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De juin à août 1982, l'auteure fit une étude de 27 églises chrétiennes de Winnipeg. Seulement deux d'entre elles ont essayé sans arrêt d'utiliser un langage non-sexiste. Dix-neuf églises n'ont fait aucune mention des femmes, ou une mention très limitée. Trois églises ont des femmes prêtres ou leaders, et la participation des femmes aux services religieux y est importante. L'auteure fit l'entrevue de 18 pasteurs; elle classe leurs réponses en catégories et nous en donne quelques exemples.

The phenomenon that we call the Christian church is vast and varied. Those who occupy some portions of its spectrum of social attitudes will be aware of wide-ranging changes which have been made in the last ten to fifteen years in response to the demands of women for greater equality of status. But how pervasive are these changes? Has the women's movement had a positive impact upon churches in our communities? It was to answer questions like these that I visited 27 out of the nearly 450 churches in Winnipeg.

The survey, begun in June, 1981, was intended to monitor church services in the community for sexism. We were looking for evidence of inclusive language and for images, if any, of women in readings, prayers, sermons, and art. We wanted to know what sermons were saying about women and to see to what extent women were participating in services for worship. Members of our group visited nine churches and, continuing the study on my own, I visited an additional eighteen churches and interviewed their ministers or other church leaders. I completed the study in August, 1982.

The twenty-seven churches, which I have grouped together in this report, represent seventeen denominations that are sociologically as well as liturgically diverse.* Seven were selected because they were believed to be staunchly conservative in their social attitudes; six were reputed to be liberal; and the remaining fourteen filled the spectrum in between.

In twenty-six out of the twenty-seven churches, we monitored a worship service, but only two showed a consistent attempt to use inclusive language. Our search for symbols and teachings about women was often frustrated by the fact that in most services there was little mention of women or of women's concerns. In nine of the twenty-six churches there was not a single mention of a woman or even a single use of a feminine pronoun. In ten other churches there was very limited mention of women in intercessory prayer (six) or in passing references in the sermon (four).

others had women as assistants or as unordained chaplains, one of whom spoke at a service that I monitored. In three out of the four services led by women there was a high degree of participation by other women of the congregation. The participation of women in the twenty-two services that were led by men varied significantly. In six of these services women took part only as general members of the congregation. In ten others they had special roles only in the ministry of music. In only six of these services did women participate by reading, speaking, ushering, or serving Communion. Thirteen of the

SEXISM IN WINNIPEG CHURCHES

In seven of the churches there was more extensive mention of women. In two of these services, both conducted by women, there was much testimony from women in the congregation, many of whom spoke about themselves and about other women. In six of the services there was some focus upon women in the sermon. In one service women were admonished and ridiculed for becoming slaves of the fashion industry; this brought titters of laughter from both sexes. In three of these sermons the focus was largely upon women.

It is certainly not the case that the presence of women ministers or other professional leaders guarantees that a church will be free of sexism. However, the participation of women in all aspects of the life of the church has long been a feminist issue. In comparison with other churches in the city, those in this study have a higher ratio of women ministers or leaders (three out of twenty-seven), and two

churches belong to denominations that refuse to ordain women. Seven of the churches forbid women to hold any position of authority over men. Two of these explicitly forbid women to speak in church except in unison readings, and one of the latter still requires women to cover their heads.

Except at the far ends of the spectrum, the criteria that we were using made little distinction between the more liberal and the more conservative churches. To find out what attitudes the ministers held about the women's movement, I found it necessary to interview them. It was only in the interview that the diversity of attitudes appeared.

Although I had expected the ministers to be reticent about expressing any sexist view, I found most of the eighteen that I interviewed amazingly candid, confident in their opinions, and articulate in expressing them. Only two requested that their names and the names of their churches not be

used in any published study. While each of the interviews was unique, I was able to group the attitudes expressed toward the women's movement into seven general categories. Here I have summarized each of these in my own words and have indicated in parentheses how many of the eighteen interviews fall within each category.

1. The church must take the women's movement seriously and attempt to make a positive response to its concerns. (2)

2. I can see that there is a lot of sexism in the church. I have not really thought about this before. Can you recommend something that I could read? (1)

3. I am personally sympathetic to many of the aims of the women's movement, but the members of my congregation hold traditional attitudes; it is just not worth the risk of splitting the church over such an issue. (3)

4. In a world troubled by poverty and the nuclear-arms race, the church has little time to bother itself with trivial issues like inclusive language and the other concerns of the women's movement. (1)

5. Women have always played important roles in our church. The ministry and other church offices are open to them. The language of the church, however, is given by God (or by tradition) and cannot be changed. The other concerns of the women's movement are secular and are not a part of our teaching. (3)

6. Our church is responding positively to the women's movement, and this is as it should be. More and more women are playing active roles in the church. However, the women's movement has become extremist. We are opposed to any change in the roles of women within the family, and we have serious doubts about making changes in the traditional attitudes toward men's and women's work. (2)

7. The women's movement is a non-Christian or even anti-Chris-

tian movement. Though some of its causes may be just, on the whole it is a movement destructive of the Christian family. Christian women ought to oppose it. (6)

Given this distribution of attitudes, it is not surprising that most of the personal attitudes expressed by the ministers toward the women's movement were rather negative, although none of those interviewed was willing to condemn the movement entirely. Here is a sampling of the replies:

"The movement is an important expression of the world we live in today. It is one of the forms of human liberation that are finding expression in a variety of ways." (The Reverend John Gilbert, minister of the Unitarian Church)

"God created men and women for different roles. The women's movement is to blame for making people dissatisfied with what they are." (Elder Gerald Hayes of Arlington Street Chapel, Christian Brethren)

"It is the aim of women's lib to take men down a notch. It is not a matter of justice but of revenge. Women place themselves in a power struggle and only hurt themselves. It becomes an issue of female chauvinism. . . If a woman wants to drive a truck, it is only to prove that she can do it and to take men down a notch." (The Reverend Carl E. Borchardt of Hope Lutheran Church)

"In some areas I could say 'Hey, that's great!' In other areas I feel they are pushing beyond reason. One example of this would be making the Bible a female book. The women's movement has done a lot to downgrade the position of mothers. This is proving to be a real problem for society. They seem to give the impression that if you are just a housewife you are a nobody." (The Reverend C.H. Bronsdon, pastor of the Fort Garry Pentecostal Church)

"We don't hold the concept that men and women are totally equal. They are not positioned equally by Scripture. This aspect of the women's movement is opposed. By creation woman is not equal. Women are not only created physically different, but they are psychologically different. The man is created for leadership. These differences were put there by the Creator for the sake of the family. (Pastor H.E. Post of the Zion Apostolic Church of the Pentecost)

"Women's lib is confessedly a revolutionary movement. It seeks to uproot marriage and the family and all conventional male-female relationships. It aims at power and rule by sheer weight of female numbers and has spawned radical groups. . . . Women's lib is a secular movement . . . guided by principles, many of which are non-Christian and anti-Christian." (From *The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives* by Neil R. Lightfoot, a booklet that was given to me by Pastor Wayne Turner of the Church of Christ)

This is a part of what we learned about sexism in Winnipeg's churches.

*The denominations represented are Anglican, Apostolic Church of the Pentecost, Baptist, Christian Brethren, Disciples of Christ, Christian Science, Church of Christ, Church of Latter-Day Saints, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Mennonite, Non-denominational, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Unitarian, and United churches. The small denominations are overrepresented because of our wish to get diversity.

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