

Towards a Reshaped Church

*A Feminist Look at Theological Education
and the Future of the Church*

Susan Adams

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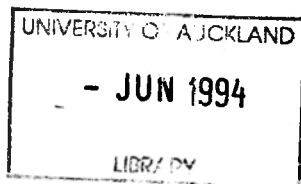
ISBN 0-9598014-2-1

Published in April 1993 by:

The Auckland Anglican Women's Resource Centre
PO Box 9573, Auckland, Aotearoa-New Zealand
Telephone: 0-9-525 4179 Facsimile: 0-9-525 4346

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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE

BACKGROUND

In the ten years since the first ordinations of Anglican women in Aotearoa-New Zealand, many changes have taken place both in the church and in the wider social context in which ministry takes place. That changing scene provides the setting for this book. The topic itself, and the direction and concerns outlined here, arise out of my own experiences, and out of my involvement with women in Aotearoa-New Zealand as we have circled our way through the changes of the last ten years to consciousness of what it might mean to be mature and responsible women in the church today.

During our circling we have had to face many issues, not least among them how to survive with integrity in a church which is androcentric if not (as it would often appear) mysogynist. At its best, the church as we have experienced it needs reshaping, and we women need constant theological resources if we are to play our full part.

Some go further and question whether it is really possible to remain within the church. For me, despite the church's traditional negativity towards women, there is a generative spark in the history and spirituality of the Christian church, a motivating warmth, which makes me reluctant to turn my back and walk away from the community of faith which nurtures the spark. I believe that the church is still a repository of lively spiritual resources and can be a critical instrument for social change towards justice and liberation.

During these ten years, I have worked in the Anglican church on provincial and diocesan boards and councils concerned with theological education and ministry development. In those places we have struggled with the purpose of theological education and how to deploy the resources available in order to provide an educational base for the

ministry taking shape in Aotearoa-New Zealand. My involvements have been as a member of the Provincial Board of Christian Education, the Provincial Board for Ministry, the Board of Governors of St John's Theological College, and various related diocesan committees. I spent time in both parish ministry and ministry with a community development focus. For several years I took part in the establishment and development of a contextual theological education programme, connected to the theological college, a local neighbourhood, and a church-based community development agency (the Glendowie project). More recently, I have been involved in activities to resource women, both theologically and financially. I was part of a network which sought to promote the appointment of a feminist woman to the Theological Education by Extension Unit, and to establish a Women's Resource Centre in the Auckland diocese. I am currently Co-ordinator for Ministry Education in the Diocese of Auckland.

As my own ministry has become more focused, and my experience of church structures and 'mannerisms' grown, I have found myself working with and on behalf of women, most often feminist women, to present their perspectives. It has often been my task to challenge the mindset of the boards and committees with a feminist perspective and to seek the release of resources to enable some new or different project to get under way. What I have to say here comes out of the experiences of that ministry. It reflects my attempts to bring change in structures. It speaks of the growing clarity and energy of a group of feminist women in articulating our vision. It shows the efforts of various parts of the feminist network to obtain resources which we have identified as necessary in order to equip women to minister in line with the vision. It expresses my reflection, and the reflections of other women, on the implications for the church of a feminist theological education. It points to a dream which we have had as feminist women - a dream of a different church and of learning opportunities shaped for women and their ministries.

I am seeking here to gather together the threads of various efforts over recent years to bring that growing dream to reality. The efforts have been to equip and resource women in their struggle to survive, to be self-determining, and to contribute to the re-shaping of the Anglican church in Aotearoa-New Zealand. It is hoped that this will also affect the shape of our society which, despite a growing secularism, is still

influenced by the theological debates of the church, especially as these find a lived expression.

My personal background and the current context in Aotearoa mean that certain perspectives and assumptions necessarily underlie the thesis. I am a Pakeha ordained Anglican woman. Of necessity I speak from this perspective, as a woman, as a Pakeha (person of European descent), as a priest. So also I properly address the structures of the Anglican church, as that is the church I know best and within which I have worked.

It is important to note that I write as a woman who claims to be a feminist. The whole project, the concrete actions and the reflections and resulting 'theories', have involved work with groups of other feminist women. This document itself is an attempt to record events and project possibilities on behalf of a particular group of feminist women who are an integral part of my life as a Christian feminist working within the structures of the Anglican church. The thesis has its conception, birth, and life within the energies of a network of feminist women of the church in Aotearoa.

There are several key concepts which are integral to my approach, which it is important to introduce at this point. Some of these I will talk about in more depth later, but at this stage it is helpful to identify what I mean by the terms. The concepts are "bicultural partnership", "patriarchy", "feminist liberation theology", "reshaped-church", and "women-church".

BICULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

Bicultural partnership is a commitment of the Anglican church in Aotearoa. It must become a perspective which has priority for the church today as it engages in its mission and organises its systems and structures. The Anglican church is becoming conscious of its history in Aotearoa and taking steps in its re-structuring efforts to recognise that history. We are reminded that the missionary church which was established in the 1820s was a Maori church. Maori language and the equipping of Maori people as leaders were essential parts of spreading the gospel here. As more British settlers arrived, and the demand for

land ownership and 'security' for the settlers grew, the focus of church shifted. By 1857 the church which saw its focus amongst the new settlers sought a constitution. The Constitution of the Church of the Province of New Zealand was signed in that year - there was no Maori involvement in the preparation or signing of that constitution. The settler church broke away from the missionary church.¹ The result has been the anglicising of spirituality, theology, ministry, and church structures.

In 1986, General Synod resolved to move towards a bicultural partnership. The Synod set up a bicultural commission to look at a revision of the constitution which would express the principles of partnership and bicultural development, and this process is nearing completion. Another bicultural commission was set up to develop programmes and educational resources to help the church in understanding and change, working with diocesan committees. (I have been a member of this commission since 1987.) General Synod passed a range of resolutions which included: training for ordination to require Maori language and cultural studies, opportunities to be provided for clergy to learn Maori language and culture and to gain awareness of the church's bicultural commitment, and the Board of Governors of St John's College and the Provincial Board for Ministry to design educational programmes to enable this. Since 1986 the learning of Maori language has become a requirement for Anglican ordinands, and sessions on bicultural partnership have become a regular part of the curriculum of St John's Theological College. Resources have been produced in the form of booklets and study materials.²

The Methodist church made a commitment in 1983 similar to that of the Anglican Church, and both the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches are engaging in a similar process. The general climate in New Zealand society is one of struggle with the issues of being a bicultural nation. Maori people have renewed their struggle for recognition and rights against the dominance of Pakeha culture. At all levels of our society - government, trade unions, education, justice systems - bicultural partnership as an expression of tino rangatiratanga under the Treaty of Waitangi has become an issue which cannot be avoided.

For Pakeha women working for justice in Aotearoa, bicultural partnership is an essential component in any analysis or any dream for

women's future. More specifically, Pakeha women who are conscious of this are looking for the opportunities to share experiences out of their commitment and to discover ways of living and working in this setting. To be a Pakeha woman is to be both oppressed and oppressor. Work to support bicultural development and partnership is full of pitfalls, in terms of both racism and gender oppression. For Pakeha women, there is much to learn about survival as well as about the active promotion of appropriate bicultural behaviours. Any re-shaping of the church necessarily must include the aspirations of Maori Christians and a commitment to a bicultural future. So the need for bicultural partnership is taken as a given, as we focus on the church in Aotearoa.

The commitment to bicultural partnership is a commitment to change. It requires mutual respect and a recognition on the part of the Pakeha of the spirituality, culture, and sovereign rights of the Maori. Partnership is a relationship of two peoples, working with equal access to decision-making and resources, regardless of 'voting strength'. No longer can the church confuse Christianity with Western culture, nor justice with that which preserves the dominance of Pakeha values. Bicultural partnership requires a re-working of the systems of power, a sharing in such a way that Maori people are not excluded or disadvantaged, so that they are able to be self-determining and to participate in the shaping of the church and nation on terms of equality with the more numerous and dominant Pakeha. It requires a re-working of theology in such a way as to reflect God present and working here in Aotearoa, and to express Christ in a way which has integrity to the life and experiences of the people in this context. The Treaty of Waitangi signed between the British Crown and Maori people in 1840 laid the foundation for partnership. This covenant has always been a focus for Maori people. We need to re-evaluate the Treaty, and accept more responsibility as Pakeha to ensure its terms are upheld. These terms promised to provide protection for Maori culture and spirituality, to preserve land and water rights, and to work in partnership as two peoples in one land. As church we have a particular responsibility arising out of the critical part we played in bringing Maori people to the Treaty table.

The church's commitment to move towards becoming bicultural comes in response to the Maori call for recognition and restitution. As a result of colonial imperialism, Maori people have had to resist powerful attempts to divest them of their land, their language, their sovereignty,

and their spirituality. As part of our Pakeha response towards the end of the 20th century, and our commitment to restoration and partnership, we cannot avoid an examination of the ideology which holds racism in place. It is the same ideology as that which holds in place sexism and economic polarity. It is the 'ideology of patriarchy'.

PATRIARCHY

'Patriarchy' is not just male domination, but a system of graduated subordinations which holds in place racial superiority, economic injustice, and male dominance (that is, racism, classism, and sexism). Each part of this system consists of social structures and power relationships and also a philosophical base which legitimates that structuring and use of power. So, for example, racism involves the use of social power to deny full place to people of another race and enables this through the development of a mindset which sees the dominant race as superior and its culture as normative. The mindset or philosophical base may be termed 'ideology'. Patriarchy holds together this network of subordinations, and as a system includes both a set of social structures and a framework of ideas. It is the framework of ideas which I refer to as the 'ideology of patriarchy'. It is the ideological form of patriarchy which influences theology, which in turn then has legitimated patriarchal social relationships and a patriarchal church. Again, in each case, patriarchy is not restricted to male dominance, but holds together all oppressions, both as ideology (theology) and as social structure.³

I am convinced that our Western European culture is based on the ideology of patriarchy. This is an important assumption, as ideology is of such significance in the attitudes and behaviours of people and yet is often hidden from immediate view, and so merits some elaboration.

Patriarchy emerged as a fully developed ideology at the time classical democracy was taking shape. It was based in the household codes of ancient Greece. In that society the aristocracy held power by virtue of birth. They exercised this power as the heads of households, that is, as head of the basic economic unit of society. The heads of households were male, Greek, freeborn, and propertied. As a propertied male, a household head 'owned' and was responsible for the care and well-

being of his wife, children, slaves, land, and animals, as they made up his extended household. The male alone participated in the affairs of state as a 'citizen'. No slave, freed or otherwise, and no non-Greek, could participate in these civic responsibilities. Such a system ensured that economic control remained fixed within the household, with land as the basis of wealth.

As Greek political theory explored the idea of democracy, rule by all citizens, those who held power in the patriarchy by virtue of birth determined to hold on to it. They were threatened with a change, and they needed a theory which justified their holding on to the power, and which excluded others from participation.

Aristotle developed the theory which ensured that the new democratic principles operated only for those who were regarded as fit to rule: it is only the freeborn men, who were Greek and own land, household heads, who were deemed 'fit'.⁴ Women, even those who were freeborn, could no longer participate in civic affairs. Aristotle's definitions of 'citizen' and of 'natural order' assigned women their place as subservient to men, and as deficient in the reasoning power necessary to rule. The same definitions assigned non-Greeks (Barbarians) their subservient place also, existing for the 'use of' free men, and devoid of reasoning power altogether. Because of this they needed 'civilising', on which basis colonisation was later justified.

Patriarchy was built into democracy at the philosophical or ideological level to make sure all this happened. Patriarchy defines what is the 'natural order', and defines as 'citizens' and 'human' one segment of the population. It therefore builds in sexism (male dominance: women have a different (subordinate) place in the 'natural order'), classism (economic dominance: those who don't own property are not 'citizens'), and racism (ethnic and cultural dominance: those who are of a different race, not Greek, are not really 'human'). These Greek 'ideals' were gathered up in subsequent European values and political life, and came to undergird British lifestyle, social structures, and philosophy. Examples of this can be seen in the structuring of the Victorian family, with male dominance, and commitment to an expression of Christianity with a stern all-powerful God. Along with this is the importance of the work ethic, a concern for property ownership, and a certainty about the 'blessedness' of European civilisation and values. Some of the language

may have changed, and perhaps the ideology is not spelled out in such a specific way, but its influence still undergirds the lifestyles, values, and structures which were brought from Europe (more particularly Britain) and were imposed on existing structures in Aotearoa.

FEMINIST LIBERATION THEOLOGY

It is my intention to present my material from a feminist liberation perspective. My use of the term 'feminist liberation perspective' is intended to convey a requirement that the issues of race, sex, and economic oppressions be confronted, and in which the experiences of women, especially poor women, are the touchstone.⁵ I believe a feminist liberation perspective is concerned for the liberation of all women from these oppressions and the various personal, interpersonal, and structural manifestations in which they occur.

In deciding to write from this perspective, I acknowledge nevertheless the debate amongst women about the use of the term 'feminist', and the awareness that for many women feminist is considered to be a white women's issue. And certainly my approach is as a white woman. While feminism as an ideological stance may be understood as developing from the life experiences of white women, the concerns it addresses in its radical liberation approach are concerns which affect the life of all women, either directly in action for change, or indirectly through pressure brought by white women on the dominant system of which they are a part.

Within the perspective loosely labelled 'feminist' there are three main strands.⁶ These strands, while distinct from each other, interact closely with each other and any edges are more blurred than distinct. The strands place emphasis, one, on the equality of women and men and the right of women to full participation in the structures of society; two, on the distinctiveness of women's culture and contribution and the need to encourage the development and preservation of 'women's ways'; and, three, on the need for transformation of social structuring and change of the androcentric norm. In this third strand, patriarchal ideology comes under challenge, along with the systems of power and domination which give it life.

Outside these strands of white feminist ideology there are the perspectives being articulated by women of colour and Black women from Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and the USA. These articulations reflect the contexts and experiences of these women in their struggle to survive as different races under the remaining vestiges of colonial militarism, white domination, and cultural sexism.

The triple oppressions of sex, race, and economy are intertwined in the patriarchal ideology upon which the whole Western European ideology which undergirds our culture and church is based. Therefore of necessity a feminist perspective must examine power relationships, as well as provide a critical analysis of the systems (from women's experience) within which we find ourselves - in this instance the Anglican church in Aotearoa. In order to push towards any 'reshaping' of this church, an examination of the present 'value base' and theology must also take place.

Western Christian feminism must be a liberation movement, which at this time remains as a vibrant strand within 'malestream' Christianity. It must be both liberating for women, enabling them to become more than 'other' and marginalised within the androcentric church, and also liberating for the church as a whole, enabling it to rediscover its roots and to become again a sign of hope.

RESHAPED-CHURCH

I am using 'reshaped-church' to identify the church we, as Christian feminists, intend to move towards. It signifies the changed institution which functions to promote a gospel of justice, wholeness, and freedom, and in which women and men of all races work together as equals towards the vision of shalom and basileia.⁷ Reshaped-church would be the church as it was always intended to be in this vision - a sign and a way. Reshaped-church is both a sign of what can be and the way through which our vision becomes reality. It will be the gathering of free self-determining people in partnership with each other, with the natural world, and with God. Reshaped-church is the goal of our efforts as women-church to wrest the church as it now is from patriarchal control.

WOMEN-CHURCH

Women-Church is the grouping of women who choose to work together in transforming the traditional church and its theology, together with men who are identified by women as being allies in this process, and who are invited to participate with us. The term 'women-church' was used by Rosemary Radford Ruether to talk about an 'exodus' community of women, separated from the church in order to express non-patriarchal theology, spirituality, and structure.⁸ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues that women-church appropriately describes both a future hope and a present reality within the church. It is the gathering of women to claim feminist theology and spirituality and to influence the decision-making structures.⁹ The concept of women-church has been used in a variety of ways by a variety of writers and groups.¹⁰ Generally, however, the term refers to a vision of women participating as equals in decision-making, spirituality, and the shaping of theology from a feminist perspective. I wish to use the term 'women-church' to identify specifically communities of women and women-identified men who are working from a feminist liberation perspective towards 'reshaped-church'.

Within women-church, women define our own oppression and shape the way we will liberate ourselves from it and express our spirituality and vision of the basileia. Women-church provides the space and focus within which feminist critical analysis takes place, and becomes a means through which ideological and structural change can occur within the church. It does these things through providing theological reflection, liturgical expression, and new models of relationships. I believe women-church most powerfully challenges the traditional church because the majority of its members remain an integral part of the traditional church structure. If it is to remain part of the traditional structure yet provide a feminist liberation challenge, it must have a clear base for itself as women-church amongst women committed to radical feminism.

Thus both women-church and reshaped-church are clearly part of the continuing history of the church. They are firmly rooted in the story of our ancestors in the faith, including the 'aunties'¹¹ and foremothers whose stories are difficult to rediscover. Reshaped-church is not a new organism coming to meet the old, but one which grows and matures from that planted in history, and which has undergone nurturing, pruning, and transplanting through women-church.

