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founda'tion n. origination; endowed
institution; solid ground or base;

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Editorial: Whose new world order?

Politicians like telling theologians to stick to their trade. Perhaps that is why I tend to prick up my ears when politicians themselves say things that enter the theological arena. President Bush, for example, stirred up a buzz of theological reflections (in my mind at least, if not in those of his original hearers) when I heard on the radio last July that he had told a Moscow audience, 'Socialism has failed because human nature could not be created anew'. My first thought was that God has been creating human nature anew for quite a long time now, but perhaps the President hasn't noticed. Or perhaps the kind of Christianity he is familiar with has not been noticeable for its transformatory qualities in the social realm.

Then I began to puzzle over the logic and implications of Mr. Bush's declaration. Did he mean that socialism would have been a success if human nature *could* have been different? That it was an ideal worth striving for, but doomed to inevitable frustration because people just aren't good enough to make it work? That a vision of a fairer society isn't a match for instinctive human greed, selfishness and competitiveness? That therefore only an economic system that legitimizes those urges has any hope of success? So, to rephrase his sentence, would he argue that capitalism has *succeeded* because human nature is irretrievably sinful? Well, there certainly is a school of Christian economists who argue that free market capitalism is the best economic system for a fallen world populated by naturally selfish people, on the grounds that it manages to harness individual selfishness towards the common good. But that is not the flavour of much western response to the collapse of state socialism in central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. There is rather a triumphalist air of the moral superiority of capitalism *per se* over socialism, which goes along with ill-disguised self-congratulation. 'We won the Cold War', proclaimed President Bush in his State of the Union address, though adding, with another touch of theological varnish, 'by the grace of God'.

Without hesitation many Christians in the former Soviet bloc countries would attribute to the grace of God, and much prayer, the revolutionary change that has liberated them from political tyranny and economic folly. It is more questionable if they would agree that somebody 'won' it for them. Nevertheless, one can be grateful for the acknowledgment of a God of grace, even in the dubious company of national claims. I find it harder to imagine a British politician publicly attributing anything to the grace of God. Some might prefer it that way, of course, since there is always the temptation that once you start invoking the name of God in relation to national and international affairs, he becomes co-opted on to one side or another in conflicting claims and objectives — 'God is on our side' . . . along with other celebrities. That way lies a self-righteousness bordering on the blasphemous.

In the course of teaching Deuteronomy again recently, I have been impressed afresh with how God tried to strip away from Israel any such delusions. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, when the dominant western powers in the UN alliance made much of the alleged moral justification for the war, by regarding themselves as agents of retribution and restraint against the wickedness of Saddam Hussein, there was a subtle move beyond that argument into claims of moral superiority as the beacon of all that is best and right for the human race. Israel faced the same temptation, since they were explicitly charged with carrying out divine judgment on the wickedness of Canaan. But they were warned in no uncertain terms that being an agent of God's justice in history is not in itself a proof of national righteousness. A 'just war' (if we allow the possibility in the biblical sense of a war which executes God's justice in a limited and partial historical context) may be waged by a deeply unjust nation. Israel were to claim no moral superiority out of military victory alone.

After the LORD your God has driven them out before you *do not say to yourself, 'The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.'* No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive them

out before you. It is *not because of your righteousness or your integrity . . . your integrity . . . but on account of the wickedness of these nations . . .* (Dt. 9:4-6, italics mine).

God, in his sovereign control of history and in the exercise of his historical justice among the nations, is not *bound* to use only those nations that have A+ on their ethical report-card. He could use a Sennacherib, a Nebuchadnezzar — both of whose nations are themselves subject to prophetic condemnation for their excesses. So as we seek to discern the hand of God in contemporary history, we should be careful that in rejoicing in the overthrow of evil regimes we do not whitewash the current 'winners', or exempt them from the moral critique that is part of the prophetic task of the church in any part of the world.

And if it is difficult to interpret the recent past, what are we to make of the future? There is a certain irony that President Bush's pessimism regarding human nature, to which he attributes the failure of socialism, sits alongside an optimistic affirmation of a 'new world order'. If individuals cannot be 'created anew', what hope is there that the world can? Perhaps it was just typical British preference for the pragmatic over the visionary (since it was hardly intended theologically!) that made Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd comment on the American President's phrase that what we are seeing in recent months is not so much a 'new world order' as 'new patterns of world disorder'.

Biblically speaking, of course, they are both right! Human history from the tower of Babel to the return of Christ could be described as ever-changing patterns of world disorder. There is nothing new in that, as Ecclesiastes would remind us. But *there is* also a new world order — not only eschatologically speaking when the parousia ushers in the new creation, but present and at work in the world now. The new world order arrived on the day God raised Jesus from the dead and exalted him to his right hand. The rock not cut by human hands which will ultimately shatter and replace all human kingdoms (Dn. 2) has come. The one like the son of man who will ultimately oversee the destruction of all the provisionally authorised 'beasts' of human power (Dn. 7) has been presented to the Ancient of Days. And in the resurrection of the Messiah Jesus lies the answer to both aspects of the human problem. It spells new creation for the individual, for 'if any person is in Christ — new creation! the old has gone, the new has come' (2 Cor. 5:17). And it is the guarantee of new creation for the whole creation (Rom. 8:18ff.; cf. Is. 65:17ff.).

Our problem is to 'see' with the eyes of faith that new world order in the midst of the patterns of disorder. Paul chose a powerful metaphor to express both truths when he described the pains of the present order as the birth-pangs of the new creation. The groaning of the world is the ultimately fruitful groaning of childbirth. The new world is already in the womb of the old and history since the empty tomb is not merely pregnant but already in labour. But there are three 'groanings' in Romans 8:18-27, and they are carefully linked together in Paul's deliberate triple use of the word. There is the groaning of creation, awaiting liberation (20-22); the groaning of ourselves, awaiting our redemption (23); and the groaning of the Spirit, interceding in us, through us and for us (26f.). Presumably Paul intends the metaphor of childbirth groaning to govern all three. The Spirit groans in us, as we groan in the world, as the world groans in the labour of bringing to birth *God's new world order.*

Theological study is not without its own groaning! The question and challenge before us must constantly be whether and how all our study, and all our work and ministry, present or future, is a participation in the labour pains of that new world, that new creation, which by God's grace we are already part of.

Chris Wright

I owe this thought to Tom Wright's meditation, 'The World, the Church and the Groaning of the Spirit', in *The Crown and the Fire: Meditations on the Cross and the Life of the Spirit* (London: SPCK, 1992), pp. 67-78.

This symposium issue on feminism is the result of several years of planning and consultation at the request of the editorial committee that we should devote an issue to the topic. It is a matter on which evangelical Christians take up strong and opposing positions and on which our hermeneutical integrity is tested rigorously. Each of the contributors made detailed comments on preliminary drafts of each other's articles, and then made revisions in the light of comments received. No attempt has been made to impose an editorial 'line' or

to seek agreement, beyond the fact that all share an evangelical commitment to the authority of Scripture. Readers will doubtless disagree in different directions with some of what follows. All we ask is that you read with an open mind and with the attitude of the Bereans who 'examined the Scriptures every day' to check if what even the apostle Paul said was true (Acts 17:11)! Concise readers' responses will be welcome.

The hermeneutics of feminism

R. Letham

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The threefold classification of feminism that follows I have used elsewhere.¹ The first group, *evangelical feminism*, consists of those who hold to evangelical theology (such as the authority of Scripture and the sufficiency of Christ as saviour) and argue for a non-hierarchical relation of full equality and reciprocity between man and woman. Secondly, *Christian feminism* includes those feminists who, while not evangelical, still work self-consciously from a commitment to the Christian faith, however they understand it. Our main focus will be here. Finally, *religious feminism* consists of feminists who do not identify with Christianity but whose beliefs nevertheless include a religious worldview. Naturally, there is a wide spectrum of opinion within each of these groups. Due to limited space, we can only focus on a few representatives and highlight broad tendencies.

The most significant work in this field has been done by Christian feminists such as Rosemary Radford Ruether and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Fiorenza, a Catholic biblical scholar, has developed feminist hermeneutical theory more rigorously than anyone else. Her book *In memory of her* (1983) is still the most important single contribution in the area. On the one hand, religious feminists such as Mary Daly and the witch Starhawk explicitly repudiate the Christian faith. Evangelical feminists, on the other hand, are clearly acting in response to pressures emanating from the broader movement.

Christian feminism

Advocacy stance

For feminists in general the arch villain is patriarchy, a social system ruled and determined by men, in which women are treated as secondary and so are defined purely in relation to the dominant male culture. The Western world is seen as thoroughly patriarchal due to the masterful influence of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Fiorenza argues that the Bible and the history of theology are correspondingly marked by patriarchal bias. They are the products of the historical winners, written by men and reinforcing male prejudices. As such they are largely oppressive to women. Evidence of the prominent role of women in the earliest Christianity has been suppressed or marginalized. Because current biblical and theological scholarship is male-dominated it is incapable of seeing this oppressive situation and thereby correcting it. Only a feminist interpretative model can do justice to the historical reality of women's leadership in early Christianity and thus integrate those texts which are redemptive and liberative for women into the overall picture. Fiorenza proceeds to explore Christian origins as a liberation struggle for Christian women within the patriarchal structures of Greco-Roman society.²

Need for paradigm shift

Consequently, following Thomas S. Kuhn's theories, Fiorenza argues that a paradigm shift is necessary, transforming androcentric (purportedly neutral, value-free) scholarship into human (engaged) scholarship. Fiorenza recognizes correctly that all interpretation is to a degree biased by the perspectives of the interpreter. However, she wants to make a virtue out of a necessity

by a deliberate policy commitment to an advocacy stance, in this case one in favour of women. She argues that all theology is done with a bias either for or against the oppressed. Neutrality is impossible. The ideal of the value-free neutrality of historical-critical scholarship is a myth. An initial question to ask is how far will this enable or prevent the reality of the texts and situations disclosing themselves. How far is Fiorenza critical of her own presuppositions? She does not think that her advocacy stance precludes critical reflection on her feminist position. Indeed, she maintains that biblical and theological interpretation has always taken an advocacy position without realizing it. In most cases it has adopted a patriarchal advocacy structure.³

Authority and canon

Following from these initial suggestions, Fiorenza explicitly denies that the Bible is the revelatory canon for Christian feminism. After all, the Bible was written by men who lived in a strongly patriarchal culture, and who accepted and reinforced its norms. Elements of the Bible have in God's name perpetuated violence, alienation and patriarchal subordination. Therefore, these elements cannot be authoritative. It is women's struggle for liberation from patriarchal oppression that is the authority for women today. The locus of revelation is not the androcentric text but the life and ministry of Jesus and the movement called forth by him. Only those elements of the Bible that transcend patriarchy are of authority. A feminist theologian must question whether the historical man Jesus of Nazareth can be a model for contemporary women since feminist psychological liberation means freeing women from all male internalized norms and models.⁴

Thus, in Fiorenza's thinking it is the critical principles of the feminist movement that are of prime importance. Following her programme, the feminist will sit in judgment on the Bible. Whatever does not agree with her previously determined opinions will be rejected. As her fellow-feminist Letty Russell puts it:

... it has become abundantly clear that the scriptures need liberation, not only from existing interpretations but also from the patriarchal bias of the texts themselves. The more we learn about feminist interpretation, the more we find ourselves asking, with Katherine Sakenfeld, 'How can feminists use the Bible, if at all?'⁵

Scripture, insofar as it is acceptable, becomes a rubber stamp for the autonomous feminist. As Margaret Farley argues, anything that contradicts feminist convictions cannot be accepted. No authentic revelation of truth can contradict feminist convictions. A divine imperative assigning inferior roles to women is ruled out.⁶ Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite is even more emphatic. Scripture lies behind rape and battering of women, for the seeds of these lie in the subordinate position Scripture assigns to women. The household codes of Ephesians and Colossians are therefore a primary legitimation of wife abuse! Feminists must challenge them. At issue in Genesis 2:21-24 is the control over women's bodies. In its conservative attachment to the patriarchal value system which Genesis 2 legitimizes, the right to life movement is an attack on female autonomy, deliberately aiming to restrict women's rights over their own bodies.⁷ For such feminists, the Bible is a source but not authoritative canon.

Gynocentrism

Since Scripture is perceived as seriously flawed in this way, what hermeneutical principles do Christian feminists regard as of prime importance? According to Rosemary Radford Ruether human experience is the starting point and end of the interpretative process. As such, Ruether accepts the basic development of post-Enlightenment thought with its anthropocentric worldview. However, this approval is only general and formal. Historically, women's experience has been ignored and it is precisely women's experience that throws the entire history of interpretation into question.⁸ For Ruether, the critical principle of feminist theology is the promotion of the full humanity of women:

Whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts the full humanity of women is, therefore, appraised as not redemptive. Theologically speaking, whatever diminishes or denies the full humanity of women must be presumed not to reflect the divine or an authentic relation to the divine, or to reflect the authentic nature of things, or to be the message or work of an authentic redeemer or a community of redemption.

This negative principle also implies the positive principle: what does promote the full humanity of women is of the Holy, it does reflect true relation to the divine. . . .⁹

Letty Russell poses the question: are Jewish and Christian feminists to be faithful to Scripture or to their own integrity? She clearly perceives the direction feminist theology is heading. She attempts a resolution of the problem. She recognizes that no interpretation that reinforces patriarchal structures of domination would be acceptable for feminist interpretation. The Bible is especially dangerous if we call it 'the Word of God' and think that everything we read is right. Instead the feminist paradigm is one of co-operation, partnership, community, a circle of interdependence in the shared story of God's love *rather than* doctrinal consensus. If the canon is deabsolutized it is no longer necessary to choose between Scripture and personal integrity!¹⁰ Russell has produced a superficially neat solution but only at the expense of cutting the cord that ties feminist theology to the historic Christian church. If the feminist paradigm abandons doctrinal consensus at the expense of co-operative partnership, what is left to identify the movement as Christian?

Hermeneutics of suspicion

In terms of the interpretation of the Bible and of Christian tradition, Fiorenza argues that a hermeneutics of suspicion is necessary, since the texts are seen as thoroughly androcentric. Feminists must learn to read them in such a way as to discern the clues they may indirectly provide to the egalitarian reality of the early Christian movement. The feminist critical method will not rely solely on historical facts nor will invent evidence but instead will engage in an imaginative reconstruction of historical reality. An act of intellectual recreation is necessary in historical reconstruction.¹¹ Fiorenza is true to her word. Much of her writing is indeed highly imaginative reconstruction, particularly in her use of an alleged conflict between the apostle Peter and Mary Magdalene which Peter won, thereby sending the church into its hitherto incorrigible patriarchal captivity and consigning Mary Magdalene's prior apostleship to historical oblivion.¹²

Our historical structures, Fiorenza claims, define men as the scientific and historical subjects and make women secondary. The NT only refers to women where they were exceptional or had become a problem.¹³ Barbara Brown Zikmund is, if anything, blunter when she states that according to the NT 'Woman is simply less than man'.¹⁴ Nevertheless, according to Fiorenza there is still sufficient evidence to recognize the prominent role women played in the Jesus movement. While Paul, despite egalitarian leanings, was somewhat equivocal on the matter, only with the post-Pauline community was there a regression to the Greco-Roman patriarchal model.¹⁵

Positive attitude to paganism

It is not surprising that the Christian feminism we have described shows certain leanings towards neopaganism. Its basic hermeneutical orientation directs it that way. Since the primary theological and interpretative principle is women's experience, a religious worldview that gives the female priority is extremely attractive. As Barbara Brown Zikmund writes:

even for those who want to stay within the Jewish and Christian legacy, the work of neopagan or non-biblical feminist spirituality is important. Goddess religions have powerful symbols that stretch our understanding of religious practice and human experience.¹⁶

Contributors to the symposium edited by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, *Womanspirit Rising*, include not only Fiorenza, Ruether and Phyllis Trible but also the witches Starhawk and Zsuzsanna Budapest, while Christ herself contributes a final chapter that is nothing less than a laudatory tribute to Goddess worship. True, a common volume does not require a single worldview from its contributors. However, the willingness to support a common enterprise at least indicates that the relation between Christian feminism and the Goddess movement, with its pantheism and occult practices, is a continuum rather than a contrast.

This conclusion finds support from Ruether's comment that God is not a Christian or a Jew rather than a pagan (*Sexism*, p. 21). Christian heresies and pre-Christian pagan religions are at least equally as valid as historic Christianity. She argues that if Fiorenza's egalitarian vision of early Christianity is correct, then the official canonical framework of Christianity is indeed overthrown (p. 35). Heretical movements such as Montanism and some gnostic sects in fact preserved Christian egalitarianism. Many gnostics held to both male and female principles in God, while the Shakers had an androgynous vision of God and Christ, anticipating a female Messiah who eventually arrived in the form of Mother Ann Lee. A feminist theology cannot ignore the religions rejected by Judaism and suppressed by Christianity, such as the pre-Christian veneration of nature evident in Goddess cults (pp. 38-39). While critical of Goddess religion (p. 40), she nevertheless admits, 'I have some significant differences with the approach of Feminist Wicca or Goddess religion, although I also share many values with them' (p. 41). Ruether argues that the most ancient image of the divine was female, the Primal Matrix, the great Womb within which all things were generated (pp. 47-49). The male monotheism of Judaeo-Christianity reinforces patriarchy and inevitably led to the suppression of these primal religions (p. 53). She describes God as 'the empowering Matrix; She, in whom we live and move and have our being — She comes; She is here' (p. 266).

Evaluation

1. In her thinking on the propriety of an advocacy stance, an assumption typical of feminist theology, Fiorenza has some important things to say. The twentieth century has shown the post-Kantian ideal of value-free neutrality to be the myth that it is. We are not neutral observers external to reality. We are part of the scene ourselves. The knower has an integral place in knowledge, as Polanyi has convincingly demonstrated. It is well that subtle biases in interpreters be recognized so that resultant distortions can more readily be seen. The gender of the theologian or biblical reader may well affect the interpretation. That should apply on a wider scale than the individual, too.

However, Christian feminists are saying more than that. The advocacy stance, instead of being a tool of interpretation, has become a dominant master. It is the feminist critical principle before which everything is to be judged. As such, it is not the reality, the thing to be known (whether the Bible, God or Christ), but the personal commitments of the interpreter that assume critical and determinative significance. We recall how George Tyrell described Adolf von Harnack gazing down the well of history to see at the bottom the reflection of a liberal bourgeois German face. How, in similar terms, can the exponent of a feminist advocacy stance fail to avoid seeing simply the reflection of a professional middle-class feminist?

2. In its explicit gynocentrism Christian feminist hermeneutics is open to all the common criticisms levelled at the anthropocentrism of the post-Enlightenment period. 'Know then thyself, presume not God to scan; the proper study of mankind is man', wrote Alexander Pope. Anthropocentrism represents an inversion of the creature's proper orientation, which Christianity has classically maintained is towards God, to glorify and enjoy him forever. Doubtless, there are many instances of anti-female prejudice in church and society that need correction. I am not defending past social systems and past attitudes to women any more than present or future ones. However, a hermeneutic so explicit in placing human beings in autonomy is in practice reversing the proper relationship between Creator and creature.

3. Christian feminism regards women's experience, not Holy Scripture, as the highest authority in all matters of faith, worldview and practice. The feminist critical principle as expounded by Fiorenza makes the feminist theologian and the feminist community the criterion of truth. At very least, there is a serious

loss of prophetic capacity if the interpreter and the community become the highest judges. Who is to judge whether a statement in the Bible does or does not promote the full humanity of women? The feminist community, of course! Who is to judge whether the feminist community has departed from truth? Why, the feminist community, of course! Dare anyone name this idolatry?¹⁷

It is not without significance that Letty Russell, Ruether, Fiorenza and Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite all acknowledge that the Bible is against them.¹⁸ Ruether declares that feminist theology must create for itself a new textual base. She recognizes that feminist theology cannot be done from the existing base of the Christian Bible.¹⁹ As Daphne Hampson argues, Holy Scripture and the feminism we have discussed are incompatible.²⁰

4. The impact of Christian feminism on various areas of theology, due to its basic hermeneutical principles, is fairly clear. The feminist critical principle involves a new anthropology. Since humanity is the image of God, such a reassessment entails a redefinition of God. Some new liturgies have already taken this step, eliminating both sexist language and the use of the masculine personal pronoun in speaking of God. My article, mentioned above (n. 1), explores some factors relevant in the matter. Ruether suggests a new Christology, for Christ is not necessarily male. A male Christ distances women from full representation in the new humanity. The world today longs for a redemptrix, a Christ who can affirm womanhood. She asks about ways in which we need a woman Christ.²¹ Moreover, since history has been written by men (the winners) so as to oppress women, Sheila Collins wants to replace *history* by *herstory*. Thus, the feminist herstory can overcome the imperialism of the historical event.²² Since the cross and resurrection are historical events, we can assume that women will thereby be liberated from these too, or at least from the hopelessly male interpretation of them we find in the Bible. So much is evident when Collins herself maintains that the ancient mother goddesses are equal to Christ in their integrative and transformative powers.²³ At the time she wrote Collins was a director of Voluntary Services for the United Methodist Church (USA).

5. By basing so much freight on creative historical reconstruction, Fiorenza has opened Christian feminism to the charge that its historical scholarship is founded not on basis of evidence but of imagination. Fiorenza herself certainly sanctions a highly imaginative reconstrual of early Christian history in her adoption of the apocryphal hypothesis of a serious vendetta between the apostle Peter and Mary Magdalene that led to Peter assuming a prominence which Jesus had not given him and which consigned Mary Magdalene (Jesus' primary apostle) to the historical dustbin.²⁴ The basic issue is how far imaginative construal can be taken before the historical evidence we have is redefined as pure prejudiced propaganda.

6. A basic interpretative assumption of feminism is that male and female are virtually two separate creatures with interests and concerns diametrically opposed to one another and locked in irreconcilable conflict. While the differences between men and women are obvious and, indeed, in some senses more significant than has often been supposed in recent times, the Bible nevertheless indicates that the features human beings possess in common far outweigh the differences. Both male and female are defined as *adam*, 'man' (Gn. 1:26-28), made in the image of God. Both together fell into sin (Gn. 3:1f.). Both need salvation. Male and female are complementary, not competitive.

Religious feminism

Further afield from Christian feminism are those who have either abandoned Christianity as incorrigibly patriarchal or others who have never made any pretence at such an association. Mary Daly, a former Catholic, wrote a book entitled *Beyond God the Father* and, in a note to an article entitled 'Why speak about God?', remarked that now 'I use the term *Goddess* rather than the hopelessly male identified term *God*'.²⁵ The main features of religious feminism are the veneration of the female body, and Goddess worship that includes pantheistic worship of nature and witchcraft. The occult is prominent. Naomi R. Goldenberg reflects on the importance of dreams and visions in the thought of Carl Jung. Dreams are sources of revelation, she claims. She herself often has recourse to a spirit guide whom she calls 'the Australian pioneer', with whom she first became acquainted during a trance experience based on Jungian techniques.²⁶ Starhawk and Zsuzsanna E. Budapest (both witches) extol the earth-centred nature worship associated with the Goddess. Goddess religions symbolize the exorcism of the

patriarchal policeman and the affirmation of the divine in women: 'In self-blessing, you affirm the divine you'.²⁷ As Carol P. Christ, citing a feminist play, puts it: 'I found God in myself and I loved her fiercely'.²⁸ With the use of astral energies, astral projection, trance states and expanded awareness advocated by Starhawk²⁹ and evident in much religious feminism, we find ourselves in territory occupied by the New Age movement.

The point is this: *these extremes differ from Christian feminism in degree but not in kind*. Members of both groups contribute to common symposia. Differences, yet common ground, are acknowledged by such as Ruether. Above all, the hermeneutical assumptions of the Christian feminists not only lead in this direction, they positively require that this step be taken. Once the experience of women is made determinative, once the authority of Bible and church is abandoned due to alleged patriarchal bias, once God and Christ are to be redefined as 'not necessarily male', the door is open in hermeneutical terms for the principal move to *women's* religion, to worship not of a male God who cannot relate to women but to a female god with whom women can be one.

Evangelical feminism

Finally, we move across the spectrum to evangelicals who have tried to address some of the existential concerns of the feminist movement. I have space only to refer to contributions by Mary Evans and Elaine Storkey.³⁰ These two works contain much helpful material. Evans writes as a biblical scholar and Storkey as a sociologist. Overall, they move in a very acceptable direction. However, there are a number of hermeneutical areas to which further attention should be given.

Firstly, both display selectivity in their use of theological models. Naturally, some selectivity is unavoidable. Reasons of space prevent everything being said at once. Again, judgments must be made about what is significant and what is less so. Despite this, I have yet to encounter serious consideration by evangelicals of some issues crucial to the feminist case. For instance, in her discussion of Genesis 1 and 2, Evans argues carefully for equality and complementarity between the sexes. In her discussion of the NT teaching, she considers the Pauline letters at length. Yet nowhere does she face the issue of why, if Eve was the first to take the forbidden fruit, the human race is nevertheless held accountable for the sin of Adam? This is more than simply an issue of exegesis. It concerns fundamental structures of Pauline theology, which impinge crucially on his Christology and soteriology. Historically, the church found the solution in the headship of Adam over the race (Eve included). Failure to discuss this matter makes the case for full reciprocity much more convincing. At the same time it is also weaker. The absence of a key Pauline theological model conditions the exegesis and conclusions.

Secondly, both build a vital and central part of their case on now disputed scholarship. In an article in 1954, Stephen Bedale argued that *kephale* in 1 Corinthians 11:3 does not mean 'head' or 'authority over' but instead 'source' or 'origin'. Thus, Bedale understood Paul to say that the woman (Eve) simply originated from the man (Adam). In short, Paul was not stating that women are in *any sense* subordinate to men. Bedale's claim was based on the use of the word in extra-biblical Greek.³¹ However, with the technological explosion and resulting computerized access to vast mountains of linguistic data, these conclusions look tenuous. Both Evans and Storkey wrote before this new knowledge became available. We cannot hold them responsible. Working independently, Wayne Grudem and J.A. Fitzmeyer have both shown that in extra-biblical Greek *kephale* normally means 'head' or 'authority over' and does not mean 'source' or 'origin', and that no number of appeals to the context can evade it.³² This conclusion has also found support from Peter Cotterell and Max Turner.³³ This statement of Paul's is a major crux in the whole debate. The burden of proof must now rest squarely on the feminists.

Finally, evangelical feminists generally and Evans and Storkey in particular fail to set their arguments in what must be the widest and profoundest theological context. Is there anything [*sic*] more foundational than God, or more crucial for theology than the Trinity? As I have argued elsewhere,³⁴ God is the best light to view the relationship between man and woman. First, God created human beings in his own image. God is a relational being, living in internal unbroken fellowship. Man, in his image, is also a relational being consisting of male and female. Second, since God created all things to display his glory there can be no greater or

more appropriate theological or hermeneutical model. Consequently, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit live in unbroken unity and full equality of essence and status yet simultaneously an order exists expressed in sending and being sent, sending and proceeding (an order that cannot be reversed¹⁵), so male and female live in full equality of essence and status yet not without a simultaneous order of authority and submission that must be seen in the context of the equality already described. Thus, feminist attempts at egalitarianism falter on the created reality of the human being and transgress the order God has given, which in turn is a created analogue of his own internal structure. On the other hand, patriarchal attempts at tyranny and domination also transgress man's created reality and, even more, the unity and equality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The oppression of women is sin against women, men and God himself. We can find solutions neither in past nor present social systems, nor in future utopias. Only in God, who made us in his own image, do we find revealed the theological and hermeneutical ground of our being. Evangelical feminists as well as patriarchal traditionalists will do well to consider this.

¹See my article, 'The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment', in *The Westminster Theological Journal* 52 (1990), pp. 65-78. The focus is on feminist theology since I am a theologian and these are theological journals.

²Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), pp. xiii-xxiii ff.

³Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, 'Toward a Feminist Biblical Hermeneutics: Biblical Interpretation and Liberation Theology', in Donald K. McKim (ed.), *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 358-364.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 377-379; *idem*, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 32-33.

⁵Letty Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), p. 11.

⁶Margaret A. Farley, 'Feminist Consciousness and the Interpretation of Scripture', in Letty Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, pp. 49-50.

⁷Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, 'Every Two Minutes: Battered Women and Feminist Interpretation', in Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, pp. 96, 104-106.

