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ARTICLES

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BEAUTY of expression in keeping with the nature of the Bible

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THE NIV INCLUSIVE NEW TESTAMENT PSALMS AND PROVERBS

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MATTHEW 9:6

Fasting

men

16 "When you fast, do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show to others they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Treasures in Heaven

serve

he

serve

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 "No one can be a slave to two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot be a slave to both God and Money.

Do not Worry

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. 29 Yet I

627 Or single cubit to your height

tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Judging Others

7 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. 2 For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

3 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in someone else's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

4 How can you say, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? 5 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye.

6 "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and then turn and tear you to pieces.

Ask, Seek, Knock

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, everyone who seeks finds, and everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

9 "Which of you, your children ask for bread, will give them a stone? 10 Or they ask for a fish, will give them a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how

your brother's

he

him

his son

him

he asks

him

THE NIV INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE EDITION

provides a clear and balanced inclusive language text. It is faithful to the original language texts while being accessible to today's reader in a world where language is constantly developing.

- Where the original languages are considered to refer to humanity in general or to a person of either gender but do so using masculine terminology, revisions have been made to restore the intention of the original texts
- Patriarchal language has been revised where possible without distorting the intention of the original languages
- God's own self-descriptions remain masculine
- Satan and angels in the Bible are masculine and are translated as such

In practice, the translators of this NIV revision have used certain phrases and translation tools in common usage in other inclusive language Bible translations:

- Singular sometimes becomes plural, 'he' becomes 'they', 'his' becomes 'theirs'
- 'He' also becomes 'you' or 'one' or is carefully omitted
- 'Brothers' is translated in a number of ways: 'brothers and sisters', 'believers' or 'friends'
- 'Man' is translated variously: 'people', 'mere mortals', 'human being', 'person' or is carefully omitted
- Masculine terms become non-specific: for example 'craftsmen' becomes 'skilled workers', 'fathers' becomes 'ancestors'

SEE THE DIFFERENCE FOR YOURSELF . . .

NON- INCLUSIVE

Mark 8:34

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Luke 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'

Acts 14:14-15

Barnabas and Paul ... rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you.

Galatians 1:11

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man.

Psalms 8:4-5

What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

INCLUSIVE

Mark 8:34

Those who would come after me, must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Luke 4:4

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'People do not live on bread alone.'

Acts 14:14-15

Barnabas and Paul ... rushed out into the crowd, shouting: "Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human like you.

Galatians 1:11

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. I did not receive it from any human source.

Psalms 8:4-5

What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

Sexist Language and the Alternative Service Book

The Alternative Service Book is the Product of careful work to bring the liturgy of the Church of England into step with our times in the best way possible. It is curious, then, that an enormous area of that task has been ignored. It is admittedly an area which some call trivial - yet churches throughout the world are becoming sensitive to its significance. A liturgy full of exclusive, (sexist), language reflects an unjust society in an unjust church, and militates against the ability of women to feel themselves fully included in Christian life.

Anyone paying serious attention to language in any context will realise that the role played by "mere" words in forming as well as expressing our view of the world is far from trivial. Therefore, the words chosen to express our relationship with God, and with one another as God's people, vitally affect the reality of those relationships whether or not we are always conscious of the fact when the words have become very familiar. Certainly not every woman in church challenges the pressure to identify herself as one of the "sons" in the image of a male God, and to seek to love her "fellow men".

Yet research proves that the word "man" used to describe an "average" human being - the so-called "generic man" - in fact causes user and hearer to image a male human being, thus implying that women are atypically human; outside the norm. Further, the fact that the word has two possible interpretations means that women have in every case to establish whether their inclusion is intended. As Dale Spender says in her book, "Man Made Language", "No man needs to seek further information to establish whether men are included in a reference such as, 'love is important for women' for if men were intended to be encompassed the statement would be, 'love is important for men'". The use of 'man' and 'he' to refer also to a woman only creates difficulties for women - which is probably why linguists have never seriously addressed this problem." Moreover, many bible passages used in worship, and much liturgy based on them, retain the word "man" as translation of the Greek "anthropos" which emphatically and unambiguously means a human being or person. Equally, words such as "sons" or "brothers" are unequivocally male, yet women are expected to identify with them in church.

Choosing language for God - make no mistake - is never a simple word game. It concerns theology on a number of levels, and has caused us, who have been involved with this issue for some time, to face deeper theological questions than even we expected in the course of researching this paper. Possibly, some of our thoughts may seem shocking, as if we intend throwing out a lot of babies with a very little bath-water, to the many who say, "I don't think of God as male or female, I just like to call Him Father." It is, however, imperative, to us, to challenge the limited language before we can honestly say we are challenging the limited concept. This remains true, though we are aware both that no language is fully adequate to describe any human encounter with the divine, and that much which we feel to be sexist has in the past been of great value, and for good reason.

We started out by making detailed notes, working through the ASB text, and suggesting possible, though often imperfect, improvements. That work could still be written up, if anyone is interested in reading it, but is impossibly long and repetitive - we found a great deal to challenge. These are therefore more general notes on the kind of things which disturb us, both throughout the ASB, and in more particular contexts.

The ASB, of course, includes a new Lectionary, and a new translation of the Psalter, and these we haven't looked at in enormous detail. This is because huge tasks of scholarship with the original texts are involved. We don't believe - given the difference in translations, and other available information - that any one text of the Bible is perfect and sacrosanct. Many parts of the Bible embody the sexism of their respective ages, and most modern translators, in using generic "men", embody that of ours. Simpler changes can and should be made by the readers themselves; beyond them is a whole further area of study on feminism and the Bible, some of it already in print. Some questions about the choice of readings here remain, and we'll come to those - but not the text.

We did in fact consider the Canticles in Morning and Evening Prayer, and decided that Psalmody was a very difficult area. We have unbounded respect for the work on the Psalter itself. Unfortunately there remains a lot of sexism in amongst their immediate and beauty, and because of the style of the poetry, suggesting simple alternatives to existing words in existing passages doesn't always work - sometimes divilous tactics of juggling with word order, or turning a phrase into the passive, are involved. We were often to be heard mumbling, "Oh, let's throw this prayer out and write a new one" as we wrestled with syntax. However, here are some of the words and phrases which troubled us most frequently:-

LANGUAGE FOR PEOPLE

"Generic" man, men and mankind can usually be adjusted simply by changing to a person, people or humanity. Sometimes "a human being" sounds better. In expressions such as "all men" the "men" can often be dropped, thus - "Christ died for all". The statement that "Christ" came as a man" needs changing to "came as a human" since that is its emphasis.

Examples

"for us men and for our salvation" (Nicene creed) to:-
"for us and for our salvation".

"such good things as pass man's understanding" (Collect, Last Sunday after Pentecost) to:- "Such good things as pass human understanding".

"O God the creator and preserver of all mankind, we pray for men of every race" (General Intercession, Prayers for Various Occasions) to:-

"O God the creator and preserver of all humanity, we pray for people of every race".

"giving him to be born as man" (Eucharistic Prayers) to:-

"giving him to be born as a human" or

"giving him to be born as one of us".

Sons of God are "sons and daughters of God" or "children of God" though the latter can sound slightly ageist. "Offspring" and "Child" can also be used of Christ's "Sonship".

Example

"that we may rejoice to be called the sons of God" (Collect, Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Baptism) to:-

"that we may rejoice to be called the sons and daughters of God".

Brothers, Brethren, and Brotherhood In general, the first two can be made to include women as "sisters and brothers" though in a few contexts a different, non-familial relationship such as "neighbours" or "friends" sounds better and the same almost always applies to "brotherhood" - "community" or "love". Some American feminists are intested in reviving "sobling" as a term for a brother or sister which doesn't imply gender. We find it a bit uncomfortably archaic but mention it.

Examples

"what we do for the least of our brethren, we do also" (Collect for Social Responsibility) to:-

"what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do also"

"...honour all men; love the brotherhood." (10 Commandments, Version A) to:-

"...honour all people; love the community".

Fathers can be translated "parents" but usually in fact means "ancestors" as, of course, does Forefathers.

Examples

"Bless the Lord, the God of our fathers." (Canticle, "Bless the Lord") to:-
 "Bless the God of our ancestors"

"...the oath he swore to our father Abraham" (Benedictus) to:-
 "...the oath sworn to our ancestor Abraham"

Fellowship, Fellow are felt to be male terms by some feminists, and can usually be replaced with material about commonness or community, including friendship, comradeship, unity, concord and even solidarity.

Examples

"the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (the Grace) to:-
 "the unity of the Holy Spirit".

"against our fellow men" (Confession) to:-
 "against other people"

Pronouns In the absence of a neutral, personal, third person singular pronoun which is regarded as "grammatically correct" there is often talk of coining one, and some people have tried, but it is hard to change a language in such a deliberate way. American experiments with "s/he" and "he or she" are unwieldy. In alluding to human beings, this problem usually concerns a clause or phrase referring back to a preceding "A person('man') who...." or "Whoever..." and most feminists would in fact use the "grammatically incorrect" but traditional and perfect comprehensible "they".

Example

"Jesus said, Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it." (Luke 9:24, set as a Postcommunion sentence) to:-
 "Jesus said, Whoever would save their life will lose it; and whoever loses their life for my sake, will save it."

Language for God

Pronouns After realisation and error with "s/he" and with attempts to coin new words, American feminists eventually arrived at the better and more reverent idea of always saying God. This is not always easy, and can sound strange. A sentence with many pronouns can sometimes be better adapted by rethinking its word-order; phrases like "God in God's goodness" will remain. In particular, "Godself" for "Herself/Himself" takes some getting used to and can be avoided, though is not, in fact, unattractive.

Examples

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:2 set as a Postcommunion Sentence) to:-
 "God is spirit and those who worship God must-Worship in spirit and in truth."

"Glory to God in the highest
 and peace to his people on earth" (Gloria) to:-
 "Glory to God in the highest
 and peace to God's people on earth."

Father The word, and concept, people are often most anxious not to lose - and God's parental love is important - but it is and unavoidably male image. There are two schools of thought among Christian feminists, some of whom find parent-imagery for God too coloured by the experience of each individual to be useful. (What, for example, are fathers and mothers to children from broken homes, one-parent families, and serial marriages?) We, however, while seeing the dangers inherent in anthropomorphism, do value this part of our heritage, but ask for other images of relationship - not only

Mother, but Sister, Brother, Lover, and Friend - to be made more available.

Speaking specifically of the parental image - and including, of course, the Lord's Prayer in this - there are alternatives. The usage "Father-Mother God" is feasible but a little clumsy. "Parent" strikes some people as impersonal, though being slightly accustomed to the usage, one of us in fact prefers it: perhaps softened by the addition of the epithet "loving". One may also retain "Father" for some prayers, and use "Mother" for others. On one level, the nurturing love of God is in fact closer to the kind of imagery we associate with mothers than fathers; on another, by condemning fathers to a less gentle role than mothers, that imagery is itself sexist.

Sometimes, in fact, "Loving God" is simplest and best. And we have, in the past, happily said the Lord's Prayer in all these ways. Intending in no way to make light of the fact that Jesus himself encouraged us to address God as "Abba" - "Daddy" - we feel that loving relationship is the kernel of truth in that naming, not gender. People have differing, and strong, feelings about this, so we simply offer the various possibilities.

We were particularly startled, when we noticed it, by the apparent clash of images in the phrase "Almighty Father" since the word "almighty" seems to indicate an impersonal kind of power. We have since learnt (from an American feminist source) that one Old Testament phrase translated "God Almighty" - "El Shaddai" - more correctly indicates "All-Sufficing" or "All-Nurturing" with its roots in the word for breast; an image of a breast-feeding mother, in fact. (Also see below - the Trinity.)

Examples

"Almighty God, Father of all mercies." (General Thanksgiving, Prayers for Various Occasions) to:-

"Almighty God, loving source of all mercies."

"...to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King" (Eucharistic Prayer) to:-

"...to give you thanks and praise,
holy Parent, heavenly Ruler"

"Almighty Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us...." (Second Collect for Maundy Thursday) to:-
"Almighty God,
whose Offspring Jesus Christ has taught us..."

"As a father is tender towards his children:
so is the Lord..." (Committal, Funeral Service) to:-

"As mothers and fathers are tender towards their children,
so is God...."

Trinitarian Images The naming of God as "father" occurs in two kinds of contexts - that previously dealt with, (parental love), and the naming of the "Persons of the Trinity". Normal practice in making these inclusive has usually been to replace the word "father" with the other principal aspect of the same "person" - "Creator". This causes indignation from those who note that all three "persons" were and are involved in the act of creation - the spirit according to Genesis and Christ according to the beginning of John's Gospel. The parallel is therefore imprecise as an exact parallel. How much, though, in fact, does traditional language consistently divide God into three separate but equal "persons"? How far have their roles always overlapped? Is not the very name "God" in prayer, often used synonymously with "the Father"? Does the same not apply to other images? These are theological deep waters, but we would venture to suggest that the naming of the "persons" is, for us, imagery for different kinds of human experience of God, and ought not be completely monolithic - though we accept its historic importance.

We therefore continue to use "Creator" or occasionally "Life-source" or simply "God" for the "Father", and are attracted to the usage, "Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer" for Trinitarian blessings etc, though "Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit" is also acceptable

A further comment on Christ - at first glance male gender is a simple fact here as the Jesus of history and the Gospels indeed had a male body. Yet it is an important distinction that gender was a physical attribute of that body only, and is irrelevant to the ascended and eternal Christ of our own experience. This is sometimes hard to express meaningfully in language, since most of our images for Christ are Gospel-based, but worth struggling with. One important part of this is replacing the relevant male pronouns with the title "Christ". Another is to use "Christ" or "the Redeemer" in preference to the male "the Son" in Trinitarian formulae.

The same, with regard to pronouns, applies to the Holy Spirit; of whom male pronouns are especially jarring, since the Hebrew "Ruach Adonai" is female.

Examples

"...the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you..." (Most blessings) to:-

"...the blessing of God almighty, the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, be among you..."

"...all that I have I share with you
within the love of God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit." (Exchange of rings, Marriage Service) to:-

"...all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer."

King, Kingship and Kingdom At first sight these words - king and kingship, in any case - present a case for simple substitution of "monarch" "ruler" or "governor"; all inclusive words which we would use in certain contexts. We have, however, thought about the wider implications of monarchist language, finding in it, from the Old Testament especially, the ascription of an oppressive, not to say militaristic, kind of power to God. "Most high" is also a royal title with similar associations. We haven't reached an ideal parallel - "governor" may be the best, though it carries a strange aura of meaning over from colonial politics.

Examples

"Eternal God, the King of Glory," (Collect, Sunday after Ascension) to:-

"Eternal God, glorious monarch."

"...in your beloved Son, the king of all" (Second Collect for World Peace) to:-

"...in your beloved child, the governor of all".

Similarly for "kingdom", an image and an area of theology we by no means wish to lose, but for which we nonetheless want a new word, we have considered "the rule of God", "the reign of God" and "the realm of God" all of which sometimes sound good. But a word for theocracy, placing God at the centre but stressing the freedom and equality of all, entirely free of the taint of feudal subjection to a monarch, is what we want, and it still eludes us. One of us, at an American church of another denomination has encountered "commonwealth", in essence a good word, (but loaded with irrelevant meanings for the British.)

Lord A word so common in liturgy, and in the Bible, as to be impossible always to change it. Yet it is indubitably male, its original meaning is related to military kingship, and its modern meaning, to social class. In the Old Testament, "Lord" translates "Adonai"

used as a respectful title for God, and "God" can often replace it. Modern Christians seem to use the words "the Lord", again as a respectful title, but with the implication of holiness, so we would occasionally consider replacing it with "The Holy One".

The latter is also possible, at times, when the allusion is clearly to Christ, as is "Master" especially in extended images of ourselves as servants. Generally, though, while "the Lord" and "Our Lord" as expressions for Christ disconcert us by their formality as much as their maleness, they are so very common that we would either avoid them entirely or, in allusions to the historical Jesus, allow them to stand. The tag "through Jesus Christ our Lord" as a way of ending prayers is a case in point - there are alternative endings available which we greatly prefer, especially "in the name of Christ".

Examples

"Lord in your mercy,

A. Hear our prayer." (Intercessions) to:-

"God in your mercy,

A. Hear our prayer."

"Lord of all Power and Might..." (Collect; Pentecost 17) to:-

"God of all Power and Might..."

"By the mystery of your holy incarnation.... Good Lord deliver us" (Litany) to:-

"By the mystery of your holy incarnation.... Good Christ deliver us."

There are only two instances, to our knowledge, where the Holy Spirit is named as "Lord" in the ASB, though both, oddly, are of major significance. They are the Kyrie and the Nicene Creed. Male imagery here makes us so uneasy that we are inclined, in the latter to such a radical move as dropping the confusing "the Lord" leaving "... the Holy Spirit the giver of life" (A full text appears in the section on the Eucharist.)

We are only aware that the Kyrie is addressed to each "person of the Trinity" in turn because we have been taught so. In any case, "Lord" could be replaced by "God" here - or, more radically,

"God have mercy,

Christ have mercy,

Spirit have mercy."

Militarism This area of Pauline imagery disconcerts other people besides feminists, but is related to male attitudes. It is easy to see encouragement, to image ourselves as soldiers through a haze of romanticism, since swords and shields are now associated with Sir Galahad, rather than with actual warfare, and since Victorian Hymnody loved to externalise temptation as a "demonic host" creeping round the tents of the just by night, but those of us who find it hard to see anything positive in any war, all this "nobility" ascribed to the instruments of death as symbolism is trying. Christianity concerns the power not of aggression but of love; that involves struggle, to be sure, but the struggle needs to be expressed in other images than these.

Now for some specific points on the individual services.

Sections of the book itself

Morning and Eveing Prayer

After a block of Introductory Sentences where numerous simple adjustments are possible, (changing "the Lord" to "God" where relevant, "mankind" to "people" etc.) we are faced with an opening prayer of which we have had to break the rhythm to produce a version without male pronouns for God, thus:-

We have come together as the family of God
in our loving Parent's presence,
to offer praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive the holy word,
to bring before God the needs of the world,
to ask divine forgiveness of our sins,
and to seek grace,
that through our Saviour Jesus Christ,
we may give ourselves to God's service.

Other adjustments are as indicated earlier in the paper, though we must express exasperation with a Confession which says, "we have sinned against you and against our fellow men", when "against other people" is the obvious meaning. Such efforts as we made to deal with the Canticles were clumsy, (see note on the Psalter earlier,) but one of us has wanted for some years to challenge the apparent hatred of women's bodies in verse 9 of the "te Deum". (Why should a virgin's womb be especially abhorrent?) Moving on to the Apostle's Creed, we do find "the Father almighty" a difficult phrase, though respect for the history of the Creeds demands something close to the original, so with some avoidance of male pronouns:-

"I believe in God, the Parent almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
who was conceived...."

(continuing to use "who" for "he" to minimalise the effect of a string of male pronouns in the original.)

"....at the right hand of the Creator,
and will come...."

Again, in the collects and Occasional Prayers, we have already indicated the kinds of changes we would make. Suffice it to say that the first section of the Litany is an appropriate place to use the formula, "God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God the Sustainer" and that the General Intercession, General Thanksgiving, and Prayer of Dedication all allude to "mankind" or "men" when they mean "people".

Holy Communion (Rite A)

Just general comments again, not a complete list of sexist bits. Again, some staggering insensitive uses of "man/men" - in the Confession and its preamble, where "our fellow men" should again be "other People", in the Creed, the Intercessions, and the Third Eucharistic Prayer; and some of the other Eucharistic Prayers if we include allusions to Christ "born as man" when the emphasis is on his humanity. Regarding particular sections if the Summary of the Law is used, though scriptural, some "Lords" could go, thus:-

"...O Israel, our God is the only Ruler. You shall love your God..."

Gloria:- "Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth."

Great God, heavenly ruler,
 almighty God, and life-source,
 we worship you, we give you thanks,
 we praise you for your glory.
 Jesus Christ, only Son of the Creator,
 True God, Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world:
 have mercy on us;
 you are seated at the right hand of the Creator:
 receive our prayer.
 For you alone are the Holy One,
 you alone have power,
 you alone are the Most High,
 Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
 in the glory of God the Creator."

Nicene Creed:-

We believe in one God,
 the Life-Source, the almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth...

...eternally begotten of the Creator,
 God from God, Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made,
 of one being with the Creator.
 Through Christ all things were made.
 For us and for our salvation...

...Incarnate of the woman Mary,
 and was made human....

...seated at the right hand of the Creator.
 Christ will come again in glory
 to judge the living and the dead.
 Christ's reign will have no end.
 We believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Creator and the Christ,
 who with the Creator and the Christ is worshipped and glorified,
 and has spoken"

We acknowledge a little poetic licence in both of those. The only point besides those already made about the Eucharistic Prayers is that we would seek to avoid male pronoun of the present-day Christ but leave them in the scriptural and historic central passage, "Who in the same night...". Moving to the Appendices, and especially the Proper Prefaces, a couple make us very unhappy. Number 6, concerning Mary, emphasises those ambiguous words, "humble and meek". Number 7 endorses a trend to idealise the nuclear family to the exclusion of other lifestyles, which we have deeply mixed feelings about. Number 27, Marriage, needs replacing - more on Ephesians 5 when we get to Marriage, but there must be another way of doing this. The other general points apply - Christ's "coming as man" appears a couple of times - and some male pronouns; there are also male pronouns for God in the Ten Commandments, if anyone uses them. Anyone using the full B (Exodus) text in which Number 10 includes wives among the covetable possessions, and after houses at that, of neighbour's, needs some talking to. Frankly, the invectiveness of the A text with modern gloss which, under Number 5, extends the family to include all men and the brotherhood, leaves us a bit speechless. "Live as servants of God; honour all people; love the community." OK?

And in Number 7, "Be reconciled with one another..."

(Rite B) Anyone choosing this text is probable wary of change; in any case, radical adjustments to language for God sit stranglely with the other archaisms. A few generic "men" remain - in the Gloria, the Creed, and the Proper Prefaces, and those could be dealt with.

Initiation Services

There are only a few things to add here to points made earlier in the paper. Firstly, the word "Father" is used a great deal in the prayers to emphasis the parallels between divine and human parenthood of children. We would therefore prefer to see this retained by using "Father" and "Mother" more or less alternately, though "loving Parent" or the slightly unwieldy "Mother-Father God" are both feasible. One of the optional prayers in the Thanksgiving for Childbirth - Number 11 - prays for the Parrot's marriage in terms (again) of the church as the bride of Christ, and could well be replaced by an adaptation of one of the Additional Prayers set for the Marriage service which doesn't use that image. This leads us to the central part of the Baptism services - the Decision, and the Baptism itself. The first part of the Decision, (once one "mankind" has been changed) is acceptable, and the language for signing with the cross seems related to the BCT apart from losing "the flesh" and keeping "the world, and the devil", and presumably has ancient roots. We feel that the one word "sin" covers all the original "unholy trinity" and are therefore confused by this one, but that is outside our brief. What we are concerned with is militarism. For reasons already stated, we find the image of "soldiers" offensive, though we don't want to lose the sense of struggle.

We suggest, "Struggle valiantly for Christ against sin, and continue Christ's strong and faithful servant(s) (or follower, or even minister, in its original meaning) to the end of your life."

The Baptism itself is of course couched in conventional Trinitarian language, and probably changes to that would be unacceptable to many people, but here are our suggestions. "God and his church" can become "God and the church" throughout. "Do you believe and trust in God the CREATOR who made the world?"

A. I believe and trust in the Creator.

Do you believe and trust in Jesus Christ, who redeemed the human race?

A. I believe and trust in Christ.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

A. I believe and trust in the Spirit.

This is the faith of the Church.

All. This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God,
Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

(As the Bishop dips each candidate in water or pours water on them - language in rubrics matters too - he says) N, I baptise you in the name of the Creator, and of the Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."

A few other minor points - when the candle is given, the words spoken by all can simply be, "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God." There is no logical reason to specify "the Father". In the optional prayer Number 38, we would omit the "brother", - "Most Merciful Redeemer and Friend,..." Towards the beginning of the Baptism of Children are some words to be addresses to a child old enough to understand, where we found that all attempts to adjust the word order to avoid a male pronoun for God made it sound as if unbaptised people aren't of God, but we eventually decided the original does that too. In the ministry of the Word for the same service, we happened to look up the scriptural references with particular regard to the generic "man/man" and found that in both cases the Greek says "whoever" and the Revised Standard Version follows that;

this text has, however been taken from the New English Bible. One wonders how many more passages of the ASB would be less exclusive if translations of the Bible were differently considered.

Marriage

We strongly approve the moves towards greater equality and mutuality and would suggest that this could be improved by the simple step of allowing either one of the couple to speak first in the Vows, Exchanging of Rings, etc. - so that they take turns, perhaps. Of course, if people really want to say "Obey" they will, and of course, it is welcome that the prayer for children, Number 26, is no longer compulsory for couples who are biologically able to have children, but may not want to. The priest, in joining the couple's hands, should of course say, "That which God has joined together, let nobody divide." Apart from the fact that a couple of the suggested New Testament readings for Marriage with Holy Communion, if left unchanged, address the couple as "wise men" or "brothers" and apart from Psalm 128, in which "everyone who fears the Lord" has a wife, the only other specific problem in the Marriage service concerns the image of the church as the bride of Christ, and of human marriage as reflecting the relationship of Christ and the Church, with its origin in "Ephesians 5".

We are of course aware that the couple described in the relevant passage are loving in a sense which to many people has very positive aspects. The passage itself is also set as an optional reading. The fact remains that it is simply one of St. Paul's more notoriously sexist moments, and the product of its age, and the image carries implications of deep love, but emphatically not of equality. The BCP, of course, had much more emphatic things to say about "signifying... the mystical union... between Christ and his Church"; most of which has gone from the ASB. There remains one allusion in the opening speech, at the end of the second paragraph where the emphasis has been made of being united in love; nonetheless we would prefer to see the clause omitted. "Ephesians 5:21-33" and the prayer based upon it, Number 35, are both optional, and at the very least to be avoided. The other, and major, culprit is the Proper Preface. We favour an alternative based on the collect:- "And now we give you thanks because through Christ you have taught us that love is the fulfilling of the law. Therefore..."

One minor point - while it is possible to draft an inclusive version of prayer Number 27 which remains close to the original, we are disconcerted by the monarchist language, and prefer to say, "Saviour Jesus Christ, who shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: share in the home of these your followers as guest and friend; give them grace to minister to others as you have ministered, and grant..."

Funeral Services

Bible readings and Psalms are of central importance in how these services are constructed so it is important, though difficult, to make the readings themselves inclusive as far as possible. A thought occurs regarding the 23rd Psalm. It involves a break from the original, of course; but we are tempted by the possibility of turning the whole thing, for liturgical use, into the second person, which by verse 4 it abruptly switches into anyway. This is sometimes a useful tactic with hymns, and may apply to other psalms for other purposes. A particular problem, in dealing with the bible readings, is raised by the reading from 1 Corinthians 15. This is the question of Christ as the new Adam. Of course, the meaning of the name "Adam" is in fact inclusive, so that theologically the pairing is not male; yet maleness has played a part in its history; if not whence the image of Mary as the new Eve in Medieval Mariolatry? - and still sounds conspicuous in the language. As to whatever part of our humanity "Adam" here indicates, that's another minefield. Staying close to the original, therefore, "For as by a human came death, by a human has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam and Eve all die..." (Naturally, "You foolish Man" and "brethren" also need changing, but they are straightforward.) The words immediately preceding the Committal - section 16 - have some irritating uses of "man" in them. We would pluralise these as "people" in both

passages, to do least damage to the poetry. We thought of recommending that the image in Psalm 103 concern a mother's tenderness; but it is also important to acknowledge that human fathers can be tender and gentle. In the Funeral of a Child, and the Prayers for a Still-born Child, it is again especially appropriate to call God "Father" and "Mother" alternating the two; some of the prayers for the parents in the latter are simple and beautiful, and we wonder why they weren't also included in the former - though the father's grief would be better acknowledged if Number 36 read "... Comfort this woman (and man)..."

The Ordinal

Since huge questions of authority and tradition are particularly involved here, the text and style of Ordination services remains formal and highly sexist, in ways which we have already outlined. The only particular questions we want to ask here concern the church's preparedness to acknowledge that the various candidates may/will eventually include women. Indeed, they do now, where deaconess candidates stand alongside the deacon candidates, no matter how neither-fish-nor-fowl their present standing. This largely concerns the passages we may call "job descriptions": "A deacon is called to serve...", "A priest is called by God..." and "A bishop is called to lead..." (though in the case of the last one at least, we don't know whether to hope that the ASB will have been superseded by then.) The best way to make these inclusive, with their string of pronouns, would/will be to put them entirely in the plural, though this is slightly less personal. The same issue, however, affects some of the readings. The second possible Old Testament Lesson for the Ordination of Priests, (Malachi 2) and the Old Testament reading for the Ordination of a Bishop, (Numbers 27) clearly concern the appointment of men; (in the first case, Levi, though nothing in the ASB makes that clear).

The Lectionary

We haven't gone through the texts of all Bible readings, but did look at the Collects, finding much that is attractive, but numerous allusions to "men", "mankind", and "sons of God" among them. Some difficult... sexist. God language also occurs: - "Father" is used often, where we would prefer simply God, and Christ is often alluded to as "your Son" in contexts which refer to the present-day Christ, and therefore need to be inclusive. Again, it would be tedious to list them all. Here are a couple of minor boggles: - Could not the seventh Sunday before Christmas name Abraham and Sarah, to save us from the tedium of always praying to emulate male heroes, (and the virgin Mary). The context is the promise to Abraham, but that promise was not, in fact, that he should have numerous descendants without female assistance in the process. Why specify that James the Apostle left his father, rather than his home, just because we know his father's name? He might still have had a mother living too, (even if Matthew's account does leave poor Zebedee stranded in the fishing-boat itself.)

Those reading the Bible in Church could often be encouraged at least to alter generic "men" as they come to them; this is usually a problem of translation rather than the original text. In any case, most of us acknowledge the original authors to be the product of the time. The position of women in the Bible is subject matter for several books, many of them already written; but, since the principle of selectivity in the choice of the readings themselves is clearly well-established, we would just like to pick up one or two things about that.

The passage which most clearly instructs women to submit to their husbands, from 1 Peter 3, is set for Friday in Easter Week, which is problematic in itself; but it includes the next few verses, which lead from one half of the epistle to the other, and which taken out of context, seem to relate the idea of community solely to this model of marriage. The parallel passage from Ephesians 5 is, as mentioned, a possible choice for the Marriage service, but from among a wide choice, so that could be worse.

Pentecost 14 however, supposedly treats of the family; though Year 1 concentrates on marriage and wifehood, and Year 2 treats of fathers, (sic). Year 1 offers no escape, in alternatives from the pairing of Superwoman from Proverbs 31, with Ephesians 5. This combination of role models, taken over the two years, is stifling in almost every way possible. "Proverbs 31" in fact reappears as a possible reading "for any Saint" where the introductory sentences for women saints still stress a distinction between Holy Matrons and Virgins, (so presumably "Proverbs" is taken to allude to the former). It is tiresome to have to say, where material celebrating women is offered, that it is better not to use it, since the "general" material is less limiting.

P. J. Blunt
Rev T. Hurcomb

the price of Bournville, partly because it is a high-quality product rich in cocoa, and partly because Green and Black's are paying the Maya people well above the market price.

It is on sale in Sainsbury's and health food shops.

More MPs favour disestablishment. A poll conducted among MPs has shown a nine per cent swing since 1992 in favour of disestablishing the Church of England. The same representative sample of 100 MPs was asked the same question on both

occasions: "What is your view on whether the Church of England should be disestablished?" Whereas 51 per cent overall supported this step in 1992, 60 per cent were in favour this January/February.

The increase in support has come entirely from Labour MPs.

DOCUMENTATION

The English of the catechism

The English-language version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is now expected to be published in the week after Pentecost. The original translation has been set aside in favour of a reworking which is so extensive that the publishers have had to start again. Two corresponding sets — from the prologue and from Book Three of the catechism — appear below for readers to compare (see leading article). The original is on the left, the reworking on the right.

