"Adam's Helper"

Women's Roles in Evangelical Churches in New Zealand from Colonial Times to the End of the 20th Century

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Contents

Preface

To paraphrase Jane Austen, it is a truth universally acknowledged that traditional historiography recorded the achievements of men but was in want of the story of women. Recent decades have seen a correction to this gender imbalance with a proliferation of writings about women, spurred on by the successes of social history. Church historians have followed this trend with a growing number of publications studying either the most notable women of the Christian faith or whole categories of women within certain periods or movements. This thesis continues that trend by considering the roles of women in the Baptist, Open Brethren and major Pentecostal denominations in New Zealand.

This thesis ventures not only into the under-reported world of women but also onto the relatively untrammelled soil of the history of evangelical[1] women in New Zealand. Rosemary Neave, Elaine Bolitho, Ruth Fry, Enid Bennett, Susan Adams, Margaret Tennant, Alan Davidson, Vivienne Adair and others have written extensively on women in the Church and particularly on women in the institutional, Protestant churches. Barbara Sampson contributed to this body of historiography by telling the stories of Salvation Army women[2]. Within the Catholic paradigm Judith Graham and

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[1] The term "evangelical" refers to a significant stream of Christianity prominent in Western societies but evident around the world. Evangelicalism is notoriously difficult to define. Many have attempted – David Hubbard, *What We Evangelicals Believe*, Pasadena: Fuller Theological Seminary, 1979; Donald Bloesch, *The Future of Evangelical Christianity: A Call for Unity and Diversity*, Garden City: Doubleday, 1983; David Wells, 'No Offense, I Am an Evangelical: A Search for Self-Definition' in *A Time to Speak: The Evangelical-Jewish Encounter*, A J Rudin and M R Wilson (Eds.), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987; Leonard Sweet, 'Nineteenth Century Evangelicalism' in *Encyclopaedia of the American Religious Experience*, Charles Lippy and Peter Williams (Eds.), New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988 – to name a few.

Noll, Bebbington and Rawlyk have mapped out the historical dimensions of evangelicalism and so include in their definition some socio-cultural elements – "a fairly discrete network of Protestant Christian movements arising during the eighteenth century in Great Britain and its colonies". Mark Noll, David Bebbington, George Rawlyk (Eds.), *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p.6. Apart from the historical linkages, commonality can be discerned in the area of core Christian theology, though even here some have conceded that "the evangelical movement defies a precise theological definition". C Norman Kraus, 'Evangelicalism: A Mennonite Critique', in *The Variety of American Evangelicalism*, Donald Dayton and Robert Johnston (Eds.), Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991, p.196.

Another writer, in the same publication, takes up the challenge to define as succinctly as possible the core of evangelical theology – Timothy Weber, 'Premillennialism and the Branches of Evangelicalism', pp.12-14. Firstly, he acknowledges the difficulties: "At best, 'evangelicalism' is a diverse movement which at times seems to have more dividing it than uniting it. In fact, some observers find it nearly impossible to speak of evangelicalism as a single entity and prefer to see it in terms of its constituent parts." p.12. Then he offers a four-fold taxonomy of evangelicalism and attempts to identify what these four branches of evangelicalism have in common. He sees an evangelical nexus in the following doctrines: the divine inspiration and ultimate authority of Scripture; the acknowledgement of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Son of God; salvation from sin through faith in Christ; and commitment to a life of holiness and service in fulfilment of Christ's mission on earth. "Naturally, it would be easy to show that evangelical theology has included more than this; but I do not believe it ever included less." p.14. Weber adds that this theological orthodoxy "does not become 'evangelical' until it is joined to a spirit of renewal and conversion – of individuals, churches, and, at least to some extent, the world". p.14 In light of Weber's comments, and my own experience of the evangelical spectrum, the critical parameters for evangelicals are: 1) that the authority and veracity of the Bible is upheld; 2) that the person and work of Christ remain the central focus; 3) that the mission to communicate the gospel is actively pursued and not marginalised; 4) that God's principles for living are adhered to and not compromised by "worldly" standards.

[2] Barbara Sampson, *Women of Spirit: Life-stories of New Zealand Salvation Army Women From the Last 100 Years*, Wellington: The Salvation Army, 1993.

Dianne Stevens have researched the stories of religious women.[3] Other writers on women in the New Zealand Catholic Church include Noeline De Courcy[4] and Pauline Grogan[5]. But for the Baptist, Brethren and Pentecostal movements historiography is scarce. Elaine Bolitho[6] and James Worsfold[7] are virtually the only exponents, apart the general Church historian, Alan Davidson whose landmark work remains a key reference point[8] supplemented by his other writings.[9]

One possible reason for the neglect of the history of evangelical women is that it fails to keep pace with a secular meta-narrative of relentless progress toward genderless equality. Within evangelicalism, the advance in women's rights is slow, fluctuating and sometimes halted altogether. Another reason, closely related to the first, is that the story falls well short of propaganda material for feminism. This is because it is neither a story of victims nor a story of heroines – at least, not heroines for the feminist cause. This combination of "shortcomings" dissuades most historians from attempting a task that promises no reward. Politically correct secular society has little or no interest, and the hierarchies of evangelical denominations are less than enthusiastic about revisiting such contentious subject matter. And so, the history of evangelical women languishes, largely untold.

I hope the following chapters illustrate that their story (or series of stories) is worth telling. Not only are they narratives of remarkable accomplishments, they are narratives of change without revolution. In each instance – especially among the Baptists and the Brethren – it was a change process that included considerable analysis and debate over a lengthy period. This meant that the opposing arguments were aired and quite well understood so that when change occurred its reasons and its critiques were already known. One intriguing phenomenon is that change occurred within an inerrantist paradigm[10] where the ultimate authority – the Bible – remained unchanged.

Chapter one sets the scene with a brief survey of women's roles in the Church during the modern era, focusing on developments in America. The second chapter outlines the developments in New Zealand from colonial times to the end of the 20th century with particular attention to the position of

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[3] Judith Graham, *Breaking the Habit: Life in a New Zealand Dominican Convent, 1955-67*, Dunedin: McIndoe, 1992; Diane Stevens, *In Step With Time: A History of the Sisters of St Joseph of Nazareth, Wanganui*, Auckland: David Ling, 2001.

[4] Noeline De Courcy, *A History of the Catholic Women's League of New Zealand, 1931-1990*, Dunedin: Tablet Printing, 1990.

[5] Pauline Grogan, *Beyond the Veil: A Triumph of Love and Faith*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 1996.

[6] Elaine Bolitho, *Meet The Baptists: Post-war Personalities and Perspectives*, Auckland: Christian Research Association of NZ, 1993; 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 1, 1814-1939, and Part 2, 1940-1993', *Stimulus*, Vol.1 No. 3, Aug 1993, pp.25-32 and Vol.1 No. 4, Nov 1993, pp.28-37.

[7] James Worsfold, *Women in Pentecostal Ministry: A New Zealand Perspective*, Auckland: Impetus Communications, 1995.

[8] Alan Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand*, second edition, Wellington: The New Zealand Education for Ministry Board, 1997.

[9] E.g. Alan Davidson, 'The Women's Vote – Then What?', *Stimulus*, Vol.1, No.4, Nov 1993, pp.22-27.

[10] Inerrantists insist that the text as contained in the Biblical canon is accurate, reliable and authoritative as the foundation for all Christian doctrine. For more on the inerrantist paradigm, and its views on women's roles, refer to the Appendix.

women in the major institutional churches. Chapters three, four and five are occupied with the Baptist, Open Brethren and Pentecostal denominations, the activities, debates and changes within those movements in regard to women's roles. The Appendix provides the reader with background material on the Biblical texts and the arguments raised by evangelicals.

I am especially grateful for the assistance of all those who contributed their time, their thoughts and their life stories to this research. Their names are listed in the bibliography. I am also indebted to those who supplied literature, those who recommended alternative lines of enquiry, and who assisted through electronic mail. They are in no way to blame for the flaws and shortcomings of this thesis, which are solely the responsibility of the author. I hope this thesis honours their contributions as well as the lives of the many people it mentions throughout its ninety-three pages.

Chapter 1 – Women in the Church in the Modern Era

Introduction

The evolution of gender roles in Western societies accelerated in the final centuries of the second millennium AD. Attitudes to women and their roles metamorphosed in almost synchronised motion with the surging emergence of an industrialised economy. One major institution to resist this trend, or accept change reluctantly, was the Christian Church. Clinging to patristic interpretations of the primeval story of Adam and Eve, the Church remained a bastion of doubt as to the status and potential of the female gender. Despite numerous examples – both in scripture and church history – of women leading, initiating, challenging the status quo, confronting injustice, attaining greatness, the ecclesiastical mindset remained closed to the possibility of women occupying representative or leadership roles. Until late in the modern era, such roles remained largely a male domain.

At least, that is the way it was in the established state churches based in Europe. The Roman Catholic Church resisted gender equality without relenting. Lutheran, Anglican and Presbyterian churches did relent but belatedly and not uniformly. It was among the non-conformist denominations with Pietist and Wesleyan origins that women discovered and created opportunities to preach, to teach, to administer, to inspire, to lead.

Women to the Fore

The pioneering energy of 18th and 19th century America was reflected in the genesis of new Christian sects and in the revival of existing denominations. Without the limitations posed by calcified structure and tradition, as in Europe, women moved fluently into leadership roles.[1] A number of writers have noted this naissance of female leadership and ministry. Leon McBeth offers a list that includes Anne Lee, who led the Shakers in the 1760s and '70s; Lucretia Mott, a Quaker who was active in the campaign against slavery during the 1820s and '30s; Ellen Harmon White, who co-founded the Seventh Day Adventist church in the 1840s; and women preachers in the Congregational and Universalist churches in the mid to late 19th century.[2] To these we can add the prominent Dutch Reformed woman, Sarah Doremus, founder and/or president of many Christian women's societies and hospitals, and an ardent missions supporter until her death in 1877; Phoebe Palmer, an

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[1] For a feminist treatment of this subject see *Women & Religion in America, Vol.1 – The Nineteenth Century: A Documentary History*, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Kellar (Eds.), San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981. For a narrative treatment of women in American Church history, and of the religious movements outside the mainstream denominations, refer to Mark Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992, pp.181-183 & 191-218.

[2] Leon McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life*, Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979. Writers who offer a more detailed list and analysis of women in the church – especially in the United States – include Ruth A Tucker & Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present*, Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987; Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organisations*, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997; and Janet Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century*, Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986.

outstanding writer and evangelist in the Holiness movement of the 1840s, '50s and '60s; and Anna White, a Shaker leader and peace activist in the latter part of the 19th century.[3] This was by no means the first time that women had featured prominently in the history of Christianity. But it was a sustained period when women pushed the boundaries of expectation and it became commonplace – though still not the norm – to find female leadership in Christian contexts.

One of the most notable female figures of modern Church history was not an American. The English woman, Catherine (Mumford) Booth (1829–1890), co-founded the Salvation Army with her husband William Booth. She demonstrated inspirational leadership while administering the movement and when instigating social action against exploitative working conditions. Catherine's example and her ministry established women's leadership as a conventional part of the structure and culture of a whole denomination. Proof of this accomplishment could be seen in the subsequent election in 1934 of her daughter, Evangeline Booth, to lead the movement.

Impressed by the ministry of Phoebe Palmer in North America, Catherine Booth sided with her in the defence of women's ministry. Palmer faced criticism for preaching when on a tour of England. Though her own preaching ministry had not yet begun Booth weighed into the debate with a public letter. This was then expanded and published as a pamphlet entitled *Female Ministry*. Firstly, she confronted the charge that it is against nature for women to engage in public ministry.

> We admit that want of mental culture, the trammels of custom, the force of prejudice, and one-sided interpretations of Scripture, have hitherto almost excluded her from this sphere; but, before such a sphere is pronounced to be unnatural, it must be proved either that woman has not the ability to teach or to preach, or that the possession and exercise of this ability unnaturalizes her in other respects; that so soon as she presumes to step on the platform or into the pulpit, she loses the delicacy and grace of the female character. Whereas, we have numerous instances of her retaining all that is most esteemed in her sex, and faithfully discharging the duties peculiar to her own sphere, and at the same time taking her place with many of our most useful speakers and writers.[4]

To illustrate her point she cited the lives and contributions of Madame Guyon (a Catholic mystic of the 17th century); Susannah "the talented mother of the Wesleys"; Elizabeth Fry (a noted Quaker and prison reformer); and other prominent women in pre-Victorian England.

Secondly, like Palmer, Booth argued her case within evangelical parameters[5] by interacting with the Biblical passages relating to women's roles. She claimed that the texts which explicitly proscribe women's ministry (i.e. 1 Timothy 2.12 and 1 Corinthians 14.34) are culturally and chronologically

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[3] For profiles of these leading women, plus many more, refer to Mary L Hammack, *A Dictionary of Women in Church History*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. There are also numerous Internet sources for biographical data.

[4] Catherine Booth, *Female Ministry* or *Woman's Right to Preach the Gospel*, Transcribed and encoded by Amy Engelhardt, edited by Perry Willett, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN., (as located at http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/ vwwp/booth/ministry.html), p.3. Also located in Dale Johnson, *Women in English Religion 1700 – 1925, Studies in Women and Religion Vol.10*, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1983, pp.277-283.

[5] In the context of this paper, the critical evangelical parameter – which applies especially to Christian leaders – is that publicly expressed opinions and decisions, on matters affecting beliefs and church practices, should be supported by Biblical texts and sound reasoning arising from those texts. (See also footnote 1 in the Preface for a discussion of evangelicalism and its core beliefs.)

specific.[6] Therefore, by this reasoning, Paul's statements in these passages are not normative for all time. The Apostle Paul's egalitarian slogan in Galatians 3.28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" [KJV] also received a mention. "If this passage does not teach that in the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of Christ's kingdom, all differences of nation, caste, and sex are abolished, we should like to know what it does teach, and wherefore it was written."[7] Booth put together a typically forceful and detailed case to support her arguments. The scriptural focal points of her pamphlet have since remained major battlegrounds in the debate over women's roles within evangelical circles.

The Wesleyan-Holiness Tradition

Catherine and William Booth's brand of Christianity derived from their Methodist roots. Methodism – in its first century of existence – was inherently innovative in its practice of the Christian faith. From its beginnings in the 18th century it broke with Anglican conventions and created organic networks, new ways of doing church. The Wesleys were on a quest for spiritual renewal in the established church while seeking solutions to the challenges presented by urbanisation in the industrial centres. They set up informal cell groups where parishioners were encouraged to explore the experiential dimensions of their faith. In the process they revived the doctrine, the ideal, of the "priesthood of all believers". The Wesleyan application of Arminian theology gave momentum to the idea that God's provision of salvation is available to all – not just the elect. Methodist societies combined these Wesleyan distinctives by democratising Christianity in England. They enfranchised their members, including women, to study, to worship freely and to minister to others. One of the chief engineers of Methodism in England was a woman – the Countess of Huntingdon.[8]

Methodism was also a source of spiritual creativity on the western side of the Atlantic. From city missions among urban working classes to camp meetings on the frontier, Methodism was the cutting edge of American Christianity in the 19th century. Phoebe Palmer's ministry was an outflow from this religious vitality, although Palmer herself was not in the mainstream of Methodism. Even within the Methodist movement with all of its shades and variations, Palmer was seen as unconventional.[9] Yet she found room not only to practice her brand of Methodist Christianity but also to spearhead a movement for spiritual renewal. The Holiness Movement, in which Palmer and her husband (Walter) were leaders, emphasised prayer, sanctification and social reform. It understood the attainment of

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[6] Hassey, *No Time*, p.100; and Booth, *Female Ministry*, pp.5ff. These controversial Biblical texts contain the following phrases: "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, she must remain silent" (1 Tim 2.12) and "women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission..." (1 Cor 14.34) [New International Version]

[7] Booth, *Female Ministry*, p.19.

[8] The Countess was a member of the first Methodist society in London and hosted the first Methodist conference in 1744. Her patronage enabled the construction of a number of Methodist chapels and the first Methodist seminary at Treveca College in southern Wales. She allied herself with George Whitfield after his split with the Wesley brothers over theological differences in 1740. For a thorough treatment of her story see Edwin Welch, *Spiritual Pilgrim: A Reassessment of the Life of the Countess of Huntingdon*, Cardiff: University of Wales, 1995.

[9] Tucker & Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, p.263.

holiness as a second work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer who placed "all on the altar".[10] This was a natural extension of the Wesleyan doctrine of "Christian perfection", a perfection of motives and desires through a "second blessing". It paved the way for ministry and leadership by women who did not possess formal qualifications but were recognised for their holiness.[11] From this movement flowed further expressions of Wesleyan-Arminian Christianity, including Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism is a populist form of Christianity that emphasises experiential and empirical dimensions of the faith, in particular, the work of the Holy Spirit evidenced in supernatural phenomena such as miraculous healing and glossolalia.[12] It was conceived under the ministry of Methodist-Holiness pastor, Charles Parham, at Topeka, Kansas, in 1901. But its birth came in 1906 at a black church on Azusa Street, Los Angeles, where it burst forth as a vibrant religion of freedom and diversity. Wherever it spread around the world it brought fresh opportunities for female leadership. As in the Holiness Movement, the key credentials for ministry leadership were spiritual rather than academic.

One woman to grasp the opportunities presented by Pentecostalism was Florence Crawford (1872–1936). She took the Azusa St experience to other parts of North America before basing her ministry in Portland, Oregon. There she founded the Apostolic Faith movement that included city missions, two large auditoriums and strict regulations about contact with the rest of society.[13] Another woman who enjoyed a high profile Pentecostal ministry was Maria Woodworth-Etter (1844-1924). Under the auspices of the United Brethren Church and then Pentecostal churches such as the Assemblies of God, she conducted evangelistic meetings mainly in the mid-western states. Many people came to her for healing. One such instance, described in her own words, is recounted by Tucker and Liefeld:

> A woman brought her boy, six years old, full of tumours all over his body... From the first time we prayed for him he never suffered any more... Over two thousand came or were brought to the altar. We prayed for them, and most all were converted or reclaimed. Nearly all were healed from one to a dozen chronic diseases.[14]

Despite her lack of formal education Woodworth-Etter's life and ministry made such an impact that many Pentecostals regard her as the greatest woman evangelist in the history of the Church.[15]

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[10] Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, second edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, p.17f.

[11] Hassey, *No Time*, p.52.

[12] In Christianity "glossolalia" refers to the "spiritual gift" of spontaneously speaking in another language not known by the speaker, or in a stream of verbal sounds that may or may not resemble a human language. This supernatural phenomenon quickly became the defining characteristic of Pentecostalism, and also the Charismatic movement, later in the 20th century.

[13] Tucker & Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, p.363.

[14] ibid., p.361.

[15] Despite a disastrous first marriage and the tragic deaths of five of her children, Maria began preaching circa 1880 and by 1885 was attracting crowds that exceeded the capacity of most civic buildings. She began using an 8000 seat marquee in 1889 but even this could not contain her audiences. In the tradition of Charles Finney, Maria had a "mourner's bench" which even professionals were eager to utilise. As well as her evangelistic and healing ministries she also gave prophecies of which the most notorious was that the San Francisco Bay area would be destroyed by an earthquake and a tidal wave in 1890. The press did not always take Maria seriously but bad press only increased the crowds. She embraced Pentecostalism in the 20th century and planted a church in 1918 in Indianapolis. 'Woodworth-Etter, Maria Beulah', *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal*

Another hero of the Wesleyan-Holiness-Pentecostal tradition is Charles Finney. A highly successful revivalist preacher of the 1820s and '30s, and theological lecturer for much of his life, his passionate evangelism demonstrated his twin convictions of free will and universal redemption. This Arminian approach was surprising in light of his prior Presbyterian affiliation. Like Phoebe Palmer, Finney emphasised the work of the Holy Spirit as the means of attaining "entire sanctification". He also developed the technique of intense spiritual ministry via an "altar call". These features of his ministry flowed into the Holiness Movement and subsequently into Pentecostalism.

Finney's significance for women's ministry is primarily through his work and influence at Oberlin College. He had already aroused controversy by allowing women to pray and testify publicly at revival meetings. When he came to Oberlin, Ohio, in the mid 1830s the newly formed College was yet to establish its theology department. This gave Finney freedom to shape its style and focus. As the institution grew and Finney's teaching gained in notoriety, Oberlin College attracted students of the Holiness persuasion. It opened its doors to female students – initially to study the arts, but then also to study theology. Antoinette (Brown) Blackwell (1825-1921) had to fight for this right before being permitted to study under Finney, with his support. Despite this concession, she was not awarded a degree when she graduated in 1850. But in 1853 she accepted a pastoral appointment to a small Congregational church and there became the first American woman to be ordained.[16]

Across the Denominations

Despite the successes of Methodist women such as Phoebe Palmer, Amanda Smith (a black Holiness evangelist), and Frances Willard (a prominent feminist and a key leader in the Temperance movement)[17], the policy of their own denomination remained closed to women occupying leadership roles until the 20th century. While these women were informally recognised as leaders they were not granted formal recognition within the church hierarchy. Women fared no better in the Presbyterian context. A few engaged in evangelism and others in missions, but denominational policy denied gender equality until the 1950s.[18] Lutheran churches also rejected the notion of female leadership throughout the 19th century. Deaconesses could be found among American Lutheran churches but

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*and Charismatic Movements (*hereafter *NIDPCM)*, Stanley M Burgess (Ed.) and Eduard M Van der Maas (Assoc. Ed.), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, pp.1211f.

[16] Tucker & Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, p.280.

[17] Frances Willard (1839-1898) received greater recognition outside the church than in it. She is the only woman among the 50 historical figures honoured in the form of statues erected to represent each state in the capital, Washington DC. At the time of her death, one New York newspaper wrote: "No woman's name is better known in the English speaking world than that of Miss Willard, save that of England's great queen." Another declared that "she was the most influential woman of the age and that her name would become more and more revered in ages to come". In fact, the passing of time has diminished her renown, partly due to the failure of the prohibition movement and partly due to the evolution of the feminist movement beyond the Christian sphere. This from: Faith Martin, 'Frances Willard: America's Forgotten Feminist' located at http://www.geocities.com/~svpress/articles/fwillard.html, 1999.

[18] The exception to this in the Presbyterian sphere was the stance of the Cumberland Presbyterians, who split from the mainstream of the denomination early in the 19th century. Ironically, their journey to recognition of women's ministry included rejecting the revivalist and Arminian forms of Christianity that were widespread in 19th century America. These theological differences led to their split from the rest of the denomination. Once the Cumberland Presbyterians lost their links with the denominational colleges they became open to ordaining ministers without traditional qualifications. This included women. Hassey, *No Time*, p.77f.

ordination was not on offer to women before the 1970's. European Lutherans beat their American counterparts to the line but only by a decade.[19]

In another major denomination – represented by the Church of England, the Episcopal Church in America, and the Anglican Church in other English colonies – the struggle for women's ordination was similarly long and seemingly fruitless. The lobbyists' goals were well defined. Each rung of the hierarchical ladder was marked by a set of rights or an office previously inaccessible to the female gender. The pathway to attaining equality at each tier of the hierarchy was equally well defined yet labyrinthine with synods, commissions and conventions to be negotiated. Lay rights were obtained in England in stages during the first two decades of the 20th century. Recognition of deaconesses' parity with their male counterparts (deacons) occurred much later, while ordination to priesthood came near the end of the century.[20] The Episcopalian timeline was a little shorter, in part due to the size and diversity of this denomination in America. Some churches went ahead and ordained women before this practice was officially sanctioned.[21] Denominational leaders accepted the inevitable when they approved women's ordination at the 1976 General Convention.[22]

Among the non-conformist denominations, the Baptists were the most significant because of their size and influence – not just in America but around the world. During the latter part of the 19th century the Baptist Church overtook the Methodist Church to become the most ubiquitous brand of Protestantism in the United States. But, as in other North American denominations a number of splits occurred in Baptist ranks. The most profound of these was the North–South divide prompted by the friction surrounding the slavery issue in the 1840s, then reinforced by the Civil War (1861-65). This schism entrenched theological and cultural distinctions between the urban-liberal north and the rural-conservative south. While women preachers gradually became more common in the American Baptist Convention – at least 50 women were ordained between 1903 and 1929[23] – Southern Baptists were resolutely opposed to public ministry roles for women. Even participation in the Southern Baptist Convention was resisted until 1918 when the constitution was altered to sanction women occupying representative roles.[24]

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[19] Tucker & Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, p.386.

[20] Probably the first woman ordained as a priest within the Anglican Communion was Florence Li Tim Oi of Hong Kong. She was ordained in an emergency situation during wartime, in 1942 or '43. Ordination of deaconesses was recognised by the Lambeth Conference in 1968. Hong Kong again set a precedent when Joyce Bennett and Jane Hwang became the first regularly ordained priests in 1971. In 1976, the Anglican Church in Canada ordained six female priests, and five were ordained in New Zealand in 1977. Others were ordained on the continents of Africa and Australia during the 1980s before the Church of England had its first female priest in 1992. The first female bishop in the Episcopal Church was Barbara Harris, appointed Suffragan Bishop of Massachusetts in 1989. Penny Jamieson became the first female diocesan bishop in the Anglican Communion when consecrated as Bishop of Dunedin, New Zealand, in 1990. Data from: http://www.anglican.org.au/student/pages/timeline.htm.

[21] Sara Maitland, *A Map of the New Country: Women and Christianity*, Boston: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1983, pp.98-105.

[22] Tucker & Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church*, p.380.

[23] Hassey, *No Time*, p.62.

Opportunities for Baptist women were most prevalent within organisations involved in mission work overseas or social work in America. Women played key roles in fundraising, teaching, temperance campaigns, caring for the homeless and other para-church ministries both at home and abroad. When the Women's Missionary Union was formed in 1888, the decision to set up the sodality was made cautiously. Only after consideration of whether such a structure and role for women would contravene Biblical teachings and the views of male leaders did it proceed. The women launching this initiative concluded that when the denominational leadership "realise what we want to do, that we do not wish to wander in any dangerous ways, but are only trying to follow them as our leaders and trying to carry into practice what they have taught us from the pulpit and press, their anxieties will cease".[25] The anxiety over women in ministry did not cease and the internal debate continues to the present day.

Pioneering Women

As has already been noted, it was in the Christian sects – the independent or separatist movements and denominations – that the practice of gender equality has been particularly evident. Examples are numerous and can be seen throughout the Modern Era. Anne Hutchinson (1591–1643) was a talented Puritan preacher in colonial New England. Condemned by the authorities for her unorthodox beliefs, she courageously continued her public ministry until her banishment from the Bay Colony. Three Quakers who made valuable contributions to the heritage of their denomination were: Mary Dyer (?–1660), a supporter of Anne Hutchinson who was hanged for insisting on similar beliefs; Elizabeth Hooton (1600–1672), another early American preacher, and Margaret Fell (1614–1702) wife of George Fox and writer of some formative Quaker texts in England. Another pietistic movement that began as a renewal movement and later grew into a denomination was the Plymouth Brethren. Though it was to become notorious for its opposition to women in leadership the Brethren movement also relied on women's participation in the earliest decades of its existence.[26]

The established denominations also offered opportunities for women to shine when revivals broke out. Revivals usually prompted renewed efforts in evangelical mission and social action. Women were at the forefront of these spiritual renewal movements and social reform initiatives. Mark Noll observes in his brief survey of women in American Christianity that "in the context of revival, women strove mightily against slavery (Sarah and Angelina Grimke), for better treatment of the mentally ill (Dorothea Dix), for educational opportunities for women (Catherine Beecher), and later in the temperance crusade (Frances Willard) and social work in the cities (Jane Addams)".[27] Revivals are experimental by nature. They stimulate exploration of experiential dimensions of the Christian faith,

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[24] McBeth, *Women in Baptist Life*, p.108f.

[25] ibid., p.97.

[26] While recounting the early history of the Brethren assemblies in Plymouth in the 1830s, F Roy Coad writes: "The women of the congregation seem to have been far less inhibited in their participation in church activities than was later the practice...." He cites a leading Brethren man of that era who even "rebuked" a woman for "neglecting her gift" when she focused on raising a family. From *A History of the Brethren Movement*, Exeter: Paternoster Press, 1968, p.66.

[27] Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, p.183f.

both internally (personal spirituality) and externally (evangelical mission and social involvement). It was in these dimensions of Christianity that women excelled.

Phoebe Palmer played a key role in the evolution of the Holiness Movement in America. Catherine Booth was in a similar position when working with her husband in a London city-mission that led to the founding of the Salvation Army in the 1870's. And, Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944), a daughter of Methodist and Salvation Army parents, successfully – and dramatically – founded the pentecostal International Church of the Foursquare Gospel in Los Angeles in the 1920s.[28] These women leaders took advantage of the uncluttered, experimental nature of their denominations or sects. They stepped into the openings these movements afforded them, exercising their gifting to powerful effect. While many of their fellow ministers and congregational members disapproved of the role reversals, most were eventually grateful for the contributions made by women to the life of these movements.

Some Christian leaders even pleaded for more women in ministry. Charles Pridgeon, founder of the Pittsburgh Bible Institute, made the following appeal:

> Our forces need to be mobilised and that not only of men but also women and children. The question of the ministry of women is more than just an academic question. The force of men who offer for His service is inadequate. Souls are perishing. There is no time to argue whether it be a man or woman that performs the service. The need must be met. The dying one that is saved will be saved just as well by whomsoever brings the Word of Life. We can split hairs, look wise, and hold up some possible meaning of a text or two of Scripture when the whole trend of God's Word is on the other side; millions are going to hell while we delay.[29]

The irony of this argument is that it derived from an evangelical concern[30] yet most evangelicals were uncomfortable with egalitarian policies and practices. As Hassey explains, "many evangelicals advocated equality for women in the church as long as wives remained submissive to husbands".[31] Public ministry for women received wide support so long as it occurred in a pioneering context not too close to home.

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[28] McPherson was a controversial figure throughout the nearly three decades of her ministry. Her strong personality, the failure of her second marriage, and a dispute over property ownership all contributed to her reputation. McPherson's theology was unorthodox in that she adopted the "finished work" understanding of sanctification and preached a four dimensional gospel. Even more unorthodox were her preaching antics. On one occasion she arrived at the service on a motorcycle, dressed as a policeman, and raised her white-gloved hand and shouted: "Stop, you're going to hell!" Her temporary disappearance for several weeks in 1926 sparked a major scandal. She claimed it was a kidnapping, but some believed she was having an affair. Despite disapproval from other Christian leaders, her evangelistic ministry continued to be popular and effective in an era when America was discovering a range of entertainment options. McPherson died of a drug overdose in 1944. This from Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, pp.191, 193 & 200f and 'McPherson, Aimee Semple', *NIDPCM*, p.856f.

[29] Cited in Hassey, *No Time*, p.127f.

[30] Evangelicalism is explained in footnote 1 of the Preface. The evangelical concern here is the communication of the gospel to the unevangelised.

[31] Hassey, *No Time*, p.129. In her examination of the views of fundamentalist evangelicals, Betty DeBerg notes that the submission of wives to husbands was an "important dimension of Victorian gender ideology". *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990, p49.

Chapter 2 – Women in the Church in New Zealand

Similarities and Distinctives

The antipodean experience of women in the Church shared a number of similarities with the American context. From the earliest decades of European settlement in New Zealand a plurality of Christian denominations was in evidence.[1] As in the American colonies, this pluralism diminished the power of the state-sponsored churches to set the socio-religious agenda. There were several ecclesiastical hierarchies and multiple routes into Christian ministry. Another commonality, but a limiting factor, was the harshness of the settler lifestyle, particularly away from the urban centres.

In Allan Davidson's survey of women's involvement in the Church during the colonial era, he explains that women were often preoccupied by the rigours of domestic and rural life in 19th century New Zealand.[2] Housework, childcare, plus transportation and communication difficulties all conspired to inhibit women from launching ministry initiatives. Some such as Charlotte Brown (1795/6-1855), Jane Williams (1801-96), Margaret Kissling (1808-1891), Mary Anne Martin (1817-1884) and Annie Schnackenberg (1835-1905) offered schooling to local Maori girls, while others such as Marie Henriette Suzanne Aubert (1835-1926) a.k.a. Mary Joseph Aubert provided a variety of social services including medical care.[3] A Catholic nun, Aubert was a vocational missionary unencumbered by the demands of family. As a respected nurse she had an extensive ministry in the Hawkes Bay region, a ministry that lasted twelve years and included work on a revision of the Maori prayer

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[1] In the 1840s and '50s the percentage of adherents to the Church of England hovered around 50% of all religious adherence, but by 1861 this proportion had eroded to 44.89%. The percentage of Presbyterians grew steadily to be 21.41% in 1861. Roman Catholicism registered at 14.37% in 1848 then declined as more Protestants arrived to be 10.98% in 1861. Methodists are recorded at 11.75% in 1848 and 8.48% in 1861. Congregationalists and Baptists appear in the 1861 figures at around 2% while "Other Protestants" cumulatively register at 5.37%. Anglican adherence remained substantial but continued to decline to be 40.17% in 1886. By the 1870's Roman Catholicism had risen to be around 14% again and stayed at that level for many decades. Presbyterians remained steady at around 22-23%; the Methodist percentage hovered at around 10%; Baptists crept up to 2.48% in 1886 then fell back slightly; other denominations including Lutherans, Congregationalists, the Salvation Army, and Brethren were cumulatively 4.54% in 1886 and 4.18% in 1911. These statistics from Allan Davidson and Peter Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity: Documents Illustrating Aspects of New Zealand Church History*, third edition, Palmerston North: Massey University, 1995, pp.101, 177-179. Colonial New Zealand's denominational pluralism was so pronounced that a contemporary French writer commented: "Religious activity in New Zealand has retained a purely English form. It has split up into a number of sects, in which the slightest shades of thought are represented.... The man without a religion is regarded with little sympathy by public opinion, and 'society' openly dislikes him. So when anyone abandons one chapel, he generally enters another immediately, unless he decides... to start on his own account a religion of which he is the apostle. Hence results a veritable forest of denominations..." Andre Siegfried, 'Democracy in New Zealand', English translation, London: 1914, as cited in Davidson & Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, p.181.

[2] Allan Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand*, second edition, Wellington: The New Zealand Education for Ministry Board, 1997, pp.74-76. Elaine Bolitho reiterates this point: "Few women appeared in early church photographs. They had hard lives; full of work and children, and that was seen as their sphere". From 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 1, 1814-1939', *Stimulus*, Vol.1, No.3, Aug 1993, p.26.

[3] Biographical data on each of these women can be found in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography (DNZB)* located at http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb.

book.[4] But, for the most part, it was through their domestic skills that women found a ministry outlet, supporting church activities with food preparation, cleaning and childcare.[5] Churches were important community centres. The "behind the scenes" contributions made by women comprised the engine room of social life in the colonial environment.

A major point of difference to the American context was that colonial New Zealand was not such a complex patchwork of languages, cultures and belief systems. Migrants came predominantly from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales with relatively few from the European Continent. This meant more homogeneity in culture and greater similarity in religion. And, owing to the fact that European settlement occurred in New Zealand some two hundred years after it happened in North America, the settlers arrived with a different mindset. Settlers in America were often escaping the spectre of religious persecution and warfare. Some carried with them the baggage of Puritan politics and priorities. They sought to establish a new society where Christian and democratic ideals prevailed. Old World values were sifted and discarded if found to be dissonant with their vision of the New World. The American war of independence reinforced their distaste for Old World attitudes and methods. In contrast, the vast majority of New Zealand settlers were not religious refugees, nor were they at odds with the political system of the motherland. In fact, they mostly revelled in the status and protection afforded by membership of the British Empire. Their mission – both men and women – was to establish Victorian civilisation, with all of its mores, in this remote corner of the globe.

Across the Street and Across the Ocean

As the 19th century drew to a close, many churches in New Zealand took up the challenge of growing social problems in the still fledgling society. In the words of Allan Davidson:

> Colonial New Zealand from its founding faced major social problems, lacking even the very inadequate (legal) system of England to cope with them. Until the welfare legislation of the Liberal government in the 1890s, self-help was the major ideology... Vagrancy, destitution, drunkenness and violence were colonial social problems.[6]

As in America, women were often at the forefront of initiatives to respond to social need. Ladies' Guilds and charity organisations of various kinds sprang up in the 1870s, '80s, and '90s to pursue both spiritual and social objectives. Davidson mentions two such organisations in Dunedin and Christchurch. The Knox Church Ladies' Association began in Dunedin in 1879 to provide practical assistance in the form of fuel, clothing, bedding and other necessities to the destitute; and the Church of England Social Purity Society (later called the St Saviour's Guild) was founded in

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[4] Aubert's ministry continued in Wanganui from 1883 where she "ran two schools and a dispensary" and then in Wellington where she provided a variety of community services from 1899 till her death in 1926. She was a major figure in the socio-religious landscape of the late 19th century and early 20th century achieving many firsts in welfare provisions for women and children in particular. See: Pat Rafter, *Never Let Go! The Remarkable Story of Mother Aubert*, Wellington: Reed, 1972; Jessie Munroe, *The Story of Suzanne Aubert*, Auckland: Auckland University Press with Bridget Williams Books, 1996; and the article by Margaret Tennant in the *DNZB* at http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb.

[5] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.78.

[6] ibid., p.68.

Christchurch in 1887 to offer shelter to at-risk girls in particular and the homeless in general.[7] Other organisations identified by Enid Bennett are: the Methodist Ladies' Guild, established in Blenheim in 1875; the Mother's Union of the Anglican Church, begun in 1886; and the politically oriented National Council of Women, 1896 – 1906 and 1916 onwards.[8] Catholic women had opportunities for public service within the St Vincent de Paul Society, begun in New Zealand in 1876, and, in the Catholic Women's League from 1931.

An organisation of particular note is the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Founded in the USA by Frances Willard, the WCTU took root in New Zealand in 1885. While its focus was on the destructive effects of alcohol, it quickly broadened its interests to encompass a raft of social and moral issues impacting family life. These included health matters, contraception, censorship and prostitution.[9] The organisation's activities were characterised as a "Crusade for Social Purity". As in the American temperance movement, the WCTU became an avenue for feminist activism, promoting the enfranchisement of women.[10] With its all-female membership the very concept of womanhood came within the scope of WCTU concerns. Speaking to the Auckland branch of the WCTU in 1888, Mrs Annie Schnackenberg declared that:

> ..the WCTU is doing no more important work, to quote Miss Willard, "than in reconstructing the ideal of womanhood. In this age woman has strength and individuality, a gentle seriousness, and is becoming what God meant her to be – the companion and counsellor, not the toy and encumbrance, of man". And so, considering the rights of woman with the threefold lines of effort – preventative, reformatory, and legal – we contend that any law, or Act of Parliament, which interferes with the rights and liberties of women only to make it safe for men to sin, is a disgrace to a community calling itself Christian; and we are doing, and will do, all we can to have such Acts repealed.[11]

Womanhood was not to be defined by patriarchal attitudes nor limited to the domestic sphere. Women had rights to assert and an important contribution to make in shaping the social agenda.[12]

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[7] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*., p.78.

[8] Enid Bennett, 'Sisters in the Faith: Organisations related to the Churches, Religion and Spirituality', from *Women Together: A History of Women's Organisations in New Zealand*, Anne Else (Ed.), Wellington: Daphne Brasell Associates Press *and* Historical Branch, Dept of Internal Affairs, 1993, pp.153-155. The National Council of Women has been an umbrella organisation for all other women's organisations in New Zealand. A good account of its history, its structures and achievements is provided by Anne Burgin in her thesis: *Women in Public Life and Politics in New Zealand*, Victoria University, Master of Arts thesis in Political Science, 1967, pp.105-138. See also Roberta Nicholls, *The Women's Parliament: The National Council of the Women of New Zealand 1896-1920*, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1996; and Margaret Tennant, *Matrons With a Mission: Women's Organisations in New Zealand, 1893-1915*, Massey University Master of Arts thesis in History, 1976.

[9] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.79.

