* contains a strong passage against discrimination that has been cited often in more recent articles: "With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language, or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent" (no. 29). This principle, however, is undercut by subsequent emphasis on the preservation of the "domestic role of women" (no. 52) and by the qualification "in accordance with their own nature," attached to the passage recommending that women assume "their full proper role" in cultural life (no. 60). Underlying this qualification seems to be the assumption that woman's nature is well defined and limiting. Finally, in a passage added during the reworking of *Apostolicam actuositatem* the Council fathers observe that "since in our times women have an ever more active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely in the various fields of the Church's apostolate" (no. 9).

Although the Council fathers had thus affirmed the equality of women and indicated some approval of the women's movement for social and legal equality, the Council on the whole does not appear to have dealt in a substantive way with the issues of women's liberation. In fact, the special closing message of the fathers to women indicates that past attitudes were still very much in the ascendancy. Even the existence of this message is telling, since there is no similar document addressed simply "to men," although there are messages addressed to "rulers," "men of thought and science," "artists," and "workers." This very arrangement of categories carries the implication that women are thought of primarily in sexual roles, while men are regarded in terms of diversified vocational contributions. Indeed, this is made clear in the opening sentence of the message to women: "And now it is to you that we address ourselves, women of all states—girls, wives, mothers, and widows, to you also, consecrated virgins and women living alone—you constitute half of the immense human family."³ The message goes on to mention that "the vocation of woman" is in the present era "being

² Walter M. Abbott, S.J., ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York, 1966). Subsequent references to conciliar documents are from this edition.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 732-33.

achieved in its fulness," a statement whose tone of assurance that the Church already knows what this vocation is stands in marked contrast to what is said in the message to workers ("very loved sons"): "The Church is ever seeking to understand you better."⁴

For some, however, the time immediately following the Council was regarded as a suitable one in which to raise the issues that follow from accepting the principle of equality. A Zurich attorney, Gertrud Heinzelmann, collected statements of women addressed to Council fathers and published them in 1965 under the title *Wir schweigen nicht länger!*,⁵ and in January of that year *Commonweal* ran her article "The Priesthood and Women," along with Mary Daly's examination of Christian antifeminism, "A Built-in Bias."⁶ The *Commonweal* piece was Daly's first article on religion and sexism, and it was as a result of this article that she was asked to write the book that eventually became *The Church and the Second Sex*.⁷ Another significant postconciliar book is Sally Cunneen's *Sex: Female; Religion: Catholic*.⁸ This 1968 volume contains the results of a survey conducted by *Cross Currents* on attitudes of and toward

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 735-36. Despite the fact that certain conciliar statements encourage egalitarianism, subsequent official statements have not been consistent with the declaration in *Gaudium et spes* that discrimination based on sex is "to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent." This is especially the case with regard to the 1972 *Motu proprio* "On Laying down Certain Norms regarding the Sacred Order of the Diaconate" (*Crux Special*, Sept. 29, 1972), which evinces a problematic selectivity in its affirmation of tradition, at once dispensing with the traditional minor orders but reserving installation as lector or acolyte to men "in accordance with the venerable tradition of the Church" (p. 1). Several representatives to the 1971 Synod of Bishops addressed the issue of equal participation by women in the ministerial life of the Church, but the Synod document "Justice in the World" (Washington, D.C., 1972) states ambiguously that "women should have their own share of responsibility and participation in the community life of society and likewise of the Church" (p. 44). The international commission established after the 1971 Synod to study women in Church and society has not yet published any reports. Finally, it must be observed that the statement issuing from the 1974 Synod on evangelization seems weaker on this issue than the conciliar statements. Although acknowledging the "intimate connection between human liberation and evangelization," the statement from the Synod is framed, for the most part, in sexually exclusive language, and the bishops' condemnation of "the denial or abridgement of rights because of race" stops short of any mention of discrimination on the basis of sex.

⁵Zurich, 1965. Heinzelmann has also edited a collection of interventions regarding women by the Council fathers, *Die getrennten Schwestern: Frauen nach dem Konzil* (Zurich, 1967). As far as the position of women is concerned, she claims in an introductory passage that "'aggiornamento' has scarcely begun" (p. 9).

⁶*Commonweal* 81 (1965) 504-8 and 508-11.

⁷First published in 1968, this book has been reissued (with an extensive and critical "new feminist postchristian introduction" by the author) by Harper and Row this year. It will be considered in the final section of this essay, along with Daly's other works on the subject.

⁸London, 1968.

American Catholic women. It reveals considerable diversity of opinion among the women, who were surveyed on such subjects as the Council, confession, education, sexuality, and church roles. In general, respondents favored women lectors and "deaconesses," but opposed the idea of women priests. Although the sample was not broadly representative and the results are dated, Cunneen's survey remains important; for it links an emerging feminism with the postconciliar climate of renewal, and thus presages the developments in Catholic feminism since the late 1960's.⁹

The title of Heinzelmann's second book, *Die getrennten Schwestern*, evokes associations with the ecumenical movement to which the Council gave considerable impetus. Indeed, it can be said in general that the ecumenical movement and the women's movement in the Church have been mutually influential. The spirit of ecumenism has encouraged Catholic women to notice similarities between their ecclesiastical situation and those of other denominations, and the sense of sharing a secondary status in the life and ministry of the religious community has contributed to a bonding process among Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish¹⁰ feminists. Although the legal status of women varies from one denomination to another, women of all faiths have found they share similar concerns over issues such as committee representation, church employment,¹¹ theological education,¹² religious language, liturgical

⁹ In *Today's Catholic Woman* (Notre Dame, 1971) Dolores Curran summarizes hundreds of interviews with the conclusion that "unless we change the role of today's Catholic woman and change it rapidly we may not have tomorrow's Catholic woman" (p. 10).

¹⁰ The present survey focuses particularly on the Christian tradition. Significant recent articles on women and Judaism include Judith Hauptman, "Images of Women in the Talmud," *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York, 1974) pp. 184-212, Paul E. Hyman, "The Other Half: Women in the Jewish Tradition," *Conservative Judaism* 26 (1972) 14-21, Barbara Krasner, "Endpoint: Where Torah and Family Touch," *Liturgy* 18 (Dec. 1973) 21-24. Especially useful is the extensively documented study by Gail B. Schulman, "View from the Back of the Synagogue: Women in Judaism," *Sexist Religion and Women in the Church*, ed. Alice L. Hageman (New York, 1974) pp. 143-66.

¹¹ Cf. Earl D. C. Brewer, "A Study of Employment of Women in Professional or Executive Positions in the Churches at a National Level," *Women's Liberation and the Church*, ed. Sarah Bentley Doely (New York, 1970) pp. 115-18. In reporting on a study of seventeen denominations, Brewer, Director of the Department of Research of the National Council of Churches, declares that "in summary, these data reflect adherence to the rhetoric of equality of opportunity for women on the one hand, and the factual conditions of considerable discrimination on the other" (p. 118).

¹² A report of the May 15-17, 1970 meeting of the National Conference on the Role of Women in Theological Education is also included in the Doely anthology, pp. 135-45. In addition, *Theological Education* has published two special issues: "Women in Theological Education: Past, Present, and Future" (Summer 1972) and "Women in Theological Education: An Issue Reexamined" (Winter 1975).

involvement, and educational patterns.¹³ More than one writer has described the situation of women in churches where equality is legally recognized as analogous to that of blacks in this country. Sexism, they argue, is at least as pervasive as racism, which has not been overcome by a constitutional amendment or Supreme Court decision, the importance and necessity of these measures notwithstanding. "Like our black brethren," writes Norma Ramsey Jones, "we women ministers are rapidly discovering that the removal of legal barriers to the fullest expression of humanity and service is only the beginning of the fight. The years ahead will show whether we will be able to break out of the social and cultural straightjacket in which we have been bound up."¹⁴

Ecumenical solidarity on issues of women and religion is evident in the reports of certain formal interfaith conferences. For example, the report of the final meeting of the Worship and Mission section of the Roman Catholic/Presbyterian-Reformed Consultation (Richmond, October 1971) recommends the opening of seminaries to women, the ordination of qualified women, and the full and equal participation of women at all levels of ecclesiastical decision-making.¹⁵ An ongoing ecumenical solidarity is demonstrated by the existence of such publications as *Genesis III*, newsletter of the Philadelphia Task Force on Women in Religion,¹⁶ as well as by the fact that many books on the topic of women and religion expand their focus beyond the immediate context of the author's denomination.¹⁷

The moral component present in so many of the recent descriptive works on women and religion has been analyzed by Beverly Wildung Harrison in "Sexism and the Contemporary Church: When Evasion Becomes Complicity."¹⁸ According to Harrison, sexism involves "an ethos and a value structure, and the formal and informal social patterns which support that ethos and value structure in our social world."¹⁹ It is her claim that what makes this ethos and value structure wrong (and not simply a morally indifferent distinction of roles) is the "inequity of the human identity which that social differentiation between the sexes distributes."²⁰ Agreeing with Elizabeth Janeway's analysis of sexist

¹³ Cf. Miriam Crist and Tilda Norberg, "Sex Role Stereotyping in the United Methodist Nursery Curriculum," Doely, pp. 119-24. *Momentum*, journal of the National Catholic Education Association, focuses on women and Catholic education in its Dec. 1972 issue.