PROLOGUE

FATHER, . . . this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. God our saviour . . . desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth. There is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved — than Jesus.

1. To Live Is to Know and Love God

God's own perfection and happiness are infinite. In the plan of his good pleasure, the Father freely created the human race to share his blessed life and so is close to us at all times and in all places. He calls us and helps us seek, know and love him with all our strength. God gathers the human race, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church, through his Son, whom he sent in the fullness of time to redeem and save us. Through Christ and in the Holy Spirit, the Father invites us to become his adopted sons and daughters and heirs to divine happiness. . . .

* * *

BOOK THREE: LIFE IN CHRIST

Chapter two: The human community

Our vocation is to manifest God's image and to be transformed into the likeness of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form since each person is called to enter into God's happiness; it also concerns the human community as a whole.

ARTICLE 1

THE PERSON AND SOCIETY

1. The Communal Character of the Human Vocation

All people are called to the same end, God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fellowship in truth and love that human beings are to establish among themselves. Love for neighbour is inseparable from love for God.

The human person needs to live in society. To do so is not something added to our nature, but is required by it. Through our exchanges with others, mutual service and dialogue with our brothers and sisters, we develop our potential; social life thus corresponds to our calling.

PROLOGUE

"FATHER, . . . this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. God our Saviour desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." "There is no other under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" — than the name of Jesus.

1. The Life of Man — to Know and Love God

God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life. For this reason, at every time and in every place, God draws close to man. He calls man to seek him, to know him, to love him with all his strength. He calls together all men, scattered and divided by sin, into the unity of his family, the Church. To accomplish this, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son as Redeemer and Saviour. In his Son and through him, he invites men to become, in the Holy Spirit, his adopted children and thus heirs of his blessed life. . . .

* * *

BOOK THREE: LIFE IN CHRIST

Chapter two: The human community

The vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God and to be transformed into the image of the Father's only Son. This vocation takes a personal form since each of us is called to enter into the divine beatitude; it also concerns the human community as a whole.

ARTICLE 1

THE PERSON AND SOCIETY

1. The Communal Character of the Human Vocation

All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbour is inseparable from love for God.

The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation.

A *society* is the sum total of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond any one of them. As a visible and spiritual assembly, a society endures through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future. By means of society, each of us is established as an heir and receives certain talents which enrich our identity and whose fruits we ought to develop. Everyone rightly owes loyalty to the communities to which he or she belongs and respect to those in authority charged with the common good.

Each community defines itself by its purpose and consequently obeys specific rules, but "the origin, subject and purpose of all social institutions is and ought to be the *human person*".

Certain societies, such as the family and the state, correspond more immediately to human nature and are necessary to it. In order to further the participation of the greatest number in the life of society, it is necessary to encourage the creation of voluntary associations and institutions, "on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to athletics, to various professions, and to political affairs". This "*socialisation*" also expresses the natural human tendency to associate with others for the sake of attaining objectives that exceed individual capacities. It develops people's qualities, especially a sense of initiative and responsibility, and helps guarantee their rights. . . .

A *society* is a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. As an assembly that is at once visible and spiritual, a society endures through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future. By means of society, each man is established as an "heir" and receives certain "talents" that enrich his identity and whose fruits he must develop. He rightly owes loyalty to the communities of which he is part, and respect to those in authority who have charge of the common good.

Each community is defined by its purpose and consequently obeys specific rules; but "*the human person* . . . is and ought to be the principle, the subject and the end of all social institutions."

Certain societies, such as the family and the state, correspond more directly to the nature of man; they are necessary to him. To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions must be encouraged "on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs". This "*socialisation*" also expresses the natural tendency for human beings to associate with one another for the sake of attaining objectives that exceed individual capacities. It develops the qualities of the person, especially the sense of initiative and responsibility, and helps guarantee his rights. . . .

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growth of a part of the Christian tradition which has been ignored for too long.

However, it is not only language that is of concern for many women, but a wider issue. Women want to change the overriding importance of the rational which is stressed in the Church. Its stress on language, and its fear of imagination, ignores the importance of our feelings and creativity. For many women it is becoming clear that there must be another way forward. This is gradually unfolding in the greater use of symbols and creative techniques in liturgy, which positively accept this form of spiritual exploration. This is not a totally new departure.

In the Hebrew scriptures David 'danced before the Lord' (2 Sam. 6:14) and Hildegard of Bingen, the 12th century mystic, wrote not only of her vision of the earth, but of music, and supervised the painting of her faith in beautiful mandelas.



What do I mean when I suggest using symbols and creative techniques? There are a vast range of possibilities, from painting and dance, to imaginative (Ignatian) prayer and the use of clay. I know that I always thought that there is only one way of 'doing' art well: so I did not do it at all. However, I can not forget my feelings of discovery when I realized it was not how I drew, good or bad, but how the painting process opened up a new vision of God, which was important. It was my feelings that were being explored, perhaps for the first time. I am not suggesting that we ignore the logical and rational, but that we begin to look at the other gifts we have been given for worshipping God.

In our liturgies we use these techniques in many different ways. At a recent liturgy, on the theme of healing and wholeness, the act of washing our hands in water was used as part of the confession, to symbolize the washing away of past hurts or experiences that we had regretted. It is often helpful to do a physical act as a symbol of what we are praying for.

In other liturgies we have used circle dancing not only as a way of meditating but also as a time of praise. For many people there is a fear of using their body because for so long, and particularly for women, it has been the 'symbol' of sin among Christians. How can this body be used to praise God? gradually it is becoming clear that this dualism between 'good mind' and 'bad body' will not do. It is destructive and untrue to the 'creator God'. We are embodied creatures, bodyspirit, and it is important for our spiritual growth to praise God in our bodies as in our minds. As Nancy Roth states:

'Repetitive movement is very focusing for people who have a highly developed sense of the kinetic, and is probably helpful for all who wish to increase their sense of the bodyspirit connection.' (3)

There are other simpler techniques. Candles can be used in the period of intercessions. We ask people to light a candle saying a prayer such as 'I light this candle for....'. and place it in a sand tray. The candles can then be a focus for further prayer. In imaginative prayer a story or section from the Bible is read several times.

During a period of silence, we either imagine ourselves within the story and experience the feelings we receive, for focus on a phrase which 'speaks to us'. This often gives us unexpected insights into our feelings, and ideas about our beliefs.



Intercessions

These varied techniques are now being used by a growing number of people in such events as small liturgy groups and painting or clay retreats. But within the mainstream churches they are still often thought of as being off-beat, even threatening. I know that many women are concerned about the worship within our churches, and there are many strands to these concerns. I have chosen to highlight two of them which have made my journey of faith so much more exciting and fruitful. I hope in the near future more people will begin to explore these traditions, because they can help in the process of women and men who worship within the Christian tradition, being accepted and empowered.

Kate Partridge

Notes:

1. "All Desires Known" by Janet Morley pub. SPCK 1992
2. "The Hidden Tradition" ed. Lavinia Byrne pub. SPCK 1991
3. "The Breath of God, An approach to Prayer" Cowley Pubs. Cambridge, Mass.

The Wimbledon liturgy group meets on the third Friday of every month at St Mark's Church, Wimbledon at 8pm. We are open to all. If you have any queries please contact either Kate Partridge on 081 540 0926 or Evelyn Ross on 081 542 0786. Thanks to Evelyn Ross and Richard Hopper.

Books

What Language Shall I Borrow? God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology by Brian Wren. SCM Press; London 1989; 264pp £9.95

This is a beautiful, stimulating and hugely insightful book which ought to be read by everyone — and especially those who I guess are the least likely to read it. I am thinking of the white, male, middle-class, middle-aged 'leaders' and other power-holding or seeking ones who produce books with titles like "Men Made New", "Men with a Message" and (honestly) "Leadership is Male". But then, I suppose it's often the fate of pearls to be cast before MCPs.

Brian Wren is a pearl-producing poet-theologian, and would that there were more like him around! His gentle strength and sensitised intellect come through in some sublimely enlightening writing which, almost for the first time in my experience, makes theology not only intelligible but also attractive and enjoyable. As for his poetry, well, it moves me: to tears, to new ways of thinking and seeing, and to worship of that more-than-male mystery we may name as 'God'. There are, truly, some absolute gems in the collections of his hymn-poems throughout this book.

The aim of the book, as the cover-blurb explains, is to analyse the present situation, in which 'God-talk', because it arises out of a male-dominated culture, is thereby partial; and to use the insights of feminist thinking to enlarge and improve our vision. As a hymn-writer, his particular concern is, naturally, the language of worship.

There are profound imaginative passages within these pages: a fine use of acronyms to help us remember what we are dealing with; a brilliant reconstruction of the impossible puzzle of Trinitarianism; a fascinating parable to end all parables about pauper-princes; and a witty — but wicked! — analysis of the paucity of the content of (part of) the recent Methodist Hymn Book "Hymns and Psalms".

Two minor niggles for this reader: American English still jars (my problem entirely!); and where *did* SCM get that logo?!

Brain Wren is a wonderful weaver of words, and this book deserves — yea, demands — to be widely read — and marked, learned and inwardly digested! Let the last commendation come, not from another man (and fan!) but from Susan Thislethwaite of the Chicago Theological Seminary:

"When I have found male God-language a barrier, the words of Brian Wren have met my need for a God beyond words. His new book shows what happens when a poet begins to do theology. It puts the rest of us to shame."

Alec Balfe-Mitchell

What Language Shall I Borrow: God-Talk in Worship: A Male Response to Feminist Theology by Brian Wren; SCM Press; 267pp £9.95;

The role in theology of hymn writers from the Psalmists onwards is not given the prominence it deserves. How we talk of God avoiding cultural and sexist distortions is an important contemporary issue to which it is natural that a well-known hymn writer and poet-theologian like Brian Wren should make an important contribution. He has used his experience as a United Reformed Church Minister, writer, and worship consultant to develop insights into the way male-dominated tradition has distorted religious belief and practice. From this analysis of the situation and a male interaction with feminist theology he traces out a creative path which liberates men as well as women from the distorting effects of a patriarchal mind-set and structure and offers an alternative vision of community for the future.

In analysing what the author calls "masculinity as a theological problem" he points out that masculinity as we know it is concerned with power as control. Despite the variants in the concept of what it is to be a man, control and downgrading the feminine are two constant factors. Patriarchy is characterised by hierarchical structures as much as by the subordination of women. It rests upon a dualism that sees opposition rather than harmony

between reason and emotion, and body and soul. The fruits of degrading the caring and nurturing side of life lead to violence of many kinds — from plundering the earth, to rape and battering of women and children, to competition of the arms race and other manifestations of aggression. Wren holds that this sort of masculinity is "dangerous and deadly for human society and planet earth". Change however is possible as these attitudes for forms of behaviour are conditioned rather than inherent, and much of this book deals with the important role of language in influencing our attitudes and actions.

Language is not a trivial matter. It shapes our concepts and if our "naming" of God is distorted, so will be our knowledge and discipleship. Theologians are agreed in general that God has no gender, yet the masculine pronoun for God is constantly used and the first person of the Trinity is praised in male terms, and particularly in terms of power (almighty). Feminine images of God which are to be found in scripture are ignored. Loving kindness is rejected in favour of judgement or kingship.

The author explores the meaning of the maleness of Jesus and the problems this brings women. The theme which he develops also is that it is only by becoming a man (rather than a woman) that Jesus gave a new meaning to being male that was not macho. This is an interesting alternative to the more usual reason suggested that no Jew would have listened to a woman Messiah. In following his liberating direction we need to ask what in our own context can lead us towards inter-gender relationships that are characterised by the mutual compassion, respect, taking each other seriously and accepting each other as full human beings — for this is what Jesus showed in his relationship with women.

The author finds that Jesus gives him a new meaning to being male particularly in his challenge to established norms. He was not competitive, aggressive, power seeking and repressive of any emotion apart from anger. His whole ministry undermines patriarchal norms and demonstrates that he aims to be the servant, not the dominator.

The book is a valuable source of Brian Wren's very effective hymn-poems, many of which work out a variety of

images of God and reflect on the way Christians respond, for instance in his song "Can a man be kind and caring", or "We are not on our own" which explore the theme of our unity with all of creation. "Name Unnamed" has a useful concept of the divine as the "nudging discomforter, prodding and shaking, waking our lives to creative unease . . . freeing and leading in all that we do".

The author brings out the richness of biblical imagery which is available to us, but highlights the danger of Christians making idols of the language employed to describe God, as if the words they used were the actual reality they attempt to depict. How deep is this tendency is shown by the anger often felt when alternative images are proposed. Thus the Church of Scotland would not even look at the very moderate study of scriptural feminine images of the divine (Motherhood of God Report) because it so offended their fixed ideas of the deity.

Wren deals not only with the way we image God but also considers how language can be used by those in power for restricting or enabling, oppressing or liberating. Those who are concerned with keeping the church as a hierarchical power pyramid tend to use language that justifies their dominance and which devalues those who are subordinate, while those who are concerned with ministry as enabling, freeing and developing community use other kinds of language. It is noticeable that most churches have neglected Jesus' own use of questioning as part of the search for the truth and Wren emphasises our need to question traditional ways of naming God to make sure they are really faithful to what Christianity is about and to discern how far discriminatory language helps justify and perpetuate patriarchal styles of power within Church structures. Let us pray that more poets and hymn writers do theology!

Oliver Pratt

Faith or Folly by Frances Makower,
Darton, Longman and Todd - £4.95.

In 1967 Eric Blakeborough accepted the pastorate of a church in Kingston-on-Thames which had fallen on bad days. He and his wife saw that the service to the community which the church could best fulfil was with the rootless young people of the neighbourhood, and set out to do this with the cooperation of the

church members. The story has been told in Eric's own writings.

This book is the story of the writer's involvement in the latter part of this development. She is a Roman Catholic nun, a cripple, who first came to "Kaleidoscope" as a volunteer and then, rather to her surprise found herself appointed to the staff. The book relates something of the earlier history of the project, but is chiefly interesting for the effect her involvement had on the author. She describes the way in which she was increasingly involved in the work of this Christian community - a fascinating story in itself - and how she finally realised that being part of this Christian church she could not in conscience refrain from participating in the Eucharist with them - a eucharist which was in all essentials complete. So, with the acquiescence of the order to which she belongs, she became a communicant. (I rather wonder whether she would have felt the same about the hippy type celebration which Kaleidoscope led at a Baptist Renewal Group conference some twenty years ago!!)

Worsening health has meant that Frances has been obliged to return to the convent from which she comes. But her witness stands as an example of the way in which Christian unity comes about when Christians from different traditions get stuck in together on the job. The ecumenicity of this book by a Roman Catholic about a Baptist project is enhanced by a foreword from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Royalties from the book go to "Kaleidoscope".

Ken Akers

The God of Our Journey by Michael Walker (Marshall Pickering).

The God of Our Journey is a rich, eloquent and inspiring book. Its exploration of our spiritual growth is illuminated by deep respect for humanity and by longing for God who is its perfect fulfilment. The final chapters on suffering and death are almost unbearably poignant but many will draw comfort and practical help from their insight and vision.

However, it is not a comfortable book: rather it is challenging and passionately argumentative. It responds to a climate in the Church which Michael Walker found disturbing. He warns against obsession with spiritual power and control and against the cult of success. In the

triumphalism of some thriving churches he sees dogmatism, authoritarianism and a tendency to manipulate people in their guilt and vulnerability.

In contrast he points to the God of Jesus Christ who empties himself of power, who identifies himself totally with the riches and the pain of our human life. He points us to the God who woos and calls us into partnership, to the God who loves our freedom.

It's a practical book which comes with the dust of the road, not the study, on its shoes. Nevertheless, it challenges us theologically because Michael believes that our thinking about God has profound effects on our human and spiritual growth. He says that we learn to deal with each other as we think God deals with us.

So what is the theological drive of the book? I think its overwhelming concern is to take the doctrines of Creation, Incarnation and Ascension, seriously and thereby to give honour to the humanity we share with all other citizens of the planet which is glorified in Christ.

Michael makes powerful statements about the God of creation. He says that Genesis does not show us 'a God engaged in a reluctant task'. God delights in his creation. Moreover, we need to balance the doctrines of Fall and Redemption with the doctrine of Creation. Of course we must never underestimate the power of evil in ourselves and in the general conduct of human affairs; but 'we also inhabit a world that continues to bear the imprint of God's creative hand on men and women who, however disfigured, have been created in his image'.

The God of Our Journey is full of challenges. It challenges our lurking distaste for the ragged diversity of human life. It challenges our denial of the ordinary experience we share with non-believers. It challenges us when we 'identify our opinions with the will of God and thereby disarm those who think differently or have heard differently in their prayers and reading of the scriptures'.

It challenges our habitual and disgraceful devaluing of women. It challenges our hectic concentration on miracle and supernatural occurrences to the exclusion of God's work in ordinary flesh and blood and it gloriously affirms that the mystery of Incarnation is more than the mystery of miracle. It challenges our obsession with punishment and reflects the 'trans-action' view whereby Christ takes the punishment for our sin, 'squares the books' and, only thus, opens the way to forgiveness. But Christ does stand in our place, 'He is made one with us and receives into

THE INCLUSIVE NEW TESTAMENT

PFE (PRIESTS FOR EQUALITY) TRANSLATION

The Inclusive New Testament produced by Priests for Equality will shortly be available from the Association for Inclusive Language. Approximate price £15 plus postage.

If you would like to order one you will be invoiced when the book comes in from America and is sent to you.

to A.I.L 36 Court Lane, London SE21 7DR

Please send mecopy/ies of the Inclusive NT.

Name.....

Address

the inclusive new testament

Inclusive in language as well as in scope, this innovative and exciting new translation presents a new vision of the Christian witness in an oppressive world.

"I feel like now I can go back to reading the Bible."

—Judy H. Giesen, Dubuque, Iowa

The Inclusive New Testament has a number of innovative features:

- ❖ **The translation** is fresh and exciting, with unmatched immediacy and intimacy. The language is graceful: no search-and-replace inclusivity here! We've been painstakingly **faithful to the original Greek texts**, employing the best up-to-date scholarship available, while gently and creatively finding new and non-sexist ways to express the same ancient truths.
- ❖ **The attractive format** of the text has no columns or artificial section breaks, giving a greater attention to the story line of each book and de-emphasizing its "bibleness"—while subtly retaining the traditional chapter and verse numberings for quick reference and ease of study. It's the best of both worlds.
- ❖ **The large and clear typeface** provides an extremely readable text for young and old alike. At 6" x 9" it's large enough for long hours of reading pleasure, yet compact enough to fit easily on any bookshelf. And we've used a **special binding technique** which allows the book to lie flat for study, worship and lecture uses, taking great care to ensure that it will withstand years of constant use.

"It reads like a storybook—I can't wait to read it each day!" —Rev. Robert P. Daly, Burlington, New Jersey

The introduction delves into the "whys and wherefores" of inclusive language, and gives a brief history of how we developed this particular translation. We think this introduction will be especially helpful to those whose commitment to

inclusive language is still growing, as well as those who want a "behind-the-scenes-look" to see how the magic of this version was accomplished.

"I love the translation! I'm often moved to tears in gratitude because now I can claim this story as mine, too!" —Jodi Creten, CSJ, College Park, Georgia

The translation itself was created to enhance personal reflection, prayer, and faith-building, yet be a worthwhile tool for study and reference (homilists will find the text invaluable!). But *The Inclusive New Testament* really shines when it is read aloud, from the lectern. The text springs to life with freshness, power and elegance; it's like hearing the words for the first time. (And we think you'll be amazed at how even Paul's arcane phrasing is made understandable!)

The Inclusive New Testament speaks to current sensitivities and attitudes, without sacrificing the poetry of holy scripture. People who have been close to the Bible throughout their lives come to appreciate the agelessness of scripture. *The Inclusive New Testament* adds to that sense of agelessness, while speaking to the moment in contemporary—and always gender-inclusive—language.

"What [the editors] have done for this reader is cherished: they have bridged a linguistic chasm, thereby refurbishing the vitality always in the Word of God. The individuals and images seem richer for their contemporized humanity."

—Camille D'Arenzo, RSM, Brooklyn, New York

Please note that we give generous discounts for multiple orders (see our order form for details); we've also set aside a number of copies for students, senior citizens and those with limited incomes, if the full or discounted price is a hardship. All requests will be considered.

Our movement—for the full participation of women and men in the church and in the world—is inexorable. *The Inclusive New Testament* is a powerful and creative step toward the elimination of sexism—and particularly institutional sexism—in our lifetime.

LANGUAGE AND LITURGY: PROPOSED ICEL REVISIONS TO AVOID 'EXCLUSIVE' LANGUAGE

ICEL (International Commission for English in the Liturgy) has issued a consultative document on proposed revisions of the eucharistic prayers, the main purpose of which is to avoid using 'exclusive' or sexist language. The Commission hold that it is not a minor or theoretical problem but a serious question that prevents the church from expressing the fullness of the christian community eg it is harmful to address a mixed congregation as 'brothers')

The reasons given for the proposed changes

1. Language is a 'powerful tool of communication' and must therefore be used with great care and precision, particularly as it affects the way people perceive themselves and others.

Words with a traditional generic use eg man or men, are increasingly understood as referring primarily or exclusively to males and therefore such language is ambiguous or misleading to many. (Research has shown that where 'man' is used the majority of people think only in terms of males and do not see it as relating to women as well).

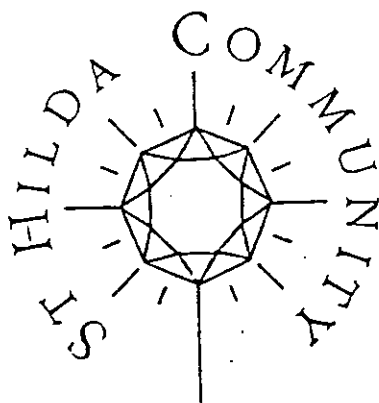
2. Biblical texts are used extensively in liturgy but often these reflect the cultural attitude of the time they were written and relegate women to an inferior position.

3 Man is often used to translate words that mean human, not male (eg homo, anthropos) and brotherhood and fraternity are used for koinonia which is not specific with regard to sex.

4 'Sound theology and pastoral sensitivity' require that the language used not only for liturgical texts but also in preaching should be such as to help, not discourage, women from full participation.

DISCUSSION POINTS (the numbers refer to the page numbers in the ICEL text)

- 1 Many people, women included, are not bothered about 'exclusive' language. Should they be? How far does it matter?
- 2 What are your reactions to the words that ICEL suggests should replace brothers, sons he him etc,
(brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, men and women, humanity, human race, people, Church, community, companion, family friends faithful, children all/we/us, all creation, whole world, forerunners, forebears, ancestors, he/she)
- 3 Do you feel that the changes proposed on pp 57-61 are reasonable? Should we press for their use now in this country (Canada has adopted them for an inter experimental period)?
- 4 The document (p67 no.2) refers to the ongoing study of the names and description of God which are generally male. Is there any alternative to using 'Father' and do christians think of the Father as male?
- 5 ICEL suggests that certain texts either need retranslating, be given a careful explanation or be omitted (67.3) Could we rely on adequate explanation or should a reselection of texts be made in some cases? (The new Easter vigil when first issued had a reference to Israel being unclean as a menstruating woman: this was dropped after protests had been made).
- 6 What comments should this meeting send to the National Liturgical Commission, who have asked for these by the end of 1981.



c/o Bow Road Methodist Church
1 Merchant Street
LONDON E3 4LY

Newsletter October 1990

Greetings.

The St. Hilda Community continues to meet for worship every Sunday at 6.30 p.m. with virtually every Sunday bringing along people who have not been before.

Since the last newsletter there have been 2 meetings of regular attendants, to clarify our aims and plan future events. One of our conclusions was that, despite our ecumenical intentions, our spirit, sometimes unconsciously, has tended to be Anglican and we therefore are aiming to be much more sensitive in future to the feelings of non-Anglicans. We clarified that the particular concern of the St. Hilda Community is with the role and status of women, in and out of the churches, and in promoting a healthier and happier relationship between women and men and this is to be the theme of our Day Conference next April (details below).

We had a very sad loss in July when our most regular attendant, Jim Tatham (Big Jim) died of peritonitis. Jim had hardly missed a Sunday worship with us since Pentecost 1987. A few of us managed to get to his funeral at St. Dunstons, Stepney and the Community bought a 6' cross of red and white flowers which lay on top of Jim's coffin as it was brought into the church. His death had been rather sudden with no chance for us to say goodbye so we are therefore arranging a Memorial Service for Jim to take place on Sunday 11th November (details below).

Another erstwhile supporter was lost to us recently when Keith Jenkins left to work in Strasbourg. One of the things he regularly did was run off the labels for our newsletters.

The US Episcopal Womens' Caucus continue to take an interest in our development and activities and in the near future will probably be seeking an article from us for publication over there.

The copy for the book about the St. Hilda Community which SPCK have commissioned should be with them by end October, with publication next spring/summer. The 'quotes from members' section is arguably the most interesting, enlightening and exciting section.

Via this newsletter we would like to ask for various kinds of help. If you feel able, could you tick off one or more of the following and return to address at top of newsletter, including your own name, address and telephone number.

Help with catering - baking a cake, etc.

Help with tea/coffee/welcoming new people on Sunday evenings.

Making a musical contribution.

Helping financially (to this end a Banker's Order form is included at the end of this newsletter).

Any other - please specify.

OR,

LITURGY

It is good if a wide variety of St Hilda's members take part in leading our liturgy on a Sunday evening. Why not put your name on the Rota, perhaps with another person if you do not want to do it on your own.

Sharing

The

Load

There are a number of St Hilda liturgies in our cupboard at the back of the stage. Many of them are now in separate folders, under themes and types of service. These can be borrowed and used as a basis for a new liturgy or used in their entirety; there are also two booklets which can be used occasionally. Readings need to be chosen to use with any of these liturgies and preferably some photocopies taken.

Have a browse after the service, and have a word with whoever led the liturgy when you decided to have a go!

FUTURE EVENTS

1. Sunday November 11th at 6.30 p.m. Memorial Service for Jim Tatham. Invitations will be sent to local clergy who knew him well, drop-in centre staff, some of Jim's secular friends and attempts will be made to contact his relatives in the East End. The offertory will go to the Bible Lands Children's Society (one of Jim's favourites). Suzanne Fageol will be the Celebrant.

2. Sunday November 18th 6.30 p.m. ST. HILDA BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS. Agape and Eucharist (reference historical note below). There will be food, drink, song and dance.

3. Saturday April 13th 1991. Day Conference on the question of why, in the churches, women and men can't agree? What's the precise problem? Why all the angst? Are there any positive ways forward? the venue is The Institute of Christian Studies, Margaret Street, WC1. There will be 2 main speakers, one female and one male. The female speaker has yet to be confirmed and the male speaker is Peter Francis (he was the chaplain at Queen Mary College when the St. Hilda Community used to meet in St. Benet's Chapel before the Bishop of London objected). This Conference will be publicly advertised nearer the time and the hall can hold up to 100 people. We haven't finalised prices yet but they're likely to be in the region of £10/£8.

4. October/November 1991. Day or Weekend Conference on the question of Do We Need the Church?

Now, for the historical note referred to earlier.

THE AGAPE; AN HISTORICAL NOTE

Originally, the Eucharist seems to have been celebrated in the context of a fellowship supper, or 'agape', to which each Christian brought a contribution. Judging from references like Rev. 1:10, it was probably held regularly on the evening of the first day of the week, 'The Lord's Day'. The Jewish prayers of thanksgiving and blessing at the meal soon came to remember Jesus and recognise what God had done through him, and this practice may be reflected in an early liturgical document called the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, or 'Didache'. After the meal, there may have been an informal Ministry of the Word - see I Cor.14:26.

It seems that, gradually, the Eucharist became distinct from the agape; the pattern described in the Didache suggests that the Eucharist proper was held immediately after the meal, with the unbaptized being asked to leave the table, as the first stage in this process. Once the meal was completely free of association with the sacrament, it became a ceremonial occasion in its own right, with the lighting of a special lamp in thanks for the gift of light. Also included were hymns, composed and sung by those present to each other, or psalms with a sung 'Alleluia' response.

In the St. Hilda Community, it has been customary to give the name 'agape' to a liturgy which does not include an actual meal. Perhaps the time has now come to resurrect the idea of a fellowship supper, with or without the Eucharist as its culmination, containing thanks for the gift of light and opportunities for informal praise and meditation. We would be very interested in your comments and suggestions.

Finally, the Banker's Order Form. If you complete the form, please return it to the address at top of this newsletter.

Your Name.....

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Please pay to the account of the St. Hilda Community,
Account No. 50351259
Co-operative Bank Plc, 134/138 The Grove, Stratford, London E15 1NX
Bank Sort Code No. 08-90-76

the amount of £.....per week/month

Signature.....Date.....

With love to you all from the St. Hilda Community at Bow.

3. HEALING LANGUAGE

They were talking about things that healed and things that hurt the spirit. And one of them said, "Do you think it's harmful to eat some things?" And the other said back, "It isn't what goes into your mouth that matters; it's what comes out of it that can hurt." And nobody argued that at all.

When I was little they taught me to say, "Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me." I knew even then that they were wrong. Words can hurt.

Human relations depend on communication. A long time before the divorce or the suicide or the career failure or the breakdown or the revolution ever happened, if anyone had wanted to do so badly enough, each of these could have been stopped. The hurt and pain, the damage and destruction could have been avoided, because each of those situations is, at its base, a problem in human relations. The point is that somewhere along the line the failure wasn't in personality or education or economics or feminism. The failure was in communication. Someone, somewhere said the wrong things or said nothing at all.

Or think of it this way: almost all mental health work—except in cases of organic brain damage from physical injury—is based on talk therapy. This means that words can heal as well as hurt.

Once we understand why language is so important it is possible to identify the kinds of language or communication patterns that have a negative effect on self-development, social interaction and mental health as well as to indicate which kinds of messages affirm and energize people.

Language tells us what everything is. Because of language we can distinguish and emphasize multiple variations of a single ob-

ject—cedar and apple and willow as types of the thing "tree," for instance; skyscraper and condominium and hotel as kinds of public buildings. Because of language, in other words, we learn to see things in special ways. We learn to see what does or doesn't exist in our culture: eighteen kinds of snow if you're Eskimo; a dozen kinds of noodle if you're Italian; over thirty kinds of cars if you're from the United States.

But, more than that, because of language we learn to see ourselves. The messages we get from others tell us what kind of a person we're perceived to be: "a good little girl," an aunt said; "a sassy young thing," the neighbors said; "pudgy or sloppy or dependable or useless"; "a dumbhead, a smarty or a brain." In fact, we look to the reactions of others to discover what we're like, how valuable we are. We ask repeatedly, "Did you really think I played well?" "Do you really like my work?" Eventually we learn to see and define ourselves in these terms and as a result become more or less comfortable with who we are.

What is even more thought-provoking is the fact that it is this satisfaction with ourselves that determines the degree to which we can relate positively—healingly—to others, for our own value and goodness is exactly what we suppose and expect of everyone else. If we are dissatisfied with ourselves, if years of negative messages have told us only that we are somehow less adequate than other human beings, that we fail to measure up, it affects every human relationship we have for the worse.

Low self-esteem dwarfs the person we could really be. It sets false limits. It propels us through life looking over our shoulder to see what's wrong with us until, of course, eventually something is, even though we always wanted to be valuable and valued. This high ideal and low self-esteem finally combine to make us dependent on, but resentful toward, the direction and support of others, programmed to their expectations, and increasingly more burdened by our own lack of independence and self-direction.

Then someday all these hidden agendas—worthlessness, dependence, a mistrust of others based on the measuring stick that is our low trust of ourselves as persons—erupt into social reactions, often unspoken but never uncommunicated. The psychologist Gerald Egan says, "Feeling is never suppressed; it is translated into a num-

ber of ungrowthful activities." Hostility, resistance, passive-aggression and displacement of emotions are all simply manifestations of a communication system that is poisoned by a sense of personal inadequacy. Not positive about ourselves, we become defensive and hostile to others. Unhappy in our limitations, we nevertheless resist the influence of others. Unable to surface genuine disagreements for fear of further rejection or ridicule, we subvert the efforts of others or exert indirect control—by never being on time, for instance; by being slow and unresponsive at work; by forgetting or delaying or pouting. Unaccepting of ourselves as we are, unconfirmed in our own worth and unfree to be ourselves, we seethe over one situation in life but take it out on another—when the coffee is cold we kick the cat.