[10] Ruth Fry, *Out of the Silence: Methodist Women of Aotearoa 1822 – 1985*, Christchurch: Methodist Publishing, 1987, p.153. In this regard the WCTU provided a launching pad for the women's suffrage campaign of Kate Sheppard. "Her writing, speaking and petitions influenced first the WCTU members, then wider public opinion and finally the government, so that on 19 September 1893 suffrage was extended to women." Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 1', p.27.

[11] Davidson & Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, p.210f.

[12] This phenomenon of women engaging in social action as a form of Christian ministry, and thereby gaining in confidence to speak up for their own rights, mirrored American history in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Organisations campaigning for the abolition of slavery, universal suffrage, and the prohibition of alcohol were predominantly staffed by women. "As socially concerned women spoke out on behalf of slaves or victims of alcohol abuse, they found the power and reason to speak out on their own behalf. Women trained through temperance and suffrage work to organise and speak publicly gained the confidence needed for local church leadership." Hassey, *No Time*, p.131.

It was not only in the arena of social activism that women found opportunities for ministry and public service. While the pulpit was closed to them in their home churches, a number of New Zealand women joined the Protestant missionary tide taking their faith to non-Western cultures. Their destinations included Asia, Africa and the Pacific Islands as well as remote New Zealand locations among the indigenous peoples. In these contexts women performed a variety of ministry and leadership roles, gaining considerable recognition for their accomplishments.

The New Zealand Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, formed in 1885, focused its energy on India.[13] The society's first missionary, Miss Rosalie MacGeorge, departed for Calcutta in 1886 to join the Baptist women's mission society known at that time as the Baptist Zenana Mission.[14] She shared a mission station with another single woman from Australia.[15] As well as her evangelistic work with the Zenana mission, MacGeorge taught Bible classes and led Sunday services.[16] Unfortunately for MacGeorge, she met a fate common to many 19th century missionaries. Within five years she contracted a fatal illness and died in Colombo while en route to New Zealand.[17]

The growing involvement of Baptist women in missional activity led to the formation of the Baptist Women's Missionary Union in 1903.[18] It was a similar story in other denominations with the first Methodist Women's Missionary Auxiliary constituted in 1902[19], and the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union formed in 1905.[20] Five Open Brethren missionaries departed for Malaya in 1898 including Miss Dron, Miss Davies, Miss Shirtliff and Miss Reeve.[21] Women's names could be found among the "full time workers" listed in a 1905 edition of the Brethren publication, *The Treasury*.[22]

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[13] Martin Sutherland (Ed.), *Baptists in Colonial New Zealand: Documents Illustrating Baptist Life and Development*, Auckland: New Zealand Baptist Research and Historical Society, 2002, p.116.

[14] The term "Zenana" refers to the parts of Hindu households from which all males outside the immediate family are excluded. Missionary women discovered opportunities for sharing their faith within the safety of the *zenana*. This evangelism tactic developed into a whole wing of the BMS dedicated to women's mission work. It was later renamed the Women's Missionary Association and incorporated into the BMS in 1914. Brian Stanley, *The History of the Baptist Missionary Society 1792 – 1992*, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992, pp.228-239, 374.

[15] They were supported by "Bengali Christian preachers". Sutherland (Ed.), *Baptists in Colonial New Zealand*, p.120.

[16] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches Part 1', p.27.

[17] Sutherland (Ed.), *Baptists in Colonial New Zealand*, p.121.

[18] Elaine Bolitho in: Anne Else (Ed.), *Women Together*, p.186; and J Ayson Clifford, *A Handful of Grain: The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of NZ – Volume 2 (1882-1914)*, Wellington: New Zealand Baptist Historical Society, 1982, p.91. For more on the BWMU see chapter 3, p.21f.

[19] Fry, *Out of the Silence*, pp.114-116. Fry explains that: "The first Methodist Women's Missionary Auxiliary (MWMA) was formed in England in 1857, its object to direct attention to female education and improve the condition of women in "heathen countries". In New Zealand a Methodist Women's Missionary Auxiliary was formed in Dunedin in 1902." p.114. Subsequently, auxiliaries were begun in Christchurch, Oamaru, Feilding, Wanganui, Palmerston North, Auckland and Wellington. At a convention in 1915 the auxiliaries united to form the Methodist Women's Missionary Union.

[20] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.81.

[21] George Trew, *Looking Back – Forging Ahead*, Palmerston North: Missionary Services New Zealand, 1996, pp.12-13.

[22] Peter J Lineham, *There We Found Brethren: A History of Assemblies of Brethren in New Zealand*, Palmerston North: GPH Society, 1977, p.80.

Miss Gresham and Miss Rout were among the earliest New Zealand Brethren missionaries to China. And, following on from their overseas missionary experience, some Brethren women, such as Mary Reeve, turned their attention to mission among New Zealand Maori.[23]

With a history of women's involvement in mission – particularly in mission schools in India – the (Anglican) Church Missionary Society (CMS) had no hesitation in sending women into cross-cultural mission.[24] The New Zealand CMS, which began in 1892 as the New Zealand Church Missionary Association, sent Marie Pasley and Della Hunter-Brown to Japan in 1893.[25] NZCMS missionaries also remained active among Maori. Allan Davidson writes: "The employment of women as missionaries both overseas and amongst the Maori broke new ground for the churches. But an editorial in the *NZ Baptist* in 1910 eloquently summarised the reality for women entering ministry:

> How delightfully illogical we are. We allow a woman to grace the throne of this mighty Empire, and forbid her a seat in our legislative halls. We make her pastor in all but name of our most difficult charges in India, and shudder at the bare suggestion of the Rev Mrs Smith being a pastor of Hanover St., Dunedin."[26]

Rising to the Top

The pastorate and the pulpit gradually eased open to women as the 20th century progressed. Each of the major denominations travelled their own journey toward egalitarianism. The trend-setter was one of the newest arrivals, the Salvation Army. When a contingent reached New Zealand in 1883 it brought with it the idea that women could occupy ecclesiastical offices – though this concept was understood within the militaristic structures of the denomination.[27]

The Methodist movement had proven to be conducive to the growth of women's ministry in England and America. It demonstrated a similar degree of openness to women's ministry and leadership in New Zealand. One branch of the movement, the United Methodist Free Church, had female representatives at their annual meeting in 1883.[28] Women also occupied the roles of stewards and

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[23] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.146. Also, Les Marsh, *In His Name: A Record of Assembly Missionary Outreach from New Zealand*, Palmerston North: GPH Society Ltd, 1974, p.231.

[24] This was not always the case. Jocelyn Murray records the comments of Bishop Daniel Wilson of Calcutta in 1842 responding to a proposition that a single woman be sent to join the mission work in India: "No: this lady will not do. I object from the experience of my Indian life, and indeed upon principle, to single ladies coming out unprotected to so distant a place, with a climate so unfriendly, and with the almost certainty of marrying within a month or two of their arrival... Ladies don't know their own minds, and no one can, or ought, in our Protestant church, to deprive them of a natural right. I give them all credit for sincerity of intention; but no single lady remains such in India...." Jocelyn Murray, *Proclaim the Good News: A Short History of the Church Missionary Society*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985, p.108. Murray observed that the turn around in attitude to women missionaries is most pronounced from 1887 onwards. She ascribed this sea-change to a number of factors including the success of the China Inland Mission in using single women, and the development of the Zenana mission strategy in India (see footnote 14), which was formalised in the establishment of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society. Murray, *Proclaim*, p.111.

[25] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.61; and Murray, *Proclaim*, p.118.

[26] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.27 No.319, July 1910, p.131; cited in Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.83.

[27] For a number of inspiring accounts of the lives and ministries of Salvation Army women in New Zealand, refer to Barbara Sampson, *Women of Spirit: Life-stories of New Zealand Salvation Army Women from the Last 100 Years*, Wellington: The Salvation Army, 1993.

[28] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.144.

trustees. Deaconesses served the church in a variety of ways through both urban and rural missions doing evangelism, health care, pastoral work and providing services to immigrants.[29] When the New Zealand Methodist Order of Deaconesses was instituted in 1907, women who sought formal training for their role had to go to the Ilkey Deaconess College in Australia. But with the establishment of a Deaconess House in 1908, and its subsequent expansion in 1923, those training for ministry could receive lectures in Christchurch on everything from theology to "car maintenance".[30] The Deaconess tradition continued in the Methodist Church until 1979. Twenty years before it ended Phyllis Guthardt became the first New Zealand woman to be ordained a full minister of the Church.[31] Guthardt went on to occupy several significant roles including President of the Methodist Conference, 1985-86.[32]

The Presbyterian Church also had deaconesses in the first half of the 20th century. A training institute was opened in 1903.[33] The training programme was more theological in character than the Methodist equivalent. While it was still inadequate to equip the deaconesses for the array of social issues confronting them outside the institute, it bred an attitude of professionalism in the deaconess movement. Women's ministry roles were growing in stature and significance. Margaret Tennant suggests that the deaconess role became an important alternative for leadership roles within the church. She further comments that "the movement has rightly been characterised as an attempt to incorporate talented women within the churches in a structured way that assisted, but did not challenge, male authority."[34]

As in the Methodist scene Presbyterian women could be found in representative roles on denominational committees and in a variety of missions situations. A succession of attempts to gain eligibility for eldership and ordination failed in the decades preceding World War II. But a special committee was appointed in 1948 and reported back in 1953. The report stated that eldership should be open to women on the following grounds:

- scriptural teaching (specifically Galatians 3.28)
- the important role that women have in the life of the Church
- evidence of women's ability in other roles in society

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[29] Fry, *Out of the Silence*, pp.99-101. Margaret Tennant comments that some ministries of late 19th century and early 20th century deaconesses have their parallels in contemporary ministries of youth work and family counselling. Intervening in situations of domestic violence was an important part of deaconess ministry in the urban centres. In fact, they contributed significantly to the social welfare sector in the period from 1890-1940. 'Sisterly Ministrations: The Social Work of Protestant Deaconesses in New Zealand 1890-1940', *The New Zealand Journal of History*, Vol.32 No.2, Oct 1998, pp.11-15.

[30] Fry, *Out of the Silence*, p.103f.

[31] The Congregationalist Union had its first woman minister in 1951 when Nancy Ward, who had been ordained in Scotland, took up an appointment in the Napier Congregational Church. This fact is mentioned by Rosemary Neave in her introduction to *The Journey and The Vision: A Report on Ordained Anglican Women in the Church of the Province of New Zealand*, Auckland: The Women's Resource Centre, 1990, p.iv. And the Assemblies of God pastor, Mildred Powell from England, was ordained and credentialled in 1953 in Lower Hutt. Elaine Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2, 1940-1993', *Stimulus*, Vol.1, No.4, Nov 1993, p.32.

[32] Fry, *Out of the Silence*, p.124f and Elaine Bolitho, *Meet The Methodists: Post-war Personalities and Perspectives*, Auckland: Christian Research Association of NZ, 1994, chapter 8.

[33] James Salmond, *By Love Serve: The Story of the Order of Deaconesses of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand*, Christchurch: Presbyterian Bookroom, 1962, p.10.

[34] Tennant, 'Sisterly Ministrations etc.', p.7.

- the incongruity with the missionary context where women are not excluded from ministry and leadership
- the wide acceptance of women in key roles in other denominations[35]

This led to a change of attitude. In 1954, 19 out of 21 presbyteries supported the proposal to admit women elders.[36] Further progress was made in the early 1960's. The eligibility of women for ordained ministry was approved in principle at the 1961 Assembly. A follow-up statement released in 1963 noted that the Assembly's decision acknowledged "the spiritual equality of the sexes". Finally, "the regulations giving effect to the ordination of women were approved by all presbyteries in 1964. Margaret Reid, Assistant General Secretary of the New Zealand Council for Christian Education, was ordained as the first Presbyterian woman minister on 13 May 1965".[37] Other major victories for the egalitarian movement included the appointments of Joan Anderson (1979) and Margaret Martin (1987) as Moderators of the General Assembly.

In the Anglican scene progress was slower than in the Methodist or Presbyterian denominations. A significant step towards female ordination came with the work of Deaconess Glenys Lewis. She toured the country in the 1960's promoting full time ministry for women and the establishment of a women's training college. This opened in 1966 under the direction of Lewis. She also had a part to play in the 1964 Synodal sanction for Deaconess ordination.[38]

As well as the internal lobbying by Lewis, the Anglican journey towards women clergy was impacted by external forces. The movement toward a union of churches including the Presbyterian Church was perhaps the most influential. Presbyterian approval of women's ordination in 1964 forced the Anglican Church to face up to the same issues for fear of it being effectively decided by integration with the Presbyterians. In 1967 the Joint Commission on Church Union (JCCU) appointed a study committee focusing on women's organisations. In 1970 this committee reported back to the JCCU noting the conservative views of the Church relative to the rest of society. It also acknowledged that "the role still traditionally assigned to, or assumed by, women is no longer sufficient to many who are seeking a different pattern of Christian involvement".[39] The "Plan for Union" issued by the JCCU accepted that those women already ordained would continue in their roles within a united church, but left it up to the church to decide on "further admission of women to the presbyterate".[40]

More conferences, commissions and reports followed. A commission appointed by the 1970 General Synod considered "biblical evidence, tradition and history, theological issues, biological facts,

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[35] My paraphrase of points listed in 'Report of Special Committee on the Position of Women in the Church', *PGA*, 1953, p.195a, cited in Davidson & Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, p.348.

[36] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.147.

[37] ibid., p.148.

[38] ibid., p.149.

[39] Joint Commission on Church Union, 'Sixth Report to the Negotiating Churches', Wellington: JCCU, 1970, p.22 – cited in Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.149.

[40] JCCU, 'The Plan for Union', 1971, p.19 – cited in Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.150.

psychological, anthropological and practical considerations, ecumenical questions, the views of the Anglican Communion and positions of the negotiating churches".[41] That Commission's report was finalised in time for the General Synod of 1972. It expressed the majority view that "Biblical Practice is not determinative for all time...".[42] The Commission reached this conclusion on the following grounds:

- the disparity between the traditional theological position and the contemporary views of society
- that New Testament practice in regard to women's leadership was largely defined by contemporary social mores
- that ministry in the New Testament demonstrates flexibility and adaptation
- "a study of the Biblical doctrine of the priesthood does not support the argument that the office must remain a permanently male one"[43]

In 1972 a motion that the General Synod adopt the recommendation of the report that provision be made for women to be ordained was narrowly defeated. But a motion "that General Synod approves in principle the Ordination of women to the Priesthood" was carried.[44] However, it was also agreed to wait for a response from the Anglican Consultative Council before taking further action.

Subsequent Synods in 1974 and 1976 saw further advances as the motion for women's ordination was reintroduced and carried. A year passed to allow time for objections. An appeal against the decision was dismissed in 1977. The first ordination of Anglican women priests in New Zealand soon followed with Wendy Goldie, Heather Brunton, Jean Brookes and Cherie Baker ordained on December 3rd and Rosemary Russell on December 4th of that year.[45] Thirteen years later, Dr Penny Jamieson was ordained Bishop of Dunedin in a historic moment for the Anglican denomination in particular and for New Zealand Christianity in general. Women could at last be seen at all levels of church organisation.

Action and Reaction

Davidson notes the wider social context that contributed significantly to the movement for women's ordination.

> The role of women in society at large was undergoing fundamental change with greater career opportunities, increased control over fertility, support for solo parents and the easing of divorce legislation with equitable division of matrimonial property. Patterns of family life were also altering, with in many cases both parents working. These changes were by no means even and churches were often almost reluctant bystanders watching the change going on about them.[46]

The movement for women's rights was making gains in legislation, education and employment. Growing social acceptance of gender equality in many spheres, from service professions to business careers to the military, made ecclesiastical opposition increasingly anachronistic. The weight of this

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[41] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.150.

[42] 'Report of the Provincial Commission on the Ordination of Women to the Priesthood', *PGS*, 1972, pp.iv-v, cited in Davidson & Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, p.349.

[43] ibid., p.349. The first three points are paraphrased to reduce their wordiness.

[44] Neave, *The Journey*, p.3/7.

[45] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.150.

social trend was evident in the reasoning contained in the Presbyterian and Anglican statements. Recognition by the Presbyterian committee that women had "shown themselves capable of entering into all phases of life" and by the Anglican commission that the Church was out of step with "the social mores and climate of the times"[47] were admissions that they could not hold back the tide. Feminism had penetrated even the inner sanctum of episcopacy.

Perhaps it was the tardiness of the Church, perhaps it was the inevitability of the change occurring, but reaction to women's ordination was muted. As part of the research for the 1990 publication *The Journey and The Vision: A Report on Ordained Anglican Women in the Church of the Province of New Zealand*, a questionnaire was circulated through the network of women priests to a cross-section of their parishioners.[48] To the question: "What do you feel have been the benefits of having women as priests?" responses were numerous but unrevealing. The largest category was a series of statements about "bringing a women's perspective" or "a different dimension". Nearly three quarters of respondents answered "No" to the question: "Have there been any negative aspects for you of women being ordained?"[49] Of the objections raised very few had substance. No one offered any sacramental or scriptural objections.[50] Finally, the question: "Has your faith changed in any way as a result of your contact with women priests?" elicited a fairly small range of responses. The most common were "No" and "My faith has strengthened / grown / deepened / been enriched". Nine respondents went so far as to say: "My faith has been restored". Others acknowledged that it had altered their attitude to the ordination of women.[51]

Stanley Grenz and Denise Kjesbo explain that where women have risen to church leadership roles they have tended to develop a consensual style of leadership, displacing vertical hierarchical structures with horizontal networks that foster greater collaboration between clergy and laity. "In addition they tend to see the church as a caring community of faith, which encourages character traits typically associated with the feminine, such as compassion, mercy and the giving of nurture. As a result the presence of women in ministry leads the church to confront social injustice and oppression more aggressively."[52] While the survey conducted for *The Journey and the Vision* did not elucidate these dimensions, an emphasis on compassion and social justice becomes apparent when women ministers discuss their experience and their ministry philosophy.[53]

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[46] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.151.

[47] Davidson & Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, pp.348-349.

[48] Neave, *The Journey*, p.5/19.

[49] ibid., p.5/20.

[50] These issues are addressed in the Appendix to this thesis.

[51] Neave, *The Journey*, p.5/20.

[52] S Grenz with D Kjesbo, *Women in the Church: A Biblical Theology of Women in Ministry*, Downers Grove: Inter Varsity Press, 1995, p.25f.

[53] Reflecting on the attributes that have helped her succeed in ordained ministry, Rev. Adrienne Bruce explains that she is assertive on issues of justice – whether it is justice for herself or others – and she is passionate about community and about her own faith story. From an interview with Adrienne Bruce, Vicar St Mary's Anglican, Mt Maunganui, Tauranga – 01/03/02.

Davidson mentions four categories of response to women's ordination, as identified by Janet Crawford: reactionary, reformist, radical and post-Christian.[54] He observes that denominations that hold to conservative social values (such as most Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, the Open Brethren, the Church of Christ and most Baptists) are more likely to take a reactionary stance.[55] Mainline denominations generally adopt the reformist position with gradual but steady progress toward higher levels of women's leadership, though the reactionary position can be found among some of their laity and clergy. The radical response is articulated through conferences, women's networks, the Women's Resource Centre, the journal "Vashti's Voice", and other feminist theological writings. The post-Christian response is expressed through movements outside the church that seek to develop feminist spiritualities and experiences.[56]

The Times, They are a' Changing

The history of women's ministry in New Zealand contains many moments of triumph from the mission stations, school-houses and community halls of 19th century settlers to the national assemblies, international organisations and episcopal offices of late 20th century Christianity. It can be broadly understood in three overlapping periods as explained by Elaine Bolitho.[57] In the early colonial era women's activities were dependent upon and linked to the significant males in their lives. From the late 1870's through to the Second World War women's ministry was visible in the context of "working with women for women". From the 1950's onwards women gained recognition for their individual accomplishments and attained higher office. During this final period the policies of most major denominations changed to accept and support gender equality. This trend has not been continuous or universal. There are as yet many issues to be addressed. Women are still relied upon to fill domestic and service ministries such as child-care, flower arrangements, and supplying refreshments. For some women this situation is a source of resentment – particularly when they feel these contributions are taken for granted.[58]

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[54] Sourced from Janet Crawford, 'Women are Questioning Male Attitudes', *Accent*, July 1986, cited in Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.151.

[55] It is this grouping within New Zealand Christianity that will be the focus of the remainder of this thesis, in particular the Baptist, Brethren and Pentecostal churches.

[56] Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa*, p.151f. Examples of this post-Christian, alternative spirituality thinking can be found in publications such as: C Kearney, *Faces of the Goddess: New Zealand Women Talk About Their Spirituality*, North Shore City: Tandem Press, 1997. In her thesis on the "Women-Church" movement (now known as the "Future Church" movement) Ruth Low finds considerable fluidity between the "radical" and the "post-Christian" groupings. She outlines evolving patterns of belief and practice noting the ways in which the "Women-Church" movement impacted women through conferences, feminist networks, ritual groups and other discussion or alternative spirituality groups around the country. She notes that in spite of its various activities, and its development of new theological perspectives, the movement struggled to effect radical change in the wider Christian community. *A Magnificent Tapestry of Women: 'Women and Ministry Conferences' and The Developing Woman-Church Movement in Aotearoa 1980 – 1994*, Massey University Master of Arts thesis in History, 1999.

[57] Bolitho, 'Women in the New Zealand Churches: Part 2', p.28.

[58] A contributor to a 1975 survey made this comment about expectations on members of the Catholic Women's League: "They may well be described as the housewives of the Church; not only are they expected to cater for all parish functions but also... to turn their hands to every need...". Women's Committee of the National Council of Churches in New Zealand, *Enquiry into the Status of Women in the Church*, Christchurch: NCC, c1976, p.21.

The limitations to women attaining higher levels of responsibility are diminishing, yet some inhibiting socio-structural factors persist.[59] One of these is the competing demands many women face with commitments to the workforce and the home displacing their ministry aspirations. There are also residual chauvinist attitudes that pose obstacles to women. One of these is the expectation placed on women to perform to a high standard, often higher than men expect of themselves. This has been an issue even in denominations where gender equality has been the norm. In the words of a contributor to an Enquiry into the Status of Women in the Church:

> Traditionally women's status in the Salvation Army has been defined as equal. In practice, I guess, as in the commercial world, a woman must be exceptional to be given higher administrative roles.[60]

However, with each new generation such attitudinal factors become less and less a feature of the socio-religious landscape while possibilities for women's ministry and leadership continue to expand.

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[59] Cultural differences significantly impact the acceptance of women in the New Zealand religious landscape. Rev. Adrienne Bruce recounts an instance at a funeral that she was conducting on a Marae in the 1980s. She was not allocated a seat on the "paipai" (the VIP or speakers' seat) and, although she was permitted to give a sermon, the responsibility for the final prayer was given to a male cleric in attendance. Interview – 01/03/02. Women's roles in non-Western cultures (including Maoridom) tend to be more prescribed, less liberated, than they are in 20th and 21st century Western cultures. Some would argue that, historically, Maori women were more liberated than Pakeha women because Maori women had the support of their kin and retained their separate identity after marriage. For instance, Julie Park (Ed.), *Ladies a Plate: Change and Continuity in the Lives of New Zealand Women*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1991, 23f. (Such an assertion emphasises the power dimension of relationships on the assumption that power = liberation.) However, cultural assumptions and values need to be taken into account when examining gender roles.

[60] Women's Committee of the NCC, *Enquiry into the Status of Women in the Church*, p.43.

Chapter 3 – The Baptists

Of the evangelical denominations considered in this paper, the Baptists have the longest heritage, the most infrastructure, and the largest number of adherents. While some Baptist historians may point to antecedents, the Baptists as a definitive grouping appeared during the late 16th century in England and elsewhere in Western Europe. In that part of the world it remained a fringe movement outside the established church. Once the movement crossed the Atlantic and took root in the American colonies it blossomed into a major denomination. Working in its favour was the gradual abandonment of the principle of religious conformity, and the expansion of the western frontier. In that environment Baptist preachers found a responsive audience to their simple, evangelical message – repentance of sin, faith in Christ, adult baptism and salvation from Hell. Methodists were also highly successful from the time of their arrival in America. But most Baptists retained their evangelical emphasis and vitality longer than the Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians – denominations diverted by liberalism in the late 19th century. With America's growing economic power and international awareness, Baptist missions became the major force in the Protestant missionary movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Baptist Women's Missionary Union

The missionary enterprise captured the imagination of many people in New Zealand who did not become missionaries but were eager to join support groups. In 1903 a structure was established to concentrate the resources women could bring to missions support. This was the Baptist Women's Missionary Union (BWMU). A network soon emerged connecting Baptist women in a common cause throughout the dominion. Overall responsibility for Baptist missionary work remained in the hands of the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society (NZBMS), including the selection and dispatch of missionary candidates. The BWMU provided an ancillary structure supporting Baptist missionaries through prayer, correspondence, fundraising and the distribution of goods to a variety of individuals and organisations. It also held annual conferences to report on BWMU activities to the Baptist Union and to its own membership.

By 1912 the BWMU had 24 branches around the country.[1] That year its annual national conference was organised to coincide with the Baptist Union national assembly. Included in the line up of events was a "public meeting for ladies" at which the BWMU President, Mrs Gray, "gave an inspiring address on the position women occupy in the scheme of the Christian faith and its propagation".[2] A

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[1] This according to the *New Zealand Baptist* (hereafter *NZ Baptist*), Vol.28 No.347, New Zealand Baptist Union, Wellington, Nov 1912, p.205. However, Hugh Morrison, from his research of BWMU annual reports offers the following figures: "By 1910 there were 33 branches, peaking at 46 in 1915, dipping to 39 by 1920 and then rising again to 66 in 1930 (including two youth branches). In 1930 nearly 1,500 Baptist women were involved." 'Carest Thou Not?: Discerning the Face of Baptist Missionary Support in New Zealand 1885-1930', *Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Missions Studies Conference*, Christchurch, 28-29 November 2001, p.8.

[2] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.347, Nov 1912, p.205f.

year later 27 branches were represented at the annual conference held at the Central Hall, in Wanganui. The President, Mrs Kirwood (wife of then Baptist Union President, Rev E A Kirwood), spoke to another public gathering. This time the subject was: "A Plea for Womanly Womanhood".[3] Through its local and national structures the BWMU promoted women to committees, boards and various offices within the organisation – secretaries, treasurers, chairpersons, presidents and vice presidents. The organisation provided opportunities for women to perform administrative functions and attain political roles they could not have found elsewhere in the church.

As more women joined the BWMU the range of activities increased to further utilise the diversity of skills they brought. A report on the Dunedin branch of the BWMU in the *NZ Baptist* explained that the ladies had formed a Stocking League, a sewing group that recycled second hand clothing into garments suitable for street children in London. The article reports that "Mrs J H Maclaren has taken charge of this department, and had the pleasure of sending a huge consignment last year to the West Ham Baptist Central Mission, and to Dr Barnardo's Homes..."[4] This group was subsequently referred to as the "Young Ladies' Sewing Circle". At a fundraising event organised by the Sewing Circle – most likely in collaboration with its parent organisation, the Dunedin BWMU – a variety of home made products were sold. The proceeds amounted to the not insignificant sum of over £45, which was designated "for our Foreign Mission Work".[5]

Another name for the BWMU was the Women's Missionary Prayer Union (WMPU), though in some centres it may have had a separate existence.[6] The term WMPU was used mainly in reference to missionary meetings where prayer was the emphasis but guest speakers were also a common feature. In addition to prayer meetings, the BWMU / WMPU arranged conferences and meetings to which missionaries on furlough, or special guest speakers, were invited to speak. Sometimes the WMPU meetings were held in conjunction with missions focused events organised by individual churches or by the NZBMS. Male speakers addressed mixed gender audiences while female speakers delivered their addresses to exclusively female audiences. An example of this is seen in a report on the "Wanganui Christian Convention":

> The Convention gatherings were mostly held in St Paul's Hall, but the Rev G C Grubb, MA, the chief speaker preached in the Baptist Church on Sunday morning, June 2nd, and Mrs Grubb spoke for the Women's Prayer Union on Sunday afternoon... The following is the Chronicle's report of Mrs Grubb's meeting: "She congratulated the Baptist women on the great work their sisters were doing in Russia... Mrs Grubb continued her splendid address... by recounting her personal experiences in Christian work in Russia in company with Mrs Podin, while their husbands penetrated into the Ural Mountains."[7]

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[3] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.30 No.359, Nov 1913, p.210f. Clearly the BWMU did not restrict itself to missions matters but, rather like the WCTU, expanded its range of concerns to include many aspects of women's lives.

[4] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.338, Feb 1912, p.22f.

[5] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.30 No.358, Oct 1913, p.198.

[6] A 1912 report on the Baptist church in Epsom, Auckland, includes these comments: "The WMPU is increasing in attendance and zeal. At its annual meeting the election of officers resulted as follows: President, Mrs Jenkin; Secretary, Mrs Keals; Treasurer, Mrs Ormond". *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.346, Oct 1912, p.196. It is likely that this is referring to the local incarnation of the BWMU but using the alternate acronym.

[7] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.344, Aug 1912, p.156.

Women Missionaries

It has already been noted in chapter 2 that Baptist women began volunteering for overseas mission soon after the inception of the NZBMS in 1885. The premature death of the pioneer missionary Rosalie MacGeorge did nothing to deter a succession of women venturing to India. In 1910 the NZBMS missionaries in Brahmanbaria, India, were Miss E Beckingsale, Miss E M Gainsford, Miss L de Carteret and Dr North.[8] By 1925 the number of missionaries in India was eight with six single women and a couple, the Rev & Mrs H A Jones.[9] The female numerical dominance continued so that in 1935 there were three men, two married women and eleven single women.[10] This had changed little by 1945 when there were ten single women, four married women and five men.[11] By this time there were many New Zealand Baptist missionaries serving with other mission agencies around the world.[12]

In 1910 the missionary zeal of Western evangelicals was reaching its peak with the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh. The work of American John Mott, who chaired the conference, and Englishman Joseph Oldham on the international Christian stage cultivated awareness of the ecumenical dimensions of the enterprise. However, the vast majority of missions personnel derived from evangelical denominations. Young Baptists in North America flocked to missions oriented movements such as the Student Volunteer Movement and the Layman's Missionary Movement. These movements soon had their counterparts in New Zealand.[13] Articles appeared in evangelical publications throughout the English speaking world quoting population statistics and exhorting readers to greater commitment to foreign missions. An example of this is found in the January 1910 edition of the *Missionary Messenger* issued by the NZBMS. Under the heading "Men to the Front" the article contains the words of a leaflet written by George Williams of the London Missionary Society. It describes the abundant opportunities for mission work and calls on people (men especially) to donate more money or to join the missionary ranks.[14] In New Zealand personal responses to such pleas came mainly from women – women did most of the fundraising, much of the praying, posting and promotional work, *and* most of the going.

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[8] Details given in 'The Missionary Messenger', NZBMS section in the *NZ Baptist*, Vol.27 No.313, Jan 1910, p.3.

[9] According to the listing supplied in the *New Zealand Baptist Handbook (*subsequently called *Baptist Yearbook)*, annual publication of the New Zealand Baptist Union, Wellington, 1925-26, pp. 64-65 & 72-73. There was a ninth person, Miss Peters, but she returned to New Zealand during that year for health reasons (p.73). There were also a number of Indian workers listed, including "Biblewomen" (p.65).

[10] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1935-36, p.12. An issue of the *NZ Baptist* commemorating 50 years since the commencement of Baptist missionary work in Brahmanbaria listed all the people who had been sent from New Zealand to that mission field. Of the 45 people listed 31 are women, six of whom went with their husbands. 25 were single women missionaries. *NZ Baptist*, Vol.51 No.572, Oct 1935, pp.305-309.

[11] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1945-46, p.158.

[12] Baptist missionaries serving with other mission agencies numbered 76 in 1935 (*Baptist Yearbook* 1935-36, pp.15-16) and 104 in 1945 (*Baptist Yearbook* 1945-46, pp.163-164).

[13] The Laymen's Missionary Movement was instituted in New Zealand on October 8, 1910 according to an article in the *NZ Baptist*, Vol.27 No.323, Nov 1910. The Student Volunteer Movement gained impetus in New Zealand through the visits of John Mott around the turn of the century.

[14] 'The Missionary Messenger', NZBMS section in the *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.341, Jan 1910, pp.3-4.

The infant NZBMS combined its resources with the Australian and British branches of the mission society and concentrated its efforts on an area near Calcutta in North Eastern India. Sometimes the New Zealand missionaries shared mission stations with Australian or British missionaries; sometimes they staffed their own. The close cooperation with other English-speaking expatriates resulted in some international marriages – particularly of New Zealand women to British men. But it was not unusual for single women to be staffing mission stations without any British, Australian or New Zealand men to assist them. Reports from missionaries published in the *NZ Baptist* during the first half of the 20th century were almost invariably written by women. Most of these reports are silent on any pastoral or speaking ministries in which New Zealand women were engaged, concentrating instead on travel arrangements, cultural differences, language learning and health issues. This omission may have several possible explanations including the following:

- The women missionaries writing the reports avoided causing controversy 'back home' by withholding information on their involvement in preaching or pastoral ministry.
- The women at some mission stations did not have church leadership roles, focusing instead on either healthcare or education or ministries to the disadvantaged.
- For reasons of space or controversy the editor omitted parts of the reports and presented them in summary form rather than in full.

Occasionally a missionary report did explain what mission work New Zealand women were doing. A brief report from Miss Cowle sketches her itinerant ministry, visiting 120 villages in 68 days accompanied only by a local "Bible woman".[15] Miss Cowle also mentions Miss Beckingsale and Miss Arnold. A much longer report entitled "Women's Work at Brahmanbaria" appeared in the November 1925 issue of the *NZ Baptist*.[16] In it Elizabeth Beckingsale details the missionary work carrying on through the network of mission stations supported by the New Zealand Baptist Church. She names some of her colleagues: Miss Rice, Miss Cowles, Miss Bradfield, Miss Gillanders, Miss Arnold and Miss Peters. Their mission activities included school teaching, medical work, Sunday Schools, Zenana ministries, village visitation, literature distribution, church planting and orphanage work. A similar report appeared in 1935, this time written by Eunice Ogilvie.[17] Eunice and six other women (three of them Indian) featured in the article. Many of these single women missionaries were also mentioned in brief articles covering their speaking engagements while on leave in New Zealand. They were sometimes praised for their communication skills and the quality of their presentations.[18]

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[15] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.42 No.493, Jan 1925, p.19

[16] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.42 No.453, Nov 1925, p.299

[17] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.51 No.564, Feb 1935, p.50f

[18] An example of this is an article in which the editor acclaims the "lantern lectures" of Miss Bradfield whose slide show of India "is one of the best – if not the best – of its kind... Miss Bradfield's clearly delivered description of the pictures conveys to her audience a fund of information that cannot fail to increase our people's sympathy with and support of the work". *NZ Baptist*, Vol.51 No.569, Jul 1935, p.213.

Women and the NZBMS

The fundraising power of the BWMU made it a vital source of income for the NZBMS.[19] This financial significance resulted in BWMU representation at Baptist Union conferences. The departure from masculine uniformity at the national assembly seemed dramatic to those present when it first occurred in 1905. In his report on the event the conference reporter wrote: "Missionary Day is Lady Day! Pretty blouses, graceful feathers, fragrant flowers, quite lit up the sombre Assembly. For the first time in the history of the (New Zealand Baptist Missionary) Society two ladies spoke to the adoption of the Report".[20] However, it was not until the 1912 conference of the Baptist Union that a woman gave a verbal report from the podium. Again this provoked an exaggerated expression of surprise:

> Then came an event that would have filled you with amazement. Will you believe it that a woman was called to the platform and allowed to tell of the help which her sisters had given to the cause of God in the regions beyond? She is the scribe (i.e. secretary) of a most useful agency, which bears the mystic letters BWMU.[21]

The note of amazement reflected the worldview of a denominational culture that took for granted the exclusion of women from public ministry and positions of leadership.

Perhaps the real surprise is the absence of women within the structures of the NZBMS. The BWMU President and Secretary were associated with the NZBMS executive from 1907.[22] Yet, the predominance of women in the missionary force and the participation of women in the BWMU might suggest that women would be found among the officers and/or the executive of the society. In 1925 all NZBMS office holders listed in the *Baptist Yearbook* were men.[23] In 1935 all office holders were men, but there were four women among the 20 NZBMS council members.[24] By 1945 the number of women council members was still four but this was out of a total of 29.[25] By then an executive committee was established and of its 10 members one was a woman. There were still no women office holders. The pattern continued in 1955 and 1965 with all office holders male apart from the assistant treasurer, listed as Miss Barnett in 1965.[26] By then eight out of 33 council members and 23 out of 33 missionaries were female.

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[19] Morrison explains that "In 1905 the BWMU contributed £58 to the NZBMS. By 1930 that figure had risen to £1,712. By 1915... the BWMU was contributing 15% of total giving to the NZBMS, and from 1925 onwards was contributing 30% of total giving." 'Carest Thou Not?', p.8.

[20] J Ayson Clifford, *A Handful of Grain: The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of NZ – Volume 2 (1882-1914)*, Wellington: NZ Baptist Historical Society, 1982, p.93.

[21] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.347, Nov 1912, p.203

[22] 15 October 1907 and 10 October 1910, *Minutes of the NZBMS Committee Meetings, 1885-1910*, Box 0757, NZBMS Archives, Carey College Library, Auckland.

[23] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1925-26, p.63.

[24] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1935-36, p.17.

[25] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1945-46, p.157.

[26] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1965-66, p.121.

Undoubtedly there were those within the NZBMS who supported an egalitarian position on women's roles.[27] One such person was Harry Driver, the first secretary of the NZBMS and later an editor of the *NZ Baptist*. His wife, Annie Driver, was at times a leader within the BWMU and the YWBCU.[28] A 1910 editorial by Harry Driver stands in contrast to the prevailing Baptist view of the biblical position on women. Entitled "Christ and Womanhood" the article highlights a few of the instances of Christ's dealings with women.[29] Driver wrote: "(Jesus) conversed with women, though even His disciples marvelled. He gave them audience, and imparted to them His richest truths. He accepted their ministry. He tenderly acknowledged their penitence and devotion."[30] Driver briefly summarised Christ's core teachings and then concluded this segment with a statement that is astonishing for a Baptist publication in 1910:

> The fulfilling of the law is – love... Man must love his neighbour (woman) as himself. Thus did Christ establish the supremacy of the spiritual, *and thereby laid the axe at the root of the tree of every outward difference including sex*. (Italics added)[31]

Driver did not stop there. He went on to mention Paul's writings, in particular Galatians 3.28.

> This and kindred passages, which indicate Paul's acceptance of the undiluted principles of unity and equality taught by his Master, must condition our understanding of his statements restricting women; do they not imply that he was conscious that the latter were of local and temporary import only?[32]

Toward the end of the article we read his eloquent statement concerning the reluctance to appoint women pastors in New Zealand despite the accomplishments of women missionaries overseas.[33] Then Driver voiced another egalitarian notion: "The day is surely coming when in every department of life the limit will be set – not by sex or fancied inferiority – but by efficiency."[34] It would be interesting to learn the readers' responses to these comments, but there was no section for letters to the editor in the *NZ Baptist* at this time. However, such bold statements by someone of influence indicate the depth of opinion on the issue among Baptists in early 20th century New Zealand.[35] Any

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[27] An explanation of the term "egalitarian" as it applies to this thesis is given on p.3 of the Appendix.

[28] The details concerning the Drivers come from Morrison, 'Carest Thou Not?', p.10; and Elaine Bolitho, 'Women in the New Zealand Churches: Part 1, 1814-1939', *Stimulus*, Vol.1, no. 3, August 1993, p.29. The acronym YWBCU stands for Young Women's Bible Class Union, which is discussed within the next few paragraphs.

[29] For a fuller treatment of the position that Jesus took in regard to women, as presented in the Bible, refer to pages 7 to 10 of the Appendix.