¹⁴ "Women in the Ministry," Doely, p. 69. Cf. Daniel H. Krichbaum, "Masculinity and Racism—Breaking out of the Illusion," *Christian Century*, Jan. 10, 1973.

¹⁵ *Origins* 1 (1972) 793-98.

¹⁶ P.O. Box 24003, Philadelphia, Pa. 19139.

¹⁷ Cf. Margaret Sitler Ermath, *Adam's Fractured Rib* (Philadelphia, 1970), and Georgia Harkness, *Women in Church and Society* (Nashville, 1972).

¹⁸ In Hageman, pp. 195-216. ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 196. ²⁰ *Ibid.*

structures in *Man's World, Woman's Place: A Study in Social Mythology*,²¹ Harrison contends that the fact that the female is defined by a restricted "sphere" of activity within the larger world of the male society results in an "uneven distribution of identity." In other words, the development and sphere of activity of females is artificially circumscribed, whereas that of males extends to the limits of human possibilities. The sexist system thus functions to neutralize part of the human potential of women, and to the extent that this is the case, the system must be regarded as destructive and evil.

Among recent titles that indicate a perception of the problem similar to that of Janeway and Harrison are Elsie Thomas Culver's *Women in the World of Religion*²² and Arlene Swidler's *Woman in a Man's Church*.²³ The subtitle of Swidler's book, "From Role to Person," and the title of her first chapter, "What's a Woman and Who Decides?" both point to the moral problem Harrison terms "inequity of identity distribution." Noting that the sexist culture has generally responded to the question "What's a woman?" by saying "Ask a man"—that is, consider the works of male theologians, psychologists, historians—Swidler observes that "men are extremely fortunate not to have all those books written about them," because the imposed definitions have "set limits and narrowed options."²⁴ Both Culver and Swidler are in agreement with the essence of Harrison's recommendation for remedying the oppressive situation, which involves not simply enlarging the boundary of woman's "sphere" within the "world" of man, but rather dissolving the boundary entirely.

To sum up the first section of this survey, it can be noted in general that literature analyzing the subject of women and religion has increased during the last decade,²⁵ and there is a greater frequency of books and articles by women, particularly by women with advanced theological degrees. With a number of good general surveys already in print, analysts have tended of late to concentrate in more depth on particular issues, and consequently the literature has grown more and more specialized. An ecumenical solidarity tends to characterize much of the literature, but there is also evidence of disagreement among feminists, though not about denominational concerns. At issue rather are such basic questions as whether, and to what extent, women should devote their energies to concerns involving traditional "patriarchal" religion. Most of the literature represents the position of those who value the religious tradition and seek in some measure to reform it, but an impor-

²¹ New York, 1971. ²² Garden City, N.Y., 1967.

²³ New York, 1972. ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁵ Cf. Marie Augusta Neal, S.N.D., "Women in Religion: A Sociological Perspective," scheduled for publication this year in *Sociological Inquiry*.

tant minority argues for a "separatist" or at least a "boundary" position for feminists vis-à-vis the established churches. Virtually all of the feminist literature on women and religion, however, is characterized by a tone of moral seriousness, even urgency. This sense of moral urgency has led many to search the tradition for clues to the causes of the oppression as well as for evidence that fragments of egalitarianism have been present from the beginnings of Christianity.

HISTORICAL ANALYSES

Although nearly all the works mentioned in this survey touch in some way on Scripture or tradition, certain publications stand out as being particularly, though usually not exclusively, concerned with the historical aspects of the woman question. Under this general category of historical analyses it is possible to distinguish three principal types of literature: comprehensive surveys, works focusing on Scripture, and literature concerned with the history of Christianity after the apostolic age.

Comprehensive Surveys

Of works that attempt to convey a broad sweep of the picture the most comprehensive is Culver's *Women in the World of Religion*. In twenty chapters she discusses the tradition from pre-OT times through the present. To this survey she adds appendices on women in the major non-Christian religions, on religious careers, and on the "world picture" regarding ordination and representation in decision-making bodies in the various churches.

Although less comprehensive than Culver's work, George H. Tavard's *Woman in Christian Tradition*²⁶ is important for its close theological analyses of the historical periods treated. The first section ("The Old Tradition," which deals with OT times through Augustine) includes a particularly useful treatment of the ways the early Christians, and later the Greek and Latin Fathers, dealt with the issue of how the "new freedom in Christ" should be experienced in the relationship between men and women. Though somewhat irenic in tone, the section on the patristic age does not fail to discuss the tension evident in this literature between the spiritual appreciation of woman as redeemed Christian and the strong misogyny of so many of the Fathers. Tavard does not analyze medieval or early modern times, but rather focuses his second section ("The Recent Tradition") on nineteenth- and twentieth-century "models" and "reflections" in the Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions. It seems significant that this 1973 book shows him solidly in favor of admitting women "to all sacraments and to all positions of

²⁶ Notre Dame, 1973.

ministry and service," since "the freedom of the Christian, imparted to all in baptism, should remove all man-made barriers between human beings."²⁷ In an earlier essay, "Women in the Church: A Theological Problem?"²⁸ Tavad had minimized the ordination question (which he still regards as secondary to the anthropological question) in terms that seem to have skirted some of the concerns he deals with in the recent book.

A third notable comprehensive work is *What a Modern Catholic Believes about Women* by Albertus Magnus McGrath, O.P.²⁹ Less ambitious in scope than the Culver and Tavad volumes, McGrath's book provides a well-documented feminist analysis of sexism in the Catholic tradition, at the same time evincing the sort of ecumenical solidarity mentioned earlier in this survey. Of particular interest are her chapters relating the women's movement to sociocultural developments since the Enlightenment, especially the last chapter, "Women as the 'Nigger of the Church.'"

Biblical Studies

The works that focus primarily on Scripture include textual analyses, pieces dealing with hermeneutics, and attempts to relate new understandings of scriptural materials to "the person in the pew." A useful place to start the search for careful analyses of biblical materials in relation to the concerns of women's liberation is the anthology *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*.³⁰ Phyllis Bird's "Images of Women in the Old Testament"³¹ studies these images as they occur in legal writings, proverbs, historical writings, and creation accounts, and includes ample references for further study. Bernard P. Prusak's "Woman: Seductive Siren and Source of Sin?"³² considers the pseudepigraphal materials and concludes that, although early religious writers had "created myths that flowed from and buttressed their prejudices," in the present era "it is no longer necessary for men to create theological reasons for excluding women from any active role in civil or religious society in order to preserve their own dominance and cope with their sexual drives."³³ A third helpful piece is Constance F. Parvey's examination of the attitudes of the early Church,

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 218. ²⁸ *Ecumenist* 4 (1965) 7-10. ²⁹ Chicago, 1972.

³⁰ Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed. (New York, 1974).

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-88. Cf. also Phyllis Trible, "Depatriarchalizing in Biblical Interpretation," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41 (1973) 31-34; J. S. Bailey, "Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2-3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1970) 137-50; Martha M. Wilson, "Woman, Women, and the Bible," *Women and Religion: 1972*, ed. Judith Plaskow Goldenberg (Missoula, 1973) pp. 141-47.

³² *Religion and Sexism*, pp. 89-116.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 106-7.

"The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament."³⁴ Parvey accounts for the religious egalitarianism of Gal 3:28 in terms of the fact that the primitive community considered itself to be living at the end of history and was in expectation of an imminent consummation of the present order of reality. She implies that the societal applications of this religious insight were not undertaken because believers expected the present order to disappear soon. She then suggests that the fact that the end did not come in the manner expected resulted in the prolongation of a state of tension between "the theology of equivalence in Christ" on the one hand and "the practice of women's subordination" on the other. In its attempt to reconcile these factors the Church "maintained a status-quo ethics on the social level through the subordination of women, and it affirmed the vision of equivalence by projecting it as an other-worldly reality."³⁵

Here Parvey's analysis is particularly interesting when related to Janeway's reading of the secular situation. If woman's essential sphere is projected into "another world" beyond this temporal one, then the fact that her this-worldly role is narrowly conceived (the situation Janeway describes in *Man's World, Woman's Place*) appears to be less problematic than would be the case were there but "one world." At any rate, this sort of reasoning appears to have been quite influential in Christian thinking. As Parvey notes, the often confused and complex arguments with which theologians have dealt with this tension between religious equality and social subordination have tended to amount to a position that men belong essentially to this world and are concerned with its governance, while women "belong to the next world and act in the Church only as hidden helpers and servants to men."³⁶ She concludes that the subordination of women in Christianity is due not so much to Paul as to the way subsequent generations of Christians have chosen to interpret him.