Notes:

- 1 Ironically, the Maori name for the Anglican church (used more frequently now in a bicultural context) is Te Hahi Mihinare - "The Missionary Church".
- 2 The most significant are: *Te Kaupapa Tikanga Rua*, Church of the Province of NZ, 1986 (the original report of the Bicultural Commission of the Anglican Church on the Treaty of Waitangi; contains the resolutions of General Synod), and *Being Christian and Bicultural in New Zealand-Aotearoa*, The Bicultural Education Commission, 1987 (a kit of study resources).
- 3 See also Chapter 2. Patriarchy is discussed in some depth by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, for example in *In Memory of Her*, pp285ff. My portrayal of patriarchy as ideology differs somewhat from her analysis.
- 4 See *Politics*, Book I, chs 12 and 13; Book II, chs 1 and 2; and especially Book III.
- 5 In theology, liberation theologies from Latin America (predominantly the work of people like Gutierrez and Segundo) arise out of experiences of domination and oppression. Feminist theology also arises out of domination and oppression, by patriarchy. Discussions in the Colloquium of the DMin programme at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass., during 1986 identified the appropriateness of seeing feminist theology as a liberation theology. So the title of the programme: Feminist Liberation Theology and Ministry. Linking feminism and liberation draws together the specific concerns of women with all other oppressions, and demands that feminism engage in political change for liberation.
- 6 Donovan, in *Feminist Theory*, identifies a series of strands of feminist theory. I have drawn some of these together to produce these three main strands. See also Adams and Salmon, *Women, Culture, and Theology*, pp10ff. Aspects of feminism are outlined in Hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, and Kalven and Buckley, *Women's Spirit Bonding*.

- 7 'Basileia', the Greek word usually translated 'kingdom', is used to capture the 'new creation' imagery of the 'kingdom of God' without using a term seen as male, geographic, and hierarchical in its English links. Basileia picks up the range of biblical images which point towards a transformed world, in which justice, peace, and life are fully experienced by all. Shalom carries a similar vision from its usage by the Hebrew prophets.
- 8 See *Women-Church*, pp57-74.
- 9 See, for example, *Bread Not Stone*, pp xiv ff, and *In Memory of Her*, pp343ff (where she uses the term 'ekklesia of women').
- 10 So, for example, the Australian Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion is entitled *Women-Church*.
- 11 In a number of conversations, challenge has been offered to the use of 'foremothers', as this assumes motherhood as a norm for women. Many women choose not to be biological mothers and yet have a significant part to play in our history and out future. 'Aunties' are included in respect to them.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHURCH AND THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

A. The Climate in the Church

As we look at the efforts of women to resource feminist women in the Anglican church, we need to spend some time considering the climate in the church which provoked women to seek appointments and projects which would more adequately resource feminist women. This section looks at the theological mood and its structural expression within the Anglican church in Aotearoa-New Zealand in the period from the late 1970s to mid 1980s, and also at the place of women in the church during this period.

THEOLOGICAL MOOD

The late 1970s and early 1980s were years of considerable challenge to the church and to society in New Zealand.¹ Included in this period was the Maori occupation of Bastion Point as a focus for land issues and Maori Sovereignty, the first ordination of women in the Anglican church, an upsurge in the numbers of non-stipendiary priests, continuing debate about church union and the role of ecumenism, the development of theological education by extension, the formation of Christian feminist groups in Auckland, a new focus on social issues in New Zealand, the gathering impetus of peace and anti-nuclear movements, and the wide mobilisation and subsequent polarisation during the 1981 Springbok Tour.

Despite all this turmoil and challenge to prevailing ideas, the predominant motif in theology continued to be 'a male God working through a male saviour to redeem sinful mankind'.² In order that this might come about, humankind must be obedient to the will of God as

communicated through the Christian church and its bishops and priests. A clear line of communication and authority must be maintained. Any changes (eg ordination of women or church union) must not interrupt that flow nor confuse the central theme of the redemption of humankind through the love and the death of Jesus Christ.

The traditions of the church were as critical as the Bible in determining what could or could not be preached or undertaken in the name of Christian ministry. Though the Anglican church says Bible, tradition, and reason are equally important in the shaping of theology and ministry,³ nevertheless the church's tradition often seems to dominate, especially in the absence of clear biblical evidence.

In 1982 a Bishop made the following statement to a Diocesan Synod:

"We believe that authority is derived from God alone. How then is the power of God to be understood in the light of the ministry of Jesus and the Cross? Jesus transforms our understanding of divine power by displaying that the leader is the one who serves (Luke 22:24-27), that the power of God is the power of weakness, humility and a cross and those empowered by God must expect to suffer (Romans 8:17)."

Here is a bishop falling back on the church's traditional use and interpretation of scriptural passages to maintain existing patterns of authority and to keep in their place those who might seek to initiate change.

During this period, the bishops and their priests exercised the power and authority to encourage or discourage 'experimentation' aimed at searching out a new role for the church, and a new expression of ministry at a time of challenge and social change.⁴ Bishops and priests held the power over who was 'in' or 'out' of the Christian church, therefore saved or not saved, forgiven or unforgiven.⁵ Nevertheless, at the same time considerable influence was extended beyond the local congregation and can be seen clearly in the role the church played through some of its more radical members in coalitions with other community groups in the peace and anti-apartheid movements of the early 80s. While bishops used their authority and traditional theology to stifle movements for change within the church, new movements developed on the edges and within the community.

From another direction, the charismatic revival movement brought a flourishing of confidence and gifts amongst lay people. This challenged the role of the priest as the mediator between God and humans, and also, for some, encouraged an exploration of the relationship between spirituality and social action. For others, however, it reinforced the literal interpretation of biblical material and, while broadening the authority for things spiritual beyond the 'priest only', it was 'males only' who benefitted. There was some motivation for change, but still built on the traditional theological emphases.⁶

The growth in feminist consciousness in the church is in part in reaction to the 'male headship' exclusion of women from leadership functions and literal use of biblical material, and it gave rise to a challenge to the church with regard to its use of language.⁷ Language is the medium through which we most frequently and clearly give expression to our theology. (Which does not exclude a present day understanding of theology as 'life in action'.) The language of the church during this period clearly communicated the androcentric nature of its theology. Constant use of 'his', 'men', 'brethren', 'son', 'king', along with images of warriors, battles, kingdoms, conveyed very clearly the status of women, despite the ordinations in 1977.⁸

Through all this, the male God reigned supreme. He remained essentially untouched by such movements as the challenges of women, the charismatic renewal, the explorations into new forms of ministry, the changing relationship between Maori and Pakeha, the call to become a church of the poor. So much and no more. These energetic creative movements desiring to find a new relevance for the church in our contemporary world and to grow a theology which speaks to the Aotearoa-New Zealand context remained peripheral. Some minimal concessions were made, but by and large the androcentric theology which reinforced the power and authority of the male hierarchy remained firmly in place.

STRUCTURAL EXPRESSION

The Anglican Church of the Province of New Zealand is by nature hierarchical, parliamentary, and all-embracing. Its catholic ethos proclaims its concern for all persons, and expresses this through its

basic structure of parochial divisions based on geographic area and recognising ministry towards all within this area. Its parliamentary system of Government gives an aura of democratic governance. However, its hierarchical nature gives to the least number - those in the episcopacy - the power to veto even those decisions agreed upon within the other two houses (lay and clergy) which comprise its legislative body (synod).⁹

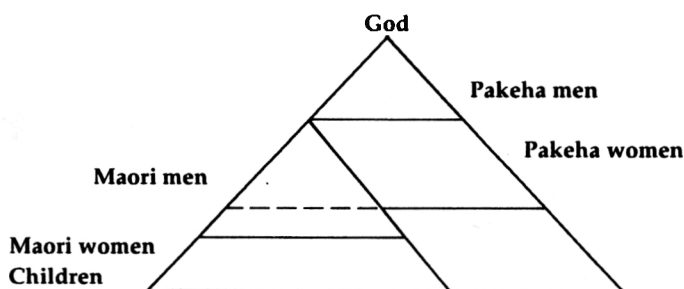
Power and authority are clearly transferred from God through the bishops to the priests and dispersed amongst those who make up the remainder of the body. Tradition is preserved this way, 'Anglicanism' is preserved this way, unity is maintained this way and focused in the bishops and archbishop.

In the period under discussion, late 1970s and early 1980s, this dispersement of power was still very clearly the privilege of maleness. Most parish vestries were predominantly male, diocesan synods and committees predominantly male, General Synod predominantly male.¹⁰ In 1983 the Auckland synod comprised 17 ordained women and 255 ordained men, 57 lay women and 207 lay men. Constitutionally, women were eligible to participate at all levels of church life, with the exception of the episcopacy. Our failure to do so was quite simply 'our own fault, and the result of poor strategising'.¹¹ Where women were members they were very much the exception and their presence in no way could be said to represent a real desire to include males and females as an embodiment of society or creation in which both men and women have responsibilities, concerns, and a part to play.¹²

Such a composition displays clearly the androcentric nature of the church as it lives out its androcentric and hierarchical theology. More than this, I believe that such a structure and composition clearly demonstrates the patriarchal nature of the Christian church. In a patriarchy only those males deemed 'fit to rule' by a process of carefully constructed screens, such as race, class, occupation, may do so. Women 'lack the intellectual ability' to engage in reason and logic, and were therefore (with some exceptions based on race) unfit to engage in the business of 'raw politics' and theological debate. The origins of patriarchy lie deep in the heart of the Western European culture with which Christianity, as it is predominantly expressed, is closely entwined. Thomas Aquinas is a key figure among the 'Church

Fathers' responsible for building into Christian theology the innate superiority of maleness.¹³

Our dominant theology, which places God at the pinnacle of the hierarchy, then males, then women, then children, then animals, etc, leaves us in no doubt as to where authority and power reside. Refinements to this picture place in the upper portions of the pyramid the Pakeha, the dominant race in New Zealand.



In a structure such as this, even with the show of democracy through participation in a committee and board structure, the power to order and control lies without doubt in the house of bishops.

A selection of figures from 1979 General Synod (the national governing body) and from the Auckland Diocesan Synod shows the dominance of white male advice.

General Synod

| | | Pakeha | | Maori | |
|--------|------|--------|----------|-------|----------|
| | | Lay | Ordained | Lay | Ordained |
| Male | 1980 | 34 | 43 | 4 | 5 |
| | 1982 | 30 | 45 | 5 | 6 |
| Female | 1980 | 5 | - | - | - |
| | 1982 | 7 | - | - | - |

Auckland Diocesan Synod

| | | Pakeha | | Maori | |
|--------|------|--------|----------|-------|----------|
| | | Lay | Ordained | Lay | Ordained |
| Male | 1977 | 88 | 82 | 7 | 13 |
| | 1983 | 207 | 217 | 10 | 25 |
| Female | 1977 | 20 | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| | 1983 | 57 | 16 | 2 | 1 |

The Maori Anglican stream of the church was struggling to gain some autonomy during this period. After a number of years of struggle and deadlock, the 1928 General Synod had moved to create an assistant bishop who would be a Maori and who would work as suffragan to a diocesan bishop.¹⁶ This situation lasted 50 years. In addition, the 1928 General Synod had agreed to the principle of direct representation of Maori people on General Synod and with the right to vote. A commission was set up, which reported in 1961, but without any prepared legislation. The legislation was eventually presented in 1964, and as a result the Bishop of Aotearoa was given a seat in the House of Bishops, but the clause providing for separate Maori representation on General Synod was defeated. Eventually, in 1978, "the Bishop of Aotearoa was to be licensed by the Primate to share in partnership with each diocesan bishop... Provision was made for the Aotearoa Council to be the equivalent of a synod and its Executive Committee to be the equivalent of a Standing Committee."¹⁷

Also at this time an endowment fund was established in an attempt to provide a financial base for the Bishopric of Aotearoa. Yet even in 1987 money for the work of the Bishopric must be sought from the Trusts and Boards controlled by the Pakeha church. This can be seen in particular in the annual application for monies which are made to the St John's College Trust Board for the development and resourcing of ministry amongst Maori and for the development of an indigenous theology. The development of indigenous theology itself creates further difficulties. Among many Pakeha Christians, it can still be heard that Maori spirituality is 'pagan', and therefore should not be 'allowed' to influence Christian theology. The purity of the Christian message, the power and authority of the church, must be safeguarded.

Safeguards are extended through the 'unifying' office of the bishop. He gives or withholds the licences to engage in ministry in the name of the Anglican church, whether lay or ordained. He has final judgment with regard to who would or would not be accepted for ordination.¹⁸ And, all the bishops gather to oversee the work and teaching of the all-male (prior to 1985) staff of the one Anglican Theological College.¹⁹

Within such a framework, a surprisingly extensive range of movements were gaining strength and presenting to this established church order and 'way of doing things' an opportunity for change.

In the late 1970s a change to the basic stipendiary priesthood was growing. Non-stipendiary priests were being trained and ordained with the intention that they should work in communities and amongst people not readily found within the traditional church. They would be 'community facing'. These people by and large arose out of a local context and held no obligations to the church by virtue of their being paid by the church. This was an opportunity to look beyond the traditional parochial structure for ministry.

Te Pihopatanga was actively pursuing this way of developing ministry. The number of 'minita a iwi' was growing rapidly, especially in Waiapu. Ministry needs were identified in particular contexts, and the people chosen by the community to meet them were raised up for ordination. Their training was also contextually based, taking place on local marae amongst lay people who participated in the training programme. Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa was seeking more autonomy, and this way of selecting and preparing people for priesthood gave the Pihopatanga greater self-determination.

Non-stipendiary ministry began with an exciting and creative flourish. It offered opportunities to explore different ways of providing ministry in the community, different methodologies for training, different ways of using financial resources. Women were attracted to the possibilities, particularly as it offered a training programme which did not require the removal of families to the residential college in Auckland. I personally found the educational style more appropriate to my needs, and the ministry possibilities more relevant to my priorities. *Of the People* was the report of a gathering held in 1978 to discuss the issues surrounding these new forms of ministry. It points towards flexible training approaches and showed us ways to look beyond the parochial structure.

The ordination of women, motivated in a large part to enable women to have equal rights within the church's professional ministry structure, opened up the possibilities to examine our theology of priesthood and ministry, our exercise of it, and our ways of making decisions and relating.

Church union and the unification of ministries provided yet another opportunity to break open our structures and mindset.

Yet none of these major possibilities were able to bring the opening-up of the structures that was hoped for. Some things happened, good things, but at heart the structure and exercise of power and control did not budge.

Still, our 'Father' God looks benevolently down, sharing 'his' wishes for the redemption of sinful humanity with the men who are our bishops and the priests who are 'his' workforce to disseminate 'his' wishes through careful teaching and ministry time-tested by tradition and safeguarded by structure. So much and no more. We must be patient.²⁰

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The ordinations of women in 1977 came in on the upsurge of the tide of women's consciousness and the clear evidence that we had many committed and competent women seeking ordination who in all conscience could not be 'kept out' by the male club any longer. The sympathetic liberal males who steered the question through the due processes of synods and committees are to be commended for their willingness to take up an issue potentially dangerous to their own careers. Few of us, males or females, foresaw how far-reaching the ordination of women might become. In those early days we were concerned with the equal rights of women alongside men to fulfil their calling to the priesthood. It was not until some years later that the wider implications of the ordination of women began to clarify. For as women began to participate more effectively in the decision structure and to meet together as women to consider the interests and new insights which were developing, a negative response from the institution began to be felt. Again to illustrate from Auckland diocese, women

experienced greater difficulty following ordination in being elected to boards and committees. Ordained women and lay women were traded off against each other. Ordained women were now clerics, and as such absorbed into the 'brotherhood' of priesthood. The voice of women it seemed was heard only from amongst lay women. We were conscious that our newly acquired access to information was to be withdrawn. But, as women, many of us were determined not to be silenced.

New Christian feminist groups and our political involvement in secular issues, our participation in anti-racism work, our participation in structural analysis, and our reflections as groups of women on our own lives, empowered us to keep developing our skills, to continue to speak up, to articulate our newly forming vision of an alternative way of being church today. The ordination of women had given us hope that the church to which we belonged would make changes, structurally and theologically, toward an expressed theology which embodied justice. Numbers of women and men, including from amongst the ordained, were involved with issues of peace, poverty, anti-racism, and more specific women's issues.²¹ We were sharpening our analysis skills and our vision. We hoped for a renewed church capable of entering into a mission relevant to the lives of people, especially women, in the 1980s, and with a theology and structure to support the moves - or better still to lead them.

We women believed we could participate in the bringing of change; we underestimated the smiling faces of those men who would say, "if change is inevitable, let us help!" - we should have heard, "let us control it"... The male speakers were felt to set about modifying and managing the various moves toward a more just and relevant church. Women's initiatives were often taken over.²²

Notwithstanding the emergent male managers, women continued to exercise new ministries, whether lay or ordained, in peace coalitions, anti-racism movements and the growing bicultural debate, women's refuges, housing networks, and a wide variety of social movements. Like it or not, the church must eventually not only begin to articulate a theology of justice, but also to support practically ministry which expresses a concern for the poor and oppressed, and a recognition that things are changing.

These years were ones of rising hope and confidence for women. We believed we could and should challenge the structures of the church and the stranglehold of patriarchal theology. Our enthusiasm and hope often outstripped our analysis and care with strategies, but we were not going to be silenced again, nor be complacent. Such a picture of enthusiasm is not meant to convey a picture of a homogenous women's movement. That would be to misrepresent the situation. Yet, however different our theology and spirituality might be, we could agree on the rights of women to a share in the decision-making and responsible exercise of the ministry of the church.

