

**THE CHURCH AND FEMINISM:
AN EXPLORATION OF COMMON GROUND**

by
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Is feminism at all compatible with the mission and message of the church? Is it possible to be both a Christian and a feminist? The feminist writer Phyllis Trible opens an article with the words: “On the whole, the Women's Liberation Movement is hostile to the Bible, even as it claims that the Bible is hostile to women.”¹ How then does Trible go on to support biblical faith? It could be that her phrase “on the whole” admits the other possibility that feminism and the church may share some common ground, some common goals, some common hope for a better world, although the shared interests may not always be immediately apparent in much of what we read today in either the feminist or the Christian press.

In attempting to discover the common ground of religion and feminism these questions will be addressed: What is feminism? How does it function in general? How does it function specifically within the church? and What effect may feminism have on the Adventist Church in the future? With greater understanding, it is possible that the churches in general and the Adventist church in particular will respond positively to the issues and concerns of feminism and that the feminists in the church will be, and will be seen to be, supportive and not destructive of the church community, representative of the faith and participating in the fruits of the Spirit.

What is Feminism?

As with most labels, there are several problems with the general term “feminism.” For instance, it can easily become limited in our thinking to a particular group, namely: white, middle/upper middle class, professional women. But, it is actually a movement that arose in response to a felt need for inclusiveness—it is particularly sensitive

to any form of exclusion. Its interests incorporate those of all women regardless of where they occupy the working day, their marital status, their economic position, or their color. In our socio-economically structured, racially segregated, gender-based society, women in disadvantaged groups such as the poor, minorities, and third world societies, are usually the disadvantaged of the disadvantaged, i.e. where a group as a whole is disadvantaged, the women in that group are frequently the most disadvantaged.² Feminism responds to this reality.

Then, too, not all feminists are women. Many men, both within and without the church, support the goals and initiatives of feminism. In fact, women alone cannot achieve its goals of greater mutuality, understanding, and cooperation between the sexes. Their raised consciousness cannot find ultimate expression either at the expense of their menfolk or by their exclusion. Feminism aims at transcending sex differentiation by limiting it to those areas of living and being where it legitimately applies--for both men and women. Where it does not legitimately apply, all members of the human family should look forward to greater freedom of self-expression, service, and growth, for gender discrimination has been restrictive in some ways to both women and men.

Another problem with the label "feminism" is that we are tempted to regard it as a late twentieth century phenomenon and not recognize its roots far back in Judeo-Christian history. This may simply be because the label itself has only recently found its way into popular usage. But even in Jewish history, some women at some times found honor and respect in what was primarily a man's world. Some were counted among the prophets, others among judges, rulers and spiritual leaders. There was even a petition for equal rights by the five daughters of

Zelophehad,³ a story with a modern feminist ring to it. Their request provided the opportunity for God to present a new, and more inclusive law to Israel about the property rights of women.⁴ However, it wasn't until New Testament times that women generally were valued as persons in their own right. Some of the most radical changes were suggested by the ministry of Jesus: he accepted women as disciples, students of theology, evangelists, witnesses of the Resurrection, touchable when Rabbinic law declared them unclean, and free of the injustice of double standards in matters of morality.⁵

While there is much more to be discovered in the history of feminism in Christianity, the contributions of some notable women from the early church through to the present century are beginning to emerge in the literature.⁶ Already the life and work of Paula, Melania, Marcella, Saint Lioba, Christina of Markyate, Catherine of Sienna, Dame Julian of Norwich, Dewens Morrey, Loveday Hambly, Margery Kempe, Ann Lee, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and numerous others are becoming part of our common heritage.

One of the most serious problems with using the label "feminism" is that it gathers together under the one term a wide range of significant differences. This can give the whole movement a reputation that arises from only some of its members. And these few are often the most radical, vocal, militant, and, therefore, publicized. So feminists become known to some as women who despise marriage and the home, and who forsake all that is womanly, homey, gentle and sweet. In its broadest terms, however, feminism seeks to support women in whatever role, or combination of roles, they take, whether of home-maker, wife, mother, business woman, professor, politician, or builder's laborer. Yet, it

seems at times that there are almost as many versions of feminism as there are feminists. There are Marxist Feminists, Romantic Feminists, Socialist Feminists, Reformist Feminists, Separatist Feminists, Ecological Feminists, Liberal Feminists, feminists for peace, and religious feminists.

Even among religious feminists there is a great variety of expression and modes of action. There are those, such as Elizabeth Schussler-Fiorenza, Paul Jewett, Judith Plaskow, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Phyllis Trible, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, and Sallie McFague,⁷ who work within the church as scholars, theologians, and committed members to bring a new awareness to their communities of what they perceive to be the proper role and status of women.

There are others who began as members of the church but who now feel so alienated within their spiritual community that they have removed themselves from it and criticize the church from a distance. They reject the church as irredeemably patriarchal, charging that its practices and theology are antagonistic to human personality, especially that of women. They can see no hope for its recovery from its male-dominated beliefs and practices.⁸

Then there are still others who are totally indifferent to the mainstream churches and search for altogether alternative forms of religious and spiritual experience: e.g., Carol Christ is pursuing studies in goddess religions; Starhawk, Emily Culpepper, and Zsuzsanna Budapest in witchcraft; and Naomi Goldenberg in dreams and fantasies interpreted Jungian style.⁹ This range of thinking within even religious feminism makes the label appear very inadequate in capturing all the nuances and varieties of the movement.

Associated with this problem of over-generalization, is the problem of the emotiveness of the term “feminism.” The particular kind of feminism with which one has come in contact, usually through the media, has an emotional response associated with it that continues to be applied to anyone representing feminism at any point along its broad spectrum. Consequently, this may mean that some within the conservative Judeo-Christian tradition will be attracted to feminism through the exemplars they have encountered, but more often it means they will be suspicious of it and even reject it. With a better understanding of the range of positions and options within feminism, hopefully the guilt-by-association inherent in using the label itself will be somewhat ameliorated.

Keeping these limitations in mind, we should address the question of what feminism is. For our present purposes feminism may be defined as a movement which aims to protect and promote the dignity, status, and full personal development of women. The ways this can be expressed in word and deed are numerous, but in simple terms this is the common thread that runs through all versions of feminism. Its goal is accomplished in two basic ways: first, by giving women the opportunity for growth (the struggle for equality); second, by affirming women's personal dignity and unique value (the recognition and acceptance of differences between women and men and among women themselves).