Parvey's emphasis on the hermeneutical aspect of the problem is well placed, and it suggests an affinity with the position presented earlier by Krister Stendahl in an extremely important essay, *The Bible and the*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 117-49. Cf. also Robin Scroggs, "Paul and the Eschatological Woman," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 40 (1972) 283-303, and "Paul and the Eschatological Woman: Revisited," *ibid.* 42 (1974) 532-37. This last issue also contains Elaine H. Pagels' very useful essay "Paul and Women: A Response to Recent Discussion," pp. 538-49. Even more recent are William O. Walker, Jr., "1 Corinthians 11:2-16 and Paul's Views regarding Women," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975) 94-110, and A. Feuillet, "La dignité et le rôle de la femme d'après quelques textes pauliniens: Comparaison avec l'Ancien Testament," *New Testament Studies* 21 (1975) 157-91. Feuillet analyzes 1 Cor 11:7 and 14:33b-35, and Eph 5:22-23, and concludes that the attitudes of Paul and Jesus toward women are complementary, not contradictory.

³⁵ *Religion and Sexism*, p. 146. ³⁶ *Ibid.*

*Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics.*³⁷ Undertaken in direct response to the debate over the ordination of women in the Church of Sweden, Stendahl's essay basically involves a three-stage exploration of the question "What is the significance of the NT view of the relationship between men and women for the contemporary Church?" He first identifies a present ecclesiastical issue (the ordination of women) as indicative of a deeper uncertainty: the nature of revelation and the meaning of Scripture. He then defines the essential "content" of revelation as a self-communication of God ("God and his mighty acts," he says, constitute the "center of revelation," a revelation which he describes as "anchored in the Christ event"), which he sees as something different from the anthropology that may derive from the human experience of revelation. "The understanding of man in the biblical view is valuable for our reading of the content of revelation, but it can hardly be the revelation itself."³⁸ The final and most fully developed stage of Stendahl's exploration involves a discussion of what results from the application of this distinction between revelation itself and the views ascendant in the community experiencing revelation.

Stendahl argues that it is an error automatically to apply the description, however accurate, of primitive Christianity as a norm for the Church in subsequent ages. "It is highly doubtful," he contends, that God wants us to play "First Century Semites."³⁹ He goes on to illustrate the principle that not even what was an "event" in the life of Jesus is necessarily normative for the Church, citing the example of Jesus' own consciousness (expressed in Mt 10:16) that his mission was limited to the house of Israel. This pattern has clearly not been regarded as binding "for all time," and this fact reinforces Stendahl's argument against automatically making NT descriptions normative for the Church. Stendahl nevertheless finds it important to understand the view of the relationship between men and women that obtained in the early Church; for such an understanding serves to illustrate the fundamental point that from the beginning of Christianity a tension has existed between the ideal (the "new" and "not yet" aspect of the Christian revelation) and its implementation in the community. Once one assumes that the religious ideals were not perfectly practiced in the early Church, there is no reason to insist that current practices replicate those of the primitive communities. This tension between the ideal and its implementation is illustrated in Stendahl's treatment of the "break-through" passage in Gal 3:28, which he sees as containing an unfolding agenda for the Church to

³⁷ Tr. Emilie Sander (Philadelphia, 1966). This edition is a revised and enlarged version of "Bibelsynen och Kvinnan," *Kvinnan-Samhället-Kyrkan* (Stockholm, 1958) pp. 138-67.

³⁸ Stendahl, p. 23. ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

implement. He notes that just as the recognition of equality between Jew and Greek was not limited to an individualistic, *coram Deo* realm, but was actually applied in church practice, so too has it been necessary to carry the ideal of equality between slave and free, man and woman beyond the internal *coram Deo* dimension into the realm of ecclesiastical and social practice. The cogency of Stendahl's analysis has been demonstrated not only by the fact that the Swedish Church (despite its "ecumenical concern" over the possibility of losing its status as a "bridge" between Catholic and Protestant elements in Christendom) acted on these hermeneutical insights and began to ordain women, but also by reason of the fact that this article has been something of a "break-through" piece for persons in general concerned with the status of women in the Church.

Of works describing scriptural attitudes toward women with the nonspecialist in mind, Leonard Swidler's "Jesus Was a Feminist"⁴⁰ is especially noteworthy. Swidler's essay, which has been translated into at least a dozen languages, argues that the words and actions of Jesus in the Gospels give evidence that he "vigorously promoted the dignity of women in the midst of a very male-dominated society."⁴¹ Other items designed to supply a general readership with scripturally-based discussions of feminist concerns include *All We're Meant to Be: A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation* by Letha Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty,⁴² and *Women and Jesus* by Alicia Craig Faxon.⁴³

Other Historical Studies

Works focusing on the situation of women in Christianity since the apostolic age differ not only according to the purposes of the authors, but also according to the extent to which they are informed by feminist questions.⁴⁴ Most supply some measure of documentation regarding the oppression of women within the tradition, but interpretations and emphases vary. Certain items mainly provide data about women that has not generally been emphasized in previous historical studies. For example, in *Women of the Church: Role and Renewal*⁴⁵ Mary Lawrence

⁴⁰ *Catholic World* 212 (1971) 177-83.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁴² Waco, 1974.

⁴³ Philadelphia, 1973.

⁴⁴ Feminists have expressed their recognition of the masculine bias of most historical studies by attempting to supply "herstory." Examples of works that endeavor to bring the "hidden history" of women to light are Joan Morris, *The Lady was a Bishop* (Riverdale, N.J., 1973), and Roland Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* (Minneapolis, 1971) and *Women of the Reformation in France and England* (Minneapolis, 1973).

⁴⁵ New York, 1967. Cf. Roger Gryson, *Le ministère des femmes dans l'église ancienne* (Gembloux, 1972). An English translation of this study, prepared by Jean Laporte and Mary Hall, is scheduled for publication this year by St. John's University Press.

McKenna, S.C.M.M., offers a detailed study of the ancient orders of widows, deaconesses, and virgins. McKenna finds it paradoxical that the ecclesiastical status of women is lower today than it was in the "primitive" Church, although the status of women in society has risen. "What Christian women had then, and what is lacking today is the status of ecclesiastical *order*, and the attendant sense of having a definite place and function in the Church's official structure."⁴⁶

Other works tend to emphasize theological analysis as well as reinterpretation of data. Of particular interest is Elinor L. McLaughlin's "The Christian Past: Does It Hold a Future for Women?" which combines useful methodological suggestions with historical illustrations of her thesis that within the dominant patriarchal tradition it is possible to recover "glimpses" of situations in the past where Christianity "fostered the being, experience, and authority of women."⁴⁷ McLaughlin contends that history should be both "responsible" and "usable," that is, it should deal with the past "on its own terms" and it should analyze the tradition in the light of "a new set of questions which arise out of commitments to wholeness for women and for all humanity."⁴⁸ The question at the base of McLaughlin's study is "whether in addition to the negative image of women and the male image of God, the tradition holds ideals or moments of realization of human wholeness which can call forth the *renovatio* in Christian history that has so often been a source of radical change, renewal, reformation."⁴⁹ She answers this question affirmatively, supporting her position with examples of spiritual leadership and egalitarianism from the biography of Christina of Markyate and from the writings of Julian of Norwich and St. Birgitta of Sweden. McLaughlin's approach is helpful and constructive, in this article as well as in her contribution to *Religion and Sexism*, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Women in Medieval Theology."⁵⁰ Other notable revisionist studies in this anthology include Rosemary Radford Ruether's "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church" and Jane Dempsey's "Women and the Continental Reformation."⁵¹

Finally, an aspect of history that is likely to receive greater attention as more and more revisionist analyses (particularly ones dealing with the modern period) become available is the resistance women have displayed over the centuries toward discriminatory religious structures. A recent example of this sort of focus is published in the 1973 proceedings of the working group on women and religion of the American Academy of

⁴⁶ McKenna, p. 147.

⁴⁷ *Anglican Theological Review* 57 (1975) 39.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38. ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 39. ⁵⁰ Pp. 213-66.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-83 and 292-318.