[30] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.27 No.319, Jul 1910, p.131.

[31] ibid.

[32] ibid.

[33] See the quotation in chapter 2, page 13 of this thesis.

[34] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.27 No.319, Jul 1910, p.131.

[35] Another *NZ Baptist* editor voiced more egalitarian sentiments 28 years later. Little had changed since 1910. If anything, the denominational culture was more conservative in the 1930s than it was in the 1910s and '20s. Yet, J J North wrote: "The woman question ought not to be a question... In the Christian Church the place of women has never been recognised with sufficient generosity... It is now not only expedient but supremely right that women should preach and teach. That does not mean every woman any more than it means every man for everyone has not the gift. But to allow a dry-as-dust minister and refuse Catherine Booth is absurd now. It is a piece of very painful literalism, attended also by twists and turns, when women are refused the pulpit. Those who refuse them pretend that Paul's word is obeyed by them, though they tolerate women teaching the Bible and teaching the pagan. The attempt to be literal frustrates the spirit of the Book." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.54 No.601, Mar 1938, p.74. John James North was a towering figure in the landscape of New Zealand Baptist history ministering in Baptist churches for 30 years from 1895 to 1926. He edited the *New Zealand Baptist* from 1915 to 1948 and for nearly 20 years was Principal of the Baptist College from its inception in 1924. He was a vocal

generalisations need to be qualified. It may also indicate the gradual impact that Baptist women missionaries were having on their denominational culture in New Zealand.

Young Women's Bible Class Union

Another important women's organisation within the Baptist movement was the New Zealand Young Women's Baptist Bible Class Union (NZYWBBCU), often shortened to Young Women's Bible Class (YWBC) or similar. Gender defined Bible classes for young people had been in operation for a number of years and a Young Men's Bible Class Union was established as a national organisation at the 1904 national assembly in Dunedin.[36] A parallel entity for young women was instituted in 1909. In the *NZ Baptist* it was reported that:

> The young women have followed the inspiring example of our young men and formed a Bible Class Union. The Young Men's Union has already made a noble record, and will do yet finer work in days to come. We can hope that the Young Women's Union will have a future of ever-growing usefulness... The following officers were elected: President, Mrs E North; Vice-presidents, Mrs A Hoby and Mrs H H Driver; Secretary, Miss Bessie Mill; Treasurer, Mrs T F Hill; District Conveners, Miss Wright (Wellington), Miss Buchanan (Otago), Mrs R S Gray (Canterbury), Miss Moses (Auckland). With such a fine staff of officers to begin with, the prospects of the agency are decidedly bright.[37]

Within a few months of the above announcement the President, Mrs North, made an appeal "To the Members of the Young Women's Bible Classes Throughout our Churches".[38] Mrs North exhorted "Baptist girls" to join the new union and to enter into fundraising efforts to support "home missions".

Young women did respond and local churches supported the development of the Bible Class Union. A report from Gisborne Baptist in March, 1912, refers to a Young Men's Bible Class and adds that "the young women of the church are busy enrolling members in sufficient numbers to make their class a useful and substantial adjunct to the church's progress".[39] Later that year a sub-union was established in Christchurch comprised of "Sydenham senior and junior, Oxford Terrace senior and junior, and Linwood classes".[40] The following year the annual meeting of the YWBBCU was held in Wanganui at which "Invercargill, Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch, Napier and other Classes were well represented".[41] As at BWMU annual conferences, an open meeting was addressed by the president of the organisation who "gave a short address on 'How to Make the Best Use of Life' ".[42]

The YWBCU did not limit itself to Bible classes for young women. Annual camps were a feature of the YWBCU calendar, particularly Easter camps. At first there was some concern that young women could not cope with the rigours of a weekend under canvas. But a successful camp in Howick laid

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opponent of gambling, the liquor trade and Roman Catholicism. His wife was Cecelia Haig, whom he married in 1897. This from Angus MacLeod, 'John James North, 1871-1950', http://www.dnzb.govt.nz.

[36] Clifford, *A Handful of Grain*, p.90.

[37] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.26 No.311, Nov 1909, p.452

[38] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.27 No.313, Jan 1910, p.11.

[39] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.339, Mar 1912, p.55

[40] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.344, Aug 1912, p.148

[41] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.30 No.359, Nov 1913, p.211.

these fears to rest.[43] An overlap of personnel between the BWMU and the YWBCU, plus the prevailing climate of interest in missionary endeavours, led to the YWBCU adopting a missions focus. A report from the Auckland YWBC sub-union on the Young Women's Bible Class Page of the *NZ Baptist* indicates links with two current women missionaries.[44] It also mentions "an inspiring address" given by a former missionary, Mrs Goring. In a series of reports from the YWBC regional unions in 1935, a statement of funds raised is included in each report. For the Auckland union, £84; Wellington, £294; Canterbury, £201; and Otago, £72 11s 5d.[45] These funds amounted to a sum in excess of £650 and represented the YWBCU's annual financial contribution to missions.[46]

Other Organisations and Ministries

In addition to the BWMU and the YWBCU, Baptist women volunteered their time and energy to a variety of church and community groups. While evangelicals emphasised missions and the Bible, involvement in other noble pursuits was not discouraged. It was not so widely reported but Baptist women were active in the WCTU. In a 1915 obituary for Mrs R H Hughes, Rev Howard Elliot wrote:

> It was to the prohibition movement that Mrs Hughes gave her strength in later years. Signing the pledge in 1859, Mrs Hughes became one of the earliest members of the first Band of Hope in New Zealand, and throughout her life was closely identified with the Temperance cause, holding various offices, including that of Treasurer to the WCTU and member of the No-Licence Provincial Council....[47]

As Mr and Mrs North were leaving for India a farewell social was arranged in honour of Mrs North who had been prominent in a number of organisations including the YWBCU and the WCTU. Under the "Church News" section in the *NZ Baptist* it was reported that the social was attended "by representatives from the various Auckland branches of the (Bible Class) Union and the Temperance Union. Each visitor spoke of the faithful work that Mrs North had done...."[48]

Social needs were a common theme for community involvement. Another obituary, this time for Mrs Edwin Holloway, mentions her contribution to the work of the Auckland Ladies' Benevolent Society.

> She had been for about 32 years a familiar and welcome figure and constant worshipper in our church where she was held in high esteem. But the sphere where she was best known was in her ministry to the poor. She was connected with the Ladies' Benevolent Society for 28 years, acting as Secretary and Treasurer for the greater part of that period... her work and influence through the agency of the Society was the means of bringing comfort and tangible help to many needy homes.[49]

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[42] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.30 No.359, Nov 1913, p.211.

[43] Clifford, *A Handful of Grain*, p.91. "The girls proved that they too could handle the big tent in a high gale."

[44] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.42 No.452, Oct 1925, p.273. This was the first year that the YWBCU movement had its own page in the *NZ Baptist*. Until May, 1925, only the YMBCU had its own page. The BWMU was also allocated its own section in the *NZ Baptist* in 1925.

[45] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.51 No.571, Sep 1935, p.275.

[46] The Yearbook has slightly different figures for 1935: Auckland £86 6s 9d, Wellington £218 11s 3d, Canterbury £137 1s 8d, Otago £43 8s 7d *and* Southland £12 9s 10d. These were the funds raised for foreign missions only; additional funds were raised for "home missions". *Baptist Yearbook,* 1935-36, p.67.

[47] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.32 No.373, Jan 1915, p.4f.

[48] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.337, Jan 1912, p.19. See also footnote 35 for more biographical data on the Norths.

[49] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.348, Dec 1912, p.234.

With similar intent, a "Young Ladies' Guild" was formed in Sydenham. The report on its first meeting noted, "The keen interest to do progressive work was evident by the large attendance".[50] Also in Christchurch, at Oxford Terrace (a very prominent church in the Baptist Union) the Dorcas Society was set up to engage in social ministry. A 1925 report of the Society's annual meeting explained that Rev J J North (the minister at Oxford Terrace) "presided over a large gathering of the women of the church. The secretary's report stated that 222 garments had been made and given away during the year... Sister Grace, in a most interesting address, gave details of the homes brightened by our 'sisters of mercy' ".[51]

A major focus for Baptist women seeking opportunities for social service was the Remuera Children's Home (later located in Manurewa). Women's groups up and down the country parcelled up goods, sewed clothing and raised funds to send to the Committee overseeing the home for orphans and other at risk children.[52] The Remuera Home Ladies' Committee was a prestigious area of service with a high profile for its members. Regular reports of their accomplishments were published in the *NZ Baptist* commending the leadership for their dedication.[53] When the Children's Home was moved to a newly constructed facility in Manurewa the Committee members were photographed alongside other luminaries of the denomination.

A perennial ministry opportunity for Baptist women throughout the country was Sunday School teaching. This form of service was so common that it was often taken for granted, receiving little attention in Baptist publications – apart from churches reporting on the numerical strength of their children's ministries.[54] Often the only person mentioned in reports on Sunday Schools was the superintendent, and invariably the superintendent was a man. An exception to this appeared in a Church News report for Waihi Baptist in 1912. It mentions the departure of several church members in recent months including Mr A Cutforth, the Sunday School Superintendent. "We wish him every success in his new sphere." Then it adds, "Miss E Kelsey has accepted the position of Superintendent of the Sunday School".[55] Perhaps this appointment did not work out, or was revoked, as

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[50] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.337, Jan 1912, p.19.

[51] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.42 No.452, Oct 1925, p.277. Further comment on "Sister Grace" appears in the section on Baptist Deaconesses in this chapter.

[52] An example of this can be seen in snippets of church news such as one from Palmerston North Baptist which includes the statement: "The Women's Auxiliary have been working latterly for the Remuera Home, and sent up a parcel of goods to the sale held recently there." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.337, Jan 1912, p.18. A public letter of thanks from the committee secretary lists a wide variety of goods donated by many individuals and groups including the Petone Baptist Ladies' Guild. *NZ Baptist*, Vol.31 No.365, May 1914, p.87. The 1925-26 Yearbook lists the financial contributions to the Manurewa Children's Home from churches, Sunday Schools, Bible classes and Christian Endeavour Groups. The YWBCU contributed £78 that year.

[53] For instance, an annual report of the Remuera Home Ladies Committee includes: "Special reference should here be made to the long service of Mrs Smethurst... Before closing this paragraph, special mention should be made of the leadership of Mrs Hay, the Secretary of the Ladies Committee...." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.343, Jul 1912, p.122.

[54] It does also appear in some obituaries. For example, a brief mention is made in the eulogy for Mary Power of Thames Baptist: "In her early life she was a Sunday School teacher, and was also well-known for her capable management of church soirees. Miss Power was vice-president of the BWMU and took a practical interest in our mission work." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.51 No.569, Jul 1935, p.213.

[55] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.347, Oct 1912, p.200.

there is no mention of Kelsey in subsequent reports, not even in an article on a Sunday School anniversary celebration in 1914. A subsequent report in 1915 refers to Mr Lusby as the super-intendent.[56] It seems the time for women superintendents had not yet arrived. Women *were* accepted in the role of Sunday School Secretary. Of the 72 Sunday School Secretaries listed in the 1925-26 *Baptist Yearbook*, 16 were female.[57] The proportion of women secretaries rose steadily to be 35 out of 88 in 1935 and 52 out of 108 in 1945.[58]

Deaconesses

> We are pleased to hear that the Oxford Terrace Church has engaged a Deaconess to assist the Pastor in his work. Miss West was a useful member of the Hanover St Church (Dunedin) and went to Melbourne for training for the work on which she had set her heart. We are sure she will prove a capable and devoted worker, and are glad that Oxford Terrace has secured her services.[59]

The role of deaconess in the Baptist movement was not as prominent or as defined as it was in the Methodist and Presbyterian denominations. Deaconesses could be found in several Baptist churches in the late 19th and early 20th century but usually they had no formal training for the position. Miss West, subsequently known as Sister Grace, was an exception to this pattern. Indeed she was exceptional in a number of ways. Firstly, she had received formal training in Australia. Secondly, she was recruited from a church in another city to take up her position in Christchurch. Thirdly, her new position was a full time pastoral role, an assistant to the senior pastor. Fourthly, Sister Grace demonstrated strong communication skills and was soon a regular speaker at WMPU meetings, Christian Endeavour functions, Sunday School gatherings, and at church meetings where "her pithy addresses (were) heard with pleasure and profit".[60]

Baptist deaconesses in the early part of the 20th century had a low profile, quietly serving the congregations and communities in which they were situated. They engaged in a range of activities usually in the areas of women's and family issues, visiting those suffering from ill health and assisting those in crisis or poverty. Typically deaconesses had little mention in denominational publications, only named in business reports from churches and church based organisations that utilised their services.[61] This was not the case with Sister Grace. Perhaps it was her personality. Maybe it was the novelty of her status as an assistant pastor with a wide scope for ministry. And, no doubt, the

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[56] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.32 No.376, Apr 1915, p.80.

[57] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1925-26, pp.10-12.

[58] *Baptist Yearbooks* for 1935, pp.8-9, and 1945, pp.12-14, respectively.

[59] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.26 No.312, Dec 1909, p.465.

[60] From 'News of the Churches', *NZ Baptist*, Vol.27 No.315, Mar 1910, p.60.

[61] For example, here is a report from Wanganui Baptist: "We have to report holding our 29th Annual Church Meeting... Reports of the different agencies were given by the respective leaders. The election of officers resulted as follows: Deaconesses, Mesdames Gaze, Strong, Tremewan, and Miss Bell; Deacons, Messrs Brider, Bell, Holland and Howe; Secretary, Mr C A Sanow; Treasurer, Mr W J Carson; Reporter, Miss Dickenson." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.337, Jan 1912, p.19. Another similar report reads: "On November 18th, the thirty second Annual Church Meeting was held... Reports were received on the various branches of Church work, which are briefly as follows: Deaconesses – meetings were held regularly, 390 visits were paid, and a number of letters written to absent members..." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.32 No.373, Jan 1915, p.20.

support of J J North was a significant factor. But, Sister Grace's profile was as high as that of any pastor of her era. She frequently featured in reports from Oxford Terrace, and deservedly so.

> The work of our Deaconess, Sister Grace, was also illustrated (in the annual report). In addition to visitation work, she conducts a weekly meeting for mothers, the membership of which is 26. The bank scheme managed in this connection was instrumental in the mothers saving £23 2s during the year... Sister Grace visited many needy people to whom she delivered 240 gifts. The sick visits numbered 680.[62]

The office of deaconess continued to operate within the Baptist denomination for many years, though formal training for the role did not commence until 1956. Stan Edgar explains that the deaconess programme at the Baptist College "was planned to include in addition to theological and biblical subjects instruction in a wide range of practical matters including religious education in schools, practical church work under supervision, home nursing and home craft, visitation, singing, blackboard work and elementary automobile mechanics."[63] Edgar goes on to identify a number of women who enrolled in the programme and the subsequent ministry contexts in which they worked.

> After training they have worked in ministerial teams (Isobel Lane at Oxford Terrace), in leadership of churches (Patricia Preest at Corstorphine and Claire Gilbert at Tamaki), in social institutions (Claire Gilbert at Manurewa Children's Home, Betty Neilson at the College), and in Maori work (Dora Whitehead and Joyce Wilby).[64]

But all of this was in the future and some distance from the prevailing denominational culture in the opening decades of the 20th century. Women were applauded for initiating ministries in missions, in Christian education for women and children, in social services and in public morality campaigns. Yet, they were not considered for formal, institutional offices in the Church. The competence they demonstrated in ministry and leadership did not displace the scriptural injunctions or the cultural assumptions underlying denominational policy.

Women and the Baptist Union

A notice appeared in a 1912 issue of the *NZ Baptist* under the heading 'Topics of the Day':

> Our ministry urgently needs reinforcement. We have five or six churches vacant, for which no men are available. We are doing scarcely anything in the way of training our own young men for the ministry and must plainly depend for some time yet upon men who have been trained by others... Our churches languish if they are left long unshepherded, and we can never occupy the position in this fair Dominion to which we think we are rightfully entitled unless we have a cultured and consecrated ministry.[65]

It would be another 12 years before the Baptist College (later Carey Baptist College) was formed to train Baptist ministers. The interdenominational Bible Training Institute (later called the Bible College of New Zealand) was also founded about this time by the Baptist minister, Joseph Kemp, thus adding to the options for theological education. But, while the lament was being written over the shortage of "men for the ministry", Sister Grace was into her third year at Oxford Terrace; Mrs Hoby had been a

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[62] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.32 No.376, Apr 1915, p.78. Sister Grace was still prominent 10 years later, as indicated by the reference to her speech to the Dorcas Society (see page 29).

[63] S L Edgar, *A Handful of Grain: The Centenary History of the Baptist Union of NZ – Volume 4 (1945-1982)*, Wellington: NZ Baptist Historical Society, 1982, p.71.

[64] ibid., p.71f.

[65] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.339, Mar 1912, p.43.

leader in the YWBC movement – both in Wellington and nationally – for some 27 years[66]; Mrs Buckingham had served in a role akin to a co-pastor in Oamaru for some time[67]; and several women had demonstrated their abilities as successful missionaries in India.

While women were not yet being considered for pastoral positions they did come into reckoning in the role of regional delegates to the national assemblies of the Baptist Union. J A Clifford remarks that in 1890 the Baptist Church "was probably ahead of the community in its respect for women and their rights. Women had a vote in Baptist church meetings before they had it in parliamentary elections".[68] However, he also notes that women were not admitted as delegates to the national assembly because of the standing definition of delegate as "adult male". After a few unsuccessful attempts to rescind the "adult male" interpretation this policy change was finally approved via a voice vote in 1908.[69] The first officially recognised women delegates attended the 1909 national assembly boosting numbers to over a hundred.

Positions in the "inner sanctum", the Baptist Union Council, were harder to come by. It was one thing to have women attending the conference, another thing for women to be making decisions for the denomination. There were instances of women speaking during plenary sessions at the national assembly and women delegates participating in sub-committees. A 1925 editorial entitled "Wives and Women" highlighted the issue:

> Now and then women spoke. We remember two rattling speeches made by the two minister's wives, and they were certainly the best speeches in the respective debates.... But no woman was nominated for Executive honours. We hope that we may live to see the wisdom of half our constituency, a half with a distinct outlook of their own, fully represented in the inmost councils of the Union.[70]

Once again the *NZ Baptist* had an editor with egalitarian sympathies. However, such thinking was not widespread in 1925. That year all Baptist Union office holders were men, as were all accredited Baptist ministers. Women were starting to enter the role of church secretary with Mrs Tutcheon of Tauranga, Miss Gainsford of Oxford, and Miss Jamieson of Invercargill the only female secretaries in a list of 60.[71] By 1935 the Children's Home executives were listed among the officers of the Union thus adding a few women to the otherwise all male listing. But, these were "safe" categories of leadership, an extension of women's domestic roles. Only two women – Miss Waterman of Oxford

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[66] A report submitted from Wellington states: "It is with regret that we have to report that Mrs Hoby has felt compelled to resign her position as leader of the Young Women's Bible Class. Mrs Hoby has been leader for about 27 years, during which period great numbers of girls have been helped and benefited by her faithful teaching and counsel." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.340, Apr 1912, p.80. Mrs Hoby was a vice-president of the YWBCU from its inception – see page 27 of this paper.

[67] A report from Oamaru Baptist reads: "Mrs Buckingham (the pastor's wife) has ably seconded her husband in all departments of church work, and, indeed, it is owing to her efforts that our Foreign Missionary contribution has doubled in the last few years. She has been always to the fore, practical, capable and very sympathetic." *NZ Baptist*, Vol.28 No.341, May 1912, p.98.

[68] Clifford, *A Handful of Grain*, p.92.

[69] ibid., p.92f; also Bolitho, 'Women in the New Zealand Churches: Part 1', p.31. This was 10 years before the Southern Baptists approved women delegates (see p.7 of chapter 1).

[70] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.42 No.453, Nov 1925, p.281.

[71] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1925-26, pp.9-10.

and Mrs James of Rangiora – were listed among the 74 church secretaries.[72] By 1945, two further structures had been established within the Baptist Union – the Sunday School Council and the Youth Council. Of the 21 members of these councils five were women. Among the 86 church secretaries four women are listed: Miss Bolt of Berhampore, Mrs Foote of Lincoln, Mrs Morrison of Green Island, and Miss Swallow of Mosgiel.[73]

Further diversification occurred within the Baptist Union creating more opportunities for women. The formalisation of ministries among Maori and recognition of the vital area of youth ministry resulted in the establishment of new departments during the 1950s. Listed among the Baptist Union personnel in 1955 were 21 Maori Board members, three of whom were women, and a Youth Department consisting of 14 people, three of whom were women. There were also 11 women on the Children's Home Board, one woman on the Sunday School Council and one on the Youth Council. 13 women were numbered among the 134 church secretaries.[74] The Baptist Union Council and the Presidency remained exclusively male and continued that way for another 15 years. By 1965 two out of the 17 Maori Board members were women, as were five of the 15 Youth Division personnel, nine out of 23 Children's Home Board members, and three out of 21 Christian Education Board members. A Deaconess Committee was in existence by this time and all of its members were women. Miss Barnett, the assistant treasurer for the NZBMS occupied the same position for the Baptist Union. But only five out of 170 church secretaries were women.[75] The last statistic indicates that the assumption that men should occupy church offices was widely held and not just an issue at the headquarters of the denomination.

The 1940s and the Baptist Women's League

The Second World War brought home to New Zealand the culture of war. Whereas previous wars involving New Zealanders had been fought in Europe and Africa, WWII was also fought in the Pacific and demanded greater domestic involvement. This resulted in the mobilisation of many women into auxiliaries to work on the land, on the railway, in the office and the factory. Traditional skills were called upon to supply clothing and food parcels for overseas servicemen, to provide health and hospitality services for allied personnel stationed in New Zealand, and, of course, to raise children. But some women took on roles usually occupied by men – "those standing in for railway porters became 'station assistants', clerks became 'clerical assistants', and drivers 'tram girls', who daringly wore trousers".[76] This departure from traditional roles did not translate to the Baptist community. Elaine Bolitho depicts the Baptist culture of 1945. It was the year when...

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[72] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1935-36, pp.6-7.

[73] *Baptist Yearbook*, 1945-46, pp.9-10.

[74] All 1955 statistics from the *Baptist Yearbook*, 1955-56, pp.1-3 & 7-9.

[75] All 1965 statistics from the *Baptist Yearbook*, 1965-66, pp.3-6 & 185-188.

[76] Donald Denoon and Philippa Mein-Smith, with Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p.325. Charlotte Macdonald cautions against overstating the mobilisation of women during the War. "In New Zealand only a relatively small number of women were directed into the paid workforce during the Second World War. They were chiefly young single women or married women without children. The number of women subject to manpower orders represented a relatively small proportion of the

> ...little Marjory Gibson was on the North East Valley cradle roll. Her mother, like all Baptist women then, belonged in a church led by men. When she went to church in her Sunday best, complete with hat and gloves, she was handed her Baptist hymnal by the man at the door and led in worship by the Rev Mr Bycroft. She put her offering in a plate passed by male deacons who also offered her communion. It was a cultural expectation that men would do these things and a biblical understanding that women would learn in silence and humility, neither speaking nor serving in worship services. They raised their voices only in singing hymns.[77]

Edgar puts a positive spin on it by writing of the "important part" women played and then lists a range of typical activities: Sunday School teaching, choir singing, food preparation, sewing, caring for the needy, and supporting missionaries. He concedes that there was no move among Baptist churches to elevate women to leadership roles and argues that even women would not have wanted this. "Probably most men and women would have found some biblical justification for keeping these positions for men."[78]

After the War many women embraced the role of homemaker. They were compliant with the prioritising by "government, church and culture" of domestic duties for women.[79] The BWMU, the YWBBCU and community organisations continued to provide Baptist women with a range of ministry opportunities. But in 1947 women from a number of Auckland Baptist churches began meeting to discuss women's issues and define their own priorities. They formed the Baptist Women's League (BWL), which spread to become a national organisation in 1952. The League supported social service institutions such as the Manurewa Children's Home, the Archer Memorial Rest Home in Christchurch, and the Auckland City Mission. "In Wellington (BWL) members assisted the Maori work being conducted further north, took part in Corso collections, and visited the mental hospital."[80] The BWL also provided a forum for discussion of current issues, formulation of positions, and actions of advocacy on behalf of Baptist women. Accordingly the BWL became politically active making submissions to the government on issues of alcohol, radio programming and social policies specific to women. It also joined the National Council of Women (NCW) in 1967 thus giving Baptist women a voice at a national level.[81]

The BWL suited women who welcomed a change from housework and motherhood, and enjoyed the company of other Baptist women. During the 1950s and 60s it was a very successful organisation attracting large numbers and creating new leadership opportunities. Vivienne Boyd was the first

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total adult female population... The number of women who took on the conventionally male jobs – truck driving, labouring, etc. – was small." From *The Vote, The Pill and the Demon Drink: A History of Feminist Writing in New Zealand 1869-1993*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd, 1993, p.121. However, a large majority of families would have had at least one person in that category and therefore this phenomenon would have impacted a high proportion of New Zealand society at that time. Macdonald does note that the wartime shift of women into the paid workforce accelerated that trend, a trend that continued after the war. p.121f.

[77] From *Meet The Baptists: Post-war Personalities and Perspectives*, Auckland: Christian Research Association of New Zealand, 1993, p.90.

[78] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.69.

[79] Elaine Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2, 1940-1993', *Stimulus*, Vol.1, no. 4, Nov 1993, p.29. Bolitho adds that this phenomenon has been called "the cult of domesticity".

[80] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.70.

[81] ibid.

representative of the BWL at the NCW and, subsequently, president of the BWL. She also became the first woman to be elected to the Baptist Union Council, which occurred in 1970, followed by Lois Dickensen in 1973. Boyd went on to become the first woman president of the Baptist Union, from 1984-85.[82] Meanwhile, by the mid 1970s the BWL had seen its best years. Attendance declined as women increasingly moved into the workforce.[83] The BWL evolved into Baptist Women's Ministries (BWM) and built a new identity as a modern organisation, linking up with international organisations such as the Baptist Women's Union of the South Pacific and the Baptist World Alliance.[84]

The Debate over 'Woman's Place in the Church'

By the middle of the 20th century Baptist women had many options for ministry and leadership, either in the church or in related areas of activity. They were active in missions, in missions support, in community service, and in youth and children's ministries. However, the range of options did not include preaching roles or church leadership. The cultural emphasis on domesticity, together with the inerrantist emphasis on compliance with scripture, kept women out of the pulpit and limited to the crèche, the women's groups, the Bible classes and the Sunday Schools. Yet the issue of women's roles was not being ignored. A "Women's Column" had appeared in the *NZ Baptist*, and a paper entitled "Woman's Place in the Church" was presented at the 1952 national assembly.[85]

The author of the discussion document, Mrs M E Holland, made an eloquent appeal to the scriptural evidence for an egalitarian view of women in the church. She noted the inclusion of women among Jesus' followers; she listed the instances of women in prominent roles in the book of Acts; and then highlighted the texts where the Apostle Paul affirmed women with whom he was associated.[86] Then Holland used the rest of her paper to survey the situation of women within the Baptist denomination and other denominations in New Zealand, America and Britain. Without providing supporting data, she claimed that Baptist women were keen to see women preachers.[87] She included mention of ministry training that is available to "young men in our Baptist Churches" but not to "young women who have the same desire". Toward the end of her presentation Holland made a gentle but confident appeal to her audience:

> The consideration of this matter might well be a concern of Assembly. There is the Maori field, and the opportunities in our rapidly growing (urban) areas, where Baptist Deaconesses, young women who feel the Call, might well be employed... There is certainly a place in the Church for every woman – there is scope for women leaders; has the time arrived for the consideration of training and equipping women in this special, full-time basis?[88]

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[82] Bolitho, *Meet The Baptists,* p.91.

[83] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.71.

[84] ibid.

[85] M E Holland, 'Woman's Place in the Church', *NZ Baptist*, Vol.69 No.779, Jan 1953, pp.5-6.

[86] For a discussion of Jesus' inclusion of women among his disciples and a survey of Paul's associations with women refer to pp.9-10 of the Appendix.

[87] Holland, 'Woman's Place in the Church', p.5.

[88] ibid., p.6.

The two-fold resolution of the national assembly, recorded at the end of the article, was "that this Assembly commends: 1) To its members the consideration of the participation of women in the full life of the Church; 2) To the Union Council the consideration of the appointment of trained women in the forward work of the Denomination Church in New Zealand".[89]

The writer of the "Woman's Column", Helen Gray, alluded to the debate with her opening comments in the next month's issue: "Baptists, if we read the signs aright, are becoming more and more open on the subject of women in the pulpit. Not that they were ever averse from the idea theoretically, but as yet there is no established practice. Our pulpits have not been closed to women, except by the tacit acknowledgement that it is the prerogative of men to preach from them, but it would seem that even this silent embargo is likely to die in our generation."[90] Gray's own feelings on the matter were ambivalent, though she supported the rights of those women who wished to preach and teach the Bible. There is no evidence that this debate gained momentum in the 1950s, or the early '60s. The Baptist Union made no policy statements and no women were appointed to the Council. But towards the end of the 1960s, as a culture of protest and sexual liberation spread around the world, the topic of women's roles and rights resurfaced with much stronger feeling.

A letter to the editor of the *NZ Baptist* in 1969 expressed growing frustration:

> Dear Sir, I am writing regarding the supposedly purely Baptist article of faith – the priesthood of all believers.
>
> The 1968 Annual Report of the Baptist Union of NZ reads: "There is some dissatisfaction in regard to the structure and representation of the (union) council."[91] Yet last year's Assembly voted in an all-male union council as usual.
>
> Sir, unless women are soon voted on to that male stronghold, I feel Baptists must concede that what they really believe in is the priesthood of all male believers.
>
> Yours sincerely, Patricia Booth.[92]

Responses followed in subsequent issues. In opposition to Booth's protest, W K Coad questioned the relevance of associating the doctrine of priesthood with the governance role of Council membership. He then made the point that if women delegates wanted a woman on the Council they had sufficient voting numbers to make that happen. Coad also asserted that any roles that are constitutionally restricted to men (e.g. diaconates) could be thrown open to women simply by women effecting changes to the constitution. But he believed that the reality was that "women don't want government by women".[93] In support of Booth's letter, R H French expressed her (his?) concern over the lack of opportunities for educated and professional women seeking to enter ministry roles in the church. French warned of failure to utilise women's talents "through being shackled to Kiwi

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[89] Holland, 'Woman's Place in the Church', p.6.

[90] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.69 No.780, Feb 1953, p.27.

[91] This statement appeared the previous year in *NZ Baptist*, Vol.84 No.965, Nov 1968, p.2.

[92] 'Letters to the Editor', *NZ Baptist*, Vol.85 No.969, Mar 1969, p.11.

[93] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.85 No.971, May 1969, p.9.

conventions conveniently sanctified by Pauline prescriptions".[94] She spoke of a new generation arising without the historical baggage carried by the previous generation.

> Such freedom set loose in a world bored with history, precedent and possessions makes a setting ripe for either revolution or renewal. It is time to start forming our denominational road through the sizzling seventies – and in our planning we must provide our womenfolk with something more than a sidewalk for prams.[95]

Further correspondence on the issue of women's roles appeared in the early 1970s. R M and A M Poulter expressed their disillusionment with the status quo and asked the question: "Should not we as Christians give equal opportunity to men and women alike, to serve God according to ability?"[96] They acknowledged that their letter might provoke responses loaded with scriptural argument. And it did. A letter entitled "Let Your Women Keep Silence" cited the third rule in the denominational constitution that "The Church acknowledges the Bible as the inspired word of God and accepts its authority in all matters of faith, doctrine and practice".[97] That statement was followed by quotation of 1 Corinthians 14.34, 35 then an interpretation of this text to the effect that women should not preach or teach in church, nor participate in any annual meetings, nor hold any leadership offices.[98] It ended with a request for the editor's view on these matters. The editor responded by saying that the text in question did not have "legislative value for our churches today. We are convinced Paul was addressing a particular and local situation and that it would be taking his words out of their context to make them apply as a general rule for the whole church".[99]

The editor, H E Whitten, stepped into the debate with an editorial entitled "Women ministers – shall we have them?"[100] Firstly he made the observation that other denominations, and other Baptist Unions, had moved to ordain women. He also noted that though the issue had arisen at national assembly it had not yet been addressed seriously. He pointed out that there was – at the time of writing – a woman student in training for ministry at the Baptist College, which "could well force us soon to a decision".[101] He then stated that the appointment of a woman minister was entirely a local church decision that did not require the sanction of the Baptist Union, except for the inclusion of the woman's name in the list of accredited ministers. He went on to identify two reasons for opposition to women ministers, 1) irrational prejudice, 2) biblical statements. Whitten spent most of the editorial discussing the socio-historical context for the Pauline injunctions against women speaking or being in leadership. His conclusion was that these texts had only temporary application appropriate for the culture of that time and that the culture of contemporary New Zealand requires an attitude that

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[94] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.85 No.971, May 1969, p.9.

[95] ibid.

[96] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.87 No.5, May 1971, p.6.

[97] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.88 No.2, Feb 1972, p.7.

[98] For a consideration of the arguments surrounding 1 Corinthians 14. 34, 35 refer to pp.12-13 of the Appendix.

[99] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.88 No.2, Feb 1972, p.7.

[100] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.88 No.10, Oct 1972, p.4.

[101] ibid.

supports women in ministry. His final statement was that Galatians 3.28 is the defining passage for this issue.[102]

A reaction from Hugh Coutts appeared in a subsequent issue of the *NZ Baptist*.[103] He asserted that a decision on the matter should not be influenced by "what other denominations may do, or what the community thinks today". And, he argued that Galatians 3.28 refers to the relationship Christians have with God and, therefore, was not relevant to the debate over women's roles. He agreed with Whitten that the contemporary culture of the New Testament church did have a part to play in the Pauline texts concerning women, however he claimed that the key issue was the "creative purpose that men should exercise the chief responsibility and leadership in the home, and in the church cf. Genesis 2.18, 21-23; Ephesians 5.22-33; and 1 Timothy 2.12".[104]

Hugh Coutts made further contributions including a 1976 letter in which he was reacting to a series of impromptu statements, in the *NZ Baptist*, favourable to the notion of women ministers.[105] The remarks had been made by guest contributors. Coutts wanted to bring the discussion back within evangelical parameters[106] when he wrote: "It's not a question of whether some women might make better ministers than some men, or whether one is superior to the other, but what the Bible teaches. Unless we are going to change the Bible to suit modern thought... we have to put ourselves under the authority of God's Word."[107] Elaine Bell made a lengthy response to Coutts (and another contributor, Ted Phythian) from her egalitarian perspective.[108] She addressed several issues: Christ's disciples being men; requirements for deacons and elders given in 1 Timothy and Titus; the context of the 1 Corinthians 14 passage; the prophetess role in the Old Testament; and the issue of men feeling uncomfortable under the leadership of women. She asked the question, "Is the attitude against women in ministry really based on Scripture, or on tradition and feeling?"[109] And so the debate continued.[110]

Women in Ministry: From the '50s to the '90s

Whatever the merits of the opposing arguments in the ongoing debate, women did move into leadership and pastoral roles during the second half of the 20th century. Joan Milner was the first

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[102] For a discussion of the meaning and significance of this Bible verse in the inerrantist debate on women's roles see the Appendix, especially pp.10-12.

[103] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.88 No.12, Dec 1972, p.5.

[104] ibid.

[105] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.92 No.10, Nov 1976, p.6.

[106] For a discussion of evangelicals and evangelical parameters refer to the Preface, footnote 1.

[107] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.92 No.10, Nov 1976, p.6.

[108] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.93 No.2, Mar 1977, p.6. For more on the egalitarian perspective refer to the Appendix.

[109] ibid.

[110] Many more letters could be cited including a series that appeared in the *NZ Baptist* as recently as December 1996 through to May 1997, sparked by an advertisement for a pastor that included the question: "Think you are our man?"

Baptist Maori Missions worker, commencing her ministry in the early 1950s.[111] She was subsequently joined by Deaconess Dora Whitehead, after Dora completed her College training in the late 1950s.[112] Joan did not go through the College programme but was still granted the title of Deaconess for her work among Maori in Pukekohe. She headed up the Sunday School work in Waiuku, held baptismal classes for young converts, led women's study groups and "cottage meetings", though, as a woman, she was not permitted to lead a communion service. Joan was a past president of the YWBCU and had engaged in social work with the "Christian Alliance of Women and Girls' in Wellington."[113] Her appointment to Pukekohe was the "beachhead" of a new Baptist Union venture among Maori that spread to parts of the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Auckland metropolitan area.[114] Joan enjoyed the team ethos of the ministry and greatly appreciated the support of the Baptist Union through the Maori Board, though she was never invited to join the Board.

Joan did not aspire to leadership roles. She was content to support others in leadership and sought to encourage local Maori men who demonstrated leadership abilities. "In the Marae work, in the Sunday School work, there was always a man from the church who would be there and I would work in with (the men) and give them prominent roles in the leadership... and keep myself as it were, 'under the umbrella'. Although I was responsible I would always try to work with a male... We were a team, we were always a team." Joan's 23 year ministry in Pukekohe and Waiuku exemplified the sensitivity, the supportiveness and the stability that women have often brought to ministries in the Baptist movement. While others came and went Joan invested her life into the community she served. The people warmly embraced her efforts on their behalf. One lady once said to Joan, "My people will listen to you because of what you do for our children." And a local leader, Sonny Kaihau, acknowledged the impact of her ministry when he said to Joan, "You are our minister".[115]

Patricia Preest was the first to enter the Deaconess programme in 1956.[116] Upon completion, Preest served as a Deaconess in Corstorphine, Dunedin, where her ministry was helping to establish a new church in a new suburb.[117] Preest returned to the Baptist College in 1972 to train for ministerial ordination. In 1974 she became the first woman, Baptist minister in a ceremony held in Remuera.[118] Preest went on to work as a hospital chaplain in the Hawkes Bay. "Later she was matron of the Aranui Home and from 1989 assistant pastor at North East Valley Church, Dunedin."[119] The next

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[111] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2', p.31.

[112] Interview with Joan Milner, Baptist Deaconess, Pukekohe – 19/01/04; also Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.40.

[113] Joan Milner – 19/01/04.

[114] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, pp.40-42.

[115] All quotations in this paragraph from Joan Milner – 19/01/04.

[116] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.71.

[117] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2', p.31

[118] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.72.

[119] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2', footnote 52, p.37.

woman to be ordained and accredited was Margaret Motion.[120] After her induction in 1978 she served as an interim minister at New Plymouth Baptist before heading to Indonesia to engage in mission work. Rev Ngaire Brader was the first woman to be a full-time sole charge minister when appointed to Epsom Baptist in 1982.[121]

Some women who trained for ministry at the Baptist College went on to become ordained ministers in other denominations. An example of this was Diane Keeley who was a student at the College from 1967-69 and then served as a Deaconess at Esk Street Church (now Invercargill Baptist) where she was not allowed to preach.[122] Her next position was with the Auckland Mission and while there she did have some preaching opportunities. A sermon at Epsom Baptist entitled "Heaven and All This Too" was published in the *NZ Baptist*. It dealt with the issue of women's struggle for acceptance in church ministries. She made the point that though women could receive training for pastoral ministry they were still dependent on local churches to invite them into those positions.