⁸Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Feminist Interpretation: A Method of Correlation', in Letty Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, pp. 111-113; *idem*, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983), p. 12.

⁹Ruether, *Sexism*, pp. 18-19.

¹⁰Letty Russell, 'Authority and the Challenge of Feminist Interpretation', in *idem* (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, pp. 137-146.

¹¹Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 68ff. On pp. 167-168, Fiorenza says that women's actual contribution to the early Christian missionary movement is lost due to the scarcity of the sources and the androcentric bias of those that do exist. It must be rescued by the use of historical imagination and by filling out and contextualizing the fragmentary information we do have. The historical texts and information on the women's movement at that time must not be taken as descriptive of the actual situation either. They are merely the tip of the iceberg and refer only to those women who have survived androcentric redactions and historical silence. Fiorenza appears to be saying that from what you have got, you read between the lines and what you have not got you make up yourself. On any other issue a procedure such as this would be laughed out of court and the professional integrity of the practitioner be irretrievably lost.

¹²Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 332f.; *idem*, 'Mary Magdalene:

Apostle to the Apostles', *UTS Journal* (April 1975), pp. 22ff. Margaret A. Farley supports this approach too, for she claims that women have good reason to be suspicious of Scripture: Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, p. 47.

¹³Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 107-109.

¹⁴Barbara Brown Zikmund, 'Feminist Consciousness in Historical Perspective', in Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, p. 22.

¹⁵Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 97ff.

¹⁶Zikmund, in Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, p. 29.

¹⁷Phyllis Trible sheds a rare ray of light in warning that feminism has its own potential for idolatry, in 'Postscript: Jottings on the Journey', in Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, p. 148.

¹⁸Russell and Thistlethwaite in Russell (ed.), *Feminist Interpretation*, pp. 11f., 137f., 96-107. Ruether, *Sexism*, p. 23, acknowledges that many aspects of the Bible are frankly to be set aside and rejected. Fiorenza, in McKim (ed.), *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics*, p. 379, states that the Bible is not only a source of truth but also of violence and domination.

¹⁹Rosemary Radford Ruether (ed.), *Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), p. ix.

²⁰Those disputing this statement should read Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). Hampson, who teaches theology at the University of St Andrews, charts her own spiritual pilgrimage from a devout Anglicanism and membership of the General Synod of the Church of England to her eventual repudiation of the Christian faith under the inherent logic of her feminist beliefs.

²¹Ruether, *Womanguides*, pp. 105, 111-112; *idem*, *Sexism*, pp. 116-138.

²²Sheila Collins, 'Reflections on the Meaning of Herstory', in Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 68-73.

²³Christ and Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising*, p. 71.

²⁴Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, pp. 68ff.

²⁵Mary Daly, 'Why Speak About God?', in Christ and Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising*, p. 210.

²⁶Naomi R. Goldenberg, 'Dreams and Fantasies as Sources of Revelation: Feminist Appropriation of Jung', in Christ and Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising*, pp. 219-227.

²⁷Zsuzsanna E. Budapest, 'Self-Blessing Ritual', in Christ and Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising*, pp. 269-272; Starhawk, 'Witchcraft and Women's Culture', in *ibid.*, pp. 259-268; *idem*, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).

²⁸Carol P. Christ, 'Why Women need the Goddess: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Political Reflections', in Christ and Plaskow (eds), *Womanspirit Rising*, p. 273.

²⁹Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, pp. 142ff.

³⁰Mary J. Evans, *Woman in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983); Elaine Storkey, *What's Right with Feminism?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985).

³¹S. Bedale, 'The Meaning of *kephale* in the Pauline Epistles', *JTS* 5 (1954), pp. 211-215.

³²Wayne Grudem, 'Does *kephale* ('Head') Mean 'Source' or 'Authority Over' in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples', *Trinity Journal* 6 (1985), pp. 38-59; Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, S.J., 'Another Look at *KEPHALE* in 1 Corinthians 11:3', *NTS* 35 (1989), pp. 503-511.

³³Peter Cotterell and Max Turner, *Linguistics and Biblical Interpretation* (London: SPCK, 1989), pp. 141-145, 183, 317. Space forbids further discussion of this issue.

³⁴Robert Letham, 'The Man-Woman Debate: Theological Comment', (see n. 1).

³⁵These relations are mentioned in the Bible. The church recognized them in its trinitarian confession. They are not imposed on the Godhead but are part of the historic Christian faith. Note the significant passage in Karl Barth, *CD* 4/1, pp. 192-205.

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Feminist theology as critique and renewal of theology

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The background of feminist theology

It is impossible to separate Christian theology from the social context and nature of the church in any era in which the theology is produced. We need to recognize that while the Bible is our final and permanent authority, theology, like the church itself, is in constant need of reform and renewal. The church's teaching on the relation between men and women could be argued to have historically owed more to the social nature of the church than to biblical revelation. It seems to many observers that traditional Christianity has taught the *equality of souls* for God and in the world to come, and the *inequality of the sexes* in this world and in the church. Throughout most of its history, the major part of the church has been a patriarchal institution based on an anthropology which defined the male as superior and 'head' and the female as inferior and subordinate. Through its sexually distinguished 'doctrine of man' it has for centuries legitimated laws and structures in society which secured male rule and demanded female obedience.¹

Within the Christian church, however, there have been several women and men who have discovered the seeds of equality within the Bible and have perceived the equal status of man and woman as an idea intrinsic to the gospel. Many Christian women have experienced a discrepancy between the *gospel* from which they have drawn strength and inspiration and the male-dominated *church* which has restricted their life and ministry. In a sense, then, feminist theology has existed as long as there have been women who have reflected upon their Christian faith and their Bible in a way that differed from the dominant patriarchal tradition of interpretation. Very often, however, the egalitarian interpretations were ignored and forgotten or criticized and rejected and then sank into oblivion.

Modern feminist theology emerged in the USA at the end of the 1960s. It is rooted primarily in Christian women's experience of living under the pressure of patriarchal ideology and structures claimed to be the eternal will of God. The modern feminist movement has provided a better climate than earlier times for the growth of feminist theology: the general consciousness-raising among women, the greater awareness of women's issues in society and, not least, the experience that 'sisterhood is powerful' have been ideological and social factors giving women inspiration and courage to take on the hard task of critical reconsideration of church life and theology.

What is meant by 'feminist theology'?

Feminist theology at present is both a critical voice *within* the church and a revolt *against* the church from women outside who are determined to develop religious alternatives. In the USA, where the major part of feminist theology has been published so far, 'theology' usually has a much wider meaning than in Europe. The notion comprises any systematic reflection upon questions of the foundation and meaning of life, whether connected to a religious tradition (Christianity, native American religion, etc.) or not. The boundaries between general philosophy of religion, religious studies and theology related to a particular religion are often indistinct.

There is no one feminist theology that can represent the whole, but rather a multitude of feminist theologies. They not only diverge in style and content but also conflict with each other with regard to the positions they hold, e.g. in their assessment of the Christian tradition.² One should therefore abstain from making general judgments on feminist theology. In spite of the differences,

however, it is possible to point out some distinct methodological tendencies and common feminist convictions.

I will define feminist theology as *reflection on the content and meaning of religion with particular regard to women's status and situation, which recognizes the use and misuse of religion in the past and the present for the oppression of women and has as its aim to contribute to the liberation of women*. This is a descriptive definition which can apply to various feminist theologies, both within and outside Christianity. These various theologies have some basic feminist assumptions in common:

1. *Patriarchy* is the big problem that has given rise to feminist movements that struggle for women's liberation. 'Patriarchal' refers to institutions, social structures and ideologies that implicitly assume or explicitly claim the superior status of males and their 'natural' right to exercise authority and leadership in society, family and church. (Some prefer 'sexism' as characterization of the sexual hierarchy and gender ideology in contemporary societies where traditional patriarchal ideology and structures have waned.)

2. Feminist theology, as feminism in general, is based on an *egalitarian anthropology*, claiming the full equality of male and female (equal dignity, equal and full humanity, entitled to equal rights, etc.).³

3. The corollary of this anthropological stance is the *commitment to social and political struggle* against specific forms of oppression and for the liberation of women, in order to create a society with equality and freedom for all.

Some readers might be unfamiliar with the usage of the key concepts *sex* and *gender* in modern feminist literature: (i) *Sex* is a *biological designation* and corresponds to *male* and *female* as biological/sexual definitions. (ii) *Gender* is a *social designation* referring to sociocultural consequences or implications of sex, i.e. the particular cultural shape of sex (biological nature) into different roles, status and normative patterns of behaviour attributed to men and women in a given culture. (iii) *Gender* can also be distinguished as a *symbolic, ideological category* referring to sexual myths, ideas about female and male nature, polarized philosophical and ideological definitions of *masculine* and *feminine*; these provide the foundation for sociocultural inequality.

These distinctions of the notions 'sex' and 'gender' are by and large shared by feminist writers. The main point is the claim that differences between men and women concerning attitudes, values, thinking, etc. are not naturally given, but predominantly determined by culture. This view is held by the majority of feminists.

Feminist critique of traditional theology

In Western societies (as in nearly all societies) the cultural hegemony has rested in the hands of men. The right to define and describe reality, including the 'nature' and 'proper role' of female and male, has been a prerogative of the sciences, philosophy and theology in which men held the authority positions. Feminist scholars in all fields seek to explore the implications of this fact.

First of all, feminists emphasize that theology has been developed not simply by males, but by males within a patriarchal culture and church. In mainstream theology this has not been recognized as a problem deserving consideration. Though contemporary philosophy and theology recognize the significance of a person's preunderstanding in the process of interpretation, theology has paid little attention to the wider sociocultural context in which the interpreter's preunderstanding has been shaped. Like

other liberation theologies, feminist theology criticizes the predominant Western academic theology for its lack of awareness about the significance of socioeconomic context and social class for theological work. Consequently, according to feminists, theology has legitimated oppressive social structures or, at least, been insensitive to injustice and structural evil. Feminists add that male scholars take sexual hierarchy for granted, support it ideologically, or fail to discover the phenomenon at all. In a patriarchal context the tacit preunderstanding of males (and often of females, too) is normally a patriarchal understanding of reality, except for individuals who somehow have developed a critical attitude toward the existing order. Furthermore, in a social system where sex has been (and still is, in part) the most basic criterion for the distribution of social roles and functions, the typical life experience of males and females respectively becomes very different. Nevertheless, most male scholars have not recognized the hermeneutical significance of gender and apparently assume that their perspective is universally human. Therefore they have not been able to discover or willing to accept women's perspective, as a different approach from a different preunderstanding, as a legitimate and necessary perspective.

The critique raised by feminist theologians against the male-dominated theological traditions is paralleled by feminist critique of other academic studies. It can be summed up in the notion *androcentrism* (male-centredness): sociologically, men are at the centre of both the religious and the secular community, whereas women live on the periphery and are therefore often outside men's scope. Women's world, as well as the whole human world, has been described from men's perspective and interpreted by means of men's concepts and thoughts, if it has been seen at all. Often women and women's issues are neglected, marginalized or blotted out altogether. This is a result of gender-biased presuppositions and androcentric answers to methodological questions: What is the object (or subject matter) of this discipline? What are the important issues and problems? Which sources are important, and which data are relevant in dealing with this problem? Very few, if any, would explicitly exclude women's issues or gender issues when answering such questions. Nevertheless, the major part of male studies implicitly shows the impact of androcentric priorities. The prevalent silence in mainstream theology about sexism and patriarchalism in church and society, past and present, is striking evidence of the non-priority of issues which are crucial to women.

And just here is the dividing line between feminist and non-feminist theologies: Is *sexism* a serious problem? And if so, is it a problem for which theology has some responsibility, a problem which should be on the theological agenda? Feminists say yes, pointing to the pervasive impact of a long patriarchal tradition on church life and on our culture in general. Feminist theologians agree that androcentrism is an adequate general characterization of traditional theology, but diverge in their assessment of the range and profundity of the distortions brought upon theology by an androcentric orientation and patriarchal assumptions. As a result of the long-term struggle of the women's movement, clear-cut patriarchal ideology and power structures in society have waned and egalitarianism has made progress in the Western world. This has also had an impact on contemporary theology. In my opinion, one should not simply talk of mainstream theology as 'patriarchal' or 'androcentric', but discern between three levels of androcentrism in theology:

1. Overtly patriarchal theologies, which are based on a conscious/explicit patriarchal ideology (defining male-female as respectively superior and subordinate/inferior) and explicitly legitimize a patriarchal ordering of society.
2. Implicitly patriarchal theologies, which have a lot of subtle (perhaps unconscious) patriarchal assumptions without propagating patriarchal ideology; they function to support traditional attitudes.
3. 'Egalitarian' theologies, which in principle recognize the equality of the sexes but have little insight into the androcentric presuppositions and priorities built into their methodologies and traditions. In practice they are unable to discover gender issues and deal adequately with them.

Feminist theology as methodological renewal

The feminist critique of traditional academic theology naturally leads to a reconsideration of methodological issues.⁵ However, often methodological reflections are scanty, perhaps lacking

altogether. Nevertheless, there is always an implicit methodology which can be analysed. I will roughly indicate the methodological distinctiveness of feminist theology in a few points:

1. Contrary to mainstream theology, which is assumed to be 'gender neutral', feminist theology claims to be developed out of women's perspective or feminist perspective. Its scholarly ideal is not the 'impartiality' or 'objectivity' of established scholarship, but the conscious 'advocacy stance' of liberation theologies in favour of the oppressed. Feminist theology aims at providing a contribution to the liberation of women and other oppressed groups, seeing itself as a part of the wider feminist struggle for liberation.

The notions 'women's perspective' and 'feminist perspective' need some clarification. 'Women's perspective' seems to imply that women have a common perspective which males do not and cannot have. However, this biologically defined group comprises women adhering to traditional womanliness as defined by patriarchy (=femininity) as well as women revolting against it (=feminism). 'Women's perspective' is therefore, in my opinion, an indistinct notion which easily blurs the existing ideological conflicts among women. 'Feminist perspective' is a more stringent notion, because it points to a feminist understanding of reality (i.e. patriarchy or sexual hierarchy as an unjust reality, legitimated by ideologies and religious beliefs, etc.). A feminist perspective conflicts naturally with a patriarchal perspective, which considers the sexual hierarchy the right and natural order of things. It also conflicts with any kind of perspective which lacks awareness of sexism as a problem in our culture.

2. Many feminist theologians emphasize that feminist theology is not created by isolated individuals, but is developed in a community doing theology together in a communal process of reflection.

3. Traditionally, the various theological disciplines (except pastoral theology) have mainly been concerned with the theoretical aspects of religion (like holy scriptures, dogmas, theological concepts, etc.), their traditioning, adaptation, and the mutual influence of religious and philosophical ideas throughout history. Feminist theology extends its field of interest beyond the ideas to the *sociopolitical* and *psychological consequences* of religious ideas and Christian practices. Their impact on laws, social structures, popular attitudes and beliefs has determined the framework of women's (and men's) lives and, hence, formed individual women's experiences to a high degree. This broad scope makes a bridge from feminist theology to women's studies in other fields, like history, sociology, psychology, social anthropology, etc. Theories and findings are adopted and employed to shed new light on various issues in theology.

4. The most important and distinctive methodological novelty in feminist theology is the principal claim that *women's experience provides important data and insight for theological work*.

'Women's experience' is in itself an ambiguous concept and is rarely defined. Is there a common women's experience across cultural, religious and political borders, or do we talk about experience related to a particular group, or some individual women's experience? From the contents of numerous contributions one can infer that the concept comprises the totality of women's experience in everyday life, in the private as well as in the public sphere, 'secular' experience as well as religious experience, or experiences related to religious institutions. In practice it is used with different contents or emphases by different writers. Many writers, perhaps a majority, emphasize women's social experience (determined by sociocultural factors),⁶ while others primarily focus upon bodily experience (determined by biology).⁷

'Women's experience is the source and norm of feminist theology' is a frequently used slogan in the US. What is really the status and function of women's experience in doing theology? Is it the source not only of new questions and perspectives, but also of the new answers women are searching for? There is no consensus upon these fundamental issues. Radical feminist theology clearly tends to regard women's experience as a normative 'text' and gives it status as an independent source of knowledge of the divine. Others give it mainly the status of *context*, from which new, existential questions emerge. Of course, this is a simplification of the various positions actually taken on a very complex issue.

In brief: Women's various experience of oppression throughout history and in our time is the basic experiential impetus for doing theology from a feminist perspective. This implies usually

both a critical analysis of the ways in which religious beliefs, institutions and practices have overtly legitimated oppression or in subtler ways supported sexism, and also the development of a viable alternative, a non-sexist theology. Since mainstream theology has ignored women's experience and the questions and challenges emerging from it, feminists recognize the relevance of Mary Daly's advice: women must 'begin asking non-questions and start discovering, reporting, and analyzing non-data'.⁸

Feminist theology: reform or replacement of Christian theology?

The claim that women's experience of oppression is a basic presupposition for feminist theology does not imply that all feminist theologians have strong experiences of being oppressed in their churches or in their social life. However, we have an important common ground in the knowledge and consciousness of women's sufferings past and present in the name of God. Many women still suffer or protest because their churches promote patriarchal teachings which place women in a subordinate and restricted role because of their sex. Although many churches have abandoned theologies of women's subordination and even ordain women, sexism is not abolished as an ideological and structural reality.

The undeniable link between Christianity and the patriarchal order of Western societies gives rise to a fundamental question: Is Christianity essentially oppressive to women, or has Christian faith been misused to legitimize patriarchal systems contrary to its intentions? Is it possible to reform or convert a patriarchally stamped theology into an egalitarian theology which is liberating to women? Or do convinced feminists have to reject this tradition and create a theology for women on quite another basis?

Feminist theologians give diverging answers to these essential questions. A frequently used typology employs two main categories of feminist theology: (i) the *reformist* one, wanting to cleanse Christian theology from patriarchalism and transform it into an egalitarian theology; and (ii) the *revolutionary* one, considering Christianity as inherently and essentially misogynous and therefore working to develop a new feminist theology on a different basis. Those belonging to the first category emphasize the egalitarian and liberating elements of the Christian tradition (primarily in the Bible). Patriarchy, in their view, is the historical and cultural framework which has impacted Christianity, but it is not an essential part of the gospel. The revolutionary feminist theologians consider it a waste of time to search for liberating pieces in a religion permeated by patriarchal ideology.⁹

However, this categorization is a bit too simple and inadequate to comprise the recent developments within feminist theology. Still taking the attitude to the Christian tradition as the basis for the typology, one should distinguish between at least three main categories, in my opinion:

1. *Moderate reformist feminist theology* will criticize and replace patriarchal interpretations of biblical texts, dogmas, etc., and include issues related to women's experience in the various theological disciplines. The Bible is the most basic source, but there are different views on the relation between revelation and Scripture, biblical authority, etc. The moderate reformists are apologetic, defending the relevance of the Christian tradition and its compatibility with crucial aspects of feminism. Such theologies can take the form of a feminist version of some existing theological direction, e.g. liberation theology, process theology, various confessional theologies.¹⁰

2. *Radical reformist feminist theology* differs from the moderate one primarily on two basic issues. The radical reformists also find something usable in the Bible, but have a very critical stance to its central message (the biblical witness to the triune God, the gospel of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ). It is considered a collection of religious experiences of the past which in principle should not be bestowed with greater truthfulness and authority than other religious experiences. There is a clear tendency to syncretism, e.g. in making a selection of sources from the Christian tradition and from other religious traditions to meet the religious and psychological needs of feminists.¹¹

3. *Revolutionary, radical feminist theology* departs from the two former types in its total rejection of the Christian tradition and in its programme of developing an alternative feminist religion and theology (or *theology*, as some Goddess theorists put it). However,

there is no one alternative, but rather a multitude of post-Christian and non-Christian feminist theologies founded on various theoretical bases and drawing upon diverse sources (in addition to 'women's experience', of course): contemporary feminist philosophy and analysis of culture, religion and society, psychological theory in feminist reinterpretations, ancient religious traditions, e.g. Goddess religions and witchcraft, and living 'primitive' religions, e.g. shamanism.¹²

Evangelical feminist theology: no contradiction in terms

It is my firm conviction that an evangelical and biblically rooted feminist theology is not only possible but also necessary for the health of the Christian church and its life and mission in the world. In the following I will briefly give some reasons for this position. It should be understood, therefore, that in the remaining paragraphs of this article, I am discussing the role of a feminist theology that is based upon evangelical presuppositions.

1. Like numerous other Christian feminists I hold the view that the egalitarian elements of the Bible have priority over the patriarchal ideas in terms of theological significance though not in terms of quantity. Space does not allow in-depth arguments for this view, only some brief suggestions. According to Genesis 1-3, male and female have equal status in *creation*; male dominion is a consequence of sin. (Most Christians have not perceived the judgment upon Adam as a prohibition against combating 'weeds and thorns' by means of agricultural technology, a position inconsistent with the claim that male dominion is the eternal law of God.) *Jesus'* attitude to women was remarkably egalitarian and liberating. *Redemption* implies a freedom from the bondage caused by the fall; partly and anticipated in this era, fully in the era to come. Through *salvation* and *baptism* male and female have equal status (Gal. 3:28). The church has seen it as a corollary of the gospel to fight the social and ecclesiastical inequality between Jews and Gentiles (in Paul's time) and later on the social inequality between slaves and free human beings; thus it is in accordance with the gospel to abolish the social inequality between men and women. *Paul's* prescriptions of women's subordination should primarily be understood as a consequence of his missionary principles: for the sake of the gospel, Christians should adapt to current customs when possible and avoid unnecessary stumbling blocks. (It is noteworthy that the domestic codes do not tell husbands to rule over their wives. Thus the patriarchalism of the NT is limited and toned down.) In brief, though the Bible was written in a patriarchal culture and reflects patriarchal customs and attitudes, it contains remarkable non- and anti-patriarchal elements connected with central aspects of its content.

2. Protestant theology has some basic assumptions which provide a link to aspects of the feminist critique. The majority of Protestants agree upon the *reality of sin* also in reborn Christians and recognize *human limitation* in understanding God's will (cf. also 1 Cor. 13:9-12). Hence, although theology has normative pretensions, one should admit that theology is always a partial and limited interpretation of the word, acts and intentions of God. As such it cannot be wholly untainted by human sinfulness and self-assertion. The combination of selfishness (of individuals and groups) and limited understanding (which often is claimed to be the full truth) can result in theologies that legitimate existing unjust power structures and the exploitation of the poor by the privileged ones.¹³ Christian theology should understand itself as a type of human intellectual enterprise which is always in need of self-criticism as well as criticism from outside. An adequate response from the theological establishment to the feminist critique is not rejection or neglect, but rather the self-critical question: *What truth does this feminist critique contain?*

3. Most Protestants hold the view that 'the priesthood of all believers', i.e. the community of faith, is assigned the ultimate responsibility for teaching and preaching the Word of God in the world. Therefore theology should be seen as *the continual reflection of the whole people of God upon its faith and upon its witness to the gospel in words and deeds in the world, founded upon the biblical testimony of God's revelation as its normative source of knowledge about God*. The theological task requires not only the skills of theological experts. The particular perspectives, experiences, insights and concerns of Christians living in various cultural contexts and life situations are contributions needed to illuminate the situation in which the people of God live and bring their witness.

4. The different experiential contexts of women and men provide a sufficient argument for a theology incorporating women's experience. The reflection of God's people upon their faith and witness is biased and partial when the majority of God's people are practically excluded from it. The typical traditional women's experience of childcare and housework as well as the 'feminist' experience of struggling against various kinds of oppression both provide significant insights that until recently have had no place in theology. However, a feminist theology should not be regarded as a completion of male-authored theology considered as basically right, though limited. An 'equal but different' (complementarity) model of men's and women's experience fails to address the problems of androcentrism and patriarchy within predominant theology. A feminist theology must be critical, liberating and constructive. The pervasiveness of androcentric thought within the established theological tradition urges clearing up in the attic of theology. Feminist theology must explore critically the ramifications of androcentrism in theology and its effects in church and society.

5. Feminist theology must not only demand for itself the right to deal with the problems of sexism and androcentrism. These problems need also to be taken seriously and put on the agenda of established male-dominated theology. As long as its silence about sexism continues, and as long as androcentric thought goes on unrecognized, the predominant theology will continually reproduce its inherent biases. It is not enough that women's engagement in feminist theology is tolerated as a kind of special interest, or that feminist challenges to androcentric methodology and interpretations are accepted as interesting new viewpoints. Such responses are insufficient to bring about changes in the way mainstream theology is done by the theological establishment. Therefore it is an important task to analyse further the institutional conditions and the hindrances for doing feminist theology and for transforming androcentric theology into a truly inclusive theology.

6. Feminist theology intends to bring about a renewal of theology, not only to criticize. Its constructive task is to reflect upon the whole of Christian faith and praxis from a feminist perspective. Taking women's experience seriously and making women's issues visible is an important dimension of this constructive work. It is an urgent task to develop a methodology for a feminist theology which is consciously and definitely *Christian and feminist* at the same time. This requires, in my opinion, both a *fundamental commitment to the gospel and to Jesus Christ as the centre of faith, and a commitment to women's liberation and to combating the evil of sexism as its particular centre of concern.* The methodology of a biblically rooted feminist theology will share basic principles with traditional theology, while others will be challenged. The concern for women's liberation calls for a creative transformation of methodology which can enable theology to integrate insights from women's experience and feminist scholarship. For the sake of its own insight, and for the sake of its tasks toward the church and

the world, it must stay in a two-way critical and informative dialogue with non-feminist Christians as well as with non-Christian feminists. A Christian feminist theology must therefore live in a double context, the Christian church and the community of women.

¹Cf. Elizabeth Clark and Herbert Richardson (eds.), *Women and Religion. A Feminist Sourcebook of Christian Thought* (New York, 1977); George Tavard, *Woman in Christian Tradition* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1973); Rosemary R. Ruether (ed.), *Religion and Sexism: Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York, 1974); Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (eds.), *Women of Spirit. Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions* (New York, 1979).

²Cf. the anthology *Womanspirit Rising* (eds. Carol P. Christ and Judith Paskow, San Francisco, 1979), with contributions from Christian, Jewish and non-Christian feminist theologians.

³It is disputable whether some of the radical feminist theologians hold a position of female superiority, e.g. Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston, 1979).

⁴As one of the exceptions can be mentioned Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (Grand Rapids, 1978) and *The Ordination of Women* (Grand Rapids, 1980).

⁵Rosemary Ruether's *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward A Feminist Theology* (Boston, 1983) has a lengthy methodological account. In addition, biblical scholars like Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Phyllis Trible also have extensive methodological contributions.

⁶E.g. Rosemary Ruether, Letty Russell, Mary Daly (see notes 5, 8, 10-12).

⁷E.g. Penelope Washbourn, *Becoming Woman: The Quest for Wholeness in Female Experience* (San Francisco, 1977).

⁸Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston, 1973), pp. 11-12.

⁹*Womanspirit Rising*, pp. 9-11.

¹⁰Some representatives of this position are: Letty M. Russell, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective - A Theology* (Philadelphia, 1974), *The Future of Partnership* (1979), *Growth in Partnership* (1981); Virginia R. Mollenkott, *Women, Men, and the Bible* (Nashville, 1977), *The Divine Feminine* (New York, 1983); Patricia Wilson-Kastner, *Faith, Feminism and the Christ* (Philadelphia, 1983).

¹¹Ruether's books *Sexism and God-Talk* and *Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston, 1985) are typical representatives of this position.

¹²Mary Daly's later books (e.g. *Gyn/Ecology: The Meta-Ethics of Radical Feminism*, 1979, and *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, 1984) represent the more philosophical orientation within this category. Starhawk is a well-known theorist of feminist witchcraft religion which includes elements of ancient Goddess religion and contemporary shamanism. She is the author of *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco, 1979), *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* (Boston, 1982), *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority and Mystery* (San Francisco, 1987). Naomi Goldenberg represents a Goddess theology based on a feminist reinterpretation of Jungian psychology: *Changing of the Gods. Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions* (Boston, 1979).

¹³Cf. W.S. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation* (Scottsdale, 1983).