Religion⁵² in the form of several essays on the nineteenth-century publication *The Woman's Bible*, a feminist commentary prepared by a committee led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

WORKS ON SELECTED ISSUES

The books and articles to be discussed below represent five issue areas that (a) tend to recur in the literature and (b) seem to be dependent upon theological advances in order for progress in liberation to occur. These include church law, liturgy, ministry, ordination, and models for Christian life.

Church Law

Although many recognize that the present code of canon law discriminates against women, literature on the specifically legal questions has not been abundant. The *Jurist* for Winter/Spring 1974 contains useful material on this subject. Of great importance is the address by Pope Paul VI on "Canonical Equity," in which he declares that "canon law is . . . not just a way of life and a series of pastoral regulations, but is also a school of justice, discretion, and charity in operation."⁵³ This principle of equity offers an ideal against which to measure the present code, a task undertaken by Lucy Vasquez in "The Position of Women according to the Code."⁵⁴ Vasquez' descriptive article concludes with the observation that the canons discussed "portray women as being less than full adults on a par with men. They are to be protected, separated, observed, supervised, and, at least on occasion, even mistrusted."⁵⁵ In the same issue Joan A. Range examines the history of canon law and finds precedent in Gratian for legislating on the basis of current theological understanding rather than in a spirit of blind adherence to tradition.⁵⁶ Range argues that essential to the reasoning behind laws prohibiting women from church office were Gratian's beliefs that woman is inferior and naturally subject to man, and that through woman sin entered the world. Pointing out that equality of the sexes is accepted by believers today and that the Church no longer blames Eve for original sin, she holds that there is no longer adequate theological reasoning to support

⁵² Joan Arnold Romero, compiler, *Women and Religion: 1973 Proceedings* (Tallahassee, 1973) pp. 39-78. Stanton's work (with an introduction by Barbara Welter) has been reprinted as *The Original Feminist Attack on the Bible (The Woman's Bible)* (New York, 1974).

⁵³ Allocution, Feb. 8, 1973, to auditors and officials of the Sacred Roman Rota, *Jurist* 34 (1974) 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-42. ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁵⁶ "Legal Exclusion of Women from Church Office," pp. 112-27. Cf. Ida Ramig, *Der Ausschluss der Frau vom priesterlichen Amt* (Cologne, 1973).

the discriminatory laws. The contemporary political factors involved in eliminating discrimination from church law are not discussed in these articles, and subsequent analysts would probably do well to link considerations related to removing sexual discrimination with broader questions about what sort of over-all revision is desirable. For example, the impetus for equal recognition of both sexes in church law might profitably be aligned with that favoring a pluralistic or regional approach to the question, since it seems more likely that certain reforms can be implemented sooner in some cultures than in others.⁵⁷ In "Canon Law and the Battle of the Sexes,"⁵⁸ Clara Henning depicts the current code as essentially a power tool designed to reinforce the dominant position of a male clerical caste, and expresses pessimism with regard to the forthcoming revision. "We are confronted with a system that will in every likelihood continue to write discriminatory new laws on the basis of discriminatory old laws."⁵⁹ Henning feels that only pressure from concerned women can result in the removal of discriminatory laws. Pressure is no doubt required, but it seems inadequate unless complemented by support of the principle of equity on the part of those preparing the revision.

Liturgy

In 1969 Paul Vanbergen observed in *Studia liturgica* that "every cultural mutation mediates new values, and these values must be integrated into the liturgy if the liturgy is not to run the risk of being completely out of touch."⁶⁰ Vanbergen's article does not deal directly with the profound cultural mutation involved in the women's movement, but he is aware that the crisis facing the churches is a "crisis of humanity" that calls for a "modern anthropology." Since 1970, however, a number of articles and at least two books on the relationship between worship and new understandings of woman have been published. Uniting this literature is a common insistence that the growing cultural recognition of woman's equality should be integrated into liturgical celebrations and a recurring cry for consistency between what the Church teaches about justice and equality and what it practices in liturgical life.

The Liturgical Conference, which has assumed considerable leadership in keeping the woman question before its members, devoted the October 1970 issue of *Liturgy* to articles related to the women's movement, of which Mary Catherine Bateson's "Where? Lydia's. On Liturgy and Its Need for Women," and Edward J. Foye's "The

⁵⁷ Cf. Martin J. McManus, "Canon Law: Justice by Variety," *America* 125 (1971) 257-59.

⁵⁸ *Religion and Sexism*, pp. 267-91.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

⁶⁰ "Liturgy in Crisis," *Studia liturgica* 6 (1969) 91.

Androgynous Church”⁶¹ are especially important because they illustrate the tension between two main positions regarding woman’s involvement in the Church. Bateson feels that worship should allow both men and women their “full expression” and “full contribution,” and emphasizes a “complementarity” of roles between the sexes. “If the presidency of the eucharist is to remain a male prerogative, we need to search out ways of counterpointing this role,”⁶² she observes, suggesting that if a man consecrates, perhaps a woman should convene the worshipping community and pronounce the final blessing. Foye, on the other hand, stresses the theological principle that the image of God is both male and female, and recommends the ideal of an “androgynous” worshipping community. He opposes prescribed sex-role definitions for worship because in the past these have entailed the “rejection of the feminine,” which he sees as detrimental to both men and women: “If we reduce the feminine to silence, we are rejecting ourselves and defining in advance the graces God may give and to whom he may give them.”⁶³ Both Bateson and Foye note that in many countries the fact that the sanctuary has been men’s territory has meant that the nave has largely contained women, children, and the elderly. Whereas Bateson advocates remedying this by developing a “contrapuntal” role for women, Foye is unwilling to assume that a liturgical role should be assigned simply on the basis of sex, and maintains that fidelity to the Spirit in our times requires the ordination of women.

In a similar vein, Janet Walton, S.N.J.M., states in “Women, Worship, and the Church” that “as long as the church continues to differentiate according to sex rather than according to the gifts of each person, it is openly impoverishing the people of God.”⁶⁴ Walton analyzes recent statements on women from three administrative levels of the Church—Rome, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and a diocesan priests’ senate—and questions the inconsistency between these statements and other general statements. The lack of official support for the full involvement of women in ecclesiastical life is indeed problematic, but the problem is larger than this. As Sally Cunneen observed as early as 1971,⁶⁵ regulations at that time allowed considerably more liturgical involvement for women than had been permitted in the past, but

⁶¹ *Liturgy* 15 (Oct. 1970) 6–8 and 16–19. Another special issue of *Liturgy* on women appeared in Dec. 1973 and a third is scheduled for Nov. 1975. *Living Worship*, also published by the Liturgical Conference, has focused occasionally on women; cf. Robert W. Hovda, “Women in a Sign-Church: Do We Lead or Follow in Human Liberation?” Sept. 1973, pp. 1–4.

⁶² *Liturgy* 15 (Oct. 1970) p. 7.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁶⁴ *Liturgy* 18 (Dec. 1973) 4.

⁶⁵ “Women and the Liturgy: The Present Paradox,” *American Ecclesiastical Review* 165 (1971) 167–74. Cunneen reports here on a survey conducted by a task force from the National Council of Catholic Women to measure the involvement of women in various

nevertheless participation was low despite the apparent willingness of many women to serve. She accounts for this "paradoxical" situation in terms of the laity's conditioned passivity and lack of knowledge of new regulations, and the lack of issue awareness on the part of church administrators. More recently, positive efforts to remedy the situation have been published in the form of books that include theoretical discussions as well as practical illustrations of nonsexist prayers and worship services. Arlene Swidler, who headed the task force conducting the survey mentioned by Cunneen, has edited *Sistercelebrations: Nine Worship Experiences*,⁶⁶ and Sharon and Thomas Neuffer Emswiler have collaborated on *Women and Worship: A Guide to Non-Sexist Hymns, Prayers, and Liturgies*.⁶⁷

Ministry

The action, experimentation, and reflection of American sisters and laywomen since the Council has resulted in a considerable body of literature regarding women in ministry. *The Changing Sister*, edited by M. Charles Borromeo Muckinhern, C.S.C.,⁶⁸ had indicated some of the directions renewal was taking among women religious in the mid-1960's, and by the early 1970's enough data was in for the National Assembly of Women Religious to publish two books based on the experiences of sisters who had taken seriously the challenge to examine their lives and works in the light of the gospel, the spirit of the founder, and the needs of the times. In the foreword to the first of these volumes, *Women in Ministry: A Sister's View*, editor Ethne Kennedy, S.H., notes that two significant trends of contemporary religious experience include "the phenomenon of sisters coming together in national groups designed to direct church action toward renewal and service" and "the discovery and sharing of professional competence of sisters in inter-community fashion."⁶⁹ A second anthology, *Gospel Dimensions of Ministry*,⁷⁰ reports on new approaches to traditional apostolates of education and health care, as well as on such areas as campus ministry, pastoral ministry, ministry to the aging and to migrants, and involvement in housing, legal justice, and politics. Of significance also is M. Thomas Aquinas Carroll, R.S.M., *The Experience of Women Re-*

liturgical roles. The task force heard from 345 parishes in 71 dioceses and from 65 diocesan liturgical commissions. Of the latter, only 7 responded with an unqualified "yes" to the question "Does your diocese intend to promote the use of women as lectors and commentators in the parishes?" while 13 responded "yes" with unspecified limitations, 27 did not answer or did not know, and 18 responded "no."