> I think the lack of equal opportunity is the most serious question at the moment. For women who have chosen vocations in the Church it's very difficult. So far, we've trained one woman for the ministry. I hope there'll be many more. And most of us are happy about it, so long as we can tuck them quietly away in chaplaincy work or somewhere else where they do not challenge our emotional response to having women in positions of leadership.[123]

Not long after this Keeley and her husband Bruce left the Baptist denomination to join the Anglican communion and undergo further ministry training. In 1978 they became the first married couple to be ordained as Anglican priests together.[124]

With the opening of ministerial training to women, the interest in deaconess training quickly subsided. "In the ten years to 1975 only one woman trained as a deaconess, and in the 1974-75 *Yearbook* only two were listed as still active within the denomination. During the next decade three women trained, but in the 1984-85 *Yearbook* there were only two retired deaconesses listed. Most of the others had moved outside the denomination to other work."[125] In addition to the roles of deaconess and minister, women entered a variety of positions within the national structures of the Baptist movement. The achievements of Vivienne Boyd in the BWL and then the Baptist Union have already been noted.[126] Other women who served as President of the Baptist Union were Mrs B J Humphries (1990), Annette Denholm (1993), and Angela Cossey (1999). Dr Lorna Jenkins was Director of

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[120] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.72; and Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2', p.33. Bolitho notes that Margaret Motion's induction sparked another round of heated debate on women's roles in the *NZ Baptist*. See footnote 54 on p.37 of her article.

[121] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.72; and Bolitho, *Meet The Baptists*, p.93f.

[122] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2', p.31.

[123] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.92 No.2, Mar 1976, pp.13.

[124] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2', p.32.

[125] Margaret Evans, *Women in Leadership in the Baptist Church in New Zealand: Changes since 1965*, Essay written as part of a course on "Christianity in Aotearoa", University of Auckland, ACTE, 2001.

[126] Refer to page 34 for details.

Christian Education from 1990 to 1993, and Nancy Squire was appointed Director of Ministry Training at Carey College in 1998.[127]

Missions support continued to be an area of service for some Baptist women but there was a steady decline in the overall level of participation. This was due to factors such as:

- The end of colonialism and the emergence of independent national churches reducing the number of opportunities for pioneer missionary work.
- Advances in telecommunications, transport, home appliances and medicine making missionary life and travel far less physically strenuous or emotionally fraught than previously.
- Work commitments and the competing demands of urban life in 1990s New Zealand contracting the time that women formerly had to devote to missions support.
- The changing status of women missionaries who ceased to be iconic heroes and were increasingly perceived simply as women who had made a career choice to do ministry in other countries.

A Baptist Men's Missionary Fellowship appeared in the 1950s but faded into extinction during the 1970s.[128] The BWMU was subsequently replaced by the Baptist Missionary Fellowship (BMF), a low key organisation that includes men and women who share an interest in missions.

Youth work is another ministry area that developed and changed dramatically during the latter half of the 20th century. Youth ministry evolved out of the Bible Class and Christian Endeavour movements. During the 1960s these movements were decimated by the emergence of a Western youth culture that spread rapidly through pop music and the media, and which rebelled against existing authority structures. Many Baptist youth workers left their roles feeling disillusioned and unwanted. In 1972 the Baptist Council sought someone to head up the Youth Division of the Christian Education Department after the position had been vacant for 18 months.[129] Beverly Holt, a BTI graduate and former staff member for Scripture Union, was selected through an interview process. The other two applicants were men, at least one of whom was a minister. Bev suggests that they were probably regarded as too valuable to be appointed to the position. "The churches needed all the ministers they could get. So, let's take the woman!"[130] Bev also recalls that the panel was keen to have a single person who would be free to travel around the country. "I was a trained school teacher so I was useful for teaching (roles), I was a youth worker so I was good for youth, and I was single!"[131]

The appointment came without a salary and had no standing in the constitution of the Baptist Union. "I wasn't a minister so they had no housing for me, they didn't know what to give me in the way of a

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[127] These details from Evans, *Women in Leadership* essay.

[128] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.79f.

[129] ibid., p.60.

[130] From an interview with Beverley Holt, former National Youth Director for the New Zealand Baptist Church, Auckland – 22/9/03.

[131] ibid.

salary... constitutionally I didn't exist for three years."[132] When she requested office space in Wellington she was only offered "a cupboard" at the national headquarters. Bev discovered more support from people at the "grass roots" of the Baptist movement. Friends in Nelson arranged for a small car to facilitate her travels. Some individual churches refused her assistance in developing their youth ministries because they disapproved of women in leadership roles. "The minister (at Te Atatu) spoke to me very nicely a couple of times on the telephone to tell me that... there was no Biblical rationale for women leaders."[133]

Bev found the first nine years the hardest as she strove to rebuild youth ministries throughout the denomination. She travelled extensively investigating the youth scene and listening to what people had to say. The strategy and style of her ministry was essentially relational. "It was a woman's thing – I lived with the people, I would get to know their kids, I was non-threatening to them, I listened a lot."[134] Bev invited the more senior members of the congregations to become "sponsors" for youth activities. This avoided the taint of authority that youth found repugnant. The activity groups concentrated on programmes the young people wanted and new leadership emerged naturally from within the groups. Looking back on the early years of her ministry, Bev comments that "it was a fabulous time to come in because we were at the bottom; the only way to go was up.... We had the hippie movement with the 'Jesus People', so there was a whole (dimension) of Christianity that was very relational... and all the Jesus marches and so forth – it was a great time to be in youth work".[135]

In 1979 the Youth Division was reclassified as a separate department and the name changed to Baptist Youth Ministries (BYM). Bev was given the title of National Youth Director.[136] A number of younger leaders emerged, like Mark Pearson and Merilyn Withers, who were "great with the programming side".[137] During the 1980s the BYM leadership established a base in Mt Roskill, Auckland, and developed a team ethos – the National BYM Team. They were soon sending teams of young people on short-term missions overseas. Bev was so pleased with the progress of the work that in her report to the 1986 Baptist national assembly she stated that all the goals had been achieved. Amid much acclaim and enthusiastic support Bev was reappointed to another three year term. At that time she gave notice that she would not seek reappointment in 1989.

Bev's relations with the denominational leadership soured during her final term as Youth Director. She had become concerned about issues of gender inclusive language, women in leadership, and sexual abuse. These concerns were partly inspired by the rise of the feminist movement in the late 60s and early 70s. Bev stated that "when I first started, I knew that I needed to keep separate from

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[132] Bev Holt – 22/9/03.

[133] ibid.

[134] ibid.

[135] ibid.

[136] Edgar, *A Handful of Grain*, p.61.

[137] Bev Holt – 22/9/03. Bev explained that the emphasis was on inspiring young people with the big concept of being part of the Kingdom of God. This was done through concerts, camps and other youth events.

that (i.e. feminism) because of the anti-feminist responses within the Baptist church. I knew as soon as I got caught up in it my days (in the job of Youth Director) would be numbered."[138] Yet some of the concerns of the feminist movement had also become important to Bev. She made her views known through speaking engagements and articles in periodicals.[139] Reflecting on the reaction to her initial attempts to highlight the issues of gender equality and sexual abuse, Bev comments that "from then on I lived virtually under siege".[140] She recalls that key people with whom she might have discussed the situation were absent from the scene through health reasons or overseas commitments. "We didn't have a leadership at that time who would say to the people who were having difficulty with those issues – 'Go and talk to her if you've got a problem.' And he (Gerrard Marks) wouldn't tell me who to go and talk to. So, it isolated me.... But *it had to happen*, otherwise I would have stayed in institutional Christianity."[141] At the end of her tenure Bev felt shattered by the experience of the previous two years. She left the Baptist denomination entirely and retreated to the "spiritual roots" of her home in Piha.[142] There she continued to develop her feminist thinking and to explore alternative spiritualities.

While Bev Holt's story is unique, it contains elements common to the experiences of many women in ministry. Bev brought a new dimension to Baptist youth ministry, a creative and relational style that was outside the ministry paradigm of the male youth leaders. But, she lacked the authority and status enjoyed by male leaders. And, like other women, Bev found her ministry initiatives and her communications with denominational leaders were obstructed or misinterpreted. Gender differences and disagreements over the relative importance of certain issues are frequently sources of tension, both inside and outside the Church. In denominations where feminist influences and egalitarian views have been resisted, the proclivity for misunderstanding and hostility is likely to be greater than in churches where egalitarian principles are the norm.

The Denominational Position

The movement toward egalitarianism in the Baptist Church gained momentum during the 1990s. Women who had received training in theological colleges filtered through the denomination impacting churches and communities, demonstrating their abilities in a wide variety of ministries. Some individuals such as Caroline Kelly-Johnson and Gayanne Frater (BCNZ graduates) voiced the concerns of women who found they had the freedom to do theological training but still felt restricted by gender structures within the Church.[143] Women like Marjory Gibson and Shirley Cope openly

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[138] Bev Holt – 22/9/03.

[139] For instance: 'A Task that is Not Finished', *NZ Baptist*, Vol.105 No.9, Oct 1989, pp.1 & 7.

[140] Bev Holt – 22/9/03.

[141] ibid.

[142] Bev Holt, 'It Had to Happen: A Journey of Preparation for Being Church in the Tomorrow', from *Keeping Our Heads Above Water: Reflections on the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women*, Ree Bodde (Ed.), Auckland: Women's Resource Centre, 1998, pp.108.

[143] For instance: Gayanne Frater, 'Women's Anger', *Vashti's Voices*, Vol.2 No.6, Autumn 2000, pp.11-19.

shared their experiences of being a woman in a pastoral role.[144] A few Baptist men took up the egalitarian cause, even preaching their message in Sunday services. A series of sermons developed by Baptist ministers David McChesney and Paul Grimmer were produced for use in Baptist churches at the request of the Assembly Council in 1994.[145] The opening comments outlined the reasons for a sermon series on this topic: it was Suffrage Year; it was a very topical issue; the impact of radical feminism needed a response; the incongruity of women's roles in mission compared to women's roles in the church was apparent; and confusion existed over Biblical teachings on this issue.[146]

The first sermon in this series focuses on the Genesis account, which it interprets as an egalitarian creation (with men and women to be in partnership) followed by the entrance of sin (the Fall) with the resultant friction between genders.[147] God intends for the pre-Fall relationship to be restored and the Christian Church provides a community in which this can be realised. Sermon two considers Jesus' egalitarian stance towards women, which contrasts with the norms and attitudes of his cultural context.[148] It includes a list of the women mentioned as co-workers of Paul in the New Testament and concludes with the verse interpreted as the rallying point for a new social order – Galatians 3.28. Sermon three looks at the issue of women's roles in the context of Biblical views on marriage, again emphasising a message of mutuality rather than hierarchy.[149] 1 Corinthians 7 & 11 together with Ephesians 5 are the key texts.

Sermon four homes in on "the real problem," the issue of women in leadership.[150] After pointing out the diverse range of ways that Christian denominations have handled this (e.g. fully endorsed in the Salvation Army, opposed in the Brethren scene) the sermon goes on to analyse the "tough passages in Paul's writings". A literal reading and application of Paul's instruction for women to remain silent (1 Corinthians 14.34; 1 Timothy 2.11) is dismissed on the grounds of consistency. "If we are going to use the scriptures in this way, then we must be consistent. How many churches would be willing to withdraw their women missionaries, ban women from teaching Youth and Sunday School and forbid women from taking part in any speaking in the church? What would our worship be like if women were to remain completely silent?"[151] The instruction for women to be silent in the Corinthian church is explained by the congregational arrangements whereby men and women were separated from each other and women may have been calling out to their husbands to make comment on the ministry from the front. Paul's instruction for women not to exercise authority over men in 1 Timothy 2.12 is explained away with a statement that the Greek word translated "authority" in this passage

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[144] *NZ Baptist*, Vol.109 No.2, Mar 1993, p.14.

[145] David McChesney and Paul Grimmer, *Women and Leadership*, sermon notes produced at the request of the Baptist Assembly Council, Auckland, 1994.

[146] For a survey of the Biblical teachings on this issue and the accompanying debates refer to the Appendix.

[147] McChesney and Paul Grimmer, *Women and Leadership*, pp.1-3.

[148] ibid., pp.3-5.

[149] ibid., pp.5-7.

[150] ibid., pp.7-9.

[151] ibid., p.9.

relates to a situation where someone is usurping authority. "It seems that what Paul is opposing are women who have never been given authority to preach. He is not prohibiting all women from positions of authority, but opposing them when they have never been granted that authority...."[152]

Some of the exegesis lacked sophistication but the message was clear; God and the Bible are not opposed to women in ministry and leadership roles and the church should not be either. To underline the shift that had occurred in denominational thinking a special *hui* on the subject of "Women in Leadership", sponsored by Carey Baptist College, was held in November, 2000. It resulted in seven affirmations.[153] The first of these spoke of the positive role of male leaders in encouraging, advocating and validating women leaders. Affirmation two referred to national assemblies and the need to make these events an inclusive experience for women, not an isolating or alienating one. Affirmation three spoke of the importance of "healthy" churches and pastors in enabling women to enter pastoral roles. The fourth item affirmed the various "pathways" that women might take into leadership roles, recognising that theological training often happens later in the journey rather than early. Affirmation five was less affirmation and more recognition of the lack of mobility experienced by women in pastoral ministry – the lack of invitations to serve in churches other than the one in which they began. Affirmation six affirmed the personal experiences women might have of words and signs that confirm for them the rightness of their aspiration to pastoral ministry. The seventh affirmation again identified a problem that women often face, temporary or probationary terms of appointment without certain prospect of a permanent appointment.

Conclusion

A plurality of views on women's roles co-existed within the New Zealand Baptist movement during the 20th century, though a hierarchical view dominated. Despite the prevailing denominational culture, women's roles and the expectations of women changed substantially over the course of the century. By the end of the century full equality was in sight. The question could be asked: did egalitarianism develop because of new ways of understanding the relevant Biblical texts, or did external pressures push Baptists into accepting alternative interpretations of these texts? It could be argued that neither of these was the determining factor. Ever widening circles of opportunity for women in ministry and leadership gradually swamped the impeding 'rocks' and 'sandbars' until women could be found in almost any sphere of activity. Denominational statements and policies tended to be an event after the fact, an acknowledgement of what had already occurred. Such statements had the hallmarks of a 'work in progress' and at the end of the century they were still a long way from being a coherent, systematic and comprehensive treatment of the issue. But this may be an advantage to the Baptists. Absence of a definitive policy statement leaves room for a greater number of members to feel included and listened to. It also allows flexibility for further development and new understanding as Baptists continue the process of discovering the possibilities for women.

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[152] McChesney and Paul Grimmer, *Women and Leadership*, p.9. Refer to pp.15-16 of the Appendix for the debate surrounding the Greek word for authority in 1 Timothy 2.

[153] *Women in Leadership* – A presentation at the 2001 Baptist Assembly originating from a special hui on the subject of Women in Leadership sponsored by Carey Baptist College, appendix 4, Nov 2000.

Chapter 4 – The Open Brethren

From its inception in Dublin and Plymouth the Brethren movement spurned denominational structure and resolved to meet "according to the New Testament pattern". This principle resulted in a loose network of independent groups meeting in private homes or unsophisticated halls. Without a denominational framework there was no formal membership. However, the question of how informal membership was policed prompted the first major split in the movement in 1845.[1] The two factions became known as the "Exclusive" or "Closed" Brethren and the "Independent" or "Open" Brethren. In spite of further internal conflicts, the movement was attractive to people disenchanted with the established church. While the Brethren movement never grew to the proportions of two other non-conformist movements, the Methodists and the Baptists, it quietly spread throughout the English speaking world.[2] Through its missionary endeavours, it also took root in many parts of the non-Western world. Adherence to scripture as the authoritative, infallible Word of God is another fundamental Brethren principle. The Bible is to be read and followed as literally as possible. This literality prompted a distinctive form of Eucharistic service (a non-liturgical service open to vocal participation by all men) and a distinctive brand of eschatology known as Dispensationalism. It also led to an entrenched policy of female subjugation derived from a literal reading of Pauline texts.

Nineteenth Century Roots in New Zealand

In New Zealand the Open Brethren movement can trace its history back to the middle of the 19th century and the ministry of pioneer settler, James G Deck.[3] Deck and his family arrived in 1852 and settled in the Motueka district, near Nelson. The evangelistic efforts of Deck, his sons, and others that joined them resulted in the spread of the movement around the South Island in the 1850s and 60s, then into the lower half of the North Island from 1865 onwards. During the 19th century the Open Brethren developed no infrastructure apart from establishing congregations (called "assemblies" – not to be confused with the Assemblies of God) in most provincial centres and in many rural localities. This was partly due to their ecclesiology – opposing denominationalism – and partly their eschatology, commonly referred to as "lifeboat theology" where the emphasis is on conversion so as to secure eternal salvation beyond this world. Such thinking infused urgency into

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[1] The main founder of the movement, J N Darby, insisted on a letter of commendation to accompany a person who migrates from one assembly to another, while George Mueller was satisfied with the testimony of the individual. Darby was trying to protect the movement against heresy. His followers became the Exclusives while those who stood with Mueller became the Independents or Open Brethren.

[2] The North American Brethren movement had its own beginnings separate from the Plymouth Brethren. It traces its roots to a form of non-denominationalism that emerged in Scotland in the 1840s and 50s and then spread to the United States via Ontario, Canada, in the 1870s. However it shares the same principles, practices and beliefs as the movement that began in Dublin and Plymouth. For more on the North American Brethren refer to Robert Baylis, *My People: The History of those Christians Sometimes Called Plymouth Brethren*, revised edition, Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1997, or to websites like: http://www.gospelhall.org. The Australian story is similar to that of New Zealand. See Ken J Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia*, Gailes, Qld: Aberdeen Desktop, 1999.

their evangelistic task and diminished the significance of any earthly structures or cultural footprints. As Lineham observes, "buildings were never important to the early Brethren... and they kept no records of their nomadic wanderings, so that it is rarely possible to trace their resting place. They were a pilgrim people who were unwilling to put roots down in alien territory".[4]

If tangible evidence of the activities and achievements of early Brethren men is rather limited, the data for Brethren women is scarce. Women appear in lists of assembly members where they are uniformly identified by their husband's surname and often his first name.[5] Only occasionally are they seen acting independently or pursuing their own priorities. Lineham notes that James Deck's daughter, Mary Deck "opened a school for girls in Motueka" in the early 1860s.[6] Lineham also records the commencement of a Sunday School near the Manawatu Gorge in 1895 by "Mrs Croucher and her daughters Catherine (Mrs Cautley) and Florence (Mrs Edwards)".[7] This ministry – combined with the preaching talents of James Chrystall who preached to the parents of the Sunday School children – led to "the greatest revival among New Zealand Brethren".[8] In the same area, a few years later, "the importunate prayer of Mrs Stenberg led to the conversion of forty persons including John Ireland... (and) his wife, (and) John H Ross, later a notable assembly missionary in the Argentine... F Howay, Miss E S Lenart and Sven Nelson".[9] The context of Mrs Stenberg's prayer was one or more of a series of revival meetings for which "Franklin Ferguson was the main preacher, assisted by Edward Whitehead, James Coppin and Henry Curran".[10]

Perhaps the most notable instance of a woman's ministry in the early Brethren movement is the story of Mrs (Kate) Squires of Gore. After a split in the local assembly, Mr and Mrs Squires led one faction dubbed the "Squireites". Lineham explains that Mrs Squires became the matriarch of their embryonic assembly. "Granny Squires", as she was known, "preached there on Sundays, and on Mondays she went out in her buggy and visited any of her neighbours who had been absent. Most judged it better

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[3] Peter J Lineham, *There We Found Brethren: A History of Assemblies of Brethren in New Zealand*, Palmerston North: GPH Society, 1977, pp. 13-21 and 29-32.

[4] ibid., p.32.

[5] For instance, "In Wanganui four converts were baptised in 1870. By 1873 this congregation had grown significantly and included Mr and Mrs Alister Perkins, Mr and Mrs Wallace, Mrs Blyth, Mr Harvey and Allan Wilson". Also, at the Hinman Mill in the area that was to become Palmerston North, "On the evening of 24 January 1883 Hinman began to preach in the mill, and a time of revival followed. Very soon there were enough converts and interested Christians to begin an assembly, and its foundation members included Mr and Mrs William J Erenstrom, Carl Bergersen, Mr and Mrs Otto Tiller, and Mrs Horsfield". Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, pp.39 & 66.

[6] ibid., p.17.

[7] ibid., p.93.

[8] ibid.

[9] ibid., p.94.

[10] ibid. Edward Whitehead was a prominent figure in Brethren circles. He founded the Gospel Publishing House – initially called the "Bible and Tract Depot" – in 1900 (see Campbell Fountain, 'The First Hundred Years', *The Treasury*, Vol.102 No.11, Palmerston North: GPH Society Ltd., Dec 2000, p.8) and was known for his trips overseas to visit Brethren missionaries (see for instance, *The Treasury*, Vol.6, May 1904, p.125f.) as well as his preaching. Franklin Ferguson was also prominent as an evangelist (Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.86) and as editor of *The Treasury* for about 20 years from 1901. Some of his editorial comments are discussed later in this paper.

to hear a public sermon on Sunday than a private one on Monday and the services were well attended."[11] As the gathering evolved into an established assembly Granny Squires relinquished her position and male leadership ensued.[12] Squires' preaching role was born of necessity. As in the case of Mrs Croucher (above), Squires was in a pioneering context where almost anyone with sufficient ability and ambition could lead the local movement. This set of variables was a recurring motif for Brethren women's ministries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, both in New Zealand and overseas. But for the most part, the record of 19th century Open Brethren is a record of men, and in particular – as H Pickering puts it – the *Chief Men Among the Brethren.*[13]

Foreign Missions

In 1899 an Open Brethren periodical called *The New Zealand Treasury*, later abbreviated to *The Treasury*, commenced publication. The first mention of Brethren women in ministry appeared in the March issue where a brief article records the recent departure of a missionary expedition to Penang in Malaya. The missionary party was comprised of four single women and one man.[14] Gender roles among the party were defined by which languages were learned. "The sisters have commenced the study of the Malay language, while Bro. Blick has taken up Chinese."[15] The Malaya venture enjoyed a high profile that year with further reports in the June, August and October issues of *The Treasury*. In the last of these, it was explained that two of the women had started a school for Malay children.[16] They were also offering basic medical care and distributing Christian literature. Interestingly, the March issue made passing reference to the words of one Miss Soltau, "the principal of the China Inland Mission (CIM) Training Home for Young Women in London".[17] One of her letters from China to England had mentioned the work of a Brethren male missionary and this was the focus of the article. However, the very mention of Miss Soltau and her role indicated Brethren awareness of the prominence of women in missions and in the CIM in particular.

As in the Baptist movement, a high proportion of early Brethren missionaries were women. From his study of the Brethren missionary movement George Trew explains that between 1896 and 1910 forty -seven missionaries went to mission fields in Asia and Latin America. "Of that number 4 were single men, 12 were single women, and 31 were married... Included in the number of those serving as married missionaries are those single women who specifically went out to the field to marry their husbands-to-be who, were already there... About 25% of the missionaries were single women (12)

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[11] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.99.

[12] "Until her death Kate Squires continued to preach, hold prayer meetings, and promote the Brethren faith and the temperance cause in the Southland district." Colleen P Main, 'Catherine Squires 1843-1912', in the *DNZB* at http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/dnzb.

[13] H Pickering, *Chief men among the Brethren*, London: n.p., 1931 edition, cited in Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p. 185, footnote 3.

[14] These missionaries are previously named in this paper in chapter 2, page 12, third paragraph.

[15] *The Treasury*, Vol.1, Mar 1899, p.47. The use of the title Brother, usually abbreviated to Bro., was common in the 19th century for Brethren men.

[16] *The Treasury*, Vol.1, Oct 1899, p.173.

[17] *The Treasury*, Vol.1, Mar 1899, p.44.

and this fact indicates the significant role that single women played in Brethren missionary endeavour from the start."[18] Trew identifies the ministries performed by the women as mostly service ministries – school teaching, managing orphanages, doing some medical work and other ministries specific to the needs of local women.[19]

Foreign missions work gave women a higher profile in the Brethren movement and a wider range of ministries than they would otherwise have had in New Zealand. A 1902 issue of *The Treasury* devotes four and a half pages to a letter from the missionary, Phebe Ferguson, in South Africa.[20] The letter was written very soon after the Boer War, which ended in May that year and that could be the reason for the editor's fascination with its contents. In her letter Miss Ferguson described the people she lived amongst and challenged her readers to respond with gifts and prayers. While on a tour of New Zealand mission stations in India, Edward Whitehead mentioned the work of several women missionaries.[21] Included among these were Miss Robertson and Miss Marshall who were "itinerating" – visiting and speaking at surrounding villages. By the start of the First World War, there were a number of Brethren, women missionaries reporting on their activities in China, India, South Africa and Malaya. Their range of ministries included coordinating and teaching Sunday Schools, orphanage work, providing health care, teaching women's Bible classes and conducting itinerant evangelism.[22]

By 1920 there were at least 50 active New Zealand Brethren missionaries of whom 28 were women.[23] 16 of these women were married, six of them to men of British nationality. The other 12 were single. By 1930 there were 77 missionaries listed in *The Treasury* of whom 44 were women.[24] It is likely that a few of the married women were of a different nationality though this is not made explicit. 15 of the women were single. The two major destinations for missionaries in the first half of the 20th century were China (where the names Evelyn Daniell, Alice Gresham and Alice Rout featured in missions reports) and India (where Emily Starck, Jessie Treweek, Alice Mai and Lottie Sundgren gained frequent mention). Just as in the Baptist movement, the Open Brethren put great store in the work of their missionaries. Each assembly committed itself to support certain individuals and thus mission support became a corporate investment and activity. Those who returned to New Zealand, either on leave or permanently were accorded considerable acclaim as they visited local assemblies to report back to their supporters and further publicise their cause.

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[18] George Trew, *Looking Back – Forging Ahead*, Palmerston North: Missionary Services New Zealand, 1996, pp.27f.

[19] ibid., p.28.

[20] *The Treasury*, Vol.4, Dec 1902, p.297ff.

[21] *The Treasury*, Vol.6, May 1904, p.125f.

[22] For example, see 'Missionary Intelligence', *The Treasury*, Vol.16, Jan 1914, p.11.

[23] Extrapolated from Les Marsh, *In His Name: A Record of Assembly Missionary Outreach from New Zealand*, Palmerston North: GPH Society Ltd, 1974.

[24] *The Treasury*, Vol.32, Jan 1930, p.12f.

Home Missions

In August 1899, an appeal was made for men to volunteer for mission work among New Zealand Maori.[25] There was no indication that women were wanted. Within a couple of years at least three men and two single women had taken up the challenge. A 1901 article states that in Masterton a school teacher named Miss Arnold had become involved in ministry to Maori.[26] The only specifics given were that she was learning the language and had started a Sunday School at the local Marae. A subsequent report mentioned Alice Peart, "who has had a year working among the Maoris and learning the language, [and now] believes it to be the Lord's mind to leave Hastings (the scene of her past labours) and go to New Plymouth and work with the natives in that locality".[27] There she carried on her ministry with the aid of a bicycle.[28] Before long Peart married another Maori ministry worker, Fred Martin, and they settled in the Bay of Plenty.

Two more women rose to the challenge in 1904. Mary Reeve had previously been to Malaya as one of the party of five referred to earlier. She was already 51 when she left for Malaya and found that her health did not stand up to the tropical climate, so returned to New Zealand in 1902.[29] In 1904 Reeve moved to Te Kuiti to embark on a new mission to local Maori. There she was joined by Miss Allen and, together, the two women established a flourishing Sunday School ministry and regularly held "gospel services".[30] They were not completely on their own in their mission work. In a report on the progress of their mission, Reeve mentioned a couple of tours through the King Country by "some earnest Christian lassies", Salvation Army women.[31]

A number of other Brethren workers engaged in missions among Maori, often in remote, rudimentary contexts. These home missions had a much lower profile than the more glamorous foreign missions. They lacked a mission board to coordinate the work, which was going on in the Hawkes Bay, Wanganui River, Taranaki, King Country, and Bay of Plenty areas. And for long periods there was little or no mention of the work in *The Treasury*. This contrasts with repeated and extensive coverage of the "Bible Carriage" and "Gospel Tent" itinerant ministries that criss-crossed the North and South Islands throughout the first half of the 20th century.[32] Lineham blames "Pakeha attitudes" for the lack of attention to, and subsequent decline of, ministries among Maori. He also speculates that the prominent "role of women in the outreach lessened the attractiveness of the message to some

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[25] *The Treasury*, Vol.1, Aug 1899, p.132f.

[26] *The Treasury*, Vol.3, 1901 (month not stated), p.126.

[27] *The Treasury*, Vol.3, 1901 (month not stated), p.158.

[28] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.146.

[29] Marsh, *In His Name*, p.231.

[30] *The Treasury*, Vol.6, Jul 1904, p.191.

[31] *The Treasury*, Vol.6, Nov 1904, p.297.

[32] Articles in *The Treasury* on this ministry are too numerous to list but easily located in sections entitled 'Work and Workers'. Lineham devotes a chapter to 'Carriage, Tent and Hut' ministries in *There We Found Brethren*, pp.121-144.

Maoris".[33] This may have been a cultural issue[34] or, as Lineham suggests, it may have been due to Brethren women not being authorised "to gather converted Maoris into new assemblies".[35] A more successful era of missions to Maori occurred in the 1930s when veterans, like Frances Rout who ministered in Wairoa, then Kihikihi, then Wairoa again,[36] were joined by Sylvia Martin, Abe Compton, H J Hayden and others including Maori Brethren workers ministering among their own people.[37]

One "home missionary" who defied categorisation was Miss H A Wieneke. As Lineham explains, Wieneke came "from Germany in 1887 and set up a kindergarten in Christchurch, but then began to visit from door to door in areas of the South Island. She would remain in an area for six months or more, visiting many homes and in her quiet way directing many people to Christian truth".[38] Wieneke soon appeared in *Treasury* reports on "Work and Workers". There were often a couple of lines mentioning her ministry, the quantities of literature she had distributed or tracts she had posted.[39] Had she been a man she almost certainly would have become involved in the Bible Carriage work, travelling the country, evangelising and distributing Christian literature. In her declining years she continued a postal ministry from her home in Masterton, where she had settled. Upon her death in 1927 she received a glowing obituary:

> Miss Wieneke devoted herself fully to the Lord's work... as a district visitor and distributor of gospel literature... Her faithfulness, zeal for souls, and generosity brought her into much esteem with the Lord's people wherever she went, and she was used in leading many souls to Christ.[40]

Editorial Comments

The absence of a national governance structure within the Open Brethren movement left a vacuum that the *Treasury* went some way to fill. While it had no executive role, the *Treasury* was the sole, permanent voice of the movement from 1899. Therefore, its editors' words carried a lot of weight. Throughout its history *Treasury* editors held to moderate and orthodox views on most matters. In 1926 the editor, Franklin Ferguson, made a rare foray into women's issues with an article on the topic of "Womanly Modesty".[41] He extolled the virtues of the Christian woman who lives "according to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures" then criticised the "unchaste attire of the fashionable world" and "the cutting and shingling of women's hair...." He likened the social trends of the 1920s to the

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[33] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.146.

[34] See chapter 2, page 19, footnote 59 for an expansion of this issue.

[35] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.146.

[36] 'News of Work and Workers', *The Treasury*, Vol.29, May 1927, p.79.

[37] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.147.

[38] ibid., p.125.

[39] For instance see 'News of Work and Workers', *The Treasury*, Vol.17, Aug 1915, p.127.

[40] 'Fallen Asleep in Christ', *The Treasury*, Vol.29, Jul 1927, p.111. Wienecke was also involved in the Temperance movement in New Zealand.

[41] *The Treasury*, Vol.28, Feb 1926, p.23.

proverbial "time of Lot".[42] Ferguson was worried about the prospect of a moral meltdown, that women were becoming debased as they shifted "out of the place God had assigned them".

> On a summer's day you cannot walk the streets of our towns and cities without being compelled to turn away the head with a feeling of shame. The more up-to-date attire is not decent for any woman or girl to put on, let alone for a Christian, and is calculated to arouse all the viler passions of men.

Ferguson offered some advice to Brethren women. "It behoves every mother in our Assemblies to set an example in wearing becoming dresses, and to take a wiser and more decided oversight of her daughter's attire...." He appealed to scripture (Romans 12.2; 1 Timothy 2.9) then claimed that any departure from strict modesty "is a very serious offence," and added, "but we would hope none or our sisters would deliberately do this...".[43]

The editor addressed a more substantive issue in an article entitled "Women Keeping Silence".[44] He asked the question: "Should a woman's voice be heard addressing publicly a mixed company in any meeting or gathering convened by the assembly?" In response he declared that it has not been the practice to date because church leaders have "clearly maintained from the Word that a woman's place is to be silent in the church; and this is not limited to a meeting for worship, but applies to all meetings for which the church is responsible". Ferguson exhorted church elders to guard against "innovations" that might threaten "the simplicity and purity of apostolic doctrine and practice". After quoting 1 Corinthians 14.34-35, he pointed to the preceding verses that instruct orderly worship. He then made a leap – as if thinking of 1 Timothy 2.12-15 – to Creation theology when he described public ministry by women as an "inversion of God's primal order". He acknowledged, without mentioning the reference (i.e. 1 Corinthians 11.5), that Paul had "recognised the woman's liberty of both praying and prophesying," but still asserted that "in the churches or assemblies her voice must not be heard" except in corporate worship.[45]

Then he infused his argument with the issue of authority by saying:

> Privacy is the women's sphere, and subjection her appointed place, in relation to the man. Both law and gospel teach this equally, and true faith has observed it in every age. Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord (1 Peter 3.6). If Miriam prophesied, it was to the women of Israel (Exod 15.20-21). If Deborah was raised up, it was a judicial token of dishonour to the nation which had lost its true manhood by departing from the Lord... The Scripture everywhere discountenances female prominency (sic) as something inconsistent with the original law of creation, and with the modesty and meekness which are the woman's chief adorning in the sight of God.[46]

In his final section he declared that God's truth does not change and that "the apostle's injunction will be certainly obeyed by all who are under the true leading of the Spirit".[47] The editor wrote these

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[42] This refers to the story of Abraham's nephew who chose to live in Sodom, only to flee for his life when the city was condemned for the sin and immorality of its inhabitants (Genesis 13.5-13; 19.1-29).

[43] All quotes in this paragraph are from *The Treasury*, Vol.28, Feb 1926, p.23.

[44] *The Treasury*, Vol.29, Jul 1927, p.102. All quotes in this paragraph are from the same page.

[45] See the Appendix for a survey of the debate surrounding the issues raised here and, in particular, the possible interpretations of the passages in Genesis, 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 that underlie these comments.

[46] *The Treasury*, Vol.29, Jul 1927, p.102.

[47] ibid.

words confident in his position and certain of agreement from his readers. There was no column for letters to the editor at this time so it is unknown what reaction this article may have evoked.

Another opportunity for views on gender roles to be aired came in the "Questions and Answers" section of the *Treasury*. This time the proponent was J C Tilyard. The question was asked: "Can you give guidance re the conducting of Bible Classes – is it scriptural to have separate classes for young men and young women or should they be together?"[48] In his response Tilyard conceded that there is little in scripture concerning the issue. Nevertheless, his preference was that the genders be kept separate. "It seems to us that if our young Christians are to be fully equipped to occupy their distinctive positions in life commendably, it will be well for our young men's Bible classes to be in the care of godly experienced brethren [i.e. men], while our young women's Bible classes should be under the care of godly experienced sisters."[49] Tilyard's admission that his reasoning did not have a Biblical basis indicates that the actual basis for his statement was cultural – he was asserting the most commonly accepted view.

Women in the Church

In the first half of the 20th century the Open Brethren lacked the sort of structures found in the Baptist movement in which women could serve. It had no equivalents to the BWMU, the NZBMS, or even the YWBCU[50]. Fundraising events were a rarity. Missions support came through the collection plate and there were no impressive church buildings to be financed. Fellowship meals were a regular feature of assembly life and for these the women went to great lengths to ensure an enjoyable occasion for all. Ladies' Bible study and fellowship groups were in existence from earliest times and they provided an important point of contact with other women, but offered limited opportunities for ministry. However, there was no real demand for avenues of higher service. Foreign missions provided such opportunities but were a viable option for only a small minority – whether men or women. As a whole, the Brethren movement was egalitarian in regard to status. It did not have paid ministers or pastoral staff. Elders in the local assemblies usually had low profiles unless they were gifted preachers who travelled to speak at other assemblies. The great majority of Brethren people were middle class and fairly homogenous in outlook.[51] In this egalitarian environment women were content to serve in whatever way they could.

A Bible class movement for young people began in Auckland in 1908.[52] Over succeeding years an association of sorts was formed to oversee the Bible Class programme in that city, but the network

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[48] *The Treasury*, Vol.38, Mar 1936, p.46.

[49] ibid.

[50] For more on these organisations refer to chapter 3 of this thesis, especially pages 21 to 28.

[51] Lineham's analysis of 1921 census statistics reveals that Brethren were more affluent and had higher representation among the business and farming sectors than the general populace at that time. They generally disapproved of trade unions and other social or state mechanisms for redistribution of power and wealth. Many Brethren had working class roots but attained social mobility through their "values of thrift, honesty and generosity". *There We Found Brethren*, p.160-161 & 164.

[52] ibid., p.128.

failed to spread around the country. Along with the ubiquitous Sunday Schools, the young people's Bible classes created ministry opportunities for Brethren women. An obituary for one Mrs Mutzke highlights this fact.[53] It firstly records the unfortunate demise of Mrs Mutzke, "run over by a motor bus". Then states that she "had a class of boys in Howe Street Hall, all of whom professed to be saved". It was clear from the notice that Mrs Mutzke had a productive role in her church and was greatly missed. This was a rare acknowledgement of a teaching ministry by a Brethren woman in this era, a situation that was out of step with the views of the *Treasury* editors quoted above.[54]

A ministry area that began to emerge in the 1920s and '30s was community and social ministries. The impetus for this came from Norman Hyde, a former Methodist minister who joined the Brethren Assemblies in 1913. After moving to Hunterville, Hyde established a children's home in 1919. "By 1921 there were twenty five children in the home. Olive Newton and Miss Murdoch were the first assistants...."[55] Lineham goes on to point out that such ventures were a break with Brethren tradition, which emphasised evangelism and discounted "social relief" work (such as that done by the Salvation Army) as a "social gospel". Nevertheless, it was not long before other ventures of this nature appeared. Miss E Feltham set up a children's home in Otaki, later named the Feltham Children's Home. Rest homes for the elderly were also commenced, first in Hunterville, then in Palmerston North. "Further homes were established only in the sixties: the Maranatha Home at Mosgiel in 1960; the Mona Vale Home, Havelock North in 1964; the Kenwyn Home in Te Aroha in 1966, the same year as the short-lived Hebron Home in Nelson; Kensington House was opened in Christchurch in 1968, and Edenvale Home and Rosa Dene in Auckland."[56]

Another ministry to young people evolved between the Wars and crystallised into the Every Boy's and Every Girl's Rallies in 1944. It grew out of a boys' club movement in Auckland that began in the 1920s.[57] The Rallies were evocative of militaristic youth movements with uniforms for the children and ranks for the leaders.[58] Badges were awarded for successful completion of a range of crafts and physical activities, similar to the Scouts movement. These Rallies catered to school-age children and incorporated the Brethren emphasis on Bible teaching and scripture memorisation. The Rally movement "spread through Auckland and the Waikato and then to the rest of the country... By 1966 there were 332 rallies, with 11,545 children on the rolls".[59] In some places the Girls Rallies outgrew

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[53] 'Fallen Asleep in Christ', *The Treasury*, Vol.28, Oct 1926, p.159.

[54] See Ferguson's comments on 'Women Keeping Silence' and Tilyard's comments on gender defined Bible classes. Another unusual feature of this obituary is that contained more substance than most obituaries for women in the *Treasury* at that time. Most death notices used phrases like "a quiet/good testimony", or "has been in happy fellowship" to characterise the lives of deceased women. Whereas the notices for men record them as having taken "an active part in the Assembly", or "served on oversight".

[55] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.127.

[56] ibid.

[57] ibid., p.129.

[58] The militaristic motif was not overstated and children often attended Rallies in their usual clothing.

