

Often faced with enormous difficulties, sometimes treated with the most cruel injustice in communities that were for the most part decidedly patriarchal, Canadian women struggled to survive, to contribute and to make their lives meaningful. We study their lives because women have been integral to Canada's history. What they were and did made all the difference.

The book is testimony to the astonishing amount of research in the field done in Canada in the last two decades. It was the late sixties before historians generally (but by no means unanimously) conceded that Women's History was not only a valid discipline but also a wide-open area of opportunity for enterprising scholars. Now, this volume, documented from the work of many, the most pertinent of whom are listed in its Selected Bibliography, is ample evidence of the energy, industry and insight of workers in the field. Its very existence is a source of great satisfaction, perhaps especially to those women who, like myself, in their

early careers could only dream of such a major and speedy development.

The scope of these 400 pages is, of course, huge. What the authors attempt and what they deliver is a general survey history, an enormously valuable tool for all Women's Studies courses, all general Canadian History courses and, because of its stress on personalities, an engrossing book for the general reader. Decades of work are still to come. The volume *Quebec Women: A History*, written by Montreal's Clio group of scholars, whose English translation was published concurrently with *Canadian Women: A History*, already provides a very large expansion of the field. There will be, to cite only one instance among many, massively growing bodies of work done on immigrant women in the post-World War II period, and particularly, I should think, on Dutch, Italian and Asiatic women.

Native Women's Studies, both Indian and Inuit, are still in their infancy. The authors are rightly wary of extrapolating twentieth century anthropological findings to firm conclusions about the women

of our more remote past: "It is only with the most imaginative use of fragmentary sources that we are able to construct a picture of those worlds that we, perhaps, have not quite lost." But we can certainly hope — and on the evidence of this work be confident — that future scholars will open the doors to a much increased understanding of our native women's roles in the nineteenth century and twentieth centuries, right up to our own time. The authors have done their best to obviate the criticism usually levelled at all of our written history — that it is the product of an overwhelmingly white, middle-class mind-set; time and further expansion of the field will ensure that such criticism is increasingly meaningless. Meanwhile, this work is a superb and indispensable tool for Women's Studies courses and a source book for any reader who is interested in Canadian women, their trials and their triumphs. Its index alone would make a good starting place for an Encyclopaedia of Canadian Women, not such a bad idea, perhaps, for a future, and equally committed enterprise.

OPENING THE CAGE: Stories of Church and Gender

Edited by Margaret Ann Franklin and Ruth Sturmeij Jones. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987.

SISTERS IN SPIRIT: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective

Edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

CLERGY WOMEN AND THEIR WORLDVIEWS

Martha Long Ice. New York Praeger, 1987.

Louise H. Mahood

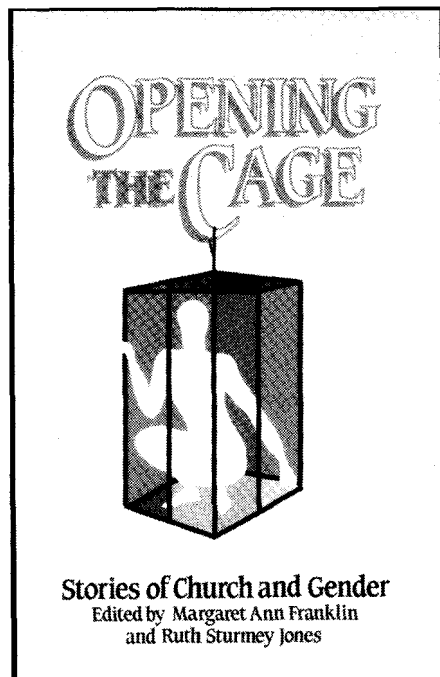
Many women experience some sort of divine force or forces. Many words are used to describe it: such as goddess, female principle, Anat, Baal, God, Y-w-h, Christ, Allah, Buffalo Women to name

but a few. None of these words adequately describe, name or characterize the divinity we experience. Men's attempt to name the divine has not been any better, but unfortunately has become the norm of most western religious experience. In other words, the way men understand God and organize themselves is how we have been taught to speak about God and

structure our places of worship respectively.

Opening the Cage, Sisters in Spirit and Clergy Women and their Worldviews are three distinctive studies about women's struggle to work within their patriarchal Christian churches. These books do not offer alternatives to their churches. They do, however, confirm that while our history binds us to our oppression, our religion binds us to our history.