⁶⁶ Philadelphia, 1974. ⁶⁷ New York, 1974.

⁶⁸ Notre Dame, 1965. ⁶⁹ Chicago, 1972, p. 12.

⁷⁰ Ethne Kennedy, S.H., ed. (Chicago, 1973).

*ligious in the Ministry of the Church.*⁷¹ Carroll concludes that many of the difficulties experienced by those seeking to respond in new ministries are due to inadequate relations between men and women in the Church, and she is convinced that "one of the prime ministries must be a healing of the man-woman situation in the Church and in society."⁷² Kennedy, Carroll, and others⁷³ have noted the relationship between developments among sisters and among contemporary women in general, a subject treated by Lora Ann Quinonez, C.D.P., in "The Women's Movement and Women Religious."⁷⁴ Quinonez finds affinities between the search of women religious and other women in terms of "a desire to experience ourselves as persons, not as symbols or mythic figures; a critical examination of old roles and an urge to shape new ones in which we can make our gifts available to others; a sense of the huge need for the liberation of all peoples and groups."⁷⁵

Not surprisingly, the diversification of ministerial roles for women has met with some resistance. Kennedy observes that "resistance to woman's mature entrance to Church and civil societies is not limited to men and clerics alone," but is also due to the fact that women have been conditioned to mistrust one another" and "to underestimate feminine abilities."⁷⁶ Among others, Thomas Franklin O'Meara has noted that the assumption of leadership roles by women poses some threat to "clerical culture," a fact he interprets as ultimately beneficial for the Church. "In the midst of these changes," he claims, "women are initiating not a

⁷¹ Chicago, 1974. Carroll reports that generally "as of today the Church in its prescriptions is not taking women seriously" (p. 17), although she regards as encouraging the fact that the Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate had mentioned in its 1972 *Guidelines* that a "critical question concerns the ordination of women as deacons" and reported that "among deacon candidates themselves and leaders of training programs, there is growing conviction that women would strengthen the diaconal ministry immeasurably" (Washington, D.C., 1971, p. 54).

⁷² Carroll, p. 16.

⁷³ In "Religious Life Yesterday and Tomorrow," *New Catholic World* 312 (1972) 74-77, Annette Walters, C.S.J., describes the efforts of American sisters to liberate themselves from oppressive structures in order to serve more effectively. Cf. also my "Creative Ministry: Apostolic Women Today," *Sister Formation Bulletin* 19 (1972) 8-14.

⁷⁴ *Origins* 4 (1974) 337-43. In "Follow-up/The Liberation of Women," *Center Magazine* 5 (July-Aug. 1972), Anita Caspary, I.H.M., describes her work as superior general of the California Immaculate Heart community (a group that chose to lose canonical religious status rather than rescind the decisions of its chapter of renewal) in terms of a "struggle for the liberation of a specific group of women dedicated to the service of the church" (p. 19).

⁷⁵ Quinonez, p. 343.

⁷⁶ *Gospel Dimensions of Ministry*, p. 10. This conditioning for self-mistrust among women is analyzed by Susanne Breckel, R.S.M., in "Women and Ministry in the 1970's: A Psychologist Reflects," *Women in Ministry*, pp. 83-93, and by Letitia Brennan, O.S.U., in "How Women Can Break the Power Barrier," *America* 128 (1973) 552-55.

power play for ordination to the solitary pastorate as it is now, but a movement towards the liberation of the ministry itself."⁷⁷

Ordination

Literature on this issue has appeared from time to time since 1965, but has increased dramatically within the last five years. In general, early works served to establish the import of the question. Subsequently writers have analyzed scriptural and traditional materials and focused on the pastoral dimensions of the issue. In 1965 Heinzelmann raised the question of ordination in relation to what the traditional practice of excluding women from priesthood may imply about the baptism of women. She cites the doctrine of the spiritual character imparted by baptism, which makes the recipient capable of receiving the other sacraments and grounds the Christian in the rights and duties of church membership, and asserts that "the exclusion of women from priestly ordination, a sacrament, quite obviously runs counter to this doctrine of the full effect of Baptism."⁷⁸ In another 1965 article, Charles R. Meyer urges a "careful" and "unprejudiced" re-examination of the question of the ordination of women in the early Church, and states that "to push the argument against the sacramentality of the ordination of deaconesses too far would be in fact to deny the sacramentality of the order of deacons."⁷⁹

The most substantial Roman Catholic contribution to the ordination discussion currently available in English is Haye van der Meer, S.J., *Women Priests in the Catholic Church?*⁸⁰ He investigates the arguments from Scripture, tradition, the magisterium, and speculative theology

⁷⁷ "Feminine Ministry and Clerical Culture," *Commonweal* 98 (1973) 523-26.

⁷⁸ "The Priesthood and Women," *Commonweal* 81 (1965) 507.

⁷⁹ "Ordained Women in the Early Church," *Chicago Studies* 4 (1965) 301. A substantial part of this article is included in Meyer's *Man of God* (Garden City, N.Y., 1974) pp. 58-85.

⁸⁰ Tr. Arlene and Leonard Swidler (Philadelphia, 1973). This work, a doctoral thesis which van der Meer completed under Karl Rahner, S.J., in 1962, was first published as *Priestertum der Frau?* (Freiburg, 1969). The English edition is enhanced by a useful bibliographic survey in the "Translators' Foreword," and by the translators' concluding observations on developments that have occurred since the thesis was written. A notable Anglican contribution is Emily C. Hewitt and Suzanne R. Hiatt, *Women Priests: Yes or No?* (New York, 1973), which explores the issue in terms of popular feelings about priesthood, attitudes toward women, theological arguments, and ecumenical and "practical" considerations. This volume also contains official documentation and a selected bibliography. Odette d'Ursel's "Women's Accession to the Pastoral Ministry in the Churches Stemming from the Reformation," *Lumen vitae* 29 (1974) 554-82, cites the main events in the gradual opening of pastoral responsibilities to women from 1832 to 1974, and quotes from principal documents of Protestant churches and ecumenical conferences. D'Ursel attaches much importance to exegetical and theological studies, noting that such examination "has nearly always resulted in women obtaining to the pastoral ministry on an equal footing with men, despite the weight of the past" (p. 582).

that have been offered by dogmatic theologians to affirm the practice of excluding women from orders, and concludes that "Catholic dogmatic theologians may not hold that according to the present position of theology it is already (or still) established on a scholarly basis that 'office' should, by divine law, remain closed to women."⁸¹ John J. Begley, S.J., and Carl J. Armbruster, S.J., likewise find the traditional material inconclusive and thus suggest that the issue of ordaining women is "pre-eminently a pastoral question."⁸²

Pastoral arguments for and against ordination tend to emphasize two interrelated aspects of priesthood, the functional and the symbolic. Mary Angela Harper inquires in an early article whether woman's contribution might be destroyed by being forced into "the existing structure of ecclesiastical functions and offices,"⁸³ and J. Galot, S.J., has argued that the priestly tasks related to cult, government, and preaching are "specifically masculine." Women, he notes, are divinely destined to co-operate with these tasks but not to share them. He considers woman's natural "feminine docility" to be in accord with the "masculine pastoral function of government" and holds that, with regard to preaching,

⁸¹ Van der Meer, p. 9. In 1973 the Committee on Pastoral Research and Practices of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops called for "exhaustive study" of the reasons for and against women's ordination. The Committee's report, "Theological Reflections on the Ordination of Women," is reprinted in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10 (1973) 695-99. It focuses on traditional arguments against ordaining women and does not give evidence of having taken into account the work of van der Meer. In "Will Women Be Ordained?" *Origins* 2 (1973) 743-44, Ann Gillen, S.H.C.J., objects to the negative emphasis of the report and predicts that a growing sense of rejection by the Roman Church will lead Catholic women to seek ordination in other Christian churches or to evolve an independent priesthood according to their sense of vocation. In "Biblical Material Relevant to the Ordination of Women," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 10 (1973) 669-94, J. Massyngherde Ford observes that "the bishops' report, while remaining open, has tended to overlook the evolution and diversity of thought and practice from the Old Testament to the New and also within the early Church itself" (p. 690). Ford sees no scriptural reasons for denying ordination to women, and underscores the statement of the 1968 Lambeth Conference: "The New Testament does not encourage us to believe that nothing should ever be done for the first time" (p. 693).