The value of women and world view

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The purpose of this article is to discuss a 'pernicious weed' which has put down roots with long tendrils reaching deep into the soil of our human history and present-day cultures. This 'pernicious weed' is patriarchy, which is basically the rule of a tribe or family by men, with emphasis on the value and positions of men. Its corollary is often misogyny, which means the devaluation of the female and all that is associated with the feminine. Many great thinkers from the major academic disciplines have asked, 'Why is patriarchy almost a universal phenomenon?' Historians, psychologists, sociologists and theologians have presented their reasons. By applying the anthropological theory of world view I propose that the underlying problem of patriarchal behaviours is the basic cultural assumption that women are of lesser value than men.

Before presenting the theory of world view it is appropriate to name some of my own assumptions. First, the analysis of this essay is based upon a secular behavioural science perspective, not upon a theological or hermeneutical perspective. The second assumption is that I accept the Scriptures as inspired and authoritative for all of Christian faith and practice. I am seeking to understand and theologize about a human phenomenon, the devaluation of females, through a behavioural science grid. The third perspective or assumption is that I profess to be an evangelical biblical feminist. I have been a cross-cultural missionary and am very concerned about the social and spiritual realities of women around the world.

The fourth assumption has to do with the pervasive and almost universal reality of patriarchy with the accompanying devaluation of women. There is not sufficient space to present all the data that have been gathered which demonstrate the devaluation of girls and women from before birth to the grave in almost all cultures of the world. The reader should be acquainted with the data gathered from research projects done during the United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985), particularly Bernard (1987), Taylor *et al.* (1985) and Sivard (1983). That is not to say that every culture exhibits devaluing behaviour patterns at every stage of every woman's life. However, the 'big picture' conclusion is that the devaluation of women is present in almost all cultures, including so-called technologically advanced Western cultures.

We started with the question 'Why does patriarchy appear to be an almost universal phenomenon?' I believe that the anthropological theories of world view can at least partially answer that question. The words 'world view' are used frequently these days in many academic disciplines. The definitions of world view presented here are from a cultural and missiological perspective, particularly utilizing the theoretical framework of world view as discussed by Hiebert (1985), Kearney (1984) and Kraft (1980). World view from this perspective refers to the deepest level of analysis of a culture. In this section I will present the concept of world view under the headings of definitions, characteristics and functions. Throughout I will interject at certain points how world view assumptions influence and/or illustrate the phenomenon of the devaluation of women.

Definitions of world view

Kearney defines world view as a people's

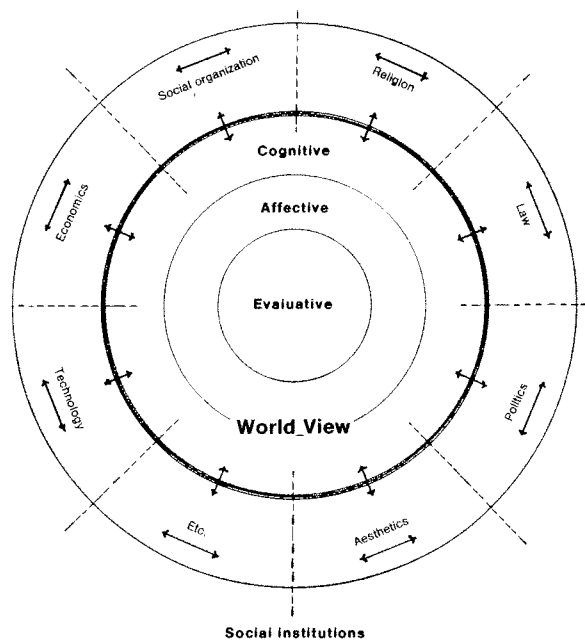
way of looking at reality. It consists of basic assumptions and images that provide a more or less coherent, though not necessarily accurate, way of thinking about the world. A world view comprises itself of Self and of all that is recognized as not Self, plus ideas about relationships between them, as well as other ideas (1984:41).

Kraft suggests that

The world view is the central systematization of concepts of reality to which the members of a culture assent (largely unconscious) and from which stems their value system. The world view lies at the very heart of culture, touching, integrating with, and strongly influencing every other part of culture (1980:53).

I define world view simply as the basic assumptions and values by which a given individual within a group of people or society perceives and organizes the reality around them. World view is the 'heart' of any culture and is what makes a culture 'tick'. The diagram below will show how the world view (which is generally invisible) is in the centre with the various social systems (the visible social patterns, customs and traits of culture) around the perimeter.

A Model of world view



Characteristics of world view

First of all, Hiebert (1985) has theorized that there are three segments or parts in a world view: cognitive, affective and evaluative assumptions. Cognitive assumptions provide people with basic concepts of time and space and help shape categories of thinking and types of logic used. The affective assumptions give people their basic ideas of what is beautiful, what is good taste in styles, colour, smells, music, etc. Finally, 'evaluative assumptions provide the standards people use to make judgments, including their criteria for determining truth and error, likes and dislikes, and right and wrong' (Hiebert 1985:46, 47). It is particularly this third segment of world view, the evaluative, that is being dealt with in this essay. The world view will contain evaluative assumptions about all segments of society. In this study I am dealing only with the evaluative assumptions regarding gender issues. It is proposed that the underlying problem of visible patriarchal behaviours is the basic invisible assumption that women are of lesser value than men. The diagram indicates that the evaluative part of world view is at the inner core of world view (from Hiebert 1985:46).

The second characteristic is that human beings are not born with a world view. Rather it is developed and becomes part of the individual's thinking as he or she interacts with other people and objects, first within the family system and later within the other social systems of the culture. Often these assumptions are unconscious, unexamined, and usually taken for granted since the learning process begins at the moment of birth. The world view assumptions are taught to succeeding generations so convincingly that they seem absolute and therefore are seldom questioned, with the result that people interpret their life experiences in terms of these assumptions and feel that they are absolute truth.

Third, Kearney suggests that 'the backbone of a world view is the opposition and integration of the Self and the Other' (1984:108). From birth and throughout life, the dynamic relationship between Self and Other (be it humans or objects in the environment) is the basis for the formation of various categories and value systems of the world view. From the second and third characteristics of world view can be drawn enormous implications for infant girls as they seek to find their place within the family system. The numerous evaluative messages communicated to the girl, most often at the intuitive level, are being imprinted upon her developing psyche. Very early on she learns that others perceive her to be of lesser value. From these devaluing life experiences she develops the assumption that in truth she must be of lesser value. Now this dynamic learning process is basically unconsciously taught and learned by the adults and the daughter in the family.

Of all the many possible relationships between Self and Other, the relationship between male and female as it is experienced by women, first in the family and later in the broader society, is a very significant part of any culture. From global demographic data it is apparent that the male/female relationship can be most frequently described as patriarchal, that is, men ruling over women. We begin to see how patriarchy and the devaluation of women are two sides of the same coin.

The fourth characteristic of world view is that it is the 'source' from which explicit culture is derived. In other words, the world view of culture provides the underlying, but invisible building blocks for the visible social systems of the culture. Notice in the diagram that there are 'gates' from the world view to the various social systems. It is also observed from the diagram above that the various social systems are in a reciprocal relationship with each other and the world view. This means then that the world view is the 'source' for the visible or explicit culture, but in turn the explicit culture, the social systems, reinforce and sanction the assumptions of the world view. They are in reciprocal relationship.

Gender roles are part of the visible culture. Therefore, as we examine not only the various roles women play, we must also ask about the values and assumptions behind the roles. When women are consistently paid less for the same job as men, does it not imply that women and the work they do are of less value than men and the work they do? Why is a woman's testimony in the court room often taken to be less credible than a man's testimony? Why are the doors to education more easily opened for boys than for girls? In like manner, we must also ask about the invisible values and assumptions behind the very visible exclusion of women from certain ministries and positions within the religious system.

Fifth, it is important to understand that world view assumptions are not necessarily the same as religious beliefs and opinions, although in some cultures there may be a strong relationship between the two. The religious system is only one of the various social systems of the culture (see the diagram). The various social systems do not impact the world view with equal importance and strength. In some cultures one or two particular social systems will have a stronger relationship with and therefore a greater impact upon the world view. For instance, in Western cultures it is the economic system with its emphasis on materialism and consumerism that has strongly reinforced world view assumptions regarding the use of time and material elements. That is in spite of the fact that they are so-called 'Christian' nations. However, in many other cultures around the world it is the religious system that strongly influences, reinforces and sanctions the basic assumptions and belief systems of their world view. It is to be noticed then that the religious system is separate from the world view assumptions even though it may have tremendous influence on the world view.

Basically, the religious system will describe and prescribe the general and specific beliefs and values of the world view. That is to say, the religious system will not only describe and affirm a certain type of relationship between men and women, it will also say that that is how 'things ought to be'. In prescribing the gender relationship it is in turn informing the contents of the assumptions of the world view. This sanctioning influence of the religious system on the basic world view values and assumptions is of great significance in regard to the devaluing process of women.

Functions of world view

When all basic assumptions and values are brought together to form a world view, they function in at least five ways to help the people of a given culture to conceptualize their whole reality. First, the world view of a people provides a rational explanation or justification for the belief system that they adhere to. The world view gives the cognitive and rational apologetic for how and why things are the way they are. This 'map of reality' is logical to the people who own a particular world view.

The second important function of world view is to provide emotional security and stability. When individuals or a whole society must face highly emotional situations, for instance crises or celebrations, it is the basic assumptions of the world view that will indicate to the individual how to find help in the midst of the crisis or how a given celebration will reinforce emotionally the belief system. When we are going through a difficult crisis, it is the basic belief in an eternal God who cares for us that prompts us to turn to God in prayer. Rituals and ceremonies are times in which the world view assumptions are reinforced through the emotional response.

The third function of world view is to judge and validate the norms of the society. The world view evaluates what is right and wrong about behaviours and choices. In other words, our world view not only gives us a map of reality, it also gives us a map for reality. A world view not only describes how things are but prescribes how things should be within a given culture.

World view serves not only to say what is valuable but also how to sort out and prioritize our values by putting them in hierarchical order. It teaches us the degrees of allegiance we will extend to the Other of our environment. It would be difficult for most people to put the same value on the soap they use to clean themselves as compared to the value ascribed to their parents or siblings. In other words, our world view indicates to us which values, beliefs and allegiances we would be willing to die for and which ones we can let go without losing our sense of integrity.

It seems to me that the evaluative function of world view is at the crux of the matter when discussing gender issues, especially the function of ascribing allegiances. Not every culture in the world devalues women to the level of animals. Nevertheless, even if women are accorded a relatively high value in a given culture, men are usually given a higher priority or allegiance in the society. This is demonstrated in subtle ways. Boys and men generally speaking have better nutrition than girls and women. In certain cultures female foetuses are aborted more frequently than male foetuses. In most instances, men have more legal rights than women. In these and many more instances, men are given the preferential position and treatment.

The fourth function of world view is to integrate and give an overarching pattern or organization to all of our perceptions and

assumptions. The devaluation of women is usually not seen in just one of the social systems, *i.e.* the family or church. If the devaluation of women is truly a world view issue, it will be demonstrated in one way or another in all the social systems.

Fifthly, not only does a world view integrate the basic assumptions of a people, it also monitors how and when change will be brought to the world view and culture. In spite of the fact that the world view provides stability, it also permits change. This function presents hope that the massive devaluation of women in human history can be turned around. The danger is, though, that changes will only be brought to the visible part of culture, the social systems. Society may pass laws which mandate that women and men receive equal pay for the same job in the workplace. But because there is a change in the visible culture does not necessarily mean there will be a corresponding change in the invisible world view of the culture. The perceived value of women and their work must change also.

Concluding implications

Thus far the theories, characteristics and functions of world view have been presented. To close I shall briefly discuss a few implications for Christian ministry and the process of theologizing in our contemporary world.

First, an obvious fact should be noted. World views are held by both men and women in a given culture. The belief that women are of less value is not held by men only. Women also perceive themselves to be of lesser value. The devaluation of women affects both men and women, albeit in very different ways. Both men and women must work towards finding a true gender identity which liberates both to be all that God would want them to be.

Second, world view assumptions are passed from generation to generation. The present-day devaluation of women was learned from the previous generation, who in turn learned these values from their ancestors. The human race has been 'congenitally flawed' with aggressiveness on the part of men and passivity on the part of women for a very long, long time (Van Loeuwen 1987). If we believe that the human race finds its common origin in the Genesis creation narratives, then we might also find the beginnings of the phenomenon of the devaluation of women in those same passages. It seems to me that Genesis 3:16 describes this phenomenon when it says 'the desire of the woman shall be for her husband and he shall rule over her'. Patriarchy and the devaluation of women are a result of sin entering the world. Because human beings, when left to themselves, seem to have a very strong propensity to get caught in the 'cultural drag' of patriarchalism and misogyny, each new generation of children needs to be carefully and clearly taught the equal value of male and female.

We have suggested that patriarchy and the devaluation of women have been around since sin entered the human race. A

cursory overview of the two-thousand-year history of the church indicates that only sporadically has it spoken out against the sin of sexism. Christian missionary enterprise has sought to deal with various kinds of cultural issues like polygamy, ancestor worship or ethnic music, but very little has been done to deal with the issues surrounding the devaluation of women around the world. This indeed is a challenge for contemporary theologians.

Third, it was stated that there is a sanctioning and reinforcing reciprocal relationship between the visible and the invisible culture. This fact presents a warning to both the traditionalists and the feminists. All human beings are profoundly and powerfully influenced by the invisible and often unconscious world view assumptions of the culture in which they were socialized. We are all strongly conditioned by the culture around us. And this is true even for Christians. Both the traditionalists and the feminists theologize out of their own cultural and world view perspectives. Each must be willing honestly to acknowledge their own 'cultural baggage' being brought to the task of scriptural exegesis.

Fourth, as might have been guessed, it is much easier to change the visible cultural behaviours, customs and systems than it is to change the invisible world view assumptions, beliefs and allegiances. For all the good changes that have been made in favour of women, they will be short-lived unless the underlying value systems are changed.

In this essay I have sought to define the theory of world view and describe how this explains at least in part the universality of patriarchy and the devaluation of women. Now the discussion must move on to ask the question 'How do we bring change at the world view level?' That is a question which there is neither time nor space to discuss at this moment. In the meantime, those of us who profess to be 'in Christ' are called to embrace a value system which demonstrates that kind of gender equality in our everyday behaviours (Gal. 3:26-28).

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A stalemate of genders? Some hermeneutical reflections

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Introduction

Christians are not exempt from the effects of secular trends in emancipation. Today's Christian woman is faced with a situation where the church is often sending out messages about her nature and role which are in opposition to those received in her contact with the secular world. She may be a school headmistress, teaching boys, but she may not 'teach' men in the church. And within the church world itself there are puzzles. She may join a missionary society (mostly manned by women!) and be supported by her church to teach men and women and plant churches abroad, but still not be able to 'teach' on her return home!

In an attempt to decode such conflicting messages, the modern Christian woman may rightly turn to the Bible for authoritative guidance, yet precisely there she faces another set of problems. Christians are divided over what the biblical evidence says.

The pressing need at the moment is to formulate a theology which does not merely sanctify the results of secular feminism, but which reassesses the new cultural horizon and thinking on the role of women in the light of the biblical horizon. Achieving such a fusion of horizons is precisely the issue among evangelicals in this debate.

Scripture must be authoritative

If Scripture is not viewed as authoritative there is no obligation to take its words as foundational or binding for decisions affecting doctrine and behaviour in the area of the roles of men and women. The issue will be decided on other grounds. Thus, although Schuessler Fiorenza deals with the biblical text more than most liberal Christian feminists, when the text is put in the balance and found wanting, feminist concerns outweigh revelation: 'The personally and politically reflected experience of oppression and liberation must become the criterion of appropriateness for biblical interpretation and evaluation of biblical authority claims.'¹ It is this question of scriptural authority which divides the different approaches to the issue at the most fundamental level.

At this stage the polarizations may seem obvious. Those who regard Scripture as secondary see things one way, and those who regard Scripture as primary see things another way. However, the debate is not simply a matter of whether Scripture is authoritative, but how that authority may be discovered. We are still left with the dilemma that evangelicals (*i.e.* those, including myself, who regard Scripture as primary and authoritative) do not necessarily agree upon the interpretation of the text, and there is often a great chasm of suspicion between the proponents of those various interpretations. Deciding what the text means involves more than merely assenting to its authority.

A matter of exegesis

Among evangelicals the different sides of the debate show that scholarship is divided. Some take a traditional or 'hierarchical' view of the relationship of men and women, while others maintain a 'liberationist' position of mutual submission and equality. (The labels do not consign the one side to 'chauvinism' and the other to 'raving feminism'!) The curious thing is that the source for these widely differing views is precisely the same text! The text itself faces us with choices more complex than merely to take it or leave it.

The vast majority of literature appearing is still in the area of exegetical statements about Scripture, where a particular view is

propounded because this is what Scripture is *obviously* saying. If we remain at this stage we shall go no further than hurling proof texts from one side of the debate to the other. What is necessary is to go a step further back, to examine the hermeneutical processes which lead to the formulation of the various conclusions advocated. There is scarcely any material which is yet dealing with such questions. Willard Swartley's book *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women* is one of the few to start raising the issues, but there is a long way to go.

Is tradition exegetically authoritative?

In asking this question the emphasis is not on a particular church or doctrinal tradition, but on the tradition in which we all stand with respect to the way in which given texts have historically been interpreted.

Many evangelicals have frankly been deterred from the possibility of coming to conclusions which differ from those traditionally held through the centuries, rightly afraid of somehow, in the process, sacrificing the authority of Scripture. But is this necessarily the case?

Biblical exegesis on the nature and role of women has traditionally been exclusively hierarchical. Thomas Aquinas concluded women's subordination from the Pauline writings, inferring from Genesis 2 and 3 (influenced more by Aristotle than Scripture!) that woman was essentially a misbegotten male, a male *manqué*. The woman is by nature (for Aquinas it is ontologically convincing) cursed, subject to man and weaker than him: 'woman is naturally subject to man, because in man the discretion of reason predominates'²

Man was clearly made in the image of God, but woman was inferior in this respect also. Augustine commented, 'The woman herself alone is not the image of God: whereas the man alone is the image of God as fully and completely as when the woman is joined with him.'³

By the time of the Protestant Reformation Luther's exposition of Scripture was still governed by the presupposition that woman was inferior to man. On Ecclesiastes 7:26 he exegetes, 'she was created to be around the man, to care for children and to bring them up . . . and to be subject to the man. Men, on the other hand, are commanded to govern and have the rule over women and the rest of the household. But if a woman forsakes her office and assumes authority over her husband, she is no longer doing her own work, for which she was created, but a work that comes from her own fault and from evil. For God did not create this sex for ruling, and therefore they never rule successfully.'⁴ Luther may have had cultural grounds for such ideas, but there are no biblical grounds for men being commanded to govern and rule over their wives, let alone women in general, and certainly nothing in Ecclesiastes! And if on creational grounds a woman's role is to be around the man and to have children, presumably all men are to be gardeners!

Calvin seems to accord women a slightly higher dignity than Luther, yet he was similarly convinced of women's subordination, on creational grounds. In his commentary on 1 Timothy 2:12 he states: 'The reason that women are prevented from teaching is that it is not compatible with their status, which is to be subject to men, whereas to teach implies superior authority and status.' He goes on to say that men as teachers may also be subject to others: 'there is no absurdity in man's commanding and obeying at the same time in different relationships. But this does not apply to women, who by nature (that is, by the ordinary law of God) are born to obey, for all wise men have always rejected *gynaikokratian*, the government of women, as an unnatural monstrosity.'⁵

Calvin and the others were convinced that their views rested on biblical grounds, totally oblivious that their own cultural horizon had in reality led them to faulty exegesis. Tradition does not always leave us the best of exegetical examples!

What has changed?

It is only within the past generation that a significant number of exegetes have seriously maintained that Scripture teaches equality and mutual submission rather than a hierarchy of the sexes, and that the role of teaching is not reliant on a superior status or authority which is gender-based. Is this overthrow of a traditionalist interpretation also the overthrow of biblical authority? The question must be asked how such teaching could possibly be plain from Scripture if it has not been generally recognized before now? The weight of historical exegesis falls on the traditionalist interpretation, leaving us with two main options:

- (1) The traditionalist understanding must be correct because exegesis is historically changeless.
- (2) The liberationist understanding may be correct because exegesis depends to a large extent upon the current cultural horizon of the exegete as well as the past cultural horizon of the text. In this case the results of exegesis may validly change if new light is shed on the exegetical and cultural presuppositions of past generations.

From a study of the history of exegesis the first option is obviously untenable. For the second option we have ample historical precedent. For example, in attempting to specify incarnational Christology and to protect it from the early heresies, many of the early Church Fathers did so within a Platonic framework which presupposed that God was both immutable and impassible – views which are no longer held to be prerequisite to modern exegesis! Their understanding was affected by their cultural horizon which was later seen to be unwarranted by Scripture itself. Luther's cry for justification by faith from Romans was contrary to much prevailing interpretation, just as also with the abolition of slavery came the understanding that Scripture could no longer be used to maintain the unjust status quo, even if, in the 1850s, to argue against slavery was allegedly to argue against Scripture's infallibility!

In other words, tradition alone may hallow error just as easily as it may hallow truth, and newness itself does not sanction or invalidate an interpretation.

Issues in translation

There are already a number of arguments previously cherished by traditionalists which have been shown to be hermeneutically unsound. For example, the use of 'helper' to refer to Eve in Genesis 2:18 is rarely referred to now to indicate subordination, since it has been shown that 'helper' is used most often of God in relation to Israel – with no connotations of inferiority!

Similarly, many questions have been asked of the traditionalist position – not through a stereotypical desire to be militant or anti-authoritarian, but because it throws up issues of inconsistency and problems of translation and exegesis.

The verb *hypotassō* occurs twenty-three times in the Pauline epistles. Traditionalist writers tend to translate the word as 'subordinate' rather than 'submit to' (the former often having overtones of inferiority in the English). Although Paul clearly distinguishes between *hypakouō* ('obey' – a verb never used for the husband/wife relationship⁹) and *hypotassō*, there has often been an implicit acceptance of obedience even where it does not actually occur. Typical of this is Best's statement, 'In Ephesians 5:22-33 the wife is taught to be obedient to her husband in the same manner as the Church is obedient to Christ. The subjection of the Church to Christ and its relationship to him as wife is assumed as known.' He clearly reads obedience instead of submission, though the two are not synonymous for Paul.

In fact, the injunction 'Wives, submit to your husbands . . .' is an implicit command where the imperative is absent, but assumed from the participle *hypotassomenoi* in Ephesians 5:21, which commands us to be subject to one another. It is thus part of a mutuality of submission within the body of Christ. It cannot be a different submission on the part of the wife since there is no new verb, and the only verb used is one which in fact also governs all

other relationships. The NIV conveniently separates verse 22 as beginning a new section, and no traditionalists see it as significant that the injunction of 5:21 applies to men and women alike! However, 'the subordination of wives is an example of the same mutual subordination which is also shown by the husband's love . . .'.⁸ Submission is not the duty of the wife alone any more than love is the duty of the husband alone!

Markus Barth contends that whenever the verb is used in the active, God himself is the only one who does the subjecting. There is a hierarchy of God's supreme power subjecting the weaker and inferior to himself. However, when used of Christ, the church and its members, *hypotassō* describes a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden. He expects this kind of subordination only of Christ and of persons who are "in Christ" . . . It is a demonstration of that "total humility, gentleness, mutual bearing, love, unity, peace" which in 4:1-3 were described as the constitutive works not of miserable slaves and bootlickers but of the free children of God, of persons in high standing, even of princes.¹⁰

This is no feeble submissiveness. Neither is the husband on any occasion enjoined to make the wife submit. Rather, it is a voluntary, personal act of free yielding to an equal, required of both sexes. This is surely what the text requires us to understand, and also how stable, godly marriages and relationships actually work! Correct exegesis affects correct behaviour; orthodoxy and orthopraxy are inseparable.

Presuppositions in translation

Bruce Metzger, in his introduction to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), comments that 'During the almost half a century since the publication of the RSV, many in the churches have become sensitive to the danger of linguistic sexism, arising from the inherent bias of the English language towards the masculine gender, a bias that in the case of the Bible has often restricted or obscured the meaning of the original text'.¹⁰ The NRSV is to be congratulated in its attempt (though not always successful) to take this seriously.

Whilst some feel it is nitpicking to correct this linguistic bias (after all, man has embraced woman for years!), apart from being sociologically downright impolite in linguistically ignoring half the population, this bias actually leads to a number of wrong assumptions within the biblical text which the Greek does not warrant. For example, in a recent lecture this author had difficulty persuading a student that Paul's use of *adelphoi* ('brothers') throughout 1 Thessalonians did not mean that he was addressing only men! It also leads to such 'helpful' comments as the *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible* entry on 'Woman': 'The gospel was available to all men without regard to sex!'¹¹

The sexism (*i.e.* neglect or exclusion of women) of the Greek language itself is often reinforced in translation into languages which are also sexist. The fact is that, in Greek, feminine nouns and pronouns are used *exclusively* with reference to women. If a category is mixed or uncertain (*e.g.* disciples), then the masculine is *always* used, although Luke sometimes specifies both (*e.g.* Acts 5:14: *andrōn te kai gynaikōn*). It is time our translations changed to using 'brothers and sisters' where this is clearly the intended meaning, as indeed the NRSV does. It is not enough to maintain, 'everyone knows that "brothers" means "sisters" too – it is taken for granted'. It is *not* taken for granted that masculine includes feminine, and why should it? Take for example 2 Timothy 2:2, 'And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others' (NIV). This presents no problem for men (*i.e.* male) to read. It *must* apply to them. But, in the English translation, does 'men' here include women? After all, these 'men' are to teach others – something which (according to traditionalist or hierarchical interpreters) women are apparently precluded from doing!

Every female reader, consciously or unconsciously, passes this word 'men' through an interpretative grid to ask whether it includes her or not. In the case of 2 Timothy 2:2 the translation may lead her to believe that she is not included. Greek has a separate word for man and woman/husband and wife (*anēr* and *gynē*). However, here the word *anthrōpos* is used, a word clearly meaning 'person, human, mortal', yet more often than not in the NIV, translated by the ambiguous word 'man'. The Greek is clearly *inclusive*; the English is not. The small courtesy of inclusivist language is not some grudging concession to feminist stridency, but a necessary tool for correct exegesis.

Similarly, the English personal pronoun 'he', used in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, prejudges the issue and makes it difficult to read it as anything but exclusively male when there is in reality no Greek male personal pronoun or indication that it is to be understood exclusively.¹² Yet the NIV inserts 'he' or 'man' some eleven times in this passage!

Disregarding inclusivist language may lead to presuppositional blindspots among exegetes (the vast majority of whom are male). For example, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 is a passage stressing the need for personal purity in relationships. Exactly which relationships are in mind has been disputed; the discussion ranges between *skeuos* ('vessel') in 4:4 as a reference to the wife (so B. Witherington III, M. Evans) or to the body (so L. Morris). Among the many arguments it is felt that to refer *skeuos* to the wife would portray a low view of women, whilst others see no denigration of the wife, especially since in 1 Peter 3 she is referred to as the 'weaker vessel', thereby presuming that the husband is a vessel too!

The options given by scholars are either that it means 'a man should control his own body' or that 'a man should acquire a wife' in all holiness and honour. Of those who relate *skeuos* to the wife, all of those read by this present writer presume that the *hekaston hymōn* ('each one of you') of 4:4 refers exclusively to men. It is presumed that Paul must be speaking of a husband, and no translation or commentator even entertains the possibility that it may refer to a woman. It simply does not occur to them! It is always seen to be a man controlling either *his* body or gaining *his* wife! The likelihood is there, however, that the language used is deliberately ambiguous and is embracing both men and women. *Skeuos* is used here by Paul as if to say that the instructions for sanctification and chastity apply to each to take a partner/control of their own body in holiness and honour. There is no need for Paul to be addressing only men at this point. This is merely one example of the danger of marginalization in translation. Maleness is assumed, femaleness is not.

Christians should, for reasons of courtesy and clarity, use the word 'man' only when it refers to maleness. If this means changes to our translations or in our everyday language, so be it. We can only be enriched by the process.

Issues in exegesis and interpretation

Unclear texts should be interpreted in the light of clear texts

There are no unequivocal texts forbidding women for all time from teaching or participating fully in all aspects of church leadership. The key texts used in the past are significantly among the most difficult in the NT, including a number of *hapax legomena* and verses such as 1 Timothy 2:15, which still awaits a really convincing exegesis.