This definition has been translated into beliefs and actions that have been guided predominately by either secular or religious considerations--although these are not always clearly nor mutually exclusive. In secular terms, it has been interpreted in the following kinds of ways:

Humanistic: i.e. womanhood possesses unique power, strength, and virtue that is to be cherished and utilized.

Materialistic: i.e. women are entitled to the same rights and opportunities for material prosperity, power, and prestige as men;

Radical: i.e. women are to be freed of all patriarchal bondage including male-dominated control over social, economic, marital, and religious institutions and relationships.

In religious terms, it has been interpreted as:

Redemptive: i.e. women can be restored to their full womanhood and personhood by the grace of God;

Ministrative: i.e. women are called by God to make their unique contributions in service to home, church, and community;

Transformative: i.e. women and men in full mutuality and complementarity can overcome the divisions between them and together usher in the kingdom of God.

Given the redemptive, ministrative, and transformative interpretations in feminism it may be asked why restrict these possibilities to women? It is true that these objectives could apply equally well to the personal development of men in the world and the church as well. However, feminism focuses particularly on women because, as women, they have faced particular recurrent disadvantages. It is to these specific disadvantages that feminism initially responds. Throughout human history, women have been marginalized, silenced, excluded, restricted, and blamed. They have been consistently socialized to believe they could not, should not, or dare not live confidently, competently, or effectively beyond a few circumscribed roles. The story and participation of women who could serve as models in history, philosophy, literature, theology and leadership including a full account of women's contribution in the Christian church have largely been lost to us, because women have lacked both access to the channels for expression and the encouragement of the established

authorities. As critics of the church are quick to point out, much of the oppression of women has been at the hands of church men.¹⁰ It is “with the house of Israel” that feminism may really find its most compelling challenge and its most fundamental work.

The oppression of women has been so large-scale and so successful that they, as is true of oppressed peoples in other situations, often become party to it themselves. They have frequently lost touch with their authentic selves and deny their own right to personhood and full development. Many women have confessed that feminist consciousness-raising is such a radical change in attitude to one's self, one's calling, and one's self-worth, the experience parallels religious conversion. For the Christian woman, both experiences are the work of God in restoring wholeness to humankind.

How Does Feminism Function Generally?

In order to impose some order on the variety of interpretations within feminism both secular and religious, two emphases of interest and action have been identified. One is described in terms of the search for equality and the other in terms of the search for difference. These categories are suggested for the sake of conceptualization--in actual fact, they are inter-related and interdependent.

The first emphasis, the pursuit of equality, manifests itself in the agitation for women's rights. Provoked by sensed injustices it seeks to redress these wherever they are found. It has given rise to demands for equal pay for equal work, opening up educational, employment, communication, and decision-making opportunities for women, and the removal of discriminatory practices and laws that have worked against them in issues surrounding marriage, divorce, rape, wife abuse,

abortion, sexual harassment, maternity leave, benefits and allowances for single parents, child-care assistance, insurance, health benefits and medical practices, ownership rights, financial services, and payment and status within the helping professions that are mostly staffed by women, among others. It protests any move that could work against women's full equality and dignity, from advertising and other media presentations to papal dictums and legislative decisions.

In the twentieth century, the pursuit of equality entered the public arena with the demand for women's right to vote, but its concerns have ranged much more widely since then. While we may not sanction all the "reforms" that have been won, together they have removed a great deal of hardship from large numbers of women and opened up whole new options and protections for them. Many feel this work is not yet completed.

The second emphasis, inadequately expressed as the search for difference, seeks the meaning of "womanness." It explores answers to questions such as: Who am I, as a woman? How do I make meaning? What is of value to me? How am I unique? Wherein do I find satisfaction and fulfillment? And for the Christian: What would God have me, a woman, to be and to do? In that it is a search for difference and uniqueness, women must seek their own answers to these questions. A great deal of research has shown that women function in significantly different ways from men as leaders, in career choices, the kind and degree of commitment to spirituality and church affiliation, moral decision-making, forms of relationship, cognitive strategies, patterns of growth and development, the issues that concern them, and how they view themselves.¹¹ Some of these differences are clearly due to

processes of socialization, but many suspect that not all differences can be easily accounted for in this way.

Whether by nature or nurture, it seems clear that across a wide spectrum of endeavors, women do have their own way of living and thinking that has yet to be fully articulated. But difference is not essentially divisiveness; the overall objective is to discover the grounds for complementarity and harmony. It may release in women and men, their homes, churches, and communities, a way of living and being, working and thinking, imagining and worshipping, with which they have lost touch in this technological, materialistic, objective-analytic world. For the women themselves, a greater self-awareness may result in a more realistic sense of their strengths and limitations, and may encourage them to make a more authentic contribution to the balance in life and thought.

Most people, it seems, are introduced to feminism through the first emphasis, the agitation for equality. From a young age, human beings have a very keen sense of fair and foul play, when justice is done or not done. Men and women can generally be persuaded to see where women have been treated less even-handedly in law, custom, attitude, and opportunity, especially when this treatment has touched on their own lives or the lives of those closest to them. This is the more militant arm of the movement, the one that makes its voice heard through the media and protests at the gates of legislatures. In fact, for many, it represents all they know of the feminist movement.

It is here that women and men need to work in close cooperation. They have much to gain and much to lose as they consider what is best and just for home, family, church and all the individuals within them,

how they can cooperate and communicate between the sexes with greater understanding, and why Christians need to accept each other fully and ensure the personal rights to fair treatment of all in the society.

Entering feminism through an encounter with injustice in the form of discrimination usually means coming into it with some anger and hurt. Many feminists are enraged, fighting back at the society they perceive as oppressive, sometimes adopting stances to express not only their point of view but the emotion that accompanies it. However, the feminist movement confirms that anger as a human emotion can activate and focus energy. The “hurt” and “rage” periods of the sixties and early seventies have gradually given way to the more “constructive” period of the eighties in the movement as a whole. Many feminists have become active in practical ways in such matters as housing for the poor, refuges for the battered, cooperatives for the underpaid, and peace efforts among the superpowers. And what has proved to be the developmental pattern of the movement as a whole is often repeated in the individual histories of feminists themselves from the time they first personally confronted the issues involved.