⁸² "Women and Office in the Church," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 165 (1971) 145-57. Others stressing a pastoral approach include Meyer, *Man of God*; Gerald O'Collins, S.J., "An Argument for Women Priests," *America* 129 (1973) 122-23; George R. Evans, "Ordination of Women," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 73 (1972) 29-32; Agnes Cunningham, S.S.C.M., "Women and the Diaconate," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 165 (1971) 158-66; Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., "Women Priests: Today's Theology and Yesterday's Sociology," *America* 131 (Dec. 14, 1974) 383-87. Observes Stuhlmueller: "We of the Catholic Church must seriously ponder the consequences of endorsing women as lectors and teachers of theology and yet denying them the sacred orders of the diaconate and priesthood. Without realizing it, we may be producing a 'Protestant' form of Catholicism—a religion emphasizing the Word over the Eucharist, especially over the liturgical sacrifice of the Mass" (p. 387).

⁸³ "Women's Role in the Church," *America* 115 (1966) 93.

woman performs the indispensable function of assimilating the truth as proclaimed by male preachers and then transmitting it in unofficial situations, chiefly to the young.⁸⁴ Still others have suggested that the ordination of women at this time could have the negative effect of perpetuating a hierarchical "caste structure."⁸⁵ Gregory Baum, on the other hand, maintains that "the ordination of women to the priesthood would restore a prophetic quality to the Church's ministry, educating people to discern the injustices in present society and presenting them with an ideal for participation of women in the life of society."⁸⁶ Literature on women and the diaconate has particularly emphasized pastoral considerations. In 1971 the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Permanent Diaconate released a "Report on the Permanent Diaconate" which states that "the current discussion of the theological dimensions of ministry should be pursued in terms of the Christian and not only in terms of the Christian male. Actual services being performed by women, both secular and religious, could often be rendered more effectively if they were performed within the office of deacon. The witness of history tells in favor of such practice, not against it" (no. 34).⁸⁷ Ford, Cunningham, Hünemann, and others have indicated that the ordination of women deacons is more immediately feasible than the introduction of women priests.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, most of the pastoral arguments advanced regarding diaconate can be extended to the areas of priesthood and episcopacy. As Begley and Armbruster have observed, "Because of the underlying unity of Church office, admission to one office implicitly affirms the theological possibility of admission to any of them."⁸⁹

⁸⁴ *L'Eglise et la femme* (Gembloux, 1965) p. 203.

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Gössman, "Women as Priests," tr. Simon King, in *Apostolic Succession: Rethinking a Barrier to Unity*, ed. Hans Küng (*Concilium* 34) pp. 115-25; Ann Kelley and Anne Walsh, "Ordination: A Questionable Goal for Women," Heyer, *Women and Orders*, pp. 67-73.

⁸⁶ "Ministry in the Church," *Women and Orders*, pp. 57-66.

⁸⁷ Prepared by a committee of eleven members of the Catholic Theological Society of America, the report is published in the *American Ecclesiastical Review* 164 (1971) 190-204, as well as in *Crux* and *Worship*.

⁸⁸ Ford, *art. cit.*; Cunningham, *art. cit.*, and "The Ministry of Women in the Church," *Review for Religious* 28 (1969) 124-41; Peter Hünemann, "Conclusions regarding the Female Diaconate," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 36 (1975) 325-33.

⁸⁹ *Art. cit.*, p. 151. The CTSA report cited above (n. 87) does not limit its conclusions regarding women to diaconal ministry, but rather states in general that the Catholic Church must be open to the Holy Spirit on the question of women's ministry; "for many women experience a desire to serve in capacities of spiritual leadership and sacramental service not available to them in the present structures and institutions of the Church" (no. 32). Noting that female leadership is a growing contemporary phenomenon, Karl Rahner observes in *The Shape of the Church to Come* (New York, 1974) that in the Christian community leadership should be linked with sacramental and liturgical life, which will entail women's serving in priestly roles in communities where they are leaders (p. 114).

Symbolic considerations have received much attention in the discussion about priesthood. Frederick P. Chenderlin, S.J., acknowledges that ontologically God could "work the miracle" that would empower a woman to "fulfil the task of consecration," but argues that the maleness of Christ is important because at the Last Supper he was "playing a particularly masculine role"⁹⁰ in undoing the harm caused by Adam. As Chenderlin interprets Paul, the maleness of Adam is essential to his headship and authority, and analogously, Christ's redemptive activity must involve maleness, since "man has a precedence in authority over woman."⁹¹ Evans, Price, and Barnhouse, on the other hand, maintain that including women in ordained ministry could enhance the representational power of priestly service.⁹² They are basically in agreement with Begley and Armbruster, who hold that "it is extrinsic and accidental to the incarnation that the specific human nature assumed by the Son was masculine."⁹³ Evans maintains that "men and women redeemed in Christ's friendship might be better symbolized by male and female priests, not the one sex voiding half the meaning of the symbol,"⁹⁴ and Cunningham points out that the ordination of women at this juncture of history might well serve to guarantee and express orthodoxy of faith, since to exclude woman from priesthood on the basis of sex amounts to "a new mode of neo-Arianism."⁹⁵ Recently, arguments for ordination have emphasized the need to symbolize the fact that the image of God is both male and female,⁹⁶ and this approach entails an important shift in the discussion. Rather than asking whether it is right to *include* women in official ministry, these writers are inquiring, at least implicitly, whether it is wrong to continue *excluding* them.

⁹⁰ Frederick P. Chenderlin, S.J., "Women as Ordained Priests," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 72 (1972) 27.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁹² Evans, *art. cit.*; Charles P. Price, *Ordination of Women in Theological Perspective* (Cincinnati, 1975); Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse, "An Examination of the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood in Terms of the Symbolism of the Eucharist," *Women and Orders*, pp. 15-37.

⁹³ *Art. cit.*, p. 154. Nor does van der Meer find difficulty with the notion of females representing Christ. There is "something significantly feminine," he observes, "not only in the Church as bride as receiving, but in the Church as imparting, as dispensing life" (p. 149). He argues that to claim that women cannot administer sacraments because of their femininity logically entails that one must find it problematic for men to receive sacraments.

⁹⁴ *Art. cit.*, p. 30.

⁹⁵ "The Ministry of Women in the Church," p. 138. In this 1969 article, however, Cunningham did not recommend the immediate ordination of women to priesthood, but suggested instead that women become deacons "in preparation for the moment when the ordination of women will be a reality" (p. 140).

⁹⁶ Cf. Hewitt and Hiatt, *op. cit.*; Price, *op. cit.*; Eric Doyle, O.F.M., "God and the Feminine," *Clergy Review*, 1971, pp. 866-77.

Models for Christian Life

That the basic acceptance of an egalitarian approach to human relationships—in contrast to a model of domination-subordination—carries ramifications for Mariology as well as for Christian ethics and moral education is evident in the writings of Sidney Cornelia Callahan, Janice Raymond, Beverly Wildung Harrison, and others.⁹⁷ In *The Illusion of Eve: Modern Woman's Quest for Identity*,⁹⁸ Callahan explores the results of the emphasis on sexual polarities in Christian thinking, and notes that although the concept of Mary as the New Eve contributed to the theological appreciation of woman's dignity, adulation of Mary has not necessarily helped women in society. "The New Eve may be exalted, and even woman in the abstract glorified, but all other women living here and now must be kept away from business, education, the professions, government, and (heaven forbid) the altar."⁹⁹ Callahan comments on the effectiveness of imprisonment upon a pedestal and criticizes past emphasis upon a piety of silence and submission in "imitation" of Mary. Interestingly enough, Paul VI's recent Apostolic Exhortation "Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary" gives evidence of recognizing this problem. The document acknowledges that the Marian image characterizing much devotional literature can hardly be reconciled with the way women live today, and insists that the "permanent" and "universal" exemplary value of Mary's life cannot be located in the time-bound conditions of her background. It also asserts that the qualities of Mary's discipleship are to be imitated by men as well as by women. Mary's strength and courageous involvement, it points out, "cannot escape the attention of those who wish to support, with the Gospel spirit, the liberating energies of man and of society" (no. 37).¹⁰⁰ Callahan argues against a "feminine" spirituality, insisting that sex should not restrict the Christian freedom of women. She finds that despite the Gospel demand for a "single high standard of Christian behavior for both sexes," emphasis on presumed

⁹⁷ Cf. Roger Ruston, O.P., "Theology and Equality," *New Blackfriars* 55 (1974) 52–60; Joyce Trebilcot, "Sex Roles: The Argument from Nature," *Ethics* 85 (1975) 249–55; Penelope Washbourn, "Differentiation and Difference—Reflections on the Ethical Implications of Women's Liberation," *Women and Religion: 1972 Proceedings*, pp. 95–105; Rita Gross, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Women in Religion: Review, Criticism, and Redefinition," *ibid.*, pp. 121–30; Gwen Kennedy Neville, "Religious Socialization of Women within U.S. Subcultures," Hageman, *op. cit.*, pp. 77–92; Harriet Goldman, "Women and a New Spirituality," *Cross Currents* 24 (1974) 51–54; Margaret A. Farley, R.S.M., "Liberation, Abortion, and Responsibility," *Reflection* 71 (1974) 9–13. Farley's piece is an especially useful contribution on the subject, since it takes both the tradition and the feminist perspective seriously, and challenges both proabortionists and antiabortionists to greater honesty in dealing with the problem.