For example, the *hapax legomenon* 'authentēin' in 1 Timothy 2:12 is seen by Moo to be 'a major *crux interpretum*'¹³ to support a traditionalist interpretation. Does this not in fact violate the generally accepted hermeneutical principle that unclear texts should be interpreted in the light of clear texts? Payne rightly notes, 'In no other verse of Scripture is it stated that women are not to be in "authority" over men. It is precarious indeed to deny that women should ever be in a position of authority over men based on the disputed meaning of the only occurrence of this word anywhere in the Bible.'¹⁴

Yet in the debate over women it is precisely such 'unclear' texts which are used as foundational to the traditionalist argument that women should not authoritatively teach men. Rarely are there references to unequivocal texts such as Colossians 3:16 which clearly states that teaching is the responsibility of all believers. Gender is simply not specified, and neither is it anywhere assumed that some teaching is more authoritative than other teaching within the church body, or that a formal sermon slot in church is different from teaching outside a church environment.

Presuppositions in exegesis

Presuppositions are inevitable scholarly appendages, indivisible from any theologian's task and visible at every level of exegesis. Scholer observes, 'The concept of genuinely objective biblical interpretation is a myth. . . . Generally, persons raised within holiness, pentecostal and certain Baptist traditions experienced women teaching authoritatively in the church long before they were equipped to interpret 1 Timothy 2:11-12 and never found that

passage a problem. Conversely, persons raised in many Reformed traditions knew long before they were equipped to interpret 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that women were to be excluded from authoritative teaching in the church. They grew up finding the verses clear support for what they believed.'¹⁵

Not that this means that the task of exegesis is a hopeless one, but that at least these things should be recognized with no false notions of some ideal 'objectivity'. Not all presuppositions are wrong. Yet the approach of the exegete must always be that presuppositions are not to change the text, but rather be changed by it. As Swartley challenges, 'If Bible study is never allowed to change our doctrine, indeed our beliefs, then why do it?'¹⁶

Much of the traditional exegesis of the passages concerning women has rested on presuppositions that Paul *must* have had a hierarchical opinion of women. In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Grosheide remarks of 7:39, 'Remarkable it is that Paul first mentions the wife instead of beginning with the husband. This may be due to the fact that the Corinthian women were taking too many liberties and also that the wife is subject to the husband.'¹⁷ The commentary mentions little about the significance of 1 Corinthians 7 with regard to the role of women, but the above quotation serves to show that it presumes, if anything, to have the subjection of wives in mind, even if the passage does not mention it! Many liberationist exegetes note, however, that the surprising parallelism of men and women in the passage would seem rather to point to Paul's handling of them as equals.

Headship

Kephalē ('head') has been a linchpin of controversy, leading many to conclusions of hierarchy – authority for husbands and subjugation of wives – and some others to an understandable over-reaction, leading unfortunately to an emptying of meaning or force to verses such as Ephesians 5:23. It is important to see how exegetes' assumptions about the word may lead to erroneous interpretations and an ignoring of the contextual meaning.

For instance, the majority of exegetes dealing with *kephalē* in Ephesians 5:23 proceed with the following hermeneutical reasoning:

- (i) *Kephalē* means 'head', either literally or metaphorically.
- (ii) What 'head' means can be found by a diachronic study of *kephalē* used in other contexts in biblical and extra-biblical Greek literature.
- (iii) *Kephalē* is sometimes used with the sense of 'ruler' and sometimes with the sense of 'source' or 'origin'.
- (iv) The choice lies with the exegetes; those with traditionalist presuppositions opt for 'ruler, authority over', and those with liberationist presuppositions opt for 'source'.
- (v) Sometimes even English etymology is called upon to bolster the argument of meaning, e.g. the 'head' of a school or 'head' of a class imply authority and pre-eminence, therefore 'head' in Ephesians 5:23 has these connotations! Even if this is not a deliberate hermeneutical procedure it is often an unconscious misfortune resulting from translation into a polysemy.

However, James Barr has shown that 'the etymology of a word is not a statement about its meaning but about its history; it is only as a historical statement that it can be responsibly asserted, and it is quite wrong to suppose that the etymology of a word is necessarily a guide either to its "proper" meaning in a later period or to its actual meaning in that period'.¹⁸ Words not only change their meanings with the passage of time, but even within the same time-span words are themselves capable of a plurality of meanings.

Neither is the use of *kephalē* in other Pauline passages a fool-proof methodology. It is possible for a word to be used even within the same letter with entirely different meanings or shades of significance. What must be avoided is what Barr terms 'illegitimate totality transfer', where the semantic value of a word in one particular context is added to its use in a completely different context. Thiselton states that 'the meaning of a word depends not on what it is in itself, but on its relation to other words and to other sentences which form its context. . . . words do indeed possess a stable core of meaning. . . . Nevertheless, the most urgent priority is to point out the fallacy of an atomizing exegesis which pays insufficient attention to context'.¹⁹

For example, in Ephesians 1:22 *kephalē* may well mean 'head' in the sense of 'crown' or 'top', but it is different from 5:23, where it

does not. Context must be the hermeneutical decider, but context is frequently forgotten!

So what *does* headship mean? The tradition passed down in many churches is that of a husband taking final and major decisions, and in the end being a type of loving 'boss'. Is this in fact what the biblical evidence suggests? An example of faulty transference of meaning is found in Best's comment on Ephesians 5:23: 'Headship implies here not organic unity but the power to rule'.²⁰ The implication for him is obvious without any need for explanation! Certainly Christ does have power to rule his church, but it is nowhere suggested that power is the point of comparison in this context. In fact, in a passage speaking so much of submission and love, power and ruling are distinctly out of place. The analogies drawn from Christ are all in the area of giving up and sacrifice, not of power or rule. Headship is giving, not ruling.

Hurley says, 'Headship and leadership most often involve initiative rather than command'.²¹ But for Hurley the initiative is essentially in authority of decision-making for the husband, whereas the context in Ephesians simply does not say this, rather it demands that we see initiative at the point of selfless, self-giving love.

Similarly, Bruce makes this bald statement on this passage: 'In this context the word "head" has the idea of authority attached to it after the analogy of Christ's headship over the church'.²² The underlying exegetical assumption here is that the analogy of Christ's headship of the church is speaking about authority at this particular point. This is neither necessary nor obvious. 5:25-29 elaborate on this headship in terms of love. It is not Christ's Lordship which is analogous to the husband's headship, but Christ's self-giving, and it is to such a headship of love that the wife is to submit herself.

It becomes obvious that views of headship being 'over' the wife/woman or consisting in superiority, priority, decision-making, bread-winning or authority from this passage are based on eisegesis rather than on the text itself. The ideal Christian marriage is not required to be the relationship of a subservient wife to an authoritative husband, but that of mutual self-giving.

Choosing an interpretative centre

Where we begin is all-important to our conclusion. Clark says, 'In short, 1 Timothy 2:8-15 is one of the most important texts to consider in any examination of the New Testament on the roles of men and women.'²³ F.F. Bruce, however, begins with Galatians 3:28: 'Paul states the basic principle here; if restrictions on it are found elsewhere in the Pauline corpus, as in 1 Corinthians 14:34f. . . . or 1 Timothy 2:11f., they are to be understood in relation to Galatians 3:28, and not *vice versa*.'²⁴

The heart of the problem is precisely here. The basic hermeneutical principle upon which all agree is the necessary harmonization of text. From then on a 'key' passage is found, which becomes the standard by which all other texts must be harmonized. Which one is the 'right' one to start with? This is the moot point. Perhaps it should be borne in mind that traditionalists have usually made the more unclear texts their centres for interpretation.

The use of the creation narratives

A complete examination of this topic is impossible here. However, a good example of the way in which the creation narratives have been used may be seen from 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Debates over this passage are often brought to a climax by an appeal to the fact that 'Paul uses a creation argument' or 'Paul refers to the creation order', as if this were automatically known to be irrefutable evidence for the traditionalist view!

The traditionalist exegesis of these verses may be seen from Alan Stibbs' commentary. It is presumed that Paul's teaching about woman is quite clear. She is to be subordinate, and the reference to the Genesis story is so obvious that there is no need to exegete it: 'The tragedy of the Fall establishes the general truth that a woman is more easily deceived than a man; so it is out of place for her to take the lead in settling either doctrine or practice for the Christian community. (Note that it is, however, a woman's privilege to teach children and younger women . . .).'²⁵

But does the fall establish such a general truth? The main hermeneutical issue arising from 1 Timothy 2:13-15 concerns the

reason for which Paul uses the allusion to Genesis. What exactly is the point of comparison between the Eve story and the Ephesian situation?

A traditionalist view:

Throughout his book *Man & Woman in Biblical Perspective*, James Hurley presumes that Genesis 2 was written in order to show the headship of man over woman and that it is for this reason that Paul refers to Adam and Eve.

Hurley's insistence on hierarchy leads him to a faulty exegesis of Genesis 3. He rightly dismisses the possibility that the consequences of Eve's act are that all women are gullible and should not be allowed to propagate their ignorance. Perhaps a little close observation of the subject matter may have helped him to his conclusion, but also the fact that women are specifically encouraged to teach in certain other circumstances. The key to understanding lies in deciding who was actually at fault in the fall. 'Paul seems to be saying that Eve was not at fault; she was deceived. Adam, on the other hand, was not deceived but deliberately and with understanding, chose to sin. . . . The verse under consideration appears virtually to excuse Eve on the basis that she was in reality deceived by the serpent. . . . Paul's point might then be paraphrased, "The man, upon whom lay responsibility for leadership in home and in religious matters, was prepared by God to discern the serpent's lies. The woman was not appointed religious leader and was not prepared to discern them. She was taken in. Christian worship involves re-establishing the creational pattern with men faithfully teaching God's truth and women receptively listening."'²⁶

The exegetical fallacies here are legion. They involve conclusions, among others, that Eve's act did not constitute sin (and all acts following deception must therefore presumably not be counted as sin either?). Adam was in effect priest and religious leader of the family (which is simply not mentioned in the text and has repercussions on women's place in the priesthood of all believers). It sees the necessity of a theological sin to cause the fall, and finally, it makes Adam's deliberate sinning the condition of and preparation for the faithful and authoritative teaching by men in the church!!

A liberationist view:

The *gar* ('for') at the beginning of 1 Timothy 2:13 is not illative (causal, giving the reason for the prohibition), but explanatory, *i.e.* it is not about Adam being in a position of superiority over Eve, or that woman's nature prevents her from teaching. Rather, Eve is cited as an example *not* to follow. Ben Witherington III, in one of the most penetrating and exegetically detailed books to appear on the whole debate so far, maintains, 'The point of the example is to teach women not to emulate Eve, but rather to emulate the behaviour outlined in v. 15'.²⁷

Evans argues that Eve's deception is used by Paul, not to point to women's greater capacity for deception, since in 2 Corinthians 11:3 Paul uses Eve's deception to say that both men and women can be deceived. Neither is it used to propose women's unsuitability to teach, otherwise, why should they teach children and other women? Rather, Paul is making a connection between understanding or knowledge and teaching. It is the purpose of his epistle to expose false teaching and encourage the truth. So, 'Eve had been deceived and had sought to teach Adam something which she herself did not understand'.²⁸ In the context of false teaching, or while women were uneducated, they were not to teach.

This view relies heavily on Paul's teaching being culturally relative rather than absolute. The prohibition is dependent on women being ignorant, and once this changes, it is no longer valid or necessary. Yet this in no way detracts from the absolute nature of the *principle* behind Paul's teaching, which is that 'No believer, male or female, has an automatic right to teach. Any, particularly women, who are untaught and easily deceived, must continue to concentrate on learning rather than on usurping an authority which has not been given to them.'²⁹ But the emphasis and highly innovative point Paul is making is not that women should not teach, but that they *should* learn!

What is normative?

One of the main fears about this question for traditionalists is that, if certain of Paul's injunctions to women are seen to be non-normative, then the authority of Scripture itself is at stake.

However, this question has to be faced for the whole of Scripture, not merely on this particular issue. So Payne rightly asks how far other accounts of the early church are to be normative for today. 'Several comments in 1 Timothy 2 should caution us not to assume that everything here is to be normative for all ages. . . . It is inconsistent simply to assume on the one hand that it is normative for women never to teach or be in authority over men, but on the other hand to dismiss as not normative Paul's comments about braids, gold, pearls, expensive clothes, and raised hands in prayer.'³⁰

In this issue the traditionalists are obviously lacking in hermeneutical consistency. Much of this arises because of a failure to recognize the implications of the genre of epistle. Paul's epistles are contextualized, not systematic, theology. So Witherington rightly states, 'We are thrust into the context of the letters that are of either a problem or progress nature. It should be recognized that what an individual says to correct an error cannot be taken as a full or definitive statement of his views on a particular subject. . . . Paul, as a task theologian. . . [stresses] certain points not because they are of great importance, but because he must redress an imbalance in the thinking of his audience.'³¹ The liberationist may be neither dismissive, escapist nor unsound in appropriately maintaining certain parts of Paul's teaching to be culturally binding for his then target readership, yet not necessarily binding in the same way in the different cultural milieu of today. As the OT so often functions for us as a paradigm of principles for action rather than a blueprint of detailed instructions, so also with the NT epistles: they must be understood against their primary context and then recontextualized into ours.

Practical modern application

In the past the established church has closed its doors to women's public ministry where it might involve teaching when men are present. Traditionally this has come back to 'biblical grounds'. This is not the place to discuss women's ordination and other related issues, except to point out some anachronisms with which we have all had to live. In the last years the number of women missionaries continues to exceed the number of men. Among the various unhappy suggestions that 'the men are being disobedient' or 'some of the women ought not to be there' may be the plain fact that God is calling many more women and that their gifts may be used abroad whereas (on theological grounds!) those same gifts may not be used at home.

Hurley concludes from 1 Timothy 2:11-12 that women may not authoritatively teach men. However, on the mission field he would allow it, as long as they are not taking an elder's role.³² This not only reveals (all too often for theologians) an appalling lack of understanding of cross-cultural church planting, but presupposes that 1 Timothy 2:11-12 is speaking of an elder's teaching. This simply is not true. The passage is unqualified. Why are Hurley and so many of our churches apparently prepared to sacrifice their theological prohibitions in work overseas? A jet flight does not change the nature of women or the men to whom they may minister!

In fact, the traditionalist position presents a muddled interpretation of exactly what does constitute authoritative teaching. A question never asked is what determines teaching as authoritative when a man engages in it? The great danger is of placing authority itself in the male gender rather than in the Word of God. Evans rightly warns, 'The more the distinction between the sexes is stressed, the greater the tendency to assume that men relate to God in a different way from women.'³³

Conclusion

If this issue is to proceed any further than a battle of proof-texts or a stalemate of genders then we must be willing to re-examine

presuppositions, face up to inconsistencies and cease dismissing evangelical liberationists as *per se* unsound!

Although it is possible that the modern cultural horizon regarding women is adversely affecting true exegetical understanding, it must equally be possible that the modern horizon is actually correcting a false understanding of the past. The latter certainly makes most sense of the facts.

³⁰E.S. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (London: SCM, 1983), p. 32.

³¹Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Part I, Question XCII. Aquinas asks the question, 'Whether woman ought to have been produced in that original production of things?', a question he does not ask of man!

³²Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 7.7.10.

³³Luther's Works, Vol. 15, p. 130.

³⁴J. Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1964), p. 217.

³⁵The only time *hypakouō* is used is in 1 Pet. 3:6, referring to the example of Sarah calling Abraham 'Lord'. The only occasion of this is in Gn. 18:12, where, interestingly, no obedience is involved. The context in 1 Peter would seem to point to Christlike behaviour in a situation where a Christian wife is married to a non-Christian husband.

³⁶E. Best, *One Body in Christ* (London: SPCK, 1955), p. 172.

³⁷M. Barth, *Ephesians*, II (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1974), p. 608.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 710.

³⁹New Revised Standard Version (Oxford: OUP, 1989).

⁴⁰'Woman', *Interpreters' Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. IV.

⁴¹The *mias gynaikos andra* of 1 Tim. 3:2 may not be referring so much to the gender or number of the spouse as to the faithfulness of relationship. So the NRSV's 'married only once' does not translate it as gender-specific, and interestingly the NIV sees not gender, but faithfulness as the point at issue in a parallel usage in 1 Tim. 5:9, where it translates 'the wife of one husband' as 'has been faithful to her husband'. If Paul's major point had been to clarify gender in leadership, it could easily have been expressed less ambiguously.

⁴²D.J. Moo, '1 Timothy 2:11-15: Meaning and Significance', *Trinity Journal* Vol. 2 NS, No. 2 (1981), p. 66.

⁴³P.B. Payne, 'Libertarian Women in Ephesus . . .', *Trinity Journal* Vol. 2 NS, No. 2 (1981), p. 175.

⁴⁴D.M. Scholer, '1 Timothy 2:9-15', in A. Mickelsen (ed.), *Women, Authority & the Bible* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1986), p. 215.

⁴⁵W. Swartley, *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1983), p. 187.

⁴⁶F.W. Grosheide, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), p. 185.

⁴⁷J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: SCM, 1983), p. 109.

⁴⁸A. Thiselton, 'Semantics and New Testament Interpretation', in *New Testament Interpretation*, I.H. Marshall (ed.) (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1979), pp. 78-79.

⁴⁹E. Best, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

⁵⁰J. Hurley, *Man & Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Leicester: IVP, 1981), p. 150.

⁵¹F.F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), p. 384.

⁵²S. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1980), pp. 191-192.

⁵³F.F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1982), p. 190.

⁵⁴A. Stibbs, *The New Bible Commentary Revised* (Leicester: IVP, 1970), p. 1171.

⁵⁵J. Hurley, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

⁵⁶B. Witherington III, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), p. 122.

⁵⁷M. Evans, *Woman in the Bible* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1983), p. 105.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵⁹P.B. Payne, *art. cit.*, pp. 169-197.

⁶⁰B. Witherington III, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁶¹J. Hurley, *op. cit.*, p. 250.

⁶²M. Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

The mystery of male and female: biblical and trinitarian models

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An imaginary interview with C.S. Lewis on the subject of male and female might take this shape:

RPS Dr Lewis, I understand that you are not really convinced about the equality of the sexes.

CSL I have the highest regard for the opposite sex. But there is no equality anywhere. In the great deep dance of heaven there is no equality. We are not like stones laid side by side, or one on top of the other, but stones ordered in an archway with each of us interlocking with Him, the centre. We are all equally at the centre and none are there by being equals.¹

RPS But whether you use the word equality or not, both men and women are needed in church leadership equally, since both men and women are made in the image of God.

CSL Only a man in a masculine uniform can represent God to the church, since the church is essentially feminine to God.²

RPS Dr Lewis, your argument is curiously reversible. If only men in a masculine uniform can be in church leadership because church leaders represent God to the church, then is it not true that only women in feminine uniform should be in church leadership when those leaders represent the church to God by offering sacrifices of praise and worship? If the church is the bride and Christ is the groom, then the ministers and those appointed to act on behalf of the church must all be women!

I am sure that C.S. Lewis would explain that he is neither deprecating women, nor against female leadership or women in ministry, but repulsed by the modern addiction to the idea of equality. He would probably want to point out that while the Bible exalts sexual differences, it sees no differences in the rights and privileges of men and women when they are in Christ. But that leaves us with a dilemma which must be resolved if peace is to come in the battle of the sexes at church and at home. The problem is partly caused by the apparent double message of Scripture.

Inspired ambiguity

It is no wonder that competent biblical scholars line up on both sides of the women's ministry issue, some defending what they call parity of the sexes at home and in the church, others defending distinctive roles and governmental differences between the sexes.³ Both sides claim the authority of Scripture.

I have come to the conclusion that the ambiguity at the root of these differences is not accidental but God-inspired. God's Word puts us in a bind, a bind which only faith can resolve, as the following brief overview suggests:

1. Radical sexual equality in creation and in Christ

On the one hand, the Bible teaches radical sexual equality as illustrated by the following summary points:

★Both sexes are created in the image of God: each images God as fully as the other; and it takes both men and women to express the image of God on earth.⁴

★Full side-by-side complementarity of the sexes is God's intended plan. The archetypal passage in Genesis 2, to which both Jesus and Paul refer, confirms that men and women were side-by-side companions and partners, not leader and follower, or sovereign and assistant. Nothing deprecatory is implied by the word 'helper' (it is used of God himself, Ps. 54:4). There is nothing in the passage to reinforce the sovereignty or superiority of the male. We are not

justified in concluding with Susan Foh⁵ and others⁶ that the archetypal passage in Genesis 1-3 proclaims both an ontological equality of women to men (equal in receiving the benefits of Christ) and the subordination of woman in government, rendering women unfit to hold teaching or ruling positions in the church.

★In Christ, the curse experienced by male and female is substantially reversed. While we are still exploring time-honoured and culturally-bound misinterpretations, I must acknowledge my gratitude for Susan Foh's helpful treatment of the curse in Genesis 3:16. She shows that the effect of sin was negative for both the man and the woman. One result of sin is that man will now rule his wife, instead of being the side-by-side companion of Genesis 2:18-25. The woman will desire to overthrow that rule: as signalled by the curse, 'your desire will be for your husband' (3:16). Susan Foh shows conclusively that the etymology of the word 'desire' supports a non-sexual understanding of the word, similar to its use in 4:7 for the desire of sin to overmaster Cain. Men rule; women revolt. Sometimes the rebellion is overt, sometimes it is covert, as with the woman who said, 'My husband is the head, but I am the neck and I can turn the head any way I like.' Both are the result of sin.⁷ In Christ it is different. Instead of the politics of rule and revolt (Gn. 3:16) in the home, there is the grace of mutual submission. Christ equips husbands to love their wives sacrificially, instead of ruling them. Christ equips wives to bombard their husbands with undeserved respect instead of rebelling against their husband's rule overtly or covertly (Eph. 5:21-23).

★Male and female enjoy full equality in Christ. There are no second-class citizens in God's kingdom (Gal. 3:28). As we shall soon see, this passage teaches the elimination of all disadvantages, not of all distinctions.

★Men and women are joint heirs of the spiritual gifts and co-leaders of God's people under the new covenant. All the spiritual gifts are given without sexual distinction (1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4). In these 'last days' both men and women are fully equipped by the Spirit to prophesy (Acts 2:17-18). Even the so-called 'leadership gifts' of apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastor-teachers (Eph. 4:11) are granted without sexual differentiation. Rich testimony to this is given in Paul's greetings in Romans 16, which refer to nineteen men and ten women known to him. Women played a key role in the churches under Paul and it is hard to imagine that when 'leading women' followed Paul (Acts 17:4, 12) they adopted silence and ceased to give some kind of leadership. Paul is neither a traditional hierarchical (men over women) chauvinist, nor a radical feminist.

The advocates of female equality and interchangeable ministries seem to have the Bible on their side. But so do those who insist that sexual differences are entrenched in creation and exalted by Christ. I repeat, the bind about women's ministry is caused by Scripture. It is intentional.

Another sampling of biblical truth on radical sexual differentiation will reveal how deep the ambiguity in this area goes.

2. Radical sexual differentiation

★The physical constitution of each sex suggests that there are profound differences in both psychology and spirituality. It is generally recognized that women, who have their sexual and reproductive organs inside their bodies, are more totally identified with their experience of sexuality. Men have their organs on the outside and tend to be less totally identified. Jean Vanier speaks of the woman's sexuality as interior and the man's as exterior.⁸ Every cell of the body exhibits sexual differentiation. These differences have become incarnated

in the norms and traditions of every culture and have profound implications for our spiritualities.

★*The apostle Paul finds in the creation of woman from the man (1 Cor. 11:8), for the man (11:9) and after the man (1 Tim. 2:13) an argument for some kind of male priority, not merely in the culture of his day but entrenched in creation. Exactly what constitutes this priority is the issue at stake. To show how sensitively Paul balances sexual equality in Christ and sexual differentiation we must note how Paul stands his own creational argument (for, from, after) on its head by saying, 'in the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman' (1 Cor. 11:11), clinching his synthesis with another creational analogy, namely that all men are now born from women!*

★*Scripture contains three corrective passages which insist that sexual distinctions must be made in ministry. 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 14:34-36 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15 are notoriously difficult to interpret, especially in the light of Paul's affirmation of women's ministry elsewhere. But all three underscore that men and women must be in right relationship for worship to be orderly and God-honouring.*

★*The marriage headship problem. Unfortunately the headship of the husband is often understood as power and authority. In contrast to this, Ephesians 5:21-33 exhorts the husband not to overpower but to empower his wife through loving, sacrificial service to her. On the matter of power and authority Paul actually uses the word *exousia* in 1 Corinthians 11:10 for the woman's own authority to minister (not the husband's through delegation), this view being conceded even by scholars who insist on hierarchical headship.¹⁰ Whether one understands 'head' incorrectly, in my view, as 'chief over', the way James Hurley does, or as 'source', the way Gordon Fee does,¹¹ one is left hanging on the horns of the headship dilemma: some distinction within marriage is called for under the metaphor of headship, a distinction directly exhorted by the apostles and modelled by Christ's relationship with the church. Earthly marriage is designed to be a heavenly parable, not merely a convenient way of cohabiting. The problem with most books which correctly defend male-female equality is that they usually do so by eliminating headship or by reducing it to a meaningless anachronism.¹²*

★*The Father God whose image both male and female bear. One can appreciate the logic of Lewis' statement that males should represent God to the church when the church is feminine to God even if one disagrees. There is not a single case in the Bible where we are exhorted or even encouraged to call God mother. To speak of God as Father is fundamental to biblical faith. It is what marks our peoplehood with our covenant God. When the Hebrew people spoke of God as Father (Is. 9:6; Mi. 2:10) they did so understanding that fatherhood confers relationship. All *patria* in heaven and on earth is derived from the Father (Eph. 3:15).¹³ In contrast, no Muslim ever addresses God as Father.*

Nevertheless, the Bible is rich in feminine imagery of God. God is a midwife (Ps. 22:9), a winged bird under whose wings people take refuge (36:8). God is both master and mistress (Ps. 123:2). The Hebrew word for compassion (*rachim*) conveys the notion of God's motherly compassion.¹⁴ Paul speaks about his relationship with Christians for whom he felt responsible in language effusive in both paternal and maternal imagery (Gal. 4:19). And why should he not? It takes both male and female to be the image of God.

Commenting on the paucity of feminine imagery in the NT (except the 'hen' passage in Mt. 23:27) and the preoccupation of the church with exclusively male images of God, Kenneth Leech notes that it was all too easy for the Mother of God (mariolatry) to replace the missing note of God as Mother. We may, he suggests, carefully speak of God as the Lord whom we have come to know as both Father and Mother,¹⁵ which is not the same as addressing God as 'Mother'. David Jeffrey, on the other hand, tends to downplay these feminine references to God (for good reason)¹⁶ and makes the astute observation that the net effect of vertical inclusive language is not the feminization of God but *neutering and abstraction*, 'by means of which the central character of all biblical language about God — that it is personal and intends to reveal divine personality — is blunted or entirely effaced'.¹⁷ Neutering God has the effect of neutering ministry, of dissolving the mystery of male and female into androgyny. Here then is the other side of the argument: the Bible exalts sexual differences in personal faith, marriage and church ministry.

Scripture presents us with two seemingly irreconcilable truths. First, God created the differentiation of the sexes. Sin brought alienation and negative power politics into the home, and the effects of that curse are still with us. Christ's saving work has substantially reversed the curse but does not reverse creation. Male and female differentiation continues in marriage and ministry. However, at the same time, a marvellous unity and equality was implied in God's plan for the sexes, a unity once lost but now substantially rediscovered through Christ. Rather than imitating Adam and Eve in their fallen hierarchical relationship, Jesus and Paul invite us to find our model in the original couple before the fall. Thus, Adam and Eve are not only our past, but our future. But how can we resolve the bind in which this leaves us?

Scripture, like the gospel itself, is characterized by reversal, a 'but' that forces us to see another viewpoint. And good preaching takes the perceived ambiguity in a text and explores in its light the human predicament with sufficient depth that one is 'set up' to discover the resolution of the bind in Christ and the gospel.¹⁸ Scripture is the ultimate preachment in just this sense: it plunges us into a bind that affects our experience and perception of what it means to be human — male and female. It defines or even exaggerates the itch before it tells us how to scratch, revealing Christ and his gospel as the resolution only when we have fully perceived ambiguities within the issue.