So the circle simply intensifies. The more poorly we relate to others the more negative responses we get back. And the negative feedback only confirms the basic unease we've had about ourselves ever since we began to accumulate those first sad signals: "fat, irresponsible, not as good a baby as her older sister."

Perhaps no incident is more telling than the research of E. R. Guthrie and its later replications. A psychology class conducted an exercise on low self-esteem by identifying an extremely withdrawn, unkempt, mediocre and unpopular student and reinforcing that person with positive communications about simple things. They said, for instance: "That color is perfect on you. Eileen said you're so easy and understanding to be with. We think that with your ability you're the natural person to chair the committee." Each remark was grounded on observable data, no matter how slight. By the end of the year, the student had joined several campus organizations, made the dean's list, become president of an important student group and created a social circle. Objective testing as well confirmed a rise in self-esteem and self-image. Obviously, the affirming attention of significant people had been a healing factor in the positive orientation of an otherwise colorless and even negative life.

Clearly, the effect of one human being on the development of another is profound. More profound is the fact that communication patterns, so unconsciously adopted, so casually explained away as "that's the way I am," are a basic part of personal growth, social effectiveness, and mental health. The important question is then to determine what kinds of messages obstruct full, positive development

and what kinds of communication act as catalysts to growth. For it is the stunted individual, the person denied growth who is finally caught in the divorce, pressed to suicide, driven from the job, reduced to emotional distress, or frustrated to the point of revolution.

Kinds of Language That Hurt

A hurtful communication is any message that generalizes, devalues, or ignores the person. Each of these says "static" or "imperfect" or "bad."

1. *Labels and Stereotypes.* We know only as much about our world as we're able to perceive or consciously to acknowledge. But perception is affected by the language we use to describe what we see. For instance, to call a car a Rabbit or a Cutlass or a limousine is to shape perception, to include some characteristics of "car" but to exclude others. Consequently, language will alter our world vision. It does more than simply report. It draws attention to some qualities of a thing but not to others—even though a number of qualities are present in the same thing at the same time—and so influences our behavior and reactions. To call a stickpin a weapon is to emphasize a quality quite distinct from what we think of when we call it a piece of jewelry.

In other words, labels classify and categorize and evoke reactions that may have very little to do with the entire reality. Whole segments of society have been deprived and smothered in their personal development because people accept labels—Polack, ex-con, nun, woman, homosexual, retard—as a substitute for understanding the whole person. Many have never been able to grow beyond these half-truths.

Labels cut off communication and come laden down with negative vibrations that start the circle of self-hatred and social conflict. The point is that it hurts not to be allowed to be your whole self, your best self, but to be named and discarded for only a part of you.

2. *Evaluations.* After fifteen years of marriage it ceases to be funny that "she burned the first piece of toast we ever had and hasn't improved since." The not-a-good-cook mark translates so easily to not-a-good-wife and affects every other area of that self-image. In fact, always to be graded either good or bad in anything makes all of

life one long track meet, one great academic competition. The stress of being defined only as a winner or loser can eventually become the greatest burden of them all. To evaluate rather than to describe another person's behavior—"You're a drunk" instead of "You had six martinis"; "Jimmy's dumb" instead of "Jimmy got three C's and a D"—is the worst kind of entrapment. To get three C's is a fact that may change. To be dumb is a condition that is terminal. Even winners would like to be accepted for who they are instead of for the ribbons they've collected. Or, if not, what proof is there that the love will be there after there are no more ribbons to garner?

The point is that any evaluation, positive or negative, is a potential barrier to growth that hurts personal development and relationships as well.

3. *Evasions.* It is possible to talk to other people without ever really attending to them. And that may be the greatest put-down of them all. By interrupting, shifting topics abruptly, failing to respond to conversational leads or by giving minimal, unrelated or impertinent replies (uh huh; good, good; you bet) one idea comes through very clearly: neither you nor anything you say is interesting or important to me. Poor people report feeling that way when dealing with welfare agents. A woman's conversational topic, research shows, is hardly ever picked up on by men. The dead marriage, we know, is the one where even evaluations have given way to vapid, unmeaningful exchange.

Failing to attend to others in one way or another—failing to let them talk or ignoring their interests or responding without substance or meaning—is domineering and degrading. It is, furthermore, not communication at all. At best it is manipulation masking as interaction: what parents do to children; what bosses do to workers; what teachers do to students; what any powerful do to the powerless. It is the communication of unworth that hurts.

4. *Sexism.* But if evasion is bad, total non-recognition is worse. If someone says, "I'm so hot" there are four possible ways to respond.

1. Positively and directly: "Do you mind this heat?" or "Yes, it is warmer than yesterday," or "Heat can certainly make a difference."

2. Negatively but directly: "Don't complain about the heat," or "Heat is good for you."

3. Tangentially: "Your mail is on the table."

4. Not at all. Nothing degrades a person more than not even to notice that he or she is in your presence. It is a particularly hurtful insult. And half the human race is beginning to notice what a hurtful put-down it is to be treated as if they don't exist or are only owned by someone else. One half of the human race, women, are ignored or never responded to at all in the name of efficiency in language.

It is one thing to be an inferior or less important person. It is another thing to be no person at all. And that is the effect of sexist language: to subsume one entire body of people under the identity of the other, to absorb and deny their individuality, to snuff out their independent existence.

The argument against universalizing language (saying "people" for "men," for instance) is that male words include women too or that the issue is trivial. But words mean what people agree that they mean, and the existence of half the human race is not trivial, unless of course you really do not value it.

There is no such thing as the objective meaning of a word. Words connote whatever people think when they say them. Consequently, most meanings change over time. "Boy" has meant everything from "hangman" to "rascal" to "slave" to "young gentleman." When Chaucer used "harlot" it meant "good fellow." Once "Kleenex" and "Teflon" and "Victrola" were brand names; now they're substances, items. Obviously, words change in meaning when people begin to use them differently or look for new ways to express new understandings. Rockets, for instance, fly but were not called airplanes because that term is simply not able to draw attention to the distinctive characteristics of this new kind of flight.

Sexism is a language pattern that claims to recognize women but allows only male pronouns, terms, and so-called generic titles of male derivation (*chairman*, *brotherhood*, *mankind*, *fraternity*). This non-recognition makes women essentially non-persons. No wonder that women become the unnamed property of someone else (Mrs. Charles W. Everett rather than Eileen Kelley-Everett). No wonder the Church can't hear itself talking only to men. A sacristan in-

formed the new priest that the community preferred the use of universal language in the Mass ("humankind" or "all people" for "men," "community" for "brotherhood") and the benign, patronizing answer was "When I say 'men'—broad smile—I mean everyone." No more obvious a lack of concern for the dialogue of Eucharist or the existence of person can possibly be manifested. What the words meant to the female congregation were simply not important to him despite the fact that addressing someone directly or naming a thing gives them identification and therefore value.

A music publisher who refuses to edit sexist language out of hymn material, arguing that "the ERA is important but pronouns are not," is a person in the language business who doesn't understand language. What isn't in the language will never be in the culture or the mind. That women are not important enough to be recognized in the language is one reason why women don't have equal rights in civil law.

And sexist language affects the position of men in society, too. No word exists in the culture to describe the man who has fathered a child. She has "conceived," she is "pregnant." But isn't he part of it too? What has he done? What is he? The language doesn't tell us. Out of this exclusive linguistic attention to the biological process of bearing a child, the man's rights to child custody or the birth process have been almost obliterated. Only now are the courts beginning to grapple with rights of the unwed father, the divorced man.

New research attests to the general effects of this kind of non-recognition on the self-esteem, personalities, success and emotional health of women.

The use of language to subsume or obliterate peoples is harmful to the development of the rights and responsibilities of both men and women. A great deal of healing needs to be done here.

So, what are the alternatives? What kinds of communication heal and bring to growth?

Kinds of Language That Heal

To be effective, language must be descriptive rather than evaluative, specific rather than general, responsive rather than ignoring, and open rather than defensive.

1. *Descriptive.* An antidote to the perils of evaluation is simply to state facts rather than to make sweeping judgments. If I'm a slob I'm socially undesirable and—since I am what I am—there's no hope. On the other hand, a descriptive message gives criteria for growth and a gauge to our relationship. Something like this, perhaps, gives direction in a way that the labels "gross," "dirty," "uncouth" do not: "I got caught in rush hour traffic three times this week because it took me extra time to pick up your clothes. Please do that for yourself so I'm not edgy about how the house looks or late for work."

No attack has been leveled, no vague expectations relayed. The contract is clear and the needs can be negotiated without a lowering of self-esteem or a denial of personal worth on either part. A message can be sent without name-calling that destroys the value of either person; growth thus becomes possible for both persons.

2. *Specific.* This car dealer, not *all* car dealers, has been dishonest. This woman, not women in general, cannot park her car. *That* motel, not the entire chain, is unsatisfactory. The ability to specify rather than to stereotype leaves us open to the possible value of every opportunity of life. Until absolutes and generalizations are eliminated from our vocabularies old barriers will continue to divide us as peoples and new insights can never emerge.

3. *Responsive.* Communication that fails to address, to recognize, to listen, to include is the language that separates groups into oppressors and oppressed. At the parish meeting, for instance, it is possible to say either "those people" or "some of us." One approach pits one group against another; the other commits all of us to work it out together. Instead of dividing people into camps by saying "*Those* people are agitating" or "*They* are never satisfied," language can be used to bring us together. We could say, "Some of us as citizens of the United States or members of the Church feel differently about things." But if it is "*their*" problem instead of "*ours*" then the lines are already drawn and revolution will be needed to resolve what dialogue could have healed to everyone's advantage.

4. *Open.* The impulse to evaluate, confirm or deny another's experience is an obstacle to communication. The need to agree or to disagree with another's experience (the "I-know-exactly-what-you-mean; why-when-I-was-there . . ." pattern) has often been considered

supportive. The fact of the matter is that support or understanding is not when you either agree or correct my feelings or experience but only when you accept the fact that they are my feelings and allow me to express them and to work them through with you. For it is that ability to admit and deal with my emotions and identity that finally heals.

Anything else blocks self-disclosure, the necessary basis of understanding and intimacy. It directs the person to tell us what we need to hear and so may suppress what the other person needs to say. As a result, people are less sharing, inclined to be wary of what they say, guarded in their openness and alert to defend themselves against rejection, ridicule, or reproof. People need to have their feelings accepted, their experiences noted, their equality and dignity respected. No put-downs, no hostile humor, no sermons are acceptable responses to the awesome truth of another human being's existence and effort to deal with life. Out of this respect grows trust and the possibility of a growthful relationship.

Clearly language can both hurt and heal. Why? Because language affects self-development, mental health, and social interaction. To be growth-producing, language must build self-esteem and personal worth. Language that minimizes others, excludes them, labels them, ridicules them is language that destroys the self, builds frustration and jeopardizes mental health. Language that attends to others as unique, trustworthy and worthy of respect contributes in the most humanizing way to the building of the kingdom.

The disciples wanted Jesus to say exactly which of the dietary laws were necessary to their religious development. But Jesus was not to be fooled by appearances. "It is not what goes into the mouth that saves," he said, "but what comes out that defiles."

And there is the secret of healing: To minister reverently to the other with the sacrament of language.

4. THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

This is a bad news, good news presentation. The bad news is that the worst is not over for religious life. The good news is that the transition is at hand and may well be galvanizing for all of us. To get an idea of where religious life is going, however, it is important to understand where it has been and where it is now; that renewal is a process to be completed over time, not a project to be abandoned.

Psychologists have traced the life-cycle of human beings, biologists the life cycle of plants and animals, historians the life-cycle of movements and governments, and sociologists the life-cycle of groups and institutions. In every discipline the findings are clear: living things change as they grow, and each change brings with it a gift to be enjoyed and a task to be completed. But if that was common knowledge in the 1950's and 1960's, few watchers of religious life remembered to bell the cat. The result was profound shock in both the Roman Catholic population and in religious communities themselves as a life-style that had come to be seen as immutable began to shift and even apparently to crumble. For the most part, the changes were not generally seen as life-giving. And they were not easy. Nevertheless, religious life has apparently gone on. But why did it all happen? Where is it going now, if anyplace at all? Is religious life still a Gospel life or simply a paling shadow of a holier age? The question now is whether or not we are simply presiding over smoldering ruins or whether there is a phoenix in the ashes. It all depends.

The Development of Religious Life

The life-cycle of an institution has five major parts. In the period of *institutional origin* someone somehow senses the unspoken in

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE AND LITURGY PACK

Discussion Outline together with relevant extracts from the 1980 ICEL proposals for avoiding sexist language in the eucharistic prayers (now out of print).

ICEL (International Commission for English in the liturgy) in 1980 issued a consultative document on proposed revisions of the eucharistic prayers, the main purpose of which was to avoid using 'exclusive' or 'sexist' language. The Commission hold that it is not a minor or theoretical problem but a serious question that prevents the church from expressing the fullness of the christian community. The USA, Canada and New Zealand have adopted the changes. Although in England and Wales a number of organisations including the National Board of Catholic Women and the Newman Association recommended the changes the Hierarchy turned this down, on the grounds there was no pressure from below. However very few copies of the document were circulated, very few people were given the chance to look at the situation and even one bishop had never heard of the recommendations!

REASONS GIVEN FOR THE SUGGESTED CHANGES

1 Language is a 'powerful tool of communication' and must therefore be used with great care and precision, particularly as it affects the way people perceive themselves and others.

Words with a traditional generic use eg men or man, are increasingly understood as referring primarily or exclusively to males and therefore such language is ambiguous or misleading to many. Research has shown that where 'man' is used the majority of people think only in terms of males and do not see it as relating to women as well.

2 Biblical texts are used extensively in liturgy but often these reflect the cultural attitude of the time they were written and relegate women to an inferior position.

3 Man is often used to translate words that meant human, not male, in the original text. eg homo, anthropos, and brotherhood and fraternity are used for koinonia which is not specific with regard to gender.

4 'Sound theology and pastoral sensitivity' require that the language used not just in the words of the liturgy but also in preaching should be such as to help, not discourage, women from full participation.

DISCUSSION POINTS (The numbers refer to the page numbers in the Icel text)

1 Many people, women included are not bothered about 'exclusive' language. Should they be? How far does it matter?

2 What are your reactions to the words that ICEL suggests should replace brother, sons, man, he etc: Brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, men and women, humanity, the human race, people, Church, community, companion, family, friends, faithful, children, all/we/us, all creation, ancestors etc?

3 Do you feel the changes proposed on pp 57-61 are reasonable? What ought we to do about it? What about the suggestions on page 67?

4 ICEL suggests that certain texts either need retranslating or should have careful explanation given or be omitted. Could we rely on this? Should there be a reselection of texts? (When the new Easter Vigil was first issued there was reference to Israel being as unclean as a menstruating women. This was dropped after protests were made).

STATEMENT:
THE PROBLEM OF EXCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
WITH REGARD TO WOMEN

PREFACE

Where there is life there is growth and adaptation. This is true of language as of other living things. Because societies do not stand still, neither can the languages that serve them. As societies grow, new values develop, new sensitivities emerge. We have only to recall how much our ecclesial language is changing with the new emphasis on the laity.

The fuller participation of women in the social life of a growing number of countries is raising serious questions for languages like English which, for historical and cultural reasons, have reflected male predominance in their vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

Emerging sensitivities are no longer at ease with conventions that appear to exclude women from designations that should have a universal human extension.

Because liturgy must reflect a deep concern for the whole people of God and an awareness of the sensitivities of every part of it, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy has encouraged its Advisory Committee to engage in a continuing study of the issue.

The following statement drawn up by the Advisory Committee indicates the present stage reached in this study. It is reproduced in this Green Book to provide the context within which it is proposed that certain interim emendations of the eucharistic prayers should be considered.

Denis E. Hurley, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Durban
Chairman, ICEL

NOTES ON THE POINTS OF REVISION
IN THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

A. ACCOUNT OF INSTITUTION

Though the words "man" and "men" have a traditional generic usage, many people have come to experience them as referring primarily or exclusively to males, thus including women only in a secondary way, or in a derived sense, or omitting them altogether. Hence, in accordance with its policy of using inclusive language, ICEL proposes a revision in the account of institution in all the eucharistic prayers.

The original text reads:

It will be shed for you and for all men
so that sins may be forgiven.

The emended text reads:

It will be shed for you and for all
so that sins may be forgiven.

B. EUCHARISTIC PRAYER II

The experience of the past decade has shown that the present version of the opening lines of the intercessions is very frequently misunderstood. Many people seem to hear this as a prayer primarily or only for the clergy and/or think that the Church in question is the institutional *societas visibilis* or even the hierarchy of clergy alone. Some understand the "us" of the second line as referring to the community actually present and not to the "Church throughout the world" of the previous line. And so a number of priests add a phrase such as "and all your people" after "all the clergy," in order to correct what they regard as an excessive clerical bias, and they appeal to Eucharistic Prayer III for a parallel. This shows that they misinterpret the present English version, which—following the Latin original—prays first for the whole Church and only then for its ministers. The intercessions of Eucharistic Prayers III and IV have their own character and construction and do not in fact offer helpful parallels. In the face of this misunderstanding ICEL has judged that its translation should be revised in order to clarify the sense of the prayer.

In addition, there has been some measure of dissatisfaction with the use of the word "clergy" in this prayer. This arises, not from the intention being voiced, but from the word itself, which is

felt to have lost its original rich connotation and to be flat and inexpressive in this liturgical context. Accordingly, "ministers of your Gospel" is proposed as conveying more expressively the reality at issue.

The original text reads:

Lord, remember your Church throughout the world;
make us grow in love,
together with N. our Pope,
N. our bishop, and all the clergy.

The emended text reads:

Lord, remember your Church throughout the world;
make us grow in love as your people,
together with N. our Pope, N. our bishop,
and all the ministers of your Gospel.

C. EUCHARISTIC PRAYER IV

1. The present version, "you alone are God," as cited below, was based on an earlier Latin reading (*solus*), which was later changed (*unus*). The proposed revision is thus a more accurate rendering of the Latin text. It also avoids the difficulty which some experience in saying of the Father that he alone is God. (Though in the Gloria, *tu solus Dominus*, said of Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, does not seem to be experienced as a similar difficulty.)

The original text reads:

Father in heaven,
it is right that we should give you thanks and glory:
you alone are God, living and true.

The emended text reads:

Father in heaven,
it is right that we should give you thanks and glory:
you are the one God, living and true.

2. The present version, "and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light," as cited below, is revised on the principle of the use of inclusive language. The Latin original in fact has a broader reference here, using *creaturae* not *homines*, and so this has been preserved in the revision.

The original text reads:

Source of life and goodness, you have created all things,
to fill your creatures with every blessing
and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light.

The emended text reads:

Source of life and goodness, you have created all things,
to fill your creatures with every blessing
and lead them to the joyful vision of your light.

3. The following text was emended on the principle of the use of inclusive language. This means that "man," "men," "he," "his" had to be avoided. One possible solution would have been to use "we" and "our" throughout, but this would have obscured the stages of the history of salvation which are marked in this eucharistic prayer. *Homo* could have been rendered "man and woman," but this would have obscured the sense of the oneness of the human creation contained in *homo* and in the creation accounts of Genesis. Accordingly, it was found necessary to add a new line from Genesis 1:27 in order to allow the text to move from the unified concept of the human race to the inclusive language of the following lines.

The original text reads:

You formed man in your own likeness
and set him over the whole world
to serve you, his creator,
and to rule over all creatures.
Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship
you did not abandon him to the power of death,
but helped all men to seek and find you.
Again and again you offered a covenant to man,
and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation.

The emended text reads:

You formed the human race in your own likeness:
male and female you created them
and set them over the whole world
to serve you, their creator,
and to rule over all creatures.
Even when they disobeyed you and lost your friendship
you did not abandon them to the power of death,
but helped all people to seek and find you.
Again and again you offered them a covenant
and through the prophets
taught them to hope for salvation.

4. The third of the following lines had to be revised on the principle that inclusive language was to be used. This involved the recasting of the two previous lines.

The original text reads:

He was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit,
and born of the Virgin Mary,
a man like us in all things but sin.

The emended text reads:

Conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary,
he became like us in all things but sin.

5. The weakness of the present translation of the following has often been criticized; it misses the reference to 1 Corinthians 10:17 contained in the Latin and thus fails to convey the important point that the eucharist is sign and cause of unity. An alternative version has already been approved by ICEL and has been in use in some parts of the world for several years.

The original text reads:

Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church;
and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this bread and wine
into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.

The emended text reads:

Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church;
and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup
into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.

D. EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS FOR MASSES OF RECONCILIATION

In addition to revising the wording of the account of institution (see A above) in both of the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses of Reconciliation, ICEL recommends three emendations in Prayer I. In each instance, the original version intends a generic, inclusive reference to the human community as is apparent in the original. In order that these lines not appear to refer primarily or exclusively to males, the texts have been emended.

1. The original text reads:

You invite us
to serve the family of mankind
by opening our hearts
to the fullness of your Holy Spirit.

(Latin: *hominibus*)

The emended text reads:

You invite us
to serve the human family
by opening our hearts
to the fullness of your Holy Spirit.

2. The original text reads:

Father,
from the beginning of time
you have always done what is good for man
so that we may be holy as you are holy.

(Latin: *hominibus*)

The emended text reads:

Father,
from the beginning of time
you have always done what is good for your people
so that we may be holy as you are holy.

3. The original text reads:

Therefore we offer you, God, ever faithful and true,
the sacrifice which restores man to your friendship.

(Latin: *quae hominibus
gratiam tuam conciliat*)

The emended text reads:

Therefore we offer you, God, ever faithful and true,
the sacrifice which restores us to your friendship.

E. EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

The use of inclusive language is particularly important in the socialization process children, who discover their Christian identity through participation in the communal liturgical life.

In addition to revising the wording of the account of institution (see A above) in all the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children, ICEL recommends the following emendation Prayer III:

The original translation reads:

Yes, Lord, you are holy;
you are kind to us and to all men.
For this we thank you.

The German original text of this prayer, *zu allen Menschen*, and the Latin *hominibus* intend to communicate the Lord's unconditional love for all people. Thus, the emended text reads:

Yes, Lord, you are holy;
you are kind to us and to everyone.
For this we thank you.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years some areas of the Church have become especially aware of the pastoral problems caused by language that discriminates against women; this commonly was called "sexist" language and lately "exclusive" language. ICEL has already expressed concern regarding discriminatory language in liturgical texts and has set out a plan of action to deal with this problem:

The Advisory Committee recognizes the necessity in all future translations and revisions to avoid words which ignore the place of women in the Christian community altogether or which seem to relegate women to a secondary role.

(Minutes of the Advisory Committee Meeting, August 1975)

The Secretariat is directed to engage the assistance of consultants in the fields of sexist, racist, and anti-Semitic discrimination, and collectively (a) to identify and collect pertinent existing literature in these fields, (b) to consult with other Churches and other appropriate bodies regarding this problem.

The materials, reports, and studies obtained as a result of this process should be collated and evaluated by a subcommittee, which should consist of experts in the fields involved, other concerned and knowledgeable individuals, and be chaired by a member of the Advisory Committee. The subcommittee should report to the Advisory Committee and make both general and specific recommendations:

- a. regarding the removal of discriminatory language in existing texts and documents;
- b. regarding principles and procedures by which future mistakes can be avoided;
- c. regarding attitudes which have given rise to various forms of discrimination in the past;
- d. regarding the commissioning of such study papers as may seem necessary.

(Minutes of the Advisory Committee Meeting, November 1977)

The present statement is designed to aid ICEL in dealing specifically with the problem of exclusive language with regard to women; statements on matters of racial and anti-Semitic discrimination will follow in due course. The present statement is intended to apply to translations, revisions of existing texts, and composition of original texts.

As a powerful tool of communication, language must be used in worship with the greatest care and precision. Modern studies have established the fact that language performs a highly important role in how one comes to perceive one's self and others. Furthermore, the range of symbols and images used determines the scope of the religious understanding and practice of the people of God, and if this range of symbols is limited, so also will be their understanding and practice. The way one is named within the worshiping community — and whether one is named at all — could affect the way one lives the Christian life. The failure of much of liturgical and theological language adequately to recognize the presence of women

seems effectively to exclude them from full and integral participation in the life of the Church, and this exclusion can prevent the whole Church from experiencing the fullness of the Christian community.

Thus, the problem of exclusive language is more than a linguistic one; it has important theological and sociological implications as well. It must not be thought of as a theoretical problem, or a minor one; it is an immediate, real, and pressing problem for many Christians and therefore for the whole Church.

At worship, men are frequently addressed in both the prayers and hymn texts. Women, however, hear themselves mentioned only infrequently and often are not addressed at all. Their personal crisis with respect to Church life is precipitated by appreciation of the true principle *lex orandi, lex credendi*, that is, the Church believes as it prays. The experience of many women leads some to conclude that the Church considers them unimportant participants in its life and worship. Because of this problem of exclusive language and the obstacles to heartfelt participation which it creates in worship, some people have felt strained to abandon corporate worship altogether.

Today it is recognized that each and every Christian is called to, and indeed has a right to, full participation in worship. One basis for this appreciation is a deeper understanding of the meaning and power of the sacraments of Christian initiation: baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist. Stemming from the baptismal anointing in the Spirit, we now have a greater recognition of the dignity and responsibility of each Christian to participate fully in the life of the Church. In addition, we understand the Church to be people of God, sacramental community, as well as sacred institution, and these images and concepts both require acknowledgment of the role of individual Christians in the Church. Christian worship therefore arises out of and depends upon an integral and active assembly of the baptized, and is hindered and made less perfect and less acceptable to the extent that some members of the community feel excluded from full participation in it.

The introduction of vernacular languages into liturgical use also increased the general awareness of the matter of full participation in liturgy. When Catholics began to pray in their own tongues, attention was drawn to the fact that much traditional language in worship did not in fact permit full participation by those members of the community who were women.

Biblical texts are used extensively in the liturgy and also lie at the root of many liturgical texts. Biblical language, therefore, must be carefully examined with respect to its influence on women's participation in worship, especially as it grew out of and in some ways reflects a time and culture considerably removed from our own. At the present time the Roman Catholic liturgy in the English language has used and depends upon existing Scripture translations such as the New American Bible, Jerusalem Bible, and Revised Standard Version. However, ICEL has undertaken a pilot project to determine the feasibility of translating the psalter and the lectionary readings that will specifically take into account the liturgical use of these texts. This work will of necessity have to consider carefully the problems raised by some biblical language, and therefore a full discussion of these matters will be undertaken here.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

Both sound theology and pastoral sensitivity require that the language used in all liturgical texts, as well as in all other aspects of liturgy, for example, preaching, should not only permit but indeed facilitate the full participation of women in the worship of the Church. Sensitive Christians have begun to remedy the problem of liturgical language that is discriminatory toward women by careful choice of a vocabulary which includes all people. Such language is referred to here as "inclusive" language.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCERN

There are three aspects of liturgical language that are of special concern: language addressing and referring to the worshipping community; language referring to God; and language referring to women.

1. Language addressing and referring to the worshipping community.

- a. Terms such as men, sons, brothers, brethren, fraternity, and brotherhood now are understood to refer exclusively to males, although from the perspective of the history of language these words once had a broader meaning. It is no longer acceptable to use this type of language in liturgical texts (unless the text does refer specifically to males) or to address such texts to any liturgical assembly in which women participate.
- b. Terms such as man, mankind, forefathers, family of man, and certain uses of he, his, and him once were generic terms which could be used to include both men and women. Because these terms are in fact often used to refer only to males, their use has become ambiguous and increasingly is perceived to exclude women. Wherever possible, therefore, these terms should not be used.

It is noted that the term "man," as it is employed in many biblical and liturgical texts, is used to translate *adam*, *anthropos*, or *homo*, words which actually mean "human" rather than male. In addition, brotherhood and fraternity often are used to translate *koinonia*, which is not specific with regard to sex.

The problematic terms listed above can often be replaced with other words which may in fact be more faithful to the original texts. Thus, expressions such as the following may be used to designate individuals or groups:

brothers and sisters	Church	all/we/us
sons and daughters	community	all creation
men and women	companion	whole world
humanity	family	forerunners
human race	friends	forebears
humankind	faithful	ancestors
people(s)	children	he/she

However, simple substitution of an inclusive term for a problematic one is not always theologically or linguistically appropriate, and entire passages sometimes need to be rewritten. Difficulties sometimes can be obviated by employing a plural for a singular pronoun, or by using the passive voice.

- c. A rubric is at present printed in *The Order of Mass*, at the Penitential Rite and the *Orate, fratres*, which states:

"At the discretion of the priest, other words which seem more suitable under the circumstances, such as, 'friends,' 'dearly beloved,' etc., may be used. This also applies to parallel instances in the liturgy."

"Brothers and sisters" or other inclusive phrases should be used in these places, if women form part of the worshipping assembly.

2. Language referring to God.

Names and descriptions applied to God in biblical and liturgical texts have been almost exclusively male in character. ICEL recognizes that this raises serious questions on several different levels, and is pursuing a study of the matter.

3. Language referring to women.

Some liturgical texts imply the inferiority of women and their natural subjection to men. These texts generally are biblical or biblically inspired and reflect the culture in which they were composed or culturally conditioned theological argumentation. An example would be the subjection of wives to husbands indicated in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3. The problems that arise from such texts may in some cases be relieved by more careful translation; in other cases particular verses or entire pericopes may have to be deleted from liturgical use, and there is ample precedent for such selectivity. Another possible solution is careful explanation of the texts. Each passage requires individual study and judgment regarding the approach that is to be taken.

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1 Many people, women included are not bothered about 'exclusive' language. Should they be? How far does it matter?

2 What are your reactions to the words that ICEL suggests should replace brother, sons, man, he etc: Brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, men and women, humanity, the human race, people, Church, community, companion, family, friends, faithful, children, all/we/us, all creation, ancestors etc?

3 Do you feel the changes proposed on pp 57-61 are reasonable? What ought we to do about it? What about the suggestions on page 67?

4 ICEL suggests that certain texts either need retranslating or should have careful explanation given or be omitted. Could we rely on this? Should there be a reselection of texts? (When the new Easter Vigil was first issued there was reference to Israel being as unclean as a menstruating woman. This was dropped after protests were made).

STATEMENT:
THE PROBLEM OF EXCLUSIVE LANGUAGE
WITH REGARD TO WOMEN

PREFACE

Where there is life there is growth and adaptation. This is true of language as of other living things. Because societies do not stand still, neither can the languages that serve them. As societies grow, new values develop, new sensitivities emerge. We have only to recall how much our ecclesial language is changing with the new emphasis on the laity.

The fuller participation of women in the social life of a growing number of countries is raising serious questions for languages like English which, for historical and cultural reasons, have reflected male predominance in their vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

Emerging sensitivities are no longer at ease with conventions that appear to exclude women from designations that should have a universal human extension.

Because liturgy must reflect a deep concern for the whole people of God and an awareness of the sensitivities of every part of it, the International Commission on English in the Liturgy has encouraged its Advisory Committee to engage in a continuing study of the issue.

The following statement drawn up by the Advisory Committee indicates the present stage reached in this study. It is reproduced in this Green Book to provide the context within which it is proposed that certain interim emendations of the eucharistic prayers should be considered.

Denis E. Hurley, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Durban
Chairman, ICEL

NOTES ON THE POINTS OF REVISION
IN THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS

A. ACCOUNT OF INSTITUTION

Though the words "man" and "men" have a traditional generic usage, many people have come to experience them as referring primarily or exclusively to males, thus including women only in a secondary way, or in a derived sense, or omitting them altogether. Hence, in accordance with its policy of using inclusive language, ICEL proposes a revision in the account of institution in all the eucharistic prayers.