B. The Structures of Theological Education

The primary avenues for theological education within the Anglican church in Aotearoa reflect the dominant themes of this climate. The major concern of the church in the late 1970s and early 1980s was to resource 'professional' ministers (priests), predominantly from a male perspective on theology and the church. Into the 1990s, this is still predominantly the case. Because of this, in this section, though still focusing on the conditions at the time of the women's effort to break open theological education through the TEE appointment, I have updated information to the present. For example, in the residential programmes (which continue to be most highly valued - and funded - by the structures), the majority of students are still Pakeha and male.

There are three main structures for theological education:

1. The Provincial College of St John the Evangelist in Auckland.
2. Diocesan ordination programmes.
3. Workshops, programmes, and resources provided by diocesan Christian education and ministry committees and staff.

Although the church has now reached a position where the majority of ordinands are being trained for non-stipendiary ministry through diocesan training programmes, the bulk of the resources - money, books, equipment, staff - are still located within the provincial college. In the mind of much of the professional membership of the church, those who train in the three year residential programme are more adequately equipped for professional stipended ministry than those

undertaking any local programme. \$1.5m is spent each year on this residential programme, while on average \$77,000 is spent in each of the seven dioceses which offer local programmes (excluding the Bishopric of Aotearoa).²³

People wishing to have access to theological education but not offering for ordination have a limited number of options offered to them. Some study as fee-paying extra-mural students through St Johns College and others as fee-paying intra-mural students. Local (and cheaper) possibilities include workshops, study groups, and other programmes planned, supported, and encouraged by diocesan Christian education and ministry committees. Most frequently these are based in parish groups and often run by parish clergy or the Church Army.

WOMEN IN THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

A brief examination of the current situation with regard to women and theological education reveals some interesting trends. I believe these trends are indicators of dissatisfaction many women feel with the present situation. It is clear that women are in the main being trained in diocesan programmes for a non-stipendiary ministry; women are speaking out about the hostile academic and spiritual environment of St John's College; women are forming groups for study and reflection outside the structures; women are seeking ways to access theological education without necessarily seeking ordination. The bishops and others who determine the programmes of education are puzzled by women's expressions of dissatisfaction. These trends need to be explored in relation both to women seeking ordination and to women seeking knowledge in theology but not ordination.

With reference to ordination candidates, in the 1988 intake of 11 students into St Johns College there are no women. (*Note:* All the following figures refer only to students from Pakeha dioceses). Whereas there are 2 anticipating 1 or 2 semester stays and 14 participating in diocesan training programmes aimed at the equipping of people for non-stipendiary ministry. Since 1978 the pattern of intake of women at St John's College is this:

Residential

Ordination Candidates

| | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | Total |
|--------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Male | 22 | 21 | 20 | 17 | 18 | 16 | 23 | 11 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 188 |
| Female | 5 | 8 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 35 |
| Total | 27 | 29 | 20 | 20 | 18 | 18 | 27 | 15 | 14 | 14 | 10 | 11 | 223 |

The total number of women in residential training (long or short term) was 35 compared with 188 men).

By contrast, the numbers of women in non-residential diocesan programmes are greatly increased. The total number of women (from figures available) in each Diocese commencing non-residential programmes in the years 1976 to 1988 were:

Non-Residential

Ordination Candidates

| | 77 | 78 | 79 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | Total |
|--------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| Male | 10 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 107 |
| Female | 0 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 12 | 14 | 80 |
| Total | 10 | 16 | 11 | 15 | 20 | 17 | 18 | 13 | 11 | 10 | 22 | 19 | 187 |

In that period of time 107 Pakeha men have trained in non-residential programmes compared with 80 women. All these were ordinands. (No distinction has been made between non-stipendiary and stipendiary candidates.)

In recent times (at least) theological education and resourcing for ministry has been the prerogative of ordinands and clergy. Christian education (the intentional activity of nurturing people in the faith) has been the offering to lay people. This has usually been on an ad hoc basis under the guidance of local clergy. It has not been until the last 6-7 years that programmes such as Education for Ministry (EFM) and Kerygma have been available, offering regular group meetings and in-depth study over 1-3 years.

Occasionally non-ordinands have participated in the courses offered at St John's College. At the time of writing, these people have been either fee-paying individuals accepted to fill perceived vacancies with scholarships available or intra-mural students from the Auckland region able to avail themselves of the daytime courses. Over and above this the Licentiate in Theology (LTh) has been available as an extra-mural course, but without any organised supervision or administration.

It would be realistic to say that unless a person was prepared to undergo selection for ordination and then to participate in a provincial or diocesan programme aimed at equipping people for ordained ministry, theological education and ministry resourcing programmes were ad hoc and scarce. What is offered (including at St John's College and) in diocesan programmes, is based on the traditional parish concept of ministry and directed by men (all Anglican clergy, except one Roman Catholic lay man). In Auckland, 1 or 2 women who are unpaid are invited in occasionally.

In 1985 the Rev Janet Crawford (Anglican) and the Rev Enid Bennett (Methodist) were appointed to the faculty of St John's College in response to pressure from a network of women concerned about theological education. These women now find themselves struggling within an institution controlled and dominated by men, and structured to ensure the continuance of traditional concerns in response to the dioceses it serves. With a reducing number of women candidates being selected by their dioceses for residential training, and the pressure to satisfy diocesan expectations in order to keep the numbers of students at a cost effective level, support for the women faculty and freedom for pedagogical experimentation or critical theological exploration from a feminist perspective is severely limited.

ATTEMPTS AT OTHER POSSIBILITIES

In 1980 a contextual 'experiment' of theology and ministry education was established in a local low income community. I was involved in setting this up through the Anglican-Methodist Social Services with whom I worked at this time. I stayed involved until 1985.²⁵ The college, faculty and students, and the community worked together developing an understanding of relevant ministry and priesthood and a style of

action-reflection education which involved lay people of the community as well as ordinands. Eight ordinands participated in this over the first 4 years, receiving some course credit for work undertaken. An emphasis in the programme was to relate the living experiences of the community (which included the ordinands) to the activity of doing theology. Critical areas for exploration included the hopes and aspirations of women in a low income marginalised community and the role of the church and its priests here; the history of the Anglican church in Aotearoa and the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi; and the gathering and focusing of resources for social change and the church's participation in this.

Now, although the programme continues, there are no ordinands or church affiliated lay people associated with the programme, and there have not been for 3 years. The difficulty of receiving course credits, the withdrawal of College staff, and the general lack of enthusiasm by the College for this alternative style of theological education have restricted the willingness of ordinands to 'give up time' to be involved.²⁶

Less structured attempts have taken place outside the official education avenues of the church. An ecumenical effort to promote structural analysis as a way of understanding the oppressions of society and the role of the church in maintaining them gathered strength in para-church organisations.²⁷ Through this work there has been a groundswell of activity for social change on the fringe of the church. This groundswell has gathered in some clergy and committed lay people, and has challenged the church to examine the prevailing theologies for their complicity with the status quo and encouraged it to develop a theology of action for change.

In recent years the church has been groping for a way to respond to the claims of Maori people as tangata whenua (the people who belong to the land in this place; those with prior claim as indigenous). The Anglican church history in Aotearoa is one of suppression of Maori spirituality and of control. It has been active in the colonising of the indigenous people. The 1986 General Synod decision to support the claims of Maori people and to move towards becoming a bicultural church propelled church organisations to consider how to inform people of what has happened, why and how to respond. As yet, educational activity in the Anglican church is very limited.²⁸ The

church was dependent, therefore, on those of its members who have gained some skills in anti-racism work and in bicultural workshops through their activities in ecumenical organisations such as the National Council of Churches or community coalitions such as the Waitangi Action Committee and the Pakeha Anti-Racism Coalition. Leadership in these activities has often been provided by women. The bicultural demands will require educational opportunities throughout the church on more than the limited and tentative basis on which they are presently offered. But work has begun, and must be seen alongside the more formal and up to now more acceptable educational activity.

There has been a further activity which should be mentioned in a consideration of attempts to provide theological education. This has mainly taken the form of conversations amongst some clergy and lay women about ways to provide an alternative theological education. The dream has been to find an alternative pedagogy to the prevailing one in the theological college, as well as to provide a different perspective for the doing of theology. As yet no structured programme has emerged, but many of those involved in these conversations have offered workshops and other events in an ad hoc manner. No funding has been sought to enable a more sustained development, so it remains as dream and conversation.

Alongside these movements have been the various efforts by women to make changes or provide alternatives to meet their needs. The establishment of the Auckland Anglican Women's Resource Centre is significant amongst these. This Centre and other projects will be discussed in chapter three.

THE PRESENT REACTION

In the current context, there appears to be a tightening of controls with regard to the provincial college, with the bishops expressing concern at what is to be 'taught', the accountants and trustees concerned at the pupil-teacher ratio and keeping numbers up to justify the proposed \$1.4m expenditure on upgrading facilities. All finds focus in the imminent affiliation taking place with the BTheol degree programme of the Melbourne College of Divinity. (This is now in place, and in 1990 a parallel BTheol programme with the University of Auckland, and in

conjunction with a number of other theological institutions was initiated.) This move is pleasing to bishops and board in that it provides a degree structure and status. Reservations are expressed in terms of the necessary shift from an emphasis on ministry to academic theology and the possible influx of fee-paying non-ordinand students, plus concern at the external control over content and ethos which could be exercised by the credentialling body. These could have a negative effect on the access of women to the resources of St John's College. Further, a focus on 'academic theology' rather than the continued struggle to intertwine theology and practical ministry, with the mutual correctives and critiques which are possible, is feared by people - especially women - who are working with an action-reflection model based on their experiences of life and ministry.

As this tightening and recasting process has been going on, almost without notice in the wider church, changes in faculty membership have been clear indicators to the informed observer. In 1985 the first move took place towards the removal of the three full-time and one part-time persons teaching theology at St John's College. This process was completed in 1987. These faculty members had developed a reputation for radical and challenging theology. They explored cross-cultural, anti-racism, feminist, and liberation theologies in the range of the work of the department, and they expected that as a result people would be motivated to act for social justice in a variety of ways. Foundational to their work was a commitment to exploring the place and role of Pakeha New Zealanders in Aotearoa and the growth of contextual theology. After their removal in 1987 the Board of Governors took a decision to invite a young Englishman, with two years' parish experience, and whom they had not interviewed but whose evangelical persuasion was reassuring, to accept the position as lecturer in systematic theology. The theology department would now have two staff: a young Englishman who had never been given the opportunity to visit the New Zealand Anglican church, and a woman selected by a male process in 1985.

Women are reacting in a variety of ways to the prevailing structures and styles of theological education. At the most basic level they are organising study groups and support groups from amongst themselves. At a more structured level, they attempted to influence the development and appointment of the TEE worker, and in Auckland the Women's

Resource Centre gives some autonomy through the funding of people to run workshops and the purchasing of feminist literature. Women are seeking other women to help them as facilitators and leaders of study groups, and are encouraging others to undertake more study so as to feed back new insights and stimuli. Few women seem to be encouraged into the residential programme - most participate in local diocesan programmes. In addition to this, women are putting considerable energy into the bicultural movement and into activities perceived by the church as marginal to its 'real' concerns. In 1988 another national gathering for women in ministry (lay and ordained) was organised, and in 1989 there was a meeting of all ordained women to review our role and life in the church's mission and our continuing resourcing for ministry.

When I returned to the New Zealand (and more particularly the Auckland) Anglican scene after two semesters of study in Boston, I was more than ever conscious of the tension which existed when women, white middle class women, consider their needs in relation to theological education. I have felt this tension in myself and in response to me since coming home.

It seems to me that women want to have access to the best theological insights that are available, women want to know what is being discussed and written about; and women want our own experiences valued and taken into account, women don't want to 'be told'. We want access to the academy without leaving our hearth and home. We want the latest theological insights without having to struggle with theological complexity. Sometimes this tension gets expressed in an attack on the use of language or 'complicated concepts'. Sometimes we label people who seek to bridge the gap as 'academics', too theoretical, and we are in danger of dismissing them. Other times we say 'that's all obvious', 'there's nothing new in that', and are in danger of marginalising those who seek to help us articulate our experiences in a way which can be written for sharing.

Our experience shows us clearly that we need to find ways to care for each other, and to hear each other as we learn together how to close the gap between experience and academia. Both approaches are important for us: it is not an 'either-or' but a 'both-and'. As women we learn from sharing our experiences today as well as those of the past. We want to

gather together all the dimensions of life and faith, seeing them in relation to each other, and as having an effect on each other. Nothing exists in an impenetrable box. Our experiences of this interconnectedness provide the firm foundation of our faith and future, and is essential to our theological task as feminists. We believe this approach should infuse the whole theological enterprise of church and society. Our critical hermeneutic as feminists and our celebration of creation needs taking into the various traditional disciplines of church history, missiology, systematic theology, Old Testament studies, etc, and not to remain as a separate (and optional) offering under titles such as 'feminist theology' or 'a feminist approach to ...'. Aspects of this pedagogy will be picked up and explored in more detail in Chapter 4. They were also 'in the air' as feminist women began to develop the TEE project.

Notes:

- 1 *A Theology of Priesthood for New Zealand*, the Report to General Synod 1982 by the Provincial Commission on Doctrine and Theological Questions, outlines many of the issues facing church and society, see especially pp6-8.
- 2 My experience of sermons, Diocesan Synod debates (eg on the use of language), and discussion in such places as Boards of Christian Education and Councils of Ministry, lead me to this conclusion. It is backed by the reflections of other women with whom I have talked, and by documents such as the drafts for the proposed Prayer Book circulated at that time.
- 3 Richard Hooker is credited with stating this 'trilateral' for the Anglican church. See Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, p341.
- 4 As experienced by the Friday Group of the Auckland Diocese in its conversations with the bishop over such things as licenses for ministry.
- 5 See 1662 Book of Common Prayer ("... whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they

are retained”), and also 1928 Prayer Book and 1980 Ordinal of the Church of the Province of N.Z.

- 6 This was illustrated at the 1986 Clergy Conference which enabled a variety of worship styles to be experienced, and in which the charismatic groups showed creative exploration of worship yet using traditional biblical interpretations and male-dominant language.
- 7 By 1983, women had presented a motion to Auckland Synod to use inclusive language in debates, and most ordained women had begun to alter male language in the liturgy.
- 8 More recently, the Warden of the Theological College has attempted to explain away the androcentrism of male language when used of God, and to justify its continuing use. This is outlined in a summary published in the Aldersgate fellowship newsletter, October 1988, of a lecture by Fancis Foulkes entitled “Male, female - and God”. Other writers are clear that language does carry messages of power. See, for example, Dorothy Soelle, *Beyond Dialogue*, p38.
- 9 See *Manual of The Constitution, Canons and Standing Orders*, Church of the Province of New Zealand, pp252ff.
- 10 It was in 1892 that the first moves were made at a General Synod to include women in voting procedures and decision-making, but these were defeated. In 1919 General Synod amended Title B Canon V, which in effect made women over the age of 21 eligible to become members of the church, to vote in parish meetings, and therefore also to be eligible to serve as church warden or ‘vestryman’. However, it was not until 1932 that Mrs C.H. Symons was elected as the first diocesan synod representative, in Wellington. See Morrell, *The Anglican Church in New Zealand*, pp130-131.
- 11 Private conversations held by women from the network with the archbishop in 1987 revealed this statement. It is recorded in verbatim notes of that meeting.

- 12 It is difficult to trace the numbers of male and female participants in the boards and committees of the church. No separate numbers are kept. Consequently the unequal representation of women is covered over. In later records, the 'Mrs' or 'Miss' previously used to identify women in the lists has been dropped.

- 13 See the *Summa Theologica*, Question XCII, The Production of Woman. Aquinas builds on Aristotle: see *Politics*, especially Book III, for a foundational discussion on citizen and democracy and the role of women. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza has presented clearly the origins of patriarchy and its influence on the Christian church. See her article in *Concilium: Women Invisible in Church and Theology*, "Breaking the Silence - Becoming Visible", pp3ff, and also *In Memory of Her*, pp285ff.

- 14 See *Proceedings of the 44th General Synod* (1980) and *Proceedings of the 45th General Synod* (1982).

- 15 See *Diocese of Auckland Year Book*, 1977, 1983.
In 1983 it is difficult to identify gender due to changes in mode of recording, ie, only initial and surname is shown on the list of synod members.

- 16 The history of the Maori church and its relationship to the structures of the church as a whole is outlined in *Te Kaupapa Tikanga Rua*, pp9-13.

- 17 *Te Kaupapa Tikanga Rua*, p11.

- 18 The Bishop of Aotearoa now licenses jointly with a diocesan bishop those who will work in the Maori pastorates.

- 19 Two women members of the joint faculty were appointed in 1985.

- 20 Ten years after ordination there were 3 women who were fulltime vicars of parishes in Auckland (the largest diocese) and 2 part-time, out of a total of 83 vicars. Most of the 96 women ordained in New Zealand since 1977 are still either in non-stipendiary ministry (most related to parishes) or in specialist ministries, such as chaplaincies.