Inspired resolution: the battle of the sexes peaced

The clue to the resolution of the bind is found in the book that evokes the tension in the Bible. Paul says in Ephesians 5:32, 'this is a profound mystery — but I am speaking about Christ and the church'. A mystery is a deep truth about God and his dealings with man. It takes us beyond normal human categories to find an answer to an apparent contradiction. Mystery points to incomprehensible fact, to transcendent truth, to a reality appreciated by worship, to the experience of Christ in the living out of our lives. To begin unpacking the mystery of biblical unity at least partially we will explore three inspired analogies, all from Scripture, and all associated with the mystery of Christ. All show that biblical unity is a social complex.

1. The mystery of Christ and the church

Marriage as designed by God is a pale reflection of the mysterious unity of Christ and the church. It is a two-way lens, on one hand enabling us to 'see into' God's covenantal relation with his people through a universal life situation: the covenant of a man and a woman. On the other hand we can 'see into' the male-female covenant by viewing it through the ultimate prototype: Yahweh's irrevocable covenant with Israel and Christ's with his bride.¹⁹

The mysterious unity of Christ and his church is such a profound intercourse that we may speak of the church as Christ's body — not as an extension of himself, not even an extension of his incarnation, but his body. So identified is Jesus with his own body that a rejection of his bride is a rejection of himself, as Saul the Pharisee discovered (Acts 9:5). We may reverently speak of a mutual covenantal filling: Christ filling the church (Eph. 1:23) and the church filling Christ by being his inheritance, his treasure (Eph. 1:18). It is the difference and the interdependence of head and body, groom and bride, that allow us to speak of the unity of Christ and the church as a sacramental unity, a divine mystery worthy of contemplation.

Christ does not control or rule the church, not at least in the same way that he brings inanimate creation and the entire cosmos under his headship (Eph. 1:22). Instead of overpowering his spouse, Christ so invests himself in his own bride that he can commit himself to the bride's decisions (Jn. 15:15; Mt. 18:18; Jn. 20:21). Thus, the Christ-church relationship is the perfect model of husband-wife. The husband is head not by overlordship but by empowering his bride.²⁰

If a superior (Christ) and an inferior (church) can enjoy such unity, then why cannot two creatures who are equal but gloriously different? That seems to be the thrust of Paul's first inspired analogy. Here is rich unity because there is both equality and differentiation, thus modelling full male-female partnership as a much richer reality than mere interchangeability.

2. The mystery of Jews and Gentiles in the new humanity

Paul also uses the word 'mystery' to describe the marvellous new humanity Christ created in himself from two very different

humanities: Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:14-15). Jesus did not fashion Jews out of Gentiles, or Gentiles out of Jews, but rather incorporated both into a unity that transcends the differences without obliterating them. The mystery is that the church experiences more unity with both Gentiles and Jews than it could as a mere messianic Jewish community, or a mere Gentile church, a truth largely obscured today.

Nothing thrilled Paul's heart more than the mystery of God's dealings with Jews and Gentiles bringing both together in a unity of equality and differentiation. This mystery is the climax of his letter to the Romans. He concludes his contemplation of the Lord's social miracle worked among Jews and Gentiles (chapters 9-11) with the longest doxology in the letter (11:33-36). He coined new words and phrases to express this mysterious togetherness: made alive together (Eph. 2:5), raised up together with Christ (2:6), seated together in Christ (2:6), citizens together (2:19), joined together (2:21), built together (2:22), heirs together (3:6), embodied together (3:6), partakers together (3:6), knitted together (4:16). This miraculous togetherness is not because the two peoples are similar (Jews and Gentiles, or males and females) but precisely because they are both different but, in Christ, a social complex rich and mysterious. Once more we see a pattern for the rich unity of full male-female partnership that celebrates rather than merges sexual differences.

But the third inspired analogy requires more comprehensive treatment: the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Paul makes this deliberate connection in Ephesians 4:4-6: our unity in the church originates in the unity within the Godhead, one God, one Father, one Lord. We may speak of this transcendent unity as Trinitarian unity.

3. The ultimate analogy: the mystery of the Holy Trinity

The theological parallel for androgyny (the merging of the sexes, or the desexualization of humanity) is Islamic monotheism, or Unitarianism. The impoverished unity in each results in abstraction rather than personhood. No Muslim calls God 'Abba'. Ironically the central tenet of Islam, that there is but one God, is Christianity's profoundest preachment. Social Trinitarianism proclaims a unity of God deeper than the abstract unity of Islam. Perhaps this is the ultimate irony in the history of religions that, far from proclaiming tritheism, the Christian church humbly confesses the deepest truth of the Muslim creed: one God. And we do this by insisting that we have come to know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Dr J.I. Packer's definition of Trinitarianism in *The New Dictionary of Theology* is succinct and helpful: 'Within the complex unity of his being, three personal centres of rational awareness eternally coinhere, interpenetrate, relate in mutual love, and cooperate in all divine actions. God is not only *he* but also *they* — Father, Son and Spirit, coequal and coeternal in power and glory though functioning in a set pattern whereby the Son obeys the Father and the Spirit subserves both. All statements about God in general or about the Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit in particular, should be "cashed" in Trinitarian terms, if something of their meaning is not to be lost'.²¹

The Orthodox church has probably best understood the awesome beauty of this. While the Western church, starting with Augustine, started with the philosophical notion of the unity of the Godhead and then attempted to explain the differences of the persons, the Eastern church started with the apostolic witness and the church's experience of three divine persons, and then explored, as an act of worship, the marvellous unity within the Godhead. The Orthodox theologian Tomas Spidlik notes that within Orthodox spirituality 'the divine Trinity is the fundamental mystery of the Christian faith'.²² He notes that 'only the Christian revelation teaches the highest and most intense union as embracing that which in the finite realm divides and is a principle of division: the personality'.²³ In other words, God is more one because he is three.²⁴

According to Orthodox spirituality, Christian experience is nothing more or less than being included in the unity of the Trinity, participating in the mutual love, order and interdependence of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. When Christ prayed that 'they may be one as we are' (Jn. 17:11, 25-26), he was not merely praying that individual believers would be united with God, but that believers would participate in the social unity of the Trinity by experiencing loving communion with one another. Speaking to this, James Houston says, 'to know the Triune God is to act like him, in self-giving, in inter-dependence, and in

boundless love'.²⁵ In contrast, we reduce fellowship to camaraderie, or likemindedness. It should be the mystery of God replicated, albeit imperfectly, in the mystery of the church and the mystery of marriage. We should not cheapen this mystery either by unisexing the church or by compartmentalizing the sexes in the church: women ministering to women and men to both men and women. This is the one community on earth that bears the image of the triune God.

Male and female celebrators of one God

We become like the God we worship (Ps. 115:8). Trinity-worshippers become celebrators of community and cohumanity. We are called to deal with the battle of the sexes not only by resisting the megatrend towards androgyny in society and unisex ministry in the church, but by calling men and women to find their life together in the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Reverently we may suggest that the unity of the Holy Trinity is like the unity of the sexes, though we must immediately affirm the greater accuracy of the corollary: the unity of the sexes in Christ is a pale human representation of the eternal divine model.

We have explored these three analogies (Christ and the church, Jew and Gentile in a new humanity, and the Holy Trinity) because they are revealed and transcendent truths about unity in Christ. They are inspired windows on the final reconciliation of male and female. In each there is true unity in Christ because there is differentiation, not because there is sameness. There is true unity in the Christ-church reality because the head is distinguishable. There is more unity in the church because the Jew-Gentile differences have been transcended though not eliminated. Jews have a position of priority (Rom. 1:16) but they do not rule Gentiles in the mysterious social unity of the church. There is truly one God because he is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the last two analogies (Jew and Gentile; Father, Son and Holy Spirit) there is equality of persons. Inequality is not the necessary consequence of differentiation. In each of the analogies there is a person or people with a priority. Jesus has priority in relation to his church. Salvation comes first to the Jews. The Father has priority with the Son. So we have three biblical analogies of male-female unity in which differentiation and priority contribute to unity rather than prevent it.

Bringing peace to the battle of the sexes will not be accomplished by appealing to this or that text. We must exegete the whole Bible, to find the answer in biblical theology and ultimately in worship. If man (male and female) is created in the image of God, and if both the marriage couple and the church are a mystery of Christ, then we discover our true sexuality through a worshipful imitation of our triune God in the living out of our lives. It remains for us now to anticipate some of the fruits of living out the mystery by celebrating gender spirituality, full partnership in ministry, deeper marital companionship and deeper personal authenticity.

C.S. Lewis uses the analogy of the violin bow and the string. Both are needed to make one sound. There is more unity with a bow and a string than in a room full of bows, or a room full of strings.

Some would rather not have any mystery. They want explicit sex. They want male and female roles put down in black and white. They want things arranged in neat hierarchies. They want the functions of the sexes institutionalized in job descriptions and sexually-determined leadership offices. Others want to strip away the mystery by unisexing everything, including the ministry. But for my part, I will devote myself to the life-long, indeed, eternity-long, adventure of discovering the mystery. And equipping the church theologically for full male-female partnership is itself an act of worship. As Lewis said so insightfully, 'We are not like stones laid side by side but . . . like stones ordered in an archway with each of us interlocking with Him, the centre. We are all equally at the centre and none are there by being equals'.²⁶

²¹From *Perelandra*, or *Voyage to Venus* (London: Pan Books, 1983).

²²Cited in Janet Moreley, 'In God's Image?', *New Blackfriars* 63.747 (1982), p. 375, quoted in Kenneth Leech, *Experiencing God: Theology as Spirituality* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985).

²³The most recent is the Danvers statement advertised in *Christianity Today* (13 January 1989), pp. 40-41, in which the subscribers say 'in the church, redemption in Christ gives men and women an equal share in the blessings of salvation; nevertheless, some governing and teaching roles within the church are restricted to men'. It is otherwise a helpful statement.

⁴The definitive piece of scholarship on this text is Phyllis A. Bird, 'Male and Female He Created Them: Gen. 1:27b in the Context of the Priestly Account of Creation', in *The Harvard Theological Review* 74:2 (1981), pp. 129-139. The gist of her linguistic analysis is that the parallel coda (in the image of God he created him/male and female he created them) is progressive and not synonymous. She argues convincingly that the specification of humanity's bisexual nature is dictated by the larger structure of the chapter. Therefore she concludes that the first meaning of 'male and female' is not a reference to the relational nature of the image of God but to fertility. There is therefore no word about the distribution of roles, responsibility, shared dominion or sexual equality, but rather the divine blessing of procreation. She does, however, concede that the Yahwistic account explains the primary meaning of sexuality as psychosocial, rather than biological. And, in conclusion, she agrees that 'the juxtaposition of these two statements does have consequences for theological anthropology and specifically for a theology of sexuality. Sexuality and image of God both characterize the species as a whole and both refer to Adam's fundamental nature; but they do so in different ways . . . To be human is to be made in the image of God. And if to be human means also to be male or female (the plural of v. 27 also works against any notion of androgyny), then both male and female must be characterized equally by the image. No basis for diminution or differentiation of the image is given in nature. . . . Contemporary insistence that woman images the divine as fully as man and that she is consequently as essential as he to an understanding of humanity as God's special sign or representative in the world is exegetically sound even if it exceeds what the Priestly writer intended to say or was able to conceive.' Bird's analysis surprisingly ends up supporting the view of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, expanded by Karl Barth and many modern scholars, that the image of God is relational, and that both sexes are required for God's full representation to be made in the human race.

⁵Susan T. Foh, *Women and the Word of God: A Response to Biblical Feminism* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979), p. 1.

⁶E.g. Bruce Waltke, 'The relationship of the Sexes in the Bible', in *Crux*, Vol. XIX No. 3, September 1983, pp. 10-16.

⁷S.T. Foh, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-69. Bruce Waltke supports Foh's interpretation by offering two further lines of evidence: Waltke, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁸Jean Vanier, *Man and Woman He Made Them* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1985), p. 50. The seeming anatomical justification of the double standard (that a man may have sex with several partners, since he is not marked by the encounter, but a woman may not, because she has allowed a man to come inside her and so is indelibly marked) is not supported by Scripture. This is carefully considered by Helmut Thielicke, 'The Mystery of Sexuality', in *Are You Nobody?* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965), pp. 45-60.

⁹See especially Gordon Fee's treatment of the Corinthian passages in *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), pp. 498-530, 699-713, and John Nolland, 'Woman in the Public Life of the Church', *Crux* 19:3 (1983), on 1 Tim. 2. It appears that 1 Cor. 11 deals with relationships, not ministry, on the assumption made by some Corinthian women that since the end had come sexual differences were meaningless. Paul repudiates this eschatological breaking down of sexes, as he would repudiate androgyny today. 1 Cor. 11:2-3 does not teach a chain of command but male-female relationships that resemble God-Christ. 1 Cor. 14:34-38 is textually the most difficult of the three as it seems to contradict Paul's clear teaching in 1 Cor. 11:10 that a woman has her own authority (*exousia*) to minister in prayer or prophecy when she is in right relationship to men. Judging the passage in 14:34-38 as non-Pauline appears to me unwarranted, so we are left making a sanctified guess: Was Paul forbidding women to evaluate prophecies in public, a role normally assigned to elders? 1 Tim. 2:8-15 addresses an ad hoc situation in which false teachers (2 Tim. 3:6) had doctrinally seduced the women, making it a replay of the Garden scene (1 Tim. 2:14). Here Paul shuts down women's ministry completely (2:12), using, once again, a creational argument (2:13). All three of these passages have been weighted disproportionately, especially in the light of the example of Jesus in relation to women, a fundamental truth usually ignored.

¹⁰James Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), p. 176.

¹¹In *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 502-503, Gordon Fee notes: 'The metaphor [head in 1 Cor. 11:3] itself is often misunderstood to be hierarchical, setting up structures of authority. But nothing in the passage suggests as much. . . . Moreover, vv. 11-12 explicitly qualify vv. 8-9 so that they will not be understood this way. Indeed, the metaphorical use of *kephale* ('head') to mean 'chief' or 'the person of the highest rank' is rare in Greek literature — so much so that even though the Hebrew word *ros* often carried this sense, the Greek translators of the LXX, who ordinarily used *kephale* to translate *ros* when the physical 'head' was intended, almost never did so when 'ruler' was intended, thus indicating that this metaphorical sense is an exceptional usage and not part of the ordinary range of meanings for the Greek word.' Fee surveys all the relevant studies on *kephale* in his footnote, especially Wayne Grudem's survey of 2,336 examples of *kephale* (Wayne Grudem, 'Does Kephale Mean "Source" or "Authority over" in Greek Literature? A survey of 2,336 Examples', published in Knight III, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women* (Chicago:

Moody Press, 1985). A careful examination of Grudem's examples shows that 'chief over' is the exception rather than the rule. Although Christ's headship over creation (Eph. 1:22) is obviously 'chief over' or 'head' rather than 'tail', in the marriage passages 'source' fits the context best. In 1 Cor. 11 Christ finds his source in God (in a non-Arian sense); man finds his source in Christ; woman finds her source in man. Priority but not rule is implied in this. In Eph. 5 the husband-wife/Christ-church analogy is not expounded in every respect. The husband cannot save or sanctify his bride (5:26-27). But the point of the comparison is the quality of relationship. The husband becomes 'source' as he voluntarily gives himself sacrificially to meet his wife's needs. In the light of this, the wife's voluntary submission and respect make sense as she relates to her 'source'.

¹²Two recent examples of this are worthy of note. Patricia Gundry's *Heirs together: Mutual Submission in Marriage* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980) is a well-placed stick of dynamite, destroying hierarchy in the home. But she does so at the expense of headship. Gretchen Gaebelein Hull's *Equal to Serve: Women and Men in the Church and Home* is even more problematic. After defending her view of biblical inerrancy, Hull goes for the jugular: patriarchy. But her understandable attack on the dreaded fruits of patriarchy are, in my view, *historically incorrect* (what patriarchy became under the birthing of the nuclear family after the Industrial Revolution is a far cry from patriarchy in the preceding extended family), *culturally insensitive* (as David and Vera Mace show, patriarchy in the East has worked well for 4,000 years, aligning purpose and direction to the life of the individual) and *dispensationally inaccurate* (her inductive judgments on the OT patriarchs are made with NT eyes). Once again Hull, by eliminating hierarchy and roles, appears unable to give any clear idea of what headship in the home, or male 'inseminating' leadership in the church, actually means.

¹³See David Jeffrey's splendid treatment of the linguistic basis of God as Father as a response to the *Inclusive Language* Lectionary: *A companion work under the National Council of Churches to the RSV revision: David Lyle Jeffrey, 'Inclusivity and Our Language of Worship' in The Reformed Journal*, August 1987, pp. 13-22.

¹⁴Kenneth Leech, *op. cit.*, p. 353. A contemporary Jewish scholar makes the same point: 'Some may interpret [the male blessing] as grudging resignation to a lesser state, or as the acceptance of one's fate. But Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik, a leading contemporary Talmudic scholar, views it as a blessing that affirms woman's innate superiority over man. It is God's wish, he says, that human beings achieve the Divine qualities of compassion and mercy. Woman is naturally closer to that level of perfection than is man. She was given the gift of mercy and compassion. Is not God himself addressed as *Rachum*, the Compassionate One? And is not *rechem*, the Hebrew word for womb (the part of the body that more than any other distinguishes woman from man and symbolizes her essence) a form of the same word that means compassion? A woman can therefore proudly claim to have been fashioned 'according to his will'. Man, on the other hand, cannot make the same claim. . . . He starts with a baser nature than does woman, and is therefore in need of greater refinement' (Donin, *op. cit.*, p. 196).

¹⁵Leech, *op. cit.*, p. 366. Jeffrey carefully shows that some feminist writers, in their concern to identify characteristics in God that are feminine or maternal, have wrongly deduced from the feminine article required by the Hebrew words for spirit (*ruah*) and wisdom (*hokma*), that these justify considering them metaphorically feminine. An appropriate parallel is 'la table' in French — Jeffrey, *op. cit.*, p. 19. See Barry Hoberman, 'Translating the Bible: An Endless Task', in *The Atlantic* 255/2 (1985), p. 58; also Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978).

¹⁶Jeffrey also notes that 'When feminine metaphors come into Christian spiritual literature . . . they are drawn straightforwardly from Scriptures and apply to personal dispositions of heart. Thus the church is seen as the Bride of Christ, and individual Christians figured as virgins who have prepared themselves for the coming of the Bridegroom. . . . The overwhelming metaphor for characterizing Christian fidelity in the history of Christian spirituality is that of the Bride, Christ's spouse and beloved, working and preparing for that day of final union and, while doing so, writing and praying, as it were, love letters to the Bridegroom. . . . Feminine metaphor is applied not to God but rather to themselves and to us, to the conception of what it is to be human and a Christian' (p. 20). Typically, Jeffrey ignores the OT in this matter and overstates his case.

¹⁷Jeffrey, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁸Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980).

¹⁹This is the theological basis of my practical book on marriage: R.P. Stevens, *Married for Good: The Lost Art of Staying Happily Married* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1986).

²⁰In his ground-breaking study on *kephale*, Stephen Bedale makes this Christ-church analogy: 'in the natural relationship of Adam and Eve we have an analogue of the spiritual relationship of Christ to the Church. The Church is the Eve of the Second Adam — "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh". So Christ is *kephale* in relation to the Church, as Adam in relation to Eve.'

²¹J.I. Packer, 'God', in Ferguson, Wright and Packer (eds), *The New*

²²Tomas Spidlik, *The Spirituality of the Christian East: A Systematic Handbook* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1986), p. 44.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁴Expounding this, Spidlik maintains that 'the texts of the Greek Fathers... remained faithful to the terminology of the New Testament: the expression *ho theos* is reserved for the father of Christ (Rom. 5:6, 2 Cor. 11:31, Eph. 1:3). The Father Almighty is the creator of heaven and earth, and hence the principle of cosmic unity in the extra-divine universe. This Father, however, is also the source of intra-divine unity. The Son and the Spirit are one in the Father. And since the function of the divine Persons corresponds to the place each occupies in the bosom of the Trinity, the

salvic value of the mystery of the trinity is manifested' (*ibid.*, p. 44). Commenting on this in an unpublished paper, Dr James Houston argues that 'to all intents and purposes, Augustine states that the relations within the Godhead are irrelevant to their being God. . . . It is as if God is God, in spite of the Trinity!' In contrast to this the Greek Fathers insisted that God's relations with man are internal to God's own character. In harmony with this, Dr Houston traces the fact that in Western spirituality there has been a renewed mysticism (a direct personal experience of the presence of God) whenever there was contact with the Trinitarian insights of the Greek Fathers. Trinitarian faith invites and evokes relationship.

²⁵Houston, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

²⁶From *Perelandra* (see n. 1).

BOOK



REVIEWS

What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament (JSOTS 94)

D.J.A. Clines

Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990,
178 pp., £18.50/\$28.50.

I came to this book with high expectations. Clines' interpretation of Esther in *The Esther Scroll* (1984) showed brilliantly how insights from recent literary criticism could be used to illuminate the biblical text, and I was hoping for more of the same. Sadly, I was disappointed.

This is a collection of six essays, three on Genesis, one on Job, one on Nehemiah, and one on the OT histories as a whole. They are all from the point of view of what is commonly called 'reader-response theory', which in general seeks to take seriously the modern reader's contribution to determining meaning in the biblical text, and specifically seeks to take seriously the phenomenon of first-time reading of the text in which one reads without presupposing knowledge of what happens later. For those unfamiliar with such approaches this book offers an admirably lucid exposition of them (and the account of deconstruction in the essay on Job is particularly helpful for those like myself who are easily mystified by such things).

Why then the disappointment? First, the style of the book. Clines writes clearly and entertainingly, which makes a welcome change from many academic works; yet at times his rather droll style becomes either flippant or tendentious in a way that some will find offensive.

Secondly, I find the whole approach too often both artificial and doctrinaire. On the one hand, his highly sophisticated 'first-time readings' are a world away from the actual readings made by genuine first-time readers. On the other hand, his exclusion of questions about wider literary and historical context goes against almost everything we know about the nature of the OT as a body of closely inter-related writings. Good first-time readers would be asking themselves 'What kind of material am I reading, and what are appropriate ways of reading it?' and be open to vary their reading accordingly. In *The Esther Scroll* Clines got this just right; here, his advocacy of reader-response theory has simply become doctrinaire.

Thirdly, Clines is less than clear about the implications of his whole approach in relation to theological concerns. When discussing the question of biblical authority, he finds all traditional notions beside the point. The notion of authority should be abandoned and replaced by the notion of an imaginative and suggestive resource for the way we look at life. In a sense this is perfectly logical – if you read the Bible simply as you would read any literature, then it will only function in the way that any literature would function. But what is lacking is any proper correlation of this approach with other approaches. As Clines has simply replaced theological categories by literary categories, he has in no way resolved any of the familiar problems but simply abandoned them.

The book left me with the impression of someone who has become deeply dissatisfied with (and hurt by?) traditional, and especially conservative, Christian approaches to the Bible as Scripture, approaches which he now regards as dogmatic and potentially oppressive. Yet this alternative seems to me no less dogmatic, and only non-threatening because the content of the Bible no longer matters enough to do anything very much with it.

Walter Moberly, Durham.

Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament

Gerard Van Groningen

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990,
1,018 pp., \$39.95.

It is my pleasure to review this work by my former colleague at Reformed Theological Seminary (Jackson, MS). During his tenure at Reformed, Van Groningen was ambitious in developing an up-to-date study on the messianic concept in the OT because the older works were either too dated or too brief, and

also because of the critical assumptions in modern works (p. 10).

The author's presuppositions are clearly stated. He holds to the Reformed view of the covenant (pp. 57ff.) and to the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible (pp. 69f.). He also believes that the present order in the English Bible is 'the historical order of the scriptural presentation' (p. 11) and that the method of exegesis of relevant texts determines the investigation, rather than prior conclusions. He rejects the critical views of the transmission of the text and the development of messianism in Israel as a historical development. The author restricts the messianic concept to what is revealed. This qualification is of the utmost importance because the author defines revelation in the modern evangelical sense of inspiration (inerrancy and infallibility) and in the conservative sense of the historical order of the progress of redemption and revelation.

Beginning with Jesus' words in Luke 24:27, 44, the author looks for a relation between the gospel of Jesus Christ and the revelation of God in the OT. He locates that connection in the 'messianic concept' which he extensively introduces in Part I (pp. 17-94). The author treats the various offices and the functions of those anointed in ancient Israel, after an extensive discussion of the root *msh* ('anoint'), the noun *māšīah* ('anointed one'), the anointing oil, and the application of anointing oil. He further contrasts the development of the messianic expectations in Israel with the expectations of the nations around Israel.

He locates the source of the messianic concept in the nature of divine revelation and its development in the progressive and unified nature of God's word. He affirms the importance of the word 'revelation' in the title as a method by which he considers the messianic concept in the various parts of the OT revelation in the sequence of the English Bible: Genesis (Part 2), Exodus-Deuteronomy (Part 3), The Former Prophets (Part 4), the Poetic Books (Part 5), and the Latter Prophets (Part 6). It may seem somewhat strange that he allocates about 100 pages to Genesis and only 70 pages to the Former Prophets (Joshua-2 Kings). The comparison between the Poetic Books and the Latter Prophets is even more interesting (c. 100 pages and more than 500 pages respectively!). The history of Israel and Judah from the division of the kingdom to and including the post-exilic era is summarily dealt with: the books of Chronicles (1 and 2), Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther cover some 10 pages in all! I wonder whether the canonical approach of Brevard S. Childs, even in modified form, could have helped the author to integrate the theological significance of these books into the messianic concept.

The weakness of Van Groningen's approach is the same weakness he criticized in

other works. He observed that older works were too dogmatic or outdated. This book, too, operates from a clearly defined messianic concept (one that I share wholeheartedly with the author), in that Van Groningen has a faith commitment from which he selects and interprets the text. Instead of clearly defining the themes and subjects that form the messianic concept, he intuitively grasps many such themes and subjects. The critic may raise the matter of definition and the conservative may ask why he did not include a discussion of covenant, kingship, Zion theology, or the creation-redemption theme of Scripture. The author introduces many such related topics in the subsequent treatment of passages, but the absence of a coherent integrative framework is disturbing to the serious reader.

The work is dated in terms of bibliography – it appears as if the collection of the bibliography stopped at about 1980 – and in method. The method does not take into account the gains of genre criticism or rhetorical analysis. This is for me a major weakness of the book. The author's detailed, and often laborious, analysis of individual words and phrases tires the beginning student of the messianic concept and strains the interest of the advanced student. Were he to have developed principles of literary analysis by which the many passages could have been grouped together, analysed, and then seen as contributing to the messianic concept, the reader would have been greatly in his debt. Moreover, if Van Groningen had developed a rhetorical study of the texts, he again would have been able to define the nuances in the many texts more precisely.

In conclusion, the reader will find many gems and discover unexpected discussions. For example, the subject of typology is treated under the messianic revelation in the time of Jacob (pp. 153-167). I encourage the publisher to develop a subject index because the table of contents is too sketchy and the many subjects that Van Groningen introduces are too varied; at times he opens up unexpected avenues for exploration.

Willem A. VanGemeren, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, USA.

The Christology of Jesus
Ben Witherington III
Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress,
1990, 310 pp., \$24.95.

This study might be viewed as an exegetical *tour de force* in that it works within mainstream methodology and is published by a press not known for its evangelical leanings, yet notwithstanding it manages to make a mild and inferential case for the messianic self-understanding of Jesus. This approach reflects the model of C.K. Barrett, the author's principal mentor, and accordingly presents a cautiously conservative analysis of the synoptic material (largely Mark and Q) as it affords hints of Jesus' authoritative claims. The author follows a 'most scholars' consensus methodology, utilizing the criteria of multiple attestation and dissimilarity centred on the priority of Mark, and largely bracketing the data of the fourth gospel.