[59] Lineham, *There We Found Brethren*, p.129.

the Boys Rallies, especially towards the end of the 20th century. Many women became involved in the Girls Rallies as leaders, organisers and supporters.[60]

While Brethren women did not have a Women's Missionary Union they were eager to demonstrate their moral support for Brethren missionaries. They did this several ways. They sent food parcels to missionaries in the field. Assembling goods, packaging and sewing up parcels were monthly or six monthly events to which most households contributed. Missionaries in remote locations welcomed the arrival of the packages.[61] Brethren women also held annual, regional missionary conferences attended by ladies from all the local assemblies. Such events gave opportunities for women missionaries (and women working among Maori) to report on their activities to sizeable audiences. Occasionally these events were recorded in the *Treasury*, often in the context of outlining the itinerary of a missionary on leave. In this way it was reported that "Misses Gresham and Rout have returned home to Auckland after a visit South. On their way home they were at the Sisters Missionary Conference, Hastings".[62] And, similarly, "Miss Severinsen has been in the Waikato for a time, at the Maori Language School and Sisters' Missy [i.e. Missionary] Conference".[63] These conferences were important opportunities for Brethren women to celebrate the achievements of prominent women and to experience the solidarity of being together.

From the 1950s to the '70s

After a small string of articles in the late 1920s and early '30s the *Treasury* remained virtually silent on gender issues for decades. This was in part due to a preoccupation with the events and issues surrounding the Second World War. And after the War many people took for granted that women would return to traditional roles in the home and support the men in the church. As Bolitho observes, it was the inerrantist denominations[64] like the Brethren that most avidly promoted domestic ideology for women. With the weight of Biblical authority behind it, the message for women was to endorse their husbands' leadership in the home and "follow the example of their foremothers in the faith".[65] This denominational culture saw Brethren women practising hospitality, supporting assembly activities, and remaining committed to children's ministries such as "Bible in Schools" for much longer than was evident in the more liberal denominations.

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[60] Joan Suisted was the Girls Rally leader at Raleigh St Assembly in Cambridge for many years beginning in the late 1950s. After some hesitancy about a woman being in a leadership role, the elders of the Assembly became very supportive of Joan's work with the Girls Rally. She recalls that many of the women of Raleigh St Assembly were involved in the Girls Rally programme because it was a major ministry opportunity for them. From an interview with Joan Suisted, Cambridge – 10/11/03.

[61] This I know from personal experience having lived my childhood in central Africa in the 1960s and '70s, the son of Open Brethren missionary parents.

[62] 'Brief Items', *The Treasury*, Vol.48, Apr 1946, p.63.

[63] 'Work Among Maoris', *The Treasury*, Vol.49, Nov 1947, p.175.

[64] Inerrantist denominations are those that stress the authority and validity of the Bible for determining Christian theology and practice. Refer to the Appendix for a fuller treatment of this term and a survey of the debates within the inerrantist camp.

[65] Elaine Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches: Part 2, 1940-1993', *Stimulus*, Vol.1 No. 4, Nov 1993, p.30.

However, in the 1950s Brethren women began to feel awkward in comparison with women in other denominations. Head coverings, which had been commonplace for women in public contexts in the 1930s and '40s, were going out of fashion. Exclusive Brethren women continued to wear head coverings as a badge of their distinctiveness. But was it still necessary for women in the Open Brethren? The editor of the *Treasury* attempted to address this subject by answering the question: "Does the woman's long hair suffice for the covering required in 1 Cor 11.3-16?" His answer was:

> No. The direction is that a woman is to have a covering on the head, when she engages in prayer, or prophecy, that is, in a meeting where these are being carried on. The long hair referred to in verse 15 is for a veil, or as Darby's rendering gives it, "in lieu for a veil." But it is to be noted that the covering, and the veil, are different things, and are described by different Greek words. The long hair... is to have in addition the covering on the head.[66]

Whatever the interpretation of the original Greek, Open Brethren women increasingly abandoned the use of head coverings so that by the mid 1980s it was only practised in very conservative assemblies or by elderly women who had not yet made the transition.[67]

The 1960s brought further social change to secular society with contraceptive pills, television, pop music and youth culture, reliable motor vehicles, increased economic prosperity and more women entering the workforce. Brethren Assemblies virtually cocooned their members from social changes that threatened their traditions so that many Brethren people arrived in the 1970s with a worldview from an earlier decade. By then the influence of the changing culture was irresistible with the media bringing daily coverage of the Vietnam War and anti-war protests, plus rampant consumerism, American television culture, rising oil prices and the women's liberation movement. "The 'second wave' of active feminism burst suddenly on New Zealand in 1970-71. Groups of women began to meet during these years, adopting the name Women's Liberation, and circulating books, articles and ideas from the United Kingdom and America. From the onset it was clear that theirs was a radical agenda, distinct in its form, style and concerns from existing women's organisations."[68] While many Open Brethren tried to shut out or ignore this movement, they could not deny its impact.[69]

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[66] George Menzies, 'Questions & Answers', *The Treasury*, Vol.58, Jan 1956, p.9. J N Darby was a founder of the Brethren movement and also played a major role in its divisions in the 19th century. See also footnote 1.

[67] Campbell Fountain (manager of the GPH Society) sees the abandonment of head coverings within Brethren assemblies during the 1970s and '80s as a pragmatic development. He believes the theological reasons for wearing a head covering had long been obscured or forgotten. Women's hats had been fashion accessories in previous decades and such fashions had infiltrated the Brethren church. The variety of head coverings in Brethren assemblies reflected a fashion choice rather than any theological commitment. Eventually women chose to take their hats off for the same reason they had put them on – a change of fashion. Those women who wore head coverings long after the majority had discarded them eventually felt obliged to relinquish this practice. To continue wearing head coverings might be interpreted as spiritual pride, "a holier than thou" attitude. Campbell sees merit in head coverings for women during worship for reasons of symbolism. His thinking – supported by 1 Corinthians 11.6-10 – is that it symbolises the submission of women as part of the natural order divinely instituted at Creation. Interview with Campbell Fountain, Elder at the Kingston St Brethren Assembly, Palmerston North – 15/10/03.

[68] Charlotte Macdonald, *The Vote, The Pill and the Demon Drink: A History of Feminist Writing in New Zealand 1869-1993*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books Ltd, 1993, p.161.

[69] Campbell Fountain recalls that feminist views and literature were being discussed in Brethren churches during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The evangelical writer and speaker, Elisabeth Elliot (widow of a renowned missionary pioneer killed by indigenous inhabitants of the Amazon) became known for her comments against women's ordination. During the same period, the writings of high profile feminists such as Mary Daly and Letha Scanzoni circulated widely. Scanzoni became known for her sympathetic views on lesbianism and homosexuality. Campbell felt that this was evidence of the antithetical philosophy and the amoral agenda of the

A very significant article appeared in the *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal (CBRFJ)* in 1975 entitled "The Woman in Christ".[70] It had a strongly egalitarian tone – a surprising and controversial stance for a Brethren writer at that time. The *CBRFJ* editor prefaced the article with the following comments:

> As with all of Ross (Palmer's) contributions, it is a deeply thoughtful paper in which Ross seeks to discern the mind of Christ on an issue on which Christians of equal sincerity have taken widely differing views. Its appearance during International Women's Year is quite coincidental. The subject is one which is of concern at any time. ...we must be careful not to let our interpretation of scripture be dictated by the current mores of our society.[71]

Palmer, himself, claimed that his article was not prompted by the "Womens Lib" movement but rather by the need to study "this area in which considerable conflict has grown up in recent years".[72] Yet, the "Women's Lib" movement was mentioned twice more in the discussion forum in which Palmer made this claim.[73]

Early in "The Woman in Christ" Palmer looked at the creation story in Genesis. He interpreted Eve's "helper" role as that of an equal partner to Adam sharing responsibilities and decision-making.[74] The deterioration of the relationship that occurred at the time of the original sin does not meet with divine approval but is simply stated as a matter of fact in Genesis 3. Palmer argued that this state of affairs is not to be accepted as the norm but resisted in the same way that the earth is still to be cultivated despite unfavourable conditions.[75] He continued with a brief survey of women in the Bible – Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and Priscilla. He also noted the "enlightened attitude" to women in the gospels where women are presented as Jesus' disciples and as witnesses to his resurrection.[76] Palmer examined Peter's speech at Pentecost for egalitarian features, and then proceeded to list other prominent women of the New Testament. He concluded this section with the statement: "In general then, it would appear reasonable to say that women participated fully in the church and tended to be even more prominent there than in the society in which they lived."[77]

Turning to Pauline teachings, Palmer firstly identified the key text for egalitarians – Galatians 3.28. He explained that this does not obliterate gender differentiation but "both equally share in all God's

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feminist movement. Accordingly he joined those warning against any progression toward feminist policies within the church. Campbell Fountain – 15/10/03.

[70] Ross Palmer, 'The Woman in Christ', *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship (NZ)*, No.69, Dec 1975, pp.1-15. The CBRF journal was established to foster academic debate and change within the Brethren movement. It has since been replaced by the journal *Stimulus*. Ross Palmer was a prominent civil servant in the Road and Transport Division of the Ministry of Transport.

[71] *CBRFJ*, No.69, Dec 1975, p.i.

[72] From Palmer's opening remarks in a discussion forum recorded in *CBRFJ*, No.70, May 1976, p.5.

[73] ibid., pp.5-15.

[74] Palmer, 'The Woman in Christ', p.2.

[75] ibid., p.3. In Genesis 3.17-19 Adam is told that his agricultural efforts would be constantly thwarted by environmental factors, yet it would still be a key source of food.

[76] Palmer, 'The Woman in Christ', p.5.

[77] ibid., p.6.

grace and both stand equal in God's presence and neither can look with superiority at the other".[78] With regard to the passages instructing female submission (e.g. Ephesians 5.22-33) Palmer offered a hermeneutic that uses Genesis 3 as a backdrop. He suggested that Pauline directives and guidelines were attempts to mitigate relational distortions resulting from the Fall.[79] Palmer explained away injunctions against women participating and leading in the church (1 Timothy 2.8-15; 1 Corinthians 14.33-35) on social, cultural and etymological grounds.[80] He pointed to specific cultural references and to alternative translations for the words translated "silence" and "authority". He found in these passages indications of quarrelling, competitive, exhibitionist and disorderly behaviour. In light of this he concluded:

> The principle of decent and orderly behaviour applies just as much today even though there are different ways in which 'decency' or seemly, honourable behaviour are expressed in different societies.... With the general high level of women's education today and their greater participation in all sorts of roles in society, a fuller participation in the public activities of the Church would not offend against propriety and it would advance the goal of edification that Paul considered best achieved by all contributing one by one.[81]

Also in this article Palmer stated that to "deny women their position in Christ as priests and joint-heirs by discriminating against them, is to seriously impoverish the church and make it an unbalanced male society".[82]

Responses to the article appeared in the pages immediately following it.[83] David Burt disapproved of Palmer's shift away from the traditional emphasis on male leadership. He asserted that Adam's priority in creation together with the words of 1 Corinthians 11.8-10 and 1 Tim 2.11-13 gave a clear mandate for male leadership in the Church. He agreed with Palmer that women are not inferior to men but saw in creation a divine order parallel to the order found in the Trinity. He also rejected Palmer's argument that instructions to the Church in Corinth can be limited to local customs and behavioural problems. He believed that 1 Corinthians 14 prohibits vocal ministry for women while 1 Corinthians 11 – where mention is made of women praying and prophesying – does not condone such ministry for women but simply addresses the additional issue of head coverings. On this issue Burt stated that women "should show some public sign of acknowledgement of male leadership".

George Stevenson commended Palmer for highlighting a number of points that needed discussion. He supported Palmer's desire to escape the strictures of Brethren tradition. And, he acknowledged that the Brethren had inherited attitudes dating from the early 19th century when the movement was founded, when women were not yet enfranchised and had little opportunity for higher learning. Stevenson opted for the middle ground by advocating women's participation in the form of prayer,

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[78] Palmer, 'The Woman in Christ', p.6. For a fuller treatment of the meaning and significance of this Bible verse in the inerrantist debate on women's roles see the Appendix, especially pp.10-12.

[79] ibid., pp.7-8.

[80] ibid., pp.8-11. For an explanation of these "grounds" refer to pages 12 to 16 of the Appendix.

[81] ibid., p.11.

[82] ibid., p.4.

[83] These pages were not numbered as part of the publication but simply inserted into the loose leaf journal as supplementary documents.

missionary reports and "discussions of scripture". Clive Vautier took a strong stand against Palmer's article denouncing it as an attempt at "falsification of God's Word" and a "radical manipulation of God's work". He declared that "each passage of Scripture stands as it is written and is to be understood in its obvious and plainest sense. 1 Corinthians 14.34 means plainly and simply that women were to keep silent and not speak in the assemblies, nor were they to teach according to 1 Timothy 2.12. Anything else is adding to, or subtracting from what is commanded in God's Word."

The fourth respondent, Helen Read (a former missionary) adopted a few of Palmer's headings as the framework for her comments. She mentioned "complementarity of the sexes" and concurred with Palmer's comments about resisting the effects of the Fall. Read also made the point that women missionaries often perform leadership and ministry roles that would normally be a male domain purely because there is no one else to perform those functions. In her concluding remarks, Read mentioned that many women feel uncomfortable about public participation, that "it could well take a long time for them to overcome what has been the traditional method for many years of 'the women keeping silence', but a start needs to be made somewhere...".[84]

A *CBRFJ* sponsored forum on the issue of gender roles in the church, held in 1976, brought together spokespeople for the opposing camps. In his opening remarks Palmer noted "that the assembly[85] has a reputation for a negative attitude towards women".[86] He was followed by John Campion who identified the key issue of the debate – the interpretation of the New Testament epistles. On the one hand Brethren regard the epistles as inspired by God and therefore they remain authoritative for all time; on the other hand they acknowledge that the epistles were written for a specific audience in a particular place and time. He stressed the importance of discerning the underlying, lasting principles as the key to interpretation.[87] However, the wide-ranging discussion that followed mixed theological issues with culturally derived arguments such as the character traits commonly associated with each gender. At one point the issue of head coverings surfaced. There was no dissension over this issue as the participants noted that it is not practised universally and that it was essentially a cultural phenomenon. One participant commented:

> There is great variety in the matter of dress in assemblies. In the deep south [i.e. the southern regions of New Zealand] some wear a scarf to pray, even in their bedrooms, whereas in Auckland or London, no covering at all is evident.[88]

The central, recurring theme of the discussion was the issue of authority – the teaching that women are to be in submission to men, who themselves are in submission to God. The outline summary of the forum contained the following:

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[84] From the 4th page of Helen Read's contribution, *CBRFJ*, No.69, Dec 1975, following 'The Woman in Christ'. The fact that a woman was invited to comment in this journal is in itself evidence of the growing influence and freedom of women within the Brethren scene in the 1970's.

[85] Shorthand for the "Brethren Assemblies" or the "Brethren movement".

[86] *CBRFJ*, No.70, May 1976, p.5.

[87] ibid., p.6.

[88] ibid., p.15.

1. The submission of women goes right back to creation.
2. Women should not usurp authority, in an Assembly/Church situation.
3. Women should be careful to act in a seemly fashion in the Church.
4. Women are equal with and complementary to men.
5. Many of the problems between the sexes caused by the Fall can be put right "in Christ".
6. Christ's attitude to women was radical for his day.
7. God gives special gifts to both men and women.[89]

However, the issue of vocal ministries for women in the church was left open for future discussion within the Brethren movement.

Changes in the 1980s and '90s

Joan Suisted is highly regarded in Brethren circles for her many years of ministry both inside and outside the Brethren assemblies. During her life she has served as a Sunday School teacher, a Girls Rally leader, a women's Bible study leader, a Religious Education in Schools teacher, a speaker at many women's groups and conferences, plus an administrator and then a president of Christian Women Communicating International (CWCI). She has also written a great deal of Christian poetry, which has appeared in Christian magazines and in a series of poetry books published from the late 1960s to the mid 1990s.

Joan's public speaking ministry grew out of devotional talks given at Ladies' Friendly Hours at the Cambridge Raleigh Street Assembly and other assemblies in the area. In 1976 Joan was invited to join a speakers panel for CWCI.[90] With CWCI Joan spoke at women's conventions and other functions throughout the country. She also travelled to Fiji to speak to women's groups there in 1982. In 1980 Joan moved from the speakers panel to an administrative role with the local board of CWCI. She soon rose to the national level of the organisation and in 1986 she became President of CWCI in New Zealand, a position she held until 1993. In that capacity she participated at the international level of the organisation, joining the international board for CWCI, and was invited to join the national council for the Evangelical Fellowship of New Zealand.

While occupying all of these roles Joan was not invited to teach or preach to a mixed audience within her local Brethren assembly. Joan reflects on this situation. "CWCI was really a lifeline for us (Brethren women) at the time because those with a gift for speaking would have had no opportunity otherwise... CWCI met a great need there."[91] Yet, as Joan explains, the elders at Raleigh St were supportive of her ministry with CWCI. She consulted with them whenever other assemblies or groups invited her to speak outside the usual parameters for Brethren women.[92] Joan's elders encouraged her to take up these opportunities on the understanding that her speaking occurred

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[89] *CBRFJ*, No.70, May 1976, p.15.

[90] CWCI is an interdenominational organisation but has had a predominantly Brethren membership because its roots are in that movement.

[91] Joan Suisted – 10/11/03.

[92] The basic parameter was that women were not permitted to teach or preach to mixed gender audiences. Although this was not stated in any constitution document, it was an unwritten and unquestioned policy for the most of the Brethren assemblies.

under the authority of the male leadership of the host church. Joan recalls that some speaking engagements at Brethren venues were formatted as interviews with prepared answers so as to circumvent the restrictions on women speaking. She notes that in recent years she has been invited to give eulogies at Brethren funerals. "Fifty years ago that would never have happened!"[93]

While the Raleigh St Assembly was not ready to the face up to the issue of women's roles other Brethren assemblies were confronting it head on. A fellowship called Westchurch, in Christchurch, began addressing it in 1983. Westchurch had evolved out of a Bible Study group in 1980, a group in which the women were free to participate fully. That ethos carried over to the new assembly where the question of women teaching in the Sunday morning service rose to the top of the agenda for the church's AGM. Of the six contributors to the discussion documents,[94] one (a woman) had a firmly egalitarian perspective; four (all men) had views ranging from mildly complementarian to strongly hierarchical; one (a woman) held a semi-complementarian view in which she supported women's rights to "pray and prophecy" but not "to be in teaching, authoritative positions over men".[95] All six based their arguments on Biblical texts. Several made references to contemporary social trends or views. One contributor made specific mention of "the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement".[96] Another wrote:

> If the world pours scorn on us for simply obeying the clear teaching of scripture and accuses us of being backward and out of date – we should take it as a compliment and rejoice at the opportunity to witness to the timelessness of God's word.[97]

At the church meeting, the discussion was followed by a vote in which 13 were in favour of women participating in the teaching ministry of the church. Eight people voted against the proposal and 14 were undecided. However, within six months it was again put to the vote. The outcome was a decisive reverse of the earlier ballot with only 11 voting in favour while 21 voted against and two abstained. The Westchurch elders decided to conduct annual surveys within the congregation to gauge opinion on the notion of women eldership. Church members listed those people they most preferred. Results were tabulated and names ranked according to how many lists they appeared on. Throughout the rest of the 1980s the most preferred people for eldership were men, though the names of one or two women gained increasing levels of support. At a 1991 church meeting, two votes were taken on a proposal for "Women teachers and elders in Westchurch". Both ballots favoured the proposal, though the second round of voting gave only a narrow margin of victory. Three women were asked to join the eldership but each declined the invitation. A subsequent invitation did gain a positive response. Kathy Mayes and Ruth Wildbore joined the eldership in December 1992. This made Westchurch only the second Brethren assembly in the world to have

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[93] Joan Suisted – 10/11/03

[94] *Westchurch: Women Bible Teachers on Sunday Morning*, a set of discussion documents prefaced by Albert Wildbore, Christchurch, Sept 1983.

[95] Margot Ney in *Women Bible Teachers on Sunday Morning*, on the 10th printed page.

[96] Tony Stoop in *Women Bible Teachers on Sunday Morning*, on the 20th printed page.

[97] Chris Hanham in *Women Bible Teachers on Sunday Morning*, on the 5th printed page.

women ministering in the capacity of elders.[98] However, this move to egalitarianism came at a cost. Approximately a quarter of the congregation left the assembly during the 1991 – 92 period.[99]

In Putaruru the elders released a position paper to address the issue in their assembly in 1984.[100] They held to a policy of equality but with gender distinction, and reserved the roles of teaching and leadership for the elders. Again, they went to considerable lengths to consider the scriptural arguments paying particular attention to the "difficult scriptures".[101] The underlying tone of the document was irenic and open, accepting the possibility of changes based on fresh interpretations of Biblical texts. On their concluding page the Putaruru elders acknowledged that "in the last 10 years there has already been considerable change in our understanding and practise in this area".[102] This was followed by statements to the effect that women were free to participate in open worship and encouraged to teach in a variety of contexts (family, youth, children and ladies groups) but not in the "assembled church". Head coverings would be optional. And, women could serve as deacons but not on the "Board of Deacons", which functions "as a Church governing body".[103]

Similar documents and discussion papers appeared at Brethren assemblies around the country. Elders and others at Kingston Street Chapel in Palmerston North debated the issue on and off for several years. One of the members of that assembly was Sheila Malcolm.[104] Sheila, her husband and family, moved to Palmerston North in 1969. Upon arriving there she took over leadership of the Girls' High Crusaders group, a role in which she continued for six years. Sheila had previously been involved in Sunday School teaching, Girls' Rallies and Girls' High School Crusaders groups in Dunedin and Christchurch. At the Kingston St Assembly Sheila participated in women's Bible study groups. She also accepted speaking invitations at women's gatherings, such as those organised by CWCI. But Sheila was conscious of the needs of her children as they grew up, so, during the latter part of the 1970's she reduced her commitments outside the home. For a while Sheila wrote a women's column for the *Treasury*. But, she quit this role because she felt the guidelines she was given made the column too shallow in its subject matter. She was not allowed to write comment on passages of scripture lest it be construed as assuming the authority to teach.

Sheila admits to sometimes feeling frustrated by the restrictions she faced within Brethren circles. At Kingston St she contributed to worship leading for a while then opted out of that because of the

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[98] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches Part 2', p.33. Bolitho explains that "University Chapel in Vancouver had done so first, but had called the women by a name other than elders". Footnote 60, p.37.

[99] All the details in this paragraph – apart from the information from Bolitho – were kindly supplied by Albert Wildbore (former elder at Westchurch) in a document entitled *Women Elders in Westchurch (a Brethren Assembly) Christchurch, NZ*, attached to an e-mail to the author, 04/02/04.

[100] *Women's Role in the Church*, Positional paper by the elders at Kensington Gospel Chapel, Putaruru, April 1984.

[101] ibid., pp.5-7.

[102] ibid., p.10.

[103] ibid., p.3.

[104] Details relating to Sheila Malcolm derive from an interview with Sheila, Palmerston North – 14/10/03.

expectation for her to step aside after leading the singing so as to let a man do the speaking and praying. Sheila explains that the church leadership interpreted the Apostle Paul's injunctions literally. "There was no written Assembly policy on the matter, it was just quoting Paul."[105] A catalyst for the debate of women's roles in the late 1980s was the introduction of led worship services – the presentation of a prepared speech at the commencement of the worship service that set the tone for the period of "open worship" which follows.[106] The involvement of women in worship leading or in audible contributions to "open worship" would be a departure from conventional Brethren patterns. Sheila says that she sensed that change was coming because she had observed the elevation of women to higher office in other denominations, and was aware that the writings and visits of feminists like Elaine Storkey were impacting upon the gender debate in many churches at that time. She prayed for change within the Open Brethren denomination.

When the Kingston St leadership examined the issues surrounding women's roles in the late 1980's, the debate was conducted in a calm, respectful manner, according to Campbell Fountain.[107] He explains that there were three groups in this debate: those who resisted change; those who called for rapid change with only minimal rationale; and those who worked for change in a gradual, reasoned manner. A 1989 discussion paper presented the two opposing views with particular attention to Galatians 3.28, 1 Corinthians 14.34 and 1 Timothy 2.12.[108] Two or three public meetings were held in which changes were proposed and opportunity was given for objections to be aired. In Sheila's estimation, most people were supportive of change.[109] Like the Putaruru assembly (and many others around the country) it was decided that women should be permitted to engage in a wide range of speaking ministries including reading, praying, singing, making announcements, giving reports and making brief devotional comments. No change was made to the policies on preaching, teaching and eldership.[110] However, it was not until 2001 that women leading worship was officially sanctioned by the Kingston St elders.[111]

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[105] Sheila Malcolm – 14/10/03.

[106] In many assemblies this "worship leading" has since expanded into the use of a series of items such as devotional remarks, prayers, poetry or musical items. The "open worship" format of the communion service is a distinctive facet of Brethren church life.

[107] Campbell Fountain, Elder at the Kingston St Brethren Assembly – 15/10/03.

[108] *A letter to all Assembly members on the public participation of men and women in Assembly Services*, from the Kingston Street Chapel elders, Palmerston North, Oct 1989.

[109] Sheila Malcolm – 14/10/03.

[110] *A letter to all Assembly members*, p.3. Campbell states that when the policy change occurred in 1989 over 30 people left the assembly. He observes – with some irony – that many of these people ended up in churches that already had egalitarian policies or were soon to adopt them. He knows of only one person who joined Kingston St because of their new policy, and that person did not stay long. Campbell Fountain – 15/10/03. It is possible that the change in policy disaffected those who wanted the status quo, while, those who wanted full egalitarianism were disappointed that the policy change did not go far enough. Therefore, it was an unattractive resolution to people in either camp.

[111] Item 6 on the *Minutes of the Elders' Meeting*, recorded by Charles Erlam, Kingston St Assembly, 29 March, 2001, states that "while there is not unanimous agreement within the committee on the issue, there are some on the committee who would strongly like to see women able to worship lead". A discussion paper was considered and a vote held in which six voted in favour, one against, and one abstained. Accordingly, "it was agreed to go ahead with this proposal. It was noted that this ministry, along with other important ones in the church, needs to be done on the basis of gifting, and with eldership approval".

The changes at Kingston St continued in the 1990s. As well as ministry opportunities in the church, the leadership structure also came in for scrutiny. Like a number of other assemblies, Kingston St adopted a split leadership structure. The church is now led by a group of elders and a Ministry Leadership Team comprised of six ministry leaders – each responsible for a ministry portfolio. Women are included in this team but not among the elders. Any significant decisions taken by the Ministry Leadership Team has to be approved by the elders.[112] Sheila Malcolm is pleased with the present situation at the Kingston St assembly. She is still involved in women's Bible study groups and is now comfortable with leading worship. She is also active in ministries outside the church, particularly religious education in schools where she currently holds the position of chairperson for the Manawatu District Churches Education Commission Committee.[113]

Belief and Practice

Women's roles and Brethren attitudes to women continued to evolve during the final decades of the 20th century. Vocal participation in home groups and in family services on Sunday mornings helped women become accustomed to public speaking and to seeing other women in ministry roles. Enrolment of female Brethren students at the Assembly Bible School and the Bible College of New Zealand became a common occurrence during the 1980s.[114] In those institutions they gained access to the same variety of training and ministry experiences as their male counter parts. By the late 1980s or early 1990s women could be found on pastoral teams or even on eldership in a number Brethren churches.[115] In a few assemblies women had opportunities to deliver sermons from the pulpit in Sunday services. Women missionaries, counsellors and youth workers were welcome to speak at camps, conferences, cell groups and youth services regardless of the gender of the audience. The depth of conviction or interest in what was scripturally sanctioned was waning among the younger generations.

Significant figures in the Brethren movement continued to insist on a hierarchical or complementarian view. After a long hiatus on the topic of women's roles, the *Treasury* gave attention to the issue with two articles in 1990. The editor, Doug Hewlett, introduced the articles with these comments:

> For some years the *Treasury* magazine has had a policy of not dealing with certain doctrinal issues.... This policy was adopted for a number of reasons. Firstly, the subjects are often controversial, and the magazine certainly does not aim to foster controversy. Secondly, each assembly is guided by its elders and leaders and it is not the place of other people or of a magazine to adopt an authority position as to what should or should not happen in assemblies; especially in sensitive issues.[116]

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[112] Details on the Kingston St leadership structure were supplied by Campbell Fountain – 15/10/03, and Sheila Malcolm – 14/10/03.

[113] Sheila Malcolm – 14/10/03.

[114] Women were welcome at the Assembly Bible School (ABS) from its inception in the late 1950s but initially they were kept apart from the men and assigned a different set of courses and activities. (The Bible School had gender defined intakes alternating between men and women.) In the 1990s ABS amalgamated with the other Open Brethren College, GLO, to form the Pathways College of Bible and Mission.

[115] Examples include Te Atatu Bible Chapel and Eden Chapel in Auckland, Otumoetai Bible Chapel in Tauranga, Hillcrest Chapel in Hamilton, Elizabeth Street Chapel in Wellington and Westchurch in Christchurch.

[116] *The Treasury*, Vol.92 No.3, Apr 1990, p.54.

The author, Peter Robinson, laid out many of the arguments for a complementarian perspective.[117] He emphasised his inerrantist assumptions: "There are no contradictions in Scripture. We must find a happy harmony with all Scripture and not reject it because it does not fit our thinking."[118] He also claimed the support of history for his views.

> The matter of male leadership in teaching, eldership and worship must not be seen as a 'Brethren tradition' that some are making a last ditch stand to hold on to. It needs to be recognised that these are doctrinal truths that have been almost universally held by all mainstream Christian churches for hundreds of years. The movement in the last 30 years in the world towards a militant feminism is having an impact on the Christian Church.... The fact that doctrinally there is a strong case for the status quo points to social pressures being a dominant factor in this movement.[119]

Robinson may have been accurate in his historical assessment. But, was his observation concerning the impact of opposing social forces even more telling? How many were still listening to the complementarian arguments? And, would the younger Open Brethren sustain traditions hundreds of years old?

An inerrantist commitment to the biblical text, which characterised the Brethren movement from its inception, was still in place among the older generations but losing some of its power among the youth. The number of Brethren people attending theological training institutions declined during the 1990s. In keeping with trends in other denominations, sermons in Brethren assemblies were less likely to be exegetical, more likely to be therapeutic in nature. Changing identity was evident in other ways. Many assemblies adopted contemporary names, leaving behind the stigma of "Bible Chapels" and "Gospel Halls". Sunday morning services incorporated seeker friendly elements derived from American success stories, often marginalising the quintessentially Brethren "worship service". Sunday evening "gospel services", indeed, evening services of any kind were abandoned in many churches for lack of interest. The growth of cell groups in the 1980s and '90s marked a return to Brethren roots, but without trained leadership the depth of this movement was questionable.

Conclusion

Throughout the 20th century the issue of women's roles had little traction among the Open Brethren. The prevailing ethos ranged from strongly hierarchical (or subordinationist)[120] to mildly complementarian. Women could freely engage in foreign missions or evangelistic work in remote rural locations, but speaking roles within the home assemblies were off limits. Until the impact of the feminist movement was felt in the 1970s, and discussion documents appeared in the 1980s, the issue remained off the agenda. Finally change came during the closing years of the century – slowly at first, then gathering pace. While the Open Brethren did not embrace egalitarianism to the degree found in other denominations there were many departures from the position advocated by Franklin Ferguson in 1927:

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[117] Refer to the Appendix for a survey of the "complementarian" arguments.

[118] Robinson, 'Women in the Church', Part 1, *The Treasury*, Vol.92 No.3, Apr 1990, p.55.

[119] Robinson, 'Women in the Church', Part 2, *The Treasury*, Vol.92 No.4, May 1990, p.95.

[120] See page 3 of the Appendix for an explanation of these terms.

> A woman's place is to be silent in the church; and this is not limited to a meeting for worship, but applies to all meetings for which the church is responsible.[121]

Women expanded their horizons from "making tea and buttering scones"[122] to the varied and nuanced roles of worship team leaders, youth workers, small group leaders, pastoral staff and Children's Church superintendents. The emotive debates of the 1970s and '80s dissipated in the pluralist and politically correct environment of the late 1990s. Successive women Prime Ministers and numerous other examples of women in leadership made such debates seem redundant to many. Besides, there were more pressing matters. The survival of some assemblies was seriously in doubt due to dwindling congregations and ageing demographics. The relevance of the whole Brethren tradition was in question in an age of supermarket Christianity and proliferating non-denominational outlets.

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[121] *The Treasury*, Vol.29, Jul 1927, p.102. Cited earlier on page 51 of this paper.

[122] Margaret Malcolm, 'The Place and Contribution of Women in the Church', *Challenge Weekly*, Vol.39 No.39, 1981, p.24; repeated by Robinson in 'Women in the Church', Part 1, *The Treasury*, Vol.92 No.3, Apr 1990, p.57.

Chapter 5 – The Pentecostals

The Emergence of a Movement

Pentecostalism in New Zealand is generally understood to have its genesis in the ministry of the English evangelist, Smith Wigglesworth.[1] Wigglesworth conducted two highly successful – and controversial – evangelistic and healing crusades, firstly in Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin in 1922, then in Auckland, Palmerston North, Blenheim, and Wellington again in 1923.[2] A local committee cultivated the seeds laid by the Wigglesworth meetings in Wellington. The organisation they established was first called "Wellington City Mission"[3] and then "New Zealand Evangelical Mission" (NZEM).[4] NZEM became an umbrella organisation for a number of Pentecostal groupings around the country and in 1924 the leaders convened a national conference of its affiliates. At this conference the NZEM was renamed the Pentecostal Church of New Zealand (PCNZ).[5]

Apart from in Wellington and Christchurch the PCNZ experienced little growth in the next few years. Tensions arose over issues of church governance with some groups preferring greater autonomy. The PCNZ's leading personality, American evangelist A C Valdez, wrote to the General Council of the Assemblies of God (AOG) in the United States seeking to establish an association between the PCNZ and the AOG.[6] This proposal met a favourable response. Meanwhile, a number of assemblies seceded from the PCNZ. Their leaders met at the Bethel Temple, Wellington, in 1927 where they inaugurated the AOG in New Zealand.[7] The following year attempts were made to link the remaining PCNZ groups with the new denomination. However, the PCNZ leadership rejected this move at their Christmas Conference in 1928 and the Pentecostal movement in New Zealand became permanently divided.[8]

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[1] A plumber from Bradford, Wigglesworth did not become a Pentecostal evangelist until the age of 48, though he had previously done evangelism with the Salvation Army. Despite his lack of formal education, Wigglesworth travelled widely and became a renowned Pentecostal preacher. His daughter, Alice Salter, and her husband also visited New Zealand. 'Wigglesworth, Smith', *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements (*hereafter *NIDPCM)*, Stanley M Burgess (Ed.) and Eduard M Van der Maas (Assoc Ed.), Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, p.1195. For more on Wigglesworth's life and ministry see Desmond Cartwright, *The Real Smith Wigglesworth*, London: Sovereign World, 2002; or Julian Wilson, *Wigglesworth: The Complete Story*, Portland, Or: Authentic Publishing, 2002.

[2] James Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements in New Zealand – With a Breviate of the Catholic Apostolic Church in Great Britain*, England: Julian Literature Trust, 1974, pp.109-120 & 149-155.

[3] ibid., p.127.

[4] ibid., p.141.

[5] ibid., p.163.

[6] ibid., p.176. Also stated in the article entitled 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.1, located at www.agnz.org/history.htm.

[7] 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.1.

[8] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.178. The PCNZ leadership established links with the Elim Church in Great Britain in 1930. After further controversies and divisions, remnants of the PCNZ became the Elim Church in New Zealand, from January 1st, 1953. Worsfold, pp.178 & 191.

A Baptist minister of eleven years (and son of Exclusive Brethren parents), Edward Weston, was invited by the NZEM to pastor a congregation in Wellington in 1924.[9] Weston had previously ministered at a Baptist church in Berhampore, Wellington, during which time he received prayer for Spirit baptism.[10] His convictions led him to preach on the work of the Holy Spirit during his final Baptist pastorate in Mosgiel. Back in Wellington, but working as a Pentecostal pastor he rose to become chairman of the PCNZ in 1931.[11] However, when evangelists of the Apostolic Church reached New Zealand in December 1933, Weston responded to their preaching by leading his Newtown congregation into the new Pentecostal movement.[12] Weston became a leading figure in the early history of the New Zealand Apostolic Church travelling the country preaching Spirit baptism, pre-tribulation eschatology and Apostolic ministry principles.[13] The Apostolic Church, founded in Wales following the Welsh Revival of 1904-1906, had a strongly hierarchical governance structure with denominational leadership in the hands of "apostles" and "prophets".[14] It also had a clear theological position outlined in its eleven Tenets.[15] This stability and clarity appealed to a number of PCNZ and AOG congregations as well as other independent Pentecostal groups who joined the denomination during the 1930s and '40s. The Apostolic Church quickly became the largest Pentecostal denomination in New Zealand and remained so until 1976 when the AOG reclaimed that position.[16]

Although the NZEM / PCNZ became the nursery for emerging Pentecostal denominations, the seeds of Pentecostalism were numerous. James Worsfold mentions the preaching ministries of "Catholic Apostolic" evangelists in the 1860s, which resulted in a short lived semi-Pentecostal church in Wellington.[17] A number of other evangelists and missioners visited New Zealand in the late 19th century to hold revival meetings or conduct evangelistic crusades. They included Henry Varley (an English evangelist), George Mueller (orphanage founder and Brethren leader, resident in Bristol), John Dowie (evangelist, resident in Melbourne), and the Americans Reuben Torrey and Charles Alexander who toured in 1901.[18] After the First World War the Salvationist, Herbert Booth, had a significant evangelistic mission in New Zealand leaving behind a network of converts who subscribed

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[9] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.159; 'Weston, Edward', *NIDPCM*, p.1192.

[10] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.104. "Spirit baptism" is a shorthand way of referring to the spiritual experience that Pentecostals strive for, a personal encounter with the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity. It is this experience that is commonly evidenced in the "gift" of glossolalia or "tongues".

[11] 'Weston, Edward', *NIDPCM*, p.1192. This prominence within the PCNZ came despite Weston breaking away from the movement to start an independent church in Newtown, in 1925. He soon returned to the PCNZ fold bringing his new church with him in 1926. Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.170 & 176.

[12] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.179 & 241; *NIDPCM*, p.1192.

[13] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.244-256.

[14] ibid., pp.240-242.

[15] *NIDPCM*, p.323.

[16] 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.5. This statement was based on the results of the 1976 New Zealand census.

[17] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.64-79.

[18] ibid., pp.85-89.

to a Christian covenant.[19] It was a group of these "Covenanters" that brought Wigglesworth to Wellington and laid the groundwork for his ministry.[20]

Women in the Early Pentecostal movement

Contributions by women attracted less attention but were no less significant to the emergence of Pentecostalism. An ex-missionary by the name of Miss Jacobsen conducted "Spirit filled" meetings in Freemans Bay, Auckland, until her departure to America in the early 1920s.[21] Florence Archer took over leadership of the group, which continued to flourish until it merged with the NZEM congregation established in Auckland after the visit of Wigglesworth. In 1919 two American missionaries, Miss M F Ayers and Miss Clarkson, "were invited to conduct special meetings at the [Sydenham Gospel] Mission". [22] Spirit baptism was the subject of their preaching and this led to a Pentecostal experience for Mr & Mrs K E England. Mr England went on to be an elder of the PCNZ in 1925[23] while Mrs England was (for a short time) editor of the Pentecostal periodical, the *New Zealand Evangel of the Apostolic Faith.*[24] The Englands later became founding members of the AOG in 1927 with Mr England appointed to the role of Presbyter Canterbury District.[25]

The highest profile Pentecostal woman of this era was Aimee Semple McPherson.[26] She visited New Zealand in 1922 at a time of heightened interest in "faith healing" and other Pentecostal teachings. Her preaching attracted press coverage from the *Auckland Star* and *The Dominion* where it was reported that:

> Mrs Aimee Semple McPherson, a religious revivalist, who is well known all over the United States and Canada and is on her way to Australia, held several meetings in Wellington during the weekend. The power of this healthy, happy looking woman in white made itself manifest at crowded meetings held in the Methodist Church in Taranaki Street on Saturday afternoon and in the Town Hall yesterday afternoon and evening when she delivered the Word with enthusiasm and fervour.... Her address on the Saturday evening was an exposition on the Holy Spirit.... She likened the beneficence of the Spirit to rain in a thirsty land... and such was her winning power and frankness that she gained a big response to her every appeal.[27]

This visit to New Zealand and Australia came only months after McPherson's ordination by the First Baptist Church in San Jose, California.[28] Her international celebrity status and evident preaching talent served to affirm the place of women in the Pentecostal movement of the 1920s.