- 21 The Peace Movement working hard to raise an anti-nuclear consciousness; ACORD, a group campaigning against racial discrimination; structural analysis workshops to provide skills; pressure groups working to bring in the Domestic Purposes benefit for solo parents and to reform laws relating to contraception and abortion - these were some of the major active issues to involve many women in leadership.
- 22 For example, Bishop Ted Buckle, involved in church-to-church dialogue with the Roman Catholic church was quoted in the press and heard to say that the ordination of women is a negotiable factor in church union discussions. The same bishop has been a participant in international forums discussing issues surrounding the ordination of women and has not, as far as I can ascertain, entered into formal discussion with ordained women in New Zealand before presenting the New Zealand perspective.
- 23 I am not including the Diocese of Polynesia in this discussion. It is a diocese of the Province of New Zealand, but functions independently, and is not relevant to the experiences on which this thesis is based.
- 24 During this period I also did some teaching at St John's College and was available as mentor to some women students.
- 25 Note that this is at the original date of writing - 1988. The project is in another period of change now, in 1991.
- 26 Christian Action and the Wellington-based Urban Training Centre were two agencies offering courses in structural analysis.
- 27 Diocesan Bicultural Committees are exploring local possibilities, but sustained education is slow in developing. St John's College has incorporated some work, especially in the area of language and culture, into its programme. The resource kit, *Being Christian and Bicultural in Aotearoa*, provides some written study materials. In 1989 the Provincial Bicultural Commission appointed a 5-person education unit to work throughout the Province.

CHAPTER THREE

FEMINIST PROJECTS

A. Preparation

In 1982, five years after the first ordinations of women, women's ministry had grown in visibility and audibility. Women were beginning to take some responsibility to articulate and work for those support systems and resources which they believed would assist in equipping them more adequately for a ministry which was breaking-away from the old male models of parochial-based ministry. The Anglican Provincial Board for Ministry asked for a review of the ministry of women, and women themselves began to look at their history and feel their way toward a gathering together of women to review, share, and plan ahead.

In 1980 there had been a Conference for 'Theologically Trained Women'. Nineteen women attended, most ordained but some lay, from across the denominations. This was the first such attempt in New Zealand to gather women in ministry together. It was made possible by funds from the Christian Conference of Asia through their Women's Conference. To quote from a report by Janet Crawford published in *Vashti's Voice*, No 6:

Women in ordained ministry are a small and often lonely minority. They are mostly strongly opposed to authoritarianism and hierarchalism, and feel a degree of oppression within the institutional church and traditional ministry. Those endeavouring to create new patterns of ministry generally receive little support or understanding. Through unity we shall gain strength.

It needs to be noted that there were no women teaching in theological schools at this time in New Zealand.

Plans were laid for a further national conference in 1981, this time to be more open. It was held in Wellington and offered amongst Christian feminists. This time 100 women attended. Inevitably amongst the joy and excitement of sisterhood, tensions were evident. They surrounded the role of women in the church and who defined the nature of ministry.

Women continued to get together and to share. Visits from feminist theologians such as Dr Letty Russell, Sister Marie Augusta Neal and Phyllis Tribble provided focal points for such gatherings. Events overseas, such as the Sheffield study on The Community of Women and Men in the Church and the conference in 1981, provided material and impetus for gatherings of women to meet and talk. The tasks for women in the church who sought to change the status quo continued to take shape and to gain clarity. Then as now, many women gained the strength and power to move beyond the boundaries of a structural church; others found the strength to stay.

Following this 1981 conference, some women began to take action to get women appointed to the faculty of St Johns College.¹ This was seen as a piece of positive action to break open the patriarchal hold on theological education. The move to get women appointed to the faculty, however, was to be a slow process, which did not achieve the desired result until 1985.

In the meantime, a number of significant changes were taking place in the Anglican church. More women were again being appointed to boards and committees, at both provincial and diocesan level. This needs to be noted because through these women information about funding possibilities, the way the structure worked, how the networks of alliances both formal and informal operated, and what possibilities there might be to influence the shape and mission of the church, filtered out. At this time I was a member of the Provincial Board for Ministry and its representative on the newly-formed St John's College Trust Advisory Board. I was also a member of the St John's College Board of Governors and the Diocesan Council for Ministry. These boards and their subcommittees have considerable influence over the development of theological education and ministry, as well as the power to direct financial resources. During my time as chairperson of the Provincial Board for Ministry the Advisory Board was established through General Synod statute, at the instigation of the Provincial Board for Ministry.

This was a move to break open the stranglehold on funding previously held by St John's College.

In 1982, when the Provincial Board for Ministry asked for a review of the difference the ministry of women was having on the Anglican church, it was possible for a group of women to pick up the request and to discuss amongst women how to, or not to, comply with such a request.

This gave rise in 1983 to a group of Auckland Anglican women meeting, with two concerns: the need to record the history of the ministry of ordained women, and the desire for a conference to discuss the ministry of women on a more general basis.²

The Provincial Board for Ministry had agreed to support a funding application to the St Johns College Trust Board³ for money to carry out these pieces of work. Eventually \$5000 was granted through the St Johns Board of Governors.

Spirits were high among women. Denominational boundaries held less significance than they appeared to do for the men. Our local gatherings drew women across such artificial divides. Our past conferences had also met ecumenically.⁴ We needed the strength and experience and support of each other. At the same time we recognised the need to tackle particular church structures if we wanted to make a change. This needed careful and patient work. We were learning. We knew some of the pitfalls and impossibilities, but we were hopeful nevertheless. Justice and righteousness were on our side!

The Auckland group of Anglican women resolved to act in two ways. One of our number at that time, Dr Judith McMorland, was a lecturer in the sociology department at Auckland University and looking for an appropriate piece of research. It was agreed with her that she should undertake the research to gather the history leading up to the ordination of women and to collect the stories of the Auckland women ordained since 1977. The second move was to meet with women ecumenically to plan the third national Women and Ministry Conference. The intention of the conference was to encourage women to meet and reflect together beforehand in regional groupings (to this end a study booklet was prepared), so that when we did gather nationally there was some

sharing of the wisdom and concerns of more women than the few who could meet. The idea was to gather around the focus of 'Women's Spirit Rising'.⁵ It was hoped that in addition to expanding notions of ministry beyond a focus on ordained parish activity, with stories of the real work and commitment and struggles of a wide cross-section of women, we would begin to develop a national network of women.

The planning and preparation for the conference was facilitated by our being able to employ, part-time, Sue Vugler to handle the correspondence and production of a regular newsletter to keep women informed of the shape it was taking.

The 1984 Conference, held at Camp Morley in Auckland, gathered 120 Pakeha women to do theology together, to experience living together, to plan for the future, and to meet in denominational caucus groups to prepare submissions and challenges for particular denominations.⁶

We had previously consulted Maori women through Hui Wahine of the Bishopric of Aotearoa, and it became clear that the time was not yet for a bicultural hui. As Pakeha women, we had a lot of work to do. We proceeded to plan accordingly, but reserved a percentage of the funds we had available for Hui Wahine, to use as they determined.

It was out of this 1984 Conference, and in particular from the Anglican caucus, that a series of recommendations were presented to the Provincial Board for Ministry meeting in 1984. There was a concern for the diversity of ministries to be affirmed, the recognition of lay ministry among them, and the establishment of a provincial committee on women and a training/resource centre with a 'woman crafter'.

The Provincial Board for Ministry received the submission and supported its women members in exploring the possibilities. From the women's network, the Auckland Anglican women took the responsibility to check out the options.

During this time, work on the appointment of women to the faculty at St John's College continued. A women's group was meeting with the staffing committee of the College to ensure any such appointment be made with the support of the women's network and in their interests. It was hoped that this second appointment of a 'woman crafter' might

work with those women who did not have access to St John's College and its residential programme.

By 1984 there was an unprecedented number of women studying at Holy Cross, the Roman Catholic Seminary in Dunedin. There was also a significant increase in the number of women interested in studying at St John's College, including women wanting access to theological exploration of a disciplined nature but with no interest in ordination. Those responsible for these training programmes were still men who had themselves trained in the traditional schools of theology and exercised their ministry in the traditional parish structure. So while there were more and more women in ministry, and documents such as *Of the People* and *A Theology of Priesthood in New Zealand* pushing for a more open approach and creative use of resources, real substantial change was difficult. Women who managed to fight their way into the system were in grave danger of having their creative spark and enthusiasm to be women in ministry squashed.

Throughout 1985 conversations about possibilities continued. Janet Crawford was appointed to the staff of St John's College with the enthusiastic support of the women's network, and Enid Bennett through the Methodist appointment system. We were glad to welcome Enid, but disappointed that the process of her appointment had been dominated by men and had no connection with the networks of women exploring theological education. Holy Cross in Dunedin also appointed a woman to their faculty. At this point we began to experience some fear that our hopes for a second women to be appointed in the Anglican theological education system would not be realised.

B. Engaging in Evaluation

SYMPATHETIC CRITICISM

As I begin this section, looking at projects, I am conscious of grave tentativeness. So often as women reflect on the work of other women, or try to engage in a dialogue or debate with the ideas put forward by other women, pain and hurt are felt by both parties. And yet, unless we do engage critically with the actions and ideas of each other, we are doomed to keep re-inventing the wheel. It seems to me that we need to

find ways of looking at and evaluating the work that is going on, whether that is in the academy, the kitchen, or the community.

There is much we can learn from each other, and the task is urgent, so whatever tools and approaches enable us to make our contribution need to be thankfully acknowledged and picked up without a sense of competitiveness or of any proprietary rights to their use. Our history of survival as women has been one of caring about what happens to others, of sharing what we have learned, and of working together for change. It is in this spirit of collective wisdom that feminist liberation theology has its roots. I am attempting to present a style of criticism based in sympathy for the work of other women who are engaged in challenging the patriarchal ideology of this world and are seeking to work collectively for change towards justice.

To this end, I want to emphasise a basic premise which I am working with, namely, that sympathetic criticism, which functions within the realm of women's activity for liberation, is criticism for women and not of women. By that I mean that the analysis and comments need to be made in terms of the overall task of feminist liberation, of how that task is or is not furthered, and not in terms of how the particular woman or women 'perform in isolation' from the movement.

It is my intention that what is recorded - the story, the analysis, and the theoretical proposals - is for the benefit of the women's network in Aotearoa. So my evaluation of the various projects is made in terms of what can be learned from them, as we continue to struggle for survival as feminist women, and continue to equip ourselves in the task of liberation.

C. Some Feminist Projects

Growing in feminist understanding and continuing to equip ourselves for the tasks of liberation was the starting-point for the development of several projects aimed at enabling theological education for women within the Anglican church system. Each of these has had a different point of focus, and through each there have been learnings for feminist project-development within the church and for feminist theological education.

THE T.E.E. PROJECT (Theological Education by Extension)

The appointment of a second woman in the theological education system is the first project I want to explore.

The Women and Ministry Conference of 1984 saw a coming together of hopes and expectations of women as they participated in the struggle to re-shape the church in Aotearoa. As part of this coming together, there emerged the hope that a woman could be appointed to the TEE network, who would work with women as they explored and were equipped for new forms of feminist ministry, and participate in the structures in such a way as to bring about changes consistent with empowering feminist ministry. In addition, because of its integral part in the theology and ministry of feminist women, it was anticipated the appointee would be involved with the moves towards bicultural partnership.⁷

The women working on this appointment saw the position as one which would indicate that the church had heard and recognised the need for a woman to be able to respond to the needs of other women in ministry. It was to be a focused job, and not work done in time snatched from another job. It would have a reasonable budget, which would include a travel allowance to enable the connecting of women through the Province, instead of the isolating of them in rural or multi-problem parishes or in chaplaincies. Women would draw up the job description, women would provide support and oversight, women would have direct access to the structures. The TEE unit, as a provincial activity focused on theological education in the local setting and on supporting ministry officers in the various dioceses, seemed to be the best option available and certainly the most sympathetic.

The Rev Bruce Gilberd, the then Director of TEE, agreed to respond to the women's concern for a staff person to resource women in their ministries. In consultation with the Auckland women, he developed a budget and job description to present to the TEE Management Board (at this time, the Board of Governors of St John's College).

At the time there were no women amongst the network of theological educators in the paid ministry of the church, ministry officers and Christian education staff. The fact that two women from the women's network in Auckland were now on the Provincial Board for Ministry

(myself as Chairperson and Rosemary Neave) and that there were two women on the Board of Governors of St John's (one - me - from the women's network) was significant in steering the dream this far.

That nothing moved on the appointment during 1985 is not surprising, even though the increase in the budget of the TEE unit to make this possible was approved. The TEE unit had for some time been expressing difficulty in its relationship with the St John's Board of Governors, as the body under whose oversight it technically came. The focus of that body was rightly, according to the terms of its establishment, the residential training at St John's College. As a result, proposals were presented to the Board of Governors in June 1986 intended to create a new and independent Board of Oversight for the TEE unit. One of these proposals came from the unit itself, the other from the Provincial Board for Ministry. The new Board of Oversight was approved and set up, the intention being that it represent more really the concerns and interests of those people throughout the province seeking to use and develop the resources for theology and ministry such a unit could offer.

At this time the Director of TEE, Bruce Gilberd, was elected Bishop of Auckland. He was installed in February 1986 and this left the position of Director of TEE vacant. I went overseas to study in August 1986, and this meant that my part of the story with regard to the women's relationship to TEE and the proposed women's appointment was not available, and much of the clarity of the original vision was lost as job specifications were prepared and applications were considered for what was now one and a half positions.

In July 1986 applications were called for. Funds were available for one and half positions - a fulltime Director and a half time Associate. A job specification for two people, outlining areas of work, was circulated, including a half time job description for a woman to work specifically in the area of enabling women. It was left an open question whether the full time or part time appointment would include the women's ministry enabling work. The women's job description, developed in consultation with the Anglican women's work group, was changed slightly - an 'Anglican woman' clause was deleted. This was not noticed by the women continuing to promote the appointment.

Finally after two selection processes, the appointments were duly made: male fulltime and female half time. It is important to note that

one of the women involved in making the appointments called it one of the worst processes she had ever been involved in.

There was now a woman available to work with women in theological education by extension. However it became clear early that the process and the structure had produced difficulties that meant that the position was not as effective as had been hoped in terms of the original vision.

The male dominated system of appointment for the women's position, acted against the advice and wishes of the women's network, and acted despite two of the three women on the Board voting against the appointment. This meant the Associate needed to work initially largely through male contacts and male support systems. As time has gone on some parts of the women's network retain hesitations in working wholeheartedly with the Associate. The male system also blocked off direct access to Anglican structures, by not appointing an Anglican woman, thereby limiting the potential of her having access to challenge and change those structures, and creating the need for her to work through men to get access to those structures.

What was observable to some in the Province, was the determination of the male system to provide the necessary openings and support and work suggestions to 'get the job going' and to justify the rightness of the appointment. It also appeared that, of necessity for survival, the Associate had to spend considerable time on relationships with the TEE network-all male at that time. Some of the effectiveness of this work has been felt through the attitudes of men associated with the TEE network and conversations between them and women of the women's network. What has emerged is a feeling of protectiveness, a sense of responsibility for the work of the female colleague.

Clearly the way the system made the appointment now requires it to protect the appointee from any anger or hostility, real or imagined, which may arise from the women's network. It needed to prove that it was a 'good' appointment, but it remains a question - in whose eyes and for whose benefit was it or is it 'good'. Some would frame an answer which says: for the liberal Pakeha male system. This is not to deny that women have also benefited from the appointment.

Initially there was real hope that, should the appointment be made, the women's network would provide the primary support network, the

Anglican women would provide access into the activities of women in the various dioceses, and the network would provide the community within which explorations of what it meant to be a feminist liberation educator relating to church structures could be undertaken. Within this community - emergent women-church - it was anticipated the TEE field-worker would be 'at home'. It was hoped that here the possibilities and potential for a feminist programme in relationship to existing structures could be explored without losing integrity as feminist or being diverted from the tasks defined by the women's network.

However, as has already been indicated, the appointment in fact was controlled by the male structure, processes and understanding. It was made in terms of that structure's understanding of the needs of the church. As a result the woman fieldworker did not have a ready base in the women's network, and was therefore unable adequately to meet the network's expectations of resourcing for feminist ministry. Some suspicion still remains about the participation of men in the supporting and directing of the work.

In summary, the original concept and feminist dream for the job was re-shaped and the power in the appointment process was with a group dominated by men and a male style. In this process some of the 'women's story', which led to the appointment being formulated, was lost and women on the Board were 'outvoted'. There continues to be a pattern of male authentication and protection, as was anticipated when the male system took over the appointment process. The power of authority for existence, for funding, for access comes directly from the patriarchal (albeit liberal) structure of the church. Some good women's work has been done, but there has remained some hesitancy, in parts of the women's network, in giving wholehearted support. And there is the sense that the job has not been as effective as it might have been, if the women's network had had more control in the process of appointment, and the ongoing development of the job. It could be said that the appointment works against the original dreams of the network, as there is now an 'official' women's educator, identified and appointed by the male structure, to advise them on women's perspectives and concerns. This then becomes their arena of contact with women - no wider consultation is needed, and those parts of the women's network who find difficulty wholeheartedly supporting the Associate's work do not need to be consulted, and are even seen as 'wet blankets' for not giving unqualified support to another feminist woman.⁸

Issues Raised

The key criterion is whether or not changes occur that will facilitate the liberation struggle of feminists within a patriarchal structure. The evidence is that any process in which the financial and determining power remains in the hands of the white male system is unable to provide a firm basis for a feminist liberation action. Without a climate of mutual respect and genuine power sharing, men will continue to call the tune, and women will be required to dance to their tune in order to simply survive.