The original text reads:

It will be shed for you and for all men
so that sins may be forgiven.

The emended text reads:

It will be shed for you and for all
so that sins may be forgiven.

B. EUCHARISTIC PRAYER II

The experience of the past decade has shown that the present version of the opening lines of the intercessions is very frequently misunderstood. Many people seem to hear this as a prayer primarily or only for the clergy and/or think that the Church in question is the institutional *societas visibilis* or even the hierarchy of clergy alone. Some understand the "us" of the second line as referring to the community actually present and not to the "Church throughout the world" of the previous line. And so a number of priests add a phrase such as "and all your people" after "all the clergy," in order to correct what they regard as an excessive clerical bias, and they appeal to Eucharistic Prayer III for a parallel. This shows that they misinterpret the present English version, which—following the Latin original—prays first for the whole Church and only then for its ministers. The intercessions of Eucharistic Prayers III and IV have their own character and construction and do not in fact offer helpful parallels. In the face of this misunderstanding ICEL has judged that its translation should be revised in order to clarify the sense of the prayer.

In addition, there has been some measure of dissatisfaction with the use of the word "clergy" in this prayer. This arises, not from the intention being voiced, but from the word itself, which is

felt to have lost its original rich connotation and to be flat and inexpressive in this liturgical context. Accordingly, "ministers of your Gospel" is proposed as conveying more expressively the reality at issue.

The original text reads:

Lord, remember your Church throughout the world;
make us grow in love,
together with N. our Pope,
N. our bishop, and all the clergy.

The emended text reads:

Lord, remember your Church throughout the world:
make us grow in love as your people,
together with N. our Pope, N. our bishop,
and all the ministers of your Gospel.

C. EUCHARISTIC PRAYER IV

1. The present version, "you alone are God," as cited below, was based on an earlier Latin reading (*solus*), which was later changed (*unus*). The proposed revision is thus a more accurate rendering of the Latin text. It also avoids the difficulty which some experience in saying of the Father that he alone is God. (Though in the Gloria, *tu solus Dominus*, said of Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, does not seem to be experienced as a similar difficulty.)

The original text reads:

Father in heaven,
it is right that we should give you thanks and glory:
you alone are God, living and true.

The emended text reads:

Father in heaven,
it is right that we should give you thanks and glory:
you are the one God, living and true.

2. The present version, "and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light," as cited below, is revised on the principle of the use of inclusive language. The Latin original in fact has a broader reference here, using *creaturae* not *homines*, and so this has been preserved in the revision.

The original text reads:

Source of life and goodness, you have created all things,
to fill your creatures with every blessing
and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light.

The emended text reads:

Source of life and goodness, you have created all things,
to fill your creatures with every blessing
and lead them to the joyful vision of your light.

3. The following text was emended on the principle of the use of inclusive language. This means that "man," "men," "he," "his" had to be avoided. One possible solution would have been to use "we" and "our" throughout, but this would have obscured the stages of the history of salvation which are marked in this eucharistic prayer. *Homo* could have been rendered "man and woman," but this would have obscured the sense of the oneness of the human creation contained in *homo* and in the creation accounts of Genesis. Accordingly, it was found necessary to add a new line from Genesis 1:27 in order to allow the text to move from the unified concept of the human race to the inclusive language of the following lines.

The original text reads:

You formed man in your own likeness
and set him over the whole world
to serve you, his creator,
and to rule over all creatures.
Even when he disobeyed you and lost your friendship
you did not abandon him to the power of death,
but helped all men to seek and find you.
Again and again you offered a covenant to man,
and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation.

The emended text reads:

You formed the human race in your own likeness:
male and female you created them
and set them over the whole world
to serve you, their creator,
and to rule over all creatures.
Even when they disobeyed you and lost your friendship
you did not abandon them to the power of death,
but helped all people to seek and find you.
Again and again you offered them a covenant
and through the prophets
taught them to hope for salvation.

4. The third of the following lines had to be revised on the principle that inclusive language was to be used. This involved the recasting of the two previous lines.

The original text reads:

He was conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit,
and born of the Virgin Mary,
a man like us in all things but sin.

The emended text reads:

Conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary,
he became like us in all things but sin.

5. The weakness of the present translation of the following has often been criticized; it misses the reference to 1 Corinthians 10:17 contained in the Latin and thus fails to convey the important point that the eucharist is sign and cause of unity. An alternative version has already been approved by ICEL and has been in use in some parts of the world for several years.

The original text reads:

Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church;
and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this bread and wine
into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.

The emended text reads:

Lord, look upon this sacrifice which you have given to your Church;
and by your Holy Spirit, gather all who share this one bread and one cup
into the one body of Christ, a living sacrifice of praise.

D. EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS FOR MASSES OF RECONCILIATION

In addition to revising the wording of the account of institution (see A above) in both of the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses of Reconciliation, ICEL recommends three emendations in Prayer I. In each instance, the original version intends a generic, inclusive reference to the human community as is apparent in the original. In order that these lines not appear to refer primarily or exclusively to males, the texts have been emended.

1. The original text reads:

You invite us
to serve the family of mankind
by opening our hearts
to the fullness of your Holy Spirit.

(Latin: *hominibus*)

The emended text reads:

You invite us
to serve the human family
by opening our hearts
to the fullness of your Holy Spirit.

2. The original text reads:

Father,
from the beginning of time
you have always done what is good for man
so that we may be holy as you are holy.

(Latin: *hominibus*)

The emended text reads:

Father,
from the beginning of time
you have always done what is good for your people
so that we may be holy as you are holy.

3. The original text reads:

Therefore we offer you, God, ever faithful and true,
the sacrifice which restores man to your friendship.

(Latin: *quae hominibus
gratiam tuam conciliat*)

The emended text reads:

Therefore we offer you, God, ever faithful and true,
the sacrifice which restores us to your friendship.

E. EUCHARISTIC PRAYERS FOR MASSES WITH CHILDREN

The use of inclusive language is particularly important in the socialization process children, who discover their Christian identity through participation in the communal liturgical life.

In addition to revising the wording of the account of institution (see A above) in all the Eucharistic Prayers for Masses with Children, ICEL recommends the following emendation in Prayer III:

The original translation reads:

Yes, Lord, you are holy;
you are kind to us and to all men.
For this we thank you.

The German original text of this prayer, *zu allen Menschen*, and the Latin *hominibus* intend to communicate the Lord's unconditional love for all people. Thus, the emended text reads:

Yes, Lord, you are holy;
you are kind to us and to everyone.
For this we thank you.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years some areas of the Church have become especially aware of the pastoral problems caused by language that discriminates against women; this commonly was called "sexist" language and lately "exclusive" language. ICEL has already expressed concern regarding discriminatory language in liturgical texts and has set out a plan of action to deal with this problem:

The Advisory Committee recognizes the necessity in all future translations and revisions to avoid words which ignore the place of women in the Christian community altogether or which seem to relegate women to a secondary role.

(Minutes of the Advisory Committee Meeting, August 1975)

The Secretariat is directed to engage the assistance of consultants in the fields of sexist, racist, and anti-Semitic discrimination, and collectively (a) to identify and collect pertinent existing literature in these fields, (b) to consult with other Churches and other appropriate bodies regarding this problem.

The materials, reports, and studies obtained as a result of this process should be collated and evaluated by a subcommittee, which should consist of experts in the fields involved, other concerned and knowledgeable individuals, and be chaired by a member of the Advisory Committee. The subcommittee should report to the Advisory Committee and make both general and specific recommendations:

- a. regarding the removal of discriminatory language in existing texts and documents;
- b. regarding principles and procedures by which future mistakes can be avoided;
- c. regarding attitudes which have given rise to various forms of discrimination in the past;
- d. regarding the commissioning of such study papers as may seem necessary.

(Minutes of the Advisory Committee Meeting, November 1977)

The present statement is designed to aid ICEL in dealing specifically with the problem of exclusive language with regard to women; statements on matters of racial and anti-Semitic discrimination will follow in due course. The present statement is intended to apply to translations, revisions of existing texts, and composition of original texts.

As a powerful tool of communication, language must be used in worship with the greatest care and precision. Modern studies have established the fact that language performs a highly important role in how one comes to perceive one's self and others. Furthermore, the range of symbols and images used determines the scope of the religious understanding and practice of the people of God, and if this range of symbols is limited, so also will be their understanding and practice. The way one is named within the worshiping community—and whether one is named at all—could affect the way one lives the Christian life. The failure of much of liturgical and theological language adequately to recognize the presence of women

seems effectively to exclude them from full and integral participation in the life of the Church, and this exclusion can prevent the whole Church from experiencing the fullness of the Christian community.

Thus, the problem of exclusive language is more than a linguistic one; it has important theological and sociological implications as well. It must not be thought of as a theoretical problem, or a minor one; it is an immediate, real, and pressing problem for many Christians and therefore for the whole Church.

At worship, men are frequently addressed in both the prayers and hymn texts. Women, however, hear themselves mentioned only infrequently and often are not addressed at all. Their personal crisis with respect to Church life is precipitated by appreciation of the truth of the principle *lex orandi, lex credendi*, that is, the Church believes as it prays. The experience of many women leads some to conclude that the Church considers them unimportant participants in its life and worship. Because of this problem of exclusive language and obstacles to heartfelt participation which it creates in worship, some people have felt strained to abandon corporate worship altogether.

Today it is recognized that each and every Christian is called to, and indeed has a right to, full participation in worship. One basis for this appreciation is a deeper understanding of the meaning and power of the sacraments of Christian initiation: baptism, confirmation, and the eucharist. Stemming from the baptismal anointing in the Spirit, we now have a greater recognition of the dignity and responsibility of each Christian to participate fully in the life of the Church. In addition, we understand the Church to be people of God, sacrament, and community, as well as sacred institution, and these images and concepts both require and acknowledge the role of individual Christians in the Church. Christian worship therefore arises out of and depends upon an integral and active assembly of the baptized, and is hindered and made less perfect and less acceptable to the extent that some members of the community feel excluded from full participation in it.

The introduction of vernacular languages into liturgical use also increased the general awareness of the matter of full participation in liturgy. When Catholics began to pray in their own tongues, attention was drawn to the fact that much traditional language in worship did not in fact permit full participation by those members of the community who were women.

Biblical texts are used extensively in the liturgy and also lie at the root of many liturgical texts. Biblical language, therefore, must be carefully examined with respect to its influence on women's participation in worship, especially as it grew out of and in some respects reflects a time and culture considerably removed from our own. At the present time the Roman Catholic liturgy in the English language has used and depends upon existing Scripture translations such as the New American Bible, Jerusalem Bible, and Revised Standard Version. However, ICEL has undertaken a pilot project to determine the feasibility of a new translation of the psalter and the lectionary readings that will specifically take into account the liturgical use of these texts. This work will of necessity have to consider carefully the problems raised by some biblical language, and therefore a full discussion of these matters will be undertaken here.

GENERAL PRINCIPLE

Both sound theolog and pastoral sensitivity require that the language used in all liturgical texts, as well as in all other aspects of liturgy, for example, preaching, should not only permit but indeed facilitate the full participation of women in the worship of the Church. Sensitive Christians have begun to remedy the problem of liturgical language that is discriminatory toward women by careful choice of a vocabulary which includes all people. Such language is referred to here as "inclusive" language.

SPECIFIC AREAS OF CONCERN

There are three aspects of liturgical language that are of special concern: language addressing and referring to the worshiping community; language referring to God; and language referring to women.

1. Language addressing and referring to the worshiping community.

- a. Terms such as men, sons, brothers, brethren, fraternity, and brotherhood now are understood to refer exclusively to males, although from the perspective of the history of language these words once had a broader meaning. It is no longer acceptable to use this type of language in liturgical texts (unless the text does refer specifically to males) or to address such texts to any liturgical assembly in which women participate.
- b. Terms such as man, mankind, forefathers, family of man, and certain uses of he, his, and him once were generic terms which could be used to include both men and women. Because these terms are in fact often used to refer only to males, their use has become ambiguous and increasingly is perceived to exclude women. Wherever possible, therefore, these terms should not be used.

It is noted that the term "man," as it is employed in many biblical and liturgical texts, is used to translate *adam*, *anthropos*, or *homo*, words which actually mean "human" rather than male. In addition, brotherhood and fraternity often are used to translate *koinonia*, which is not specific with regard to sex.

The problematic terms listed above can often be replaced with other words which may in fact be more faithful to the original texts. Thus, expressions such as the following may be used to designate individuals or groups:

brothers and sisters	Church	all/we/us
sons and daughters	community	all creation
men and women	companion	whole world
humanity	family	forerunners
human race	friends	forebears
humankind	faithful	ancestors
people(s)	children	he/she

However, simple substitution of an inclusive term for a problematic one is not always theologically or linguistically appropriate, and entire passages sometimes need to be rewritten. Difficulties sometimes can be obviated by employing a plural for a singular pronoun, or by using the passive voice.

- c. A rubric is at present printed in *The Order of Mass*, at the Penitential Rite and the *Orate, fratres*, which states:

"At the discretion of the priest, other words which seem more suitable under the circumstances, such as, 'friends,' 'dearly beloved,' etc., may be used. This also applies to parallel instances in the liturgy."

"Brothers and sisters" or other inclusive phrases should be used in these places, if women form part of the worshiping assembly.

2. Language referring to God.

Names and descriptions applied to God in biblical and liturgical texts have been almost exclusively male in character. ICEL recognizes that this raises serious questions on several different levels, and is pursuing a study of the matter.

3. Language referring to women.

Some liturgical texts imply the inferiority of women and their natural subjection to men. These texts generally are biblical or biblically inspired and reflect the culture in which they were composed or culturally conditioned theological argumentation. An example would be the subjection of wives to husbands indicated in Ephesians 5 and Colossians 3. The problems that arise from such texts may in some cases be relieved by more careful translation; in other cases particular verses or entire pericopes may have to be deleted from liturgical use, and there is ample precedent for such selectivity. Another possible solution is careful explanation of the texts. Each passage requires individual study and judgment regarding the approach that is to be taken.

Translators at odds

The Vatican has now imposed its own English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The text which had previously been prepared by the American priest Fr Douglas Clark, and set up in Britain by Geoffrey Chapman ready for publication, had used "inclusive" language, avoiding the characteristic use of the male pronoun and adjective to cover both sexes, which in modern English and American culture can be felt to discriminate. This version has now been so extensively altered that the publishers have had no option but to begin again from scratch. Readers can compare the results on page 369. They are likely to be unimpressed, and a significant proportion of them could well be offended by the aggressive setting-aside of any nod in the direction of "inclusive" language.

The opponents of the original English translation raised a variety of objections to it. They argued that inclusive language was ugly. Indeed it can be if filleted in such a way as to discard idiom and produce laboured paraphrases, bogus plurals, and the wearisome repetition of "he or she". But in this case the authorised translators of version 1 held that it was their task to combine modernity with accuracy and elegance. And while accepting that improvements and corrections should be made, they felt that they had basically succeeded.

The Vatican thought otherwise, and added theological considerations. Behind the inclusive language was seen a unisex agenda which could distort the balance of Christian doctrine on creation, incarnation and redemption. The ideology of feminism was thought to be at work, undermining

the foundations of the truth, and leading towards women priests besides much else.

Archbishop D'Arcy of Hobart was charged to go through the text, without reference to its authors, patiently inserting the offending phrases which had been so carefully excluded. Comparison of the corresponding extracts on page 369 shows clearly the principles being applied. In the very first paragraph of the prologue to the catechism, "man" or "men" is worked in six times. One more "man", for good measure, then there are "*homme*"s in the French original. That is really laying it on.

Not all the balance of advantage lies with version 1. In the epigraph at the head of the prologue it is driven to the archaism "mortals" in its anxiety to banish "men"; and in its opening to the chapter on "The Human Community" in Book Three

"our vocation is to manifest God's image" — its unlocated "our" lacks the universality of version 2: "the vocation of humanity is to show forth the image of God". And how much better is "show forth" than the Latinate "manifest".

Much more often, though, the advantage goes the other way. Thus right at the beginning, version 1 has "... the Father freely created the human race to share in his blessed life ...". Neat and precise. Compare version 2: "God ... in a plan of sheer goodness created man to make him

share in his own blessed life." Note the clutter of "man", "him", and "his", and the ambiguous reference of the latter adjective (a clutter and ambiguity repeated elsewhere in the same paragraph). And "make him share"? Compulsion is quite out of place. The French original, "*pour le faire participer*", actually means "have him share".

A year and a half late, the English-speaking world is about to be given an official edition of the catechism that is no more than a dogged rendering of the

French text into English. And its misconception that "man" functions in English in precisely the same way as "*homme*" in French makes it gratuitously offensive to a sizeable part of its intended readership. It is for this that the English-speaking world has been kept waiting long after everybody else; and those who had originally been put in charge of the translation have been insulted by not even being shown the final revised version before the *imprimatur* was given. There is a moral somewhere, for those who want to draw it.

Language

Dispossessed daughters of Eve. Sue Dowell & Linda Hurcomb

p 66

Study in the language of sexism is another exciting area for Christian feminists. We are beginning to recognize the inescapable link between the use of words and the reality that use reflects in society. We are asking ourselves to what extent the language we use limits us in what we can dare to envisage. Some Christian feminists believe that it is vital to address God in a new way that does not limit the divine love and omnipotence to the human concept of fatherhood. No language can reflect God's greatness, but 'Father/Mother God' might begin to remove an obvious stumbling block without abandoning the language of nurture in our prayers as well as our theology.²⁴ This exploratory suggestion has provoked strong reactions from traditionalists in the august forum of the letters pages in national dailies. During the debate on women priests the same admonitory line was elevated to immutable truth. As if speaking on Jehovah's behalf, Graham Leonard, the Bishop of Truro, sagely warned against tampering with sexual symbolism. We are walking over the land mines of sexual symbolism to enter into the reality of sexist language. The explosions are unfortunate. We can only hope that our children will be able to tread the territory without the wounds and damage that we carry with us.

P 80

An important theological reflection of this quandary is the struggle for new language to describe Lordship and the claims of the ultimate authority of love. A church that so many outside see as living off the fat of its past glories can seem to have no words left and no authority that has not become tainted with worldly power.

It was not always so, we imagine, in the early struggles. The Judaeo-Christian experience of God, born and nourished in a pre-literate nomadic setting and recorded for us in scripture, relates that there were times when the chosen bearers of the divine purpose were very few, pitted against a hostile counter-culture. There were times, too, even then, when the people of God made and controlled the culture we lived in. Who knows which of the two we are living in now? Are we 'taking ease in Zion' or 'singing the Lord's song in a strange land'? Probably both. The stumbling block is always the nature of power. 'But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher and you are all brethren. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ. He who is greatest among you shall be your servant' (Matt. 23.8-12). If this central teaching of Jesus had been maintained, the very foundations of hierarchy and authoritarianism in biblical religion would have been uprooted.

Note to
Chapter on Sisters of
Cassandra

Women's study of language is a major explorative field – both secular and theological. Studies mirror the general spectrum of feminist thought by ranging from a separatist to a restorative emphasis. Two examples here may be useful to the reader: 'Nowhere is women's experience of male-dominated language more pervasive than in the church and synagogue. Such "he" language is "applied in the generic sense" to God, to the preacher, to the worshipper. In hymns, liturgies and styles of government, religious life is male orientated. It is *generic nonsense* to say that women are included linguistically when they are excluded by so many practices. If this is to change, the Biblical, theological, and ecclesial traditions must be interpreted and translated so that the liberating power of God's love can break through in new words and actions. The search for a usable past includes the search for usable language and new forms of expression' (Letty Russell, *Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective. A Theology*, Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1974, p. 95); 'Women have been systematically excluded from the English language; split off from the sounds, words, and syntax that should be our most powerful means of expressing our feeling, thoughts, and desires . . . Our separation from language defines and maintains our separation from our experience' (Julia Stanley, 'The Rhetoric of Denial: Delusion, Distortion, Deception', *Sinister Wisdom* 3, 1977, p. 28, quoted by Emily Culpepper, 'The Spiritual Movement of Radical Feminist Consciousness', in *Understanding the New Religions* (see ch. 1, note 1). n. 229).

From 'Women, Ministry & The Church'
Joan Chiltresen OSB

3. HEALING LANGUAGE

They were talking about things that healed and things that hurt the spirit. And one of them said, "Do you think it's harmful to eat some things?" And the other said back, "It isn't what goes into your mouth that matters; it's what comes out of it that can hurt." And nobody argued that at all.

When I was little they taught me to say, "Sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never hurt me." I knew even then that they were wrong. Words can hurt.

Human relations depend on communication. A long time before the divorce or the suicide or the career failure or the breakdown or the revolution ever happened, if anyone had wanted to do so badly enough, each of these could have been stopped. The hurt and pain, the damage and destruction could have been avoided, because each of those situations is, at its base, a problem in human relations. The point is that somewhere along the line the failure wasn't in personality or education or economics or feminism. The failure was in communication. Someone, somewhere said the wrong things or said nothing at all.

Or think of it this way: almost all mental health work—except in cases of organic brain damage from physical injury—is based on talk therapy. This means that words can heal as well as hurt.

Once we understand why language is so important it is possible to identify the kinds of language or communication patterns that have a negative effect on self-development, social interaction and mental health as well as to indicate which kinds of messages affirm and energize people.

Language tells us what everything is. Because of language we can distinguish and emphasize multiple variations of a single ob-

Healing Language

ject—cedar and apple and willow as types of the thing "tree," for instance; skyscraper and condominium and hotel as kinds of public buildings. Because of language, in other words, we learn to see things in special ways. We learn to see what does or doesn't exist in our culture: eighteen kinds of snow if you're Eskimo; a dozen kinds of noodle if you're Italian; over thirty kinds of cars if you're from the United States.

But, more than that, because of language we learn to see ourselves. The messages we get from others tell us what kind of a person we're perceived to be: "a good little girl," an aunt said; "a sassy young thing," the neighbors said; "pudgy or sloppy or dependable or useless"; "a dumbhead, a smarty or a brain." In fact, we look to the reactions of others to discover what we're like, how valuable we are. We ask repeatedly, "Did you really think I played well?" "Do you really like my work?" Eventually we learn to see and define ourselves in these terms and as a result become more or less comfortable with who we are.

What is even more thought-provoking is the fact that it is this satisfaction with ourselves that determines the degree to which we can relate positively—healingly—to others, for our own value and goodness is exactly what we suppose and expect of everyone else. If we are dissatisfied with ourselves, if years of negative messages have told us only that we are somehow less adequate than other human beings, that we fail to measure up, it affects every human relationship we have for the worse.

Low self-esteem dwarfs the person we could really be. It sets false limits. It propels us through life looking over our shoulder to see what's wrong with us until, of course, eventually something is, even though we always wanted to be valuable and valued. This high ideal and low self-esteem finally combine to make us dependent on, but resentful toward, the direction and support of others, programmed to their expectations, and increasingly more burdened by our own lack of independence and self-direction.

Then someday all these hidden agendas—worthlessness, dependence, a mistrust of others based on the measuring stick that is our low trust of ourselves as persons—erupt into social reactions, often unspoken but never uncommunicated. The psychologist Gerald Egan says, "Feeling is never suppressed; it is translated into a num-

ber of ungrowthful activities." Hostility, resistance, passive-aggression and displacement of emotions are all simply manifestations of a communication system that is poisoned by a sense of personal inadequacy. Not positive about ourselves, we become defensive and hostile to others. Unhappy in our limitations, we nevertheless resist the influence of others. Unable to surface genuine disagreements for fear of further rejection or ridicule, we subvert the efforts of others or exert indirect control—by never being on time, for instance; by being slow and unresponsive at work; by forgetting or delaying or pouting. Unaccepting of ourselves as we are, unconfirmed in our own worth and unfree to be ourselves, we seethe over one situation in life but take it out on another—when the coffee is cold we kick the cat.

So the circle simply intensifies. The more poorly we relate to others the more negative responses we get back. And the negative feedback only confirms the basic unease we've had about ourselves ever since we began to accumulate those first sad signals: "fat, irresponsible, not as good a baby as her older sister."

Perhaps no incident is more telling than the research of E. R. Guthrie and its later replications. A psychology class conducted an exercise on low self-esteem by identifying an extremely withdrawn, unkempt, mediocre and unpopular student and reinforcing that person with positive communications about simple things. They said, for instance: "That color is perfect on you. Eileen said you're so easy and understanding to be with. We think that with your ability you're the natural person to chair the committee." Each remark was grounded on observable data, no matter how slight. By the end of the year, the student had joined several campus organizations, made the dean's list, become president of an important student group and created a social circle. Objective testing as well confirmed a rise in self-esteem and self-image. Obviously, the affirming attention of significant people had been a healing factor in the positive orientation of an otherwise colorless and even negative life.

Clearly, the effect of one human being on the development of another is profound. More profound is the fact that communication patterns, so unconsciously adopted, so casually explained away as "that's the way I am," are a basic part of personal growth, social effectiveness, and mental health. The important question is then to determine what kinds of messages obstruct full, positive development

and what kinds of communication act as catalysts to growth. For it is the stunted individual, the person denied growth who is finally caught in the divorce, pressed to suicide, driven from the job, reduced to emotional distress, or frustrated to the point of revolution.

Kinds of Language That Hurt

A hurtful communication is any message that generalizes, devalues, or ignores the person. Each of these says "static" or "imperfect" or "bad."

1. *Labels and Stereotypes.* We know only as much about our world as we're able to perceive or consciously to acknowledge. But perception is affected by the language we use to describe what we see. For instance, to call a car a Rabbit or a Cutlass or a limousine is to shape perception, to include some characteristics of "car" but to exclude others. Consequently, language will alter our world vision. It does more than simply report. It draws attention to some qualities of a thing but not to others—even though a number of qualities are present in the same thing at the same time—and so influences our behavior and reactions. To call a stickpin a weapon is to emphasize a quality quite distinct from what we think of when we call it a piece of jewelry.

In other words, labels classify and categorize and evoke reactions that may have very little to do with the entire reality. Whole segments of society have been deprived and smothered in their personal development because people accept labels—Polack, ex-con, nun, woman, homosexual, retard—as a substitute for understanding the whole person. Many have never been able to grow beyond these half-truths.

Labels cut off communication and come laden down with negative vibrations that start the circle of self-hatred and social conflict. The point is that it hurts not to be allowed to be your whole self, your best self, but to be named and discarded for only a part of you.

2. *Evaluations.* After fifteen years of marriage it ceases to be funny that "she burned the first piece of toast we ever had and hasn't improved since." The not-a-good-cook mark translates so easily to not-a-good-wife and affects every other area of that self-image. In fact, always to be graded either good or bad in anything makes all of

life one long track meet, one great academic competition. The stress of being defined only as a winner or loser can eventually become the greatest burden of them all. To evaluate rather than to describe another person's behavior—"You're a drunk" instead of "You had six martinis"; "Jimmy's dumb" instead of "Jimmy got three C's and a D"—is the worst kind of entrapment. To get three C's is a fact that may change. To be dumb is a condition that is terminal. Even winners would like to be accepted for who they are instead of for the ribbons they've collected. Or, if not, what proof is there that the love will be there after there are no more ribbons to garner?

The point is that any evaluation, positive or negative, is a potential barrier to growth that hurts personal development and relationships as well.

3. *Evasions.* It is possible to talk to other people without ever really attending to them. And that may be the greatest put-down of them all. By interrupting, shifting topics abruptly, failing to respond to conversational leads or by giving minimal, unrelated or impertinent replies (uh huh; good, good; you bet) one idea comes through very clearly: neither you nor anything you say is interesting or important to me. Poor people report feeling that way when dealing with welfare agents. A woman's conversational topic, research shows, is hardly ever picked up on by men. The dead marriage, we know, is the one where even evaluations have given way to vapid, unmeaningful exchange.

Failing to attend to others in one way or another—failing to let them talk or ignoring their interests or responding without substance or meaning—is domineering and degrading. It is, furthermore, not communication at all. At best it is manipulation masking as interaction: what parents do to children; what bosses do to workers; what teachers do to students; what any powerful do to the powerless. It is the communication of unworth that hurts.

4. *Sexism.* But if evasion is bad, total non-recognition is worse. If someone says, "I'm so hot" there are four possible ways to respond.

1. Positively and directly: "Do you mind this heat?" or "Yes, it is warmer than yesterday," or "Heat can certainly make a difference."

2. Negatively but directly: "Don't complain about the heat," or "Heat is good for you."

3. Tangentially: "Your mail is on the table."

4. Not at all. Nothing degrades a person more than not even to notice that he or she is in your presence. It is a particularly hurtful insult. And half the human race is beginning to notice what a hurtful put-down it is to be treated as if they don't exist or are only owned by someone else. One half of the human race, women, are ignored or never responded to at all in the name of efficiency in language.

It is one thing to be an inferior or less important person. It is another thing to be no person at all. And that is the effect of sexist language: to subsume one entire body of people under the identity of the other, to absorb and deny their individuality, to snuff out their independent existence.

The argument against universalizing language (saying "people" for "men," for instance) is that male words include women too or that the issue is trivial. But words mean what people agree that they mean, and the existence of half the human race is not trivial, unless of course you really do not value it.

There is no such thing as the objective meaning of a word. Words connote whatever people think when they say them. Consequently, most meanings change over time. "Boy" has meant everything from "hangman" to "rascal" to "slave" to "young gentleman." When Chaucer used "harlot" it meant "good fellow." Once "Kleenex" and "Teflon" and "Victrola" were brand names; now they're substances, items. Obviously, words change in meaning when people begin to use them differently or look for new ways to express new understandings. Rockets, for instance, fly but were not called airplanes because that term is simply not able to draw attention to the distinctive characteristics of this new kind of flight.

Sexism is a language pattern that claims to recognize women but allows only male pronouns, terms, and so-called generic titles of male derivation (*chairman*, *brotherhood*, *mankind*, *fraternity*). This non-recognition makes women essentially non-persons. No wonder that women become the unnamed property of someone else (Mrs. Charles W. Everett rather than Eileen Kelley-Everett). No wonder the Church can't hear itself talking only to men. A sacristan in-

formed the new priest that the community preferred the use of universal language in the Mass ("humankind" or "all people" for "men," "community" for "brotherhood") and the benign, patronizing answer was "When I say 'men'—broad smile—I mean everyone." No more obvious a lack of concern for the dialogue of Eucharist or the existence of person can possibly be manifested. What the words meant to the female congregation were simply not important to him despite the fact that addressing someone directly or naming a thing gives them identification and therefore value.

A music publisher who refuses to edit sexist language out of hymn material, arguing that "the ERA is important but pronouns are not," is a person in the language business who doesn't understand language. What isn't in the language will never be in the culture or the mind. That women are not important enough to be recognized in the language is one reason why women don't have equal rights in civil law.

And sexist language affects the position of men in society, too. No word exists in the culture to describe the man who has fathered a child. She has "conceived," she is "pregnant." But isn't he part of it too? What has he done? What is he? The language doesn't tell us. Out of this exclusive linguistic attention to the biological process of bearing a child, the man's rights to child custody or the birth process have been almost obliterated. Only now are the courts beginning to grapple with rights of the unwed father, the divorced man.

New research attests to the general effects of this kind of non-recognition on the self-esteem, personalities, success and emotional health of women.

The use of language to subsume or obliterate peoples is harmful to the development of the rights and responsibilities of both men and women. A great deal of healing needs to be done here.

So, what are the alternatives? What kinds of communication heal and bring to growth?

Kinds of Language That Heal

To be effective, language must be descriptive rather than evaluative, specific rather than general, responsive rather than ignoring, and open rather than defensive.

1. *Descriptive.* An antidote to the perils of evaluation is simply to state facts rather than to make sweeping judgments. If I'm a slob I'm socially undesirable and—since I am what I am—there's no hope. On the other hand, a descriptive message gives criteria for growth and a gauge to our relationship. Something like this, perhaps, gives direction in a way that the labels "gross," "dirty," "uncouth" do not: "I got caught in rush hour traffic three times this week because it took me extra time to pick up your clothes. Please do that for yourself so I'm not edgy about how the house looks or late for work."