It is in the mature phase of the “constructive” period that the emphasis on equality alone does not satisfy in the long term. The realization has come to the thought leaders in the movement that every obstacle to full equality of women could be removed but still it may not essentially change how men think about women or how women feel about themselves. It would not guarantee full mutuality between the sexes. It would not necessarily bring full awareness to women of what is uniquely “womanly” about themselves. For this reason, much of the current action in the feminist movement is centered on the second focus:

the search for what constitutes “womanness.”

While both men and women can participate readily in the struggle for equality (although they may not necessarily approve of all the means used to gain this end or some of the specific ends being sought), and while the efforts of both men and women are needed to overcome discriminatory practices, when it comes to the matter of discovering what constitutes “womanness,” women and men have different tasks. Women must necessarily take the initiative in finding out who they are. Forgoing if necessary a position on the ladder of male-defined success, they must be willing to assert themselves, speak from their hearts and their experience, and seek to express their own personhood independent of whose wife, daughter, or mother they may be. Indeed some women have defined themselves only within the limits of the role they play in respect to the significant men in their lives. Of course, the relationships and commitments women have with others are vitally important in their perceptions of themselves--how good it would be if men more often would see themselves in these terms too--but the point is that who women may marry and the children they may have are not the only considerations in their self-awareness, their personal development, or their spheres of influence and responsibility. It is a time for women to “work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Men can encourage them in this task. They can listen, allow them to work freely, dialogue, criticize while being aware that together they could be opening up new possibilities for all. The lives of both women and men could be enriched by discovering the other's voice within themselves.¹² While either men or women may manifest a particular trait or uphold a particular value more consistently and characteristically

than the opposite sex, there is no value, no point of view, no trait of personality or character that has been shown to be inaccessible to or absent from the other. The cluster of values, attitudes, perceptions, and characteristics that have been traditionally labeled “feminine” or “masculine” range all along the continuum between what makes the “female” identity and the “male” Identity. An individual man or woman is a composite in varying proportions of both and no sharp line separates all men from all women in personality, ability, or character. Full womanhood, for instance, possesses courage, strength, and objectivity; full manhood exhibits a measure of gentleness, nurturance, and intuitiveness. To develop one's distinctive feminine or masculine voice while listening to the other's voice will bring fuller complementarity within one's own self and within the human family.

As many feminists see it, in our heritage and culture developed as “male” traditions, mind has predominated over heart; truth has been perceived in ways that limit it to what can be quantitatively assessed; “the faith” has been passed down to us more as a set of doctrines that have been “proven” from Scripture, and less as a saving relationship between human and divine. The contribution that women can make to self-knowledge and alternative ways of understanding faith and meaning could very well be important experiences for both the world and the church.

How Does Feminism Function Specifically Within the Church?

As already suggested, feminism does not have to be unchristian, non-Christian, anti-Christian, or as Mary Daly has suggested, post-Christian. It can be cast in redemptive, ministrative, and transformative terms.

Feminists discover in Genesis that humankind is constituted of male and female, equal to, but distinct from, each other, and together reflecting the image of God. They see the effects of sin which separated humanity from God, some people from other people, and humankind from other forms of life on this planet. In part, this alienation was reflected in the status accorded women in the human family where custom, law, and attitude relegated them to the level of a man's possessions. But with the ministry of Jesus, the "good news" was that the walls of separation and oppression were broken down. In the kingdom of God, Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female were to have equal access to the grace of God. The gifts of the Spirit were distributed among the members, for teaching, or preaching, or healing, or administering, or helping, or prophesying (1 Corinthians 12: 27,28 NIV). Each participated in his or her unique way as equally honorable members of the body of Christ, making up the "priesthood of all believers." The different gifts of the Spirit were assigned according to the need of the church and not according to gender and women and men worked together as complementary and equal partners in all avenues of ministry to promote and nurture the infant church.¹³

The "equal" and "different" themes revealed in the creation and redemption accounts have, therefore, an even stronger basis in Christian feminism than in secular feminism. Redemption was to restore that which had been lost through sin. The Gospel showed God was no respecter of persons in matters of salvation and service.

No account of the issues and questions addressed by feminists in the churches is complete that does not include the dramatic and controversial contribution of Mary Daly. She began her career as a

committed Roman Catholic, she qualified for two Doctor of Philosophy degrees, one in theology and the other in philosophy, and she is currently a tenured professor at Boston College. But, while at Fribourg, she interrupted her studies briefly for “one very special side trip to Rome”: she visited what she calls “the one great carnival of an event, the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church.” In her words:

Every day during that month-long visit in Rome was fascinating but one day in particular was important. I borrowed a journalist's identification card and went into St. Peter's for one of the major sessions. Sitting in the section reserved for the press, I saw in the distance a multitude of cardinals and bishops—old men in crimson dresses. In another section of the basilica were the “auditors”: a group which included a few Catholic women, mostly nuns in long black dresses with heads veiled. The contrast between the arrogant bearing and colorful attire of the “princes of the church” and the humble, self-deprecating manner and somber clothing of the very few women was appalling. Watching the veiled nuns shuffle to the altar rail to receive Holy Communion from the hands of a priest was like observing a string of lowly ants at some bizarre picnic. . . . Speeches were read at the session, but the voices were all male, the senile cracking whines of the men in red. The few women, the nuns, sat docilely and listened to the reading of documents in Latin, which neither they nor the readers apparently understood. When questioned by the press afterward, the female “auditors” repeatedly expressed their gratitude for the privilege of being present. Although there were one or two exceptions, for the most part they were cautious about expressing any opinion at all. Although I did not grasp the full meaning of the scene all at once, its multileveled message burned its way deep into my consciousness. . . . When I returned home to Fribourg, I really began to work on The Church and the Second Sex.¹⁴