So, although the TEE project has achieved some good things for women, its full potential has not been realised because of the process of appointment and the oversight which was established. Because the original vision has not been fully realised, there continues to be the need and energy to pursue the dream, and a number of other projects and initiatives have developed parallel to the TEE project. The church climate, and the current patterns of theological education, continue to push feminist women to find alternatives for themselves and ways to change the church.

Throughout the Province there are groupings of women who desire access to critical feminist theological education, groups who are exploring different ways of looking at life and the Bible, and groups who would like to help to 'waken' other women to the meaning of our life experiences as women both in church and society. I have already mentioned the Women's Resource Centre and its growing role. It is one of a number of feminist projects for theological education for women that are exploring ways of carrying forward the dream and ways of resourcing women and reshaping the church.

WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTRE

Concurrently with the latter stages of this process for the appointment of a woman to work in the TEE unit, an alternative was being worked on a group of ordained and lay women from the Auckland diocese. They were preparing a submission for funds to establish an Auckland Women's Resource Centre aimed at linking together Auckland women and providing resources and education for women who felt isolated and with their needs unmet. This move, learning from the TEE effort, determined to keep maximum control. The design was for funds to

remain under the control of the Centre, rather than the usual practice of their being held by a diocesan committee. The women involved in the Centre would make decisions and engage in all planning for Centre activities.

In one situation the women remained in control of their application and money, in the other they were dependent on men and a male structure. These differences are to become significant.

The establishment of this Centre began with the Friday Group⁹ of the Auckland Diocese. That group made an application to the St John's College Trust Board, through the Auckland Diocese application, for funds to establish the Resource Centre. They included a description of their focus in the submission, which sought significant funds and indicated an autonomous place for the Centre in relation to church structures.

Such a submission became possible with the establishment of the St John's College Trust Advisory Board. The outcome of its establishment was that trust monies, previously expended almost entirely on residential theological education through St John's College, began to be distributed more widely for projects in education and ministry around the province.

The Auckland Diocese agreed to support the application of the Friday Women's Group in March 1986, and the funds were granted. Because of the way in which the Friday Group established its application and its relationship to the diocesan structure, the monies were paid into the group's account for expenditure according to their budget and not held in Church Office accounts. The women had control. After receiving application, they proceeded to appoint Rosemary Neave to set up the centre. By October 1987 a number of educational events in theology and spirituality had been held, as well as two monthly tea and worship gatherings for women. They were off to a good start and feeling positive and energised as their funding for the second year's running was approved.

Providing a decision-making base was a 'working core group', drawn from the Friday Group. Some of the women in the 'working core group' were also involved in the TEE project, and have had the opportunity to reflect in depth on that and to identify learnings. The Women's Centre

attempts to find ways to maintain the clarity of its vision, its autonomy within the church, and its relevance to users.

The core group of the Centre, learning from the early deaconess movement and women's missionary activities in Auckland at the turn of the century, chose to use a 'liberal' bishop as 'protector'. At this stage, the Centre chose this path as it was in no rush to tie itself up with statutes and canons and accountability structures.¹⁰ Work had to be done on these questions in order to survive as an Anglican entity, with the right to speak to the church and to participate in decision-making. By moving slowly, however, we were able to see the pitfalls and to identify allies more carefully.

As at 1988 the Centre was in its second year of funding and concern was beginning to be expressed about its autonomy by the institutional church. It maintained its own bank accounts and budget, and was not legally required to report to any committee or board of the church, except to the Trust Board with regard to the expenditure of its monies. It is important to note that, because the Resource Centre was now participating in diocesan activities as a visible entity, offering feminist theology and spirituality workshops and producing a newsletter, the call was out to tighten the structured relationship to the church and to restrict its autonomous activity.

The Women's Centre in its original application stated as clearly as it felt able, that it saw itself servicing the needs of women who felt unresourced by existing church programmes and groups. It declared itself as complementary to existing organisations, offering an alternative and not a replacement, and it sought the right to appoint its own staff and develop its own work. As it developed its identity further, it had meetings with the Association of Anglican Women, an existing and well established Anglican women's organisation, and with the Standing Committee of the diocese, to explain its self-perception. A reasonable level of open communication was significant in developing the level of 'acceptability' which has grown. This 'acceptability', albeit tinged with fear and anxiety, has made it possible for the Centre to send a major submission to the Diocesan Structural Review Committee, to distribute a statement of goals to the diocesan synod, to meet regularly with the bishop to offer comment on events and decisions affecting women, to offer a monthly inclusive language liturgy in association with an inner-city church, and to offer some input to a diocesan clergy conference.

By keeping the profile high, the centre has been able to advertise and sell a reasonable quantity of local feminist writings (some of which it has helped to publish) and to underwrite a number of theological workshop events in various locations in Auckland and in other parts of the country. In addition, we have enabled women's ritual groups, a monthly eucharistic liturgy exploring inclusiveness and feminist theology, study groups, liturgical dance, herstory workshops, and other activities. In all of this, the women of the core group have maintained control of finance, appointments, events, and identity.

The monthly newsletter and circulation of feminist books from the library mean we are in touch with a large number of women throughout the country. From them we receive letters of encouragement and hope that what has begun with the centre will flourish. We also receive letters of challenge which express fear at what we represent, and also heart-rending letters from women sharing stories of great pain and anguish.

Although the work of the Centre is focused in the main amongst Pakeha women, the women of the core group are all actively involved in bicultural work and see the promotion of bicultural partnership as an integral dimension of the Centre.

At this time the Centre is still dependent upon the distribution of trust funds, but seems to have won a place as a diocesan priority in the application for such funds. It is, however, seeking ways to be more financially independent through publishing and a charge system for workshops. For the next few years our finances seem secure, and we have established the principle of monies being paid into the control of the Resource Centre itself. This principle necessitated moves toward being formally constituted and therefore legally entitled to hold and solicit monies, remaining an integral part of church life and activities and yet self-determining.

It is apparent to those of us associated with it that the Women's Resource Centre has great potential. It provides worship opportunities which are greatly welcomed by feminist women (and some men), educational events which explore theology and spirituality from a feminist liberation perspective, and input into key diocesan decisions. It also acts in a less tangible way as a beacon: many women see the centre as a sign of hope and 'Women Church'. It is also able to be a focus

for the networking activity amongst women. In two or three instances recently it has picked up consultancy and advocacy roles for women having difficulties with church structures - to say nothing of the steady stream of women who want to 'talk'. Out of this mix of activities, the centre continues to plan the next phase of its intentional projects.

THEOLOGY AND RACISM GROUP

A semi-structured project has been the meeting together as a group of women since 1985 to explore theology and racism. All the women in the group clearly identify themselves as feminist and have a commitment to the defined issue because of the way it affects our country and the churches in the moves towards bicultural partnership. Originally the group was called together under the auspices of the NCC Programme on Racism (now Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand). Of particular interest to the group is the part Pakeha women must play in these moves towards bicultural partnership and antiracism. Each of the women involved is in some way both teacher and learner, and all are active in a variety of antiracism and bicultural education programmes. As the group commenced its third year, we took some time to gather together our learnings about racism and theology, and also to reflect on how we learn as feminist women and what we seek to do with our learnings.

LOCAL GROUPS

Some further projects of a less structured style have also been possible in part because of the funding support of the Womens Resource Centre and in part because we have a growing group of women able to respond to requests. This work has taken the form of various workshops - some parish-based, others amongst gatherings of women. In some of these instances validation by the Centre of the workshop leaders has encouraged feminist women to participate. I have led many of these workshops, as a paid facilitator.

One such group functioned within the Campbell's Bay Anglican Parish. I met with these women on three occasions. On one we explored the group's need in the area of theological education and identified specific concerns they had for feminist theological education. On another we explored a feminist approach to Bible study.

Another local group was the Market Place Mission in Rotorua. This group was trying to bring about changes in a local parish - in language, liturgy, and relationships between clergy and lay people. It also sought to act as a parish mission initiative within the local community, in particular in the establishment of a women's refuge. I spent some time with them reflecting on power-relationships and other aspects of feminist theology as this relates to their specific concerns.

Notes:

- 1 St John's Theological College was at this time a joint residential college for the theological education of both Anglican and Methodist students. The colleges came together in 1972 at the height of church union discussions and separated again in 1985. In 1985 they agreed to function as separate colleges sharing the same plant and some joint faculty. See the *Partnership Agreement between the Board of Governors of St John's College and the Trinity Methodist Theological Council To Enable Shared Work in Residential Ministerial Education*, 1985.
- 2 Jocelyn Armstrong, a woman active in Christian feminist concerns and participant in the previous Women in Ministry Conference, and myself, likewise involved in women's issues and also chairperson of the PBM, called the initial meeting together.
- 3 The St John's College Trust Board administers investment monies for the funding of theological education and ministry training. It is the primary source of funds for this work, and funds entirely the costs of St John's College. Prior to the establishment of the Advisory Board, St John's College was the only major recipient of monies. Some grants were made to Maori schools (Anglican) and to minor applications, but the rest reinvested.
- 4 It has been noted that, while the structured ecumenical positions were held by men (eg National Council of Churches, Church and Society Commission, the Negotiating Churches Unity Council), women were living and working and worshipping ecumenically.
- 5 See *Vashti's Voice* No 19.

- 6 For an outline of the vision and planning for the Conference, see my article, "The Women and Ministry Consultation", in Enid Bennett (ed), *With Heads Uncovered*.
- 7 Chapter 2 outlines the details of the intentions and hopes for the appointment.
- 8 Now, in 1991, TEEM has been established. This is a national network of women related to the work of the TEE Unit. Many women express satisfaction with what is offered, others still express some dissatisfaction.
- 9 The 'Friday Group' is a group of lay and ordained women who have been meeting since 1983. We see ourselves as primarily monitoring the structures of the diocese and seeking to participate in those decisions which have direct implications for our ministry as women.
- 10 It is, however, working towards becoming an incorporated society in its own right.

CHAPTER FOUR

A FEMINIST THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN

Through my involvement in the TEE initiative, the Women's Resource Centre, the theology and racism group, and informal projects such as parish study groups, theological workshops,¹ and personal supervision, I have become aware of some appropriate styles and key components for feminist education. The variety of different projects provides for a wide range of women's needs for theological education, and enables the testing out of differing styles and approaches. Among the differing approaches, we are beginning to discern those which are most conducive to feminist liberative learning. If feminist theological education is to do its task, then its educational style, approach, and structuring must be appropriate both to its goals and to the women whom it serves.

Much learning has taken place for me and other feminist women concerned to resource women in the area of feminist theological education, as we have grappled with new situations, experiences, and structures. Much of this learning has become clear in the reflection time we spend together. Group reflection is important for feminist growth; within this setting, as well as out of my own work, I have gained much new learning. Learning from both settings forms the basis for the rest of this chapter.

Our continuing thinking as feminist women in ministry has identified a number of areas of difficulty. Reflection on why women found the traditional theological education they had received of limited value included:

- their sense of oppression in a heavily androcentric college,
- their isolation from sharing with the insights and experiences of other women,
- the separation of theory and practice,

- the basic assumption that a feminist critique was optional if not inappropriate,
- the assumption that maleness is normative.

For many there was the experience of the unchallenged authority of teacher, scripture, church, and tradition. The TEE experience showed how the male structures can prevent feminist women from working effectively, even though the stated intentions might provide room for women's needs and programmes. Experiences such as those through the Women's Resource Centre have shown the difficulty of sustaining energy, and of providing church related structures while enabling learning opportunities for feminist women.

Out of all of these projects, three main issues emerge which need to be addressed. The first of these relates to women's ways of learning. We now realise that some of the difficulties women have experienced with traditional theological education are due to the learning expectations of traditional educational approaches. Women have ways of learning which are not the same as those generally provided for by traditional adult education, planned and presented predominantly by men. The second issue is that of providing learning opportunities towards a feminist future. We have become clear that feminist education requires a combination of action and reflection, and a move towards transformation, plus learning which enables critical appraisal of tradition and structure so as to result in justice for all. Feminist theological education cannot be satisfied with static knowledge or with education as a way of equipping people to fit into the existing system and dominant mind-set. Feminist theological education goes beyond 'learning in ways appropriate for women', to equipping and empowering women for transforming action. The third issue is that of creating an organisational framework which will sustain women's ways of learning and feminist transformative action, while maintaining a relationship with the structure of the church. We have discovered how critical are questions of accountability, leadership and teaching style, decision-making, and access to resources. A feminist perspective requires new structures and ways of working in relation to education, as in relation to all else.

I will now look at each of these three issues.

WOMEN'S WAYS OF LEARNING

Fourteen years ago I began tentatively to explore the possibilities of theological education, as a way to better resource myself for an undefined ministry I was groping towards. Later I learned other women also were searching for a different way. I was looking for an education style which would 'teach me how to learn', which would help me ask my questions, which was integrally related to the community work I was doing, and which would help me make sense of the church-world interface.

It has become clear, from my own experience and from the experience of others, that women respond best when the learning environment favours honest relationships and co-operation, when there is mutual respect and trust between all members of the learning group. I have been invited to work with several groups which have an ongoing life (such as the parish group in Campbells Bay and the Market Place Mission in Rotorua), and I recognised how readily the women in these groups grapple with new ideas, identify structural blocks, and open themselves to new learnings. The trust they had built up in their group made it possible for them to engage at depth in theological reflection. In this environment, women, many of whom have learned not to value their own ideas and to think their questions naive, are more willing to share information and questions which arise from their personal experience and exploration. I have found that time spent with new and casual groupings in developing personal relationships and group identity and trust provides a similar sympathetic environment for the disclosure of personal experience. This use of personal experience as a base is a significant element in women's learning.

A close interaction between theory and practice (praxis) is a style which I find women respond to. Groups I am part of are working with new knowledge and sharing their insights almost simultaneously in an ebb and flow rhythm. Ideas, using those ideas in practice, and passing the ideas on to others, are not easily separated in the experience of women. We are most often teachers and learners at the same time. This aspect of women's learning was identified clearly by the Theology and Racism Group during a sustained group meeting.² To say that we are both teachers and learners is not to devalue or make unnecessary the person skilled or knowledgeable at depth in certain areas. Effective

learning requires input at key points. Personal experience is important, but sharing out of experience alone can become a circular exercise which is encouraging without necessarily resulting in significant learning. The point about being both teachers and learners is to acknowledge that information is for sharing. No one has all the answers. Knowledge is not a personal preserve, and women want access to it.

In my experience, learning for women occurs best when it is related to enhancing the quality of life for self and others, when it takes account of relationships, when it is based in experience, when it responds to women's questions and vision, when it takes account of 'learning how to learn'.

For these reasons it is often difficult to assess women's knowledge for credit. I remain unhappy with the traditional exam system as the basis for accreditation, and believe we need to work at new ways of assessing and giving credit for women's learning.

My experiences and reflections - and those of the women with whom I have worked - are borne out by a growing body of literature which explores women's ways of learning. It attempts to assist us more effectively to provide learning opportunities for women, and to remove the self blame attitude women often have because of their inability to cope with traditional educational styles and expectations.

Carol Gilligan attempts to redress the failure of current development theory by focusing her book on the moral development of women³. She shows how repeatedly women's moral judgments are based on the primacy of relationships. Her research identifies the way in which women, at each stage in their development, are concerned for the interdependence of human persons, and seek to structure their responses to alleviate exploitation and hurt, and to maintain relationships. For all the women who were subjects in Gilligan's research, personal experience was more important than knowledge of moral or behavioural rules.

Research on the human brain has shown a distinction between the right and left hemispheres in regard to modes of operation⁴. The left hemisphere functions in a thinking style which is analytical, logical, abstract, and sequential. It is concerned with time and speech, and with cause and effect relationships. The right hemisphere, on the other

hand, produces a style of thinking which is synthetic, imaginative, holistic, and metaphorical. It is concerned with shapes and colours, textures and forms, music and art. In Western culture, at least, men tend to favour the left hemisphere of the brain, and women the right⁵. Much of this is undoubtedly cultural conditioning, fostered by education, and by the male-dominated institutions which are closed-off to those who do not use abstract logical thinking. Jung's tight categorising of these functions as 'masculine' and 'feminine' is not helpful, as it continues to type-cast men's and women's ways of operating⁶. It is unhelpful to suggest that research in this area points to differing brain-functions which mean that women are inevitably more intuitive and holistic in their thinking-patterns in comparison with men's emphasis on logic and analysis. It does show, however, that these more free-flowing ways of thinking and knowing and learning are integrally human, and appropriate in education⁷. Women have allowed these ways of discovering and knowing to be significant in their experience, and they must be taken account of in any education programmes in which women will participate.

Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule⁸ gather together the stories of many women, which show the alienation of women from traditional male models of education. They show how women are subjective connectors with knowledge, rather than separate and objective 'masters'. They assert that, because of this, women who pursue a journey of subjective connecting become voiceless within the male system. Women lack the authority of received knowledge which 'everyone' knows and which can be regurgitated, and until women's subjective ways of knowing gain recognition, they also lack the authority of intuition and connectedness. Belenky et al are convinced that women, after years of male teachers who have convinced them they lack the powers of reasoning, need other women as models to assure them that thinking (reasoning and problem-solving) are a 'human imperfect and attainable activity'. Belenky et al show the importance of co-operative groups of women working in an environment hospitable to the women and using the women's agenda in such a way that women are connected with their own and each other's knowledge. As part of this, Belenky et al show how women in the first instance need to be set free from living up to the learning expectations of the male-dominated system. Women in learning situations repeatedly state how their own achievement goals

are set according to the male system, and how inability to measure up is internalised as personal failure and inadequacy. *Women's Ways of Knowing* shows clearly the responses of women to educational styles determined by men, and illustrates alternatives gleaned from the experiences of women struggling to be women focused in educational method and content.