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[19] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.94-97.

[20] ibid., p.107f.

[21] ibid., p.93f.

[22] ibid., p.164.

[23] ibid., p.168.

[24] ibid., p.172.

[25] ibid., p.197.

[26] McPherson is first mentioned in this paper on page 8 of chapter 1. Her colourful career is characterised in footnote 28 on the same page.

[27] *The Dominion*, 28th August, 1922, p.6, cited in Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.136f.

The first PCNZ missionary was Miss Burnett of Auckland who was seventy when she left for Tonga in January, 1926, to link up with "an American Pentecostal missionary, Miss Ronburg. Miss Burnett experienced much blessing in her ministry".[29] Also in 1926, Florence Archer led a team that included Miss A Saunders from Pleasant Point, Miss M Sutherland from Wellington and Mrs Bonney of Auckland, to Fiji. They sailed from Auckland on March 25th, as reported by Pastor Archibald Brown of the Auckland Assembly.[30] More evidence of women in ministry comes from the PCNZ annual conference in December of 1926. Worsfold points out that several women "who were accredited workers in the Home Mission field also brought ministry (at the conference). They were Miss N Sullivan, Masterton; Miss I Saunders, Taranaki; Mrs Watt, Hawera; Miss E Saunders, Temuka; Mrs White, Wanganui".[31]

The Assemblies of God and Women – the early years

Like other evangelical[32] denominations of this era, mission work was a high priority for the fledgling AOG movement. Its mission statement included a plan for home missions and a commitment to world evangelism.[33] In September of 1927, Grace Jupp was formally recognised as the first AOG missionary from New Zealand to India.[34] Jupp faced a difficult situation in India under British rule. Her letters depict civil unrest in the streets and the anxiety felt by expatriates during this period.[35] Yet AOG men and women, especially women, continued to volunteer for missionary work in India and elsewhere. Of the nine missionaries listed as recipients of funding in the *NZ Evangel* in January, 1928, all but one were women.[36] By the end of 1931 the list of AOG missionaries included Miss G M Jupp, Miss C McCallum, Miss R Heslop, Miss E Fenwick, Miss C S Eady, Miss I Watts, Miss Richards, and Mr & Mrs F Upham – all in India; W J Thomson and J H Geddes in Central Africa; and Miss I Burnett, Miss M Sutherland, Miss E Silson, Miss A Archer and Miss Harvey in the Pacific Islands.[37] However, this missionary wave tapered off during the 1930s as funds dried up during the Depression and as the home base of the New Zealand AOG movement struggled to grow.

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[28] *NIDPCM*, p.857. This ordination was controversial in that it was not ratified by the wider Baptist association.

[29] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.172.

[30] *New Zealand Evangel of the Apostolic Faith* (official organ of the Pentecostal Church of New Zealand) published by the PCNZ, Wellington, Vol.2 No.23, Jun 1926, p.1. A subsequent report from Archer mentions her search for suitable facilities to provide accommodation for her and space in which she could conduct meetings. *New Zealand Evangel of the Apostolic Faith*, Vol.2 No.24, Jul 1926, p.9.

[31] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.175.

[32] For a discussion of evangelicalism and evangelical parameters refer to the Preface, footnote 1

[33] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.205.

[34] Rowena Tutauha, *Looking Back – The Assemblies of God in NZ in the 20th Century*, paper prepared by the Receptionist / Secretary for the Assemblies of God Executive, Auckland, Jan 2000, p.2.

[35] *The New Zealand Evangel* (hereafter *NZ Evangel*), Monthly journal of the Assemblies of God in New Zealand, published by the Executive Council of the Assemblies of God, Auckland, see Vol.5 No.7, Aug 1929, p.13, and Vol.6 No.7, Aug 1930, p.13.

[36] *NZ Evangel*, Vol.3 No.12, Jan 1928, p.10.

[37] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.209f. Tutauha states that there were only eight AOG missionaries at this point but does not supply names. *Looking Back*, p.2.

As in America, AOG women in New Zealand were free to adopt informal ministry roles by exercising their gifts in tongues, prophecy, "words of knowledge" and prayer for healing. There was also no inhibition in regard to roles in denominational publications as evidenced by the editorships of the *NZ Evangel* by Mrs England in 1926 and Jessie Franklin in 1927.[38] Formal ministry roles were also open to women. This was established from the outset of the New Zealand AOG movement. In the weeks following the launch of the denomination (in 1927), its leaders agreed upon a constitution and a 'Statement of Fundamental Truths'.[39] Among the sections of this document was one entitled: Rights and Offices of Women. It contained the following words:

> Whereas the hand of God is mightily upon many women to proclaim and publish the "Good tidings of great joy" in a wonderful way, it was resolved that the General Council [of the] Assemblies of God, submit the following Scriptures for consideration:
>
> 1) In Christ, that is, in the matter of salvation, the lines of sex are blotted out. (Gal 3.28)
> 2) Women are commanded to be in subjection, and not to usurp authority over the man. (1 Tim 2.11-15)
> 3) They are called to prophesy and preach the Gospel. (Acts 2.17) "He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, to exhortation and to comfort." (1 Cor 14.3)
> 4) To be helpers in the Gospel. (Rom 16.3)
>
> Therefore be it resolved, that this Council recommends to the ministry and Assemblies of God, that we recognise their God-given rights to be ordained, not as Elders, but as Evangelists, after being duly approved, according to the Scriptures; and that they serve as assistant Pastors, Missionaries, or as Evangelists.[40]

This policy statement was consistent with AOG policy in the United States. It demonstrated their inerrantist commitment to Biblical authority combined with the openness to women in ministry that characterised the Holiness-Pentecostal stream of evangelicalism in America.[41]

In addition to performing the roles mentioned in the charter document (above), there was at least one instance of a woman acting as interim leader of an assembly. Among the "Assemblies' Reports" in 1929 was one from Temuka which announced that "Sister Hart has felt led to resign her position as leader of Temuka Assembly, as her stay in Temuka is uncertain, the six months for which she agreed to officiate having come to an end".[42] But for the most part, women were content to minister to other women through regular women's events in their home assemblies.[43]

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[38] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.172 & 207. Jessie Franklin held the position for a period of four months before resigning at the first annual conference of the AOG in December, 1927. She was the first editor of the journal after it ceased to be a PCNZ publication and became the official AOG periodical. *NZ Evangel*, Vol.3 No.12, Jan 1928, p.3.

[39] While the AOG assemblies demanded greater autonomy than they had experienced within the PCNZ, they were willing to accept a centralised authority on matters of doctrine and ministry.

[40] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.202.

[41] For more on the Wesleyan-Holiness-Pentecostal tradition refer to chapter 1, pp.4-5 of this thesis. See also Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movements in the Twentieth Century*, second edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. For an explanation of the term "inerrantist" refer to p.1 of the Appendix.

[42] *NZ Evangel*, Vol.5 No.7, Aug 1929, p.15.

[43] For example, a report from the New Plymouth assembly mentions a "Sisters' Meeting" held each Wednesday "for prayer and fellowship". *NZ Evangel*, Vol.5 No.7, Aug 1929, p.15.

Within the AOG movement it is standard practice for ministry candidates to be ordained by the General Council and licensed (or credentialled) for pastoral ministry. In New Zealand a Credentials Committee was established to assess the merits of each applicant for ordination.[44] Ordination was not offered to "home and foreign mission workers" and, by implication, was not available to women.[45] Such workers would be granted a "Licence to Preach".[46] This restriction was subsequently reflected and intensified in the American AOG movement. Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld note that the "Assemblies of God offered women unparalleled opportunity for ministry during the early years of the twentieth century" but "this open attitude toward women began to change... as a new generation of leaders emerged".[47] The 1931 General Council for the American AOG resolved that ministry licences (or ordination certificates) given to women should limit them to the role of "evangelists".[48] This was a far more restrictive situation than that which Pentecostal women had previously enjoyed in the short history of the movement. The American General Council rescinded this decision in 1935 but the "patterns of limitation continued to be generally accepted".[49]

The Apostolic Church and Women – the early years

Due to the importance of governance structures within the Apostolic Church the offices were clearly delineated at the establishment of the first church in Wellington. Worsfold records the exact offices into which each person was formally inducted.

> The men set apart were: E. R. Weston as Pastor-Teacher, Alf Jackson as Pastor; and A. S. Scott, J. Johnston, H. Anderson... R. Baker as Elders; A. Wright, G. Chambers and J. Morgan as Evangelists; and W. Berry, F. Wortley... Mr Stockbridge as Deacons; Mrs E. Weston, Mrs Alf Jackson, Mrs Stockbridge, Mrs R. Baker, Mrs E. Trembath and Miss E Salmon as Deaconesses.[50]

There were no Apostles or Prophets appointed at this time. The New Zealand Apostolic movement would operate under the authority of the Australian branch of the Church until such time as the young Church had leaders eligible for higher office. Several of the deaconesses were wives of some of the male office bearers. This same pattern occurred elsewhere as other churches became identified with the Apostolic movement. In Auckland the leader appointed in March of 1934 was A Wright.[51] Three elders and six deacons were appointed including Crossley and Ferguson whose wives were counted

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[44] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.203.

[45] As already stated on the previous page, the legitimate ministry roles for women were: assistant pastors, evangelists and missionaries. The last two of these three roles fell into the category of "home and foreign mission workers". The status of associate and interim pastors was unclear though they probably became "licentiates", a tier below full ordination.

[46] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.203. The missionary, Grace Jupp, was the first to be given a "licence to preach" according to Elaine Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches Part 2, 1940-1993', *Stimulus* Vol.1 No.4, Nov 1993, p.33.

[47] Ruth A Tucker & Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present*, Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1987, p.360.

[48] ibid., p.364; and 'Women, Role of', *NIDPCM*, p.1205.

[49] *NIDPCM*, p.1205. Also in Barfoot & Shepherd, 'Prophetic versus Priestly Religion', as cited in *Submission to Apostolic Church New Zealand National Council on The Question of the Release of Women's Ministry,* Apostolic Church, August 1992, p.86.

[50] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.241.

[51] ibid., p.243.

among the six deaconesses. In Onehunga the leader was Boath, the sole deacon was Mill and the deaconesses were Boath, Mill and Watt.[52] In this way Apostolic fellowships were established in Wellington, Nelson, Blenheim, New Plymouth, Auckland, Onehunga, Te Kuiti and Dargaville during 1934. Others followed in Hastings and Christchurch in 1935. Some of the smaller centres made do without deaconesses, and sometimes leaders had responsibility for more than one congregation.

The New Zealand Apostolic Church did not have its own constitution until 1943. Its architects borrowed heavily from the constitutions of the United Kingdom and Australian Churches. Included among its provisions were definitions of the various offices of the Church. Deaconesses would not participate in governance but would be involved in "visitation of the sick, the setting out of the Lord's Table, the counselling of women who came forward in the services and the chairing of women's meetings".[53] These functions had some similarity to but were more limited than those performed by deaconesses in other denominations of that era. The constitution went on to depict what the character of each office holder should resemble. Deaconesses were expected to "recognise that the correct attitude of the woman towards the man necessarily limits any ministry by them in meetings of both sexes". By way of explanation it stated that "the scriptural limitation of their ministry is that they should not teach doctrine or fundamental truths in an authoritative manner. They must not lay down doctrine. (1 Tim 2.12; Titus 2.4)"[54]

The 1930s and '40s were pioneering years for the New Zealand Apostolic Church and, consequently, it was a fertile period for ministry initiatives. The wider society was also charting new territory with the social programmes of the first Labour government and the mobilisation of women on the "home front" during the War. Women were visible in many capacities both in the Church and outside of it. Apostolic women exercised oratory skills to a degree not evident in the decades which followed. In a reflection on "Apostolic Women in the Past" one writer characterises the period in this way:

> Right from the beginning of the Apostolic Church gifted women played a vital role especially in the ministry of prophecy and preaching. Some wives of well known pastors of the 1930-1940 period were preachers who moved under a great anointing and had a gift that could carry whole congregations. Among these were Mesdames Pickles, Arnold, Gardiner, Scadden and Dixon. The passing of these women seemed to leave a gap that was not filled in the next decade.[55]

Another gifted Apostolic communicator was the Australian, Heather Burrows. Her successful evangelistic ministry on the other side of the Tasman prompted denominational leaders to invite her to New Zealand. She spoke at the 1944 Easter Convention in Wellington. Worsfold recounts that the venue "was filled to capacity for these services" and adds that Burrows held further meetings in churches throughout the country before returning to Australia in 1945 because of ill health.[56]

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[52] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.243.

[53] ibid., p.270f.

[54] ibid., p.272f. For a discussion of the basis for this interpretation of 1 Timothy 2.12 refer to pp.14-16 of the Appendix.

[55] *Submission to Apostolic Church New Zealand National Council*, p.87.

[56] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.274f.

The first missionaries from the New Zealand Apostolic Church were Alfred Greenway and his wife who went to Japan in 1937.[57] They were followed there by Mr and Mrs Robertson and Miss L Dunn, though this mission came to an end during the First World War.[58] Other missionaries went to China in 1944. These were Mr W R Neill, Miss E Cooper and Miss S Murray.[59] Their mission field also closed, as the political climate in China became unfavourable. The three missionaries returned to New Zealand in 1952.[60] But other mission opportunities were opening and again women answered the call. In 1954 "Miss K Thompson was farewelled by the church as a missionary nurse to India" and another nurse, Miss G. Jenkins was among the first Apostolic missionaries to enter New Guinea "leaving New Zealand on January 15th, 1959".[61]

Apostolic missions among Maori commenced in 1937. This venture arose out of the work of the Open Brethren home missionaries Miss Rout and Miss Martin working in the Te Puke / Waitangi area of the Bay of Plenty.[62] Worsfold notes that these women began taking an interest in the teachings of the Apostolic Church in their quest for "a deeper spiritual experience".[63] He explains that Alf Greenway (the national superintendent) responded to their appeal and conducted a series of meetings at the Waitangi Marae in 1934. Then in 1937 the first Apostolic Maori Mission Church opened at Waitangi near Te Puke. "The opening services were presided over by J F D Thompson and the ceremony of the opening of the door was performed by Miss Rout. She had given a lifetime of service to the Maori people and was held in high esteem by them."[64] Others were appointed to head up the work at Waitangi beginning with Mr V Heard from Hastings, then R L Arnold of Christchurch arrived in 1939.[65] He was joined by Mr & Mrs G C Scadden in 1944 before the focus of the ministry among Maori shifted to its new headquarters in Rotorua between 1947 and 1950.[66]

A women's organisation called the Dominion Women's Movement began in 1942.[67] Unlike women's organisations in other denominations this one was headed by a man, Allan Dickson. His job was to set up the organisation along the same lines as its British equivalent. District leaders were appointed and they were all women – wives of Apostolic Church leaders – "Wellington, Mrs A Gardiner; Auckland, Mrs C Scadden; Waitangi, Mrs R L Arnold; Nelson, Mrs A Dickson; New Plymouth, Mrs W Pickles; Christchurch, Mrs G White".[68] Worsfold adds that "The Sisterhood of the Church were asked

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[57] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.255.

[58] Miss Dunn later became a deaconess at the new Apostolic church in Dunedin in 1942. ibid., p.262.

[59] ibid., p.274.

[60] ibid., p.279.

[61] ibid.

[62] Miss Rout and Miss Martin are first mentioned at the top of page 50 in chapter 4 of this thesis.

[63] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.258.

[64] ibid.

[65] Ibid., p.261.

[66] ibid., p.275.

[67] ibid., pp.263-264.

[68] ibid., p.264.

to see that the tenor of their meetings should be for prayer and Gospel endeavour and that ministry particularly adapted to women's needs be given".[69] In 1945 it was Cecil Scadden who arranged a Christmas convention for members of the women's movement at Napier Boys' High School.[70] But, subsequent conventions were turned into family events and by 1955 they had become youth camps.

Navigating the 1950s and '60s

AOG fortunes fluctuated over the four decades from the '30s to the '60s with the number of adherents growing, shrinking then growing again. Churches multiplied then defected or disappeared. Bible Schools were opened only to close within a few years. The denominational periodical suffered a similar fate with frequent suspensions and a few name changes along the way.[71] Organisational structures were set up and then reformed or replaced. A number of factors such as the Depression, World War Two, the working class background of its membership and the emergence of other denominations contributed to this chequered history. The AOG lost key personnel, such as Cecil Scadden, plus many congregation members to the Apostolic Church. Other Pentecostal rivals included the Revival Fire Mission (in Auckland), the British Israel movement (mainly in Wellington), the Latter Rain movement (later to become the New Life Church), and the new Elim denomination, which emerged from remnants of the PCNZ in the 1950s. Such fragmentation within a stream of Christianity that was relatively small was damaging. By 1960 there were about 54 Pentecostal churches in the country and "only the Auckland Queen Street Assembly of God, the 'flagship' of the movement, had a membership of more than 100".[72]

The AOG did benefit from numerous foreign visitors or permanent arrivals. The American, Valdez, was present at the birth of the denomination in 1927. Hewitt and Fallon arrived from Australia that same year, though Hewitt joined the Apostolics in 1933. Fallon became editor of the *NZ Evangel*. Mellor came from the UK in 1929 and made a very significant contribution for the next 12 years. Greaves came from Australia in 1939 and ministered in Christchurch for 10 years before being replaced by the Englishman Tom Whiting, who also stayed for 10 years, leaving in 1959 after a stint as Council Chairman. Finch came to Wellington from the UK in 1950 and for a while was Principal of a Bible College as well as editor of the *NZ Evangel*. Ferrell came from the USA in the mid 1950s to minister in Auckland, and was replaced by Tregenza from Canada in the latter part of the 1950s. Ralph Read arrived from Australia to pastor the Christchurch assembly before becoming Council

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[69] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.264.

[70] ibid., p.275.

[71] After 10 years of almost continuous publication the *NZ Evangel* was replaced by the *Redemption Tidings* in 1937. Four years later the name *NZ Evangel* was reinstated but it was printed smaller than previously. Then in the same year it was renamed *Rivers of Living Water* and, soon after, it was replaced by a brief circular called *The News*. The *NZ Evangel* was resurrected in 1950 under the editorship of Benny Finch in Wellington. After some financial difficulties at the Wellington headquarters publication of the journal was transferred to Auckland. There it blossomed under the editorship of Mary Tregenza. But Mary and her husband left at the end of 1960 resulting in another break in publication until 1963. By the late '60s it was again suspended. Publication finally resumed in 1985 and continued until 2000 when the name was changed to *One Purpose: The Evangel*. [Most of this information from Tutauha, *Looking Back*.]

[72] *NIDPCM*, p.188. This article mentions 10,000 Pentecostals but this figure is not credible either historically or mathematically (e.g. 10,000 divided by 54 equals 185 people per church group). 4000-5000 is more realistic.

Chairman. He was replaced in Christchurch by Averill (Australia) in 1966, then Barton (UK) in 1971. Many others came and went as exchange pastors, conference speakers and evangelists.[73]

In the 1950s AOG women were playing their part in the life of the denomination. Missionaries Peter and Barbara Uren were serving in Borneo, while Elton and Gwen Knauf were in the Belgian Congo, in Africa. Others were involved in mission among Maori in the Bay of Plenty and, from 1955, in the Poverty Bay area.[74] Women's meetings featured in the life of most churches. AOG women in Auckland held a "Combined Sisters Fellowship" event in 1955 to which women of other denominations were invited.[75] That year a husband and wife – W T & E Whitehouse of Palmerston North – were listed among the credentialled AOG ministers.[76] By that time Stanley and Mildred Powell were co-pastoring the Lower Hutt assembly. The Powells arrived from England in 1951, already experienced as Pentecostal evangelists. Mildred Powell was credentialled in 1953, so becoming the first woman to be ordained in the New Zealand AOG or in any New Zealand Church.[77] Women continued to provide the backbone of the AOG children's ministries, with considerable success. Noelle Midgeley reported from Mt Roskill that "Sunday School attendance is from 70-80 and our church only seats 68... Our Happy Hour Club, which we hold during the winter months, averages 50-60 children, mostly children who do not attend Sunday School."[78] Margaret Skilleter rose to be the National Organiser in the Sunday School department of the AOG.[79]

Women also contributed to the *NZ Evangel* in a way not previously in evidence. In 1956 "Sister G Walters" (a former missionary) wrote an article on the subject of revival, discussing its biblical basis and contemporary evidence of it both on the mission field and in the church.[80] There was also an article on "Divine Healing" from "Sister Howard Carter" on the front page of another 1956 edition. It was a new development for women to be addressing doctrinal issues in a public forum. This may have been due to the appointment of Mary Tregenza to the editorship of the denominational periodical.[81] She and her husband, Roy Tregenza, came from Canada to take up the pastoral

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[73] This data gleaned from: 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand'; Tutauha, *Looking Back*; the *NZ Evangel*; and Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*.

[74] *NZ Evangel*, No.133, Oct 1955, inside cover.

[75] *NZ Evangel*, No.132, Sept 1955, p.10.

[76] *NZ Evangel*, No.133, Oct 1955, inside cover.

[77] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches Part 2', p.32. Nancy Ward was the first woman minister in New Zealand (1951), though she was ordained in Scotland. Phyllis Guthardt was the first New Zealand woman ordained in New Zealand (1959). See footnote 32 on page 14 of chapter 2 for more details.

[78] *NZ Evangel*, No.140, May 1956, p.4.

[79] *NZ Evangel*, No.?, Nov 1958, p.20. This position was discontinued in 1962. Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.4.

[80] *NZ Evangel*, No.139, Apr 1956, pp.4-5.

[81] The dating of this appointment is somewhat unclear. The editorship of B Finch probably came to an end soon after the financial scandal that brought about the end of his ministry with the Wellington Assembly of God church as well as his role as Principal of the Bible College located in the Hutt Valley in 1954. (Both properties had to be sold to recover debts.) 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.3; Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.3. The wording of one source concerning Tregenza's appointment is that "The New Zealand Evangel took on a new lease of life through the gifted work of Mary Tregenza. Her husband, Roy, pastored the Auckland Assembly for a short time after it moved to 510 Queen St in 1956". (From 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.4.) However, Tutauha states, "At the Annual Conference in January 1957... Roy Tregenza was appointed the new principal of

ministry of the Auckland assembly in 1956. The sudden death that year of the Principal of the Bible College, Spencer May, brought about a change in the Tregenzas' situation.[82] Roy was appointed Principal in addition to his pastoral duties – the College was operating in Devonport at this time. However, Roy became heavily involved in local assembly and national AOG affairs leaving most of the management of the Bible College to Mary.[83] This she coped with extremely well in addition to her responsibilities with the *NZ Evangel*.

Pastor G C Jennings contributed an article to a 1958 issue of the *NZ Evangel* on the question: "What is the scope of women's ministry in the church?"[84] He began by emphasising that "there are many more things a woman may do in the Church than things she may not do". He then deployed a subordinationist view in his interpretation of 1 Timothy 2.12.[85] "This is obviously referring to the teaching ministry in the church, the instruction in righteousness by the overseers, and the commands to the flock by the pastors or shepherds. This is not a woman's sphere of ministry in the church. Notice, however, the phrase, 'over the man', which leaves the woman free to teach the Word to, or instruct young people (minors), the children or her fellow women."[86]

However, in regard to 1 Corinthians 14.34-35 Jennings adopted an egalitarian stance.[87] He understood the injunction against speaking (verse 34) to be against chattering. "This command may seem almost unnecessary in this and other countries at the present time, but let us not forget that the Bible is a universal book, and talking by women in the church was common at the time... and persists to this day in some lands."[88] His reason for not interpreting it as a prohibition of women speaking in church was his concern to harmonize scripture. Jennings cited the Joel prophecy (repeated in Acts 2) that in the "last days" God would "pour out (his) Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..."[89] This Pentecost passage was of special significance to his Pentecostal readers. Jennings also drew attention to the verse in 1 Corinthians 11 which declares that "Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head". Then he asked

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the Bible College. The following year Sister Tregenza was appointed Editor of the NZ Evangel and developed the magazine considerably." *Looking Back*, p.3. Yet, this would mean that Mary was editor for only 18 to 20 months, as she left at the end of 1960. Worsfold is unhelpful on this dating issue as he cites a 1954 source (?) for his information concerning the appointment of Roy Tregenza to the role of Bible College Principal. But he too commends Mary on the quality of her editorial work. Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.215. The *NZ Evangel* did not identify its editorial personnel in 1956/57.

[82] 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.4; Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.3; and Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.215.

[83] From 'Mary Tregenza Resigns College', *NZ Evangel*, Vol.1 No.3, Nov 1960, p.12.

[84] *NZ Evangel*, Mar 1958, pp.14-16.

[85] For a brief explanation of subordinationism see p.3 of the Appendix. For a discussion of 1 Timothy 2.12 see pp.14-16 of the Appendix.

[86] *NZ Evangel*, Mar 1958, p.14.

[87] For a definition of egalitarianism see p.3 of the Appendix, plus subsequent pages for egalitarian arguments. Refer to pp.12-13 for a discussion of 1 Corinthians 14.34-35.

[88] *NZ Evangel*, Mar 1958, p.14.

[89] ibid., p.15.

"Why these instructions if a woman is not permitted to prophesy or speak in prayer in the church?" Jennings conclusion read as follows:

> Summing up, we believe that the emphasis in the teaching of the New Testament concerning women's ministry in the Church is not so much directed against the exercise of her vocal abilities, as to her duty to be in subjection to the men God has set in the church by Divine appointment.[90]

The use of the first person plural pronoun "we" indicates that Jennings had consulted with fellow denominational leaders so as to state a position supported by the entire AOG leadership.

Despite Mary Tregenza's success with both the *NZ Evangel* and the AOG Bible College, she concurred with Jennings in regard to the place of women in the church hierarchy. Upon her resignation from leadership of the College, in November 1960, Mary was quoted as saying: "Ideally and scripturally, administrative offices in the church should be filled by men. From the start I have realised mine to be an emergency ministry until a more ideal appointment could be made".[91] She continued her role as editor of the *NZ Evangel* until she and her husband left the country at the end of the year. Her departure resulted in a cessation of the periodical until 1963.

In the 1960s the AOG churches were supporting Tom Reid in Papua New Guinea, Lawrence Reid and his wife in the Philippines, Beryl Green in Florida and Uruguay, Janet Lake, Graham Cruickshank and his wife in Fiji.[92] Gwen Knauf returned to New Zealand after the tragic death of her husband, Elton, but Joye Knauf left to do mission work, as did Bob and Noelle Midgley who departed for Australia in 1969.[93] Missionary support was carried on by the Women's Missionary Council.[94] The 1960s was a decade of significant changes for the AOG movement. The Bible College in Devonport closed down in 1962 but new colleges opened in Lower Hutt in 1967 and near Tauranga in 1968.[95] A printing department was launched in Christchurch in 1964.[96] Ralph Read left for Australia in 1965 but Frank Houston (founder of the college in Lower Hutt) replaced Read in 1966 when appointed to the new role of General Superintendent.[97] Throughout the 11-12 year period of Houston's Superintendence the AOG movement experienced remarkable growth.[98] This was partly

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[90] *NZ Evangel*, Mar 1958, p.16.

[91] From 'Mary Tregenza Resigns College', *NZ Evangel*, Vol.1 No.3, Nov 1960, p.12.

[92] Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.4.

[93] The information on Elton Knauf from Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.3; the information on the other names comes from 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.4, and Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.218 & 220.

[94] For instance, one brief report stated that: "Throughout the year the Women's Missionary Council has been actively engaged in sending out parcels of food and clothing to missionaries in various countries". *NZ Evangel*, Feb 1964, p.14.

[95] The closing of the Devonport College is mentioned in 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.4; while the openings of the Christian Life Bible College and Faith Bible College are mentioned by Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.4, and Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, p.218.

[96] 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.5.

[97] Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.4, and Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.218.

[98] "When Houston took over there were 26 churches and 29 ministers; when he left to pioneer a new church in Sydney in 1977 there were 80 churches and 97 ministers." From 'The Assemblies of God in New Zealand', p.5.

attributable to the Charismatic renewal movement[99] that swept through many congregations in the major denominations during the late 1960s and throughout the '70s and early '80s.

Like the AOG, the Apostolic Church benefited from the visits of many pastors and evangelists from overseas. The list of Australians includes J H Hewitt, I J Hewitt, A Gardiner Jnr. and Rev P J Lovell President of the Australian Apostolic Council. From the UK came "prophet" J G McCabe and A L Greenway (who was appointed national superintendent) in 1934, J F D Thompson in 1935, T V Lewis, J Pridie and I MacPherson in the 1950s, and Rev T Saunders in 1966 (then President of the UK Council).[100] Charles Forrest also came out from the UK in the 1950s and was responsible for designing several Apostolic churches, but drowned while attending a youth camp in 1958.[101] In 1956 Miss I Christensen, a Danish Apostolic missionary, visited the New Zealand churches to present the need for mission work in the New Hebrides.[102] This resulted in the departure of Mr & Mrs L Dewar to the New Hebrides in 1957.

In 1952 the Apostolic Church made its first attempt at establishing a Bible School. It was founded in Hamilton by Alf Greenway and called the Bible Training Centre. The School provided training for all who "felt a call to Christian service".[103] This included women. Classes were offered on a part-time basis and the study programme required two years to complete. However, after nine years the Bible Training Centre closed down. Other attempts were made at establishing denominational colleges including Te Nikau College in Porirua. It was commenced by Billie Pearson in 1976 and was popular from the late '70s to the early '90s, benefiting from the Charismatic movement. However, it too closed its doors after 20 years operation. The Vision Leadership College that replaced Te Nikau began in Hamilton in 1998, while the ACTS Bible College began earlier in 1990, in Auckland.

Apostolic women were active in children's ministries. Sunday Schools could be found in all churches around the country. Women also supported the national "Bible-in-Schools" movement. A 1969 survey revealed that 25 people were involved "under the auspices of the Council for Christian Education".[104] But, during this period, women were rarely involved in preaching ministries – as they had been in the early years of the Apostolic movement. The theocratic system of governance established at the founding of the denomination was gradually relaxed[105] allowing greater

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[99] The Charismatic Movement was a "second wave" of Pentecostalism not directly linked to the "first wave" that emanated from Azusa St, Los Angeles, in 1906. It filtered, and sometimes flowed, through whole denominations in countries around the world. Christians embraced the Charismatic Movement as a recovery (or discovery) of an experiential dimension to their faith, without necessarily altering their core doctrinal beliefs. Its trans-denominational appeal made it a catalyst for ecumenical initiatives during this period. The *NIDPCM* defines it as "all manifestations of pentecostal-type Christianity that in some way differ from classical Pentecostalism in affiliation and/or doctrine". From 'Charismatic Movement', *NIDPCM*, p.477.

[100] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.249 & 278.

[101] ibid., p.278.

[102] ibid., p.283.

[103] ibid., p.277.

[104] ibid., p.286.

[105] ibid., p.287f.

enfranchisement of the congregation, and more freedom for local expression in ministry structures. However, while ministries did not have gender limitations women were not considered for offices with leadership or teaching responsibilities.[106] The growing professionalism of Apostolic ministry and the prevailing ideology of domesticity combined to exclude women from leadership and public ministry.[107]

Engagement with the Wider Community

Until the arrival of the Charismatic movement the Pentecostal churches remained fairly insular. Visits from overseas speakers such as Oral Roberts, David du Plessis, Enoch Christensen and Derek Prince in the late 1960s,[108] then Graham Pulkingham in the early 1970s, "helped root charismatic renewal within local churches as well as giving broader theological undergirding for the emerging movement".[109] Numerical growth of the movement and a fresh interest in connections with other denominations precipitated a greater level of engagement with the surrounding society. Pentecostals began to join and even lead other Christians in coalitions campaigning against perceived threats to traditional values. This trend was particularly pronounced in the late '70s and early '80s as evangelicals confronted the growing power of feminist and alternative lifestyle movements.

Just as American and European civil rights and protest movements defined the liberal agenda, so the conservative response was fuelled by American movements such as the campaign for Creation Science, the anti-abortion/pro-life movement (following Roe v Wade in 1973), and the Moral Majority movement of the 1980s. For Pentecostal women the Women's Aglow Fellowship International (WAFI) was an important mechanism for solidarity. Begun in 1967 in Seattle, WAFI promoted worship meetings, Bible studies and conferences for women, all with a Pentecostal flavour. Through its widely distributed newsletter, *Aglow*, it advocated domestic roles and traditional values in contrast to the secular women's liberation movement. "WAFI authors frequently denounced feminists for dismantling traditional gender hierarchies and scorning the notion that women's highest vocation is in the home. Many of them even claimed to be 'former feminists' whose marriages were only saved by renewed commitment to the principle of wifely submission to male authority."[110]

Family values crusades struck a chord with Pentecostal women in New Zealand. Brett Knowles, in his historical survey of New Life churches, describes the Save Our Homes (SOH) campaign, which was a rallying point for Pentecostal women in the late 1970s.[111] Anne Morrow, wife of Pastor Peter Morrow, was the leading activist. She was reacting to the "radical" aims and attitudes in feminist publications and to a 1974 select committee report on women's rights. Morrow and her supporters

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[106] Bolitho, 'Women in New Zealand Churches Part 2', p.33.

[107] *Submission to Apostolic Church New Zealand National Council*, p.19.

[108] Worsfold, *A History of the Charismatic Movements*, pp.315-316.

[109] Allan Davidson, *Christianity in Aotearoa: A History of Church and Society in New Zealand*, second edition, Wellington: The New Zealand Education for Ministry Board, 1997, p.170.

[110] 'Women's Aglow Fellowship International', *NIDPCM*, p.1209.

organised a conference in Christchurch to promote Christian values and beliefs concerning women's roles. It was timed to upstage a feminist conference, also planned for Christchurch, called the United Women's Convention (UWC). The SOH conference included seminars and plenary sessions – a similar format to the UWC. It attracted the involvement of members of parliament, civic dignitaries and overseas speakers. It also attracted positive attention from the press.[112] After the successful Christchurch event, the SOH campaign continued for two years with thousands of people attending conventions around the country. It also spawned the conservative women's magazine *Above Rubies*, which began publication in September 1977. Through this reactionary movement, Pentecostal women discovered a public dimension to their influence. It led to involvement with other organisations such as the Society for the Promotion of Community Standards[113] and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child. Another major example of socio-political activism for Pentecostals and other evangelical groups in New Zealand was the unsuccessful petition against the 1985 Homosexual Law Reform Bill.[114]

Ivanica Vodanovich, a sociologist at Auckland University in the 1980's, analysed the "contemporary Christian revival" – the Charismatic movement and the "Pentecostalists" – in terms of its stance on women's roles and its relationship to the feminist movement.[115] Vodanovich stated that:

> Within the revival woman's primary social role is located within the family as legal wife and mother. The belief system of the movement describes a pattern of divinely ordained order in which individuals are organised into families; they, in turn, are the building blocks of the nation... Families are the crucial intermediaries between the individual and the nation – and because of their primary responsibility in the family women are key figures in the realisation of His design.[116]

From 1981 census data, Vodanovich demonstrated that a higher proportion of women, especially younger women occupied with "household duties", could be found in Pentecostal denominations than in the institutional churches.[117] Vodanovich further explained that the beliefs and cosmology of

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[111] Brett Knowles, *The History of a New Zealand Pentecostal Movement: The New Life Churches of New Zealand from 1946 to 1979*, Studies in Religion and Society Vol. 45, Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000, pp.225-230.

[112] E.g. 'Men and Women Created Equal', *Christchurch Press*, 12 May 1977, p.7; 'Life Style: What the Bible Really Says about Women', *Christchurch Star*, 13 May 1977, p.7; 'Message for Wives: Don't Nag Hubby', *Christchurch Star*, 16 May 1977, p.4. In contrast the UWC was reported negatively with headings such as: 'Women Toss Out Media – Convention United No Longer', *Christchurch Press*, 6 June 1977, p.1; 'Lesbians Intended to Disrupt Convention if Men Let In', *Christchurch Press*, 8 June 1977, p.16; and an editorial: 'Butch Spoils it for the Majority', *Christchurch Star*, 7 June 1977, p.8. All these headlines cited in Knowles, *The History of a New Zealand Pentecostal Movement*, pp.228-229.

[113] ibid., p.234.

[114] A nation-wide effort to sign up petitioners against the bill succeeded in netting nearly a quarter of the New Zealand population. However, Parliament rejected the petition "and the passing of the bill represented a defeat of almost apocalyptic proportions for the moralist movement, which never recovered its former vigour". *NIDPCM*, p.189.

[115] Ivanica Vodanovich, 'Woman's Place in God's World', *Women's Studies Journal*, Vol. 2 No. 1, August 1985, pp.69-79. Vodanovich was looking at the Pentecostal denominations – the Assembly of God, Aspostolic and Elim Churches – as well as those who subscribe to Pentecostal beliefs and practices while remaining within the "institutional" churches, the Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Baptist Churches. See p.69 and footnote 5 on p.78 of 'Woman's Place in God's World'.

[116] ibid., pp.68-69.

[117] ibid., pp.71-72.

"Pentecostalists" (and other "fundamentalist" Christians) envisaged a divine order opposed by anarchy and chaos, "the work of Satan".[118] God is a patriarchal deity who has created and ordained male pre-eminence complemented by spousal and filial subordination.[119] The family is "a bulwark against disorder (the work of Satan)... So a threat to the family is a threat to the nation and its way of life...."[120] This worldview had theological, biological, psychological and sociological dimensions. For example women found companionship, and opportunities for service within the Christian community. Its social structures validated their status as mothers and housewives. Pentecostal women filled nurturing roles such as counselling and praying for healing. "These activities do not threaten the female family role but can be defined as an extension of it and part of her religious practice."[121]

Vodanovich, citing Robertson (1981),[122] pointed to a possible correlation between "fundamentalist" Christian activism and the encroachment of the state into areas concerning the family and personal morality. She noted that such public involvement was a new development for Pentecostals who had previously critiqued the institutional churches for their involvement in secular, social causes.

> They justify their action in terms of the rapid increase in the past decade of legislative measures which affect the family, the status of women, the rights of parents and sexual morality... They are reacting to what they interpret as a deliberate attempt to change the nature of New Zealand society and to limit their rights as Christians living in a Christian society.[123]

Specifically on feminism, Vodanovich concluded that Pentecostals viewed female autonomy and entry to socio-economic power structures as a threat to the traditional values of femininity and motherhood. The shift away from "passivity, emotionalism and nurturance"[124] to spheres of activity beyond the family circle challenges both social and divine orders. "Women are the weak link in the pattern of divine order and their 'insubordination' threatens the boundaries of the group."[125]

Nola Ker, writing at a similar time to Vodanovich, also highlighted the relationship of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement to feminism. She observed "a marked tendency for participants in these various groups to support the traditional role of women in the Church, and support it with vigour. Many women, I must admit, are not dissatisfied with traditional Church structure...."[126] Ker quoted comments derived from a recent questionnaire among Christian women. These comments favoured a Biblical picture of women as submissive, supportive and hard working. Ker, a feminist, took comfort from sociologist, Bryan Wilson, who posited that "this world-wide religious revival with its

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[118] Vodanovich, 'Woman's Place in God's World', p.74.

[119] ibid.

[120] ibid., p.75.

[121] ibid., p.76.

[122] R Robertson, 'Considerations from Within the American Context on the Significance of Church-State Tension', *Sociological Analysis*, Vol.42, 1981, as cited in Vodanovich, 'Woman's Place in God's World', p.79.