This was Daly's “moment of truth.” The contrast between the women and men in the church in matters of status, participatory power, and even dress and demeanor shook her to the depths of her being. In this moment she saw that much was in jeopardy: the acceptance of her gifts by the church and even her acceptance as a woman in the church. The Church and the Second Sex, first published in 1968, was a plea for

reform. It appeared to fall on deaf ears. It was followed by Beyond God the Father Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation. Again this was a critique of the church's attitude towards women but here she was moving more towards affirming women's personhood outside of the church. In successive books, her criticisms grew increasingly sharper, her separation from "male-dominated" institutions in general, and Christianity in particular, more pronounced.¹⁵ And yet Daly observers wonder why she still has so much bitterness against the church that she claims is no longer part of her world. They wonder why she continues to show signs of hurt at what the church has said and done. Some have suggested that she is undergoing "cultural mourning"--the faith that nurtured her and to which she was committed proved to be ultimately hostile to her. But her separation from her community and the obstacles she perceived between herself and an all-male God have brought her into a state of profound grieving.¹⁶

Daly is widely read and influential in many circles. Although she no longer claims any affiliation with organized religion, her continuing critique of the church and her own personal story haunt many Christians. In the extreme separatist stance she has taken to find personal meaning as a woman, she carries a part of many women with her. Her life and writings make a statement that for many would not otherwise be made.

Fortunately, not every feminist woman has such a negative experience with the church, although they also sense the struggle to be counted as equal among the saints. There are numerous accounts of the feminist issues within the church but one collection that captures some of the specific outlines of the movement without following Daly's path

towards disillusionment is that edited by Elizondo and Greinacher, Women in a Men's Church.¹⁷ While the insights given here are to the point and the criticisms are unsparing, there is a note of optimism and hope that one does not find in Daly. The collection includes pieces on the patriarchal influence that has determined belief and practice, concepts of God, church, and world, accounts of women in the Scriptures, and the church's relationship with the feminist movement particularly in matters of church office and feminist theology. It can serve as a "roadmap" for those interested in seeing how feminism interacts with the church in positive, albeit critical, ways.

One of the equality issues within the church at large is the question of the ordination of women to ministry or priesthood.¹⁸ A classic text in this debate is Paul Jewett's The Ordination of Women.¹⁹ He argues from the position he explored in Man as Male and Female²⁰ that a partnership of the sexes is the ideal for all of life bearing the imago Dei. Admitting women to the ministry, he believes, is a necessary and logical development of the nature of this partnership. He tackles the topic by systematically reviewing and refuting the traditional grounds for excluding women: arguments from the nature of women, the nature of the ministerial office, and the nature of God himself. While some of these grounds for excluding women have not been commonly found in Adventist writing, each of Jewett's reviews come out strongly in support of the equality of the feminine in both the human family and the concept of God.

The discussion on the ordination of women has a long history in Adventism²¹ and has recently been given renewed attention. The two feminist themes, equality with difference, can be seen in the supporting

arguments:²²

Arguments based on “equality”

Major concern: Women should have equal access to all roles in the church.

Points of argument:

(i) Because men and women are equal before God in redemption women should have equal access to all church roles.

(ii) Because women are excluded from ordination they are also excluded from other roles for which they could be well suited, such as editors, administrators, and members of certain decision-making groups.

(iii) Because women are excluded from ordination, they are also discriminated against in matters of salary and promotion regardless of the responsibilities they may carry, because these are often tied to ordination.

Arguments based on “difference”

Major concern: Women have a unique contribution to make in all roles in the church.

Points of argument:

(i) Because women's gifts of caring, nurturing, and promoting relationships are vital to the church, they should be recognized and proclaimed by means of ordination.

(ii) Because women have their own viewpoint on the world, reality, and religion, they are needed in the ordained ministry to balance the message given.

(iii) Because at least half of the congregation is women they should be ministered to by women who can speak to their particular needs and experiences and preach the Word in ways to which women can best relate.

Although specific points within them might be challenged, each is useful for an understanding of the role and mission of the church and the women within it, and together they give a more complete picture than either one alone.

It would be unfortunate, however, if feminism within the church was seen only in terms of the debate over ordination. That would be similar to seeing all of the first wave of feminism this century as the debate over suffrage. In this latter case, it was the issue of the right of women to vote that captured center stage in the public imagination and media and even in the minds of many feminists. But once

suffrage was gained, the movement began to feel its work was done and its energies dissipated. What was overlooked at the time was that a particular “right” achieved did not automatically mean that full equality of the sexes had been established. Nor did it mean that women were fully in touch with themselves as thinkers and doers as women to exercise this new privilege in ways that could make a significant contribution in the world in which they lived. Ordination for women could fall short of the goals of feminism in a similar way. As Elder Gordon Hyde suggests, the ordination of women is not the only concern of women and their supporters in the church today, but it has come to be the symbol of what should be accorded to women.²³ This—its symbolic significance—makes it so important, but as an issue it does not stand alone.

Since about 1972, the Adventist church has been involved with committees, ad hoc councils, and study papers, on the role and status of women.²⁴ In 1973, the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) met with a number of scholars and notable women in the church at Camp Mohaven, Ohio, to discuss the issue. It brought forward a number of recommendations supporting women's role in the home, in leadership, in ordination, and in soul-winning ministry. These recommendations passed through two Annual councils and the Spring meeting of 1975 where they were accepted in principle, although significant limitations were imposed to restrict ordination to deaconesses and elders and only in those cases where local, union, and division committees gave their approval. In a set of subsequent papers, the BRI came out strongly in support of the view that there did not seem to be theological grounds against the ordination of women. This issue is still under review as

recent events prior to, and during, the 1985 General Conference session indicate.

Since the early seventies, a number of other issues involving equality have been addressed. Many of these issues and the measures taken to correct them have at times been extremely complex because they have challenged traditional practices and attitudes and have involved a great deal of emotion on both sides of the debate. Merikay McLeod's (formerly Silver) Betrayal, an account of the sex discrimination case of Silver vs. Pacific Press Publishing Association, is a case in point.²⁵ It was one of the first signs that feminism had things to say to the Adventist Church about the equality of women that had to be taken seriously. One of the benefits of this particular account is that it illustrates what is at stake and what is involved in a matter as simple and as basic as the petition for equal pay for equal work. The book is a difficult one to read for it does not disguise the pain and frustration involved in this battle. It does not answer the question about whether legal action was the best way to handle the difficulty McLeod experienced, nor does it give both sides of the story, but it does give a moving and disturbing history of one woman's attempt to secure equality. It proved to be a significant moment for many in church employ for as Professor Leona Running of the Adventist Seminary claims on the jacket of the book: "Countless women employees are, or should be, grateful to Merikay for the size of their paychecks. Her courage and persistence have won benefits not only for her but for innumerable others, even as she wished."