No attack has been leveled, no vague expectations relayed. The contract is clear and the needs can be negotiated without a lowering of self-esteem or a denial of personal worth on either part. A message can be sent without name-calling that destroys the value of either person; growth thus becomes possible for both persons.

2. *Specific.* This car dealer, not all car dealers, has been dishonest. This woman, not women in general, cannot park her car. That motel, not the entire chain, is unsatisfactory. The ability to specify rather than to stereotype leaves us open to the possible value of every opportunity of life. Until absolutes and generalizations are eliminated from our vocabularies old barriers will continue to divide us as peoples and new insights can never emerge.

3. *Responsive.* Communication that fails to address, to recognize, to listen, to include is the language that separates groups into oppressors and oppressed. At the parish meeting, for instance, it is possible to say either "those people" or "some of us." One approach pits one group against another; the other commits all of us to work it out together. Instead of dividing people into camps by saying "Those people are agitating" or "They are never satisfied," language can be used to bring us together. We could say, "Some of us as citizens of the United States or members of the Church feel differently about things." But if it is "their" problem instead of "ours" then the lines are already drawn and revolution will be needed to resolve what dialogue could have healed to everyone's advantage.

4. *Open.* The impulse to evaluate, confirm or deny another's experience is an obstacle to communication. The need to agree or to disagree with another's experience (the "I-know-exactly-what-you-mean; why-when-I-was-there . . ." pattern) has often been considered

supportive. The fact of the matter is that support or understanding is not when you either agree or correct my feelings or experience but only when you accept the fact that they are my feelings and allow me to express them and to work them through with you. For it is that ability to admit and deal with my emotions and identity that finally heals.

Anything else blocks self-disclosure, the necessary basis of understanding and intimacy. It directs the person to tell us what we need to hear and so may suppress what the other person needs to say. As a result, people are less sharing, inclined to be wary of what they say, guarded in their openness and alert to defend themselves against rejection, ridicule, or reproof. People need to have their feelings accepted, their experiences noted, their equality and dignity respected. No put-downs, no hostile humor, no sermons are acceptable responses to the awesome truth of another human being's existence and effort to deal with life. Out of this respect grows trust and the possibility of a growthful relationship.

Clearly language can both hurt and heal. Why? Because language affects self-development, mental health, and social interaction. To be growth-producing, language must build self-esteem and personal worth. Language that minimizes others, excludes them, labels them, ridicules them is language that destroys the self, builds frustration and jeopardizes mental health. Language that attends to others as unique, trustworthy and worthy of respect contributes in the most humanizing way to the building of the kingdom.

The disciples wanted Jesus to say exactly which of the dietary laws were necessary to their religious development. But Jesus was not to be fooled by appearances. "It is not what goes into the mouth that saves," he said, "but what comes out that defiles."

And there is the secret of healing: To minister reverently to the other with the sacrament of language.

4. THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

This is a bad news, good news presentation. The bad news is that the worst is not over for religious life. The good news is that the transition is at hand and may well be galvanizing for all of us. To get an idea of where religious life is going, however, it is important to understand where it has been and where it is now; that renewal is a process to be completed over time, not a project to be abandoned.

Psychologists have traced the life-cycle of human beings, biologists the life cycle of plants and animals, historians the life-cycle of movements and governments, and sociologists the life-cycle of groups and institutions. In every discipline the findings are clear: living things change as they grow, and each change brings with it a gift to be enjoyed and a task to be completed. But if that was common knowledge in the 1950's and 1960's, few watchers of religious life remembered to bell the cat. The result was profound shock in both the Roman Catholic population and in religious communities themselves as a life-style that had come to be seen as immutable began to shift and even apparently to crumble. For the most part, the changes were not generally seen as life-giving. And they were not easy. Nevertheless, religious life has apparently gone on. But why did it all happen? Where is it going now, if anyplace at all? Is religious life still a Gospel life or simply a paling shadow of a holier age? The question now is whether or not we are simply presiding over smoldering ruins or whether there is a phoenix in the ashes. It all depends.

The Development of Religious Life

The life-cycle of an institution has five major parts. In the period of *institutional origin* someone somehow senses the unspoken in

have had no one who has actually asked me, no one whom I felt wanted to hear. The Christians I know don't seem to be able to cope with my strong emotions regarding the Church, dismissing them as excessive and unnecessary. And others don't seem to understand why it was such a big deal to leave and how much I struggle with the ongoing situation". The decision to leave is such a big deal precisely because being part of a church involves various kinds of attachment and commitment. Withdrawing from the spiritual, emotional and social ties that church involvement gives is understandably difficult and rarely undertaken lightly. Another participant said, "Because the Church has been so much part of the whole of my life, it feels fairly brave not to be going along with it. But I couldn't justify it any longer".

Fifteen of the participants had had some experience of the Church of England. Around the same number had experienced an evangelical expression of Christianity. Also represented were Baptist, Pentecostal, Plymouth Brethren, and Roman Catholic backgrounds. If a specific denomination or form of Christianity is relevant to a comment, then it is noted. However, the majority of those who took part talked about 'the Church'. 'The Church' is used throughout as a way of referring generally to the institution which represents the Christian community as it is perceived by the participants. Eight of the women who took part continue to have some involvement with a church or Christian organization.

Not In Our Name is about women telling their stories. I hope that other women who identify with any of the comments made will realize that there are others who feel the same, and that their experiences are valid. Some of the comments are very obviously from a woman's perspective and specifically address issues pertaining to women. Others could equally have been said by men. A similar study asking men why they leave the Church remains to be done, and it would be interesting to compare the responses.

The concern here, though, is with what women have to say, because it is clear from the following pages that much is done in the Church and Christianity that women cannot give their name to. As well as offering a means of identification for those with similar experience, I hope that *Not In Our Name* makes challenging reading for all who still sit within the Church and profess to act in *its* name.

Rosie Miles
Nottingham 1993

From "Not in our Name: voices of women who have left the church." Rosie Miles. Southwell Diocesan Social Responsibility Group 1994

THE USE OF LANGUAGE

There is no doubt that the male-oriented language of Christianity proves a problem for some people. The language we use matters, and this is as true of the words we use to talk about God and our experience of the spiritual as of any other kind of experience.

i) *Some women felt that existing language and imagery inhibited their perceptions of God and did not incorporate their womanhood.*

'I find all the male language restricting.'

'The Church restricts God to an image of maleness I just can't relate to.'

'Masculine images of God, so heavily over-used, contribute to women's subjection by reinforcing the heavy hand of a lifetime's paternalism, and by telling women that God is not really on their side. Certainly, I have found that praying to 'Mother God' introduces a new meaningfulness to my prayers, and gives me a sort of help and comfort not supplied by the image of 'Father God'.'

'When I think of a male God I don't have any image in my head because the concept of a male God is a really empty one as it's been pummelled and pummelled into me since I was a child; but if I think of a female God I immediately have very vivid visual imagery of enormous massive breasts and an extremely large-hipped woman who enfolds and envelopes everything, who regenerates and recreates everything. A creative life-source who is vast.'

'I've not gone into goddess worship but I think there are ways of looking at God still within the Christian tradition that are so much more creative. You don't just have to say God's 'Father' - God can be a lot of other images, not just restricted to the Bible either. There can be much creative language used and that excites me, perhaps because I like what language can do, and because it has a power.'

'I find the idea of a Father God much more difficult than the figure of Jesus.'

'How can a child who has known their father as an abuser pray to God the Father without feeling sick?'

'I hold on very firmly to the things that I discover about God which I find are beautiful as opposed to powerful.'

'I wouldn't want to say that the notion of a powerful God is a male notion, but I would say that the notion of a powerful God, in isolation, doesn't answer many of the really profound experiences I have as a human being. I don't know whether it's as a woman or as a human being. It's rather empty - power. It doesn't answer experiences like wistfulness and interdependence and need and support. I'm not saying that they're necessarily 'female' qualities but I know that they are experiences which aren't answered by the image of God which is generally presented by the Church.'

'I wonder now whether I may have made a mistake in throwing my concept of God in with the people who have damaged me most.'

'Without us realizing it, the lack of inclusive language must have had a profound effect on us, and I'm only just beginning to realize how important it is not to have everything being male. I don't like it when it's very obviously feminist, but that's only because I don't feel comfortable and right with it, but perhaps I would had I been used to that for years. There are a lot of women who don't see it as an issue because they've not thought about it, and I think that's probably the case with me. I'm only just, in the last couple of years, coming round to seeing how important it's been to me for many years without me knowing it. So I think it's a very subtle thing...I don't think it's something where people ever know how it's affected them - men as well as women. It's equally unfortunate for men who have a gentler, more feminine personality, because it doesn't let them identify with anyone.'

'A church that was good for women would have a liturgy that was more holistic and encompassing. At the moment it's all very male-oriented. If this church was using images so we could relate to God better I would like some more images of women in it. And if male and female we all represent God, how come we can't have male and female attributes given to God? If you look at the liturgy as it stands it's all very male-dominated and women are kept invisible. Where is my representation for me as a woman?'

ii) *The Old Testament was also seen as heavily weighted with masculine images.*

'The Old Testament is loaded with references to God the warrior, God the slayer, God the potent masculine leader beating the hell out of everyone who isn't Hebrew...'

'The Old Testament is so male. It's also very colonial. We all sing about going into battle and fighting the good fight, and that's repulsive. It's repulsive in this day and age - it doesn't fit with our times. War has become a completely different concept.'

'We sing stupid songs about going into battle and brothers doing this and that, and sometimes I refuse to join in.'

iii) *Some women commented on their relation to Jesus, as a male saviour.*

'If you reject the idea of Jesus - which some women do - they say a male saviour cannot save them, or if you reject the idea of Jesus for whatever reasons, then you've probably given up on Christianity.'

'A male saviour cannot save me. It would have to be a woman. The maleness of Jesus is a tremendous stumbling block.'

'Jesus dying on the cross is basically the core of Christianity, and when I finally got to the core I decided that a man being tortured to death wasn't going to be a symbol for me.'

'My God can be 'She', my God can be female, but at the end of the day Jesus has got to be a man. I find lesbians' relationship with the whole of Christianity really strange because how do you work out your relationship with Christ if you're a lesbian? I don't really understand that. Particularly if you're a separatist as well. If you're a feminist lesbian it's about politics and patriarchy and male domination so therefore how do you work out an equal and loving relationship with a male Christ?'

'I still would hold to the basic Christian beliefs in essence. Some things still puzzle me. The aspect of a male saviour - that is really difficult because he was meant to be there as a representation for all and having experienced everything for everybody. Was he gay? Did he understand gay women? I wouldn't say I have written off Christianity completely but I have written off

the trimmings of Christianity. I still have a belief that there is a positive God. It's unfortunate that everyone has named 'him' God and given him a male identity. I would say I don't think that's totally necessary.'

iv) *One woman commented on a need for feminine symbols and representation for women in talking about the divine, and how she felt the Church denied this.*

'The minute you try and offer alternative feminine symbols for the divine, you're met with accusations of heresy.'

'I think that's why feminism is so important, and what the Church doesn't realize, is it doesn't give expression to and validate women, female identity, expressed in divine terms. They'll go so far in saying, "We realize that mankind is exclusive, so we'll change that to humankind, but when we're talking about the Godhead or any other standard it is in solely male terms". And they deny women when they do that. They are emphasizing 'man' as equalling 'male' as all-important. Men are little Gods. God is a big man.'

'The women who are reinterpreting symbols are on the fringe, they're not central. It's like second-best and I don't want second-best anymore.'

'Even though some in the Church may say, "We understand that God is genderless, nonetheless we have to use terms like King, Judge, Lord, Father, etc." And if you try to use feminine symbols for the divine they're not on the same level. They're second-rate symbols because they're not given credence by the Church.'

THE NON-VALUING OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE

There was a general feeling that women's experience is not highly regarded by the Church, and some comments suggested that Christianity itself does not value women's experience either.

'When I first left, it was because Christianity did not engage with women's experiences. It was more than a question of women's ordination or of changing language in services. To correct these (which the Church may yet do) would no longer have been enough for me. Fundamentally, the nature of the Church and Christianity is patriarchal. I now criticize Christianity for its obsession with dualisms: divine/human, male/female, body/soul, humanity/nature, etc. It seems constantly to seek to separate and compartmentalize.'

'One of my major reasons for staying in the Church was guilt: guilt about not supporting the other women who were sticking in there fighting for change. If they could cope, why couldn't I? But I think each individual has to choose where they will work for change; we have to choose where to focus our energies, and for me the Church is just not worth it. It didn't address my experiences or those of women I met or read about. I feel it to be destructive of women's selves, the right to name our experiences, and its concept of God is so male that there seems to be little scope for change. It talks to men about *their* sins, *their* problems, and calls for repentance and change in a way that is often inappropriate for women. For example, women have always cared for others - what they need is assertiveness not humility, self-respect not self-sacrifice.'

'The Church's record historically concerning women is also less than glowing, and I can see no acknowledgement of its failings. It ignores the atrocities it has committed in the past such as witch burnings (some estimate that nine million, the vast majority women, died). Historically, the established Church has done little for women, e.g. aligning itself with those opposing women's suffrage, and it continues to support an image of the family which is at odds with the experience of many. It has never been able to address the realities of

women's lives. I hear no repentance for the Church's sins; there is silence, or at best lame excuses.'

'It's really quite interesting that men have dominated Sunday and women do their washing on 'Moon-day'. And whoever worshipped their washtub? It's so denigrated all that essential side of life. I've done it. Rejected and denied and derided all the feminine things - child-rearing, housework, etc. - and I've tried to live as a man and value those things that men do, and I catch myself at it all the time.'

'I think men don't have the same difficulty if they leave the Church, because competition and individualism are their normal modes anyway. I think that what the organized Churches teach is that there is a truth to be found - there's *one* truth - so it's a competitive attitude to life. And boys are usually brought up to fight for their own individualism. So to leave the Church would just be asserting your own individualism. Whereas for women it's difficult to leave something where there are strong strands tying them to the spiritual. They see the good bits of it, or they want a link with a spiritual community and they don't want to have to admit that the one they know is letting them down. It's like women staying in rotten marriages - they stay in them long past when they should leave. They stay in grotty jobs. It's partly because they don't value themselves and their own experience and partly because they just aren't into that sort of competitiveness. I do think that Christianity is the cult of the individual.'

'Everything that happens to the body is part of the spiritual process - so being born is, sexuality is, childbirth is, illness is, decay is, death is - because none of them are separate from the spirit. And because women are much more in touch with their bodies and with the body's fluctuations and cycles and changes and that whole process, then they have a much stronger link with the spiritual, which men seem to have appropriated. So it feels like Christianity is an appropriation of creativity: God created the world, the Father created the world. It's a real denial of the facts.'

'At the heart of what is wrong is the denial of the feminine and the denying of that spirit towards beauty.'

'I now realize that there is no way I am prepared to worship a male God and a male son with women nowhere. No way. I try not to be too negative about Christ's teachings. But I still think OK so he'd got female disciples, but he

was still a man - who wasn't married. Where is sexuality? Where's menstruation? Where's child-rearing in all of that? He said leave your families - big deal. Leave your families? And go off and leave the women to get on with the child-rearing. It makes me so angry. There are times when I can be tolerant and think he meant something slightly different from that - he meant, "Don't get caught up in the everyday," and, "If you have a real belief and there's something that needs to be done...lots of people can bring up children". It's all right but it's so easily distorted into "Keep the women in the kitchen, silent", and everybody else goes off and has a wonderful time being spiritual. It's this division of spirituality from the everyday, and leaving women to deal with the everyday and denying the spirituality within the everyday that I find so intolerable. And of course most of the established churches are run by men.'

'Women come off worse in terms of the Church's family services, Mothering Sunday, etc., in that it makes people who haven't got a family or who aren't mothers feel very isolated. And if you actually look at the composition of churches, very few are your normal nuclear family.'

The 1992 Methodist Conference report recommends the following:

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that.....

- 1) the use of 'inclusive language' and the exploration of female imagery in our speaking of God should be strongly encouraged in order that:

we seek a more balanced understanding of God, and manner of speaking of God, in whose image both male and female is made.

we avoid encouraging by our language the idea that the male is the norm of the human.

we avoid the marginalization of women through the use of 'exclusive' language and the dominant use of male imagery,

- 2) preachers and leaders of worship should remember how language helps to mould our thinking and attitudes and that we should, therefore, seek to avoid the use of 'exclusive' language which reinforces ideas and attitudes incompatible with Christian belief in the equal standing of women and men,
- 3) the use of inclusive language should strongly be encouraged in all official Methodist publications, and that the practice of using such language in all new Standing Orders should be continued.
- 4) ways should be explored of raising awareness of the issues discussed in this report throughout the church - e.g. through questions on official agendas, through 'language workshops', etc.

*** Resolution

A1. The Conference adopts the report and commends it for study.

The Report itself makes interesting reading. Among the points it makes is that if something is increasingly heard as exclusive "it is inadequate to simply refer people to a dictionary" which gives one meaning as generic. One illuminating paragraph reads "For many who believe in the equality and full humanity of male and female the continued use of exclusive male language is an anachronism which fails to express their belief". The implications of this are those who oppose the use of inclusive language really believe that women are inferior and made so by God.

This document stresses that it is not a question of responding to a current fad but the nature of the gospel and "our Christian conviction that women and men are together made in the image of God" We have an obligation to express this conviction clearly in our language. It advocates replacing mankind by humankind and men by everyone or us, or changing the singular into the plural which is not gender based (they rather than he). Further, humankind is not an ugly modern word, it was in use in the 17th century.

While acknowledging it may not be possible to alter all traditional texts it extols the attempts already being made in changing the words of hymns, although somewhat uncertain of changing "pleased as man with man to dwell" into "Pleased with us in flesh to dwell" (the USA United Methodist Hymnal). It points out the obligation to use inclusive language is particularly important in creating new hymns and liturgy.

In dealing with the section called "Language and Imagery about God" it rather underestimates the effect of heavy emphasis on male language for God "Some people think of God as in some sense male". Among the grass roots Christians this is extremely widespread, and even those with theological training pay lip service to God having no gender, their attitudes often do not match this.

An interesting use of the word strident appears in this Report. So often it is used of any woman who firmly but reasonably states a case for equality. Here we find the emphasis on male language being described as "almost strident". Note the "almost".

There is a section looking at the scriptural and later tradition witness, going over much the same ground as the invaluable Church of Scotland working party report on The Motherhood of God. The point is made that faithfulness to scripture does not tie us at all points to the language of the Biblical text "it does involve a continuation of that search for the most appropriate way of expressing God's revelation".

An interesting paragraph deals with the development of language in speaking of God within the Scriptures themselves, "a process of selection, refinement and innovation. Paul tended to avoid "Israel centred" expressions, in Mt the Kingdom of Heaven is generally used instead of Mark and Lukes "Kingdom of God". John in particular explores bold new imagery such as the Word. The document likens our attempt to find appropriate female imagery in speaking about God to the biblical writers search for better ways to express their conviction about God.

It also suggests that there are a lot of male centred assumptions in biblical exegesis. For instance Eph 5.21ff is often quoted to support the "headship" of men over women but is perhaps better seen as an example of the early Christian "struggle to re-assess the man-woman relationship in the light of our new life in Christ. What is impressive

about this passage is not the way it confirms "male centred" beliefs , it is rather the extent to which it manages to break free from them" through stress on mutuality and relationships. These last two of course are very much hallmarks of feminist theology.

The Report calls for a "dialogue with our own tradition". Part of proclaiming the Gospel is to get away from stultifying time and culture bound concepts. It discusses the implications of understanding the Holy Spirit in feminine terms, the function of words in describing God (metaphor not reality), and the need for a wide variety of images beyond that of Father. Further, we need to examine what is meant by Father - and they suggest, looking at various scriptural meanings, that these are no intrinsically male. Although they do not quote Moltmann, this would tie up with his idea of a motherly father.

Encouragingly the writers of the Report believe that the growing feeling of alienation at male "God-talk" is a feeling grounded in the quest for truth "and in the stirrings of the Spirit"

Reasonably although they mention the nature/nurture debate and whether there is such a thing as women's experience as against men's, they do not go into it in depth, for this is a very open question even among those most ardently seeking gender equality. They do however point to the importance of the interaction of human experience and divine revelation. The Report suggests that there is a particular danger in western culture of seeing male in terms of control and domination, which is translated into patriarchal ideas of God which have a very distorting effect on the "new life" that Christ came to bring us. We also have to be careful about how we use what our culture perceives as feminine if we are to avoid projecting on God another set of stereotypes.

Theologians today are beginning to question the idea of God's impassibility. If God is God of Love, can the divine really remain indifferent to our suffering? In developing anew understanding of God, women who more often suffer powerlessness and vulnerability than men have much insight in speaking to us "of the powerlessness and vulnerability of God". It is good that this Document brings up this issue as it is a concept that is seen as very threatening by traditionalists, who need to keep God at a distance. Janet Morley, in all her pioneering prayer writing has found she roused more ire from this than any other issue. the furore about calling God mother is nothing compared to that of describing God as vulnerable.

Although the writers of this report see using the mother image as balancing the father one, they also foresee a danger in that emphasis on mothering can lead to a perpetuation of our culture's expectation that women should be first and foremost mothers. One image they like is that of Brian Wren "Dear Sister God" which some find speaks "powerfully of God's solidarity with and faithfulness to, us".

The report recognises that it is easier in doing theology to use unfamiliar language than it is in public worship, but there is a tradition of extempore prayer within Methodism which allows for variation. Other problems like having no neutral personal pronoun they suggest getting round by sometimes referring to God as He and sometimes as She. That at least would remind us that God is beyond male or female. Another solution is to avoid pronouns (this of course leads to a tiresome repetition of the noun) or they suggest a possible way forward is using She for the Spirit. For once in this well researched document they

have not followed up the number of feminist theologians who point out the distortions inherent in this usage (from the statutory female in the Trinity, still outnumbered by males, to the objection that there is both male and female in every member of the Trinity). They come close to this in a section on the Trinity where they see problems of calling the three persons, as is often done today in creative liturgy, creator, redeemer and sustainer, "as the work of each person of the Trinity is at the same time the work of the one God".

The Document concludes with a resounding call to men who belittle the issue of language to consider whether their stand does not contribute to the perpetuation of male dominance over women, and to women to consider whether they are not acquiescing in the devaluation and subordination of their own sex. Male centred society (or patriarchy) is very far from the will or gift of God but a deep sin of our own creating.

This is a splendid Report which would be a very good introduction to the subject. It is readable and has the advantage unlike the ICEL reports or the Anglican Making Women Visible of not having to go into detailed recommendations. It is put forward as the beginning of a quest into where looking at the issues raised might lead the Methodist church community - and it is equally relevant to members of other churches. This is a significant signpost in our journey towards reflecting the divine wholeness in a community where women and men are live in mutual sharing, neither dominating the other, witnessing to their equal creation in the image of God.

The Language of the Pilgrim Church

Passionate feelings are aroused by the kind of language we use, indicating the importance words and images have in our spiritual and secular lives. Paradoxically enough, one quite often hears people saying that the language issue is a trivial one, but the furore that is aroused when any change indicates the opposite.

Language has a profound psychological significance and effects our attitudes towards self and others. When "men" are always put forward as a norm this reinforces the feeling many women have of being second class in the church. Although the word men or man has a generic sense this is increasingly less used and there are a number of studies to show that where the word man or men is used the image that comes up in peoples' minds is that of males.

Language, of course, is only part of the social conditioning which makes it hard for many women to be confident in their God-given gifts. With the forthcoming shortage of clergy the laity, women and men, will need to take a more active role, and the importance of openly including women is underlined in the change of language used in the papal "Calling and Mission of the Lay Faithful" (Christifidelis Laici) which came out about five years ago.

This makes the recent Vatican action over the translation of the New Catechism even stranger. The word "women" in the phrase "men and women" now seems to them exceedingly dangerous, leading to a feminist take-over of the Church. It is not without significance that, under pressure from American traditionalists, when they rejected the translation which referred openly to women as well as men, it was given it to a hard-line Tasmanian archbishop: this prelate had no experience in translation, and is chiefly known for having been a leading light in seeing "the reds under the beds" in every movement for bettering the lives of the poor. For all the insistence of the Vatican that everyone knows that men means women too, when it came to the section on the priesthood (1577) they had to put in a special word (*viros*) to indicate that in this instance women weren't included.!

As with so many other authoritarian moves, I think insisting on exclusive language is backfiring. I recently ran a workshop on language at a conference discussing how to make the Church more Vatican II minded.. I have never had such a large proportion of a conference opting for this workshop, and instead of people coming and saying this was just one of many things that needed changing and they didn't give it much priority, the participants, men as well as women, were all furiously angry.

We must give credit to our bishops; They did their best to save the original translation, Bishop Konstant flying out to Rome to urge its retention. When the Association for Inclusive language, which I chair, wrote to the bishops on this matter they told us

that in preparing materials for schools and adult education they would be using inclusive language, and this has happened, if any of you have seen the guidelines produced for teachers on using the catechism.

One of the charges made by opponents of change is that its all political correctness. Doubtless some changes called for are nonsensical, but there is an old Latin adage *abusus non usus tollit*, - abuse doesn't make use unjustifiable - one only has to look at alcohol. No one is going to be harmed if we continue to call manholecovers by that name, but there is real harm if we continue to make women invisible by referring to them as men. I have been in a committee where it was said that we need a new chairman - the effect of this was immediately to turn attention to the men present rather than thinking equally of all the participants, whatever their gender.

In secular society there is a real change towards inclusivity. For instance a year or two ago the Trade Unions realised that "one man one vote" gave the message that unionism was really a man's affair,. therefore they changed it to to one member one vote, fortunately still retaining the same initials. If you listen to radio and TV there is a much greater use of the phrase he or she than in the past. Is the Church, as it so often does, to lag behind society in this matter and so appear to many to be dragging its feet where equality is concerned?

Even though it may not bother you personally, it is important to think of its effect on others. In my work running the Christian Women's Resource Centre I meet a number of alienated women, particularly among the young, who are hungry for spiritual development but who find what goes on in their parish church no longer seems relevant to them. We must be careful not to hang mill stones round the necks of others. It is interesting that when Rome altered the words of the Eucharistic prayer from "shed for all men" to "shed for all" very few people felt this objectionable. There is permission to say brothers and sisters instead of brethren, so why do so many celebrants still use this exclusive term? Probably it is a question of just not thinking about it, so it is important to draw the attention of the clergy to this.

All the major Churches are now becoming aware of the problem of exclusive language (that appears to exclude women) particularly when it relates to believers, and are taking steps to revise their liturgies and hymnals.

The Anglican official report, Making women Visible discusses the reasons for and against change and makes a detailed examination, in the context of the ASB(Alternative Service Book) of how this might be done. For instance a simple shift to the plural, so that they or them is used in place of "he," is often enough. This is something I find very useful, provided it fits the metre of a hymn. I don't know if you know the song "open your ears O Christian people" which is set to a lovely Israeli melody. Its last verse runs "he who has ears to hear his message" which can easily be transformed into "they who have ears to hear the message". One parish I know

has specially typed out hymns using inclusive language as far as possible, as this is less threatening, there is nothing more provocative than inking in changes into hymn books. Generally people do not notice the change unless one tries altering a very well known hymn, in which case it is better to let well alone and make sure it is balanced by other more inclusive hymns.

X Within the Catholic Church the International Commission for English in the Liturgy or ICEL for short has also been pressing for change and one of the principles of their revision of liturgy has been that of inclusive language.. In the early 1980's this organisation put out a consultative document on the proposed revisions of the eucharistic prayers.

(top page of M1 Icel from pack)

So far Rome has only permitted the dropping of the word "men" from the consecration (eg shed for all, not shed for all men), turning down the request of the bishops of England and Wales that changes should be made in Eucharistic prayer IV which is resounds with references to "men". While new rites using inclusive language (eg the RCIA) have been accepted, it is proving more difficult to get Curial agreement to revised rites, such as the one for funerals, even when all the national hierarchy conferences agree on them.

There is of course not much popular pressure for change in this direction but that is because people have not considered the issue. We are in a situation today like that preceding the change from the Latin liturgy. Then the members of the Vernacular Society were thought to be cranks. It was only when people actually experienced the benefits of the Mass in a language they could understand that the great majority saw that the change was good. Often the opposition is based more on resistance to the idea of change, rather than the changes themselves.

Not so long ago I had to work out the readings and hymns for the funeral of ninety year old aunt who had been a devoted Anglican, and whose parish was a thriving if elderly community. In this context we chose inclusive versions of the psalms, used friends instead of men for the Pauline reading and used a text from Khalil Gibran on death as a passage to life. No one except the Vicar noticed the changes although I am sure there would have been protests if we had announced that the service was going to use inclusive language. We decided to let the hymns well alone, but were careful in what we chose.

np2 A similar voice crying in the wilderness today to that of the Vernacular Society 20 years ago is the two year old Assoc. for Inclusive Language, It has its roots in an ad hoc meeting of RC women who through their work in pastoral ministry, adult education

or women's organisation felt that something needed to be done about the way women were so often treated as second class citizens. Out of this meeting came several initiatives, one of which to tackle the language and symbol issue through setting up the Association for Inclusive Language, which has been concentrating on providing educational materials.

Although there are signs of recognition in all the major churches of the undesirability of using language that appears to exclude half the human race it seems likely that real change will only come with pressure from below, and this is only possible when people, both women and men, become aware that language does matter. We have become sensitive in the ecumenical scene about using language that is offensive to other denominations, and we are very careful about not using language that is understood as racist, but so far little thought has been given to the way so much language excludes women, and has become a cause of alienation of an increasing number of women, particularly the young.

It was with this in mind that the Association, in collaboration with women and men with pastoral, theological, linguistic and educational expertise produced its first publication, the study pack "Women, Language and the Church". A wide variety of materials are included at different levels, some being suitable for parish, student, sixth form and other groups who are approaching the subject for the first time, while other items aim at a more knowledgeable sector of the community.

The pack is evidently meeting a need judging by the demand here and overseas from all the churches, clergy and laity alike. The Association of which I am the editor and chief bottle washer has also recently had requests for permission to translate it into Welsh and Brazilian Portuguese for use in Amazonia!, and a Korean trade unionist has taken a copy back to her country with the hope of translating some of the items.

The kit is in loose leaf form, for two reasons. One is that the user can take out what is needed for a particular occasion, the other is that for lack of money the first printing has had to be a do it yourself -the editing done on the Christian Women's Resource Centre Word Processor, and the off set litho printing was done by a parish sister with the aid of her community and some of the parishioners, the collating being done on a snooker table! A wide range of people contributed items, men being particularly helpful with the illustrations, although there was one I had to turn down. Wanting something to illustrate the 4 prophesying daughters of Philip, I did not sufficiently brief a helpful male art teacher. What was produced was very symbolic of the way society, both church and secular looks at women. These four prophets were shown with hands folded and heads hanging meekly down!

There are two aspects of inclusive language in relation to religion. The one is the way we talk of the faith community, the other is how we speak about God, often referred to as "God-Talk". It is comparatively easy to change the sort of language we use about the

community but harder to tackle the problem of how speak about God. Christians tend to forget that all language used of God is a metaphor or image and not the concrete reality.

Many believe that because we talk of God the Father and use the masculine pronoun for the divine, God must be male. Only recently a woman religious, lecturing to a group of RCs with higher education, found it impossible to convince them that God was not male, something that the Pope had found necessary to underline in his document on women "Mulieris Dignitatem". There is no gender in the divinity, although in his human nature Jesus did come as a man. This has been used as an argument against women becoming priests. Yet which is more important, that Christ became human or became a male?

ICEL have proposed that the Creed should be changed to and "became human" in place of "became man", because the latter leads to an unwarrantable implication of the importance of masculinity. Another argument is that women cannot be in the likeness or an icon of Christ. Again this puts emphasis on biology rather than on the personal characteristics of Christ. Jesus was compassionate, caring, good at personal relationships. These, whether by nature or nurture are characteristics more often shown by women than by men. Are men really more Christlike than women?