A collection of essays edited by Charlotte Bunch and Sandra Pollack⁹ begins to focus more particularly on women in academic institutions. It moves towards feminist education and what the 'teacher' needs to be aware of. However, I think it still speaks, in the main part, to women's study programmes and how we can best enable women to gain access to knowledge. It again highlights the importance of building relationships in the learning environment where honest exploration can take place, of asking questions to uncover women's history and experience, and of the importance in women-sympathetic education of recognising and working with the interconnectedness of life issues.

We can pull threads together from all this and summarise a learning style appropriate for women as needing to include:

- A base which takes women's experience seriously and uses this experience as a genuine component in learning.
- A co-operative learning style which recognises the teacher-learner exchange.
- A concern for relationships within the learner group. Open and honest relationships facilitate the sharing necessary in women's learning exchange.
- A recognition that 'right brain' activities are equally valuable and appropriate components in learning, along with the analytical logical reasoning of traditional academic education.
- An integrated learning approach that recognises the interdependence of human persons and the whole ecosystem, including use of skills to analyse structures and systems.
- A need to celebrate the knowledge women have so they become aware of 'knowing'. This needs to begin with recognising and

affirming the style of knowing which women bring, for example, through intuition and the arts, oral history, stories, memories, suspicion.

- A praxis based style which honours the action/reflection immediacy of women's activity, and also recognises that action/reflection is a significant learning method, which links theory with practice.
- Educators who have remained in contact with (or 'known to') the network during the process of acquiring their skills, providing greater confidence in their knowledge and skill.
- The development of assessment and accreditation which values the ability to learn and question and enables the expression of knowledge in a variety of ways.
- A sense of the relationship between subject matter, process, and outcome - process alone is not enough.

When the style of learning outlined above is set against much of what still exists in many learning institutions, including theological colleges, it becomes clear why women often feel out of place, excluded, inadequate, or not taken seriously. The sort of education setting that I came up against when I was searching for a way to 'learn' theology, was heavily reliant on a teacher who held 'knowledge' and passed it on to students, who worked individually to collate and package this 'knowledge' and restate it for examination and accreditation. In this process, each component of 'knowledge' (discipline) is seen as separate and self-contained, and the subject-matter used within the learning environment is predominantly academic and abstract in form, with limited direct relationship to either the experiences of the learners or the needs of the world outside. Further, both teacher and 'knowledge' are seen as authoritative, with little room to question either. Traditional theological learning environments have been caught in this model.

There are, and often have been, alternatives to this model. Liberal education has attempted to provide a more flexible, integrated, and co-operative approach. Much of the learning style for women outlined above is drawn into such liberal educational theory and practice. Many people are trying to do things differently, and a variety of imaginative

approaches have been and are being attempted now, including in theological colleges. What I have outlined for women clearly can be helpful for men as well. However, I believe it is still possible to speak of 'women's ways of learning', and important to do so in constructing an educational style appropriate for women.

LEARNING FOR A FEMINIST FUTURE

There is a distinction between women's ways of learning and a feminist education. It hardly needs to be stated that the use of the word 'feminist' further qualifies the educational style. While the provision of those elements which encourage women to learn are appropriate for whatever they seek to learn, feminist education has as its goal the learning for transformation. This transformation seeks change in the various power relationships which make up our work and society. Our participation in the Women's Resource Centre and the TEE appointment highlight the difference. In the one, women and men feel comfortable that women will be resourced to do better those things they are able to do in the church and community; in the other, tension develops when women seek to be self determining and move the initiation and development of projects from the control of male structures to structures controlled by a women's feminist process. This feminist education integrates the critique of power and ideology within whatever is being investigated, and holds the subject matter up against the feminist vision of the future.

For feminist education of this sort to be possible, there is a struggle for most women at the personal level to escape the bindings and conditioning of androcentric education and socialisation. Escape from this is necessary in order to claim the right to gynocentric programme development which is conducive to feminist women's explorations. We have found we need to give away acquiescence to the 'trust me' passive relationship to education and its teachers which we have been conditioned into. Feminist education must provide opportunities for women to grapple with the way patriarchy affects them. It must give women skills and confidence in their personal lives for survival in an androcentric world, while helping them to be aware of co-option. I have found that women often need help to articulate what they know from their life experience. So feminist education must provide a learning environment in which each woman can develop as a woman. This personal discovery aspect

of feminist education is important for a feminist future. Not all women have a feminist consciousness, yet the movement must grow and expand. There continue to be personal discoveries for each of us to make, so we must not neglect personal awareness. Learning to challenge and be challenged is a delicate aspect of growth, and assertiveness training courses have helped many of us with this. Our lives, what happens to us as individual women, is an integral part of the whole political system. "The personal is the political." For us in Aotearoa, what is happening to Pakeha women as individuals and as groups of women is often a critical discovery to make when examining situations from a bicultural perspective. As Pakeha women, we need to explore our place and our role in the bicultural future which is unfolding.

Transformation on an interpersonal level in feminist education enables women to learn to relate to other women. We learn to value women as friends and colleagues, to trust women, and to share knowledge and experiences with women: we learn to love each other. The androcentric interests of society have, in their own best interests, privatised women. We have been cut off from each other into the separate worlds of our own homes and families, and encouraged to seek only men as our friends and confidants, and to be competitive and jealous towards other women. Learning towards a feminist future needs to help women to unlearn this conditioning. As women we can and must learn to trust each other, to care and support each other, and to realise that we can share the concern for the liberation of all women. A feminist education must help us to rediscover how to work co-operatively. I find it useful in feminist education to provide opportunities for women to explore ways of working together. This often helps to break down individual and competitive styles, and to create enjoyment in an area previously feared. We need to seek new patterns for learning together, as well as for acting and deciding together.

When feminist education addresses the transformation of structures, it focuses on the major issues of oppression in patriarchal society. All of these are significant for feminist education. Feminist education is not only on about the sin of sexism, nor only concerned for personal growth and liberation. The links between the various oppressions need to be identified. In order that women can engage in social transformation, feminist education needs to equip us with the skills to analyse society, for we need to be able to survive in it without succumbing to it. We need

to be able to discern how our society works, how the oppressions of race, sex, and class are held in place, and how to plan strategies for change. A feminist education is built around our involvement in actions for social change, as well as our theorising about it. The asking of questions, critical analysis, is an essential aspect of feminist education. We need to learn which questions to ask and which answers to respect.

For feminists engaged in theological education, communities of women become important. They can provide the support systems for feminist women which are otherwise hard to find, and they can provide appropriate alternative structures through which to confront the traditional education system of the church. The network developed by the Women's Resource Centre, for example, provides women with the assurance that it is not our own failings and inadequacies which cause our discomfort and our inability to 'measure up'. The theology and racism group has a system of accountability, which provides the checks and balances to ensure we remain 'true' to our feminist vision and commitment to transformation. Within the membership of such a community we can create close support and friendship groups which allow challenge, care, and encouragement to take place. Many groups founder on this point, and yet we believe it is important to struggle with in goodwill. All the projects provide an environment within which we can live out our vision now, expressing our discovered theology and vision in ritual and celebration. They become signs of new possibilities at the heart of the tradition. It is communities like these which form what I call 'women-church', and become home for feminist women engaged in struggle for change. This is a necessary part of theological education for feminists.

In our learning for a feminist future it is important that we work with a learning style which promotes our feminist ideology. This requires that we explore the relationships of power and authority, that we work with co-operative rather than hierarchical relationships, that we affirm the goodness of creation and the importance of right relations. We need to be developing a style which values women and expects them to make important contributions to the development of knowledge and to the structuring of our society. Education for feminists is an evolving creative style, open to change and self-critique, and with a clear responsibility to engage in social transformation for the liberation of all women. In other words, our process and our goal must be compatible.

ORGANISATIONAL FRAMEWORK

At this point we need to explore the structure which will best enable all women to learn, and feminist women to 'learn' their way into a new future. The organisational framework we seek will ideally facilitate both these aspects of women's experience. Feminist women will need to keep control of the vision that energises them, the emerging structure, and the content of any feminist educational system.

A framework for feminist education will not be rigid, nor will it be the same for all women or groups. The path women travel in their learning and emerging is many and varied, so the framework needs to be flexible, capable of multiple shapings - a flexi-frame.

Nevertheless, there are some important areas which require an appropriate feminist organisational framework to facilitate their functioning to support a feminist theological education. These include such activities as goal-setting, leadership-selection, resource-use, content-selection, and assessment. Any organisational framework is concerned with: (a) who is engaged in a particular task, (b) what process is used for enabling that task to be carried out, and (c) where accountability for the task lies. So in each of these key areas we need to ask, from a feminist perspective, who are the appropriate people to be involved, what is the appropriate process, and where does accountability lie? Organising for feminist theological education will then be built around the answers to these questions.

Setting Goals:

In order that the goals set for any feminist theological education project reflect the vision for a feminist future, feminist women must be involved in and have control of the goals and the process of setting them. A strength of the Women's Resource Centre is that this happened and continues to happen. The women who met originally to plan for the centre were able to reach a clear consensus as to the purpose and style of the centre. These two aspects are reviewed from time to time by the core group as further decisions need to be taken regarding the activities of the centre. These reviews refer to the original goals and ensure the centre remains accountable to feminist women in their struggle to transform the church.

Goal-setting aims to make the goals relevant, realistic, and achievable for the particular women involved, and thereby generate energy and enthusiasm rather than a sense of obligation and passivity. Goal-setting is at all times subject to critique in terms of process and content against the vision for a feminist future.

Any organisational framework for a feminist educational project must include a process by which women who are engaged in the project participate in shaping and reshaping the project's goals, generally through a core group to whom they give decision-making responsibility.

Making Decisions:

Key decisions in feminist theological education need to be made by all those affected by the decision. There need to be structures to enable this to happen, such as open forums, community meetings, consensus processes, and wide participation in decision-making groups. The Women's Resource Centre has held a number of meetings to which all those who receive the newsletter are invited to come. These meetings discuss broad issues of policy. However, full participation is not always possible, so the Centre has a working core group, which is entrusted to make decisions for the Centre, consulting others from time to time. Individuals and groups entrusted with decision-making responsibility remain accountable to those on whose behalf they are acting, and to the vision of a feminist future.

In order to facilitate good decision-making in a feminist structure, access to adequate information and an ability to analyse situations are very important. To this end, open and honest access to information is essential. This brings into severe doubt the value of 'confidential' information, whether about finances, students, or whatever.

Determining Resources:

'Resources' includes finances as well as plant and equipment, time for reflection as well as shared experiences and accumulated knowledge. Resources often seem to be in short supply, and disharmony frequently arises between struggling groups because of this, therefore determining what resources really exist, where they are, and what are required, as well as how to get access to them, creates opportunities for learning.

Out of my experience with the projects, it is clear that the decision-making group in any feminist educational project must have effective control over resources. In the case of TEE, the financial resources are held by the Board of Oversight who determine what proportion shall be available to the woman fieldworker. The Women's Resource Centre, on the other hand, has its own bank account, which is operated by the core group. For a feminist group, it is key that control is in the hands of those who decide the basic priorities and goals of the educational enterprise. Separation of financial decisions, for example, from planning decisions shifts effective power to those who control the finance. A feminist framework must integrate the processes for decisions about resources with those relating to all other aspects of the group's activity.

All of this will require a careful appraisal of what is available presently from traditional church systems, what is available from amongst the women themselves, and what must be sought elsewhere. The tension will be to make sufficient demands on church resources without allowing the traditional church to determine the future of the feminist programme.

Providing Leadership:

Feminist education recognises that there will be specific leadership needs. This is so even within a non-hierarchical structure based on power-sharing and partnership. Feminist projects recognise the value of equality and sharing, and of the exchange in teacher/ learner roles.

The Resource Centre identifies leadership for particular activities on the basis of membership of the feminist community, ability to work in consultation, energy to initiate and carry through a task, group skills, teaching ability, knowledge and experience in feminist theology and social action. So the core group has asked Rosemary to give leadership in organisation, while I lead the monthly inclusive language liturgy. Informal groups often seek feminist leadership beyond the formal church structure. Both the Campbells Bay group and the Market Place Mission have, for example, invited me to lead workshops for them.

In contrast to the permanent leadership of the hierarchical church, feminist leadership is most effective when it is identified and is then supported by the group which requires the leadership. Those exercising leadership are accountable to the group concerned and to the feminist

vision. Persons identified for leadership tasks may be paid for their leadership and may be contracted for periods of time in order to provide job security. Leadership is not carried out in isolation but amid a support group similarly identified for its skills or need to learn.

In addition, leadership is emerging which is not limited to tasks, but includes the honouring of age and insight: the crone and the prophet, the spiritual guide and the woman of wisdom and experience. These leadership functions are being recognised, celebrated, and incorporated into the life of feminist education environments. From these people we learn about ourselves, we gain a sense of perspective about our activities, we are challenged and enthused. A feminist structure incorporates them just as significantly as accountants and professors in traditional settings.

Choosing the Learning Context:

This is related to how we use our resources. It recognises the need for flexibility in where we might choose to learn, and an ability to shift resources to the most appropriate place. The learning context will be chosen for its ability to facilitate the planned-for learning, rather than used because it is set aside. So again, those who participate in deciding the shape of the learning goals need also to participate in choosing the best context for that learning. The decision-making structures used to choose will need to allow women who will be taking part in the learning process all to have a say about the best place for this. Sometimes the place might be a city classroom, sometimes a suburban kitchen or a country church hall, sometimes a shopfloor, sometimes a refuge centre, sometimes a movie theatre.

The context for learning is an integral part of feminist education. The context itself speaks to the learning and has direct relevance to the reflections which arise and the people who become available to share leadership and wisdom. It also affects considerably the ability of the participants to learn. Therefore, choosing the learning context must again involve in some way both 'teacher' and 'learner'.

The TEE project aimed to meet the goal for feminist theological education of making available learning opportunities to as many women as possible. That goal continues to be relevant. We need to consider formal institutional settings and informal home settings and

neutral spaces as all necessary to the task. Therefore the organisational structure which supports this type of programme must be able to move a wide range of support systems and resources quickly and easily to the most appropriate place. It must also be able to provide people with skills to work in a wide range of situations without denigrating one at the expense of the other.

Non-residential programmes, such as the non-stipendiary training weekends and the informal education events of the Women's Resource Centre (which can be designed to meet the needs of the participants), must not be seen as lesser value than the residential programme at St John's College based on offered courses in a fixed institution. Both have their place and need to be seen in co-operation with each other, rather than in competition. It is my experience, however, that it is easier to ensure the feminist content of the non-residential programmes at this time.

Choosing the Learning Content:

Feminist theological education has at its core the transformation of unjust structures, of fragmented relationships, and of oppressive situations. It seeks justice, equality, wholeness, peace, freedom for all women, and therefore eventually for all people. The content of its education programmes must therefore seek to bring this about through the equipping of women to grow, articulate, and take action towards the vision. It is the basis on which the theology and racism group functions, and is a basic principle of the Women's Resource Centre. The choosing of curricula needs to be done in a way which promotes the vision, and which includes all participants. It is here that content and method become closely linked again. In other words - how content is chosen, by whom, and for what must be inter-related.

Not only must we consult the consumer - she knows what she wants to learn - but we must also be guided by those women who are able to keep the vision bright and clear. The choice of curriculum outline and course content is clearly biased! Feminist theological education should not apologise for this. The Resource Centre unashamedly provides resourcing which is specifically feminist. The organisational structure is there to facilitate an educational style for feminist women - towards a transformed future. It cannot tolerate an open, 'anything goes', 'we must be fair to the other perspective', 'we must achieve a balance', set of criteria.

Structuring Relationships:

I have already noted the 'teacher/learner' interaction and the decision-maker/consumer interaction, in which roles are flexible, interchangeable, and equitable. My work with the Campbells Bay women's group illustrates this clearly. I was seeking to explore women's needs and hopes for and experiences of theological education, and they were looking for input on feminist theology and for Bible study. We were able to help each other. The hierarchy of traditional learning institutions has no place in a feminist structure. This suggests that the key dynamic in organising relationships therefore is not individual role, but collective accountability. We need each other. Accountability is not 'up' to the money supply, nor 'out' to the holders of the status quo. Instead, it is 'around' to each other in the task of transformation. 'Teacher' or 'learner' are both essential to the task, for it cannot be achieved without either. Each person's task and relationship within the group are identified by accountability to others for the facilitation of the goal and vision. The people who gain credentials in the process of changes are then accountable for their use to the group.

The focus has shifted from the private, personal acquisition of credentials - and the use of whatever is available to attain these - to the mutual concern to equip ourselves to participate in the transformation of an unjust world. Therefore, relationships must be built on mutual accountability towards this goal. Whatever our gift, skill, knowledge, or need, we all contribute to and draw from the educational enterprise. Accountability moves around and between us rather than up to those 'in charge'.