[123] Vodanovich, 'Woman's Place in God's World', p.76f.

[124] ibid., p.75.

[125] ibid., p.77.

[126] Nola Ker, 'Women and Church Structures', from *Religion in New Zealand: Women and the Church*, Christopher Nichol (Ed), Wellington: Tertiary Christian Studies Programme, Victoria University, 1984, p.49.

drive to preserve what is perceived as Truth and prevent an alleged insidious undermining by secular forces" was "yet another example of the intermittent occurrence of such movements" which "serve but to interrupt temporarily the strong force towards secularisation."[127] In New Zealand the trends to secularism and women's liberation continued. And the causes that motivated Pentecostal women into activism during the 1970s and '80s were largely left behind in the '90s as these denominations faced their own internal debates on the roles of women.

Coming of Age

A commission was appointed by the Council of the Apostolic Church of New Zealand in 1990 to investigate the theological basis for women's ministries, and to make recommendations to the Council based on their findings. It reported back to the Council in 1992. In keeping with the evangelical ethos of the denomination, the report devoted 62 pages to Biblical interpretation beginning with a section on "Principles for Interpreting Scripture" and ending with an appendix.[128] The remaining 36 pages of this comprehensive document were given to: an index, an introduction, a summary of findings and recommendations, statements of key issues and methodology, an outline of key theological considerations, some reflections on historical background, some models of women's ministry, a presentation of contemporary survey data, and a bibliography.

In a segment on the "Historical Background to Current Beliefs and Practice" the writers noted that from the late 1970's up to the time of writing some churches had adopted a reactionary stance in response to the "militant feminism" gaining ground in secular society. This resulted in women's roles in the church being more restricted, more defined, than they were previously. Furthermore, the reactionary attitude was equated with orthodoxy. Consequently, attempts to widen women's roles or to raise their levels of responsibility were regarded with suspicion as a secular attack on the church or on the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy.[129]

From its examination of the Bible, the commission concluded that the Old Testament understanding of women does not limit women's potential or, at least, is not inconsistent with women occupying key ministry roles. Particular attention was paid to the Creation and Fall passages in Genesis. In regard to the Creation story the report noted that Christianity inherited two streams of thought found in Judaism. One views Eve as co-regent with Adam and sharing equally in bearing "the image of God" – the other holds that Eve had a subordinate or even inferior status to Adam by virtue of Adam being created first and Eve being created as Adam's "helper" (cf. 1 Corinthians 11.8-9). On the grounds of the "law of first mention", and considering interpretations of the original Hebrew that favour an understanding of the term "helper" as an agency stronger than the one being helped, the commission opted for the gender equality or "egalitarian" view of these passages.[130] Similarly the commission did

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[127] Ker, 'Women and Church Structures', p.49.

[128] *Submission to Apostolic Church New Zealand National Council* (first cited in footnote 48, p.72)

[129] ibid., p.17.

[130] ibid., pp.38-40. For an explanation of the term "egalitarian" refer to the Appendix, p.3.

not see in God's pronouncements following the Fall – as some suggest – that Eve's punishment relegated her to subordinate status. The statement that "your husband will rule over you" (Genesis 3.16) was not a *prescription* but a *description* of the likely pattern of human behaviour in a sinful world.[131] It concluded that these passages "are misused if they are called upon as Biblical examples of the depreciation of sexuality or of womanhood. According to these texts, it is human sinfulness which initiates and maintains prejudice and inequality between the sexes.... Genesis certainly does not outline a creation ordinance in which sexual differences signify something about woman's unsuitability for ordained ministry".[132]

The most explicit New Testament passages on the subject of women speaking or engaging in ministry (1 Corinthians 11.1-16; 14.33-36; & 1 Timothy 2.8-15) are dealt with at length by the report, along with shorter explanations of related texts. Each of the issues these passages raised was interpreted in favour of women's ministry or else eliminated from the equation altogether by means of either linguistic, or cultural, or textual, or rhetorical argument. For instance, the Greek word frequently translated "head" in 1 Corinthians 11.3 can better be understood as "source" since that was the ordinary usage of the word.[133] And the prohibition on women speaking in the church in 1 Corinthians 14.34 was viewed as inconsistent with the reference to women praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11.5. Therefore the prohibition should be considered relevant only to a specific situation in the church to which Paul was writing. 1 Timothy 2.11-12 was also explained as "local and cultural" without "universal application." The "I do not permit" phrase was interpreted as: "I am not presently permitting."[134]

The commission concluded "there is no Scriptural bar to the full participation of women in ministry." Furthermore, "the question is not one ultimately of women's rights but rather of releasing women into ministry as God gifted them."[135] It recommended the Council accept this position in principle. The report went on to list measures that could be taken to implement this principle. These included: raising the profile of women by utilising them more often in minor public roles; inclusion in pastoral teams on a part or full time basis; opening up to women the opportunity to be elders or involved in "ascension" ministries (the roles of apostle, prophet, evangelist or pastor).[136] The Council accepted and implemented the findings of the commission with the exception of opening up the roles of eldership and ascension ministries to women. In regard to that proposal the Council stated: "While we recognise that some exegetical material can find scriptural openness to the recognition of women in Eldership and Ascension ministry, at this time there is not consensus in Council on this matter."[137]

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[131] *Submission to Apostolic Church New Zealand National Council*, p.42.

[132] ibid., p.43. (For further consideration of the arguments relating to Genesis see the Appendix, pp.4-6.)

[133] ibid., p.61f.

[134] ibid., pp.78-81. (For further discussion of the Pauline passages see the Appendix, pp.10-17.)

[135] ibid., p.5.

[136] ibid., pp.5-6.

[137] Minutes of the Annual Council of the Apostolic Church in New Zealand, August 1992, p.6, cited in the *Submission to Apostolic Church New Zealand National Council*, p.6.

Although the Council was undecided on the issue of opening up the "ascension" ministries in 1992, further discussions ensued until the decision was reached that women could be ordained as pastors. Janette Thomas was the first woman to take up the opportunity.[138] After her ordination in June, 1995, she commenced ministry at the Apostolic Church in Whakatane.[139] Others soon followed. Lesley Leighton, Joy Cullen and Helen Monk were ordained in 1996, and Simone Grace in 1997.[140] Not all of these women remained in pastoral ministry. The Apostolic policy of biannual renewal of pastoral credentials meant that licences lapsed for any who did not continue in active service. Compounding the situation for women pastors was the rarity of an invite to pastorates beyond their initial posting.[141] However, in keeping with the pattern in the Pentecostal movement of husband and wife involvement in ministry, there are a number of "pastor's wives" who were ordained and then continued to practice pastoral ministry alongside their husbands. Joy Cullen and Helen Monk are two examples of this. Another is Jill Moore.

Dave and Jill Moore left their farm on the West Coast in 1984 to pursue their calling to pastoral ministry. They had already been leading a cell group that exercised Charismatic gifts. After completing a five month study programme at the Te Nikau Bible College in 1985, they shifted to Hamilton to do pastoral ministry under the guidance of Pastor Underwood at Grey Street Apostolic. In 1986, the Moores joined with several others from the Grey St church to plant Westside Apostolic. The leadership team at Westside consisted of four married couples. "We were all involved in the preparation for planting, the decision making", Jill recalled. Dave was ordained but was in full time employment initially and so Jill took on some of the pastoral duties. In addition to pastoral ministry, "my main role was overseeing the children's ministry; I preached a little bit but I was out at Kids Church most of the time because I'm a trained primary teacher with a passion for working with kids... I know that's often the women's job but that was my gifting and so that was the main area in which I was involved."[142]

The Moores relocated to Tokoroa in 1990 to take responsibility for the Apostolic Church there. It was then that Jill had opportunity for more preaching ministry. This was born of necessity because the church in Tokoroa had both morning and evening services, each Sunday. Jill notes that a major reason she did not do much preaching until arriving in Tokoroa, and even then less frequently than she does now, was her parental commitments. "I think for women... you go through stages of life more marked by the stages of your children – men do too, but particularly (for me) as I chose to be at home with the children... The church fitted around the kids."[143] Jill also had responsibility for the pastoral care of women. But on many projects Dave and Jill worked as a team. Partnership has

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[138] Information supplied by Margaret (?) of the Apostolic National Resource Centre, e-mail to author, 04/03/04.

[139] Interview with Rev Jill Moore, Assistant Pastor, Tokoroa Apostolic – 27/02/04.

[140] Margaret, National Resource Centre, 4/3/04.

[141] This lack of career mobility mirrors the situation in other denominations (cf. chapter 3, p.44, affirmation 5).

[142] Jill Moore – 27/02/04.

[143] ibid. For a brief article that eloquently reflects on the subject of reconciling ministry and motherhood see Viv Whimster, 'Ages, Stages and Cycles', *Vashti's Voices*, Vol.2 No.7, Spring 2000, pp.14-16.

always been integral to Jill's ministry philosophy. "For Dave and I – we've always been a team... When I heard of pastors' wives going into full time employment, ten years ago, I struggled with that! How have you got the time to do that?" She has since moved on from thinking that way and has observed that for some couples, the wife does not necessarily share the husband's calling. "Whereas, I knew from when I met Dave that we were going to be in ministry... In fact, I sensed God's call for us to leave the farm before Dave heard (that calling)."[144]

Jill's position at Tokoroa was clear. "Dave was the pastor, I'm the wife... that was not an issue for me. I just got fully involved, visitation, children's ministry, whatever needed to be done." Jill also attended leadership meetings. "Early on, when we came here, all of our elders' meetings were, in fact, elders and wives (together)." But the logistics of getting everyone in the same place were often too difficult and so they decided that only the men should attend. This decision was also related to a concern that the men needed to "rise up" to take more of a leadership role. It was about this time that the 1992 submission document was produced. Jill recalls that there was considerable discussion on it and a questionnaire for Dave to complete. "Within our church we had women worship leaders, we had women ministering at altar calls, women deacons... women preaching, women in ministry in every area but not actually in the presbytery, the oversight as such. So there was freedom for women to minister; there was no holding back. But when it came to the oversight, for example the eldership, that was a male domain... And I was completely comfortable with that."[145]

It was some years later that Jill felt impelled to seek ordination. Jill recalls that she was doing a lot more preaching in '97 and '98 and very much enjoying it. "I was hanging out the washing one day and heard God say – it was the one time I heard an audible voice – 'I want you to get ordained'. And I thought, what? Get ordained?" Jill was aware that there were women pastors in the Apostolic church; she knew that was approved at a national level but at a local level the policy was that women were to be "released in ministry" but could not be elders or pastors. "On the local basis that was something that we weren't fully comfortable with and, personally, nor was I."[146]

From the clothes line to the cloister was quite a journey for Jill. "I had to go through a heart searching time of saying, 'Lord, what is this going to mean?' "[147] She thought it over for several weeks before she felt sufficiently comfortable with the idea of ordination for herself. One day she raised the idea with her husband and found that he too had been thinking along these lines. "For us it was quite a paradigm shift. For me personally I had embraced (the idea of) women in ministry, yes. Women leaders in so many ways – you see it biblically, you see it... But from a personal stance... I had a hesitation, particularly in (terms of) a governmental role."[148] It was some months before her husband felt the timing was right to raise the idea with the elders of Tokoroa Apostolic. It was a busy

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[144] Jill Moore – 27/02/04.

[145] ibid.

[146] ibid.

[147] ibid.

period in the life of the church because of the construction of a new auditorium. The elders worked through the process of discussing what ordination for Jill would mean for the church and then agreed that it was the right thing to do. They decided that Jill could be ordained and offered the position of Assistant Pastor but that she would not sit on the presbytery. "And, again, I was completely comfortable with that because the policies and whatever, that isn't my gifting."[149] Jill and Dave contacted another Apostolic pastor who readily supported Jill's application for ordination. Her ordination occurred at the Tokoroa church one Saturday afternoon in 2000. Jill was issued with a certificate of ordination granting her license to minister as a Pastor in the Apostolic Church of New Zealand. "Officially I am a Reverend. I am also then authorised to marry (and bury)."[150]

Since that time the church leadership has been restructured with the result that executive powers were allocated to the staff, while the elders continued to determine policy and make decisions on doctrinal issues. Now women are involved in leading certain departments of the church. Jill continues to serve as Assistant Pastor and her husband, Dave, remains the senior Pastor. Reflecting on the difference her ordination has made to her status or her ministry Jill finds that the recognition of her ministry that comes with ordination is important. She also believes that she received a measure of divine empowerment through the "laying on of hands" that occurred at her ordination. "There has been a greater liberty since then... It's not just (because) I'm the pastor's wife that I have these opportunities (for ministry) but (now) there is affirmation and confirmation on both national and local levels of my calling as a pastor."[151]

Unlike their American counterparts, the New Zealand AOG churches lacked well-developed structures to assist women into ministry or to promote rigorous debate on women's issues. A Women's Ministries Department was not established until 1995/96.[152] Mary Hood is a pastor at Tauranga AOG and has been heavily involved in women's activities in her denomination. Mary spoke at the National AOG Conference in 2001 on the role of women. She asked her audience what would happen if all the women in their churches boycotted the activities of the church for two weeks. She also posed the question: "How long is it since a woman spoke in your pulpit?" The audience was quiet in response to these questions. Mary has detected a reluctance to address the issue within many AOG churches. She believes that New Zealand churches generally have a preference for "getting on with the job" rather than analysing and debating.[153]

The subject of women's roles was a sensitive one when the Hoods first came to pastor the Tauranga assembly in 1983. Their predecessors had held to more traditional views on women's roles and

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[148] Jill Moore – 27/02/04.

[149] ibid.

[150] Jill Moore, e-mail to author, 04/03/04. Brackets included in the original.

[151] Jill Moore – 27/02/04.

[152] Tutauha, *Looking Back*, p.5.

[153] Interview with Mary Hood, (co)Pastor at Tauranga Assembly of God, Otumoetai, Tauranga – 13/09/02.

ministries.[154] The gender issue was so controversial that most people avoided discussing it. Mary began running morning coffee groups for women and offering childcare services so that mothers could enjoy fellowship and Bible study without the constraints of caring for young children. She suspects that this was a fairly radical approach, in comparison with the typical attitudes and practices of churches at that time. But at Tauranga AOG it proved to be a springboard to a flourishing range of women's ministries including young mothers' groups, prayer ministries, worship services and a child care centre. Other churches – both inside and outside the AOG movement – followed this example, creating similar structures for women during the 1980s and '90s.

The AOG Superintendent's wife (Glennys Hughes) indicated her desire to see some progress in the roles of AOG women by organising a gathering for pastor's wives in the early 1990's. But nothing further developed in that period. Mary also organised a pastors' wives' conference. It was held in 1995, at Faith Bible College, Welcome Bay. During that event, the invited Australian woman speaker prophesied over Mary that she would become involved in a work that was on her heart.[155] This prophetic basis to her efforts encouraged Mary to advance the nascent women's movement through the national executive.

In 1996 a contingent of AOG women – mostly pastor's wives – travelled to Adelaide to join thousands of others at a national conference for Australian AOG women.[156] Conference goers heard speakers on a range of Pentecostal themes as well as an address on the "Role of Women in Ministry Leadership". That same year, Mary encouraged other pastor's wives to lobby the AOG executive. But she was the only one who actually wrote in. The executive suggested she meet with other executive members' wives to explore the issues. Mary, and those she met with, formulated a proposal, which was presented to the executive and accepted. The proposal was to establish a national committee of women leaders who would meet twice a year to plan national events for AOG women. Sub-committees were set up around the country in each region according to the regional divisions of the AOG movement. Regional operations were to be headed up by the regional superintendents' wives.[157]

The first national conference for New Zealand AOG women occurred in 1998, in Tauranga.[158] It was organised and led by Mary and other members of the committee set up in 1996. Lila Terhune of the USA and Marie Cartledge of Australia were the invited speakers.[159] The national AOG executive were meeting in Tauranga at the same time and one of the executive, Kem Price, "opened the

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[154] Mary Hood – 13/09/02.

[155] ibid.

[156] Sharon Heke, 'New Zealand Contingent of Women Travel to Adelaide', *NZ Evangel*, No.1996-3/4, Winter 1996, p.8.

[157] Mary Hood – 13/09/02. Mary added that this structure did not work so well where the wife of the regional superintendent was not gifted for that role.

[158] ibid.; and Shirley Baskett, 'Around the Nation: 1st National Women's Conference a Huge Success!', *NZ Evangel*, No.1998-4/4, Spring 1998, pp.8-9.

[159] 'National Women's Conference Planned for August, '98', *NZ Evangel*, No.1998-1/4, Summer 1998, p.14.

conference by stating it was a *significant moment* in God for Christian women of our movement and nation".[160] The conference was so successful in its operation and attendance that there was a considerable financial surplus. This money was invested and subsequently used to finance further women's conferences in 2000 and 2002. However, these events were not as successful as the first and Mary believes the finances have dwindled.[161]

In Mary's words, "the movement is now at a 'crossroads' ". She perceives that the future of the AOG women's movement is linked to a variety of other priorities such as evangelism and Church growth. She wonders where the vision for women's ministries fits into the current evangelistic strategy of the AOG movement. Mary can see the potential of women's ministries to contribute to AOG objectives. "Community is a woman's thing... It's a problem with men; they don't often see the grassroots family stuff. It's not just women's issues, it's all of life – life is only possible because of women." Mary has observed that while women support male initiated activities, men rarely support or become involved in female initiated activities. "If we are going to survive as a church we need to embrace some of the life things... to realise that in many areas women are being just as effective as men."[162]

Ordination of women to pastoral ministry has been a part of the AOG movement since the 1950s. However, it is still not the norm. In 1996 Chris Jenkins was the only woman ordained among 14 new ordinands.[163] Another woman was ordained in 1997, one out of a total of 30 ordinations.[164] Yet, from her research, Mary stated that as much as 28% of credentialled and ordained pastors in the New Zealand AOG denomination are currently women. They minister in the roles of marriage celebrants, hospital chaplains, mission workers, and preachers in a variety of settings. Two women pastors are the senior pastors of their churches.[165]

Throughout the 1990s the AOG Council addressed the issues surrounding women's roles, obtaining discussion documents and submissions to guide their thinking. Kem Price played a significant role in this process. He asserts that women in ministry was never an issue.[166] It was only the question of whether women could be in positions of authority and leadership that was a sticking point. Gradually

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[160] Jonathan Young (Ed.) on behalf of the Executive Presbytery, 'Executive Presbytery Impressed by National Women's Conference', *NZ Evangel*, No.1998-4/4, Spring 1998, p.9. Italics in the original.

[161] Mary Hood – 13/09/02.

[162] ibid.

[163] 'Newly Ordained Ministers', *NZ Evangel*, No.1997-1/4, Summer 1997, pp.16-17.

[164] '1997 Ordinands', *NZ Evangel*, No.1998-1/4, Summer 1998, p.4. Photos are displayed without any captions or explanatory text, therefore, the ordinands cannot be identified.

[165] Mary Hood – 13/09/02. This statistic, if it is reliable, means that less than two percent of AOG pastorates are headed by women. According to Neil Hetrick, ~~current Superintendent~~ General Secretary, "On any Sunday we now have over 24,000 people who worship in our 216 churches". That statement was made in 1998. 'Viewpoint', *NZ Evangel*, No.1998-4/4, Spring 1998, p.1.

[166] Conversation with Kem Price, Assistant Superintendent for AOG New Zealand, at the national office, Auckland, 13/02/04. This assertion is supported by the historical record beginning with the AOG constitution (see p.70), followed by numerous examples of AOG women in ministry cited throughout this chapter, and the comments made by Jennings in his 1958 article in the *NZ Evangel* (see pp.76-77).

all of the constitutional clauses restricting women's roles were removed or modified. The last to go was that relating to executive positions. This occurred in 2003.[167]

Conclusion

Throughout its 80 year history the New Zealand Pentecostal movement has demonstrated – relative to other evangelical movements – a high degree of openness to gender equality. Although not fully realised in practice, the Pentecostal policy on women's roles was essentially that women could engage in ministry to the extent that God had gifted them. Commitment to this policy varied according to the emphasis placed on ministerial qualifications or on governance structures. And governance was the main issue. Biblical cautions and prohibitions concerning women speaking in church were less imposing to Pentecostals than those relating to women in authority. Yet even in this respect egalitarianism was developing both in policy and in practice as the end of the 20th century approached.

Commitment to egalitarian models of ministry varied from one denomination to another and from one period to another. A wide range of women's roles were in evidence during the early years of the Pentecostal denominations studied in this paper. Women missionaries, evangelists and prayer group leaders were common in the AOG movement in the 1920s and '30s; deaconesses and women preachers featured in the Apostolic Church during the 1930s and early '40s. Women pastors began to appear in the AOG during the 1950s; eventually and more decisively among the Apostolics in the 1990s. Many factors contributed to the fluctuating phenomenon of women occupying public roles. Splits in the Pentecostal movement, the Depression, the War, individual personalities, the influence of those who came from other countries, revival and renewal movements, efforts to evangelise or interface with the rest of society, the erratic number of adherents within these denominations – all had their effect on the changing fortunes of women's ministries.

Perhaps the most distinctive feature was the prominence of pastors' wives. While this has been a strength for women's ministries it has also been a weakness. On the one hand it created a binary relationship of ministry roles. Wherever a man achieved prominence – usually in a pastoral role – his wife was also cast into the limelight with opportunities to serve according to her gifting. On the other hand, this ministry model excluded women whose husbands were not in ministry, or, at least, they were left without a structure to facilitate the development of ministry skills. This too is changing with the emergence of women's organisations and women's events during the most recent decades.

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[167] Kem Price – 13/02/04.

Conclusion

A study of women's roles in the Church evokes responses ranging from fascination to indifference, from puzzlement to condescension, from empathy to antipathy. Much depends on the viewpoint and the life experience of the reader. For some people the mere mention of the Church is enough to deter them from reading further. For others it is the emphasis on women that sparks their interest. Or it may be the combination of Church *and* women that either enthuses or dissuades people. Yet the long history of the Church – and women in the Church – means that the subject should not be ignored. There is certain to be something that can be learnt from a study of over half the adherents of a historic institution.

Just as in the rest of society, the history of women in the Church is not an incremental progression from one level of "liberation" to another. In colonial times the opportunities women had to initiate or lead a ministry or a church varied according to locality and denominational culture. In rural areas women's leadership was more a last resort than an indication of changes in gender ideology. Women founded schools and Sunday Schools, set up women's groups and led church groups. Yet, once male leadership became available, the women willingly stepped aside. In the urban centres the first wave of feminism and social-activism from the 1870s to the 1910s was reflected in women's involvement in a range of community organisations and ministries including the influential Women's Christian Temperance Union. This was also the period when Deaconess ministries emerged, when women's Bible study classes commenced, and volunteers for missionary service were predominantly women. Yet these ministry opportunities were spread unevenly around the country, and depended on the strength of particular organisations in each region.

Retrenchment

With the possible exceptions of those in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition (Methodists, the Salvation Army and Pentecostals), New Zealand churches experienced a phase of retrenchment from the 1930s to the 1960s in regard to women's roles. The denominational publications consulted for this thesis paid minimal attention to women's activities during that period. Only the established and influential women's ministries received reasonably regular coverage in the *New Zealand Baptist*. These included the Baptist Women's Missionary Union, the Young Women's Bible Class Union and, to a lesser extent, the Remuera/Manurewa Children's Home. The valuable function and extensive network of these organisations ensured a national profile within the denomination. However, feminists could argue that these denominational structures domesticated women's roles by limiting them to traditional support ministries and children's ministries.

The Brethren periodical, *The Treasury*, conformed its content to the denominational emphasis on evangelism and missions. For several decades women's ministries only received mention in reports

on missions and missionary conferences. The intermittent publication of the *New Zealand Evangel* reduced opportunities for Assemblies of God women to shine in the historical record. When it was published the content of the *Evangel* was mainly devotional in nature. Women preachers in the Apostolic Church were notable exceptions to the prevailing conservatism among evangelical churches during this period. But, that phenomenon was restricted to the 1930s and early 1940s.

Janet Hassey comments on the decline of public ministry roles for evangelical women in the United States between the First and Second World Wars. She blames four main factors: "Fundamentalist subcultures", institutionalisation, a "backlash against changing social values", and "a more literalist view of Scripture".[1] The phenomenon of a Fundamentalist subculture was not so clearly replicated in New Zealand. It did not have the Creation – Evolution battles prominent in the USA in the 1920s nor did it have the population base prerequisite for the emergence of many nuanced subcultures. In fact, New Zealand culture was still closely tied to the "mother country", Great Britain. However, some evangelical groups became rather insular. The Church of Christ, the Open Brethren and Pentecostal movements kept largely to themselves until the latter decades of the 20th century. This meant that they developed their own, distinctive denominational cultures with some Fundamentalist strains.

The second factor, institutionalisation and, its corollary, the growing professionalism of church ministry, is also blamed for excluding women from ministry. This was a factor in New Zealand Church history but mostly among the major denominations, the Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics and Methodists. Of the evangelical denominations considered in this thesis, the Baptists and the Apostolics were most susceptible to institutionalisation; the Open Brethren were least affected.

Hassey's third factor – evangelical reaction to social change – came later in New Zealand than in America. It coincided with several phenomena including the second wave of feminism, increasing governmental intervention in the social sphere, and the anti-authority youth culture of the 1970s and '80s. The social trends of this period provoked reactionary responses from evangelicals but this reactionary movement was often led by women and it empowered women to stand up for what they believed. Another reaction to social change was that it prompted evangelicals to review their policies on women's roles. The "women's liberation" movement was an influence often denied but frequently mentioned. As such it was instrumental to the substantial changes in denominational policies on women that occurred in the closing decades of the 20th century.

As for the fourth factor in Hassey's list, the literalist interpretation of Scripture, this approach was evident in New Zealand evangelical denominations throughout the 20th century. It is characteristic of the evangelical paradigm. But it did not prevent the development of a debate concerning women's roles. That debate was particularly pronounced within the Baptist denomination, partly due to its greater number of adherents and partly because of its national structures, which provided multiple forums for dialogue.

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[1] Janet Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century*, Grand Rapids: Academie Books, 1986, pp.137-143. Previously cited in chapter 1, beginning on p.1.

The Forces of Change

Two main factors featured in the story of women's roles in New Zealand evangelical churches: the discipline of Biblical interpretation and the currents of change in the surrounding culture. For the most part, these two forces worked in opposition – the resolute rock of orthodox exegesis assailed by the winds and waves of social trends. One was internal to the Church; the other was external. But the key component in this dynamic was the human interface. So long as a majority of people – especially leaders – within evangelical denominations held to a traditional, literalist interpretation of Biblical texts on women, women's roles remained limited and away from church or denominational leadership. When people were influenced by cultural trends and social movements they became open to a reconsideration of the Biblical passages. Many evangelicals redefined or refined their views on women's roles in light of the challenges to traditional thinking. Externally, these pressures came from the feminist movement in all of its forms, from the tangible evidence of women in the workforce, and from much publicised changes occurring in other Christian denominations. Internally, questions were posed by women's groups and organisations, by writers in Christian periodicals, and by the mounting evidence of women's abilities across a range of ministries.

Not mentioned by Hassey, but relevant to the New Zealand context, was the influence of key personalities, prominent congregations and denominational publications. In a small country with denominations of 50,000 or less, significant individuals or groups can have a major effect on denominational policy. Among the Baptists, women missionaries such as Rosalie MacGeorge and Elizabeth Beckingsale raised the profile of women. Rev. J J North and his Oxford Terrace Baptist Church also played an important part in promoting women's ministry. The pastoral work of Deaconess Grace, the formation of the Dorcas Society, plus articles and editorials in the *New Zealand Baptist* from 1910 to the late 1930s are all evidence of this. Other pastors, union presidents and staff such as Vivienne Boyd, Patricia Preest and Bev Holt contributed in later decades to make women in leadership an accepted part of the Baptist landscape.

In the Open Brethren scene the *Treasury* editors fuelled the debate while maintaining the status quo. Prominent missionary women such as Gresham, Rout, Sundgren and Gillingham proved what women could accomplish in the most challenging environments. Later on it was Ross Palmer in the *Christian Brethren Research Fellowship Journal* and then the assemblies at Westchurch, Putaruru, Te Atatu and Hillcrest that led the way toward egalitarianism. Individuals such as Joan Suisted and Sheila Malcolm further demonstrated women's capabilities. The development of women's roles within the Pentecostal movement was also aided by prominent figures. These included the Scaddens, the Tregenzas, the Morrows and the Hoods.

Additional Lines of Research

Some additional factors not explored in this thesis include income, education, health and technology. Developments in these facets of human society inevitably impacted the Church and influenced gender roles. Higher levels of education and greater control over health issues facilitated women

moving into the workforce and opened up new options of the positions they could occupy. Similar outcomes are likely within the church. More research could be done in these areas utilising historical census data and identifying relevant governmental legislation. The potential value of this kind of analysis is illustrated in the work of Vodanovich.[2]

Another avenue for research is the minutes and statements of denominational bodies – councils, boards, presbyteries, pastors' conferences, mission agencies, women's organisations, elders groups, deacons groups and sub-committees. All levels of decision making need to be taken into account as evangelical denominations employed a variety of denominational structures while retaining a congregational emphasis. Even those with a strong, centralised infrastructure still leave a large measure of authority to the individual church to decide its own policies and direction. Such a study would reveal far more of the attitudes and policies that relate to women's roles and of the processes by which changes have occurred. A comparison with the institutional Protestant denominations might reveal that congregations and individuals played a lesser part in decisions about women's roles in those denominations than they did in the evangelical denominations. This, in turn, might have contributed to their more rapid progress toward egalitarianism.

After many hours of reading, interviewing, researching and writing, this thesis amounts to only an introduction, an entry point into a whole sphere of historical and theological research. It takes the reader on a guided tour of a world that is undervalued and almost unknown even to the most regular churchgoer. It also reveals the possibilities for momentous change without sacrificing the heritage, the beliefs, or the sense of community, which anchor the human enterprise.

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[2] Ivanica Vodanovich, 'Woman's Place in God's World', *Women's Studies Journal*, Vol. 2 No. 1, August 1985, pp.69-79. Previously cited in chapter 5, p.80f.

Appendix – Lines of Resistance

A significant number of Christian churches resisted the trend toward egalitarianism during the 20th century, weathering the storm of feminist agitation. Apart from the Roman Catholic Church, these denominations are not prominent in the national statistics In New Zealand. Many of them attract less than one percent of the population.[1] However, these same denominations have shown strengths in ways that the Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists have not. They have contributed to missions, evangelism and community organisations in far greater proportions than their share of the Christian market would suggest. And most could claim greater loyalty from their adherents than the major Prostestant churches.[2]

This appendix surveys the issues and debates relating to women's roles in these churches. Only brief consideration is given to the issues most relevant to the Catholic Church since that institution is not the subject of this thesis. Material relating to the debates within Roman Catholicism can be found elsewhere.[3] The majority of this appendix is focused on the issues and debates most pertinent to Protestant evangelical denominations.

Symbol and Text

In his study of women's ordination in the United States, Mark Chaves identifies two groupings among denominations that have tended to resist gender equality in ministry.[4] These he labels "inerrantists" and "sacramentalists". Inerrantists belong to denominations where the emphasis is on biblical authority and arguments from scripture. Evangelical[5] churches such as the Southern Baptists, the Reformed Churches, most Pentecostal groups, and some Lutherans comprise the bulk of this

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[1] Of the denominations studied in chapters 3, 4 & 5, respondents who claimed to be Baptists totalled 51,000 in the 2001 census, all those who claimed to be Brethren amounted to approximately 20,000 of whom around 18,000 were likely to be Open Brethren, and the Assemblies of God adherents totalled 16,000 while those who claimed to be Apostolics amounted to 8,100. It is likely that at least some of those who identified themselves simply as "Christian" were also members of these denominations. From www.stats.govt.nz/census.htm.

[2] This conclusion can be drawn from the dramatic decline in census figures for each of the three main Protestant denominations while the statistics for the smaller denominations remained comparatively steady. In a 40 year period (from 1956 to 1996) the percentage of people declaring themselves to be Anglican dropped from 35.9% to 17.5%, the Presbyterian percentage fell from 22.3% to 12.7%, the Methodists declined from 7.4% to 3.6%. Cumulatively the Catholics, Baptists, Brethren, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventists and the Pentecostal churches registered 17.8% (with Catholics being the great majority at 14.3%) in 1956. By 1996 the combined figure for these denominations was only slightly down at 17.3% (of which Catholics comprised 12.7%). People who exited the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches during those decades had redistributed themselves to the categories Agnostic, Atheist, No Religion, or simply "Christian". Davidson and Lineham, *Transplanted Christianity*, p.301f.

[3] See for instance: Vincent E Hannon, *The Question of Women and the Priesthood: Can Women be Admitted to Holy Orders?*, London: Catholic Book Club, 1967; Louis Bouyer, *Woman in the Church*, Tr. Marilyn Teichert, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1979 (original: *Mystère et ministères de la femme dans l' église*, Paris: Aubier, 1976); Leonard Swidler & Arlene Swidler (Eds.), *Women Priests: A Catholic Commentary on the Vatican Declaration*, New York: Paulist Press, 1977; and Peter Drilling, *Trinity and Ministry*, Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.

[4] Chaves, *Ordaining Women*, pp.84-127.

[5] See footnote 1 of the Preface for a discussion of this term.

category in America. Sacramentalists are found in churches where sacraments are central to theology and church life. This category is dominated by Catholic Churches but also includes various Orthodox denominations and some Episcopalians.

Chaves notes that resistance is particularly strong in the sacramentalist camp where symbolism is considered crucial to the practice and representation of the faith. The main argument is that the priest, acting in the place of Christ, should be male because Christ was male. When women perform sacerdotal duties – especially celebrating the Eucharist – a symbolic dissonance arises. This dissonance is intensified by a traditional view of women as morally frail and inferior to men. Janet Soskice outlines this reasoning in her analysis of the sacramentalist perspective:[6]

> Women were regarded by many early theologians as subordinate in the order of creation and as lesser in authority, rationality and will. God, on the other hand, was known as supremely powerful, supremely good, and supremely rational... Women cannot signify Christ because they are naturally subordinate... This, if anything, has been the constant position of the Church, and the main argument why the symbolism would be wrong.[7]

Soskice suggests that alternative images and characteristics be utilised when considering priesthood symbolism. For instance, the priest's humility may be more representative of Christ than his (or her) eminence. Christ is presented in New Testament writings as a humble 'servant' who renounced opportunities for self-promotion and freely associated with social outcasts. Accordingly, Soskice contends that it is the poor, the disadvantaged and women who best symbolise Christ to humanity.[8]

Chaves is more direct in his critique. He believes that an evolved hostility to the "modern liberal world" is at the core of sacramentalist opposition to women in leadership.[9] He asserts that there is no intrinsic logic to the proposition that the priest must represent Christ biologically. In his examination of a series of official statements from the Catholic Church, Chaves perceives an anti-modernist stance, a systematic effort to shut out secular influences.

> My argument is that the Church's resistance to full gender equality, and its expression of that resistance in terms of its core sacramentalist identity, should also be understood in the context of constructing a boundary between the Church and the world.[10]

In so doing, the Catholic Church is declaring its distinctiveness, defining its identity against the surrounding social climate. While Chaves' thesis has its merits, it flies in the face of reality. The Church as a whole, and Roman Catholicism in particular, has survived for centuries despite changing sociological and philosophical paradigms. Its identity has been shaped by a multitude of historical and theological factors. It is not defined by its reaction to a single issue or even an entire cultural paradigm. Like any enduring institution, the Church exists because of, and is defined by, its internal logic and belief system. Otherwise it would have succumbed to external pressures long ago. In fact, sacramentalist denominations (the Roman Catholic Church, various brands of Orthodox Christianity

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[6] Janet M Soskice, "Would the Symbolism Be All Wrong?" from *Women Priests?,* Alyson Peberdy (Ed.), Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1988, pp.12-21.

[7] ibid., p.18f.

[8] ibid., p.20.

[9] Chaves, *Ordaining Women*, pp.116-127.

[10] ibid., p.124.

based in Eastern Europe, plus the Coptic Churches in North Eastern Africa) still attract hundreds of millions of adherents across the globe.

In the inerrantist camp resistance to gender equality is based on biblical statements that appear to exclude female participation at leadership levels. For these denominations the Bible is the highest authority, regulating both individual and corporate patterns of behaviour. The texts discussed by Catherine Booth, and before her by Phoebe Palmer, indicate the key parameters for inerrantists in the debate on women's roles in the Church. While Chaves might claim otherwise, the inerrantists and their subset the evangelicals[11] are defined by the status they ascribe to the Bible. With the legacy of William Tyndale, Martin Luther, John Calvin and the Protestant Reformation informing their denominational traditions, the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy has long been their most distinctive trait.

Equality or Complementarity?

On the issue of women's ministry, inerrantists divide into two main groupings – "egalitarians" and "complementarians".[12] This terminology derives from the American debates of the late 20th century. However, a survey of this debate provides a helpful understanding of the main issues that have concerned New Zealand evangelicals who have resisted or embraced egalitarianism.

The complementarian viewpoint is represented by those who assert that men and women are equal *but* different and complementary. They acknowledge feminist concerns and the gains women have made in other spheres of society. However, they point to Biblical texts that support their argument that women's roles do not include church leadership or ministries that put them into positions where they could be teaching men. "Subordinationism", an earlier incarnation of complementarianism, emphasises the "divinely created order" of Genesis which, in this view, established that women are subordinate to men and men are subordinate to God. Remnants of this emphasis can also be found in complementarianism.

The egalitarian viewpoint, labelled by some as "liberationist", emphasises gender equality and the freedom to enter ministry roles according to individual merits. Egalitarians reject subordination (or gender hierarchy) as a product of distorted social categories. Far from representing God's creative design, subordination of women "falls short of the highest Biblical ethic".[13] Egalitarians strive for a social order in the church that offers equal opportunities for men and women to fulfil their potential at all levels of ministry and leadership.

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[11] For a discussion of evangelicals and evangelicalism refer to footnote 1 of the Preface.

[12] In his book *Sabbath, War and Women: Case Issues in Biblical Interpretation*, Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983, Willard M Swartley labels the opposing camps "hierarchical" and "liberationist". This classification focuses on the gender relationships that each viewpoint might approve of or encourage. It also casts negative connotations over the complementarian view while making the egalitarian view sound far more positive and more defensible as an issue of basic human rights. As in most disputes, here language is deployed as a weapon to denigrate the opponents' viewpoint and to win support for one's own. Throughout this thesis the words "complementarian" and "egalitarian" are preferred because they are both somewhat positive in tone, and are more widely used.

[13] Swartley, *Sabbath, War and Women*, p.151.

The Created Order

Complementarians typically begin their argument by an examination of the creation accounts in the opening chapters of the Bible, Genesis (Gen) 1 – 3. They acknowledge that Gen 1.26-27 establishes the equality of men and women – both are made "in God's image". This "likeness" has structural, relational and functional dimensions that apply to all humans, both corporately and individually.[14] But complementarians do not stop there. They go on to argue that although the two genders are identical in status their roles are meant to be different, especially in regard to authority. They assert contra Bilezikian[15], Grenz[16], Groothuis[17], Keener[18] and others that equality can exist within the context of different gender roles, that it is not compromised by differing function or by subordination. Adam and Eve were equal before God but functionally and positionally distinct. In the words of Bruce Ware, Theology professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "while both are *fully* the image of God, and both are *equally* the image of God, it may be the case that both are not constituted as the image of God in the identical way." In fact, as Ware argues, "there is a God-intended temporal priority bestowed upon the man as the original image of God."[19] In pointing to the chronological order of the creation story, Ware highlights one of the major strands of the complementarian rationale for restricting leadership roles to men.