Margaret Ann Franklin and Ruth Sturmeij Jones have edited *Opening the Cage* to focus on church and gender issues. All of the writers (13 women and 3 men) live in Australia or New Zealand, and belong to the Church of England, the Roman Catholic or the United Church. The parameters of selection focused not on blaming men for oppression but on recognizing that women have colluded in this oppression. It would be unfair to concentrate on one or two chapters simply because each contributor has a unique perspective to share. Suffice it to say that 14 of the 16 writers are over 45 years old, and many of them have risked their professional futures by standing up for the rights of women to work along side men in professional church work. What makes these stories unique is the fact that the



stories are the content. So rather than reading about women's struggle for equality from the top down, we read about it from the bottom up. Here we discover the leading edge of religious scholarship. The only disappointment was that the stories by Church of England and Catholic writers echo those of our sisters in Canada and America. While the Anglican Church in Canada and Australia have stepped ahead of the English and ordained women, these ordained women still have to cope with protests and blocks. Oddly enough, Catholic women are not pushing for women to be ordained the way many are in North America. In some respects these churches are still tied to their home base in England or Rome and are not yet indigenous. The Uniting Church, native to Australia, was formed in 1977 and has ordained women since its founding. Over all, this book is worth reading for an insight into current Christian struggle for women in Australia and New Zealand.

Sisters in Spirit is another collection of essays, but by Mormon women about Mormon women. Edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, these essays are the culmination of monthly breakfast meetings of modern day Mormon women struggling to be faithful and feminist. It begins by establishing the distinctions of Mormonism from mainline Christian churches. Mormon women have suffered dearly. The basic tenet that distinguishes

Mormons from Christians is the rejection of the doctrine of original sin (humanity fell out of paradise by disobeying God's commands). Now while this alternative theology implies that no one is technically to blame for human sin, women in Mormonism are saddled with the curse of Eve. Christ redeemed Adam, but Eve's status remains troublesome. This contradiction creates a major problem for contemporary Mormon women who feel the need to reform their temple. They realized that there was merit in the ERA, yet their church publicly condemned it. These essays provide a fascinating ground-breaking study of Mormon history in America. One essay describes women's roles as healers, a vocation that today is controlled exclusively by men. These essays are the kind that can only be written from within. And for that reason the book also has its limitations. I hoped that these women would go one step farther and really challenge the system that oppresses them rather than just naming it. I was also surprised that none of these women saw that they were suffering or could link that suffering with that of Christ.

Martha Long Ice made an extensive study of 17 clergy women from 12 denominations before writing *Clergy Women and their Worldviews*. She let the women tell stories about their childhood, call to ministry, their work, ethics, theology and worldviews within a sociological construct. Ice recognizes that her small group

by no means provides the means of a comprehensive study of women clergy. What they do have in common is their gender, and that they are all Americans. They are women who struggle to maintain their integrative theology within a patriarchal culture. In other words, their ethics and theological views surface in practice and not just at a head-level. They are not feminists, yet they clearly are aware that their womanly gifts for ministry do distinguish them from male clergy. They all like being both women and clergy. What does that say about their worldviews?

Simply by their presence they are a challenge to the norm. I wish Ice had said this. As it is she quotes Thomas Kuhn's work on worldviews at length, and other male scholars on the subject, with little reference to women's sources.

I had some real difficulties with this work. I was inundated with huge quotes that I personally find visually annoying as much as disruptive to the narrative. Ice does not challenge the male definitions of reality, but uses standard sociological language and models. Ironically, the women clergy in her study are pioneers, who see their survival in male terms, although they know they have uniquely female gifts for ministry.

These three books provide a rare look at women on the edge of their traditions, and are of particular interest to those struggling with traditional western religious values and assumptions.

THE CHALICE AND THE BLADE: Our History, Our Future

Riane Eisler. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987.

Hoke Holcomb

Riane Eisler is a woman with a message, and she delivers it with passion and verve in this synthesis of several areas of scholarship. Her message is that within our history there have been long periods when cultures functioned as a partnership of members with an ethic of cooperation, nurturing, and support; cultures of the chalice. Over a period of several millennia, these cultures were replaced by invading tribes that operated from a basis of male dominance, power and fear; cultures

of the blade. She believes that we have reached a point where we can shape our future by reestablishing partnership cultures.

To establish her case, Ms Eisler draws from several areas that are sociological in nature, utilizes current scientific work in the dynamics of change, and introduces her own terminology and cultural transformation theory. Her work would, indeed, be a grand synthesis if she were consistently rigorous in her treatment of these diverse elements, but she is not. Most of the material is well presented, some is even uplifting, but she falls short of some of her more scholarly goals.

Her strongest suit is the summary she gives of several key studies in archeology. She presents a convincing case that for several millennia BCE there was "a long period of peace and prosperity when ... all the basic technologies on which

civilization is built were developed in societies that were not male dominated, violent, and hierarchic."

Her foci in the archaeological portion of the work are the cities of Hacilar and Catal Huyuk in what is modern day Turkey, areas in central and southern Europe that are referred to as the Old European culture, and excavations of Minoan sites in Crete. These cultures flourished at different times in the period between about 7,000 BCE and 3,000 BCE. They were primarily Neolithic and agrarian societies, although the Minoan culture extended into the Bronze Age. The subjects of these archaeological studies are brought to life as she describes the activities in cities made up of hundreds and in some cases thousands of people working in harmony.

She argues that these cultures "had a well developed religious system that in-