Making Assessment and Providing Credentials:

Any organisational structure will include ways of credentialling those who participate. In a feminist enterprise, that credentialling will need to take account of the needs of the consumers and the goals of the enterprise. At present, in Aotearoa-New Zealand, there are no clear patterns of appropriate credentialling. So these will need to be developed.¹⁰ Credit which reflects the work undertaken and which does not require a distortion of the work to fit an alien course prescription or assessment procedure will need to be established. For example, group work, non-exam action-based responses, and the development of critiques and time-lapse assessments, could all have a place in

feminist theological education. The structure will need to find ways of including these styles of assessment, and of recognising real effort.

It may be that within an overall understanding of effort and participation and understanding of the vision of a feminist future, goals for assessment can be set within each programme or unit of work. A task for the administrative side of the organisation is to establish recognisable credentials so as not to disadvantage feminists wishing to pursue their learning in other academic environments. The Glendowie contextual project sought out and used sympathetic people from established schools and organisations in order to enable this. However, this is a vulnerable situation, as the turnover of staff or new emphasis of boards can prejudice a sympathetic relationship, as in fact happened in the Glendowie-St John's link.

Evaluating the Process:

Any organisational structure needs a way of evaluating its effectiveness. For a feminist structure, the dynamic of critique and challenge which is part of feminist methodology needs to be applied to the enterprise as a whole. The purpose of this is to ensure that the educational style and content remains true to its vision and goals. A feminist education enterprise is not simply setting out to provide an alternative learning environment for women, but is endeavouring to resource women for work towards a vision of a transformed church and world. The evaluating of this will be a co-operative effort of all the participants, and done in the light of the goals and vision. Therefore a group, which is representative of the whole endeavour, will need to be continually observing and reflecting back to the participants the manner and degree to which the vision and goals are being achieved. External consultants, invited to participate, can be catalysts for new insights and learnings, as happened with the visits of Sister Marie Augusta Neal and Letty Russell.

It is necessary for the integrity of such a programme that its own motives, methods, and outcomes be constantly monitored, reviewed, and adapted.

In summary, with regard to organisational framework, it could be said:

- The organisational style must facilitate feminist goals and vision.

- The goals are established in consultation with the consumers, with clear bias towards the articulated feminist vision.
- The structure functions with accountability amongst all its various members in light of the wholeness of their relationships with each other and their responsibilities towards the achievement of goals and vision.
- Decision-making will occur in consultation between consumer and other participants in the process - those affected by the decisions have the right to participate.
- Information will be available in forms accessible to all.
- Leadership will be available to support the goals and vision, and selected and contracted according to the needs of the people being resourced.
- Resources will be flexible and able to be quickly and easily provided in the context and manner required.
- Curricula will be determined by participants (teacher and learner) and will lead towards the goals and vision.
- Credentialling will be of a form which recognises feminist goals, relationships with other institutions, and the style and effort of the participants.
- Evaluation will be continual, involving all engaged in the endeavour, and done in the light of the goals and vision.

ELEMENTS OF A FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

A feminist pedagogy would consist of an educational methodology which promotes and resources the feminist goal of justice and liberation, using an organisational style which is conducive to women's ways of learning and to feminist ideals.

Thus the above components of an organisational framework will be an essential foundation for any feminist pedagogy. They will all be relevant, therefore, (along with awareness of women's learning styles

and feminist goals) in developing theological education for women from a feminist liberation perspective. Within that framework, what is distinctive about a theological education for feminist women, is its purpose and its content.

The overarching purpose is transformation. This transformation of personal, interpersonal, and structural relationships is towards the shalom-basileia vision. Movement within the church towards a just society will require the setting of clear objectives for a feminist educational enterprise. Foundational among these objectives will be the re-shaping of theology. This requires also the analysis of existing structures, reinterpretation of biblical and traditional roots, and development of skills in social change. Because the church and its theology has been complicit with the state, and has provided the spiritual undergirdings for our Western European social organisation based on patriarchy, a central role of feminist theological education is to "unmask, demythologise, and debunk" all that supports such a system. The purpose of feminist theological education is to equip women to engage in the transformative task.

Consistent with this purpose, the content of feminist theological education will include those things which enable women to understand the nature of patriarchy and to develop the insights, knowledge, and skills to take actions together for change towards transformation. As women do this, they are engaging in the development of theology which expresses the feminist liberation vision. This theology is one of wholeness and blessing in which women also reflect the goodness of God. In the doing of feminist theology, women claim the right to envision God, to speak about and share their spiritual experiences, to examine and reshape the ethical basis for decision-making, and to dream a new future for all humankind. In this process, the traditional resources of Christianity will all come under scrutiny from a feminist liberation perspective. Tools for analysis, for biblical criticism, for doing theology, for unmasking androcentrism, for visioning, will all form part of the content. The skills of listening, critique, challenge, articulation of experience, and the concern for the wellbeing of all women will be brought to bear on the task.

In Aotearoa-New Zealand, feminist theological education of necessity works hard at exploring the role of women in the process of becoming

a bicultural church and society. This exploration includes developing an understanding of the theology of the missionaries and early settler church, bicultural pointers to racism and anti-racism, and re-theologising a Christian perspective based on the Aotearoa experience.

In summary, any feminist pedagogy will not make use of hierarchies, nor a 'banking' approach,¹² nor a privatising of knowledge, nor the existing androcentric world view. It will see teacher and learner together, its curriculum and content are contextual and feminist, it recognises the value of work done through appropriate credentialling, and it will draw all who are affected by decisions into the process of making these decisions. Experience will be the core of the learning process, action and reflection will be key components, and the feminist liberation vision of a transformed world will be its constant goal.

For feminist theological education, this will all take place within the context of the lives of those groups of women who seek to be church and who may be named as women-church.

Notes:

- 1 Recent examples of such workshops include 'Women, Culture and Theology' (now published) and 'New Heaven, New Earth' (in process of re-writing for publication).
- 2 A meeting held over two days at Whangaparaoa in 1988.
- 3 Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*. Her research is designed as a critique of the theories of moral development theorist Lawrence Kohlberg, in order to recognise the different styles and perspectives of women. Development theory itself, when applied to such areas as moral or religious experience, is suspect from a feminist point of view, but Gilligan's research does identify differences between women and men in how they respond to situations, and in how they appear to learn and develop.
- 4 See eg Kenneth Pelletier, *Towards a Science of Consciousness*, Delta, NY: 1978.
- 5 Though Pelletier notes that women are more likely to be balanced in their use.

- 6 Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections*, Vintage Books, NY: 1965 - see especially Ch 6.
- 7 Walter Wink, *Transforming Bible Study*, emphasises the role of both forms of knowing and learning.
- 8 *Women's Ways of Knowing*.
- 9 *Learning our Way: Essays in Feminist Education*.
- 10 The Provincial Board for Ministry has agreed (1988) to explore the provision of credentials on a wider basis than those which can be obtained through a residential St John's programme or an extra-mural LTh. The PBM has oversight of the provision of credentials acceptable for ordained ministry and for basic theological education in the Anglican church.
- 11 Thanks to Rev Katie Cannon for this concise phrase.
- 12 Educational approaches out of other oppressed contexts identify the way in which the 'banking' method, where there is a 'deposit' of knowledge which is passed on to passive students, serves to maintain the oppression. See, for example, Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

CHAPTER FIVE

"RESHAPED-CHURCH"

The life and activities of women-church now provide the vision and energy for reshaped-church toward which feminist women strive. This reshaped-church will not be a totally new body, but something which grows out of the church as we know it now. It is an extension of the work and insight which women are already contributing to church and theology through women-church.

A. Women-Church

Many women at the 1984 Women and Ministry Conference expressed the need for support and resourcing for their ministries in practical and theological ways. In conversations with women over many years, women have shared how they suffered the experience of theological study which did little to equip them for their ministry as women, or for further growth in theological awareness relevant to them as women. Many women reported the lack of opportunity for theological enquiry unless on an ordination track, and women reported the 'irrelevance' or incomprehensibility of what was offered. It seemed none of the existing structured theological education resources or programmes provided the theological content or educational style that women committed to feminist perspectives found helpful. It was against these experiences of women, and within the context of change and some hopefulness as discussed in chapter two, that specific attention focused on theological education appropriate for feminist women began.

All this activity is taking place within the existing church. Its goals include both sustaining and resourcing feminist women in their struggle and pushing towards a church which will express a feminist liberation vision in its total life. Reshaped-church is thus a goal which these current feminist theological and educational activities work towards. As women work together in these activities they are women-church, and a foretaste of reshaped-church.

My experience of the various projects I have been engaged in has led me to reflect on the nature of 'church' - now and into the future: women-church and reshaped-church. At this point I share some of those reflections as pointers towards a feminist ecclesiology. This chapter, then, draws together many of the insights I have gained through my involvement as a feminist in the church as it now is, and with those groups of feminist women struggling for a new future in the church. I offer it as the kernel of a feminist theology of 'church'.

WOMEN-CHURCH AS AN ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE

I believe women committed to struggle for transformation of our patriarchal church and theology can rightly claim the title 'women-church'. My use of this title describes self-identified women (and some women-identified men who seek to participate) who claim for themselves 'church', who refuse to be pushed to the edges. They are clear about the patriarchal nature of the Christian church, but nevertheless seek a transformation inspired by their collective experience of the power of the vision of a discipleship of equals and the goodness and ongoing nature of God's creative activity. They want access to theology and time for reflection to strengthen the movement and their ability to be proactive.

Women-church is developing as a liberation community within which women themselves define the nature of their own oppression and also shape the way in which they will liberate themselves from the worst expressions of patriarchal ideology. As such, it is a device for enabling change. Women-church is not the name of a different church, but a way of identifying this transformative activity of women and the network involved.

Women-church has the potential to create the environment conducive to feminist theological education. Such an education system requires a movement of women to sustain it. Some will be consumers, some teachers, some visioners; all will be accountable to each other and to the vision they hold. Women-church is at the core of this feminist movement for change in the church which feminist theological education seeks to promote and to serve.

Any movement for structural change needs a critical analysis of the oppression it has identified and of its own socio-historical context.

Women-church provides the sympathetic space and focus within which such feminist-critical analysis takes place. It can do this by providing the woman power, and the new theology, liturgical expressions, models of relationships, and structural forms as signs of the 'new way' for the traditional church. But it can only be a change-agent within the church if it both remains as an irritant and a sign within the heart of the traditional church and retains a clear base for itself amongst women committed to radical feminism. The committed women will analyse, reflect, and plan together from a self-determining perspective.¹ There is much work to be done in uncovering the layers of androcentric theology, ideology, and fear which have held us captives: work to reclaim our past, work to discard that which is harmful, and work to interpret differently our biblical heritage. Through such work, women-church links us with the stories of our fore Sisters, and with all those who have found God's activity liberating. It also provides us with a common base from which to speak to other women and men who claim to be Christian and for whom the Bible and church history are a source of revelation and empowerment. This becomes the stuff of feminist theological education, and the life of women-church.

At the same time, women-church must remain critically open, and be a point of reference for all those who accept the challenge and wish to participate in activities towards change. It must guard against becoming a closed sect, isolated and marginalised. After all, its goal is transformation of the whole, church and society: it must be a sign on the way to reshaped-church. Women-church stands as a reminder to the church of its calling to be the foretaste of the new creation.

Often as women and men become conscious of the complicity of church with systems of domination and oppression they are moved to leave the institutional church or to go to the margin. For this reason, women-church needs to develop as a setting for people to experience new possibilities while remaining within the church or returning to women-church. It must develop a holistic life which includes liturgy, education, social praxis, spiritual nurture, and the enabling of gifted leadership and expertise to emerge.

The communities of women-church become communities of solidarity with all who struggle against injustice. They are communities of resistance² to the androcentric and oppressive behaviour and theology

of the traditional church. They must also be communities of active struggle against injustice and oppression. They need to plan and act in ways which bring about change. It is not in the ideas about change, nor in the good intentions of the converted, but in concrete changes which move against oppression that a way is broken open towards new possibilities for living. These possibilities will include a new relational style: person to person, humans to God, humans to the whole of creation. Feminist liberation theology has an action-reflection style which, again, is the lifestyle of women-church.

In and through the lifestyle of a faith community committed to transformation there will emerge new ways of sharing leadership, of decision-making, worshipping, studying, and ordering community life³. Women-church can model the way in these things. Women-church can shuck off the old and blinkered ways of being church. As it develops, it may even risk breaking down the barriers between lay and ordained by removing the 'ordained' priesthood⁴, that elitist system of separating clergy from lay and confining authority and 'knowledge' (power) to a dominantly male inner group (particularly important in addressing alternative and appropriate forms of theological education). Women-church is catching again the vision of the early church as a discipleship of equals, deciding together on empowering symbols. It is developing liturgy which reflects and empowers the community's life for justice-making.

As it works at these things, women-church - a radical feminist movement at the heart of the church - can call, encourage, and empower the church which has become a perversion of itself to embrace again its vision as the continuing life of the one who disarmed the 'principalities and powers'. When it becomes this then once again it can offer hope to the hopeless and liberation to the oppressed. It will become 'reshaped-church'.

Women-church believes it can be the leaven, the salt. It keeps offering new possibilities, it keeps participating in the structures. It refuses to go away. It reclaims the memory of the women who have gone before as a motivating memory to act for change. In this movement of women is the constituency for a critical feminist theological education: lay women and ordained women working and learning together. In this movement of women is also the networked structure which can nurture and resource such theological education.

Because the nature of the feminist task is so risky in a church which acts to control and stifle the creative experience of the women, the strengthening of the network is essential. Women-church people need to identify each other and support each other. We need a toe-hold in the structure of the traditional church that we might change it, and the strength of each other as we raise the insights from our experiences to challenge the dominant authorities. Women-church must retain its option to critique its own actions and vision and to develop its theological resources.

The necessity for this holds true for all women working in areas of theological education, including the women faculty members at St John's Theological College and the women working through the Auckland Women's Resource Centre. These are structured organisations, but in whatever way women seek to raise the awareness of other women, to share ways of critical feminist Bible study, to develop feminist approaches to and expressions of ministry, accountability to women-church is essential. It is too easy to lose sight of the vision, to be co-opted by immediate pragmatism, to be ridiculed, and to lose confidence in the face of the 'all-competent' experienced male machinery. Foundational to a feminist approach to theological education and ministry resourcing is reflected-on experience. Our wisdom lies here, our vision and strength lies here, our corporate experience of God lies here. We need each other.

POSSIBILITIES FOR RESOURCING WOMEN-CHURCH

In an environment of careful management and liberal benevolence, based on a theology of order and control, it is inevitable that feminism, which seeks to change and break open and make new, would be experienced as threat and therefore feared. Women-church could be experienced as a threat because it seeks to create a whole new environment for the exploration of the human experience of God and the articulation of that experience. It hopes that as a consequence participants will be changed, their perceptions of relationships to each other, to the earth, and to God will be changed, and as a result the witness they bear to the love of God in the world will be changed. Inevitably the structures of church as we have known them will also be changed. In this setting, women-church needs constant re-visioning and encouragement and networking. Working at feminist theology is

a key way of resourcing women-church in these areas. It provides strength and support in the face of threat, as well as clarity of ideas for women.

Feminist theology sits in the liberation tradition, but with a clear challenge to explore from the perspective of women and to ask whether the message or resulting action is affirming and life-giving for women or not.

Feminist theology knows that our traditional theology is also based on experience - the experiences of men, white educated men from northern Europe in the main. Feminist theology seeks to reclaim the right for women and other marginalised peoples to articulate experience and to formulate theology. Feminist theology has at its heart the passion, enthusiasm, and collective wisdom of women, as well as the urgent desire to change an oppressive church. This passion and wisdom is an indisputable resource for women-church.

The nature of society in Aotearoa-New Zealand, the structures of the church, and the availability of financial resources mean that if feminists are to do theology as they hope to, to encourage women to claim their right and to offer their wisdom, then new ways have to be found.

Most obviously the confidence and skills have to be sought amongst women in the places where they are. More 'outlets' for accumulated knowledge are necessary, more gathering places for the accumulated collective wisdom of women in interaction with other women, more communication of the new expressions with other groups. Women and men need to grow into a mindset which allows women to gather knowledge and to share it.

It is not sufficient for small groups of women to work in isolation. The purpose of the gathering sound of women's voices is to make such compelling and demanding music that the score is re-written. Ways must be found to enable this interaction between groups and between our contemporary experiences and those of the past. It is in the interaction between various factors that lasting and transformative work takes place. If such an approach were to gather strength, it would not only be the style or structures of theological education which would need to be changed, but also the content of it, and the understanding of ministry.

Of necessity, more women would be engaged in the facilitating of 'educational events' for women (and for men). Events close to the places of livelihood for and experiences of women would be necessary. Some women - lay and ordained - would need access to money to fund residential programmes and extended study opportunities. Feminist events would be serious options in curriculum development in existing programmes and offered as alternative theological education possibilities in their own right. More women would need to be on the faculty of the college, and there they would have the freedom to experiment with 'teaching' method and have time to prepare and offer specifically feminist courses.