Another professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Thomas Schreiner, discerns six indicators in the opening chapters of Genesis that Adam (and, by inference, the male gender) was supposed to occupy a leadership role:

- God created Adam first, and then he created Eve.
- God gave Adam the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- God created Eve to be a helper for Adam.
- Adam exercised his leadership by naming the creature God formed out of Adam's rib 'woman'.
- The serpent subverted God's pattern of leadership by tempting Eve rather than Adam.
- God approached Adam first after the first couple had sinned, even though Eve sinned first.[20]

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[14] See Bruce Ware's discussion on this subject in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, Wayne Grudem (Ed.), Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002, pp.73-80.

[15] Gilbert Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles: What the Bible Says About a Woman's Place in Church and Family*, second edition, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1985. An ardent egalitarian, Bilezkian sees gender roles as a non-Christian social construct to be opposed. He writes: "The concept of sex roles is one of those bondages from which the gospel can set us free. Nowhere does the Scripture command us to develop our sex-role awareness as males or females.... Genuine Christian spirituality is located beyond the entrapments of sex roles. Men should learn to temper the masculinity instilled in them by the world with the authentic humanity produced by the Holy Spirit." pp.208-209

[16] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, 1995 (previously cited in chapter 2, footnote 49).

[17] Rebecca Groothuis, *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.

[18] Craig S Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul*, Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1992.

[19] From Grudem, *Biblical Foundations*, p.82.

[20] From James R Beck & Craig L Blomberg (Eds.), *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001, p.201. The same six points can be found in other complementarian statements such as Thomas Finley's discussion on "The Relationship of Woman and Man in the Old Testament", in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*, Robert L Saucy and Judith K Tenelshof (Gen. Eds.), Chicago: Moody Press, 2001, especially pp.53-61.

In regard to his first point – the temporal priority argument – Schreiner recognises that it might lead to the conclusion that "animals should rule over human beings, since animals were created before humans."[21] He counters this logic by pointing out that "humans are the only creatures made in God's image" and that Genesis 2 needs to be read in the cultural context of the ancient Hebrews in which primogeniture was the norm.[22] Schreiner then seeks canonical support for his position. He refers to the connection the Apostle Paul made between female subordination and Adam's temporal priority in his strongest New Testament injunction against women holding leadership or teaching roles. "The most natural reading of the words of Paul in 1 Timothy 2.11-15 supports the complementarian interpretation of Genesis 2: Men bear the responsibility to lead and teach in the church because Adam was created before Eve (see also 1 Cor 11.8-9)."[23] These well-worn arguments have been the stock answers of complementarians for centuries, long before the label was invented.

Schreiner's second indicator for male leadership – God's communication of instructions to Adam prior to Eve's creation – is, as Schreiner concedes, suggestive rather than decisive. His third is more controversial: that Eve was created to be Adam's helper, not his leader. The traditional view since Augustine is that the woman primarily "helps" the man through her reproductive capacity. Beyond this function, Augustine and Aquinas could see little use for the "fairer sex". Contemporary commentators emphasise other roles such as companionship, support and participating in the task of "ruling over" the earth (see Gen 1.28). Schreiner acknowledges the egalitarian argument that a "helper" is not necessarily inferior to the one being helped because God (with the name YHWH) is sometimes referred to as Israel's helper.[24] "Yahweh surely is Israel's helper in that he saves and delivers Israel – so how can complementarians possibly think that describing Eve as Adam's helper supports the case for male headship?"[25] Schreiner answers the question by examining a variety of Old Testament passages where one party is helping another party. He concludes that the "context is decisive in determining whether the one who helps has a superior or inferior role. Egalitarians cannot dismiss the complementarian view simply by saying that Yahweh helped Israel, for in other texts it is clear that leaders were helped by those who were under authority."[26]

Schreiner goes on to talk of Adam naming Eve as a demonstration of Adam's leadership role. He is careful to emphasise that this interpretation does not mean that Eve is on a par with the animals,

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[21] T R Schreiner, "Women in Ministry", from *Two Views*, p.202.

[22] Schreiner, "Women in Ministry", p.203. The egalitarian, Grenz, acknowledges that just because the order of creation culminates in the creation of Eve it is fallacious to claim that Eve is the highest ranking creature. He recognises "the different intentions of the two creation narratives" in Genesis 1 and 2. He goes on to propose that Eve be considered the 'crown of creation' in the sense that she "saves the man from his loneliness." Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.162. However, this already modest claim is weakened by the fact that Eve is object of this story – it is God who is the subject; it is he, not Eve, who provides a "solution" to Adam's loneliness.

[23] Schreiner, "Women in Ministry", from *Two Views*, p.203. The New Testament texts are addressed later in this chapter.

[24] For an example of this argument see Ruth Edwards, *The Case for Women's Ministry, Biblical Foundations in Theology*, J D G Dunn & J P Mackay (Eds.), London: SPCK, 1989, p.30.

[25] Schreiner, "Women in Ministry", p.204.

[26] ibid., p.204f.

which Adam also names (i.e. classifies) in the Genesis story. "In both instances naming is a symbol of rule, but it would be unwarranted to deduce that the rule is precisely the same or that women are like animals. The entire narrative illustrates that there was both continuity and discontinuity between Adam's rule over woman and his dominion over God's creatures."[27] One key difference is that in naming Eve, Adam recognises her as a creature of the same genus as himself. In fact, he identifies with her by renaming himself. In the words of Thomas Finley: "Her name, 'woman' (*ishshah*), relates to his new name, 'man' (*ish*). Adam recognised a new relationship and saw himself in a new light: the one from whom 'woman' was taken".[28] Egalitarians point out that the Hebrew text does not contain the usual Old Testament "naming formula" and so, they argue, it simply indicates that Adam recognised Eve as a woman, as his human equivalent. Therefore, they suggest that this is not an argument for hierarchy but a proof of mutuality.[29]

Schreiner's fifth point concerns the Serpent's selection of Eve in a deception strategy that challenges Adam's authority. Finley also picks up on this point:

> Based on the overall context, one could say that the serpent chose the woman because she was not the one with the lead role. Since she was supposed to be the man's helper, what better way to persuade the couple to turn against God than to undermine her desire to cooperate with the conditions that God had laid out?[30]

This speculation depends on the prior assumption that Adam is the rightful leader, a position that Eve is encouraged to usurp. It represents the kind of Biblical interpretation that can be expected from those who already hold to a complementarian view before examining the text. It does nothing to prove the case for Adam's leadership role. Accordingly, Schreiner concedes that it is not an integral part of his own argument and may, in fact, be incorrect.[31]

The sixth and final point is that after Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit God summoned Adam first, rebuking him before speaking to Eve (Gen 3.8-13). This indicates to Schreiner that God held Adam accountable as the leader, the chief executive in the Garden of Eden. Again Schreiner cross-references to the writings of Paul.

> In Romans 5.12-19 Paul confirms this reading of the narrative, for the sin of the human race was traced to Adam, not to Eve. I am not suggesting that Eve bore no responsibility for her sin. Yahweh censured her actions as well and judged her for what she did (Gen 3.13, 16). Greater responsibility, however, is assigned to Adam as the leader of the first human couple.[32]

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[27] Schreiner, "Women in Ministry", p.207.

[28] Finley, "The Relationship of Woman and Man etc.", p.55.

[29] Grenz cites the writings of Phyllis Trible and Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen in his development of the egalitarian interpretation of Adam naming Eve. See Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.163

[30] Finley, "The Relationship of Woman and Man etc.", p.58.

[31] Schreiner, "Women in Ministry", p.209.

[32] ibid.

Finley notes that in Gen 3.17 God addresses Adam in a formal manner that reminds Adam that he was the one who had received the instruction concerning the protected tree. Finley interprets this to mean that Adam bears overall responsibility for what has happened.[33]

The texts of the creation story, and the debates over their interpretation, lay the foundation for the approach that inerrantists take to the other Biblical material relating to gender roles. In the narrative sections of the Old Testament, egalitarians note – with some dismay – the patriachalism of ancient Hebrew culture, but then go on to celebrate the stories of prominent Hebrew women.[34] The names of Miriam (Moses' sister), Deborah (an early Israelite leader) and Huldah (a prophetess) feature in the pantheon of Old Testament heroines. However, in general, the lot of the ancient Hebrew woman was that of a dependent – depending on the significant male in her life for income, identity, social credibility and legal redress. Both complementarians and egalitarians recognise the obvious cultural dimensions of patriarchalism but whereas the former group sees a certain amount of patriarchalism as consistent with God's design, egalitarians are often highly critical. Bilezikian employs words such as "oppression", "subjection", "exclusion" and "inhumane" in his discussion of ancient Hebrew patriarchal society.[35] In this way, egalitarians side with Christian feminist literature where patriarchy (and patriarchalism) is singled out as the central evil plaguing society in general and the church in particular.[36]

Jesus and Women

In the New Testament the focus of the debate is initially on Jesus Christ and his attitude to women. Consideration of the person and work of Christ touches the very core of evangelical beliefs. His teachings and actions provide the benchmark and the framework for the beliefs and behaviour of all his followers. So, his words are closely scrutinised.[37] But on the issue of women's roles, there is no explicit record of Jesus' views. Our understanding of his views has to be inferred from the accounts of his interaction with women, and from his comments on issues that define human relationships.

One interpretation on which complementarians and egalitarians agree is that the Jesus of the Gospels was quite radical in his dealings with women, that he departed significantly from the norms of the society in which he lived. In Jewish society at that time, women enjoyed an elevated status

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[33] Finley, "The Relationship of Woman and Man etc.", p.61.

[34] For examples of this, see Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, pp.64-71, and Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, pp.63-73.

[35] Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, pp.59-68.

[36] See for instance: Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975 edition; Rosemary Radford-Ruether, *Women-Church: Theology and Practice*, San Francisco: Harper Row, 1985; and Elaine Storkey, *What's Right With Feminism*, London: SPCK, 1985.

[37] There is a long history of scrutiny of Jesus' life and words as presented in the four gospels. Biblical scholars in the 19th and 20th centuries arrived at a wide variety of conclusions about what constitutes the more epistemologically defensible "Jesus of history" in contrast to what might be categorised as the "Jesus of faith". Whether or not a discrepancy exists between these two paradigms is still open to debate. However, the evangelical premise is that the presentation of Jesus in the gospels is reliable and definitive. Therefore, an analysis of evangelical practice and belief requires engagement with the records of Jesus' life and words as they stand in the mainstream versions of the New Testament.

within the domestic environment, so long as they remained loyal to their husbands and emphasised motherhood and service. But in wider society they were regarded as inferior to men, particularly in contexts where use of the intellect was paramount.[38] There is strong evidence that both girls and boys received at least a rudimentary education in the home.[39] There the emphasis was on religious education, instruction in the Torah. But access to higher learning in the rabbinic schools was limited. In other, more cosmopolitan parts of the Roman Empire some Jewish women enjoyed the privileges of higher education.[40] But in Judea, where the Rabbis held sway, girls were excluded from the education sector.[41] It is fair to say that many boys missed out on such privileges too, especially under Roman oppression. But for males there were no cultural or religious impediments related to gender. Women were not forbidden to study the law but neither were they encouraged to aspire to anything more than listening to men speaking at the synagogue.

At worship, the patriarchal and chauvinistic ideology of Jewish culture was strongly in evidence. It is generally accepted that women sat separately from the men, usually off to the side of the main proceedings (though this understanding has been challenged). At the Temple, women were allowed to worship but were not allowed into an inner court where men congregated for certain ceremonies.[42] In this way, Jewish women were relegated to the same position as Gentiles who came to worship. And, in the synagogue, "after the men prayed, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a woman,' women were to pray, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made me according to thy will'."[43]

Although Jesus was unpopular within respectable Jewish society, his message was largely directed at the masses. He proclaimed the immanence of a new society, a new theocracy during a time when the Jews were subject to the whims of an, often, ruthless Roman autocracy. His miracles, teachings and ascetic lifestyle – suggestive of the ideal Old Testament prophet – identified him with messianic hopes, which were heightened during his lifetime. Despite the countless demands for his attention Jesus demonstrated a remarkable willingness to accommodate whoever came to him. He showed

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[38] Linda Belleville would argue that in practice women were active in the public domain as business partners and co-workers. But the evidence for this claim is sketchy. See *Woman Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000, p.82f.

[39] ibid., p.78.

[40] An example of this might be seen in the account of Priscilla, the wife of Aquila. Previous to their acquaintance with Paul, the couple lived in Italy but then moved to Ephesus. Her prominence is implied by the priority given to her name whenever the couple are mentioned (cf. Acts 18.18; 2 Tim 4.19). And, she shared with her husband the task of educating the already talented and knowledgeable Apollos. After hearing him speak in the local synagogue Priscilla and Aquila invited Apollos to their home where they taught him "more adequately" in the truths of the Christian faith (Acts 18.26).

[41] Michael Wilkins states that, "Although the schools of Shammai and Hillel held opposite views about candidates for admission, with the former opting for higher social class students and the latter preferring a more democratic clientele, neither opened their doors to female students". This from "Women in the Teaching and Example of Jesus", in *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*, Robert L Saucy & Judith K Tenelshof (Gen. eds.), Chicago: Moody Press, 2001, p.99.

[42] Edwards, *The Case for Women's Ministry*, p.26.

[43] H. Wayne House, *The Role of Women in Ministry Today*, Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995, p.71.

respect to all those who interacted with him in an open, honest manner. And, what is more, he extended this same respect to people of all kinds, regardless of race or gender.

> Jesus' dealings with women ran contrary to the cultural norms of his day; he viewed all people, whether male or female, as persons. Counter to rabbinic practice, (Jesus) freely associated with women.... He touched and was touched by women, even those who were ritually unclean (Mt 9.18-26) or whose morals were questionable (Lk 7.36-50). Jesus not only warmly received women who came to him, he considered women such as Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, and Mary Magdalene among his close friends. In so doing, he clearly demonstrated that men and women could intimately relate to each other on more than just a sexual level.[44]

In contrast to the Jewish authorities and rabbis of his day, Jesus was prepared to take time to converse with women on spiritual matters (John 4.7-26) and to teach them (Luke 10.38-42) in much the same way that he spoke with and taught his male disciples. He even "used women as examples to emulate".[45] His parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18.1-8) and his observation of the poor widow's commitment and generosity (Mark 12.41-43) are instances of this.

While it is true that Jesus did not select any women among his Twelve Disciples (or Apostles) it is clear that women were part of the wider entourage of disciples – all those who accepted the invitation to follow him and, by inference, believe his teachings. Several of these are named, most notably Mary Magdalene, who experienced release from demonic influence through Jesus' ministry then followed him all the way to his crucifixion. She is privileged to be the first witness to his resurrection (Mark 16.9). Other women among the disciples include Joanna, Susanna and Salome. "These women contributed financially to the cause and provided for Jesus' needs (Mt 27.55-56; Mk 15.40-41)."[46] While they were more peripheral than the chosen twelve, the fact that they are named and their roles are described is a significant statement in itself.

Jesus' non-selection of women Apostles has long been an argument used in opposition to egalitarian policies on ministry roles. Complementarians conclude from Jesus' selection of men only that he did not mean women to hold positions of spiritual authority. This interpretation is an argument from silence, unsubstantiated by the text. But complementarians are prone to read the Gospels through the lens of the Pauline epistles. An example of this comes from Michael Wilkins, professor at Biola University:

> We can see clearly that women and men are treated as equal persons who are called to equal status as Jesus' disciples. But we can also see that when Jesus did not call women to apostleship, this is an indication that there are different roles for women and men.... The hint here is that there are certain positions of leadership that are appointed for men, but that in no way minimizes the status of women as persons or hinders them from participating as equal members of Jesus' ministry team. It will remain for the rest of the New Testament to clarify those purposes.[47]

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[44] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.73.

[45] Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, pp.85.

[46] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.75. See also Luke 8.1-3.

[47] Wilkins, "Women in the Teaching and Example of Jesus", p.106.

Similarly, Professor H Wayne House concludes his treatment of this subject with the statement: "As we will see, in fact, it is upon qualifications and restrictions given under apostolic authority that the biblical identification and role of women in the church must ultimately be determined."[48]

In contrast, egalitarians – and some New Testament commentators – have preferred to explain the non-selection of women through the lens of the Old Testament with its emphasis on the twelve tribes of Israel as God's chosen people. "Jesus' selection of twelve male apostles, reminiscent of the original patriarchs, was an eschatological sign denoting that Jesus was reconstituting the ancient people of God."[49] The two interpretations are not mutually exclusive. Many evangelicals hold them both. But egalitarians are keen to interpret Jesus' words and actions separately from the writings of Paul. They also argue that the male gender of the Twelve Disciples does not mean that apostolic ministry must remain gender exclusive any more than the Jewish ethnicity of the Apostles means that ministry must remain in the hands of Jews.[50]

Paul and Women: His positive statements

Many books, articles and other publications have been written to address Pauline texts on women's roles. The debates are extensive and involved, exploring issues of marriage, church leadership spiritual gifting, subordination, "headship" and links with Creation theology in Genesis. Considerable effort has been expended on analysing key words in the original Greek. Some of these debates surface in succeeding chapters, which survey the journeys of some evangelical denominations in relation to women's roles in New Zealand. But here an attempt is made to introduce some of the key ingredients of the discussions surrounding Paul's views on women.

In regard to women, it could be argued that Paul was just as enlightened as Jesus was – relative to the cultures that surrounded him. He explicitly recognised the role and value of women when he referred to Phoebe (Romans 16.1-2), Priscilla (Romans 16.3), Euodia and Syntyche (Philippians 4.2-3) as co-workers in the cause of the gospel. His positive attitude was also demonstrated by his willingness to preach to an audience of women when seeking to plant a new Christian community in the city of Philippi (Acts 16.13-15). In his letters Paul wrote instructions and advice to women in the church in much the same way that he wrote to men (1 Corinthians 7.1-28; Ephesians 5.22-31; 1 Timothy 3.8-11). And he frequently included greetings or commendations for specific women in his letters. There is nothing in the New Testament record of Paul's dealings with the opposite gender to suggest he held a negative – let alone misogynous[51] – view of women.

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[48] House, *The Role of Women*, p.84.

[49] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.212.

[50] This originates with Paul Jewett, "Why I Favor the Ordination of Women", *Christianity Today,* Vol.19, No.18, June 1975, p.10.

[51] Allegations that Paul was a misogynist and, consequently, that the Church is misogynistic can be found in the works of a number of feminist writers, such as: Cathy Wilson, "Doctrine, Language and Imagery", from *Religion in New Zealand: Women and the Church*, Christopher Nichol (Ed.), Wellington: Tertiary Christian Studies Programme, Victoria University, 1984, pp.8-26. Accordingly, Ruth Edwards entitles one of her chapters "Paul:

Paul's most explicitly egalitarian statement appears in Galatians (Gal) 3.28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" [NIV]. This is the single most quoted verse in egalitarian writings and a rallying point for egalitarian lobby groups.[52] Many suggest that this is the defining statement of Paul's own thinking, that all of his other statements on rights or status must be read in the light of this verse. Some egalitarians claim that Paul's statements restricting women's roles were a concession to socio-cultural pressures that existed in the communities to whom he was writing.[53] For instance, Susan Adams and John Salmon write:

> Paul does have a vision of freedom and equality, which keeps breaking through in spite of all the pressures to clamp down on that. Because his concern was with the practical, political problems of local clusters of Christians, those social and structural factors impinged on his writing in a way they didn't on the writers of the theological reflections we know as the Gospels.[54]

They argue that privately Paul harboured egalitarian principles such as are found in Gal 3.28. They go on to assert that it was the Christian leaders of the early church who inadequately appreciated this nuanced social context and so developed Paul's theology into male oriented doctrines. "Quite a lot of what we blame Paul for, then, we should properly heap onto the church and its teachers and theologians."[55]

Egalitarians discern within Gal 3.28 a restructuring of social relations leading to a new eschatological community represented in and by the Church. They claim that the three negative clauses establish racial, class and gender equality. This is a culmination of the redemptive work of Christ, reversing the effects of the original sin described in Genesis 3 and establishing a new social order. But, complementarians confine the effect of Paul's statement to personal soteriology – the relationship

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Misogynist or Feminist". *The Case for Women's Ministry*, pp.54-71. See also the writings of Mary Daly, Letha Scanzoni and Rosemary Radford Ruether.

[52] Richard Hove writes: "For those of the egalitarian persuasion, Galatians 3.28 is a critically important verse. In fact, virtually all egalitarian scholars appeal to this verse to substantiate their position. Rebecca Groothuis, in her book *Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality*, states, "Of all the texts that support biblical equality, Galatians 3.26-28 is probably the *most* important." In her estimation this verse, above thousands of others, is the ultimate statement of equality in the Scriptures. The organisation Christians for Biblical Equity (CBE) makes Galatians 3.28 its hallmark verse: "Christians for Biblical Equality is an organisation of Christians who believe the Bible, properly interpreted, teaches the fundamental equality of men and women of all racial and ethnic groups, all economic classes, and all age groups, based on biblical teachings summarised in Galatians 3.28"." From "Does Galatians 3:28 Negate Gender-Specific Roles?", in *Biblical Foundations for Manhood and Womanhood*, Wayne Grudem (Ed.), Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002, p.105f.

[53] In a chapter entitled "Neither Male Nor Female, Galatians 3.28 – Alternative Vision and Pauline Modification", feminist theologian Elizabeth Fiorenza provides a compelling analysis of the socio-historical context of this verse, revealing the challenges, nuances and limits of interpretation posed by contemporary structures and attitudes. She draws into her discussion the other elements of Pauline teaching on women – marriage, public speaking, dress code etc – which qualify his egalitarian sentiments in Galatians 3.28 and 1 Corinthians 12.13. She discerns a "practical tension" in Paul's writings which, when understood, renders labels such as "chauvinist" and "liberationist" as overly simplistic. Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, New York: Crossroad, 1984, pp.206–241. Unfortunately, evangelicals have failed to give sufficient attention to the insights of Fiorenza and other feminist writers who have made careful, constructive contributions such as this.

[54] S Adams & J Salmon, *Women, Culture, and Theology: Some Interactions with Paul*, Wellington: Methodist Education Division, 1988, p.29.

[55] ibid., p.30.

with God that all categories of person can have as a result of their salvation through Christ. Robert Saucy, a noted advocate for the complementarian position, writes:

> The apostle's teaching that there is "neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ" is a profound statement about the relationship of men and women "in Christ." There is absolutely no distinction in their relationship to Christ. They equally participate in all that Christ has done for his people and all that He is to them today and forever. They are "one" in Him.[56]

In other words, the change Paul has in view is *positional*, not *functional*. In the complementarian view Gal 3.28 does not establish a new social order but declares the equal status before God that all Christians have through the saving work of Christ. The egalitarian, Stanley Grenz, concedes that "the egalitarian case may be overstated. Complementarians rightly remind us that Gal 3.28 is a broad, general statement that occurs in a discussion of soteriology (God's work in salvation), not church practice."[57] However, attracted by its bold slogans, and encouraged by its ambiguity, most egalitarians rely on Gal 3.28 as a major plank in the platform for their campaign.

Paul and Women: His negative statements

The Pauline texts that provoke the most debates in regard to women's ministry are those found in 1 Corinthians (Cor) 14 and 1 Timothy (Tim) 2. Paul's instruction in 1 Cor 14 falls within the context of a passage that discusses the protocols for corporate worship services. Having outlined the proper place of the speaking gifts of glossolalia and prophecy he focuses on the issue of women speaking:

> As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. (1 Cor 14.33b-35 NIV)

At face value, this text appears to be an explicit and authoritative injunction against women speaking in church. However, when examined more closely, it is actually quite problematic for Biblical commentators of all persuasions. For instance, did it intend to exclude all forms of speaking in church or is a specific kind of speaking in mind here? The context indicates prophecy and praying in tongues. Yet, only three chapters earlier – in another passage dealing with congregational protocol – Paul states: "Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonours her head...." (1 Cor 11.5) While this earlier verse imposes a particular dress code for women in the Corinthian church it does not prohibit praying and prophesying. In fact, it assumes that women *are* participating in these ways and that, apart from their lack of head coverings, they are contributing in an appropriate manner. So why does Paul now command silence and say that: "it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in church"? Is there another kind of speaking in view here?

One phrase in this passage tells women that if they wish to "inquire about something they should ask their own husbands at home." (v35) Does this suggest that the main problem was a disruptive behaviour pattern, that women were challenging their husbands or asking them questions out aloud during the service from the women's section? If that is its main application then this text does not

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[56] Robert Saucy, "The Ministry of Women in the Early Church", *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective*, Robert L Saucy & Judith K Tenelshof (Gen. eds.), Chicago: Moody Press, 2001, p.158f.

[57] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.107.

proscribe women from engaging in public ministry. It is simply an attempt to critique the proceedings in Corinth and prescribe a solution. However, this interpretation breaks significantly from the emphasis of this chapter on glossolalia and prophecy. And, it raises the question of what Paul had in mind for women who did not have a Christian husband (or father) to consult on spiritual matters. It also casts uncertainty over why Paul appealed to an objective reference point, "the Law" (v34).

Paul's appeal to the Law (*nomos* in the Greek, or *torah* in Hebrew) to back up his assertions creates further difficulties for interpreting this passage. In New Testament writings "the Law" was shorthand for the Old Testament in general or the early books of the Old Testament in particular – books containing the legal codes adopted at the founding of the nation of Israel.[58] However, there is no command in ancient Hebrew writings for women to remain silent in worship. Nor is there a requirement for women to refrain from public speaking as a sign of submission to men. Some complementarians suggest that Paul had Genesis 3.16 in mind, a verse which outlines Eve's penalty for sin and includes a clause that says her husband will "rule over" her. However, this text is not a legal injunction but a statement of consequences. Furthermore, it is not a statement directed at the protocols of worship. Grenz & Kjesbo identify several Old Testament texts that enjoin silence before God (Isaiah 41.1; Habakkuk 2.20; Zechariah 2.13) and before others who deserve respect (Judges 3.19; Job 29.21; Psalm 31.17-18). But these authors conclude, "Although Paul may have this Old Testament principle of submission in view, the question remains as to why the apostle specifically enjoins the subordination of women."[59]

In spite of the uncertainties, many complementarians have insisted that this text (1 Cor 14.34-35) proscribes women speaking in church other than divinely inspired glossolalia and prophecy.

> Clearly the speaking referred to caused women to have a public role over men in the congregation... Paul, in denying public address to women also denies (them) judging prophets and publicly disagreeing with husbands. Therefore, any noninspired public speaking regarding Scripture would be in violation of Paul's prohibition in 1 Corinthians 14.33b-36.[60]

Some egalitarian writers and biblical commentators have claimed that Paul is not the author of the statements in 1 Cor 14.34-35.[61] Their argument is that these verses were inserted by editors who supported or were members of the Judaizing elements of the early church – those who tried to make Gentile Christians adopt Jewish customs and laws. They claim that Paul would not have written such words because they are inconsistent with his arguments against Judaizers (Acts 15.1-21; Gal 1.6 –

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[58] Examples of this shorthand use can be seen in Matt 5.17 and 7.12 (where "the Law" is coupled with "the Prophets") and also Luke 16.16-17 and John 1.45. Paul uses the term "the law" in a number of ways reflecting its range of connotations and applications. Sometimes he appeals to "the Law" as definitive, legal precedent or regulation (as in 1 Cor 9.9 and 14.34). At times he speaks of it as a collection of obligations that provide a moral compass, an objective standard for living (e.g. Romans 2.12-16). And elsewhere he portrays the Law as a form of enslavement from which people can only be liberated through faith in Christ (e.g. Gal 3.23-25).

[59] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.120f.

[60] House, *The Role of Women*, p.158.

[61] An example of a biblical commentator holding this view is Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, pp.699-708; and for an egalitarian writer refer Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, pp.149.

2.16; 5.1-12) and with his insistence on breaking free of the law (Gal 3.1-25; Romans 7.1–8.4). However, claims of editorial amendments or insertions are inconsistent with evangelical views of scripture as authentic and deliberate in its content and structure. Such speculations do nothing to affect the policies of evangelical denominations.

Because of its perplexing or unresolved issues 1 Cor 14.34-35 tends to be regarded, even by complementarians, as only a supporting act to the scriptural arguments against women in ministry. For the starring role they turn to 1 Timothy 2 and, in particular, verses 11 and 12:

> A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. [NIV]

Again there is considerable scholarly debate over the interpretation of this passage. Numerous books and articles have been written to debate the historical context, the textual context and the meaning of the original Greek words.[62] Accordingly, it is hazardous to attempt only a brief explanation of the text or its arguments. However, this survey would not be complete without it.

The context of the passage is similar to the 1 Cor 14 passage previously discussed. In 1 Tim 2.1-10 Paul sets out his views of appropriate congregational protocols and their rationale. He includes instructions specific to each gender – for men in verse 8 and for women in verses 9 and 10. This is followed by further statements concerning women: the manner in which women are to learn (v11); a prohibition on women teaching and/or exercising authority over men (v12); theological arguments for this prohibition (vv13-14); and a concluding soteriological statement for women, "But women will be saved through childbearing – if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety." (v15) The wider context is Paul's concern to guard the Ephesian church against false teachers and infiltrating heresies (1 Tim 1.3-11, 18-20; 4.1-7, 16; 6.20-21). Such concerns continue to flow from Paul's pen in his second letter to Timothy where he names two who had fallen victim to false teachings (2 Tim 2.16-18). A large temple to the goddess Artemis dominated the skyline of Ephesus and the minds of many Ephesians. The socio-religious culture of mythologies, priestesses and idols associated with the Artemis cult had economic implications for the city (Acts 19.23-41). It is also likely to have been significant for at least some of those who joined the Christian church. It may be that women were especially susceptible to these influences, if this can be inferred from verses highlighting vices particular to the Ephesian women (1 Tim 2.9; 4.7; 5.11-15).

Egalitarians suggest that Paul's injunctions in 1 Tim 2.11-12 are specific to the problems found in the Ephesian church. A number of women (and men) were disseminating false teachings, either through their vocal contributions during congregational gatherings (1 Tim 1.3-7) or through other channels of

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[62] Some examples are: Paul Barnett, "Wives and Women's Ministry (1 Timothy 2.11-15)," *Evangelical Review of Theology*, 15, No.4 (January 1991); Sharon Gritz, *Paul, Women Teachers, and the Mother Goddess at Ephesus: A Study of 1 Timothy 2:9-15 in Light of the Religious and Cultural Milieu of the First Century*, Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1991; Gordon Hugenberger, "Women in Church Office: Hermeneutics or Exegesis? A Survey of Approaches to 1 Timothy 2.8-15," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, No.35 (1992), pp.341-360; Richard Clark Kroeger and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman: Rethinking 1 Timothy 2:11-15 in Light of Ancient Evidence*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992; and Andreas J Köstenberger, Thomas R Schreiner, and H Scott Baldwin, eds., *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995.

social interaction (1 Tim 5.13). Some were acting in a way that overemphasised their liberated status (1 Tim 2.9), perhaps due to an over-realised eschatology (2 Tim 2.18) or to the feminist influences of the Artemis cult. With this line of argument egalitarians find grounds to claim that Paul's strong censure of women (or of specific women) at Ephesus was limited to that situation, not a permanent stipulation for all women in all churches.

> At the core of Paul's strategy was the elimination of all unqualified or deviant would-be teachers, both male and female, so that the church's teaching ministry would be carried out exclusively by a small retinue of approved "faithful people" who would be able to take from Timothy the teaching he had himself received from Paul and transmit it to others (2 Tim 2.2, NRSV). Thus, neither women nor all men could teach in Ephesus, but only a group of trained and carefully selected individuals.[63]

While this sounds like an attractive explanation, it either overlooks or ignores a number of vital points that complementarians hasten to point out. As House tersely puts it, "If false teaching was the emphasis of his teaching in 2:8-15, certainly (Paul) would have also prohibited men from such teaching!" Also, "Paul's reasoning against women teaching men... did not originate with a feminist problem (though this may have been a cause), but was instead based on his understanding of Scripture."[64] Here House is referring to 1 Tim 2.13-14 where Paul outlines his theological premise for his prohibition of women speaking in church. This brings our survey back to the arguments raised in the earlier discussion of the Genesis creation account. Firstly, Paul touches on the fact of primogeniture, that Adam was created first (v13) and, by inference, has pre-eminence. Secondly, he puts forward his theory that Eve proved to be susceptible to deception when she acquiesced to the serpent's goading to eat the forbidden fruit (v14). From this it might be inferred that women cannot be trusted in teaching or leadership roles. Whatever the merits of his arguments, it is evident that Paul had more fundamental, more universal issues in mind than the syncretism or the gossiping that afflicted the church in Ephesus at the time of writing.

The linguistic debates that arise from the 1 Timothy 2 passage are many and complex. At issue are the Greek words for declining permission (*epitrepo*), for teaching (*didasko*), for exercising authority (*authenteo*), as well as the conjunctions *oude* (translated 'or' in the NIV) and *gar* (meaning 'for'). The verb *epitrepo* is used in the present active indicative form in verse 12 prompting egalitarians to propose that it be translated: "I am not presently allowing..." thus evoking an air of impermanence.[65] However, complementarians such as Robert Saucy point to other instances – including the preceding verses 1 Tim 2.1,8 – where Pauline commands use this construction yet have universal application.[66] Saucy goes on to point out that "it is only from the context of its use that we can determine whether a particular exhortation or command is intended to be restricted in application or have unlimited

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[63] Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, pp.182.

[64] House, *The Role of Women*, p.163.

[65] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.130.

[66] Some other examples can be found in: Romans 12.1; 16.17; 1 Corinthians 1.10; 4.16; 7.10; Ephesians 4.1; 1 Thessalonians 4.1; 5.14; 2 Thessalonians 3.6.

applicability."[67] The surrounding text is littered with universal concepts such as prayer (v1), respect for those in authority (v2), the mediatorial work of Christ (v5), attitudes in worship (v8), etc. It lacks any genuine indication of temporality.

The verbs "teaching" and "exercising authority" are linked by the conjunction *oude*, which can be translated several ways including "or" or "nor". Biblical scholars debate where the emphasis is placed in this sentence. Does *authentein* qualify *didaskein* or are they two separate activities? Does this injunction mean that women are to refrain from all teaching opportunities or only those where men are present? Scholars also note that *authentein* only appears here in the New Testament. This uniqueness has allowed egalitarians some licence to seek out a variety of translations. Some of the alternatives proposed are: "to lord it over",[68] "to have full power over",[69] "to dominate", "to manipulate",[70] "to perpetrate a crime",[71] "to instigate violence against",[72] "to represent oneself as the originator".[73] Such interpretations lend support to an egalitarian argument that Paul is prohibiting only an abuse of authority rather than positive forms of authority. Complementarians prefer a neutral translation, "have authority" or "exercise authority over", which is consistent with the neutral *didaskein* (teach). This allows them to argue that women are prohibited from any church activity where they might be teaching and exercising authority over men.

This potted summary of Pauline writings concerning women in the New Testament church has identified a variety of issues and areas of debate. It demonstrates that there are grounds for the claims on both sides of the ongoing debate. Complementarians can assert that although Paul was openly egalitarian in his soteriology (Gal 3.28), he did not at any time declare ministry roles open to both genders. In fact, he wrote specific injunctions against women speaking in a congregational setting (1 Cor 14.34-35; 1 Tim 2.11-12) while giving clear guidelines for men in ministry (1 Tim 3.1-13). Women have important roles to play in training younger women (Titus 2.3-5) and in supporting their husbands through self-controlled conduct. Egalitarians can claim that Paul held high ideals for the Christian community and personally endorsed women in ministry (Romans 16.1-4; Philippians 4.2-3). They view Paul's prohibitions as corrective passages dealing with situations where women were usurping authority or speaking out of turn. The injunctions he gave were pragmatic responses to those situations and tailored to the cultures concerned. They should not be understood as

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[67] Saucy, "The Ministry of Women etc.", p.295.

[68] Philip Payne in "Libertarian Women in Ephesus: A response to Douglas J Moo's Article", *Trinity Journal* No.2 (1981), p.175, cited in House, *The Role of Women*, p.160.

[69] Grenz with Kjesbo, *Women in the Church*, p.132.

[70] Loren Cunningham and David Joel Hamilton with Janice Rogers, *Why Not Women? A Fresh Look at Scripture on Women in Missions, Ministry and Leadership*, Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 2000, p.222.

[71] Andrew Perriman, "What Eve Did, What Women Shouldn't Do: The Meaning of *Authenteo* in 1 Timothy 2.12," *Tyndale Bulletin* Vol.44, No.1 (1993), pp.137 & 141.

[72] Leland E Wilshire, "1 Timothy 2.12 Revisited: A Reply to Paul W Barnett and Timothy J Harris," *Evangelical Quarterly* Vol.65, No.1 (1993), p.48.

[73] Clark Kroeger & Clark Kroeger, *I Suffer Not a Woman*, p.103.

normative texts governing women's ministry roles for all time. Instead the Christian Church should renounce the shackles of traditional attitudes and aspire to the higher ideals intimated by Gal 3.28.

Authority

Underlying the debates about the created order in Genesis and the Pauline prohibitions in the New Testament is the issue of authority. Adam's primogeniture, his naming rights and his accountability for the original sin all point to his role as the leader. His was the executive authority while Eve's role was that of personal assistant. Jesus' non-selection of women apostles in the Gospels has been interpreted as female exclusion from spiritual leadership and authority. And, in his epistles, Paul exhorts women to submit to male authority in the church (1 Tim 2.11-12; 1 Cor 14.34-35) and in the home (Ephesians 5.22-24). This policy is sustained – whether or not others accept it – within the inerrantist, evangelical wing of Christianity. It is this gender hierarchy that feminists vociferously oppose in their critique of "sacramentalist" and "inerrantist" denominations.

Authors such as Mary Daly and Simone de Beauvoir have labelled the doctrines and the structures of the Church androcentric and "an instrument of oppression" against women.[74] Elaine Storkey makes the comment that the gospel is not Good News for women.

> Whilst proclaiming eternal freedom in Christ (the Church) endorses temporal bondage for women... Men preach, women listen. Men pray, women say 'Amen'. Men form the clergy, the diaconate or the oversight, women abide by their leadership. Men study theology, women sew for the bazaar. Men make decisions, women make the tea.[75]

The New Zealand feminist writer, Jo Pelly, writing in the early 1980s, blamed the prevailing model of Christianity for many of the flaws in New Zealand society, including an "unhealthy" separation between the personal and the political dimensions.[76] Pelly advocated disposal of the "patriarchal model" and cultivation of a remodelling process led by women. Ruth Low provides ample evidence of such developments in her thesis on the Women-Church movement (now called Future Church) in New Zealand during the 1980s and early 1990s.[77]

Despite all of the feminist protests and the alternative church movements a number of evangelical denominations resisted the pressure to adopt egalitarian policies in the staffing of their ministries. The vast majority of their adherents sincerely believed in the rightness of their views. Leadership roles and vocal ministries were divinely ordained to be the preserve of men. Women were most in tune with the created order when they supported their husbands and devoted their energies to household chores, raising children and generating income to support the family – like the woman of

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[74] Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, pp.58-72.

[75] Storkey, *What's Right With Feminism*, p.47.

[76] Jo Pelly, "The Women's Movement and the Future of Religion in New Zealand", from *Religion and New Zealand's Future: The Seventh Auckland Religious Studies Colloquium*, K J Sharpe (Ed.), Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1982, pp.68-73.

[77] Low, *A Magnificent Tapestry*, 1999. (Refer to footnote 56 in chapter 2 for more details from Low's thesis.)

Proverbs 31.[78] A woman would only assume ministry leadership if no suitable male were available, and then only reluctantly and, where possible, under male authority. Vocal ministries among women did not really count. Such groups were simply finding a productive way to use their time, perhaps sharing their insights into spirituality and motherhood, but not engaging in serious theological debate and certainly not teaching men. Any hint of rebellion against this policy would be met with a rebuke from any quarter of the denomination concerned. To break with traditional gender roles was to disregard scripture and to fall prey to secular, or even heretical, influences.

[78] Proverbs 31.10-31. This passage describes the ideal wife, as that role was understood within the ancient Hebrew culture of the Old Testament.

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