This approach enables the reader to reflect on the grounds upon which more radical exegesis, using the same consensus criticism, rejects Jesus' messianic consciousness and self-asserted authority. The intended audience appears to be the mainline academy, and the fact that Fortress would publish the volume

attests its scholarly nature and the willingness of the author to be concessional on matters of basic methodology. The value of the study, accordingly, is not that bold new approaches to gospel criticism are adduced but that old methodologies are pressed for their positive implications in respect of Jesus' authoritative posture. While some innovative evangelicals on the right, such as John Wenham, and Bultmannians on the left, like Helmut Koester, are not listed in the index of modern authors (reference to others such as J.A.T. Robinson is also wanting), it is noteworthy that the author's sympathies are with general evangelical assumptions. He approvingly cites David Wells' distinction (in *The Person of Christ*) between Jesus' psychological self-consciousness and his cognitive self-understanding, largely limiting his study to the latter (pp. 25f.), although at points he toys with the possibility of tracing Jesus' developing psychological religious experience, especially in view of the parables (pp. 206-210).

Before accumulating evidence for Jesus' claims to authority the author disclaims affinity for the early Christian prophets school, with its heavy emphasis on later churchly redactional creativity, and leans rather toward early preservation and translation in the AD 30s of Jesus' sayings and the stories about him. 'Significantly,' he notes, 'those New Testament scholars in the modern era who have been the most well-versed in both Aramaic and Greek have tended to draw rather conservative conclusions about the state of the sayings material as we find them in the Gospels' (p. 11). A different and less modest book could have been written had Witherington pursued a more direct course of exegesis, based on this conservative assumption. As he notes, however, the purpose of the volume is to address those who do not share this optimism, hence the study 'will not presume the authenticity of the material with which we are dealing . . .' (p. 11, note). Yet the introductory section, 'Methodological and Historical Considerations', is for the most part conservative and challenges more radical critical tradition: 'Thus, the alleged chasm between the speech event of the historical Jesus and the post-Easter speaking about Jesus probably never existed' (p. 15).

In light of such statements, readers will differ as to whether the cautious style of the book is altogether warranted. What is offered on the one hand with conservative forthrightness in regard to Christian origins is softened on the other hand with concessions that may in the end cause the study to fall between two stools, as too conciliatory for conservatives and too conservative for those of more liberal persuasion. A case in point is the elimination of data from the fourth gospel: 'I will not be dealing with material such as the "I Am" discourses in the Fourth Gospel because it is difficult to argue on the basis of the historical-critical method that they go back to a *Sitz im Leben Jesu*' (p. 30). Yet on the last page of the book he quotes approvingly from Raymond Brown: '... I have no difficulty with the thesis that if Jesus . . . could have read John, he would have found that Gospel a suitable expression of his identity. . . . The affirmation that Jesus had knowledge of his self-identity . . . is not meant to exclude a development in his existential knowledge of what that identity implied for his life' (p. 277, Brown's emphasis). But this approach raises two questions: (1) Can the scholar on critical grounds really trace a development in Jesus' existential self-consciousness, and has not this enterprise already been eschewed by Witherington, as noted above? (2) If Jesus would have found the fourth gospel 'a suitable expression of his identity', on what grounds does one argue that the Johannine sayings do not represent an

accurate historical account of his self-disclosure? What reliable criteria are available for distinguishing between authentic sayings and later Christological redactions, given such an assumption?

Following the chapter on methodological and historical considerations, Witherington turns to the question of 'Christology and the Relationships of Jesus'. Here, psychological speculations such as 'Could Jesus have obtained his idea about forgiveness of sins from John?' (p. 38; cf. p. 55) may be compared with the author's favourable citation from R.T. France, 'I have found no instance where Jesus expects a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy other than through his own ministry, and certainly no suggestion of a future restoration of the Jewish nation independent of himself' (p. 44), a quotation which would suggest Jesus' independent self-sufficiency as interpreter of the new age dawning in his ministry. Since, however, Jesus is seen as sorting out his own sense of identity and mission before a hostile audience, it is not surprising that *biazetai* and *biastai* in Matthew 11:12 are interpreted as passive ('the kingdom of heaven is suffering violence and the violent take it by force') rather than as middle ('the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it', so NIV, in view of Mt. 12:28f.). The chapter contains good overview background material on Josephus, period revolutionaries, and Jesus' relationship with religious authorities and disciples, though debatable is the view that Jesus did not symbolically identify himself with Israel or operate with Isaiah's notion of a remnant (p. 129).

Chapter 3 focuses on 'Christology and the Deeds of Jesus', in which the *theios aner* school is rejected and a generally astute analysis of Jesus' works is presented. This is followed by an extensive chapter 4, 'Christology and the Words of Jesus'. Here Witherington centres first on 'Amen, I say', David's Son or David's Lord?, and the Dominion (*basileia*) of God. The author is unclear as to whether Jesus embodies God's reign, and if so, why it cannot be entered during his ministry (p. 206). In the parables (*meshalim*) discussion which follows, the author entertains the psychologizing suggestion that Jesus heard the parables from God and thus learned and discerned his own mission in life; accordingly we may view the parables as at the very root of Christology in the sense of Jesus' growing awareness of who he was and what he was to do (p. 210). One might observe that while the parables evidence Jesus' self-understanding that he is inaugurating the reign of God through his words and works, it is questionable that they tell us anything about his developing religious self-consciousness, an area that would appear inaccessible. *Abba*, Wisdom and Son of Man are next discussed for their Christological content, the Son of Man material being particularly well researched except for the rejection of 'the dubious theory of corporate personality' (p. 247), to which some may take objection.

The book concludes with a brief 'Afterword and Conclusions' in which Wrede is taken to task and the rather radical idea set forth that 'Mark was a conservative editor of his source material, not the creative author many redaction critics claim. . . . Thus, we should not stress the idea that Mark is a creative writer; he is often more a collector of diverse traditions. . . . He did not, by and large, give free reign to his imagination in his handling of this source material' (p. 264). One could wish that this and other similar appeals in the study could have been pressed with more vigour and guidelines articulated to restructure the basic assumptions and methodology of gospels exegesis. If indeed the author is correct that selected inferential

exegetical data in Mark and Q convincingly attest Jesus' messianic self-concept and give rise to later Christological development, then the question that requires attention is whether the interpreter can confidently distinguish original from later in the gospel tradition as a whole.

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The Son of Man Tradition

D.R.A. Hare

Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990,
xiv + 316 pp., \$24.95.

After several decades the debate on the Son of Man (SM) is still going strong, with no sign of a solution that will be acceptable to all. This debate cuts across three fields of research: OT (especially Daniel), intertestamental literature (especially 1 Enoch and IV Ezra) and the NT (especially the synoptic gospels). The many varieties of standpoint can be subsumed under two main constellations. On the one hand, there is the view that behind the Greek *ho hyios tou anthrōpou* stands an Aramaic *bar (en)nash(a)* which, as shown by later texts (e.g. Mishnah), sometimes took the place of the first person of the personal pronoun. For this view (called the Circumlocution Theory, originally propounded by G. Vermes, but now defended in modified form especially by B. Lindars and M. Casey) Jesus used the 'Son of Man' expression instead of 'I' on account of some special reason — modesty, fear, etc. — without any connection whatsoever to any previously existing SM concept, or even the OT *ben adam* or the Danielic *bar enash*. On the opposite side is the view that insists that Jesus' use of the term was in deliberate relation to the Danielic *bar enash* which in Jewish thinking (e.g. 1 Enoch, IV Ezra) had led to the expectation of an apocalyptic figure known as the Son of Man.

Hare's book belongs in the first camp. Despairing of the fruitfulness of the efforts of those who deny the existence of an SM concept in pre-Christian Judaism, Hare tries to approach the subject in different ways in order to prove what he considers his camp partners have failed to prove. Instead of starting, as is usual, with the Danielic (and OT) material and then working his way through the apocalyptic literature to establish what was there at the time of Jesus' appearance, he starts the other way round, working his way back to Jesus.

In his Introduction (pp. 1-27) Hare proposes to develop R. Leivestad's thesis, who denies the existence of an apocalyptic SM. He plays down the supernatural characteristics of the Enochian SM, identifying him with Enoch (without argument) (p. 16). He ignores the evidence of the LXX on Daniel 7:13 (pp. 17-18) and misses the point of r. Joshua ben Levi's statement on the Messiah's coming riding on an ass (p. 19). He criticizes Vermes and Casey for 'beginning with the solution and arranging the evidence to fit', thus 'begging the question' (p. 25). This leaves him free to present his own method, which is the one which 'begs the fewest questions', though he admits that he 'hopes to demonstrate the correctness of a specific thesis' (p. 26). His approach is to start with the interpretation of SM in Greek documents, and work his way back to the hypothetical Greek and the Aramaic of the gospels, to Jesus — if possible.

Chapter 2, entitled 'From Ignatius to Barth' (pp. 29-45), ought really to be entitled 'From Barth to Ignatius', and indicates the unhistorical

method which Hare has chosen to apply. His interest here is to show that in the (systematic) theological tradition of the church SM has been generally interpreted as a term reflecting the humanity of Jesus. Hence there is no reason to understand the NT as a title with supernatural or pre-existent connotations.

In chapter 3, on 'Luke-Acts' (pp. 47-78), Hare bypasses the meaning and connotations which SM had in Judaism in order to discover what Luke made of it — as if Luke had inherited a term empty of content! He prefers compositional rather than redactional criticism, because the former more clearly relates the various parts to the whole message. He discusses a number of SM texts, coming always unerringly to the conclusion that Luke does not have a pre-existent, apocalyptic SM, but uses the term idiomatically as 'I'. The important text of Luke 5:24 is explained away along lines which have already been refuted (e.g. by Caragounis, *The Son of Man*, 1986, pp. 179-190) but of which Hare does not show any awareness.

Chapter 4, on 'John' (pp. 79-111), concludes that SM 'refers to the incarnational existence of the Logos' (p. 111).

The following (longest) chapter is devoted to Matthew (pp. 113-182). His remarks and conclusions with each one of the sayings are patently uniform: SM denotes Jesus' humanity. Even the passion sayings tell of nothing other than the humanity of Jesus. Thus, on Matthew 20:18f. he comments, 'Nothing need be added here to what has been said concerning the earlier passion predictions. In all these passages "the Son of man" designates a unique human being who nonetheless shares with other human beings the necessity of dying!' This is quite desperate and makes no sense in the light of Matthew's concerns.

In Chapter 6, on Mark (pp. 183-211), in which Hare analyses 13 SM sayings, he comes, as usual, to the same conclusion, viz. that Mark knows nothing of an apocalyptic, titular use of SM. Already in the first saying (Mk. 2:10) which he discusses, he postulates that Mark cannot have intended another meaning than Matthew and Luke. Thus, the saying is watered down to making Jesus simply the mouthpiece of God's forgiveness (p. 187), despite the fact that Mark makes Jesus the subject of the verb. He dismisses Mark 10:45 with a few words about the 'glory-hungry Christians . . . symbolized by James and John' without coming to terms with the real issue — the saying as applying to Jesus — and without taking notice of Stuhlmacher's arguments.

On pages 213-256, entitled 'The Pregospel Tradition', Hare doubts that the 'conglomerate of traditions' designated as Q had an SM Christology. On the problem of forgiveness of blasphemy against the SM (Mt. 12:32) he has failed to consult Lövestam's detailed examination *Spiritus Blasphemia*, and misunderstands the force of the saying. *Ala* Casey he thinks that the suffering SM sayings just describe Jesus as a human being liable to pain and death, but he has some sensible criticisms against Vermes, Lindars and Casey (pp. 244-255). However, he recognizes the speculative nature of his conclusions, e.g. that 'the Greek tradents betray no awareness of an apocalyptic myth concerning the heavenly Son of Man' and that *bar enasha* 'was capable of functioning in some contexts as a modesty idiom', when he admits that they are 'based on nothing stronger than inference' (p. 256), but that this has fewer inferences than the opposing view.

Hare's final chapter is concerned with 'Jesus' (pp. 257-282). Even here his position is

that in the Aramaic-speaking community *bar enasha* had no apocalyptic content. It was purely denotative, not connotative. It communicated no content about Jesus' status. One may wonder why it was then used? Hare's principle then is to accept SM sayings as genuine if they can be understood as non-apocalyptic. Thus, since Matthew 11:19 = Luke 7:34, the saying on gluttony is not loaded theologically, it is genuine. The same applies to a few other sayings. The condition is always that the saying is not perceived to have apocalyptic or titular overtones (e.g. Lk. 12:8f.; Mt. 8:20; Lk. 11:30; Mk. 2:10). This is reminiscent of Leivestad. Hare does not appear to be aware that in these sayings he has had predecessors (e.g. J. Knox) who have been refuted repeatedly long ago. The sayings accepted as genuine reveal modesty, reserve, etc. — even Jesus' claim to forgive sins!

Hare tries to give the impression that his approach to the SM problem is free from pre-suppositions that could prejudice his results. He therefore starts with Barth and works his way back to Jesus. He thus claims to approach every evangelist independently of his predecessors and thus without any pre-understanding. To the present reviewer this is methodologically a false approach. The SM question is a historical problem. History means continuity. When Luke, for example, writes about the SM — especially since Hare assumes an earlier tradition about this way of speaking on the part of Jesus — he does not do it in a vacuum. As Hare himself shows, there was an SM tradition and Luke cannot have been unaffected by it. When he received that term it was charged with some content. If, for the sake of argument, the content was of a transcendental, apocalyptic nature, then Hare has built his castle upon the sand.

Secondly, Hare starts with what he considers to be non-apocalyptic interpretations of the SM in the history of the church, and then tries to impose such an understanding on Luke, John, Matthew and Mark, thus prejudicing his whole argumentation. He has strained the texts and their legitimate exegesis in order to get them to fit his interpretation.

Thirdly, Hare has been very selective in the kind of works he debates with. He seems to have studiously avoided taking issue with the opposite interpretation, and many important problems have been 'solved' without telling the reader that there is more to be said.

Fourthly, if Hare had started at the right end, viz. Daniel and the Jewish pre-Jesus tradition (the present reviewer is now joined by J.J. Collins in his recent SNTS lecture (August 1991) on the SM in first-century Judaism), the result would have been very different. Indeed, in the SM research, the OT, and Daniel in particular, is the right point of departure. This Jewish tradition was known to Jesus and the evangelists, it was their heritage, and therefore what they meant by SM must be interpreted in the light of that tradition, and not in the light of Barth's dogmatics.

Chrys C. Caragounis.

**Faith and Obedience in
Romans: A Study in
Romans 1-4 (JSNTSS 39)**
Glenn N. Davies
Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990
232 pp., £27.50/\$48.00.

In this book (a revision of sections of a 1987 Sheffield PhD) the author attempts to 'explore

further [than others have done] the relationship between justification and God's purposes for Jews and Gentiles' (p. 18). He does this by means of a commentary-like approach to Romans 1-4, with an appendix on Romans 9:30-10:13. The two particular concerns which are primary are: firstly, the nature of the continuity in God's method of saving mankind before and after the coming of Christ; and secondly, the nature of the relationship between faith and obedience in Romans.

A very brief introduction alerts the reader to the context: a post-Sanderian view of Judaism; and a post-Stendahl view of Paul's interest in the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. Five chapters contain the exegetical material of Romans 1-4, and a brief conclusion is offered. The brevity of both introduction and conclusion means that issues such as the history of research on this particular topic, the consequences for Pauline studies of the conclusions, etc., are not dealt with adequately. A glance at the index reveals that the authors most quoted are Barrett, Bruce, Cranfield, Käsemann, Murray, Sanday & Headlam, and Sanders (Kuss, Michel and Wilckens are referred to less often). This supports the impression that it is the inter-commentary debate which shapes this study. Little attention is given to the situation in Rome which Paul addresses (cf. Wedderburn, *The Reasons for Romans*), and to the way in which the Roman Christians may have read the epistle. Only occasional attempts are made to integrate the investigation of first-century Jewish literature into the argument of the thesis (e.g. on Abraham, pp. 155ff.).

What this book does contain is extended exegetical treatments of portions of Romans 1-4, with less detailed treatments of other portions. It consists of five chapters of varying lengths. The treatment is obviously, therefore, selective in terms of the amount of space given to various topics. The introduction and conclusion provide only the barest idea of the overall argument (and the inexperienced reader will be unaware exactly where, when and why Davies' thesis differs from other interpretations of Romans). Readers would be well advised to begin with Davies' summary of the argument of Romans 1:1-3:26 (on pp. 113ff.), as this provides access to many of the distinctive arguments of this thesis.

The basic argument is that (for Paul) God deals with mankind in the same way before and after the coming of Christ. Both Jews under the law, and Gentiles outside the law, were saved by faith and obedience. The coming of Christ, and his sacrificial death, is the fulfilment of God's purposes, the revelation of the means by which God could justly forgive those whom he promised to save under the old dispensation. Although in the era of fulfilment faith in God can only be expressed through Christ, and obedience to the law is modified by the fact that Christ is the goal of the law, yet 'obedience is as integral to the Christian life as it was to the life of the faithful Jew in the Old Testament, an obedience which springs from faith and is guided by faith' (pp. 174f.).

Along the way, Davies defends the following interpretations: *hupakoē pisteōs* in 1:5 refers to 'the obedience that springs from faith'; Paul accepts that Habakkuk 2:4 in Romans 1:7 means: 'the emphasis is on "shall live by faith"'. He follows Bassler in asserting the centrality of God's impartiality as uniting 1:6-2:11; he argues that OT believers are primarily in view in 2:6-11; and that 2:14-16 refers to pre-Christian Gentile believers (righteous Gentiles). He argues that the OT citations in 3:10-19 all presuppose the distinction between righteous and wicked, which Paul accepts (cf. Dunn who argues that Paul exploits this ironically); it is the

wicked among whom there are none righteous, no not one: 'Paul's condemnation is directed towards the wicked, in contrast to the righteous' (p. 99). He argues (against Sanders *et al.*) that 'works of the Law' in Romans cannot be limited to those parts of the Torah that distinguish Jew from Gentile ('Romans 9:30ff. and 11:6, therefore, provide significant obstacles to the acceptance of Sanders' reconstruction of Pauline theology', p. 126). 'Glorying' is not excluded on principle (3:27), but only glorying that is not accompanied by obedience (pp. 134f.) and faith (p. 154); this provides a significant link to chapter 4 on Abraham: Abraham was not justified by obedience but by faith.

Any adequate response would need equal time and space. In fact the commentary-like approach can hide (at times) the force of the thesis, which is considerable. The book cries out for a theological addendum making crystal clear the conclusions to be drawn from Paul (since Paul has been treated in a basically systematic manner this would not have been out of place). The announcement of another monograph on the same subject (D.B. Garlington, *The Obedience of Faith: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context* (WUNT 2.38; Tübingen: Mohr, 1990-91), incidentally drawn from another British PhD completed in the same year, cf. WTJ 52 (1990) p. 201, n. 2) highlights the importance of the subject; but also provides the reviewer the opportunity to withdraw and await an interchange between the two.

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Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit. Paul's Defense of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3
 Scott J. Hafemann
 Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, xiv + 261 pp., \$21.95.

This volume is the American edition of the author's dissertation, which was published in 1986 by J.C.B. Mohr as part of the WUNT series under the title *Suffering and the Spirit*. The purpose of this edition is to reach 'a wider audience' (p. xiii). To this end the author has eliminated Greek/Hebrew block quotations, has transliterated and translated what remains, has 'laymanized' technical terminology, and has translated all foreign language quotes. In structure and content, however, it is a virtual duplication of the German edition, even down to the dedication and acknowledgments. Bibliographies are identical, including the high preponderance of German works, many of which are now available in English translation.

'Prolegomena' is the term that best describes this work. It is, in the author's words, a preliminary study aimed at establishing a context for understanding Paul's letter/spirit contrast in 2 Corinthians 3:4-18 as well as seeing what light 2:14-3:3 sheds on Paul's self-conception as an apostle (pp. 1-2). (A second work, on 3:4-4:6, is apparently underway (p. 2).) The author's central thesis is that Paul in 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3 is concerned to defend himself against the charge that his suffering calls into question his apostolic genuineness by showing that rejection of Paul as 'the Spirit-giver who suffers' is in essence a rejection of God himself. This thesis is pursued in the course of five chapters and eight pages of conclusions.

The author begins with a six-page introduction that sets forth his method of study (to be carefully noted) as one that sticks as closely as possible to the text at hand (rather than exploring the broader context of 2 Corinthians) and then seeks out 'interpretive parallels', where possible, from the Corinthian letters (as opposed to drawing on other Pauline and extra-biblical materials) — the one exception being additional historical knowledge needed for determining 'the wider meaning of a word, idiom, etc.' (p. 4).

Chapter 1 is devoted to explicating the widely debated meaning and use of *thriambeōnti*, commonly translated 'lead in triumph' (v. 14a). From an examination of the relevant primary sources, the author concludes that rather than a victory motif, Paul is drawing on the Roman image of a strong enemy triumphantly paraded on a death march through the city in order to set forth his apostolic self-conception as that of a captive slave constantly being led by God to his death.

Chapter 2 explores the inner connection between his death march imagery and the 'sacrificial' language of 'fragrance' and 'aroma' in vv. 14b-16a. From perceived parallels with Paul's theology of the cross and catalogue of sufferings in the Corinthian letters, the author argues that the link is to be found in the concept of Paul as mediator of the life-giving Spirit, whose daily experience with death becomes a 'sacrificial aroma' to God.

'Who is equal to such a task?' (v. 16b). In Chapter 3 — a scant 14 pages — the author, rejecting uniform scholarly opinion, claims that 'I, Paul, am' is the expected answer. Evidence and discussion of a conclusion that is foundational for what follows are, lamentably, left to a forthcoming work.

Chapter 4 is essentially an examination of Paul's practice of self-support with a view to understanding his use of marketplace imagery in verse 17. Rejecting, from his investigation of the primary sources, the meaning of *kapēleuontes* as 'to water down/adulterate' in favour of 'to sell for profit', Hafemann argues that Paul in verse 17 is providing as evidence of his sufficiency the fact that he alone of the apostles chose not to receive financial support.

Chapter 5 rounds out the study with an analysis of 3:1-3, in which Paul, according to the author, presents the Corinthians' conversion as proof that he is God's true Spirit-bearer, and not his opponents who must resort to 'self' recommendation.

Paul's suffering (2:14-17) and the work of the Spirit (3:1-3) are thereby brought together as 'two complementary aspects of Paul's apostolic ministry' (p. 208).

The author in very clear fashion has underlined the essentially polemical character of 2 Corinthians 2:14-3:3 and has shown how these verses are integral to the issue of apostolic legitimacy, which is central to Paul's argument throughout this letter. Among the strengths of his work can be listed documentation from primary sources, copious footnotes, and passage and subject indexes. Of special interest are the sections giving historical background on the Roman custom of the triumphal procession and on *kapēleuō*.

There are, however, two shortcomings that limit the usability of this work: (1) Lengthy citations of secondary sources, constant repetition, and the tendency to get bogged down in technical detail make for slow and, at times, tedious reading. (2) There is no evidence of interaction with the sizeable amount of literature that has appeared since 1983.

In this reviewer's opinion the most serious weaknesses of the study are methodological. By beginning at verse 14, rather than at verse 12 — where virtually all translators and editors (*e.g.* UBS) place their section titles — the author arrives at an understanding of verses 14-16a (a captive slave on his way to death) that is incompatible with the basic contrast in verses 12ff. between human weakness (vv. 12-13, human anxiety leads Paul to abandon a promising mission field) and divine power (vv. 14-16a, 'but thanks be to God who triumphs over our weakness . . .'). Further, in leaping between selected passages in 1 and 2 Corinthians in pursuit of 'interpretive parallels', the flow of Paul's argument in the larger context is overlooked (*e.g.* that Paul at 3:1 is eschewing self-recommendation is in flat contradiction with texts like 6:4, 'we commend ourselves in every way . . .'), and the role of these verses within the surrounding chapters is ignored (*e.g.* the claim that the 'apostolic sufferings are unique and cannot be imitated' (p. 78) is at odds with Paul's references to the Corinthians as 'co-sufferers' in 1:6-7). Instead, the author works painstakingly through passages whose exegetical details are often irrelevant to the primary text under consideration. This can particularly be seen in the title of the work, which the author imports into these verses from other Corinthian passages. This is not to say that 'suffering' and 'the Spirit' are not important themes in 2 Corinthians — but are they really at the heart of Paul's argument in these verses? ('Spirit' does not even appear until 3:3 and then not in any focal way until vv. 6-18.) Finally, a striving for what is novel and the overriding assumption that modern research has not properly understood a single word/phrase of 2:14-3:3 raises serious doubts about the viability of the author's exegesis and conclusions at any given point (*e.g.* rhetorical questions introduced by *tis* elsewhere in 2 Cor. require a resounding 'no', not 'yes'). There is also a dangerous circularity in reasoning, where a novel conclusion reached about one verse becomes the basis for rejecting usual or natural construals of subsequent verses (*e.g.*, given the conclusion that v. 16b is a Pauline assertion of sufficiency, it then 'becomes difficult to see how the usual construal of v. 17 fits', p. 100).

In balance, though, this is a provocative work that one cannot read and remain indifferent to. It challenges one to rethink the traditional ways these verses have been interpreted and serves to place this passage in the mainstream of Paul's apostolic defence. The author is to be applauded for striving after a coherence of argumentation in 2:14-3:3 that has eluded scholars thus far.

The repeated references to scholarly works and lines of argument, the technical detail of the study, and the assumption of the reader's familiarity with the interpretive problems make the primary audience of this work those who have some biblical expertise and familiarity with the Pauline letters.

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Galatians (Word Biblical Commentary 41)

Richard N. Longenecker

Dallas: Word, 1990, cxi + 323 pp., \$24.99.

Those familiar with the scholarly contributions of Richard N. Longenecker will be eager to read his recent, substantial commentary on

Galatians. Those expecting the commentary to reflect the meticulous research which has characterized Longenecker's career will not be disappointed. The commentary contains a wonderful bibliography, both in terms of contemporary literature and ancient literature (extra-biblical and early Fathers).

Before dealing with the question of the position of this commentary in the current discussions about Paul, a word or two should be said about Longenecker's positions on a few matters which have occupied interpreters of Galatians for some time. Longenecker rightly understands the recurring first person plural as ordinarily a reference to Jewish Christians (p. 121), rather than as a reference to Christians in general. This is somewhat untraditional, but consistent with the current growing consensus. Longenecker also assumes the non-traditional position in resolving *pisteōs Iēsou*, rejecting the objective genitive. Thus, with a growing number of Pauline scholars, Longenecker understands this expression as 'the faith of Christ'. While the reviewer has not yet read a cogent lexical argument for this position, nor is there a compelling one in the commentary, it does not mar the commentary, for Longenecker's approach is not so theological that much depends on it.

Of course, the evaluation of a Galatians commentary in the last decade of our century requires an estimation of how it fits into the many and various studies of Paul and the law which have appeared in the last 20 years. Whether this is the best time or the worst time to write about Galatians could, perhaps, be debated. Possibly nothing would do more to promote scholarly consensus than a commentary which deliberately engaged the 'new perspective on Paul', whether it engaged it sympathetically or unsympathetically. While Longenecker's bibliographies make it apparent that he is familiar with what has been happening, the actual content of the commentary does not indicate that Longenecker has a definable position in the debate. With the new perspective, he is more than willing to concede that the dominant approach to understanding first-century Judaism has been incorrect: 'First-century Judaism was not fundamentally legalistic' (p. 86). However, it is not clear that the rejection of the more traditional approach has afforded Longenecker a convincing alternative. Indeed, the commentary is fairly traditional/mainstream in understanding the basic problem addressed by Paul (*e.g.*, Longenecker translates 'those of the works of the law' at 3:10 as 'those who rely on the works of the law', p. 116, emphasis mine).

Longenecker argues that Paul's opponents were nomistic (living consistently with the law), though not legalistic (attempting to merit God's approval by the law). Sometimes this appears to be a reference to living in some particularly Jewish way (*e.g.*, 'lifestyle . . . compatible with Jewish traditions', p. 86), but at other places the expression 'nomism' or 'nomistic lifestyle' is more slippery, *e.g.* p. 159, 'Christians . . . often revert to some form of nomistic lifestyle'. At the heart of the 'new perspective' is the belief that Torah distinguished Jew and Gentile, so that 'nomism' for the 'new perspective' is always Jewish nomism. For Longenecker, it is not at all clear, however, that his 'nomism' is (consistently) Jewish nomism. Indeed, it is not evident to this reviewer that 'nomism' has precise definition in the commentary. Yet it is at this point that one would (if interested) position himself in terms of the present discussions.