I believe that given our present dearth of programmes which take seriously feminist approaches, provincial and diocesan programmes should be funded to enable the growth, development, and search of women for an educational style and content which more accurately reflects their vision. Such programmes could be developed by women within existing structures, such as St John's College or diocesan education and ministry programmes. Those systems are understandably resistant to theology and methodology and vision which would require some basic changes of them. A feminist approach would require a participatory style where experience counts for as much as learned information. It would require a change in the way decisions are made and of the understanding about power-sharing.

Women-church could work more effectively through the existing structures if the present powerholders were to put aside their fears and make room for this enthusiastic movement of the spirit of wisdom, or it could continue to develop as a persuasive alternative, gathering strength and resources as it grows. Sooner or later women-church will have an impact on the theology, structure, and ministry of the church. This has begun and will gather strength.

What we need now is good resourcing through appropriate feminist theological education. Feminist theological education seeks to develop theology which supports change, includes the experiences of women, and fosters new relationships between persons and groups based on equality and partnership. Feminist theological education encourages and empowers women so that they may engage in envisioning the future, in a full participatory ministry, and in action for change within

the church and in society. Feminist theological education pushes towards justice for all: in Aotearoa that has at its core theology which expresses life in this country in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi and action towards a bicultural church. There is a symbiotic relationship between feminist theological education and women-church: feminist theological education emerges from the experience and vision of those women and men who make up women-church, and its role is to resource and empower women-church. Of necessity, as feminist liberation theology becomes more available, and more and more women (and men) are empowered to take transformative action, the church will change. Reshaped-church will emerge.

B. Reshaped-Church

Reshaped-church will be indisputably justice-oriented, with a clear self-understanding of its nature both to be and to act for freedom, liberation, wholeness, and peace. It will embody the goals of transformation towards a just society. Reshaped-church is in continuity with church throughout history. It grows out of the church as it is now, but is reshaped by the experiences of women and by the shalom-basileia vision of the early church. Church as we have traditionally known it gives way to the transforming power of the vision of the feminist future, and becomes truly the 'first fruits of the kingdom', 'servant of God in the world'.⁵

THEOLOGICAL CENTRE

Central to reshaped-church will be a cluster of theological insights which are informed by feminist liberation theology. Key to feminist liberation is the concern to break open the controlling mindset of patriarchy and to prise off the tentacles which bind people and prevent substantive change. The new church we want to shape must break free from the controlling elements of the traditional church. Evidence from the feminist projects with which I have been engaged suggests that feminist liberation theology can enable this to happen. As women make connection with the themes of this theology they are empowered to envision new possibilities for the church and to begin to take action to reshape it. The activities of the Women's Resource Centre in presenting submissions on the Auckland diocesan structural review and the

participation of core group members in this restructuring activity, plus the high level of energy and commitment of women (especially the theology and racism group) in bicultural education work, are clear examples of this. It is from these experiences in social change activities, and the theology which takes shape around them, that women-church has begun to articulate the cluster of theological ideas which are central to reshaped-church. Theology and not structure lie at the heart of reshaped-church and provide the cohesive matter.

New insights into 'how to be church' and 'why be church' are emerging.⁶ It is predominantly out of the reflected-on experiences of the women who make up women-church that the theology and characteristics of reshaped-church emerge. These 'how to be church' and 'why be church' questions are being answered from a different basis. Answers are no longer being found in an androcentric theology rooted in patriarchy, with a need to control and to ensure orthodoxy. They are being found instead arising from commitments to justice, to equality, to health and wholeness, and from a desire to respond to the creative activity of God in the world.

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza says,

Commitment, accountability, and solidarity in the ekklesia of women are the life-praxis of such a feminist christian vocation. They are a central embodiment and incarnation of the vision of a 'new church' in solidarity with the oppressed and the 'least' of this world, the majority of whom are women, and children dependent on women.⁷

Reshaped-church is no passive sign of transformation, but an active community engaged in the world in concrete situations. It is a celebrating sign of hope that injustice, oppression, marginalisation, and dehumanisation can all be and will all be overcome.

Reshaped-church will not be marked by those characteristics traditionally ascribed to the church. 'One', 'holy', 'catholic', and 'apostolic' will no longer be the definitive way to describe this church.

So, for example, the oneness which is spoken of through the concept of unity is being revealed as a mechanism of control, and therefore inappropriate for reshaped-church. Likewise, unity has been defined by dominant powerholders (till now, males), and is imposed by them to keep diverse perspectives and experiences under their control.

Reshaped-church is finding ways to affirm diversity. Holiness has been used as a way of separating the spiritual life of the church from the concrete political realities of people living in the world. In particular, holiness and spirituality have been used to denigrate women. Women have been identified by men as representing the carnal and worldly dimensions of life from which the holy seeks to separate. The universalising nature of catholicity has acted to obliterate the diverse experiences which arise out of different contexts. Here again reshaped-church claims the validity of diversity and the significance of context in shaping a response to God. Within the apostolic understanding of the traditional church is carried all the reinforcements for hierarchy and male superiority. Here also is the control of orthodoxy secured. Again it is easy to see that reshaped-church, with its roots in feminist theology, challenges that.

One, holy, catholic, and apostolic no longer dominate what it means to be church, nor do they pass unchallenged by new insights and interpretation. Reshaped-church has a self-understanding rooted in feminist liberation theology and lived out through its mission. Four key clusters of characteristics are emerging as the theological motifs of reshaped-church:

1. **Transformative:** Reshaped-church is committed to the wellbeing of the 'least' amongst us and exists for the transformation of the world to that end.
2. **Communal:** Reshaped-church is a community gathered around a vision of justice, peace, and freedom - the basileia.
3. **Diverse:** Reshaped-church celebrates the diverse nature of human experience, incorporating into its life and action the gifts of all the peoples, recognising the contexts out of which they come.
4. **Empowering:** Leadership within reshaped-church is exercised on behalf of the vision and arises out of the life of the people, remaining accountable to them and to the vision, and empowering all for ministry and mission.

TRANSFORMATIVE

Reshaped-church exists to destroy patriarchy. Patriarchy is the ideology which holds in place the series of hierarchies of our dominant western society. This social structuring creates and maintains subjugated peoples, at the bottom of which we find black and coloured women and children dependent upon women. The church has organised its structural relationships based on this patriarchal ideology and has developed its theology to sanctify this. Reshaped-church therefore seeks to transform these hierarchical structural relationships both within its own organisation and in the world. It will necessarily spend resources on its own continual transformation, ensuring that as an institution it moves ever closer to the feminist vision in which both oppressive structures and patriarchal ideology are done away with. At the same time, reshaped-church will not remain focused on itself. It will engage in mission as its normative activity, rather than seeing its own maintenance as central. The goal of reshaped-church is to facilitate the transformation of the world so that justice is lived.

Reshaped-church will develop theological insights which affirm the goodness of creation and the life of all people, in particular those people considered 'least' amongst us, and proclaim them loudly. Feminist theology will bring to light the vibrant, dangerous memories of our past in such a way that we are empowered to change, to break out of the status quo, to transform our self-perception and our ability to act for change in the world. Reshaped-church will have a radically new way of being and doing and of re-discovering the stories of the past, denied to us in malestream theology. These stories become an important part of the energy for transformation. Theology itself will be transformed from an instrument to create and maintain a subdued and dependent people into the way of proclaiming a creative life force which flows in and through women as well as men, and which provides the rationale and the motivation for change towards justice⁸. In all dimensions of our life - personal, interpersonal, and structural - transformations will be sought. Reshaped-church will be as light, as salt, as leaven (Matt 6:13-16; 13:33).

COMMUNAL

Reshaped-church is a community gathered around a vision - the basileia. It is not a meeting of individuals in the same place for cultic rituals, nor a group holding allegiance to a bishop. Reshaped-church knows itself to be a community (within which each person is important), committed together to be the focus for a new way of being in relationship. This community finds its unity not in the boundaries drawn to mark the separation between 'members' and the rest of the world, but in its common commitment to the vision of justice and its willingness to act together (albeit in a variety of ways) towards the realisation of a just world. Unity is not sought through the overcoming of denominational boundaries, nor through a focus in hierarchy, nor through the boundaries of set doctrine. Rather it is in the working together as members of reshaped-church across gender, race, and class lines in new alliances to act for justice. For example, in Aotearoa some white feminist women are beginning to link with Maori women and men to overcome racism. The focus of unity is joint activity and shared vision.

This cannot happen through individuals acting alone or working solely in the light of their own vision and experience. Patriarchy has stressed individual initiative and the controlling perception of the 'I'. Our understanding of salvation and freedom and justice has been individualised by this mindset. Reshaped-church will be constituted by communal understanding and action. So, for example, in the Church of the Province of Aotearoa-New Zealand we begin to shift from an understanding of democracy - one person one vote - to a system of decision-making which includes 'one people one vote'. Reshaped-church will be a covenant community⁹ of equals, gathered to determine how to give expression in the world today to their partnership with God.

DIVERSE

Reshaped-church recognises and affirms the value of diversity. It sees within the community of peoples who gather many gifts and skills to be celebrated and which can be used towards the goal of transformation. It recognises that, in the communal reflection on the life experiences of the people in interaction with the tradition, theologies will emerge which will be energising and hope-bringing. These local, contextual

theologies¹⁰ point us to the activities of God in our world today. As the diversity of experience and gifts are brought together, the community of reshaped-church is strengthened for its mission. From this perspective, responses to the challenge of the gospel and to the movement of God in the world will emerge in a variety of ways. There is no universal way to give expression to these things. Rather than 'the way' to respond being demonstrated in universal form by the church, reshaped-church will seek out the places where the creative spirit of God is already at work and join the activity there. It ceases to guard the way, and instead empowers new approaches arising in concrete situations.

Within reshaped-church, diversity does not mean 'anything goes'. The diverse responses to God and expressions of commitment and action are cohesive and in unity through the clarity and centrality of the vision. In reshaped-church, there is a preferential option for the 'least' amongst us, to see the world transformed by justice, love, equity, and communal responsibility for the welfare of each other.

EMPOWERING

An expression of the life of reshaped-church is its ability to empower. We have looked briefly at vision, communal goals, and the celebrating of the diverse gifts of the people - all these aspects of reshaped-church can themselves be empowering. A fourth major aspect of reshaped-church, critically related to the ability to be empowering, is the style of leadership. Reshaped-church will have leadership needs, and how these are met will either contribute to or detract from the ability to empower the people of reshaped-church for action.

Clearly, leadership within reshaped-church will not be hierarchical. Nor will it in any way replicate the leadership styles of church based on patriarchal ideology. This undoubtedly means a clerical caste will no longer exist. We move away from the order which Rosemary Radford Ruether describes:

In the official clerical mythology, an ordained priesthood is declared to have been established by Christ (as representative of God), who founded a hierarchy to pass down this divine power in a line of succession. Bishops dispense divine power to priests, and priests, in turn, dispense forgiveness, truth, and divine life to the laity, if the laity submits to the rules laid down

by the hierarchy. In this way the entire teaching and sacramental life of the Church is turned into a power tool for the clergy over the people."

To continue such ordering would be to perpetuate the denial of peoples from communal interaction regarding the formulating of theology, the identification of leadership needs, and the identification of persons with the means to meet these needs. Leadership in reshaped-church makes use of the interests, skills, knowledge, and insights of all its members as appropriate.

Such leadership is exercised in clear reference to the vision of a just world and the goal of transformation, remaining accountable to the vision and goal and to the peoples identified in any change strategies. Accountability within reshaped-church functions to ensure that the mission is actively carried out, and that the vision and goals of reshaped-church are clearly evident within its own lifestyle and social relationships. The members of the community are accountable to each other for this.

Within this skill and ability-based leadership, worship, teaching, liturgy, spiritual direction, administration, and the whole range of other leadership functions continue to exist. But the people to carry them out rise from the community itself and remain clear that their task is to facilitate the empowering of reshaped-church for its transforming activity¹².

How such a community organises its corporate life will need to be in itself an expression of the partnership style and the inclusive dynamic of its vision. The role and style of leadership gives clearest focus for this. A leadership which shares responsibility and which changes as needs arise would most likely reflect the mutual sharing of gifts and expertise desirable. So what of an ordained and permanent priesthood? Or bishops or others of the present structure? Reshaped-church, because of its very nature, will have leadership needs, celebratory needs, grieving and planning, nurturing and caring needs. However, I believe the declericalisation of reshaped-church is more likely to see these needs met in real and authentic ways through the rotation of leadership and the calling forth of particular skills and gifts as needs arise or are planned for. This can happen without necessarily setting aside 'permanently' a person or persons to whom responsibility is given for

all these tasks and more. A move away from clerical leadership is a move away from patriarchal social structuring and the controlling mindset it produces.

We seek a vital, dynamic style of leadership, in tune with the community, the issues of its life and context, and committed to covenantal partnership¹³. Within all this, I believe there is a place for the wisdom of those who, through age, experience, insight, or spiritual depth, emerge as 'respected wise people' - like kuia or kaumatua, crone or prophet. Reshaped-church is respectful of people, of place, of relationships, of creation, and knows itself to be in partnership with God. It functions with partnership as a key dynamic for its community life, its ministry, and all its relationships.

In summary, reshaped-church will call forth the story of the people of God as it is discovered anew by those previously denied the right or power to find it for themselves or to proclaim it; it will continue to shape and clarify its vision of justice for all people, in particular for the health and wholeness of full humanity for those 'least' amongst us, women, and those dependent upon women; it will be a sign of the fulfilment of this vision in its own communal life, and a sign of the creative power of God and human interaction through the places in which it chooses to take action for change; it will be a celebrating and mission-focused community of people, committed and accountable to each other and to the vision; it will raise up and support leadership according to its liturgical, pastoral, educational, administrative needs; and leadership will function to empower and energise.

Undergirding reshaped-church is the desire to celebrate God's blessing and goodness, and to work in partnership with God and all humanity for the transformation of injustice - of all that threatens life, demeans life, destroys life. To this end, patriarchy must be overcome in all its manifestations, and the full humanity of all people celebrated.

Reshaped-church is the natural outcome of feminist liberation theology, which is grown and nurtured in women-church and brought to birth, shared, and developed through feminist theological education. The current activities of women-church, such as those described as projects in feminist theological education in this thesis, need to be kept under constant review and analysis. It is from them that the flesh will be put onto the bones of reshaped-church.

The future of Christain mission and witness depends upon the manner in which we shape and care for reshaped-church. Perhaps the quality of life on our planet depends on it. Certainly in Aotearoa-New Zealand, reshaped-church has the potential to assist in bringing about a bicultural society. Such a society will be more respectful of persons and of land, and will live out the partnership, mutual respect, and justice aspects of the shalom-basileia vision.

As an ordained woman priest who is working as a feminist in the Anglican church in Aotearoa, my involvement in feminist projects for theological education for women leads me to recognise the devastating impact of patriarchy, but also the immense power and energy generated by the hope and possibilities of both women-church and reshaped-church. There are ways ahead for feminist theological education in the life of the church!

Notes:

- 1 See Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Making the Connections*, pp211ff.
- 2 For a discussion see Sharon Welch's book, *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity*.
- 3 The importance of a faith community's lifestyle for effecting change, and some possible ways of developing such a lifestyle, are outlined in Susan Adams and John Salmon, *Being Just Where You Are*.
- 4 Rosemary Radford Ruether speaks about the way clericalism is the separation of ministry from mutual interaction with community and its transformation, in *Women-Church*, pp75ff. At the same time, I am concerned that we do not simply move to remove 'priests' in a way which destroys the spiritual cohesiveness of the gathered community and of the wider life of church. Work is needed to find a creative new way ahead, which incorporates the positive aspects of both laity and priesthood. This is a critical area for reflection and debate in the church in the immediate future.
- 5 'Servant' is interpreted to mean 'co-worker with God for justice' - I elaborate this point further in Adams and Salmon, *New Heaven, New Earth*.

- 6 Some of these have been around for some time. There has been a push to see 'mission' as the heart of the church, as outlined, for example, by Colin Williams in *The Church*, and as central to many liberation theologies (including the emphases of Maori people in Aotearoa). There has been a move away from a static view of church, as in Pittenger's *The Christian Church as Social Process*. The experience of new groupings of Christians, such as those in South America and outlined in, for example, Barreiro's *Basic Ecclesial Communities* and Boff's *Ecclesiogenesis*. Feminist theologians, such as Rosemary Radford Ruether (eg *Sexism and God-Talk*, ch 8), have been exploring new ways of understanding church for some time.
- 7 *In Memory of Her*, p344.
- 8 The contrast can be well drawn out in, for example, the table of comparison between the views of mission and evangelism expressed in the missionary conferences in 1980 in Melbourne and Pattaya, published in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, September 1981.
- 9 Covenant is a basic Biblical theme, emphasising mutual responsibility and located in community. I have noted previously that partnership is at the heart of the community interrelations which express a covenantal approach. See Susan Adams and John Salmon, *Women, Culture, and Theology*, pp43ff, and also Adams and Salmon, *New Heaven, New Earth*, Chapter Two (to be published).
- 10 'Local' theologies are those which seek to take the specific local setting seriously, and interpret theological themes from that perspective. Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, outlines ways in which local theologising may be done. In *Women, Culture, and Theology*, Part Three, I have reflected on the importance of the local in theology, and note several forms of this theology: contextual, indigenous, liberation, political, and transformational.
- 11 Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women-Church*, p75.
- 12 See Ruether, *Women-Church*, p86.
- 13 See the note above on covenant community, and also *Women, Culture, and Theology*, p43.

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