Other changes have been initiated when unfair practices have come to the attention of church leaders and often much more smoothly

than in the McLeod case. For instance, in a study conducted by Freeman and Maberly²⁶ it was discovered that the Seventh-day Adventist readers and workbooks for grades K-12 were considerably sexist in their portrayal of boys and girls. In narratives with both sexes present it was discovered, among other things, that in situations portraying "children, girls were shown as the helpless or afraid children in 887. of the cases; as the incompetent children in 70% of the cases; as the victimized or humiliated in 1007. of the cases; and as those needing help in 92X of the cases; but as the creative and inventive in only 34X; and as problem-solvers in 29%. In illustrations in the same readers, girls were 637. of the passive children; 5X of the children playing sport; 40% of the larger children; and 33% of the children shown in center position. Similar percentages appeared in the study of narratives and illustrations with only one sex present. When work began on the new editions in 1983, the General Conference released a set of "editorial and graphic criteria for content and illustration of the Seventh-day Adventist Reading Series" to redress this kind of subtle role-socialization.²⁷

Similar responses have been developed in recent times in other publications of Adventist presses. In an open letter to the delegates to the Second National Convention of the Association of Adventist Women, July 11-15, 1984, William G. Johnsson, Editor, Adventist Review said in part:

I greet you, Adventist women, as sharers with me in the body of Christ. I greet you in Him in whom there is no east or west, no north or south, no bond or free, no female or male.

This is good S.D.A. theology. It has been good Christian theology for a lot longer. But good theology does not guarantee good practice, in the area of women's concerns or others. Practice lags behind theology; flaming liberals of the mind

often are blue-nosed conservatives of the hand.

At the ADVENTIST REVIEW we make a studied effort to help S.D.A. practice more closely approximate S.D.A. theology. We are sensitive to sexist language—more so, we think, than other Adventist publications. We also endeavor to keep before the church the ideal of one people in Christ that is the genius of Adventism.

The new Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal was influenced by some of the concerns of feminism. Three women were appointed to the church hymnal committee which met over the three-year period 1982-5. Women poets and musicians, some Adventist, appear in the final selection of hymns. And there has been a more careful screening of words to remove some of the sexist language that has characterized earlier hymn books. Wayne Hooper, chairman of the Church Hymnal Committee reports:

Many times (Dr Otilie Stafford] helped us to become aware of the male-oriented words in the hymns and sparked our creativity in coming up with other words that would be non-offensive or all-inclusive. After the committee had rejected the hymn, “Rise up, O men of God,” because of its obvious sexist language Dr Stafford submitted to us an adaptation that we gladly accented. The first stanza of the hymn now begins “Rise up, O men of God”. the second opens with "Let women all rise up"; the third begins with “Rise up, courageous youth”; and the fourth concludes “Rise up, O church of God.” These revisions enabled the committee to save this strong challenging hymn.²⁸

In his keynote address to the Quinquennial Session of the General Conference in 1980, President Neal Wilson drew the attention of the church to the importance of incorporating the energies and talents of women in the administrative structures of the church and the finishing of God's work. From about that time, growing numbers of women have been appointed to such positions. However, while feminists within the church rejoice over these moves, there is also a feeling among some that there is a lot more to be done in this area. For example, in a review by Patricia Habada and Beverly Rumble, “Women in Adventist Education,” it is revealed that in the year following President Wilson's

address, in North American schools (where women have long comprised a significant proportion of the work force) some few women served in middle management, while only one was found in upper level management in tertiary institutions; just two out of forty-five members appointed to the Higher Education Board in 1980 were women; three out of eighty-six secondary school principals were women; and only five women have ever served in the G.C. education department since it was formed.²⁹

In many other ways, and at numerous levels, doors of opportunity, visibility, and equality are slowly opening for women in the Christian church. Just how far and how quickly they will open only time will tell, but there are many who are watching the developments with a great deal of interest.

Recent feminist theology has been concentrating less on these concerns for equality and more on the questions of the nature of God, humanity, woman, biblical meaning-making and worship. If women approach truth-seeking in ways that are distinctively their own, one would expect that women engaged in theology will do so in their own unique way. Until the present much feminist theology has been polemical--arguing for women's full acceptance on equal terms in the religious community. However, a new tone is beginning to emerge—a constructive, creative note that suggests women are finding their voice in matters of faith and belief.³⁰ It seems that they are less involved in the pursuit of doctrinal correctness and the finer points of textual exegesis and more interested in matters of identity and relationship. They are already beginning to express their own experience in liturgies, in hymns and poetry, and in sermons and bible reading that affirm women in the important moments of their lives. Many of the celebrations and

interests of women are more accessible in narrative, parable, autobiographical story, and metaphor. This seems to be the tenor in much of the secular feminist literature and there are indications of its emergence in theology as well. For example, in many theological and devotional texts by women, including the writing of Ellen White, narrative makes a significant contribution.³¹ While women do not “do theology” this way to the exclusion of all other methods nor do they alone work with the biblical materials in this fashion, it may very well be one of the characteristic strengths and contributions of feminist theologians.

Part of the search for female identity takes place in rediscovering the community's roots. Feminist historians and Bible scholars are attempting to do this with the Christian heritage. A very readable, devotional study is Gien Karssen's *Her Name is Woman*.³² In the Foreword to the book it is stated that “It is interesting to note that God's women, down through the centuries, have enjoyed a freedom the world will find difficult to understand--the freedom to be and to do that which God intended.” Karssen's theme is that women are ultimately accountable to God for their life decisions even within the restrictions of their gender and the roles they must otherwise play. Her approach is balanced in that she includes studies on the lives of the Delilahs, Jezebels, and Sapphiras along with the Jochebeds, Ruths, and Marys.