To take another example, in the discussion of the three pairs of peoples in 3:26-29, Longenecker makes a number of references to 'old divisions and inequalities, . . . the inequali-

ties . . . having come to an end for believers in Christ' (p. 156), 'old divisions' (p. 157) and 'former divisions' (p. 158). Yet it is not clear whether such divisions are the general result of being unregenerate, or whether they reflect Graeco-Roman or Jewish culture, or (as the reviewer thinks) categories of people ceremonially distinguished by the laws of the Sinai covenant. Referring to these three verses as 'Paul's most conclusive argument', Longenecker says: 'For the ultimate answer to the Judaizers' call for Gentile Christians to observe Torah is not in setting out the God-intended purpose and functions of the Mosaic law, important as that discussion in 3:19-25 may be, but to assert that "in Christ" God has done something new that puts an end to the old' (p. 159). Consciously or unconsciously, this is surely reminiscent of E.P. Sanders' observation that Paul's only problem with Judaism is that it is not Christianity, yet Longenecker does not qualify the statement, or take any special pains to promote it. The reviewer finds Longenecker's 'solution' scarcely more satisfying than that of Sanders. Either there is a genuine inadequacy with the Sinai covenant itself which necessitates the establishing of another (the reviewer's understanding), or there is some genuine problem with how that covenant has been observed which necessitates drastic action (the common Protestant understanding). But God's act in Christ is too tortuously explicated in terms of prior covenantal administrations in Galatians to permit us to believe that Paul's most conclusive argument is merely that 'God has done something new that puts an end to the old'. Once again, Longenecker passes up the opportunity to enter the current discussion about Paul and the law.

The analytical detail required of a modern commentator in bibliographical, historical, textual and linguistic matters is daunting, and Longenecker is, in these areas, more than satisfying. His work is a rich source of information in each of these areas, and the introductory material is clear and thorough. Indeed, in terms of the conventional expectations of a modern commentary (to assemble exhaustive amounts of data, without necessarily being theologically provocative), this commentary is an enormous success. However, there is a price to be paid for this success, and that price is in the area of a convincing *theological* reading of Galatians. The modern commentator who satisfies this concern is rare indeed, and this commentary is not, in this regard, rare.

Whether Galatians will receive a satisfying theological reappraisal, synthesizing the most significant insights of the last 15 years of work in the area of Paul and the law, remains to be seen. We are still awaiting an interpretation of Galatians which consciously positions itself within the present discussion in such a way as to forge some sort of consensus.

For evangelicals, the need is substantial. If the 'new perspective' on Paul is wrong, other evangelical scholars should join Robert Gundry and Tom Schreiner in attempting to describe precisely where it is wrong. The reviewer believes that the substance of the 'new perspective' is a re-evaluation of first-century Judaism (denying that it was characteristically meritorious), which has consequences for understanding Paul and the law (the 'problem' of the law for Paul is not meritorious misuse, but that the law, as a covenantal administration, excludes Gentiles). The reviewer is still awaiting a commentary on Galatians which distinguishes itself by interpreting the book as primarily a discussion of the respective roles of Gentile and Jew in the three covenants associated with Abraham, Moses and Christ.

There are a disconcerting number of errors in the indices, so that the pages cited are often incorrect. The reader will need to look within a page or two of the citations to find the information cited in the index. I found none further than two pages away, and most were within a page.

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Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the New Testament

Philip W. Comfort

Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1990, xx + 235 pp., £13.95.

The main aim of this book is to study the way in which discoveries of early NT papyrus manuscripts (MSS) have influenced modern English translations (ETs) of the NT (particularly ASV, RSV, NASB, NEB, NIV, TEV, NJB). It consists of four sections.

Section One (24 pages) consists of an introduction to early NT papyrus MSS: a brief and helpful treatment of various issues in NT textual criticism, dependent on the work of Metzger, the Alands, Roberts, Turner and Epp. Comfort takes care to emphasize that the Egyptian papyri should not be regarded as atypical, but 'present a fair sampling of what might be found in early papyri all over the Graeco-Roman world' (p. 11). He then discusses the way in which MS discoveries have influenced editions of the Greek NT — their importance was always recognized and has steadily influenced the standard editions (Comfort misses the exhaustive study by J.K. Elliott, *A Survey of Manuscripts used in Editions of the Greek New Testament* (NovTSS 57; Leiden: Brill, 1987)).

Section Two (42 pages) consists of descriptions of the early NT MSS (i.e. those of the fourth century or earlier). For each MS the author lists the name, content, date, place of discovery, date of publication, housing location, bibliography, photo locations, which editions it influenced, its textual character, and a note to references in Section Three: its significance for text and translations. This catalogue is informative and very helpful, although discussions of the textual character of fragmentary papyri can be a bit misleading (more seriously this catalogue duplicates material found in other works not mentioned here: K. Aland, *Repertorium der griechischen christlichen Papyri. I Biblische Papyri: Altes Testament, Neues Testament, varia, Apokryphen* (Patristische Texte und Studien 18; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976); J. van Haelst, *Catalogue des Papyrus Littéraires Juifs et Chrétiens* (Série Papyrologie I; Paris: Sorbonne, 1976); and more recently, J.K. Elliott, *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts* (SNTSMS 62; Cambridge: CUP, 1989)). The section also includes a listing of uncial fragments from the third century (0162, 0171, 0189, 0212 and 0220).

Section Three (108 pages) is a discussion of the relationship between the early MSS and recent ETs. The author discusses 'all the passages from Matthew to Revelation in which the early MSS have had a significant influence on modern English translations of the NT' (p. 77). For each passage (chosen if significant variation occurs in both ETs and MSS), an English rendering of the variants with support (both MSS and ETs) is presented, followed by

discussion (of varying length). This is another catalogue, and is too extensive to comment on here (approximately 280 passages in total are discussed). It is notable that Comfort generally does not cite the early versions or church fathers in his discussions.

Section Four (24 pages) offers some concluding observations concerning the effect on ETs of papyrus MSS. The RSV translators followed Nestle's seventeenth edition (1941), and therefore had access to MSS published to that date, but introduced only twenty new readings; the NASB used Nestle's twenty-third edition (1957), including only five new readings; the NIV used Nestle's twenty-fifth edition (1963) and UBS first edition (1966), introducing another fourteen new readings. The primary conclusion is straightforward: the MSS have made significant impact upon recent ETs. In closing Comfort suggests further alterations (in total he advocates 115 alterations to the text found at the beginning of the twentieth century).

The book closes with a bibliography, and several pleasing photographs of MSS discussed in the book. This book is well presented, and of considerable interest. A great deal of material has been gathered within its covers, and many discussions are presented in such a way that those without Greek can follow the argument. The overall thesis seems indisputable, although on individual passages the arguments are sometimes contestable, and the implicit assumption that Versions and patristic citations can be disregarded is a little frustrating.

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Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology

Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (eds)

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, 367 pp., \$19.95.

The use of narrative (or story) as an approach to theology and ethics, although recently gaining interest, is replete with confusion and lack of focus. Whereas many are talking about it, few seem to be talking about the same thing or even giving the appearance of understanding what the others are saying. The result has been that many write narrative off as just another religious fad, while critical discussion by those more interested in what narrative can do in regard to revitalizing theology and ethics is frustrated by lack of direction and common ground.

Why Narrative? is an attempt to help those interested in cutting through some of the confusion in narrative theology and ethics to do so, and also to help set an agenda for further study. The introduction is very helpful, especially for those with little or no familiarity with a narrative approach. The editors do a good job introducing the major issues in each of the essays and pointing out the different ways each author contributes to the overall discussion. This provides just enough of a framework for one to begin to understand the interest (or agenda) of each author and the issues raised by these particular essays without predisposing the reader to any one particular understanding of what 'ought to be going on'.

The book is divided into three parts: I. Narrative Rediscovered; II. Narrative as a Critical Tool; and III. Narrative's Theological

Significance. The anthology moves from general frameworks within which to apply a narrative approach to specific applications of such an approach.

Part I is a collection of four essays, all of which are classics and have been very influential in the rediscovery of narrative in their perspective fields.

This section begins with an essay on the influence of narrative on theology: H. Richard Niebuhr's 'The Story of Our Life'. Niebuhr argues that the notion of story is imperative for understanding the nature of revelation. It is followed by Hans Frei, 'Apologetics, Criticism, and the Loss of Narrative Interpretation', where Frei demonstrates the results of neglecting a narrative approach to biblical interpretation. Next, 'The Narrative Quality of Experience', by Stephen Crites, focuses on the primacy of narrative in regard to understanding human experience. Finally, 'The Virtues, the Unity of a Human Life, and the Concept of a Tradition', by Alasdair MacIntyre, argues for the rediscovery of the significance of narrative as he builds a case for a virtue approach to ethics.

The five readings in Part II focus not so much on stimulating interest in the use of narrative as on the crucial rôle narrative can (or should) play as a methodology for understanding various topics. Here narrative is viewed essentially as a tool for the study of topics such as metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, theology and sociology.

Part III is a group of essays which takes many of the themes developed in the preceding sections and applies them in order to illustrate the theological significance of the use of narrative. These essays tend to focus on very specific issues and argue for particular conclusions in contemporary theological debates.

For example, Michael Root argues for the necessity of narrative in correctly understanding soteriology. His primary thesis is that 'the structure and explanatory power [of soteriology] is a function of its narrative form'. It is through what Root calls a 'redescription' of the Christian story that soteriology carries out its task.

Not all of the essays are this specific, but they all do illustrate how a narrative approach relates to and helps inform a variety of theological debates. In order not to give the misleading impression that the use of narrative presupposes certain theological convictions, the editors have included several sets of essays which argue quite different points of view on the same issue.

The editors' hope is to 'help clarify what is at stake and hence elevate the debates about narrative to a higher level'. If this does not happen it will not be due to a lack of opportunity. This anthology certainly provides the initial organization needed to stimulate focused, well-defined discussion on a myriad of issues related to narrative and theology and ethics. The essays were well chosen both for quality and importance to the discussion. The editors are to be commended for providing a common point from which much fruitful discussion can occur.

One word of caution to anyone who is interested in reading this anthology: it is intended to be used in a relatively advanced setting for the purpose of stimulating discussion about narrative approaches. Because of this, one must be prepared to be challenged in several ways. Most of the essays were written by specialists to specialists in fairly diverse disciplines, thus the subtleties of the distinctions for which the authors argue can some-

times be missed due to a lack of background. Several of the articles are quite difficult for the beginner.

Also, the implications of a narrative approach to theology can be far-reaching. The writers of these essays are in many respects carving out a new pathway. There are many questions to be asked and many ideas which must be pursued even if it appears that that pathway is taking us into forbidden territory.

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Eberhard Jüngel: Theological Essays

J.B. Webster (ed.)

T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh: 1989, xii + 235 pp., £14.95.

In this compact and relatively affordable volume John Webster has gathered together a selection of nine essays by one of the foremost contemporary German theologians. Dating from the early 1970s to the early '80s, and translated into English here for the first time, these pieces cover a broad range of topics. Yet they reflect an identifiable common theological agenda, namely the concern to take seriously the categories of grace and of the divine as breaking into the sphere of human experience in a manner as unlooked for as it is unconstrained. Thus the language of divine address, of the necessary recreating of human creatureliness, and of the unconditional freeness of divine self-giving is to be found throughout the volume in treatments of themes so diverse as those of epistemology, ethics, the nature of theological language and the *imago Dei*. This willingness to reckon seriously and unashamedly with divine action and self-revealing will doubtless be attractive to the evangelical reader as a welcome change to the more familiar cautious and apologetic approach of the Western theological and philosophical tradition to these themes.

Nonetheless, the way in which Jüngel works out the substance of his thought within this broad framework reflects the influence, not of an evangelical orientation, but rather of his teacher Karl Barth, of whose theology Jüngel is among the best and most reliable of contemporary interpreters. Yet it is clear from this volume alone that Jüngel is no Barthian in any purely imitative sense. Standing clearly on the shoulders of Barth's theological achievement he nevertheless forges his own distinctive theological product.

The most interesting essays in the volume were, for the reviewer, those treating the nature of metaphor in its significance for theological discourse, and the metaphysical issue of the relationship between actuality and possibility, viewed with the doctrine of justification by faith specifically in mind. A further piece takes a provocative look at the subject of natural theology ('anonymous theism') and Rahner's idea of so-called 'anonymous Christianity' among the adherents of other religious traditions. Here we touch on an issue more familiar, perhaps, to the average reader than some to be found in the book. Notwithstanding the central Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, Jüngel reminds us, it remains true (and certainly was so for Luther) that faith does not create the reality of salvation, but rather acknowledges and lays hold of a reality established quite independently of itself. Otherwise

faith itself becomes a vehicle for self-redemption and as such antithetical to the very purpose of the doctrine. 'In view of the justification of all which has already taken place, faith is that human attitude in which we affirm that we are justified and thereby also affirm that we need add nothing to our salvation and have nothing to add apart from this affirmation' (p. 186). If this is in any sense true, Jüngel argues, then we must make sense of the ontological affirmation that all are in some sense and to some extent already related to Jesus Christ by his redemptive act on their behalf, rather than viewing them as utterly divorced from him until the moment of their faith.

This is not an easy book, and most of its contents will not be immediately accessible to the novice in theology. Nonetheless, for those with some knowledge of theology already under their belt, who have not yet attempted to scale the heights of Jüngel's more substantial writings, this anthology affords a valuable introduction to his thought, and is a welcome addition to the corpus of modern German theology available to the English-speaking reader.

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Renewal Theology: Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Christian Living

J. Rodman Williams

Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Zondervan, 1990, 474 pp., \$19.95.

This is the second volume in a three-volume systematic theology from J. Rodman Williams, professor of theology at Regent University (formerly CBN University) and a strong proponent of charismatic renewal. Although he hopes that 'both participants and non-participants' in the charismatic movement will find his work helpful, Williams' systematics will appeal principally to theological students with Pentecostal/charismatic views.

Having dealt in the first volume with such topics as God, creation, man, sin, Christ and the atonement, Williams here turns to a discussion of the experience of becoming and being a Christian. In the first five chapters (dealing with calling, regeneration, justification, sanctification and perseverance), Williams' background in the Reformed tradition is evident, although he does not endorse a Calvinist interpretation at every point. He devotes the major portion of the book (chs. 6-14) to a discussion of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. The final chapter contains a discussion of the ethical responsibilities of 'Christian living'.

For a systematic theology this book's entry-level simplicity is both a strength and a weakness. On one hand, the work is accessible to those who lack background in technical theological issues. Anyone moderately acquainted with Scripture can follow the discussion readily. The author avoids difficult philosophical discussions and refers only infrequently to the history of doctrine. His approach is a fairly straightforward (and consistently evangelical) exposition of biblical texts relevant to the various topics. Although he frequently supplements this exposition with references to experiences within the charismatic renewal, Williams leaves the reader in no doubt that the Bible is the authority by which all experiences and doctrines are to be judged.

Philosophical implications and interactions with historic debates and formulations are generally left to footnotes and the occasional brief excursus. This makes the book easier for the beginning student but less satisfying for the more advanced. Anyone aware of the history of doctrine and the importance of philosophical commitments will probably have questions not adequately addressed in this work. Mature scholars will not likely find this a satisfying systematics at all, except perhaps as a source for obtaining a representative charismatic viewpoint for a given topic. One should note, however, that many Pentecostal theologians and biblical scholars would not endorse parts of Williams' presentation, especially his explanation of the charismatic manifestations listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-10.

This volume will make its most important contributions to students looking for a systematic theology which treats their Pentecostal experience not only with respect but with interest and favour. Such readers will find a reasonably adequate treatment of the usual central questions of theology. More importantly, they will find helpful discussions of issues which are pertinent in charismatic churches but not treated in the standard works on systematics. They may not agree with all Williams' conclusions or even with his biblical hermeneutics, but they will encounter an honest attempt at responsible theological reflection on the charismatic renewal. Such an attempt should be applauded and may encourage other attempts.

A special value of the book is the way Williams addresses weaknesses and hazards in the charismatic movement. This is especially noteworthy since charismatic leaders have not always shown a willingness to submit to theological critique, and critics within the movement have often suffered scorn as 'unspiritual' and thus have been discouraged from speaking out. One example of Williams' critique of popular charismatic teaching is his treatment of Mark 11:22 (p. 361, n. 68; p. 365, n. 90). He correctly insists that the exhortations should be translated 'Have faith in God', rather than 'Have the faith of God', as some charismatics have taught. This is not grammatical nit-picking, for the root issue is profound: is faith a power which we can use as God uses it, or is faith trust in God? Our answer will assign sovereignty either to God or to the person who knows the secrets of using faith. Williams astutely observes that the chief error of the 'word of faith' wing of the charismatic movement (represented by Kenneth Hagin and Kenneth Copeland) is its man-centred, rather than God-centred, understanding of faith (p. 366).

In fact, the issue of how to understand God's sovereignty in relationship to our responsibility to believe and act in faith is at the heart of many long-standing controversies within and surrounding the charismatic movement: Why isn't everyone healed when we pray in faith? Should we 'confess' our healing although we still have symptoms of sickness? What power, if any, do our words have to affect reality? When are we 'stepping out in faith' and when are we acting presumptuously? Williams effectively addresses these questions with a corrective emphasis on God's sovereignty (a healthy application of his Reformed training!), although he continues to exhort us to believe God for miracles as we seek to do his will.

Despite such good points, this book elicits some criticism of its own. At a crucial point Williams knowingly diverges from a commonly accepted guideline for deriving normative doctrine from Scripture: material which was intended to teach truth directly (didactic material) must be given preference over material intended to narrate events.

Didactic tells you what to do or believe; narrative tells you what happened, not necessarily what should happen or will always happen. Therefore, didactic is more normative than narrative. Knowing that others acknowledge this principle, Williams is careful to explain his reasons for rejecting it (p. 182 n. 4). This decision is fundamental to the major portion of this volume, as Williams draws on the narrative of Acts to support his presentation of the 'coming' of the Holy Spirit as an event subsequent to and separate from conversion.

Looking only at Acts, we can easily find believers who have yet to receive the 'coming' of the Spirit (Acts 8). The difficulty lies in harmonizing this with Paul's claim that every believer has the Spirit (Rom. 8:9). The problem is eased by recognizing that Luke focused on the Spirit's empowerment for mission; he left the Spirit's role in regeneration for John and Paul to explain. Williams recognizes Luke's limited aim (p. 206) but still insists that Acts is paradigmatic for the Spirit's 'coming'. Thus his chapters on 'The Coming of the Holy Spirit', 'The Reception of the Holy Spirit' and 'The Effects of the Coming of the Spirit' all concern post-conversion experiences of empowerment.

The reader could easily be confused by the resulting picture of the Spirit's presence: each believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (p. 50, agreeing with Paul), but this is before the 'coming of the Spirit', which 'goes beyond salvation' (p. 205, emphasis his). Any reader could be excused for wondering, 'How is the Spirit present in me before his coming?' Systematic theology should clarify issues (by respecting the biblical authors' intentions and letting didactic be normative) rather than cause further confusion.

Pentecostals and charismatics promote an experience of the Spirit's empowerment beyond regeneration, usually using 'baptism in/with the Spirit' or 'filled with the Spirit' to refer to this. Non-Pentecostals answer that the 'baptism' or gift of the Spirit is associated with conversion (since all believers have the Spirit), but they agree, in principle, with the importance of seeking to be 'filled with the Spirit' (Eph. 5:18). Agreeing that non-Pentecostal believers have the Spirit but wanting also to encourage a greater experience of his power, Williams would do better to make 'filled with the Spirit' his term of emphasis instead of the confusing expression 'coming of the Spirit'. This would put the discussion more on common ground rather than widening the gap between 'participants and non-participants' in charismatic renewal. All Christians should be eager to embrace the full range of the Spirit's activity, but such an aim is not advanced by creating needless confusion about the Spirit's presence in all Christians.

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A Concise Dictionary of Theology

Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia

New York and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991, 268 pp., \$11.95.

Here for once we have a dictionary of theology that really is a dictionary (the place to look up the meaning of a word) rather than an encyclopedia (the place to find lengthy articles on

topics). There are over a thousand entries, at the rate of more than four a page. These are primarily theological, but also included are 'some biblical, catechetical, ethical, historical, liturgical and philosophical terms that theological students will come across sooner or later' (p. 1). People are not included, but there are plenty of 'isms' — Augustinianism, Lutheranism, Pelagianism, Thomism, etc. The twenty-one ecumenical councils accepted by the Roman Catholic Church are all included, as are one or two others. There are extensive references to four sources: the Bible, the *Enchiridion* of Denzinger & Schönmetzer (a collection of doctrinal documents from the whole history of the Roman Catholic Church), the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the 1983 Code of Canon Law.

The authors are both Jesuits and a small minority of the entries are specifically Roman Catholic. But the dictionary is genuinely ecumenical in scope, covering a wide range of Protestant (and Eastern Orthodox) denominations, movements (e.g. Pietism) and doctrines (e.g. *sola scriptura*, imputation). These are all treated in a sympathetic fashion. While the authors are not evangelical, there is little in the volume with which an evangelical would disagree.

Many of the entries are standard theological terms, such as mercy, merit, messiah or ministry. There are also many more obscure terms, such as Neo-Palamism or nomocanon. These are succinctly explained. There are full cross references which are very helpful for those seeking further information and which also make it harder to put the volume down!

For whom will this volume be useful? It will be an invaluable tool for the student when encountering unfamiliar terms. The student who is uncertain of the identity of the Ebionites, Edessa, the Encratites or Epiclesis will quickly find a brief explanation. Even those who are more advanced will find it useful for filling the gaps that remain in their knowledge.

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Puritan Christianity in America. Religion and Life in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts
Allen Carden
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990, 256 pp., \$16.95.

During the last half-century, the sheer number of scholarly works about American Puritans has approached, if not exceeded, the voluminous output of the Puritans themselves. In more recent decades scholars have investigated nearly every imaginable side of Puritan life, examining issues ranging from the cradle (child-rearing practices) to the grave (ways of dying). Employing the tools and methods of quantitative research, literary criticism, myth and ritual, gender, and psycho-history, the Puritans have been portrayed as a complex and often contradictory people who were at once contentious and peaceful, superstitious and highly rational, prudish and prodigal. Why then another work?

According to Allen Carden, these recent efforts to explain the political, social, and psychological dimensions of Puritan life have glossed over Puritanism's driving force. What-

ever one may say about the Puritans, he contends, they were first and foremost a people of the Book. Carden's *bête noire*, however, is not so much the recent scholar but Perry Miller, the Harvard scholar whose mid-century contributions resuscitated the role and reputation of the Puritans in American history. Miller's interests were primarily intellectual; he argued for a Puritan 'mind' — a kind of Puritan in the abstract whose actions were guided by a coherent intellectual system. According to Miller, the Puritan mind was derived from philosophers, churchmen, and logicians. According to Carden, the primary source for the Puritan mind was the Bible.

Following two introductory chapters which sketch out the rise and progress of English Puritanism up to the great migration of the 1630s (and which rely heavily on Edmund Morgan's classic, *The Puritan Dilemma*), chapters 3-5 contain the heart of Carden's argument. Chapter 3, entitled 'The Biblical Basis of the Puritan Way', seeks to demonstrate that the Puritans' 'absolute belief in the Bible and the God of the Bible was the fundamental motivating force behind their worldview and the establishment of New England' (p. 33). Relying heavily upon the works of John Cotton, as well as the father and son duo of Increase and Cotton Mather, Carden concludes that the Reformation principle of *sola scriptura* formed the basis of Puritan religious authority, doctrine and practice. Admittedly, the Puritans interpreted some passages of Scripture 'parochially in light of current attitudes', but 'Nonetheless, the clergy and the faithful of Puritan New England were, perhaps to a degree never surpassed before or since, a people of the Word' (p. 46).

In chapters 4 and 5 — the longest chapters of the book — Carden expands his thesis by examining Puritan theology. He generously quotes the works of Puritan divines in order to demonstrate Puritan fidelity to a biblical (Calvinist) theology. In summary fashion he reviews the biblical foundation for Puritan theological perspectives on human nature, sin, Christ, the covenant(s), salvation, sanctification and eschatology.

A central Puritan theological emphasis which Carden briefly mentions in chapter 4 and then returns to in chapters 5-7 is the primacy of Christ. Contra Miller and others who minimized Puritan Christology, Carden contends that the Reformation doctrine of faith in Christ for salvation (the 'covenant of grace') lay at the core of Puritan belief. 'To the Puritans,' he observes, 'the primary subject of the Bible was Christ and the plan of salvation available through him' (p. 124). Whether one examines the Puritan penchant for a typological reading of Scripture or the recurring themes in Puritan sermons, the central message is Christ and his plan of salvation.

In what is the most original contribution to this study, Carden draws from his own earlier research in which he analysed the texts and themes of some 500 Puritan sermons. His analysis revealed that Puritan sermon texts were more often drawn from the NT (58%) than from the OT (42%). As well, the most often recurring sermon theme was that of sin, followed by calls to holy living, calls to salvation, expositions on the person and work of Christ, and admonitions on family relations. Furthermore, Carden's investigations dispel the notion that Puritan sermons chosen from OT texts accentuated a God of wrath, while sermons from NT texts portrayed a God of love and mercy. 'A comparison of sermon texts', he concludes, 'indicates that clear-cut differences between Old and New Testament preaching are hard to find' (p. 122).

Chapters 8–12 survey other important facets of Puritan life: the community, work and vocation, government, the family, and education. Carden emphasizes that each of these institutions was informed by biblical principles. In his final chapter he discusses the profound influence of Puritanism upon subsequent American history. While he finds much to commend in Puritanism from an evangelical perspective, he notes how the Puritans were culturally myopic in their treatment of the native American, not to mention intolerant of other religious groups, notably Quakers and Catholics.

On the whole, Carden has successfully redressed the imbalanced portrait of the Puritans presented by Miller. He persuasively argues that if we are fully to understand the Puritans, we must see them as thorough-going biblicists. At the same time, however, his argument gives pause, for just as Miller built his case upon published sermons, Carden has followed suit. Thus, while he challenges Miller's construct of the Puritan mind, he all but replaces it with an ideal type of his own – the biblical Puritan. Clearly, Puritan clergy and other leaders aspired to a biblically-based theology which permeated all areas of life. But there was another side to Puritanism, a popular side, which Perry Miller completely ignored and which Carden gives only passing attention. The recent works of David Hall, Jon Butler and Carol Karlsen point to the persistence of magic, occult practices, astrology, folk lore, etc. alongside of and, in some cases, incorporated into, Puritan belief. Their works complicate our understanding not so much of the theological convictions of Puritan ministers themselves, but of their overall influence upon the New England populace at large. Hall, Butler and Karlsen caution us: Puritanism in real life was not as neat and clean as Carden describes it.

This drawback aside, Allen Carden has written a very accessible book, appropriate for educated lay people or for an introductory college-level course (at a Christian college). He reminds us that the Puritans' central defining feature is to be found in their devotion to biblical Christianity. However much the Puritans failed – which by their own admission they most certainly did; however much they mixed the gold with the dross – which by the mere fact of living in the world no Christian community can avoid, the Puritans provide an enduring vision of a godly community committed to making every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

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Women, Freedom, and Calvin.
The 1983 Annie Kinkead
Warfield Lectures
Jane Dempsey Douglass
 Philadelphia: Westminster Press,
 1985, 155 pp., \$11.95.

This review was held over from Tony Lane's earlier survey of recent Calvin literature because of its relevance to this symposium issue. Ed.

This is a fascinating study of one particular aspect of Calvin's thought – his attitude towards the Pauline injunction that women should be silent in church. The subject is put in a broad context. The first chapter reviews the three parts of Christian freedom as expounded in 3:19 of the *Institutes*, together with an introductory discussion of the question of *adiaphora*

or 'things indifferent'. The author claims (pp. 9, 21) that this chapter covers briefly the first of the three parts of Christian freedom (justification by grace alone), but the coverage is so brief that it can easily be missed and much more space is devoted to *adiaphora* (the third of the three parts). This is also the theme for the next four chapters. Chapter 2 puts it in the context of Calvin's concept of *order*. Chapter 3 tackles the central question of women's freedom within church order. The next two chapters set Calvin's views in their historical context – the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (ch. 4) and the Reformation (ch. 5). These chapters are helpful in showing the extent of Calvin's distinctiveness. The final chapter considers the second part of Christian freedom, freedom in willing obedience to the law.