Fr Enda McDonagh, the well-known Irish theologian, speaking on "the Images of God" at the launch of the language resource pack, pointed out that as all descriptions of God are inadequate we need to use a variety of images to deepen our understanding. The Father/Son relationship is only one way of expressing the life of the Trinity. Of growing importance today is seeing in the triune God a pattern of differentiation, equality and unity which is a model we need to reflect in our lives and language.

Advocates of inclusive language do not want to replace an almighty father by an almighty mother, but to enrich our spiritual insight by using neglected feminine images from the Bible as well as creating new ones of our own. The psalmists gave us many images to express the divine and to limit ourselves only to a small number impoverishes our understanding and benumbs from too much repetition.

There is a contemporary upsurge of creative liturgy and prayer, much of it written by women, for instance "All Desires Known" which has been through several reprints, the material from the Decade of Churches in Solidarity of Women, and the prayers of the Rev. Jim Cotter, such as "Prayer at Night" and his versions of the psalms. I want to read you one of his versions of a key Christian prayer, which I have found very helpful.

Eternal Spirit....

Although in the ordinary public worship of the Mass we are not free to use alternative forms there is still plenty of scope for use of new prayer forms and song in the non-eucharistic worship of groups, families and conferences, or in special vigils and services. The inclusive approach to liturgy, particularly with its emphasis on valuing the experience of women as much as men, can have be of positive help not only in stemming the process of alienation which so many women, especially the young, are now feeling, but in enriching the spiritual lives of the faithful.

We need to work towards a community where both women and men are valued for their own individual God given gifts and not seen through the distortions of stereotype. Language is only one way of working towards the kingdom, but in the words of ICEL it is a powerful tool and one we must use in our journey towards becoming a more Christlike People of God.

The Inclusive Language and Imagery Aspects of the 3rd Progress Report on the Revision of the Roman Missal 1992

This is the third of a series of reports produced by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) which has been sent to English speaking RC bishops around the world asking for their comments. It is hoped that by the summer of 1994 the completed revised missal will be presented to the conferences of bishops for their consideration and vote.

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ....
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and became truly human

instead of "us men" and "was made man"

The ICEL note to this explains that the omission of the generic "men" (Greek anthropos, Latin homines) for the people might be held to weaken slightly the sense of the original, but this was held to be less serious than using a term which is increasingly misleading or excluding as tied to only one gender. The alternative "for us all" was rejected for the reason of a colloquial habit of attaching all to plural pronouns which would diminish the use of "us" as representing the whole human race.

Where became "human" is concerned ICEL had great difficulty in rendering "enanthropesanta", literally "inhumaned". In some older versions of the Creed (cf Denzinger-Schonmetzer Editio XXXVI no 44) this was spelled out further "that is, taking on a complete human person, soul and body and mind and all things that belong to a human being apart from sin". The ICEL Consultation believes that the sense is best captured by "and became truly human". It had to reject "and became human" as this commonly implies a change from severity to kindness. Some would have preferred to keep "and became man" as showing "the particularity of the incarnation in a male person" but the Consultation rejected this as misrepresenting what the Creed affirms at this point. Neither anthropos nor homo carry male overtones as "man" does normally in contemporary English.

PREFACES

ICEL believes that there should be some variety in preface openings, and in places has expanded "God" into a seasonal reflection ie in Advent "O God of hope and promise". There is a proposal in the actual prefaces to replace "Father, all powerful and everliving God" (eg 5 & 6) with "Almighty God, king of endless glory" or (in Preface 9 & 13) Merciful and faithful God. This does not mean they are avoiding the use of "Father" as this appears elsewhere. God of holiness and might also becomes "God of majesty and loving kindness" in the opening preface of the Holy Trinity or eternal God in that of the Annunciation or the Transfiguration and elsewhere. This phrase is also translated in the Mass of Reconciliation I as "most holy God, compassionate and good".

THE LORD'S PRAYER

A number of translation problems, such as the varied possible interpretations of "hallowed be thy name" has led to the translators keeping in "hallowed". "Thy" is replaced by "your" and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil becomes "save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil". The notes point out that the present translation leads people to believe that God entices us to evil and that the English word "temptations" excludes the eschatological meaning of "peirasmos".

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYERS

In these where the Latin has "Domine" the proposal is to use Lord, not Father as at present. In Eucharistic Prayer I Abraham is described as "our father in faith" although patriarch would be a literal translation of "Patriarchae" - but basing it on the Romans 4.11 translation was felt to be best. This is also used in the Spanish and French missal. Although the Consultation most likely did not take it into account, patriarchy these days has an increasingly pejorative meaning and "father in faith" is to be welcomed on this ground as well.

In Eucharistic Prayer II there is an interesting change in translation with reference to ministry. In praying for the Church throughout the world, asking to be made perfect in love together with the Pope and Bishops, and then "and all whom you call to your service" rather than "and all the clergy". The note says that translating "clerus" in this way is "more apposite to contemporary ministry and more faithful to the original meaning of the word than is "clergy". In fact the proposed English translation has a much wider application than the French "et tous ceux qui ont charge de ton peuple" or the Spanish which uses "pastores que cuidan de tu pueblo". A similar use is to be found in the revisions of eucharistic prayers II and IV.

Eucharistic Prayer IV has been marked by its repeated use of man to describe the people: "Source of life and goodness, you have created all things, to fill your creatures with every blessing and lead all men to the joyful vision of your light (note the sexist translation of "multasque laetificares"). The proposed revision is "Source of life and goodness, you have created all thing, that they may abound with every blessing and rejoice in the radiance of your light".

According to the note on these lines the change is in the interests both of fidelity to the Latin and to inclusive language, in the rephrasing bringing in all creation. Further on the 1973 Roman Missal in English reads "you formed man in your own likeness and set him over the whole world to serve you his creator and to rule over all creatures".

The proposed revision runs "you formed man and woman in your own likeness and entrusted the whole world to their care, so that in serving you along, their Creator, they might be stewards of all creation". The note on these lines say the revision has been made for the sake on inclusive language. It is interesting also that they point out that the new translation is not only more faithful to the Hebrew understanding but also reflects the contemporary reawakening of understanding of the relation between humankind and creation. Note their use of "humankind".

The 1973 English text goes on "You did not abandon him to the power of death but helped all men to seek and find you. Again and again you offered a covenant to man and through the prophets taught him to hope for salvation": The change suggested is "You did not abandon them to the power of death but extended you hand in mercy that all who search for you might find you. Again and again you offered humankind a covenant and through the prophets nurtured the hope of salvation".

Further on in the Eucharistic prayer in reference to God so loving the world that the savior was sent we find "a man like us in all things but sin": the revision reads "he lived as one of us in all things but sin".

While most of the English speaking Bishops' Conferences around the world are likely to welcome these much needed revisions, one can only hope that the Vatican, not known to be a friend of inclusive language, will not use its veto. We hear a lot about subsidiarity in Europe and even in Church documents, and this is very much a sphere where this should be a guiding principle. Bishops' conferences should be free to make their own discernment in such matters.

Editor

Abundant Tables of the Discipleship of Equals: Breaking Bread / Doing Justice

**WOC's 20th Anniversary
Saturday, November 11, 1995**

Song: "Wings Unfurled" by Colleen Fulmer

Call to Gather in Her Name

Introductions at Tables

Song: "Sister, Carry On" by Carolyn McDade

Kindling the Lights

Song: "Feed Our Hungry Souls" by Colleen Fulmer

Candle Lighting Response

You are touched by Sophia-Spirit
and connected to women disciples.

Song: "Rise up, O Flame" round in 4 parts, source unknown

Blessing: *(Let us pray together)*

Brak-ha Yah Shek-hi-nah, El-o-hay-nu Mal-kat
ha'-o-lam, a-sheer kid-shat-nu b'-mitz-vo-tay-ha
vet-zee-vat-nu l'-had-lik ner shel Yom Tov.

Blessed are you, Fire of Justice,
for you enkindle in us passion/
as we celebrate a discipleship of equals./

Blessing the First Cup: Water

Song: "Feed Our Hungry Souls" by Colleen Fulmer

Song: "Come, Drink Deep" by Carolyn McDade

Blessing: *(Let us pray together)*

Blessed are you, Source of Life,
for you give us women:/
mothers, grandmothers, sisters,
daughters, lovers, friends, /
who challenge us to be a discipleship of equals./

Blessing the Breads

Song: "Feed Our Hungry Souls"

(Participants echo after blessers)

Discipleship of equals in Africa,
we bless this injera in solidarity with you.

Chant: "We Make Holy Our Bread" by Colleen Fulmer

(Participants echo after blesser)

Discipleship of equals in Latin America,
we bless these tortillas in solidarity with you.

Chant: "We Make Holy Our Bread"

(Participants echo after blesser)

Discipleship of equals in Europe,
we bless this rye bread in solidarity with you.

Chant: "We Make Holy Our Bread"

(Participants echo after blesser)

Discipleship of equals in Asia,
we bless this mochi in solidarity with you.

Chant: "We Make Holy Our Bread"

(Participants echo after blesser)

Discipleship of equals in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand
and the South Pacific,
we bless this damper in solidarity with you.

Chant: "We Make Holy Our Bread"

(Participants echo after blesser)

Discipleship of equals in North America,
we bless this corn bread in solidarity with you.

Chant: "We Make Holy Our Bread"

Blessing: *(Let us pray together)*

Blessed are you, Spirit of Sustenance,
for you bring forth many grains from Planet Earth./
We take, bless, break and eat these breads/
acknowledging the beauty and power of our diversity/
as we work for a discipleship of equals./

Blessing the Second Cup: Fruits of the Vine

Song: "Feed Our Hungry Souls"

Song: "May My Blood Be" by Linda Bessom

Blessing: *(Let us pray together)*

Blessed are you, Holy One of Struggle,
for you call us to live in the best of struggles./
We take, bless and drink this fruit of the vine/
In solidarity with all who are called by the Spirit/
into a renewed priestly ministry, a discipleship of equals./

Blessing the Meal

Song: "Feed Our Hungry Souls"

Blessing: *(Let us pray together, echoing the musicians)*

Blessed are you, Unity in Diversity, *(echo)*
for you toss together our distinctive personalities. *(echo)*
Empower us to respect one another. *(echo)*
May we share our diverse gifts with all *(echo)*
who struggle to create a discipleship of equals. *(echo)*

Eating Together

Blessing the Third Cup: Milk and Honey

Song: "Feed Our Hungry Souls"

Song: "Cup of Blessing" by Sue Seid-Martin and Joan Prefontaine

Blessing: *(Let us pray together, echoing the blesser)*

Blessed are you, Playful One, *(echo)*

for you renew each generation of every nation with children. *(echo)*

May these next generations find open to them *(echo)*

the ministries to which the Spirit calls them. *(echo)*

May they be good caresharers of Planet Earth. *(echo)*

Sending Forth

Song: "Feed Our Hungry Souls"

Prayer: *(Let us pray together, echoing the blessers)*

Blessed be Sophia. *(echo in English, in German)*

Blessed be her holy name. *(echo in English, in French)*

Blessed be all women: young, generative, and wise. *(echo in English, in Spanish)*

Blessed be Sophia's sisters who keep alive the discipleship of equals. *(echo in English, in Chinese)*

Blessed be all children who tell the stories of their foremothers. *(echo in English, in Gaelic)*

Blessed be all men who work to overcome patriarchy and kyriarchy in church and society. *(echo in English, in Italian)*

Blessed be the people at our tables. *(echo in English)*

Song and Dance: "Keep On Moving Forward" by Pat Humphries

Wings Unfurled

Colleen Fulmer
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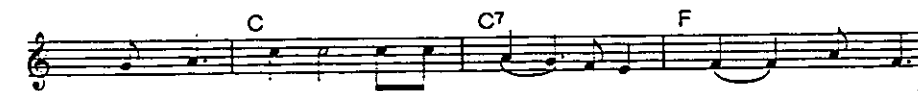
1) You are fash- ioned in my im- age. You are
2) I am fash- ioned in Gods im- age. I am
3) We are fash- ioned in Gods im- age. We are



wo- man, ra- diant Glo- ry. Spir- it ris- ing. wings un-
wo- man, ra- diant Glo- ry. Spir- it ris- ing. wings un-
wo- man, ra- diant Glo- ry. Spir- it ris- ing. wings un-



furled; you are beau- ty for our world.
furled; I am beau- ty for my world.
furled; we are beau- ty for our world.



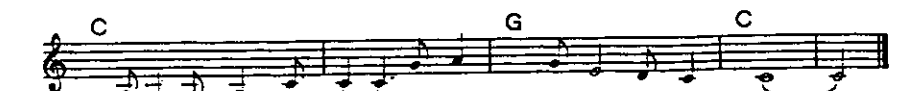
1) We are wo- men and we're gift- ed, we are young, we are
2) We are wis- dom, we are song, in our suf- f'ring we've grown
3) We are wo- men weav- ing cir- cles in our joy in our



old. We are moth- ers, daught- ers, wives; we are sis- ters.
strong. We are pas- sion, we are priest, we are pro- phet.
pain. We are vi- sion, we are hope, we are fu- ture.



We have heard the Spir- it call- in', giv- in' rhy- thm to our
And we break the bread of friend- ship and we share the wine of
Em- brac- ing one an- oth- er arm and arm the dance moves



lives; weav- in' threads of our stor- ies we're a- live!
peace; we are made in Gods im- age, we are free!

Sister, Carry On

With spirit

Words and Music by Carolyn McDade

Musical notation for the song 'Sister, Carry On'. The first staff shows the melody with lyrics 'Sis-ter, car-ry on - Sis-ter, car-ry on - It' and chords Bb, F, Bb, Eb, Bb, F7. The second staff continues the melody with lyrics 'may be rock-y and it may be rough, but sis-ter, car-ry on -' and chords Bb, Eb, Bb, gm, Bb, F7, Bb.

Sister, don't lose the dream
Sister, don't lose the dream
Don't sell out for no short time gain
Sister, don't lose the dream

Sister, don't settle too soon
Sister, don't settle too soon
Til everybody's got their rights
Sister, don't settle too soon

Sister, we share the way
Sister, we share the way
Heart to heart and hand to hand
Sister, we share the way

Stand in solidarity
Stand in solidarity
Together bring a brand new day
Stand in solidarity

Sister, carry on
Sister, carry on
May be rocky and it may be rough
But, Sister, carry on.

Feed Our Hungry Souls

© C. Palmer, 1994

Musical notation for the song 'Feed Our Hungry Souls'. The first staff is the Refrain with lyrics 'O Wis-dom So-phi-a the po-wei and splen-dor of' and chords Am, F. The second staff continues with lyrics 'God, feed our hun-gry so-uls at your a bun-dant' and chords Am, G, Em, Am, G. The third staff has lyrics 'ta-ble ---' and chord Am.

Rise Up O Flame

Source Unknown

Musical notation for the song 'Rise Up O Flame'. The first staff shows four variations of the melody with lyrics 'Rise up O flame, By thy Light glow-ing' and numbers 1, 2, 3, 4. The second staff continues with lyrics 'Bring to us beau-ty, wis-dom and joy.'

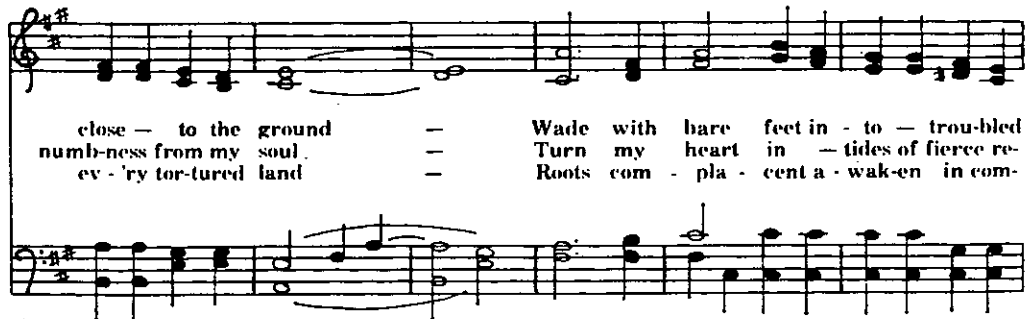
Come Drink Deep

Slowly — thoughtfully

Words and Music by Carolyn McDade



Come drink deep — of liv-ing wa-ters, — with-out cup bend
I turn my head — to sky rains fall-ing, — wash the wounds of
Come rains of hea — ven on the dry seed, — rains of love on



close — to the ground — Wade with bare feet in — to — trou-bled
numb-ness from my soul — Turn my heart in — tides of fierce re-
ev-ry tor-tured land — Roots com — pla — cent a — wak-en in com-



wa-ters where hve of life a — bounds, —
new — al where love and rage run whole, —
pass-ion so hope springs in our hands, — Come drink deep —

Blessing the Bread

© C. Fulmer, 1995



With our hands we bless this bread,
with our hearts we touch the mys-try of Your
love of your pres-ence here with us now.

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Con las ma-nos ben-di-ci-mos es-te pan, con el
cor-a-zon to-ca-mos el mis-ter-io de Tu a-
mor, de Tu pre-sen-cia, a-qui con no-so-tros.

May My Blood Be

©1993 Linda Bessom SND
Words by Archbishop Oscar Romero

May my - blood be a seed of lib-er - a - tion. Que mi san- gré se -

a se - mi - lla de lib-er - a - cí - on. May my - blood be a

May my blood be - - - a

seed of lib-er - a - tion. Que mi san- gré se - a se - mi-lla de lib-er - a - cí -

seed of lib-er - a - tion. Que mi san- gré se - a se - mi-lla de lib-er - a - cí -

-on. May my blood be a seed of lib-er -

-on. May -on. May my - - blood - be a seed of lib-er -

-on. May -on May my blood be - - - a seed of lib-er -

-a - tion. Que mi san- gré se - a se - mi- lla de lib-er - a - cí - on. Que

-a - tion. Que mi san- gré se - a se - mi- lla de lib-er - a - cí - on. Que

-a - tion. Que mi san- gré se - a se - mi- lla de lib-er - a - cí - on.

mi san- gré se - a se - mi- lla de lib-er - a - cí - on. Que

Que mi san- gré se - a se - mi- lla de lib-er - a - cí -

mi san- gré se - a se - mi- lla de lib-er - a - cí - on. May

-on. Que mi san- gré se - a se - mi- lla de lib-er - a - cí -

my - - blood be; may my - blood be; may my - - blood

-on. May my - blood be; may my - blood be; may

May my blood be - - - ; may my blood be - - - ; may

be; may my -- blood be a

be; may my -- blood be a seed of lib-er-

my -- blood - be; may my -- blood - be a

my blood be - - ; may my blood be - - a

seed of lib-er - a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion; a

- a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion; a seed of lib-er -

seed of lib-er - a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion; a

seed of lib-er - a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion; a

seed of lib-er - a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion - - - .

- a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion - - - .

seed of lib-er - a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion - - - .

seed of lib-er - a - tion; a seed of lib-er - a - tion - - - .

CUP OF BLESSING

text: Joan Prefontaine
tune: BLESSING, Sue Seid-Martin

1. Praise my friend this ho - ly cup,
2. Hold up faith - ful - ness and strength,

sor - rows ov - er - throw - ing.
fount of wo - man's bless - ing.

Rocks send forth their hon - ey streams;
Joy is nec - tar to the soul;

hills with milk are flow - ing.
truth the heart's con - fess - ing.

Why de - ny the sa - cred feast?
Love turns lips to hon - ey combs;

Bo - dy, chal - ice, tem - ple!
rain - drops en - ter flow - ers.

Moun - tains drop down fresh new wine;
Stead - fast sun and whirl - ing moon,

God's sup - ply is am - ple.
source of fe - male pow - er.

Text © Joan Prefontaine, 1995, 13875 Gates Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057.
Tune © Sue Seid-Martin, 1995, 2076 Juliet Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55105. For permission to use this hymn and for an accompaniment score, write either Joan or Sue.

Keep On Moving Forward

Handwritten musical notation for the song 'Keep On Moving Forward'. The notation is written on six staves in treble clef, 3/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 3/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics for the first staff are 'v. 1, 6. We're gonna keep on mov-ing for- ward,'. The second staff continues with 'keep on mov-ing for- ward,'. The third staff continues with 'keep on mov-ing for- ward,'. The fourth staff continues with 'nev-er turn-ing back, ____'. The fifth staff continues with 'nev-er turn-ing back. ____'. The sixth staff begins with a treble clef, a 3/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics for the sixth staff are '—v. 2: We're gonna keep on walking proud-ly...'. The word 'walking' is written with a small '(woc-ing)' above it.

v. 1, 6. We're gonna keep on mov-ing for- ward,
 keep on mov-ing for- ward,
 keep on mov-ing for- ward,
 nev-er turn-ing back, ____
 nev-er turn-ing back. ____
 —v. 2: We're gonna keep on walking (woc-ing) proud-ly...

3. We're gonna keep on singing loudly...
4. We're gonna keep on loving boldly...
5. We're gonna work for change together...
6. (same as 1) We're gonna keep on moving forward...

Planned by Diann L. Neu, Rose Mary Meyer and Maria Del Valle
 with Martha Ann Kirk, Shirley Tung, Victoria Rue, Sue Seid-
 Martin and Marta Vides.

Sexist Language and the Alternative Service Book

The Alternative Service Book is the Product of careful work to bring the liturgy of the Church of England into step with our times in the best way possible. It is curious, then, that an enormous area of that task has been ignored. It is admittedly an area which some call trivial - yet churches throughout the world are becoming sensitive to its significance. A liturgy full of exclusive, (sexist), language reflects an unjust society in an unjust church, and militates against the ability of women to feel themselves fully included in Christian life.

Anyone paying serious attention to language in any context will realise that the role played by "mere" words in forming as well as expressing our view of the world is far from trivial. Therefore, the words chosen to express our relationship with God, and with one another as God's people, vitally affect the reality of those relationships whether or not we are always conscious of the fact when the words have become very familiar. Certainly not every woman in church challenges the pressure to identify herself as one of the "sons" in the image of a male God, and to seek to love her "fellow men".

Yet research proves that the word "man" used to describe an "average" human being - the so-called "generic man" - in fact causes user and hearer to image a male human being, thus implying that women are atypically human; outside the norm. Further, the fact that the word has two possible interpretations means that women have in every case to establish whether their inclusion is intended. As Dale Spender says in her book, "Man Made Language", "No man needs to seek further information to establish whether men are included in a reference such as, 'love is important for women' for if men were intended to be encompassed the statement would be 'love is important for men'. The use of 'man' and 'he' to refer also to a woman only creates difficulties for women - which is probably why linguists have never seriously addressed this problem." Moreover, many bible passages used in worship, and much liturgy based on them, retain the word "man" as translation of the Greek "anthropos" which emphatically and unambiguously means a human being or person. Equally, words such as "sons" or "brothers" are unequivocally male, yet women are expected to identify with them in church.

Choosing language for God - make no mistake - is never a simple word game. It concerns theology on a number of levels, and has caused us, who have been involved with this issue for some time, to face deeper theological questions than even we expected in the course of researching this paper. Possibly, some of our thoughts may seem shocking, as if we intend throwing out a lot of babies with a very little bath-water, to the many who say, "I don't think of God as male or female, I just like to call Him Father." It is, however, imperative, to us, to challenge the limited language before we can honestly say we are challenging the limited concept. This remains true, though we are aware both that no language is fully adequate to describe any human encounter with the divine, and that much which we feel to be sexist has in the past been of great value, and for good reason.

We started out by making detailed notes, working through the ASB text, and suggesting possible, though often imperfect, improvements. That work could still be written up, if anyone is interested in reading it, but is impossibly long and repetitive - we found a great deal to challenge. These are therefore more general notes on the kind of things which disturb us, both throughout the ASB, and in more particular contexts.

The ASB, of course, includes a new Lectionary, and a new translation of the Psalter, and these we haven't looked at in enormous detail. This is because huge tasks of scholarship with the original texts are involved. We don't believe - given the difference in translations, and other available information - that any one text of the Bible is perfect and sacrosanct. Many parts of the Bible embody the sexism of their respective ages, and most modern translators, in using generic "men", embody that of ours. Simpler changes can and should be made by the readers themselves; beyond them is a whole further area of study on feminism and the Bible, some of it already in print. Some questions about the choice of readings here remain, and we'll come to those - but not the text.

We did in fact consider the Canticles in Morning and Evening Prayer, and decided that Psalmody was a very difficult area. We have unbounded respect for the work on the Psalter itself. Unfortunately there remains a lot of sexism in amongst their immediate and beauty, and because of the style of the poetry, suggesting simple alternatives to existing words in existing passages doesn't always work - sometimes divilous tactics of juggling with word order, or turning a phrase into the passive, are involved. We were often to be heard mumbling, "Oh, let's throw this prayer out and write a new one" as we wrestled with syntax. However, here are some of the words and phrases which troubled us most frequently:-

LANGUAGE FOR PEOPLE

"Generic" man, men and mankind can usually be adjusted simply by changing to a person, people or humanity. Sometimes "a human being" sounds better. In expressions such as "all men" the "men" can often be dropped, thus - "Christ died for all". The statement that "Christ" came as a man" needs changing to "came as a human" since that is its emphasis.

Examples

"for us men and for our salvation" (Nicene creed) to:-
"for us and for our salvation".

"such good things as pass man's understanding" (Collect, Last Sunday after Pentecost) to:- "Such good things as pass human understanding".

"O God the creator and preserver of all mankind, we pray for men of every race" (General Intercession: Prayers for Various Occasions) to:-

"O God the creator and preserver of all humanity, we pray for people of every race".

"giving him to be born as man" (Eucharistic Prayers) to:-

"giving him to be born as a human" or

"giving him to be born as one of us".

Sons of God are "sons and daughters of God" or "children of God" though the latter can sound slightly ageist. "Offspring" and "Child" can also be used of Christ's "Sonship".

Example

"that we may rejoice to be called the sons of God" (Collect, Thanksgiving for the Institution of Holy Baptism) to:-

"that we may rejoice to be called the sons and daughters of God".

Brothers, Brethren, and Brotherhood In general, the first two can be made to include women as "sisters and brothers" though in a few contexts a different, non-familial relationship such as "neighbours" or "friends" sounds better and the same almost always applies to "brotherhood" - "community" or "love". Some American feminists are intested in reviving "sobling" as a term for a brother or sister which doesn't imply gender. We find it a bit uncomfortably archaic but mention it.

Examples

"what we do for the least of our brethren, we do also" (Collect for Social Responsibility) to:-

"what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do also"

"...honour all men; love the brotherhood." (10 Commandments, Version A) to:-

"...honour all people; love the community".

Fathers can be translated "parents" but usually in fact means "ancestors" as, of course, does Forefathers.

Examples

"Bless the Lord, the God of our fathers." (Canticle, "Bless the Lord") to:-
 "Bless the God of our ancestors"

"...the oath he swore to our father Abraham" (Benedictus) to:-
 "...the oath sworn to our ancestor Abraham"

Fellowship, Fellow are felt to be male terms by some feminists, and can usually be replaced with material about commonness or community, including friendship, comradeship, unity, concord and even solidarity.

Examples

"the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (the Grace) to:-
 "the unity of the Holy Spirit".

"against our fellow men" (Confession) to:-
 "against other people"

Pronouns In the absence of a neutral, personal, third person singular pronoun which is regarded as "grammatically correct" there is often talk of coining one, and some people have tried, but it is hard to change a language in such a deliberate way. American experiments with "s/he" and "he or she" are unwieldly. In alluding to human beings, this problem usually concerns a clause or phrase referring back to a preceding "A person('man') who...." or "Whoever..." and most feminists would in fact use the "grammatically incorrect" but traditional and perfect comprehensible "they".

Example

"Jesus said, Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake, he will save it." (Luke 9:24, set as a Postcommunion sentence) to:-
 "Jesus said, Whoever would save their life will lose it; and whoever loses their life for my sake, will save it."

Language for God

Pronouns After retail and error with "s/he" and with attempts to coin new words, American feminists eventually arrived at the better and more reverent idea of always saying God. This is not always easy, and can sound strange. A sentence with many pronouns can sometimes be better adapted by rethinking its word-order; phrases like "God in God's goodness" will remain. In particular, "Godself" for "Herself/Himself" takes some getting used to and can be avoided, though is not, in fact, unattractive.

Examples

"God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:2 set as a Postcommunion Sentence) to:-
 "God is spirit and those who worship God must Worship in spirit and in truth."

"Glory to God in the highest
 and peace to his people on earth" (Gloria) to:-
 "Glory to God in the highest
 and peace to God's people on earth."

Father The word, and concept, people are often most anxious not to lose - and God's parental love is important - but it is and unavoidably male image. There are two schools of thought among Christian feminists, some of whom find parent-imagery for God too coloured by the experience of each individual to be useful. (What, for example, are fathers and mothers to children from broken homes, one-parent families, and serial marriages?) We, however, while seeing the dangers inherent in anthropomorphosis, do value this part of our heritage, but ask for other images of relationship - not only

Mother, but Sister, Brother, Lover, and Friend - to be made more available.

Speaking specifically of the parental image - and including, of course, the Lord's Prayer in this - there are alternatives. The usage "Father-Mother God" is feasible but a little clumsy. "Parent" strikes some people as impersonal, though being slightly accustomed to the usage, one of us in fact prefers it: perhaps softened by the addition of the epithet "loving". One may also retain "Father" for some prayers, and use "Mother" for others. On one level, the nurturing love of God is in fact closer to the kind of imagery we associate with mothers than fathers; on another, by condemning fathers to a less gentle role than mothers, that imagery is itself sexist.

Sometimes, in fact, "Loving God" is simplest and best. And we have, in the past, happily said the Lord's Prayer in all these ways. Intending in no way to make light of the fact that Jesus himself encouraged us to address God as "Abba" - "Daddy" - we feel that loving relationship is the kernel of truth in that naming, not gender. People have differing, and strong, feelings about this, so we simply offer the various possibilities.

We were particularly startled, when we noticed it, by the apparent clash of images in the phrase "Almighty Father" since the word "almighty" seems to indicate an impersonal kind of power. We have since learnt (from an American feminist source) that one Old Testament phrase translated "God Almighty" - "El Shaddai" - more correctly indicates "All-Sufficing" or "All-Nurturing" with its roots in the word for breast; an image of a breast-feeding mother, in fact. (Also see below - the Trinity.)

Examples

"Almighty God, Father of all mercies." (General Thanksgiving, Prayers for Various Occasions) to:-

"Almighty God, loving source of all mercies."

"...to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King" (Eucharistic Prayer) to:-

"...to give you thanks and praise,
holy Parent, heavenly Ruler"

"Almighty Father,
whose Son Jesus Christ has taught us...." (Second Collect for Maundy Thursday) to:-
"Almighty God,
whose Offspring Jesus Christ has taught us..."

"As a father is tender towards his children:
so is the Lord...." (Committal, Funeral Service) to:-

"As mothers and fathers are tender towards their children,
so is God...."

Trinitarian Images The naming of God as "father" occurs in two kinds of contexts - that previously dealt with, (parental love), and the naming of the "Persons of the Trinity". Normal practice in making these inclusive has usually been to replace the word "father" with the other principal aspect of the same "person" - "Creator". This causes indignation from those who note that all three "persons" were and are involved in the act of creation - the spirit according to Genesis and Christ according to the beginning of John's Gospel. The parallel is therefore imprecise as an exact parallel. How much, though, in fact, does traditional language consistently divide God into three separate but equal "persons"? How far have their roles always overlapped? Is not the very name "God" in prayer, often used synonymously with "the Father"? Does the same not apply to other images? These are theological deep waters, but we would venture to suggest that the naming of the "persons" is, for us, imagery for different kinds of human experience of God, and ought not be completely monolithic - though we accept its historic importance.

We therefor continue to use "Creator" or occasionally "Life-source" or simply "God" for the "Father", and are attracted to the usage, "Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer" for Trinitarian blessings etc, though "Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit" is also acceptable

A further comment on Christ - at first glance male gender is a simple fact here as the Jesus of history and the Gospels indeed had a male body. Yet it is an important distinction that gender was a physical attribute of that body only, and is irrelevant to the ascended and eternal Christ of our own experience. This is sometimes hard to express meaningfully in language, since most of our images for Christ are Gospel-based, but worth struggling with. One important part of this is replacing the relevant male pronouns with the title "Christ". Another is to use "Christ" or "the Redeemer" in preference to the male "the Son" in Trinitarian formulae.