⁹⁸ New York, 1965.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

¹⁰⁰ *The Pope Speaks* 19 (1974) 75.

sexual differences has often led in practice to tolerance for double standards.¹⁰¹

Raymond would overcome the problem of double standards and other shortcomings of "patriarchal" morality by replacing it with "androgynous morality." Using Tillichian terms, she asserts that androgynous morality would employ "ontological" rather than "technical" reason, that is, it would enable persons "to combine cognition with intuition, experience, feeling, and action, i.e., 'reason rejoined with its depth.'" ¹⁰² Raymond suggests that whereas polarized notions of masculinity and femininity have fostered an unrealistic sameness, androgyny would allow for the acceptance of diversity. "It is ironic," she comments, "that the biological argument which attempted to ground sex role definitions in nature did not take our biological differences seriously enough. That is, such an argument failed to recognize the range of biological differences between individuals of the same sex."¹⁰³ In Raymond's view of androgyny, "what we have traditionally regarded as opposites (masculinity-femininity) are not static states of being, encompassed in a male or female body, but rather processes of becoming, each defining the other, within each human person."¹⁰⁴ She thus describes the human project in terms of recovering the part of one's humanity that has been stereotyped as alien, and growing toward wholeness of being.

Harrison also emphasizes the problems inherent in the popular acceptance of the theory of a "special" feminine nature.¹⁰⁵ By accepting this theory, women have enjoyed the limited benefits of "pedestalism," which, according to Harrison's analysis, attributes to women a superior ability to live out the values that are losing ground in the "public" sector of society, values that "can no longer be effectually expressed in the lives of men."¹⁰⁶ Agreeing with Habermas that the deepest crisis of

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 107. Cf. Dorothy D. Burlage, "Judaean-Christian Influences on Female Sexuality," Hageman, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-116.

¹⁰² "Beyond Male Morality," *Women and Religion: 1972 Proceedings*, p. 92. In this article Raymond illustrates the application of "androgynous ethics" with a discussion of homosexuality.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁵ "The New Consciousness of Women: A Socio-Political Resource," *Cross Currents* 24 (1975) 445-62.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 449. The negative effects of accepting a subordinate role are treated by Nancy van Vuuren in *The Subversion of Women* (Philadelphia, 1973). Building on Gordon Allport's analysis of the ego defenses he terms "traits due to victimization," van Vuuren suggests that historically women who have identified with the religious institutions have tended to adopt "intropunitive traits," while "extropunitive traits" have been especially manifested by rebellious women, particularly those involved in witchcraft and prostitution. Cf. also Barbara Yoshioka, "Whoring after Strange Gods: A Narrative of Women and Witches," *Radical Religion* 1 (Summer/Fall 1974) 6-11.

contemporary society is "the almost total erosion of the interpersonal interface of lived-world communication from the 'public' sector of our life,"¹⁰⁷ Harrison defines the ethical task of feminists as one of simultaneously overcoming pedestalism and promoting in the public sphere the values previously confined to "woman's place."

CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS AND RADICAL CHALLENGES

Constructive efforts to incorporate feminist insights into Christian theology tend to be based on liberation-theology models. Noteworthy contributors in this area include Rosemary Radford Ruether and Letty M. Russell, both of whom treat the subjugation of women as part of an interlocking structure of oppression that also involves classism, racism, and colonialism. As a consequence, they emphasize the danger of advocating the feminist cause exclusively, although they recognize the necessity of overcoming sexual oppression because of its universality and because it supplies a "psychic model" for other oppressor-oppressed relationships. Both regard their work as only a beginning of the task demanded of theology today. Russell concludes her *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective—A Theology*¹⁰⁸ with a "Prologue" calling for a never-ending process of experimentation, action, and reflection, and Ruether has observed that "multidisciplinary teamwork" integrating the human sciences is required "before we can begin to speak of the basis for a theology of liberation adequate to the present situation."¹⁰⁹

Russell's extensively documented volume relates themes of traditional theology—such as salvation, conversion, justification, incarnation, communion—to the liberation experience. She emphasizes the need to reinterpret traditional words and concepts, observing, e.g., that *diakonia* for women today will involve claiming authentic power and authority. The ministerial model she advocates stresses pluralism and the recognition that every Christian is called to action and reflection. She opposes the stratification of Christians into clergy and laity, and suggests that ideally "the 'laying on of hands' would not set apart only those with certain degrees, but whatever members of a congregation who have a particular calling and ability to perform the service or mission needed in the life and mission of that witnessing community."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Harrison, p. 455

¹⁰⁸ Philadelphia, 1974. Cf. also Russell, "Women's Liberation in a Biblical Perspective," *Concern* 13 (May–June 1971), Monika Hellwig, "Hope and Liberation: The Task of Sexual Complementarity," *Liturgy* 15 (October 1972) 13–15.

¹⁰⁹ *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power* (New York, 1972) p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Russell, *Human Liberation*, p. 180.

Ruether approaches the subject of women and religion from the perspective of historian and "radical" theologian. Her articles have stressed the cultural factors involved historically in the subjugation of women and other oppressed groups, and her ideas have influenced other writers considerably. In an early article, "The Becoming of Women in Church and Society,"¹¹¹ she builds upon Jung's analysis of psychological growth and observes that the classical epoch of history can be likened to the stage of individual development when consciousness separates itself off from the subconscious. "Just as the rise of the ego in the individual is the origin of the dualism of the self, so the rise of the self-consciousness in history is the origin of the dualisms in both society and the cultural images of society."¹¹² Whereas primitive society had been characterized by psychic and sexual integration, the emergence of consciousness in the race led to a split between a "thinking elite" and the "mass of humanity" subject to this elite. The dominant elite then attempted to "canonize its seizure of power through the myth of fixed natures and states of life."¹¹³ She goes on to suggest that the rise of socialism in our times is analogous to what Jung termed "individuation" in human development, i.e., "the stage of the emergence of the mature self when the ego integrates itself with its subconscious and out of that integration rises the mature whole self which no longer lives on antagonisms and projections."¹¹⁴ This new stage in history can lead to a "new communal society," a realization of the "kingdom of God," in which social roles will be based on function rather than on caste, and will be temporary and contextual rather than "ontologized into fixed characters and states of life."¹¹⁵

More recently Ruether has modified this analysis somewhat by characterizing preclassical society as an earlier stage in the oppression of women rather than a time of integration in relationships. In *Liberation Theology* she points out that the emergence of classical civilizations provided an opportunity for the overcoming of taboos based on woman's physical characteristics and for the recognition of her mental abilities. What occurred instead, however, was an intensification of misogyny: "The prejudice against woman was translated into the intellectual sphere, and men reconfirmed their right to be the stronger by declaring that they alone possessed genuine mental power and all the spiritual

¹¹¹ *Cross Currents* 17 (1967) 418-26.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 421. Ruether has favored Jung's approach over those of Freud and Erikson, whose writings on women she criticizes in "Male Chauvinist Theology and the Anger of Women," *Cross Currents* 21 (1971) 173-85.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

values that went with it, while women were identified with the body and what was seen as the 'lower psyche.'"¹¹⁶ Ruether attributes classical sexism to "misappropriated dualisms," which resulted from the fact that such dialectical elements of human existence as carnality and spirituality were symbolized as sexual polarities, which were then "projected" socially as the essential "natures" of women and men. Consequently, she notes, in classical culture "autonomous spiritual selfhood is imaged (by men, the cultural creators of this view) as intrinsically 'male,' while the 'feminine' becomes the symbol of the repressed, subjugated and dreaded 'abysmal side of man.'"¹¹⁷ Ruether has traced the effects of this dualism in the history of Christian thought, emphasizing the tensions in patristic theology¹¹⁸ and the effects of residual dualism on the contemporary Church. Moreover, she attributes the dehumanization experienced in technological society and the dichotomization of ethics into private and public spheres to the limited God-concepts resulting from a dualistic understanding of reality.