The topic chosen is an excellent one. The issue of *adiaphora* is relevant to the church in every generation, and most definitely in this generation. This particular example is a good one because, as the author observes (p. 22), most of us do not get excited today about candles on the altar or the eating of eggs during Lent, so it is hard for us to enter with enthusiasm into the Reformation debates. But the issue of women's role in the church most certainly does stir up both passion and debate today. This is also a good topic because Calvin's attitude is unexpectedly 'liberal'. I have to admit that, having studied Calvin on and off for twenty years, I had never noticed that Calvin links women's silence with matters such as kneeling in prayer or the covering of the head that may in some circumstances be put aside. My embarrassment, and that of those like me, at having for so long missed this point is lessened by the author's confession that she too had for a long time failed to notice it (p. 22).

The approach adopted in the book is good. The author makes her own views clear and points out the support that Calvin offers to those in favour of women's ministry. But she also acknowledges the limited nature of this support and warns against seeking 'to make Calvin a hero in the matter of women's ordination' (pp. 9f.). The presentation is objective and scholarly, with the aim of ascertaining Calvin's view as accurately as possible.

How does the author understand Calvin? There are two key theses which can be noted and each of which needs some qualification. First, what for Calvin is the status of Paul's limitation on women's freedom? The author has examined the teaching of the *Institutes* on the place of women and especially 4:10:29-32, tracing the development of this passage through the different editions. In this passage Calvin links women's silence and women's head covering with practical matters such as kneeling in prayer, burial rituals and fixed days for celebrating the Lord's Supper. The author has also examined Calvin's teaching in his commentaries and sermons, especially on 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. This is compared with what Calvin says about the actual role of women as recorded in the OT and NT. Calvin's teaching is seen in the context of his views about 'freedom in God's order', as expounded in chapter 2. The author concludes that women's silence is, for Calvin, not a matter of divine and eternal law that binds the conscience. It is, rather, historically conditioned and time-bound apostolic advice, a matter of human historical judgments belonging to the realm of church traditions. It is a human law relating to human governance, to the political life of the church (pp. 22, 46f., 51, 62, 81, 88, 121).

This interpretation is broadly correct, but needs some qualification. The author notes of church laws that 'insofar as they derive from the Word they are not to be regarded as mere

human traditions, since "they give the impression of being approved, as it were, from the mouth of Christ himself" and help us determine what is right' (pp. 53f.). Calvin 'feels the need to point out that church decorum should be patterned after the biblical view of proper order, and that Paul's advice, because it is recorded in Scripture, lends the tradition of women's subordination in the church a kind of divine approval which should not be lightly disregarded' (p. 64). Yet the author still tries to find in Calvin a contrast between 'the timeless authority of the teachings of Christ' and 'the time-bound and provisional advice of the apostles' (p. 32, cf. p. 64). But, as the quotation above from pages 53f. indicates, it is wrong to suggest such a dichotomy between Christ and his apostles. There is however a contrast here which can be compared to that which Calvin makes between the moral law, which is eternally binding, and the ceremonial or judicial laws which can change. In conclusion, the author is right to show that for Calvin women's silence is not a matter of divine and eternal law that can never be broken. She is wrong however to reduce it to the level of a historically-conditioned human law, as in the passages quoted at the end of the previous paragraph. The two passages quoted at the beginning of this paragraph are not given their full weight. The implications of this appear in her second thesis.

From the first thesis it follows that the requirement for women to remain silent is not, for Calvin, absolute. It is an area where the church is free to change its mode of life (pp. 9, 42). But on what grounds? It can be changed where circumstances change (pp. 50, 62, 81f., 91) or as culture changes (pp. 36, 50, 88). It can be changed if the needs of the church change (pp. 88, 91) and if the change will serve the edification of the church (pp. 46, 50, 62). As these terms would suggest, the author feels that for Calvin the equality of men and women which is present in the spiritual life can be increasingly manifested in the common life of the church (p. 81). Calvin is open to major change in the future (p. 121). Calvin's word to women who preached in the sixteenth century would be, the author surmises, that 'greater freedom for women in the church is a movement in the direction of the equality of the kingdom that will come someday – but not yet' (p. 107).

The author is certainly right that for Calvin women's silence is not an absolute law. There are examples to the contrary both in the Bible and in church history. But on what grounds did women exercise such a ministry, according to Calvin? The author states this clearly. Calvin distinguishes between the 'common order' which God wishes normally to be observed (women's silence) and that which God does in a 'strange fashion' (calling a woman to teach or rule). The latter happens in exceptional 'confused' circumstances (pp. 55f.). It happens because the Spirit is free to break through the common order, and it can be expected to happen in the future too (p. 57, cf. pp. 62f.). But it must be noted that those women who taught were called by the Holy Spirit, who is free from the law. 'This unusual call by the Spirit "does not conflict with the perpetual and accustomed governance" to which God wishes us to be bound' (p. 57). Likewise, the author suggests that for Calvin, preaching by women in the early years of the Reformation was 'permissible during an "emergency" situation but no longer tolerated when the new order was instituted' (pp. 104f.).

The author has correctly observed that for Calvin the rule of women's silence can in some circumstances be waived. This is a significant discovery. But even a cursory comparison of

the grounds given by Calvin for such an exception (as expounded by the author and set out in the previous paragraph) and the grounds suggested by the author herself (as set out in the paragraph before) reveals a significant difference in emphasis. Calvin saw this as a rule which can be waived by God in his freedom in exceptional circumstances. The author sees it as a historically-conditioned, culture-bound rule which the church can in the future set aside. That for Calvin it most certainly was not.

It is here that the significance of the first thesis can be seen. If women's silence were purely a historically-conditioned, human, political law, it could indeed be set aside. But it is also part of the teaching of Scripture. This can be seen from *Institutes* 4:10:29-31. Calvin does indeed list together ceremonies such as women's head covering and kneeling in prayer and matters of discipline such as women's silence and set hours for worship. But he is careful to point out which of these are sanctioned by Paul. He goes on to state that he approves 'only those human constitutions which are founded upon God's authority, drawn from Scripture and, therefore, wholly divine'. It is in his sacred oracles that the Master is to be heard. God did not wish to prescribe what we should do in this area and has left us scope to change things according to the customs of each nation and age. But he has given us general rules. 'Traditional practices' can be changed and abrogated. On the other hand, women's head covering and silence (i.e. the scriptural ordinances) can be waived in specific situations of need. Calvin does not suggest that the scriptural ordinances can be changed and abrogated in the way that traditions can.

The same picture emerges from his commentary on 1 Corinthians 14. Paul's teaching in this passage is 'the undoubted Word of God'. It concerns administrative arrangements and so does not bind consciences. There is not the same compulsion on us to observe them as with God's commandments. But all that Paul says here is agreeable to the will of God. It is not an inviolable law but a useful form and one not to be ignored (v. 37). The Lord has given us freedom regarding outward rites – but not an unlimited, unbridled freedom. He has put railings round our freedom, he has restricted it so that it is only from his Word that we can decide what is right (v. 40).

Where does this leave us? As the author has rightly shown us, for Calvin Paul's injunctions concerning women's head covering and silence are seen as administrative arrangements and are not to be compared with the moral law. They can be set aside when the occasion warrants it. But at the same time, they are scriptural injunctions and not just human traditions. They do not bind the conscience in that other more pressing considerations can take precedence. But they are not human traditions that can be changed and abrogated in different historical or cultural circumstances.

The author has rightly shown us that Calvin is surprisingly flexible and 'liberal' on the issue of women's silence. She goes too far, however, and falls into the trap of seeking to 'modernize' him when she suggests that he sees the principle as one that can be dropped as culture changes.

Finally, attention should be drawn to one irritating feature of the book. In the endnotes, passages in Calvin's works (other than the *Institutes*) are regularly referred to solely by the page in the *Opera Calvini*. Thus a typical reference is 'Comm. John, C.O. 47, 92'. This is intensely annoying if one wishes to trace the quotation but does not happen to have the 59

volumes of the *Opera Calvini* to hand. Why could the reference not read 'Comm. John 6:22', say, which would be far more useful?

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Man and Woman in Christian Perspective

Werner Neuer

London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990, 224 pp., £7.99.

Originally published as *Mann und Frau in Christlicher Sicht*, Brunnen Verlag, Giessen & Basle, 4th edition, 1988.

At first sight this book promises to be useful to anyone concerned to think through, from a Christian perspective, the issues raised by current trends affecting the place of men and women in society. The precis on the back cover leads the reader to expect a balanced, critical and pastorally sensitive handling of a thorny topic. Gordon Wenham, in his translator's Preface, commends this book as 'a compact, readable, yet scholarly, treatment of the biblical texts relating to sexuality' (p. 10). Many readers will be disappointed.

Amongst the aims of his study, Dr Neuer includes an analysis of 'the issues raised by feminists both inside and outside the church' (p. 12). In fact, the vast diversity of feminist literature is dismissed in less than two sides of hostile comment; very little effort is made to assess the validity of different so-called feminist concerns (action against the prohibition of abortion is brushed aside in the same breath as protest against rape, p. 18); and a 'Christian feminist theology' is declared simply 'impossible' (p. 160).

The author also promises a presentation of what human and social sciences know about gender differences. Again, the result is one-sided and predetermined by the intention of illustrating that men and women are fundamentally different in nature and therefore have different tasks. We are told that, whereas fatherhood involves the fleeting physical contribution of man in sexual intercourse, 'motherhood' is 'woman's destiny' (p. 35) – a 'lengthy' and 'comprehensive' role, 'arranging what the man has acquired for her or she has received from him'. While woman is created for more passive, receptive roles, man is equipped for 'remodelling his environment' (p. 38), for leadership and exercise of authority in marriage, family, society and church (p. 55). There is little recognition of the widespread acknowledgment of the crucial role of fatherhood in the shared task of parenting. Nor is there any admission of the fact that a world in which men have had almost unlimited scope for 'mastering the environment' is now known to be far from healthy.

As Neuer outlines the main purpose of his study, it is 'to consider completely afresh the biblical view of male and female and to attempt by paying careful attention to Scripture to discover what is God's will for man and woman in the present' (p. 11). Those who have not read much on this subject may find something fresh in this book, and certainly Neuer presents his interpretations clearly and comprehensively. However, there is now such a wealth of literature available on the topic of biblical teaching about the nature and roles of the sexes, that many will question the value of the publication in English of yet another book which covers old ground and does so rather superficially.

We are told by the translator that Dr Neuer specializes in systematic theology rather than biblical exegesis. This might account for the unfortunate fact that his interpretations of OT and NT material contain some inaccurate or misleading remarks. For example, he claims that, in Genesis 2:19-20, 'it is no coincidence that Adam, not Eve, is entrusted with naming the animal kingdom', because naming was an exercise of sovereignty which God intended man, not woman, to wield (p. 71). When this claim is tested against the rest of Scripture, it is shown to be erroneous; of the several references to the naming of children in the OT, the mother exercised this right in more than half the instances. Strangely, Neuer himself later admits this fact (p. 83), which undermines the case which he tries to build on the Genesis narrative.

Again, he cites the reference in Genesis 2:18 to woman being created as a 'helper' for man – and it is clear that he sees her as a complementary but subordinate figure, supporting man in his 'headship' role as his 'helpmeet', the modest wife and mother of his children, 'who accompanies his public activity with quiet peaceableness' (p. 134, cf. pp. 69, 147). Neuer seems to have overlooked the fact that the Hebrew word used for 'helper' in Genesis 2:18 does not, in fact, denote a 'subordinate assistant': of its twenty-one appearances in the OT, fifteen refer to God as 'helper' to humanity (e.g. Ex. 18:4; Dt. 33:7; Ps. 33:20), which precludes an interpretation of the word as an assistant of 'back-room', subordinate status.

Moving on to the NT, his exegesis of passages like 1 Corinthians 11:3-16 does not do justice to the intricacies of the text acknowledged by well-informed commentators. His suggestion that this passage deals only with women praying and prophesying in small house groups, not with the 'public worship' of the church (p. 118), creates a dichotomy which is out of place within what we know of the circumstances of primitive Christianity. Also contributing to a distorted picture of the place of women in the early church is his description of Phoebe as a 'deaconess', and his failure to highlight such texts as Philippians 4:3, where St Paul greets women as his 'fellow-workers' in the gospel.

Overall, many will find frustrating the narrow conservatism which leads Neuer, for instance, to synthesize the Genesis creation narratives, and to attempt to find a single, harmonized view of woman's role uniting the different NT writings. He continually refers to 'the biblical view' of the sexes – as if there is one straightforward, monochrome picture of the natures and functions of men and women running throughout Scripture. He writes about the organization of 'the early church' – as if there was one uniform pattern of church order put neatly into place in the entire nascent church, not taking into account the rich diversity and differing patterns of ministry which the NT itself reflects.

Perhaps the most worrying section of Neuer's study is that in which he purports to find the basis for his views about man and woman within 'the nature of God as it is disclosed in the biblical revelation' (pp. 152ff.). He states categorically that biblical descriptions of God as father and bridegroom show 'that the masculine terminology of the Bible is based on the nature of God, whereas feminine terms are unsuited to designating the divine nature' (p. 158). He says that the ascription of motherhood to God 'introduces ideas into the concept of God that are completely foreign to his nature'; it is a modern feminist fad which must be rejected (pp. 155, 19). Such a cursory dismissal betrays a sad ignorance of the rich vein of spirituality running throughout church

history — from Clement of Alexandria to the Greek Orthodox theologian Gregory Palamas, from Anselm of Canterbury to Julian of Norwich — which uses female pictures and speaks in feminine terms of all three Persons of the Trinity.

Neuer maintains that God cannot be termed 'mother' because 'the basic maternal functions of conception, pregnancy and birth, which are essentially passive in character, may not be ascribed to God without injuring his divinity' (p. 161). By contrast, many reputable biblical scholars agree that there is significant feminine divine imagery in Scripture — for example, God as a pregnant woman with birth pangs, Isaiah 42:14; God as a comforting mother, Isaiah 66:13; Jesus as a mother hen with her little ones, Luke 13:34. With incredible insensitivity, both to the meaning of the text and to the nature of motherhood, Neuer dismisses such verses: 'these maternal features in God are parts of his paternal love. . . . The motherly side of God . . . is of course part of his fatherliness' (pp. 156, 161). This insistence on the maleness of God rings theological alarm bells, since it ascribes sexuality to God. Most theologians would want to say that this is a reversion to paganism. In the Scriptures, rightly interpreted, sexuality belongs to creaturely existence, and the question of God's sexual differentiation is totally out of place, for the Creator embraces but transcends all maleness and femaleness.

Yet this is not the only alarming aspect of Neuer's view; for if God is male, then male is God. Indeed, Neuer states that 'the masculine-shaped picture of God in Scripture has a

necessary consequence that man in his maleness is in a special way the reflection and representative of God. . . .' (p. 158). 'The man may be said to reflect God or Christ more completely than the woman does, whereas she more clearly portrays creation and the church. . . .' (p. 160). According to Neuer, it follows from this that leadership in society and, especially, in the church must be exercised by men; women who preach and teach where men are present are usurping men's rightful authority as God's representatives, and women 'priests' are an anathema (pp. 172ff.). Christian women should shun active leadership roles and instead aspire to follow the example of Mary's passive faith which consists completely in 'receiving, in letting happen what God is doing within her' (p. 171). Not only does such a dictate neglect the important fact that men as well as women need to have both active and passive elements within their faith, it also denies the work of the Holy Spirit. Countless churches the world over bear witness to the ways in which the Spirit has empowered women as well as men for active ministry, glorifying God and edifying believers.

In sum, the argument of this book depends upon the 'equal but different' theory. In other words, Neuer believes that it is possible to affirm the goodness of sexuality, including female sexuality, and to affirm the equality of men and women, whilst at the same time insisting on strict differentiation of their respective natures and roles. In order to defend this theory, he has to say that those passages in Scripture which seem to proclaim the abolition of discriminatory values and roles built upon

sexual distinctions actually have another meaning. Thus he contends that Galatians 3:27-28 refers only to racial, social and sexual differences 'before God (that is in respect of salvation)' (p. 109); such verses do not really have practical consequences for the roles of human beings on this earth. This interpretation, which assumes dichotomy between social order and life *Coram Deo*, is not new. It has long been used to give biblical justification to, for example, the continuance of slavery and the perpetuation of apartheid, as well as the refusal of emancipation for women. It is tragic to see a Christian writer reiterating this theory which reduces to an impractical pietism St Paul's passionate advocacy of the freedom which Christ offers.

In fact, history reveals that this theory does not work out in practice. Neuer admits that throughout church history there have been repeated denials of the equality of men and women and of the goodness of sexuality, especially female sexuality; however, the insistence on the strict differentiation of the nature and role of the sexes has remained, generally, uncontested. Only in the twentieth century, says Neuer, have the differences between the sexes — and their consequent differentiation of tasks within church and society — been rejected, evidenced by such sinful phenomena as 'women priests' and 'working mothers'. The fact that this is also the time in which church and society have begun to reaffirm sexuality and the equality of the sexes both speaks for itself and reveals the fallacy behind Neuer's argument.

Mary E. Barr, Cambridge.

BOOK NOTES

The Apostolic Fathers: Second Edition

Trans. J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, ed. and rev. Michael W. Holmes

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989, xvi + 347 pp., \$17.95.

The Lightfoot translation of *The Apostolic Fathers* has remained a standard for over a century. Now its value is enhanced even more as it has been revised in three major respects — the archaic English has been updated, the textual evidence has been re-evaluated and different variants occasionally adopted, and entirely new sets of introductions, bibliographies and textual footnotes have been provided.

Topical Analysis of the Bible

Walter A. Elwell (ed)

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991, xiv + 894 pp., \$39.95.

Elwell has surely established himself as evangelicalism's leading active editor of biblical and theological reference works. With the *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* and the *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (and others) already to his credit, and a new volume on biblical theology under way, he has now produced the most detailed and helpful topical Bible on the market. Using the NIV, biblical references are arranged under an extensive list of categories roughly equivalent to the standard sequence of a system-

atic theology. The book, however, is not for the myopic; the print borders on the microscopic!

The Complete Biblical Library, Vols. 1, 8 and 11

Thoralf Gilbrant (intl. ed.)

Springfield, MO: The Complete Biblical Library, 1986, 1989, 1990; 416, 604, 679 pp., \$29.95 per volume.

These are the inaugural instalments of an intriguing new series, projected to include 16 volumes. The first is a lavishly illustrated harmony of the gospels; the next nine, a series of commentaries covering the whole New Testament; and the last six, a set of Greek-English dictionaries. These give entries approximating the scope of Eerdmans' new *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* and include additional concordance-like information. The former appear in parallel columns with a tagged Greek text, which includes a parsing of every word. All three of these first volumes are handsomely bound, marvellously illustrated with colour pictures, charts and diagrams, and reflect the goal of the editorial team to combine in one series the best of all the typical Bible reference tools. But there are important drawbacks. The series, which seems heavily Scandinavian in origin, and Pentecostal in contributorship, has only a handful of *bona fide* New Testament scholars as writers. All articles are unsigned. The Greek text is not the Nestle-Aland but a modified *Textus Receptus*

(Stephanus plus variants). The major English text is the AV. The comments on Galatians through Philemon, while consistently conservative, break no new ground and assiduously avoid taking stands or exploring in any detail all of the most interesting or controversial exegetical issues. The idea of one series which will do it all is admirable, but this series will not do it, though its high-tech presentation will make it attractive to many, and it does collect together an impressive wealth of material into one place. A later series of Old Testament volumes is also projected.

Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism

John Piper and Wayne Grudem (eds.)

Wheaton: Crossway, 1991, xxviii + 566 pp., \$19.95 pbk.

In the US these days, two large evangelical organizations compete for the last word on the vexing issues of male/female relationships in the home and the church. The egalitarians call themselves Christians for Biblical Equality. The hierarchicalists have banded together in response to form the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. The latter group have now published the most detailed, recent tome in print in defence of functional subordination of women in the family and in ministry. Articles cover all the major texts and exegetical issues, practical questions of implementation

and collateral evidence from the biological and social sciences. Unfortunately for all their effort, these traditionalists have produced little to advance the debate, although it is helpful to have treatments of this many related topics collected together in one place.

The Agony of Deceit: What Some TV Preachers are Really Teaching
Michael Horton (ed.)

Chicago: Moody, 1990, 284 pp., \$12.95.

Televangelism and American Culture: The Business of Popular Religion

Quentin J. Schulze

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991, 264 pp., \$16.95.

It is not often that a Christian book receives a full-page spread in the religion section of a major, secular news magazine. It is extraordinary when that book is authored by one or more of America's most respected evangelical writers. Yet on 5 March 1990, *Time* devoted precisely such a spread to *The Agony of Deceit*, a sign of how the debacle of scandals among our televangelists continues to fascinate the American media and people, not least because it seems to discredit what is often taken as representative of conservative Christianity more broadly.

Horton's volume collects together essays from largely Reformed writers (best known are the names of R.C. Sproul, Walter Martin and C. Everett Koop) who analyse the theology of numerous prominent televangelists and find it heretical. Some TV preachers echo a Gnostic or docetic view of interpreting the Scriptures (the Spirit gives them 'private' revelations for which they may not be held accountable). Others preach that people can become gods. Many have a deficient view of sin and justification by faith. Unfortunately, at times this volume treats views which fall within the historic Arminian and Wesleyan traditions as equally heretical as the more outlandish claims of the 'electronic church'.

Quentin Schulze, one of the contributors to the Horton anthology, has produced a superior analysis of American televangelism. Instead of focusing primarily on potential doctrinal aberrations, he ranges widely from Christian television's faith in technology to the growth of personality cults, the ever-present demands for money, and the lure of experience-centred programming over substantive discussion of issues, including biblical and theological studies. In perhaps his most intriguing chapter, 'the new sorcery', he focuses on the powerful residue of pagan superstition which infuses much popular American religion.

Schulze helpfully points at each step along the way to the large segments of grass-roots Christianity in the US which already agree with the message of the televangelists. In many ways, then, the electronic media simply reflect American culture more generally. He explodes the myth that all this programming has had any significant evangelistic impact; non-Christians seldom watch it at all and then usually ridicule it when they do.

Both Horton's and Schulze's books conclude with helpful suggestions for more critically analysing televangelism and producing more scripturally sound alternatives. Both

books are well worth reading, but if you read Schulze first, you probably don't need to read Horton as well.

Interpreting the Pauline Epistles

Thomas R. Schreiner

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990, 167 pp., \$8.95.

Here is the third slim volume to appear in Baker's *Guides to New Testament Exegesis*, following volumes on general introduction and the synoptic gospels. Schreiner continues the attractive format and high standard of the series, though he combines general and specific topics in ways which suggest that the series editor, Scot McKnight, has not thought out in advance what matters should be covered in each volume. Thus distinctively Pauline concerns (theology and significance) combine with broader epistolary matters (the genre of a letter) with more general biblical issues, illustrated with reference to Paul's epistles (textual, historical and grammatical criticism and the composition of outlines). One wonders which of these will or will not appear in subsequent volumes, and whether any single volume will be adequate to introduce the relevant issues for a course just on that body of New Testament literature. Nevertheless, I stand by my endorsement on the back of the book: 'most helpful are the author's numerous illustrations, up-to-date and well-chosen annotated bibliographies, and even-handed consideration of interpretive options.'

Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology? Reflections of a Bultmannian Turned Evangelical

Eta Linnemann

Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990, 169 pp., \$9.95.

Every evangelical theological student studying in a university or otherwise pluralistic context should read this remarkable book. Linnemann, well known in the 1960s for her work on Jesus' parables, was a disciple of Ernst Fuchs and the new hermeneutic. Finding the German academic scene increasingly ideologically bankrupt, she first became an alcoholic but later had a charismatic conversion experience. She has now repudiated all her former writings and even encourages people who own her books to burn them! 'On fire for the Lord', instead, she teaches in her retirement at an Indonesian Bible institute.

The book reads like a typical tirade of someone so burned by her background that she can no longer affirm anything good in it. As Bob Yarborough, translator and editor, explains in his introduction, her work must be read against her experiences with some of the most extreme forms of German scepticism and academic prejudice. But simply because it is so atypical for such a conversion-plus-tirade to emanate from radical continental scholarship, her story becomes that much more fascinating and heartening. Significant parallels do exist, even if with lesser degrees of severity, in liberal academic circles throughout the world. If most evangelicals will not choose to follow Linnemann in 'throwing the baby out with the

bath water', they will nevertheless recognize here important pitfalls in the critical study of Scripture which they neglect to their peril.

Colossians and Philemon

Murray J. Harris

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991, xxix + 310 pp., \$21.95.

Here is the first instalment in a projected twenty-volume collection of 'Exegetical Guides to the Greek New Testament' (all to be written by Harris). The former Warden of Tyndale House has produced a kind of condensed commentary which proceeds through these epistles paragraph by paragraph, presenting the latest UBS Greek text, a structural analysis, phrase-by-phrase comments on significant issues of vocabulary, textual variants and grammar (including parsings), a translation and expanded paraphrase, a list of topics for further study and various suggestions for preaching the text. The primary target audience includes students and pastors who have studied Greek enough to understand all of Harris' explanations but are not sufficiently confident in their own abilities to come up on their own with the type of information Harris supplies.

The project is ambitious and the first volume exemplary. The sole outstanding question which remains is if it will be widely enough used to justify the continuance of the series. The information is so densely packaged that it takes considerable effort to glean from the book the key exegetical insights which most preachers will want. Those committed to using the Greek to this extent will probably still value more traditional commentaries more highly; those weak in their Greek may well find even Harris' digests too daunting. One can also envisage this as a project never completed due to the sheer time each volume requires, unless Harris or Baker decide to spread the authorship around some. This strategy might be desirable even if Harris does live to a ripe old age. No scholar, however well intentioned, can avoid reflecting certain perspectives to the exclusion of others, if he tries to comment in this much detail on the entire NT!

Building Your New Testament Greek Vocabulary

Robert E. van Voorst

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990, xii + 110 pp., \$7.95.

Designed as a supplement to Metzger's *Lexical Aids*, this little book arranges selected NT vocabulary both by word frequency and cognates. One can thus learn, for example, *akoē* (24X), *eisakouō* (5X), *hypakouō* (21X), and *hypakoē* (15X) all at the same time as one learns *akouō* (430X) as representative of a family with one or more words occurring 400 or more times. The result is not nearly as comprehensive in mastery of vocabulary as if one learned all of Metzger, but the arrangement suggests that the words which are learned will be memorized faster and be retained longer. Front- and end-matter include brief principles for Greek word-building and charts of principal parts and numbers.

Craig Blomberg, Denver.

BOOK REVIEWS

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| D.J.A. Clines <i>What Does Eve Do to Help? And Other Readerly Questions to the Old Testament</i> (JSOTS 94) | (Walter Moberly) |
| Gerard Van Groningen <i>Messianic Revelation in the Old Testament</i> | (Willem A. VanGemeren) |
| Ben Witherington III <i>The Christology of Jesus</i> | (Royce Gordon Gruenler) |
| D.R.A. Hare <i>The Son of Man Tradition</i> | (Chrys C. Caragounis) |
| Glenn N. Davies <i>Faith and Obedience in Romans: A Study in Romans 1-4</i> (JSNTSS 39) | (Peter M. Head) |
| Scott J. Hafemann <i>Suffering and Ministry in the Spirit. Paul's Defense of His Ministry in II Corinthians 2:14-3:3</i> | (Linda L. Belleville) |
| Richard N. Longenecker <i>Galatians</i> (Word Biblical Commentary 41) | (T. David Gordon) |
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| Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (eds) <i>Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology</i> | (David Williams) |
| J.B. Webster (ed.) <i>Eberhard Jüngel: Theological Essays</i> | (Trevor Hart) |
| J. Rodman Williams <i>Renewal Theology: Salvation, the Holy Spirit, and Christian Living</i> | (Arden C. Autry) |
| Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia <i>A Concise Dictionary of Theology</i> | (Tony Lane) |
| Allen Carden <i>Puritan Christianity in America. Religion and Life in Seventeenth-Century Massachusetts</i> | (David W. Kling) |
| Jane Dempsey Douglass <i>Women, Freedom, and Calvin. The 1983 Annie Kinkead Warfield Lectures</i> | (Tony Lane) |
| Werner Neuer <i>Man and Woman in Christian Perspective</i> | (Mary E. Barr) |

built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus
himself as the chief cornerstone
(Ephesians 2:20)

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