The same, with regard to pronouns, applies to the Holy Spirit, of whom male pronouns are especially jarring, since the Hebrew "Ruach Adonai" is female.

Examples

"...the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you..." (Most blessings) to:-

"...the blessing of God almighty, the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, be among you..."

"...all that I have I share with you
within the love of God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit." (Exchange of rings, Marriage Service) to:-

"...all that I have I share with you,
within the love of God,

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer."

King, Kingship and Kingdom At first sight these words - king and kingship, in any case - present a case for simple substitution of "monarch" "ruler" or "governor"; all inclusive words which we would use in certain contexts. We have, however, thought about the wider implications of monarchist language, finding in it, from the Old Testament especially, the ascription of an oppressive, not to say militaristic, kind of power to God. "Most high" is also a royal title with similar associations. We haven't reached an ideal parallel - "governor" may be the best, though it carries a strange aura of meaning over from colonial politics.

Examples

"Eternal God, the King of Glory," (Collect, Sunday after Ascension) to:-

"Eternal God, glorious monarch."

"...in your beloved Son, the king of all" (Second Collect for World Peace) to:-

"...in your beloved child, the governor of all".

Similarly for "kingdom", an image and an area of theology we by no means wish to lose, but for which we nonetheless want a new word, we have considered "the rule of God", "the reign of God" and "the realm of God" all of which sometimes sound good. But a word for theocracy, placing God at the centre but stressing the freedom and equality of all, entirely free of the taint of feudal subjection to a monarch, is what we want, and it still eludes us. One of us, at an American church of another denomination has encountered "commonwealth", in essence a good word, (but loaded with irrelevant meanings for the British.)

Lord A word so common in liturgy, and in the Bible, as to be impossible always to change it. Yet it is indubitably male, its original meaning is related to military kingship, and its modern meaning, to social class. In the Old Testament, "Lord" translates "Adonai"

used as a respectful title for God, and "God" can often replace it. Modern Christians seem to use the words "the Lord", again as a respectful title, but with the implication of holiness, so we would occasionally consider replacing it with "The Holy One".

The latter is also possible, at times, when the allusion is clearly to Christ, as is "Master" especially in extended images of ourselves as servants. Generally, though, while "the Lord" and "Our Lord" as expressions for Christ disconcert us by their formality as much as their maleness, they are so very common that we would either avoid them entirely or, in allusions to the historical Jesus, allow them to stand. The tag "through Jesus Christ our Lord" as a way of ending prayers is a case in point - there are alternative endings available which we greatly prefer, especially "in the name of Christ".

Examples

"Lord in your mercy,

A. Hear our prayer." (Intercessions) to:-

"God in your mercy,

A. Hear our prayer."

"Lord of all Power and Might..." (Collect, Pentecost 17) to:-

"God of all Power and Might..."

"By the mystery of your holy incarnation... Good Lord deliver us" (Liturgy) to:-

"By the mystery of your holy incarnation... Good Christ deliver us."

There are only two instances, to our knowledge, where the Holy Spirit is named as "Lord" in the ASB, though both, oddly, are of major significance. They are the Kyrie and the Nicene Creed. Male imagery here makes us so uneasy that we are inclined, in the latter to such a radical move as dropping the confusing "the Lord" leaving "... the Holy Spirit the giver of life" (A full text appears in the section on the Eucharist.)

We are only aware that the Kyrie is addressed to each "person of the Trinity" in turn because we have been taught so. In any case, "Lord" could be replaced by "God" here - or, more radically,

"God have mercy,

Christ have mercy,

Spirit have mercy."

Militarism This area of Pauline imagery disconcerts other people besides feminists, but is related to male attitudes. It is easy to see encouragement, to image ourselves as soldiers through a haze of romanticism, since swords and shields are now associated with Sir Galahad, rather than with actual warfare, and since Victorian Hymnody loved to externalise temptation as a "demonic host" creeping round the tents of the just by night, but those of us who find it hard to see anything positive in any war, all this "nobility" ascribed to the instruments of death as symbolism is trying. Christianity concerns the power not of aggression but of love; that involves struggle, to be sure, but the struggle needs to be expressed in other images than these.

Now for some specific points on the individual services.

Sections of the book itself

Morning and Eveing Prayer

After a block of Introductory Sentences where numerous simple adjustments are possible, (changing "the Lord" to "God" where relevant, "mankind" to "people" etc.) we are faced with an opening prayer of which we have had to break the rhythm to produce a version without male pronouns for God, thus:-

We have come together as the family of God
in our loving Parent's presence,
to offer praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive the holy word,
to bring before God the needs of the world,
to ask divine forgiveness of our sins,
and to seek grace,
that through our Saviour Jees Christ,
we may give ourselves to God's service.

Other adjustments are as indicated earlier in the paper, though we must express exasperation with a Confession which says, "we have sinned against you and against our fellow men", when "against other people" is the obvious meaning. Such efforts as we made to deal with the Canticles were clumsy, (see note on the Psalter earlier,) but one of us has wanted for some years to challenge the apparent hatred of women's bodies in verse 9 of the "te Deum". (Why should a virgin's womb be especially abhorrent?) Moving on to the Apostle's Creed, we do find "the Father almighty" a difficult phrase, though respect for the history of the Creeds demands something close to the original, so with some avoidance of male pronouns:-

"I believe in God, the Parent almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
who was conceived...."

(continuing to use "who" for "he" to minimise the effect of a string of male pronouns in the original.)

"....at the right hand of the Creator,
and will come...."

Again, in the collects and Occasional Prayers, we have already indicated the kinds of changes we would make. Suffice it to say that the first section of the Litany is an appropriate place to use the formula, "God the Creator, God the Redeemer, God the Sustainer" and that the General Intercession, General Thanksgiving, and Prayer of Dedication all allude to "mankind" or "men" when they mean "people".

Holy Communion (Rite A)

Just general comments again, not a complete list of sexist bits. Again, some staggering insensitive uses of "man/men" - in the Confession and its preamble, where "our fellow men" should again be "other People", in the Creed, the Intercessions, and the Third Eucharistic Prayer; and some of the other Eucharistic Prayers if we include allusions to Christ "born as man" when the emphasis is on his humanity. Regarding particular sections if the Summary of the Law is used, though scriptural, some "Lords" could go, thus:-

"...O Israel; our God is the only Ruler. You shall love your God..."

Gloria:- "Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.

Great God, heavenly ruler,
 almighty God, and life-source,
 we worship you, we give you thanks,
 we praise you for your glory.
 Jesus Christ, only Son of the Creator,
 True God, Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world;
 have mercy on us;
 you are seated at the right hand of the Creator:
 receive our prayer.
 For you alone are the Holy One,
 you alone have power,
 you alone are the Most High,
 Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
 in the glory of God the Creator."

Nicene Creed:-

We believe in one God,
 the Life-Source, the almighty,
 maker of heaven and earth...

...eternally begotten of the Creator,
 God from God, Light from Light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten, not made,
 of one being with the Creator.
 Through Christ all things were made.
 For us and for our salvation...

...Incarnate of the woman Mary,
 and was made human....

...seated at the right hand of the Creator.
 Christ will come again in glory
 to judge the living and the dead.
 Christ's reign will have no end.
 We believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Creator and the Christ,
 who with the Creator and the Christ is worshipped and glorified,
 and has spoken"

We acknowledge a little poetic licence in both of those. The only point besides those already made about the Eucharistic Prayers is that we would seek to avoid male pronoun of the present-day Christ but leave them in the scriptural and historic central passage, "Who in the same night...". Moving to the Appendices, and especially the Proper Prefaces, a couple make us very unhappy. Number 6, concerning Mary, emphasises those ambiguous words, "humble and meek". Number 7 endorses a trend to idealise the nuclear family to the exclusion of other lifestyles, which we have deeply mixed feelings about. Number 27, Marriage, needs replacing - more on Ephesians 5 when we get to Marriage, but there must be another way of doing this. The other general points apply - Christ's "coming as man" appears a couple of times - and some male pronouns; there are also male pronouns for God in the Ten Commandments, if anyone uses them. Anyone using the full B (Exodus) text in which Number 10 includes wives among the covetable possessions, and after houses at that, of neighbour's, needs some talking to. Frankly, the invectiveness of the A text with modern gloss which, under Number 5, extends the family to include all men and the brotherhood, leaves us a bit speechless. "Live as servants of God; honour all people; love the community." OK?

And in Number 7, "Be reconciled with one another..."

(Rite B) Anyone choosing this text is probable wary of change; in any case, radical adjustments to language for God sit stranglely with the other archaisms. A few generic "men" remain - in the Gloria, the Creed, and the Proper Prefaces, and those could be dealt with.

Initiation Services

There are only a few things to add here to points made earlier in the paper. Firstly, the word "Father" is used a great deal in the prayers to emphasis the parallels between divine and human parenthood of children. We would therefore prefer to see this retained by using "Father" and "Mother" more or less alternately, though "loving Parent" or the slightly unwieldy "Mother-Father God" are both feasible. One of the optional prayers in the Thanksgiving for Childbirth - Number 11 - prays for the Farnet's marriage in terms (again) of the church as the bride of Christ, and could well be replaced by an adaptation of one of the Additional Prayers set for the Marriage service which doesn't use that image. This leads us to the central part of the Baptism services - the Decision, and the Baptism itself. The first part of the Decision, (once one "mankind" has been changed) is acceptable, and the language for signing with the cross seems related to the BCP apart from losing "the flesh" and keeping "the world, and the devil", and presumably has ancient roots. We feel that the one word "sin" covers all the original "unholy trinity" and are therefore confused by this one, but that is outside our brief. What we are concerned with is militarism. For reasons already stated, we find the image of "soldiers" offensive, though we don't want to lose the sense of struggle.

We suggest, "Struggle valiantly for Christ against sin, and continue Christ's strong and faithful servant(s) (or follower, or even minister, in its original meaning) to the end of your life."

The Baptism itself is of course couched in conventional Trinitarian language, and probably changes to that would be unacceptable to many people, but here are our suggestions. "God and his church" can become "God and the church" throughout. "Do you believe and trust in God the CREATOR who made the world?"

A. I believe and trust in the Creator.

Do you believe and trust in Jesus Christ, who redeemed the human race?

A. I believe and trust in Christ.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

A. I believe and trust in the Spirit.

This is the faith of the Church.

All. This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God,

Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

(As the Bishop dips each candidate in water or pours water on them - language in rubrics matters too - he says) N, I baptise you in the name of the Creator, and of the Christ, and of the Holy Spirit."

A few other minor points - when the candle is given, the words spoken by all can simply be, "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God." There is no logical reason to specify "the Father". In the optional prayer Number 38, we would omit the "brother", - "Most Merciful Redeemer and Friend,..." Towards the beginning of the Baptism of Children are some words to be addresses to a child old enough to understand, where we found that all attempts to adjust the word order to avoid a male pronoun for God made it sound as if unbaptised people aren't of God, but we eventually decided the original does that too. In the ministry of the Word for the same service, we happened to look up the scriptural references with particular regard to the generic "man/man" and found that in both cases the Greek says "whoever" and the Revised Standard Version follows that;

this text has, however been taken from the New English Bible. One wonders how many more passages of the ASB would be less exclusive if translations of the Bible were differently considered.

Marriage

We strongly approve the moves towards greater equality and mutuality and would suggest that this could be improved by the simple step of allowing either one of the couple to speak first in the Vows, Exchanging of Rings, etc. - so that they take turns, perhaps. Of course, if people really want to say "Obey" they will, and of course, it is welcome that the prayer for children, Number 26, is no longer compulsory for couples who are biologically able to have children, but may not want to. The priest, in joining the couple's hands, should of course say, "That which God has joined together, let nobody divide." Apart from the fact that a couple of the suggested New Testament readings for Marriage with Holy Communion, if left unchanged, address the couple as "wise men" or "brothers" and apart from Psalm 128, in which "everyone who fears the Lord" has a wife, the only other specific problem in the Marriage service concerns the image of the church as the bride of Christ, and of human marriage as reflecting the relationship of Christ and the Church, with its origin in "Ephesians 5".

We are of course aware that the couple described in the relevant passage are loving in a sense which to many people has very positive aspects. The passage itself is also set as an optional reading. The fact remains that it is simply one of St. Paul's more notoriously sexist moments, and the product of its age, and the image carries implications of deep love, but emphatically not of equality. The BCP, of course, had much more emphatic things to say about "signifying... the mystical union... between Christ and his Church"; most of which has gone from the ASB. There remains one allusion in the opening speech, at the end of the second paragraph where the emphasis has been made of being united in love; nonetheless we would prefer to see the clause omitted. "Ephesians 5:21-33" and the prayer based upon it, Number 35, are both optional, and at the very least to be avoided. The other, and major, culprit is the Proper Preface. We favour an alternative based on the collect:- "And now we give you thanks because through Christ you have taught us that love is the fulfilling of the law. Therefore..."

One minor point - while it is possible to draft an inclusive version of prayer Number 27 which remains close to the original, we are disconcerted by the monarchist language, and prefer to say, "Saviour Jesus Christ, who shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: share in the home of these your followers as guest and friend; give them grace to minister to others as you have ministered, and grant..."

Funeral Services

Bible readings and Psalms are of central importance in how these services are constructed so it is important, though difficult, to make the readings themselves inclusive as far as possible. A thought occurs regarding the 23rd Psalm. It involves a break from the original, of course; but we are tempted by the possibility of turning the whole thing, for liturgical use, into the second person, which by verse 4 it abruptly switches into anyway. This is sometimes a useful tactic with hymns, and may apply to other psalms for other purposes. A particular problem, in dealing with the bible readings, is raised by the reading from 1 Corinthians 15. This is the question of Christ as the new Adam. Of course, the meaning of the name "Adam" is in fact inclusive, so that theologically the pairing is not male; yet maleness has played a part in its history; if not whence the image of Mary as the new Eve in Medieval Mariolatry? - and still sounds conspicuous in the language. As to whatever part of our humanity "Adam" here indicates, that's another minefield. Staying close to the original, therefore, "For as by a human came death, by a human has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam and Eve all die..." (Naturally, "You foolish Man" and "brethren" also need changing, but they are straightforward.) The words immediately preceding the Committal - section 16 - have some irritating uses of "man" in them. We would pluralise these as "people" in both

passages, to do least damage to the poetry. We thought of recommending that the image in Psalm 103 concern a mother's tenderness; but it is also important to acknowledge that human fathers can be tender and gentle. In the Funeral of a Child, and the Prayers for a Still-born Child, it is again especially appropriate to call God "Father" and "Mother" alternating the two; some of the prayers for the parents in the latter are simple and beautiful, and we wonder why they weren't also included in the former - though the father's grief would be better acknowledged if Number 36 read "...Comfort this woman (and man)..."

The Ordinal

Since huge questions of authority and tradition are particularly involved here, the text and style of Ordination services remains formal and highly sexist, in ways which we have already outlined. The only particular questions we want to ask here concern the church's preparedness to acknowledge that the various candidates may/will eventually include women. Indeed, they do now, where deaconess candidates stand alongside the deacon candidates, no matter how neither-fish-nor-fowl their present standing. This largely concerns the passages we may call "job descriptions": "A deacon is called to serve...", "A priest is called by God..." and "A bishop is called to lead..." (though in the case of the last one at least, we don't know whether to hope that the ASB will have been superseded by then.) The best way to make these inclusive, with their string of pronouns, would/will be to put them entirely in the plural, though this is slightly less personal. The same issue, however, affects some of the readings. The second possible Old Testament Lesson for the Ordination of Priests, (Malachi 2) and the Old Testament reading for the Ordination of a Bishop, (Numbers 27) clearly concern the appointment of men; (in the first case, Levi, though nothing in the ASB makes that clear).

The Lectionary

We haven't gone through the texts of all Bible readings, but did look at the Collects, finding much that is attractive, but numerous allusions to "men", "mankind", and "sons of God" among them. Some difficult... sexist. God language also occurs: - "Father" is used often, where we would prefer simply God, and Christ is often alluded to as "your Son" in contexts which refer to the present-day Christ, and therefore need to be inclusive. Again, it would be tedious to list them all. Here are a couple of minor boggles: - Could not the seventh Sunday before Christmas name Abraham and Sarah, to save us from the tedium of always praying to emulate male heroes, (and the virgin Mary). The context is the promise to Abraham, but that promise was not, in fact, that he should have numerous descendants without female assistance in the process. Why specify that James the Apostle left his father, rather than his home, just because we know his father's name? He might still have had a mother living too, (even if Matthew's account does leave poor Zebedee stranded in the fishing-boat itself.)

Those reading the Bible in Church could often be encouraged at least to alter generic "men" as they come to them; this is usually a problem of translation rather than the original text. In any case, most of us acknowledge the original authors to be the product of the time. The position of women in the Bible is subjectmatter for several books, many of them already written; but, since the principle of selectivity in the choice of the readings themselves is clearly well-established, we would just like to pick up one or two things about that.

The passage which most clearly instructs women to submit to their husbands, from 1 Peter 3, is set for Friday in Easter Week, which is problematic in itself; but it includes the next few verses, which lead from one half of the epistle to the other, and which taken out of context, seem to relate the idea of community solely to this model of marriage. The parallel passage from Ephesians 5 is, as mentioned, a possible choice for the Marriage service, but from among a wide choice, so that could be worse.

Pentecost 14 however, supposedly treats of the family; though Year 1 concentrates on marriage and wifehood, and Year 2 treats of fathers, (sic). Year 1 offers no escape, in alternatives from the pairing of Superwoman from Proverbs 31, with Ephesians 5. This combination of role models, taken over the two years, is stifling in almost every way possible. "Proverbs 31" in fact reappears as a possible reading "for any Saint" where the introductory sentences for women saints still stress a distinction between Holy Matrons and Virgins, (so presumably "Proverbs" is taken to allude to the former). It is tiresome to have to say, where material celebrating women is offered, that it is better not to use it, since the "general" material is less limiting.

Polly Blue
Rev T Huncamb

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INTRODUCTION

People normally object to dirty language as offensive: off-color words show disrespect for listeners. An even stronger case can be made for cleaning up sexist language--it offends more than half the population. Sexist language excludes women or gives unequal value to women and men.

This booklet briefly discusses the problem of sexist language and offers some solutions. It deals with sexist language in daily life and discusses how it has extended into the Bible, theology and the life of the church. Although not a complete treatise, it can guide individuals and groups in their efforts to eliminate sexist language.

People who object to cleaning up sexist language resort to several arguments:

- I. Sexist language is not a very important matter.
- II. Language is fixed and cannot change.
- III. The Bible reveals the superiority of the masculine over the feminine.

This booklet will address each of these arguments.

CLEANING UP

SEXIST LANGUAGE

8th Day Center for Justice
22 East Van Buren Street
Chicago, Illinois 60605
(312) 427-4351

CLEANING UP SEXIST LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT

Words, words, words, I'm so sick of words.... So goes the song from the musical *My Fair Lady*. Many people today share Eliza Doolittle's sentiments. An objection to sexist language seems to them nothing more than a tempest in a teapot. But is it not symptomatic of a much deeper conflict in our society?

Sexist Language is Very Common

Our language is replete with sexist words, references and images. They surround us and penetrate our subconscious. Frequently this language ignores or even excludes women. *Manslaughter* --could killing a woman be a less serious matter? *Man overboard* might refer to a woman. *Workman's compensation* --obviously women don't qualify. Politicians concern themselves with the *man on the street* and the *common man*--never mind that women vote, too. *All men are created equal*, but not women?

We write *Dear Sir* to women. We carefully note a *woman* doctor or a *female* lawyer performed professional work lest others automatically think the professional was a man. The singular pronoun used to refer to a man or woman is *he, him, or his*. (*Don't judge someone simply on the basis of his sex.*) A quick check of magazine articles demonstrates the omnipresence of *he* and the avoidance of *she* in articles about people in general. Women frequently are passive companions fulfilling some sexual role: immigrants brought their *wives* and children to the New World, rather than that men and women came together.

Sexual stereotyping also is part of sexist language. It generally depicts women as lacking qualities our culture values--*creativity, courage, initiative,*

strength, intelligence--and relegates them to subordinate roles as followers and helpers. People are *dumb* as a blond, *fickle* as a woman, *weak* as a sister. Sexual typecasting warns men away from such *feminine* traits as *emotionalism, indecision, and fear* but advises women to be as *strong, brave, rational* and *aggressive* as men. *Masculine, manly, and manlike* often are considered complimentary when applied to women: a woman may have *manly* determination or a *masculine* mind, and take adversity *like a man* or struggle *manfully*. Female-associated words, however, generally apply to men in a pejorative sense, as in *fussy as an old lady* or *inconsistent as a woman*.

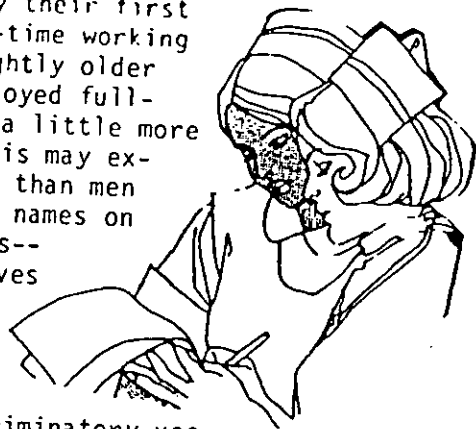
Sexist language is not infrequent or casual. It fills our conversation, books, newspapers, verbal images and even our psyches.

Sexist Language Influences Our Social Relationships

Language is more than words. It is communication between people--i.e., in a social context--and mirrors socio-political structures. Most sociolinguists agree that while language is significant in the maintenance of social structures, changes in language alone will not alter the power structure. It is true: language normally lags behind social change. However, *changes in language can be a significant factor in raising consciousness in the process of seeking change in power structures.* (*The Power of Language: 12*)

Language, then, both reflects and reinforces social relationships. For example, a boss calls the workers by their first names, but workers dare not assume that same right with their superiors. Similarly, doctors or ministers usually are addressed by their titles, but call nurses and patients or women and children

in their congregations by their first names. The average full-time working woman in the U.S. is slightly older than the average man employed full-time, but she makes only a little more than half the salary. This may explain why many more women than men are called by their first names on the job and why in offices--where most of the executives are men and most of the secretaries and clerks are women--the first naming of all women becomes habitual. This discriminatory use of language not only reflects hierarchical relationships but also reinforces them. Masters had the right to name slaves, as though slaves had no identity or name of their own. Usually slaves were given the last name of their masters.



Power and domination, then, are intrinsic to language, which becomes a map of our social relationships--of the way we have granted power and authority to some and impotence and subjugation to others.

The relationship between power and language is evident in Old Testament stories. From Adam's naming of animals to show human domination over them to Moses' demanding a name from God, the Old Testament narrative recognizes the power of language: naming and power are closely tied. God refused to reveal the divine name to Moses, but asserted instead: *I am who am*. After wrestling all night, the Angel named Jacob but would not allow Jacob to name itself. The powerful person speaks with authority and names the weaker. (*Power of Language*: 8)

In most Western societies, women must give up their names but men not only can keep their names but can pass them on intact to their sons, who in turn pass them on to their sons. Women, if they wish to trace their ancestors, normally must search back along a

line of men, each of whom took his respective father's name. The mothers are usually ignored.

Within the last decades, racial, ethnic and women's groups have realized that others more powerful have named them. Civil Rights leaders explained how language was used to maintain discriminatory views of blacks. Analyzing negative stereotypes about blacks, Simon Podair, a linguist, wrote:

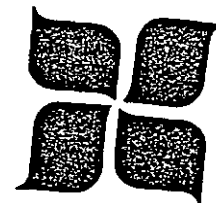
So powerful is language in its imprint upon the human mind that even the minority group may accept the very expressions that aid in its stereotyping. Thus, even Negroes may develop speech patterns filled with expressions that strengthen stereotypes.
(*Language of White Racism*: 264)

Martin Luther King, Jr. observed that even semantics have conspired to make that which is black seem ugly and degrading. He analyzed the offensive connotations of black (as in *black as sin*) and the positive connotations of white (as in *being lily white*). As language has reinforced racism, it has served to maintain sexism.

Male domination is expressed in many ways in our language.

CONTENT: DOUBLE STANDARD SEMANTICS

Studies show that male dominance appears in the very content of words. Words that name men or refer to men tend to have positive connotations such as power, prestige, leadership. Words referring to women generally are negative, and suggest weakness, immaturity, triviality, inferiority. Words used about women--even terms of endearment--frequently assume shady





meanings or become derogatory in a sexual sense. For example, *queen*, a royal term, has come to mean prostitute, but *king* has not been similarly debased. A teacher tried to describe one of her most attractive and capable students: *I found myself saying, "She's really a prince."* Appalled as I was at my own promasculine description, I just couldn't say she was a princess because "*princess*" connotes someone who is fussy and spoiled and accustomed to living in the lap of luxury. (Miller: 58)

Frequently we discover a double standard in descriptions of the same characteristic in men and women. Here are some examples:

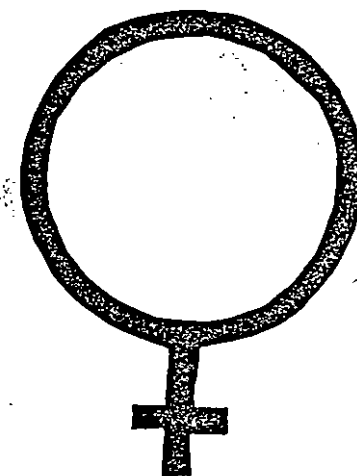
- an aggressive businessman and a pushy businesswoman
- an active boy and a tomboy
- a worried family man and a harried housewife
- a brave man and a tough little woman
- a big-spending male and an extravagant female
- a man who protests and a woman who complains

In its definition of *manly*, the Random House Dictionary (1967) supplies strong, brave, honorable, resolute, virile as qualities usually considered desirable in a man and cites feminine, weak, cowardly as antonyms. Its definitions of *womanly* are like or befitting a woman, feminine, not masculine or girlish. The many positive qualities admired in males could be used to define females too, of course, but they are not. Among the characteristics of women, weakness is among the most often cited. Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* provides this list of qualities considered distinctive of womanhood: gentleness, affection, domesticity,

fickleness, superficiality, folly. Among the qualities considered distinctive of manhood, no negative attributes offset courage, strength and vigor. (Miller: 52)

A similar discrimination appears in Spanish: words applied to men have positive connotations; similar words applied to women have negative or sexual connotations. To become a man (*hacerse hombre*) means to be independent, brave or successful in school, while to become a woman (*hacerse mujer*), alludes to physical developments.

The inferior status of women reflected in the contents of words stems from many social myths. In some ways, we are plagued by a primitive biology that assumes every human being is first of all male and only if something goes wrong is born female. St. Thomas Aquinas followed Greek thought in proclaiming women misbegotten males. Current research in the fields of immunology, embryology, and molecular genetics proves the contrary.



In 1979, *The Chicago Tribune* reported some recent findings on sex determination: *If man is made in the image of his Creator, then God may be a woman.* The article referred to recent scientific evidence that indicates nature's preference for producing females. Dr. Stephen S. Wachtel discovered a molecule--apparently the ultimate determinant of maleness. Were it not added to the embryo several weeks after conception, all babies would be girls. Wachtel stated: *You can think of maleness as a type of birth defect. In the beginning we are all headed toward femaleness.* (Kotulak: 25) Of course both Aquinas' and Wachtel's efforts to rate one sex above the other is ludicrous. They both assume that what develops first is better.

Cleaning up sexist language requires a critical examination of the content of words used for women and men, the discovery of the assumptions underlying the use of positive language for men and pejorative words for women, and the elimination of the double standard.

"MEN" MAKE WOMEN INVISIBLE



Another way in which English expresses male dominance is by using male categories as universal or by using *man* to refer to both men and women, and *he* both for him and her. The female category is absorbed into the male category under a rule introduced as recently as the turn of the past century. While it is true that English now lacks a singular personal pronoun for both male and female, the use of the masculine *he*, *him* or *his* to include women reinforces male dominance.

In this absorption of woman into the universal category of *man*, women become invisible. The words *man* and *he*, however, never become universal, because they are never used to refer just to women. When women protest the use of exclusive male nouns and pronouns, they are often chastised for raising a trivial issue or they are told *Everyone knows the word "man" includes woman* or that it is merely a grammatical convention. If it is trivial, if it is simply a grammatical convention, if maleness

is not valued more highly than femaleness, then there should be no objection to using *woman* and *she* in a universal sense to refer to both woman and man. But this is never done.

Whatever may have been true in the past, *man* has become so intimately tied to its primary meaning of "male person" that it no longer is broad enough to apply to humanity as a whole. If you think this is a minor issue try to imagine how you would feel if our ancestors had written *All women are created equal* or if we referred to our *foremothers* rather than *forefathers* or spoke of the *sisterhood of women* instead of the *brotherhood of men* or referred to artifacts as *women-made* instead of *man-made* (which might be more appropriate, given the number of articles made by women).

Studies have shown that male terms used in the universal sense do tend to exclude women. In 1972, two sociologists tested some 300 college students by asking them to select from magazines and newspapers a variety of pictures that would appropriately illustrate the different chapters of a new sociology textbook. Half the students were assigned chapter headings like *Social Man*, *Industrial Man* and *Political Man*. The other half were given different but corresponding headings like *Society*, *Industrial Life*, and *Political Behavior*. The results revealed that in the minds of the students of both sexes, use of *man* evoked images of males only--filtering out recognition of women's participation in these major areas of life--whereas the corresponding headings without *man* evoked images of both males and females. The authors concluded, *This is rather convincing evidence that when you use the word man generically, people tend to think male and tend not to think female.* (Miller: 19)

Little is known about how or to what extent children learn to use *man*, so-called generically, after having first learned its primary meaning as referring to males, but one study at the University of Iowa in 1973 touched on the subject.



Using a picture-selection technique with 100 children ranging in grade level from nursery school through the 7th grade, it found that *man* in the sentences *Man must work in order to eat* and *Around the world man is happy* was interpreted by a majority of children of both sexes to mean males and not females. A correlative survey of beginning textbooks on prehistoric people, all with *man* in the title, suggests a possible reason for the children's response. The study found that in these books illustrations of males outnumbered illustrations of females by 8 to 1. (Miller:21)



Man is the highest form of life on earth, the Britannica Junior Encyclopedia explains. His superior intelligence, combined with certain physical characteristics, have enabled man to achieve things impossible for other animals. The response of a young boy to this information is likely to be *Wow!*--that of a young girl, *Who? Do they mean me too?* Even if the female understands that, yes, she too is part of man, she must leap the hurdles of all those other terms that she knows from her experience refer to males only. (Miller: 33)

The subtle power of linguistic exclusion does not stop with words like *man, brothers, sons, or fathers*. It is being extended constantly to words for anyone who is not female by explicit definition. Someone once said: *People will give up anything before power--money, home, wife, children--but not power.* The presumption is that the people being discussed would be men with wives and not women with husbands. Sexist language, therefore, reflects and reinforces male dominance by attributing inferior status to woman through the context of words and by making women invisible through the use of male terms to refer to both men and women.

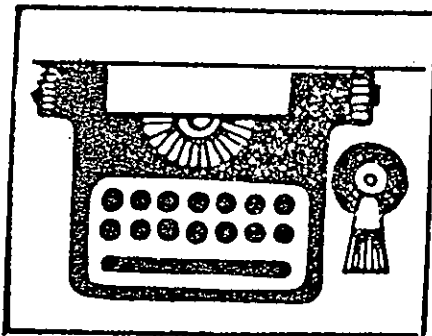
HISTORY: SEXIST LANGUAGE REFLECTS PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

The dominance of men and the oppression of women as reflected in sexist language has its roots in the patriarchal system that still influences our society. Patriarchy refers to a legal, social and economic system that validates and enforces the domination of male heads of families over dependents in the household. Contrary to popular belief, patriarchy did not exist at the beginning of human civilization. After at least a hundred thousand years, during which hunting-gathering and hunting-gardening societies allowed for a more balanced community characterized by communal property, little or no class structure, and balanced productive spheres and powers for men and women, patriarchy arose. It began with the development of large private landholdings, the movement from gardening to animal-plowed agriculture, urbanization and class societies. (Reuther 2: 3)

Under patriarchy, women are regarded as legally dependent on the male head of family, father, husband or guardian, and therefore lack autonomous legal status. Even rights to their person are restricted: e.g. men determine whom they will marry as well as proper sexual behavior for women. Girls learn early they are to serve their fathers and brothers until transferred to another patriarchy--symbolized in the marriage ceremony by the father giving away the bride to another man. Traditionally in English, the wedding ceremony condescendingly pronounces the couple *man and wife* (not husband and wife or man and woman) and afterwards the woman takes the surname of her husband.



