

because of wartime conditions, she was one of four Canadians repatriated. In 1946 she was invited to return, to help in the establishment of a medical training programme for women at the Ewha women's University in Seoul. Again in 1950 when war broke out, she was forced to leave Korea, but she was back in 1951 helping refugees and working on a Danish Red Cross hospital ship. Far less conventionally "womanly" than Oliver, Murray spoke her mind freely and with decision. Her chief concerns, like Oliver's, were standards of training for medical personnel, but she was also an activist beyond her immediate professional field. She involved herself in the education of local people about all aspects of public health, especially with regard to tuberculosis and leprosy. After her mandatory retirement in 1969, she returned to Halifax, and busied herself with promoting Canadian links with Korea in all fields, and in urging overseas service on the young: "[such service is] an adventure in understanding and building world peace...the whole world is waiting." She contributed to religious life wherever she was, but she was a doctor first and always. Male colleagues who knew her professionally and personally were unlikely to challenge her authority: she was both an recognized professional and a formidable adversary, crisply outspoken and sometimes acerbic in her opinions.

In 1929, Margaret Wrong of Toronto, whose Anglican family had produced distinguished Canadian educational, political and social leaders for three generations, began to travel through sub-Saharan Africa as secretary of the International Committee on Christian Literature for Africa. Throughout the thirties and until her death in 1948 she covered tens of thousands of miles and constantly expanded the range of her materials. She was vitally interested in encouraging African writers who would work in their own languages as well as readers of all ages, and her

interpretation of her responsibilities went far beyond any narrow mission-oriented definition. Hers was a much different sphere of influence from Oliver's or Wrong's. Her long-time companion, Margaret Read, was an anthropologist with a special interest in the roles of women and children in African societies. These concerns became Wrong's as well. Her family's prominence meant that she had valuable connections to officialdom wherever she went, and she became a respected voice in the promotion of education for both men and women throughout Africa. After her death a number of prominent men and women in Africa and England set up the Margaret Wrong Prize, to be awarded to African writers. Both Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, leading writers of post-colonial Nigeria, were among its recipients.

The "modernizing men" of Brouwer's title refers to the gradual but inevitable effect of the work of these women and others like them on male colleagues, both western colleagues in the missionary enterprise and Indians, Koreans, and Africans. Traditionally, women missionaries' work had been considered to be primarily for women and too often had been restricted to women only. Brouwer's three women were leaders among those who pushed back the boundaries: they were secure in their training and professional skills and they blazed their own trails and trails for those who followed them. Men in the mission fields and in bureaucratic officialdom finally had no choice but to follow them: progressively, if often grudgingly, their professionalism, dedication, and success were acknowledged and emulated.

Brouwer has done meticulous research for this book, including travelling to India, Africa, and Korea to gather first-hand information about the work these women did and the legacies of achievement and good will they left behind. Her Appendix I lists the personal interviews she

conducted for each woman and her end-notes and bibliography alone constitute a remarkable resource for future scholars. From the beginning, she makes it clear that her book is not to be thought of as biographical; however, inevitably, there are occasional vignettes from her subjects' lives or quotations from their letters that leave the reader wishing for more. Each of these women was remarkable for her own or any day: each of them is well worthy of a separate biography and should be so honoured. Each of them left accounts of her life's work which would provide excellent biographical source material. This volume adds a considerable dimension to our record of Canadian women's contribution to the broadening and professionalizing of the missionary endeavour.