In a more serious and scholarly tone is Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*.³³ It is her claim that the New Testament suffers from “androcentric redaction.” The accounts, penned by men, do not represent women's point of view, and the contribution and influence of

women have been written out of the record altogether or at least glossed over in ways that make women virtually invisible. Their actions are briefly dismissed, their names are not given, or where names are given often little else is known about them. Because histories tend to be selective views of the past, the full story of women has been lost. She frankly admits that an understanding today of the role of women in the early Christian church as the gospel radicalized relationships between races, classes, and genders, will have to be “imaginatively reconstructed.” For the modern Christian woman, she believes, “our heritage is our power.” Even in coming to know the struggles and sufferings of the first generations of Christian women is to draw strength from our “foremothers”. Throughout the book, she gives us appealing glimpses of what she believes to be God's vision of an alternative community and world. She draws attention to the early custom of church gatherings around the table of fellowship among equals to break bread together as a symbol of God's ideal for the Christian church then and now.

One of the obstacles to valuing womanhood has stemmed from the conception of God as male, for if God is male, it has been argued, then masculine personhood is the normative and truly authentic human personhood. Feminist theology addresses this problem by a re-study of both the nature of God and the meaning of imago Dei. Here an appeal to metaphor proves to be one of the main lines of approach. The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female is a simple starting point.³⁴ Mollenkott sums up her rationale this way:

. . . the point of Christian feminists has never been that we may not know God as father or male lover, but only that we may not stop there. We think it short-circuits our full humanity to ignore the pluriform images of God that the Bible offers us, and

therefore the multiple aspects of relating to that God.³⁵

In successive chapters of her book, Mollenkott reviews some of the female Images that are applied to God—some more familiar such as woman in childbirth, nursing mother, midwife, and mother hen; some less familiar such as mother pelican, our Ezer, and bakerwoman; and some in newly recognized female dress such as the beloved of the Song of Songs, the Shekinah and Divine Wisdom.

Phyllis Tribble's God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality looks much more closely at one general metaphor applied to God, i.e. woman, and what this might suggest regarding the nature of the image of God.³⁶ The claim has been made that “in method as well as in substance her work represents an important break with the procedure and epistemology that seem linked with sexism.”³⁷ She closely re-examines interpretations of Scripture by means of a re-study of the career of this significant metaphor. God as woman, a study she claims which “eschews systematizing” for there is movement in the text and new contexts bring in new levels of meaning.³⁸ She concentrates primarily on the text itself, treating it as a literature in that its meaning is discoverable by considering the literary form used and looking for its unique emphases. Her method is imaginative, (“rhetorical criticism”) and so welcomes intuition, guess, and surprise³⁹ (Would only a woman be foolish or courageous enough to say such a thing?) Her work, however, is not without substance and persuasiveness.

A similar approach is that of Sallie McFague. In her first book, Speaking in Parables,⁴⁰ she lays the groundwork for her later discussion about images of God by defending the use of metaphor, parable, poem, story, and autobiography, and how these might be used in

theological hermeneutics. In the follow-up work, Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language,⁴¹ she continues her defense of this hermeneutic and makes a special application to the God-as-father image. Her contribution to feminist thought is to show the metaphor in proper perspective as a model of God that captures something of his nature and character but is in no way an absolute picture of his total divinity. She accuses the church of making the “father” model exclusive, paradigmatic of the nature of the divine and the human, and ultimately allowing it to become an idol in theological thinking. Again, her critique does not suggest that the “father” metaphor is not a useful and appropriate one but she does condemn its exclusive use which prohibits other images especially those that grow out of the experiences of women. She recommends employing a more inclusive metaphor, such as “Friend,” to overcome some of its limitation but her main thrust is to recommend the use of a wide variety of images for insights into the nature of the Omnipotent.

A systematic theology from a feminist viewpoint is Rosemary Radford Ruether's Sexism and God-talk.⁴² Traditional doctrinal issues are evaluated and redeveloped drawing on many streams within feminist thought. The specific doctrines she discusses include the nature of God; creation; biblical anthropology; Christology; Mariology; conversion; ministry and community; the New Earth; and eschatology. One of the great strengths of the book is that Ruether does not simply aim to replace male-dominated systematics with female-dominated systematics, but endeavors to go beyond to non-sexist interpretations. The degree to which she and the others we have discussed have achieved this aim is the measure to which the texts will be useful to the church of the future.

More recently, Ruether has encouraged women to give themselves time and space to explore their own religious meanings. In Womanguides⁴³ she has brought together old and new texts, literature, stories, parables, and interpretations as resources for reflection, expression, and articulation of a feminist theology. These are drawn from a wide variety of sources both within and without the mainstream religious traditions and are intended to stimulate women to develop their own religious sentiments and beliefs. Such a resource is necessary she believes because the present canon “sacralizes patriarchy and has made the religious heritage and experience of women all but invisible.” Her hope is that the religious community will lift its sights and extend its compass and become truly inclusive of all people.

What Effect may Feminism have on the Adventist Church in the Future?

Although mainstream feminism is moving increasingly away from Christianity, the contribution of Christian feminism to the church may continue to be felt for some time to come. This observation is based on two developments. First, Christian feminism is now reaching a more mature stage of development, one that is deepening its theological and biblical roots and gaining more strength as a result. Second, church women and their men supporters are becoming better acquainted with feminist issues and are coming together to study these matters and to participate in change.

The issues that grew out of concern for equality did not ever engage, or even seem to have relevance to, all Adventist women. The militant voices and political struggles discouraged many in the churches from active participation. Its emphasis on “rights” and the threat it

posed to unsettle lives and relationships just did not seem to belong to the ideals of meekness, gentleness, and self-sacrifice that Christians have long espoused. But the concern for “womanness,” the second focus of feminism, does much to overcome these fears. There is more interest in discovering who they are than in what they deserve, because it touches on the very core of their beings. It causes them to re-examine the nature of humankind and the plan of salvation as it applies to all members of the human family. It brings with it self-affirmation, improved concepts of self-worth, and greater courage to be themselves as God transforms the life.

The new voice in theology may continue to swell. Each year since the mid-seventies the number of works from the perspective of feminism published by religious presses has increased. More inclusive concepts of the nature of God and humankind may result in the acceptance of broader patterns for understanding biblical truth that include “feminine” as well as “masculine” ways of thinking and a fuller treatment of certain Bible passages. Not only may the passages that have proved difficult obstacles to women's full acceptance within the church be more uniformly and positively understood, but a better knowledge of the heroines of the Bible story and their essential roles in the church of the past may emerge and provide models for today's women in search of their proper callings. Since more Adventist women than ever are choosing the seminary as their place of education, more women may engage in this study than we find at present. Because of the distinctiveness in much of the Adventist message and mission, the contribution of Adventist female Bible scholars will be important.