Since the Industrial Revolution, this patriarchal ownership has been symbolized in the use of *Mrs.* to designate a woman's status as



different from *Miss* (for those not married). Originally *Mistress*--abbreviated *Mis.*, *Miss*, or *Mrs.*--applied to all females. In the seventeenth century *Mrs.* was separated to refer to adult women and *Miss* to female children. As women gained some inde-

pendence as paid laborers, their titles supplied a modicum of information about a woman's sexual availability and they applied not so subtle social pressure toward marriage by identifying single women as young and inexperienced. In contrast, no terms differentiate married and single males. (Miller: 88-89)

In English and American society, patriarchal law codes remained intact until the middle of the 19th century. Even as late as 1971, the U.S. Supreme Court repeatedly decreed that women were not persons under the law. Today, although remnants of inequality persist in legal codes, subordination of women is held intact largely by socialization into a patriarchal culture maintained primarily through discrimination against women in the workplace. But even here patriarchy is floundering. Women's contribution at home and at work is increasingly recognized as co-equal with men's. Men and women are accepting their co-equal collaborative roles in raising children and working side-by-side as laborers and professionals. Language should reflect this reality.



Sexist Language Offends Increasing Numbers of People

One argument against cleaning up our sexist language claims that only a few people are offended by it, so why bother? While this claim may have been true years ago, it is increasingly less true. More and more people, both men and women, object to sexist language. The English language is changing as a result.

The elimination of terms such as *man* and *mankind* and the masculine pronouns in the generic sense is more common. The National Council of Teachers of English, a group more likely to acknowledge current usages than to initiate new ones, has officially recognized this change. The state of Connecticut now has a law requiring that whenever the title of a public office denotes gender--as in *chairman*, *councilman*, *alderman*--the title shall suit the sex of the person holding the office. The initiator of the law, State Senator Betty Hudson, said *To call a woman a man is not only unfair to the woman involved, but also denies to all women the recognition and regard which accrue from the accomplishments of members of their sex and attributes those achievements to the male sex.* After the law became effective in 1973, Hudson heard from a number of women in public office who did not want their titles changed. *That convinced me the bill was necessary,* she said.

Some women obviously believed that being called selectwoman instead of selectman would diminish their position. The insidious thing about stereotyping is that the minority tends to start believing the stereotype themselves, and begins acting the way the majority expects them to. (Miller: 114-115)



In 1974, California voters decided to remove words like *congressman* and *assemblyman* and the pronouns *he*, *his*, and *him* from their Constitution entirely.

Editorial decisions made by two leading scientific organizations also indicate a climate of change. In 1971, after sixty-five years of publication as *American Men of Science*, that prestigious directory of scientists was retitled *American Men and Women of Science*. And in 1973 the American Anthropological Association



passed a resolution urging anthropologists to become aware in their writing and teaching that their wide use of the term *man* as generic for the species is conceptually confusing and urged that it be replaced by more comprehensive terms such as *people* and *human beings*. (Miller: 115)

By 1975 many major textbook publishers, including McGraw-Hill; Scott, Foresman and Company; and Macmillan, had adopted or were preparing to adopt nonsexist guidelines for their authors and editors. They give practical examples of how language can be used to liberate and expand thought. (See Appendix for more information.) Library cataloguers are also removing the sexist language in subject headings and descriptions. Another gain in eliminating separate and unequal categorization was made when the U.S. Department of Labor revised its list of occupational classifications to drop sex-stereotyped job titles. The United Church of Christ was in the vanguard of change when at its 1973 General Synod it voted to eliminate sex and race discrimination in every area

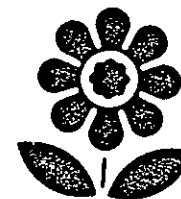


of its life. To implement that affirmation it is writing or revising its laws as well as all printed materials, including worship books and services, hymnals, curricula, journals, and personnel documents to make all language deliberately inclusive.

In 1975, at a symposium celebrating the publication of the *Revised Standard Bible*, scholars agreed that some attitudes and language in the Bible excluded or demeaned women. In 1976, the Call to Action Conference, organized by the U.S. Roman Catholic Bishops, recommended to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic publishing houses that they act to insure that sexist language and imagery be eliminated from all official church documents, catechisms, liturgical books, rites and hymnals. (AD-1977: 6) In 1977, a symposium sponsored by the Council of Theological Seminaries and the Council of Women and the Church pointed out the need to search for inclusive language to replace limited and exclusive images about God and the people of God. (*Power of Language*: 9)



These and many more efforts indicate the increasing positive response to the growing opposition against sexist language. Awareness is rising about the extent of sexist language in our vocabulary and its effect on our consciousness as well as its impact in maintaining male-dominated structures that discriminate against women.



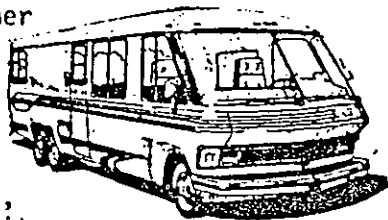
LANGUAGE IS CHANGING ALL THE TIME

Language is a dynamic reality, growing as new concepts evolve and need to be named. Over the past thirty years hundreds of new words entered our vocabulary, as basic scientific research translated into advanced technology for the space program, new drugs, medical treatments and new products for the market place. In 1950, how many people had ever heard of astronauts, tranquilizers, lunar modules, polyester, freeze-dried coffee, discos, crock pots, chemotherapy, stereos, photocopiers, microwave ovens, teflon and output?



Changing economic and political realities also enriched our language. We talk about the Third World, multinational corporations and export platforms. The jet airliner led to shuttle diplomacy and a thaw in the Cold War to detente. Urban neighborhoods experience block-busting, condominium conversion and insurance redlining, while suburbs exploded into split-level houses and sprawling shopping malls.

Not only are new words created but some old ones shed their meanings and others extend theirs: centuries ago *girl* was a young person of either sex, for example; a *knave* was a boy, not a scoundrel; and a *gossip* meant a sponsor in baptism. Old words add new meanings: a *camper* can now have four wheels instead of two legs, and *camping*, far from roughing it, can mean behaving *effeminately*, while something is *camp* when paradoxically it is in because it is so out of date. (Miller: 87)



In Chaucer's fourteenth century tale of one Canterbury pilgrim, *harlot* simply meant *good fellow*. In Shakespeare's time, *child* was ambiguous in much the same way that *man* has become: a child was a young person of either sex, but especially a female. In the thirteenth century, *shrew* was a *wicked, evil-disposed or malignant man* and the word was used specifically to refer to the devil. Applied to males, it weakened gradually in meaning through *rascal* and *villain* until by the 14th century it expressed only mild reprobation. In Chaucer's time, however, it was extended especially to women and, once thus applied, it was soon assigned exclusively to them and thus it survives today. (Miller: 57)

At one time, English had separate and unambiguous words to distinguish a person by sex; *wif* for a female, *wer* and *carl* for a male. *Mann* (a human being) dropped the second *n* in combined forms like *waepman* and *carlman*, both of which meant adult male person, and *wifman*, an adult female person. *Wifman* eventually became *woman* (the plural, *women*, retains the original vowel sound in the first syllable), while *wif* was narrowed in meaning to become *wife*. But *wer* and *waepman*, *carl* and *carlman* simply became obsolete--no longer needed once *man* was used to signify a male specifically and male and female generally. (Miller: 81)



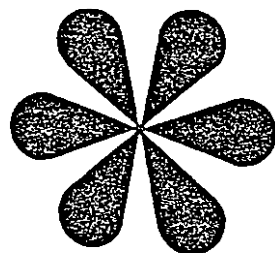
What words will eventually replace the outmoded sexist language no one can predict. Probably most will not be innovations but familiar words recycled. The candidate most likely to succeed the stubborn masculine generic pronoun is a word already in wide use, *they*. Despite grammarians' efforts to restrict it to plural antecedents, *they* is already commonly used as an alternative to the awkward *he or she*. *They* and its inflected forms have been used for centuries by reputable writers from

- Shakespeare(*Everyone to rest themselves*) to Shaw(*It's enough to drive anyone out of their senses*) to Scott Fitzgerald(*Nobody likes a mind quicker than their own*).

The use of *they* as a singular pronoun slips out in response to a healthy democratic instinct to include women when references are made to people in general. An egalitarian impulse also caused the extension of another word--*you*--from the plural to the singular. *Ye* and *you* in Old English were plural pronouns which gradually replaced the singular forms *thou* and *thee*. (Miller: 121)



Language has changed, but further changes are necessary. Certain historical changes have left some language lagging behind. Not until the late 1800s were many women allowed to go to college, so naturally the terms *freshman*, *underclassman*, *permanship*, *bachelor's degree*, *fraternity* and *master's degree* all meant specifically males. Today the reality has changed but not the language. Only inertia holds language back from keeping up with the way women are participating in daily life.



THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SEXIST LANGUAGE

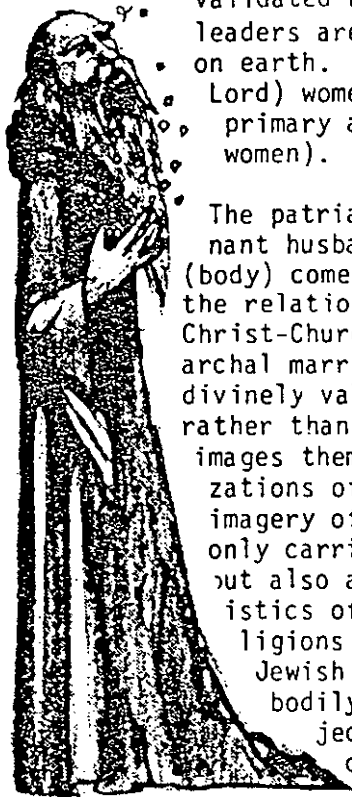
Sexist language in the Bible needs to be addressed at three levels:

- language reflecting patriarchal society;
- incorrect translation;
- feminine images of God.

Sexist Language Reflects Patriarchal Society

The major Western religions have been shaped by patriarchy while they in turn have sacralized or legitimized patriarchy in society. In classical Judaism religious law and social law were identical. They formed one legal code which was not only given by God but also was reflective of *natural law*. Male headship was not only divinely derived but based on the natural order of the universe. As a result, metaphors used to express theological insights were overwhelmingly male-oriented.

The predominant image of God was the Great Patriarch, the Father, complete with *his* creation, *his* angels, *his* people. God as Father became not only just one analogy for God among others (e.g., mother, friend, dove, wind, fire, bread) but the normative image, even though apologists insist that God has no sex. Thus a patriarchal order of society is not only



validated by the image of God, but male leaders are seen as God's representatives on earth. Because God is Father(or King or Lord) women cannot represent God(today, a primary argument against the ordination of women).

The patriarchal marriage pattern of dominant husband(head) and submissive wife (body) comes to be the fundamental image for the relation of God-Nature, God-Israel and Christ-Church. People tend to see the patriarchal marriage pattern and social order as divinely validated by these religious images, rather than recognizing that these religious images themselves are ideological sacralizations of a particular social order. The imagery of man as head, woman as body, not only carries implications of domination but also associates women with characteristics of the body which patriarchal religions regard as negative or evil. The Jewish tradition associated women with bodily *pollution*. Although Jesus rejected this concept of women as unclean, elements of it return in both canon law and popular Christian belief and practice

that distance women from the sacred. (Reuther 2: 2-4)

Traditional Judeo-Christian theology(including Thomistic thought) forbids any image of God except by analogy of proper proportionality. This posits nothing common between the terms compared, since they are strictly heterogeneous to each other. God is beyond all genus. Nothing that is connoted by fatherhood in human experience applies to God and what is true of earthly fatherhood cannot be predicated of heavenly fatherhood. (Tavard: 716) Rather, human fatherhood provides only a trace of an element that puts us on the right direction to relate to God. It was not a patriarchal God that created patriarchy but rather patriarchy that created the patriarchal God and thereby used God to sanctify a system of social domination and subjugation. To make God in the image of male

domination is idolatry. To use God to sanctify injustice is blasphemy. The religious sacralization of patriarchy does not make patriarchy holy; it makes patriarchal religion idolatrous and blasphemous. (Reuther 2: 6)

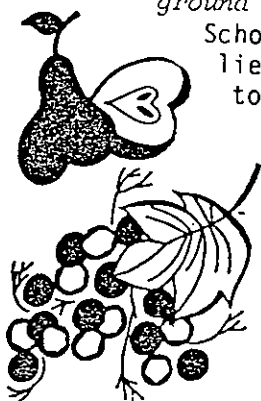
Biblical and theological analysis must question the patriarchal references to God and the religious justifications for human patriarchy. Any effort to identify the deity as male or female rather than as person will have the ethical outcome of one sex justifying its domination over the other. As a result, care is needed to recognize the patriarchal language of the Scriptures and ways to modify it when possible.

Incorrect Translations

Theological and biblical language reinforced by the political realities of the dominance of male clergy within the institution of the church has produced faulty translations to further the patriarchal view. Feminist theologians and biblical scholars are thus working consciously with insights and understanding gained from their own experience as women to challenge these mistranslations and misinterpretations.

Dr. Phyllis Tribble, professor at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, exemplified this effort when she demonstrated that in the language of the biblical creation story, examined outside the traditional confines of patriarchal interpretation, the evidence of full equality between men and women is inescapable.

There are two stories of creation in Genesis. In the first chapter *God created man in the divine image...male and female God created them.* In the second chapter *God formed man of the dust of the*



ground and later made woman from man's rib. Scholars recognize the latter as the earlier version, and at first glance it seems to reflect a more primitive concept of human beginnings. But closer examination of the older story as it was recorded in the original Hebrew reveals some significant points lost in English translations. The *man* formed out of the dust of the ground is 'adham, a generic term in ancient Hebrew for humankind. This original person is seen in the story as an androgynous being, having the potentialities of both sexes. It is for the protohuman 'adham that God plans to make a *help meet* ('ezer) or *fit helper* rather than a handmaiden.

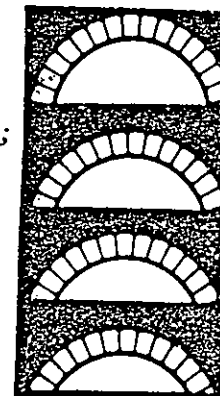
Up until God performed surgery on the sleeping androgynous 'adham, the ancient Hebrew storyteller consistently used the generic term 'adham. Only after the rib episode are the Hebrew words specifying the human male, 'ish, and the human female, 'ishshah, introduced. 'Adham, whose flesh and bones have not been sexually identified as female and male, speaks of the two sexes in the third person. *She shall be called woman* ('ishshah) *because she was "differentiated from" man* ('ish) provides a valid alternative to the Hebrew term usually rendered *taken out of*. The story is far different from the male-oriented interpretation of creation embedded in our conscious understanding and our less conscious use of language. (Miller: 15-16)

When the *Authorized King James Version* of the Bible was completed in 1611, the Old English sense of *man* as a *person of either sex* was still recognized, though the word had already become ambiguous. Not until 1970, when the *New English Bible* translated 'ezer as *partner* was the connotation of *handmaiden* corrected. (Miller: 65)

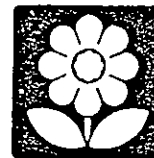


Recent research indicates that Daniel's reference to the *Son of Man* ('adham), used 87 times by Jesus, is more properly translated as *child of the people*.

Biblical translations also have changed the meaning of some of the Greek texts. For example, the *Jerusalem Bible* renders Jesus' words: *A woman in childbirth suffers because her time has come; but when she has given birth to the child she forgets the suffering in her joy that a man has been born into the world.* (Jn 16:20) Modern readers quite naturally attribute the woman's joy to the birth of a son. But the Greek word here translated *man* means a human being. (White: 1202)



Other instances occur in which masculine nouns and pronouns have been substituted for those of common gender. In the Gospel of John (1:12) and in the First Epistle of John (3:1-2), for example, the phrase *sons of God* in the King James Version is changed to *children of God* in most contemporary translations. The word *adelphoi* is commonly translated *brothers* but it actually means siblings, children of one mother, i.e., brothers and sisters. (Reuther 2:8) Since enormous weight is given by Christians to every word of the Bible, these and other words need to be corrected. Indeed, the more we look, the more sexism we find in the Bible--some of it due to modern translation, most of it the result of patriarchal cultural patterns in biblical times.



Feminine Images of God

A more important area of concern than the use of exclusive nouns and pronouns is the variety of metaphors Scripture uses to refer to God. Feminine images are largely lost. When Moses, near the end of his life, admonished the Israelites, he said *You are unmindful now of the God who fathered you*, (Jerusalem Bible, 1966). The Hebrew verb, however, specifically describes the action of a woman in labor and is never used of a man. The translation's use of *fathered* is at the same time patriarchal and erroneous. (In other translations also, such as the *Revised Standard Version*, the *New English Bible* and the *King James Version*, the rendering is incorrect though somewhat different in each case.) After Isaiah describes Yahweh as a warrior and a hero, in the next verse he compares God to a woman in labor (Isaiah 42:13-14). In another passage Yahweh is the one who brings to birth (Isaiah 66:9). Isaiah likens Yahweh's love to a mother's love for her child when he asks, *Can a woman forget her baby at the breast or fail to cherish the child in her womb?* (Miller:66)

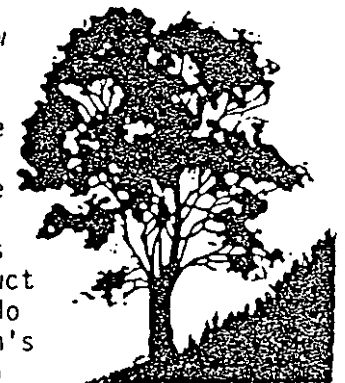
Jesus used both feminine and masculine images to explain God's relationship to the kingdom. The parable of a man planting mustard seed is followed by another depicting a woman burying yeast in dough. Later in Luke, the parable of the shepherd and lost sheep appears with another describing the woman searching her home for a lost drachma.



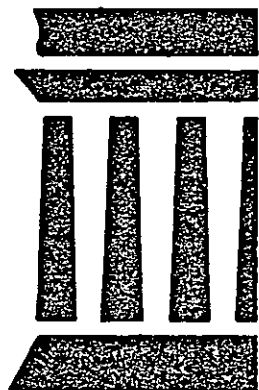
Not only did Jesus liken his suffering to that of a woman in childbirth, he also referred to himself as wishing to gather people as a *mother hen gathers her brood under her wings* (Matt. 23:27; Luke 13: 34). In the prologue to John's Gospel, translators shy away from an exact rendition of the last verse (1:18) which says literally, *God's only begotten, he who is in the Father's bosom*, by substituting *heart*. (White: 1202)

Although we are not free to rewrite Scripture, it frequently needs retranslation. In providing it we must distinguish between what is culturally contingent on a patriarchal society and what is essential to revelation. St. Paul said many things about women that scripture scholars now believe only reflect his culture and therefore are not matters of faith. On the other hand, he made a radical statement which, because it follows the egalitarian teaching of Jesus, is considered to have great theological import: *There is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female; for you are all one person in Christ Jesus.* (Galatians 3:28)

The Gospels reveal that Jesus related to women in a way that challenged Israel's patriarchal system. His treatment of women frequently shocked his contemporaries because it defied traditional Jewish prescriptions regarding relations between the sexes. On his way through Samaria, for example, he stopped and spoke with a woman--breaking a Jewish custom forbidding men to speak publicly with women. Jesus celebrated the widow giving her mite as an example of generosity, and cured the woman with a flow of blood, breaking the purity taboos about women. These and other incidents as well as the general teaching of Jesus do not make the Gospels a text in women's liberation--they are still a product of patriarchal society--but they do provide a Christian basis of women's equality with men. (Reuther 2:10)



Most theologians think the essential core of Christian truth can be separated from the language with which it is expressed. Distortions enter into language for various historical and cultural reasons but the truth of reality behind the language remains. They find a core of liberating truth within the Christian tradition, even as they recognize the distortions present in its male-dominant language. We need to find principles of interpretation that alter male, monarchic, and patriarchal symbols and language and still retain the authoritative message of the Scriptures. This feminist criticism is rooted in the prophetic vision of the Bible itself, which recognizes our constant human tendency to idolatry--to create narrow images of God that reflect ourselves. To guide this task are the prophetic traditions which condemned idolatrous efforts to make God in the human image and which criticized the use of religion to sanction social injustice. Jesus continued this tradition by leveling repeated attacks at religious leaders of his time for their legalism and clericalism at the expense of human (and many times specifically women's) dignity. He criticized the hierarchical and domineering leadership of Scribes, Pharisees and even Gentiles, rejected triumphalistic messianism for himself, and preached and practiced a new model of leadership based on service. He referred to God as Father not to reinforce the sexism of his patriarchal



society but to emphasize God's intimate relationship with people (thus the use of *Abba*). The messianic vision of equality evident in the prophets dominated his teaching so that it can truly be said that in Christ there is neither male nor female. (Reuther 2: 10)

Of course we are not free to avoid the masculinity of Jesus Christ, who, as a concrete human individual, had to have sexuality. But the significance

of the incarnation is not that Jesus became man but that he became human, one of us with whom every woman and man can identify. Our theological language and our prayers should reflect that fact.

Nowhere else does the average Christian so frequently take part in explicit theological statements and actions as in worship. Nothing else does more to form a Christian's thinking about God. Yet sexist language is rampant in liturgy, particularly in the prayers and music. An examination of thirty hymns found in a recent copy of a widely circulated missalette revealed ten hymns with words excluding women, such as *man*, *man-kind* and *brotherhood*; fifteen hymns referring to God in exclusively masculine terms; and five containing sexist language and exclusively masculine images of God. Women are explicitly excluded in such songs as *Sons of God*, *Faith of Our Fathers*, *Whatsoever You Do to the Least of My Brothers*, and *Happy the Man*.

How do we change sexist language in the Scriptures--partly due to incorrect translations and partly due to patriarchal influence? There are several possible approaches. One is to use feminine images of God as well as masculine and another is to use generic references. We can substitute words for Lord (e.g., God), for King (e.g., Ruler) and for Father (e.g., Creator). At first these titles may seem awkward and artificial; but without some conscious effort, sexist language and sexist discrimination will not go away. These titles can be substituted in public and in private readings of Scripture--no doubt in some places more easily than others. (Some wish to substitute *Yahweh* for existing titles for God but this word is commonly considered offensive to Jewish people who believe it too sacred to use). In songs, prayers and readings we can remove the ever present *he*, *his* and *him* when referring to God and when used generically to refer to all human beings. The next chapter offers additional suggestions for cleaning up sexist language.



In recent years the Catholic Church has strongly stated its condemnation of any kind of discrimination, including sexism.

There is therefore in the church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex because "there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 3: 28). (Vatican II: 32)

With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language or religion is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent. (Vatican II: 29)

Certainly from all the evidence available, a child, in modern times at least, would have to be a religious prodigy not to visualize some kind of human male figure out of all the masculine nouns, pronouns and images used in Scripture, theology and liturgy to describe the deity. That many do is illustrated in a small book called *Children's Letters to God*. A special poignancy leaps from one page: "Dear God," wrote a little girl, "are boys better than girls? I know you are one but try to be fair." (Miller: 70)



EXAMPLES AND EXERCISES

This section outlines some actions for those interested in eliminating sexist language.

I. SEXIST LANGUAGE

The structure of English makes it difficult to use phrases that are both non-sexist and grammatically acceptable. Some proposed solutions already gaining acceptance include:

A. Re: generic use of man and other masculine terms

<u>Sexist Language</u>	<u>Alternatives</u>
primitive man	primitive human beings, early women and men
when man invented the wheel	when the wheel was in- vented... when people invented the wheel
businessman	businessmen and women, business leaders, oper- ators of small busi- nesses, entrepreneurs, merchants, industrial- ists, people in busi- ness
ladies and men	women and men, man and woman, the couple

the common man	ordinary people
the man who pays a property tax	the person who pays a property tax
brotherhood	unity, community
manmade	manufactured, handmade, machinemade
Dear Sir, Gentlemen	Greetings, Dear Friend, Customer, Colleague

B. Re: supposedly generic pronouns he, him, his

Sexist example: Don't judge someone simply on the basis of his sex.

Alternatives: Don't judge persons(people) simply on the basis of their sex.

Don't judge someone simply on the basis of his or her sex.

One shouldn't be judged simply on the basis of one's sex.

You shouldn't be judged simply on the basis of your sex.

Don't judge a baby simply on the basis of its sex.

Don't judge someone simply on the basis of sex.

C. Re: stereotyping, including feminine pronouns used to describe activity assumed to be female.

Sexist Language

each citizen must pay his taxes

Alternatives

every(all citizen(s) must pay taxes

each housewife who cooks well	the homemaker(housekeeper, consumer, shopper) who cooks well
-------------------------------	--

ancient Egyptians allowed women considerable control over property	women in ancient Egypt had considerable control over property
--	---

a slave could not claim his wife or children as his own because the laws did not recognize slave marriages	slaves tried to maintain family relationships but laws did not recognize slave marriages
--	--

the teacher...she	the teacher...he or she, teachers...they
-------------------	--

the farmer and his wife	a farm couple, farmers
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a homeowner and his family	homeowners and their children
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a good nurse cares about her patient's feelings	good nurses care about their patients' feelings
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if a man can drive	if a person can drive...(or have a balance: if a woman can drive...and on the same page: if a man works...
--------------------	--

the cat washed herself	the mother cat washed herself, the cat washed itself
------------------------	--

D. Worker's titles should reflect jobs that can be filled by members of either sex.

Titles ending in the word *man* or *woman* are made genderless by replacing those endings with *person* or by suggesting a different wording. Feminine endings such as *ette*,

ess and ine which often imply something false (e.g. *leatherette*), inferior, or smaller (*kitchenette*) or less important are eliminated for a single title.

<u>Sexist Title</u>	<u>Alternatives</u>
authoress	author
aviatrix	aviator
bus boy	dining room attendant
cleaning lady, maid	housekeeper, office cleaner
congressman	member of Congress, congress- person
craftsman	craftsperson, artisan, craftworker
delivery man, boy	deliverer
fireman	fire fighter
mailman	mail carrier, letter carrier
foreman	supervisor
steward, stewardess	flight attendant
suffragette	suffragist
watchman	guard

E. Exercises

1. Watch/listen to 1/2 hour of news on TV/radio:
 - jot down sexist words/phrases
 - if possible compare results with others
 - call or write to the station to express your concern, noting day and time as well as specific examples of sexism
2. Monitor ads during one hour of TV or radio:
 - do same as above
 - write to the advertising company, telling it that its ad would be more appealing if the language were inclusive
3. Circle sexist words/phrases in your local newspaper or a magazine. Send the pages to the editor with a letter expressing your concern.

II. SEXIST LANGUAGE IN LITURGY

A. General Prayers

1. be as inclusive as possible (not brothers but brothers and sisters or God's people)
2. use nonsexist references to God (rather than Father, King, Lord or the phrase Lord, Our God, use Gracious God, Loving Creator)
3. address God in the second person, you, rather than third person which may lead to choosing he or she
4. in the sign of the cross, use: In the name of God, our Creator and of Jesus, our Savior and of the Spirit, Who is holy. Amen.

B. Prayers within the Eucharist:

1. The Gloria [Original text is in parentheses]

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to all(his) people on earth.
Holy God, loving God,
(Lord God, heavenly King,)
Almighty God, Creator (and Father)
We worship you, we give you thanks,
We praise you for your glory.
Jesus Christ, Son of God, Lamb of God, our Savior.
(Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father):
You take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
You are seated at the right hand of God(Father):
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God(the Father).

2. Profession of Faith [Original text is
in parentheses]

We believe in one God, the almighty God,
(the Father, the Almighty)
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten (of the Father),
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, one in Being
with the Creator (Father)
through whom...him) all things were made.
For all of us (men) and for our salvation
Jesus (he) came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
He was born of Mary and became flesh (man).

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered, died and was buried.
On the third day he rose (again)
in fulfillment of the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and lives with God
(and is seated at the right hand of the
Father).
He will come again in glory to judge the
living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, (the Lord),
the giver of life,
who proceeds from God, creator and redeemer.
(the Father and the Son).
Together they are worshipped and glorified.
(with the Father and the Son he is worshipped
and glorified).
The Spirit (he) has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic
Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of
sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.

3. Scripture Readings and Psalms:

Lectors should pre-read selections for sexist
language. Soon only a careless lector will
read A man who does not live in me or Happy
the man who... Future translations will give
non-sexist language. Meanwhile just as we have
adapted scriptural language to change archaic
usages to modern phrases, so it is proper to
insert sexually balanced language.

If the Scripture of the day calls for a passage
with sexist attitudes, then: a) substitute
another passage; b) explain the passage
carefully.

4. Eucharistic Prayers:

In the four canons, change For us men and for our
salvation... to For us and for our salvation or
For us men and women....

Make other changes following examples given
above, e.g. make the following changes in
Eucharistic Prayer IV:

you formed man(us)
set him(set us)
his creator(our creator)
covenant to man(to us)

5. Lord's Prayer

Instead of Our Father, use Loving God or Our
Mother, Our Father who are in heaven....

The closing doxology can be rendered: Through him, with him, in him in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours Almighty God, now and forever.

6. Final Blessing

Celebrant says: May God be with you and gives the blessing:

May Almighty God bless you:
God who created us,
Jesus who saves us,
and the Spirit who makes us holy.

C. Liturgical Music

1. Choose nonsexist songs and hymns.
2. Correct sexist language when possible. Copyright laws allow editing of a limited number of words. Keep rhythm and meter of word changes as close as possible to the original. Sometimes words may need to be shifted in a line to rephrase well. No absolute rules can be given.

Several examples are:

May our light shine before men(all)
We bring God's gift of love to mankind(the world)
To fulfill the command that we love our fellow
man(each one in Christ)
With God as Our Father(Parent) brothers (a family)
all are we
Happy the man(are they) who wanders(wander) with
the Lord
As in brotherhood(unity) we labor
Till all men (people) shall live in freedom
...pilgrims as our fathers(parents) were before

3. Some hymns have already been changed by their authors:

Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers
(people);
He(They) who has(have) ears to hear

4. Some music can be corrected by singing alternate verses with masculine and feminine words, e.g.

I am the Bread of Life, he(she) who eats...

5. Some suggestions for changing specific words are:

men to folk
man to one
brother to neighbor
mankind to people
brotherhood can be alternated with sisterhood

6. If a song cannot be corrected - DON'T USE IT.

D. Corrective Action:

1. Write to official church bodies and ask them to remove sexist language from prayers and hymns. e.g.,

National Conference of Catholic Bishops
1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

2. Review hymns used by your congregation and identify those referring to God and human beings in general in exclusively masculine terms.

- d. report your findings to those responsible for choosing hymns used for worship. Ask them:
 - a. to choose only those hymns free of sexist language
 - b. to choose only those verses free of sexist language and explain to the congregation why they were chosen
 - c. to write to publishers of song books and ask for a policy of publishing only nonsexist songs, suggesting you may need to look elsewhere for suitable materials.

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These guidelines are available directly from the publishers. The addresses are given below.

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Guidelines for Avoiding Bias. Lutheran Church in America, 213 Madison Avenue, New York 10016, 1978.

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Guidelines for Improving the Image of Women in Textbooks. Scott, Foresman and Co., 1900 East Lake Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025, 1974, paperback, free.