## **LINKING SEXUALITY AND GENDER: NAMING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA.**

Tracy J. Trothen  
Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier Press,  
2003

REVIEWED BY CATHERINE  
ROSE

*Linking Sexuality and Gender: Naming Violence against Women in the United Church of Canada*, should be of interest to any one concerned about the influence of religious discourse on the formation of social policy in Canada. Trothen, a feminist theologian and ethicist, creates an historical account of why it took so long for the United Church to name violence against women as a moral issue requiring church action. She draws on official Records of Proceedings to re-construct the church's approach to human sexuality and women's roles in the

family between 1920 and 1960, yet also does case studies of two church reports on human sexuality as well as of material from the Task Force on the Changing Roles of Women and Men in Society which included memorandums, minutes, and letters. Although these case studies allowed her to include process, methodology, and working style as factors that influenced the church's ethical position, she acknowledges a continuing limitation—her sources do not include “histories from the underside” focus on “women and marginalized men.” I am not convinced that “women’s” stories are missing, but that the dominant discourse in the church largely reflects the experiences of white middle class women. The issue as I see it is not simply the *length* of time the church took to name violence against women, but serious inadequacies in the way this violence eventually comes to be conceptualized.

Trothen begins her book with an invocation of the Montreal massacre which she names as a manifestation of systemic sexism and continued cultural sanctioning of male violence against women. As it happened, just before I read Trothen’s study, I heard Maggie de Vries read from *Missing Sarah: A Vancouver Woman Remembers her Vanished Sister*, her account of the life and death of her adopted sister Sarah, one of many sex workers who disappeared from Downtown Eastside Vancouver. Considering these two events side by side I was struck by the contrasting public responses. The “Montreal Massacre” provoked widespread horror and was quickly taken up by feminists as a symbol of male violence and systemic sexism. In contrast, friends and families of the murdered sex workers had difficulty getting the police even to acknowledge they were missing, and then to link their disappearances together.

As I read Trothen’s study, I kept thinking, “How does this analysis illuminate the life and death of Sarah de Vries, a sex worker and woman of

black, Aboriginal, Mexican Indian and white descent?” Does it make Downtown Eastside Vancouver visible as a community important to the life and well-being of women in the sex trade? Does it challenge the normalization of violence against sex workers?

The church’s discourse focuses on women as victims of male violence. For example, the church’s analysis of pornography does not allow that pornography might be created by and for women, or that women might participate in the production of male-dominated pornography other than as victims. As for sex work, the church in the 1980s articulated a position equating prostitution and S/M with rape, incest, and sexual assault. This formulation collapses the distinction between sex work and rape, begging the question of consent and serving perhaps to dangerously normalize violence against sex workers as inherent in the way they make a living. Viewing women as victims in sex work may promote both criminalization and efforts to rescue women, rather than efforts to assist them to sell sex under conditions in which their safety and well-being is enhanced.

Secondly, the church is not able to name women as perpetrators of violence against women, preferring I think, an analysis of gender that creates women’s “feminist experience” as a unitary and unitive phenomenon. This tendency to think dualistically, to identify people as victim or perpetrator, and to focus ethical reflection on women as victims, is not adequate to the complexity of women’s lives and their status as moral agents. An example of this is the way that the discussion in the church about child abuse focuses predominantly on issues of child sexual abuse. Nowhere is there evidence in Trothen’s study of women’s violence towards children becoming the focus of ethical reflection on the part of the church.

Thirdly, the church’s discourse is largely focused on violence within

the family—viewed as the site of a gendered imbalance of power, but existing largely outside of race and class. Throughout Trothen’s account, it is evident that the institutional church views community primarily through a white middle class lens that assumes the norms of the nuclear family and monogamous sexuality even while grappling with reactions against these norms. For example, Trothen recounts that the church’s discussion about the legitimacy of sexual intimacy apart from marriage was prompted by couples who were increasingly “opting” not to marry as well as by same-sex couples who “could not marry.” The perspective of those for whom marriage might not be a defining lens through which to view communal life is not evident.

An analysis adequate to naming how sex workers become victims of violence needs to consider the complex tangles of class, race, and gender. Middle class women, appealing to their right to walk the streets unmolested, have been active in campaigns that have driven sex workers out of residential neighbourhoods and into dark, isolated industrial regions of cities. When the church focuses its reflection on violence as it does in the issue of pornography, asking “Is the right of male gratification more important than the rights of women and children?” its one-dimensional and dualistic gender analysis fails to account for the intersecting structures of power that continue to make the needs of sex workers invisible and render them vulnerable to violence.