A recurring theme in Ruether's writing is her opposition to dualism and encapsulation of thought. She sees humanity on the edge of an era when classical polarities can be transcended by "dynamic unities" between "the historical and the transcendent; the spiritual and the somatic; the holy and the worldly."¹¹⁹ In her advocacy of social change she rejects "apocalyptic dualism" (typified in the language of "children of light" and "children of darkness") in favor of an emphasis on the need for greater humanization of both oppressor and oppressed. In "Crisis in Sex and Race: Black Theology vs. Feminist Theology" she cautions against the danger of elitism in the women's movement, and stresses the importance of recognizing the "primordial power of the mother symbol as Ground of Being to restore an ontological foundation to the 'wholly other' God of patriarchy."¹²⁰ She views the ordination of women as neither simply a question of women's rights nor a capitulation to clericalism, but rather a step toward a "psychological revolution in the way we relate to God, to leadership, to each other, to 'nature' and to the relation of the Church to 'the world.'"¹²¹ The challenge she sees before the women's revolution in general is to transcend the "masculine ethic of competitive-

¹¹⁶ *Liberation Theology*, p. 98.

¹¹⁷ "Male Clericalism and the Dread of Women," *Ecumenist* 11 (1973) 66.

¹¹⁸ Cf. "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," *Religion and Sexism*, pp. 150-83.

¹¹⁹ *Liberation Theology*, p. 7.

¹²⁰ *Christianity and Crisis* 34 (1974) 73. For critical responses to this article (with a reply by Ruether) see "Continuing the Discussion: A Further Look at Feminist Theology," *Christianity and Crisis* 34 (1974) 139-143. Cf. also Theresa Hoover, "Black Women and the Churches: Triple Jeopardy," Hageman, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-76.

¹²¹ "Male Clericalism and the Dread of Women," p. 68.

ness that sees the triumph of the self as predicated upon the subjugation of the other" and to contribute to the building of a new "cooperative social order out beyond the principles of hierarchy, rule, and competitiveness."¹²²

Whereas Ruether writes from within the Roman Catholic Christian tradition with a view toward reconstructing its symbolism so as to integrate transcendence with the historical struggle for liberation, Mary Daly's pursuit of the question of transcendence has led her to a "post-christian feminist" rejection of the tradition. Daly's writings span the decade covered in this survey, and deserve the careful analysis of theologians not only because she articulates the anger of growing numbers of women who are alienated from institutional religion, but also because she raises in a particularly forceful way the question of whether the oppression of women is intrinsically bound up in the symbol structure of Christianity. Daly's progressive radicalization is somewhat analogous to that of Luther, and possibly as consequential for the churches. In a spirit of postconciliar optimism, the "early Daly" had supplied some "modest proposals" toward achieving partnership in the Church. She had advocated "radical surgery" for overcoming "theological misogyny," but was basically confident that the Church could eventually be freed of the "'demon' of sexual prejudice."¹²³ Indeed, she held that "the seeds of the eschatological community, of the liberating, humanizing Church of the future, are already present, however submerged and neutralized they may be."¹²⁴ More recently, however, Daly describes her earlier hopes as "misplaced," and states that "the entire conceptual system of theology and ethics, developed under the conditions of patriarchy, have been the products of males and tend to serve the interests of sexist society."¹²⁵ She cautions against "cooptable reformism that nourishes the oppressive system,"¹²⁶ and looks to women to rename reality in ways that affirm the dynamism inherent in the process of being and becoming. "The freedom-becoming-survival of our species will require a continual, communal striving in be-ing," she comments. "This means forging the great chain of be-ing in sister-

¹²² *Liberation Theology*, pp. 124-25.

¹²³ *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York, 1975) p. 193. The edition cited here includes a "new feminist postchristian introduction by the author" in addition to the unrevised text of the 1968 edition.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

¹²⁵ *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston, 1973) p. 4. Cf. also "Theology after the Death of God the Father: A Call for the Castration of Sexist Religion," Hageman, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-42; "Post-Christian Theology: Some Connections between Idolatry and Methodolatry, between Deicide and Methodicide," *Women and Religion: 1973 Proceedings*, pp. 33-38.

¹²⁶ *Beyond God the Father*, p. 6.

hood that can surround nonbeing, forcing it to shrink back into itself."¹²⁷ Daly describes her method as one of asking "nonquestions," that is, pursuing areas of inquiry that are "invisible" to traditional methods because these areas do not fit into accepted categories of thought. This involves especially the analysis of "nondata," the experience of women, which has largely been ignored by patriarchal systems of thought. Daly insists on the need to affirm freedom and to reject the "false dichotomy" between good and evil inherent in the myth of the Fall (which has functioned to reinforce the myth of feminine evil), as well as on the need to reconceptualize God as an active principle of "ultimate meaning and reality."¹²⁸ Regarding Christology, she suggests that "as a uniquely masculine image and language for divinity loses credibility, so also the idea of a single divine incarnation in a human being of the male sex may give way in the religious consciousness to an increased awareness of the power of Being in all persons."¹²⁹ She finds Tillich's Christological concept of "New Being" of some use because it is "to some extent free of strictly 'biblical' thought and of hellenic formulas" and because "it stresses the humanity of Jesus (as opposed to a 'high' Christology) and recognizes the Christ as a symbol."¹³⁰ Nevertheless, she faults Tillich for failing to deal with the fact that the symbol has been used oppressively, and states that the "long history" of such use may indicate "some inherent deficiency in the symbol itself."¹³¹

In a recent *Horizons* symposium Daly observes that the context or "sense of reality" of Christian theologians is so at variance with her feminist perspective that real "hearing" and constructive exchange of thought between the two contexts is unlikely.¹³² She is reluctant to spend energy mediating between her futurist position and the tradition; this mediating function, however, is lately being assumed by others. In the same symposium June O'Connor describes *Beyond God the Father* as "brilliant and profoundly provocative," but disagrees with Daly's insistence that sexism is the basic cause of other forms of oppression.¹³³ This criticism points to a need for further analysis of what is at the root of sexism, and of how sexism is related to other structures

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² "A Short Essay on Hearing and the Qualitative Leap of Radical Feminism," *Horizons* 2 (1975) 120-24. This essay is Daly's response to a series of brief critiques of *Beyond God the Father* in "Symposium: Toward a Theology of Feminism?", pp. 103-20. Introducing the critiques is an extremely helpful essay by June O'Connor, "Liberation Theologies and the Women's Movement: Points of Comparison and Contrast," pp. 103-13.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 108 and p. 115.

of injustice and to traditional concepts of sin. Another contributor to the *Horizons* symposium, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, describes *Beyond God the Father* as "political theology at its best," but challenges Daly to move beyond the necessarily derivative writing of polemics and to develop her constructive insights in more detail and with greater attention to the "androgynous goal or ideal."¹³⁴ Although Daly states that "it matters more where we are going than where we started from,"¹³⁵ she still focuses on the intermediate goal of bonding in sisterhood rather than on the long-range goal of achieving androgyny. Fiorenza, on the other hand, advances the discussion by stressing the need to "recast eschatology not only in female but also in androgynous symbols pronouncing full human integrity."¹³⁶

To date, the most thorough attempt at mediation is Sheila D. Collins' *A Different Heaven and Earth*,¹³⁷ a volume describing the process that has led over the past several years to the articulation of feminist theology. Collins discusses such areas as history, God-language, ethics, worship, and communal "theologizing." Although she argues for a more or less radical feminist position vis-à-vis the established churches, Collins is reluctant to "destroy the deeply emotional psychic bases upon which we have erected our systems of truth and the symbols which unite us with universal meaning."¹³⁸ As a result, she is particularly conscious of the need to remythologize religious truths "in a way that has personal and communal depth of meaning for us."¹³⁹ This task mainly lies ahead, along with the task of developing original systems of thought based on feminist insights and that of mediating further between these insights and other contemporary approaches to religious thought.

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¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 118. Fiorenza, who finds Daly's phrase "sisterhood of man" an "excellent critical formulation" but one that "still communicates sex divisions and dependence upon a parental figure," offers as an androgynous substitute the category of "friend/friendship" to symbolize a "community of equals."

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹³⁷ Valley Forge, Pa., 1974.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*