As women continue to seek God's will in their lives and to

overcome some of the negative thinking and attitudes that they have had of themselves, they may return to some of the issues of equality with renewed vigor. Discrimination against them will possibly be seen as obstacles not merely to full equality but to Christian growth and the full exercise of their spiritual gifts and callings. For example, if the church ordained the women who feel called to the ministry and who have undergone the necessary preparation, even though this would involve just a small number, it would give an important message to all women throughout the church. It would signal that they not only have equal standing with their menfolk, but that their God-appointed gifts, possible contributions, and particular viewpoints are recognized, valued, and utilized by their churches. For this reason, Adventist women may work towards ordination not with less purpose but for even more compelling reasons.

Further study of the issues as they appear in Scripture will continue to be important, no doubt, but the inner witness to the value God places on them may have greater influence on the women in the church than continuing disputes over the occasional difficult passages. Women in the Adventist church are already coming to sense within themselves the impact of the Gospel message that “proclaims liberty” to the oppressed.

In increasing numbers, women may be more willing and confident to accept positions of trust and leadership within the church structure and begin to make their own unique contribution to the decisions that will guide the church. New emphases may be introduced in discussion and decision, such as our relationship with our environment and our response to the threat of nuclear war and poverty, because women have

traditionally been closer to matters of life and death that could affect their children. The needs of the singles, divorced, widowed, abused, elderly, and the families of church workers, may take on greater priority and receive new consideration. Hierarchical structures of authority within the church may not necessarily be dismantled but alternative patterns of relationship which invite more mutuality and cooperation between people may emerge, for women function more easily in egalitarian situations free of competition. Further, women in leadership may find they have greater support than they have ever had in the past. This will come from the many men who are urging their participation even now. And it will come from other women with whom they are developing networks of understanding and mutuality.

Historical studies to recapture our connection with the past may grow in number and importance, especially for women in the church. It is already evident that women have played very significant roles in the Advent Movement, from Ellen White on through the first decades of the twentieth century, at which time their participation began to lessen. Many women have continued to make outstanding contributions since then but their numbers and/or their visibility have decreased. The church has lost touch with its women pioneers and has lost much in so doing for the role women played in the past was not just good economics in times when the church had few resources, it was true to the gospel message as well. It was a statement to the world that “in Christ there is ... neither male nor female” (Galatians 3:28).

The Adventist home will continue to model ways of relating for the church community at large. The church may see more clearly than ever before the possibility of mutuality and cooperation between men and

women, and the importance of the full participation of all its members. The wives and mothers of these homes may feel greater support and affirmation in their roles from the church community and be encouraged to enrich their lives in ways that seem appropriate to their interests and abilities. With a sense of their personal worth as children of God in the fullest sense, they will be “suitable helpers” (Genesis 2:20 NIV) for their husbands and inspiring examples for their children. When women cease to be defined solely in terms of marriage and motherhood, “home” itself may come to be a more inclusive term by incorporating within its meaning and activities the unmarried and childless, who make up a significant proportion of church membership.

In all the interplay between feminist thought and Adventist theology and practice, one thing remains clear: it is women and men together that constitute the family of God. In the journey towards full participation in the Gospel and the endeavor to serve God, they will always need the support that encourages them, and the freedom that permits them, to be all that they can be. This they can vouchsafe to each other.

ENDNOTES

1. Phyllis Trible, "Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread," in Christ, C. and Plaskow, J. (eds), Womanspirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979, p. 74.
2. For instance, among the poor, there are more women and more women in greater poverty than men. This comes about for several reasons: women are less likely to have property; more likely to have children to care for; and more likely to find only work with low pay. Among minority and ethnic groups, women are more likely to stay at home where they have less access to cultural and language learning and social opportunities or are more likely to work for a longer time at low paying jobs than are the minority men or even other women. In third world countries, the status of women is generally close to the rank of goods and chattels for bartering, or of slaves for cheap labor.
3. "The daughters of Zelophehad son of Hephher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, belonged to the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah. They approached the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly, and said, 'Our father died in the desert. He was not among Korah's followers, who banded together against the LORD, but he died for his own sin and left no sons. Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives.' So Moses bought their case before the LORD and the LORD said to him, 'What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and turn their father's inheritance over to them. Say to the Israelites, If a man dies and leaves no son, turn his inheritance over to his daughter. If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to be a legal requirement for the Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses.'" Numbers 27:1-8, NIV.
4. This account shows in principle how God in his law-giving was somewhat constrained by the current customs and attitudes of the people. The picture this gives is of God waiting to be asked when the people were ready to ask. This may explain why, in the light of the New Testament, the laws regarding women in the Old Testament seem very harsh and discriminatory.

5. In Mark 2:27, Jesus indicates that the listeners present--presumably women were present as well as men--constituted his "spiritual" family or closest followers. Some of Jesus' most powerful theological revelations were shared with women: e.g., the unnamed "woman of Samaria" (John 4:7-26) and Mary (Luke 10:38-42). Jesus chose women to be the first witnesses and proclaimers of the Resurrection (Mark 16:1-10). This takes on added significance in the light of 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 where Paul's claim to apostleship is based on his own participation in these same two activities. The woman with "an issue of blood" (Mark 5:25-34) who touched Jesus' robe in the crowd was ceremonially unclean according to the Mosaic law (Leviticus 15:25). The woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-11) was released from the sentence of stoning which was reserved only for the adulterous woman when Jesus revealed that she was not the only "sinner" in the group.

6. For instance, accounts are given of Phoebe, Lois and Eunice, Priscilla, Apphia, Lydia, Nympha, and Claudia of the early church in Gien Karssen, Her Name is Woman Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 1977. Selections from the writings of Dame Julian of Norwich (1342-1416), Margery Kempe (c. 1373-1439), the Grimke sisters (early nineteenth century), and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1897) are given in Elizabeth dark and Herbert Richardson (eds) Women and Religion A Feminist sourcebook of Christian Thought NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1977. An overview of women in the church is found in Rosemary Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (eds) Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions NY: Simon and Shuster, 1979.

7. Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza is Professor of New Testament and Theology, Episcopal Divinity School; Paul Jewett, Professor of Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary; Judith Plaskow, Assistant Professor of Religious Studies, Manhattan College; Rosemary Radford Ruether, Professor of Applied Theology, Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary; Phyllis Trible, Professor of Old Testament, Union Theological Seminary; Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Professor of English, William Paterson College; Sallie McFague, Professor of Theology, Vanderbilt University.

8. For example, Mary Daly, tenured professor at Boston College vet one of the sharpest critics of the church.

9. Some of these new religious movements are briefly described in Section IV "Creating New Traditions" in Christ and Plaskow, Womanspirit Rising.

10. The dark and Richardson collection Women in Religion gives "representative readings epitomizing attitudes towards women in the

Western religious tradition.” It includes selections from the writings of Clement, Jerome, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, Pope Pius XI, and Barth, among others. It is a horrifying odyssey of patriarchal oppression and misogyny. This collection of writings alone helps to explain why so many informed women no longer choose to remain loyal to the Christian church.

11. In this regard two works can be recommended: Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982 and A. W. Schaef, Women’s Reality Minneapolis, MN: Winston Press, 1981.

12. Carol Gilligan, in In a Different Voice, deliberately avoids naming the alternative approach to moral decision-making she has discovered “the woman's voice.” She comments:

“The different voice I describe is characterized not by gender but theme. Its association with women is an empirical observation, and it is primarily through women's voices that I trace its development. But this association is not absolute, the contrasts between male and female voices are presented here to highlight a distinction between two modes of thought and to focus a problem of interpretation rather than to represent a generalization about either sex.” p. 2.

13. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza gives a thorough account of the place of women in the early church in In Memory of Her NY: Crossroad Publishing Co, 1984.

14. Mary Daly, The Church and the Second Sex (With a new feminist post-Christian introduction) New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1968, p. 9, 10.

15. Daly’s works include: Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women’s Liberation Boston: Beacon Press, 1973; Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism Boston: Beacon Press, 1978; Pure Lust: An Elemental Feminist Philosophy Boston, Beacon Press, 1984.

16. Dorothy Austin, Professor of Religion and Psychology, Harvard University, has suggested this analysis in her class Dynamics of Psychology and Religion, Spring, 1985.

17. Elizendo and Greinacher's Women in a Men’s Church was published in New York by The Seabury Press, 1980 and is part of the Concilium: Religion in the Eighties series.

18. Many churches have resolved this issue a decade or more ago.

The Quakers have long determined in their practice the equality of women in their community.

19. Paul Jewett, The Ordination of Women Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1980.

20. Paul Jewett, Man as Male and Female Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975.

21. As early as 1881, a committee made up of J. O. Corliss, A. C. Bourdeau, E. R. Jones, D. H. Lamson, W. H. Littlejohn, A. S. Hutchins, D. M. Canright, and J. N. Loughborough resolved “That females possessing the necessary qualifications to fill that position, may, with perfect propriety, be set apart by ordination to the work of the Christian ministry.” The resolution was referred to the General Conference Committee but it was not acted on.

22. In using supporting arguments for the proposal to ordain women to ministry to illustrate the two emphases of feminism at work in the church, it is important to recognize that not all feminists are pro-ordination.

23. Gordon Hyde, “Factors Leading up to Camp Mohaven” A response given at the Third National Convention of the Association of Adventist Women, July 11-15, 1984. Hyde was guest speaker at the convention to report on the Council on the Role of Women which met at Camp Mohaven, Ohio, when he was director of the Biblical Research Institute. The conference, in part, reviewed the Mohaven papers and progress since it brought in its recommendations at that time. A full list and copies of the audio tapes of the conference are available at the following address: Association of Adventist Women, P.O. Box 193, Berrien Springs, MI, 49103 U.S.A. A set of study papers released by the BRI subsequently to Camp Mohaven are available through the BRI.

24. One of the most complete summaries of the developments over the years is “Historical Perspectives: How We Got Where We Are” in Adventist Woman 3 (5) November, 1984: 3-4.

25. Merikay McLeod, Betrayal Loma Linda, CA: Mars Hill Publications Inc., 1985.

26. Carla L. Freeman, Norman C. Maberly, “Sexism in SDA Basal Readers” in Journal of Adventist Education 43 Dec 1982-Jan 1983: 14, 15, 40, 41.

27. This seven page document was made available in 1983 by the

Education Department, General Conference of SDA's.

28. Wayne Hooper, "Women Contribute to New SDA Hymnal" in Adventist Woman 4 (1) March 1985: 1, 2.

29. Habada and Rumble, Journal of Adventist Education 43 Feb-Mar, 1981: 12, 13, 46-48

30. See for instance, Christ and Plaskow, Womanspirit Rising especially Sections III "Reconstructing Traditions" and IV "Creating New Traditions." See also a handbook for use in women's worship groups: Linda dark, Marion Rohan, Eleanor Walker, Image-breaking; Image-making New York: Pilgrim Press, 1981.

31. In her major work, The Conflict of the Ages series, Ellen White expresses her theology by recounting salvation history in terms of the story of the struggle between good and evil. In Education, a philosophy of education where one would not expect to find it, narrative features very prominently. Fiorenza's In Memory of Her the story of the unknown woman who anoints Jesus' feet serves as a compelling introduction, and Ruether's Sexism and God-talk opens with a "feminist midrash on the Gospel in three acts." Many of the other books mentioned in these notes contain stories and personal experiences.

32. Karssen, Her Name is Woman.

33. Fiorenza, In Memory of Her.

34. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 1984.

35. Ibid., p. 4.

36. Phyllis Tribble, God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978.

37. Ibid., in the Foreword by Walter Brueggemann and John Donahue, p. xii.

38. Ibid., p. 4.

39. Ibid., p. 11.

40. Sallie McFague, Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.

41. Sallie McFague, Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.

42. Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sexism and God-talk Boston: Beacon Press, 1983.

43. Rosemary Radford Ruether, Womanguides: Readings Toward a Feminist Theology Boston: Beacon Press, 1985. A concise statement of her feminist theological position can be found in the chapter entitled "Theology as Critique and Emancipation from Sexism" which she contributed to Theodore W. Jennings (ed), The Vocation of the Theologian Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986, pp. 25-36.