

Disbanded Brothers – Has a ‘Feminised’ Church Alienated Men in the UK?



Christopher Ducker
May 2007

Presented as part of the requirement of the Applied Theology Degree, Redcliffe College

The author can be contacted at cjducker@yahoo.co.uk

PREFACE

This dissertation is an attempt to understand why there is a gender gap in the UK's churches, and whether this is linked to what many people have identified as a trend towards 'feminisation' within the church. That is to say, beyond a numerical imbalance, is there something about Church culture that is attractive to women but alienating to men?



As the churches of the West continue to haemorrhage men at an alarming rate, I believe this is a valid and significant issue for investigation – yet there has been surprisingly little written on this topic in relation to the UK. It is said that three things should never be discussed at the dinner table: politics, religion and sex. Perhaps the combination of religion and the relationship of the sexes is likewise taboo for many Christians, but I have found myself wondering aloud why British men are increasingly feeling that Church is not something for them. On a personal note, I find myself asking why, when both my children reach adulthood, my son will only be half as likely to attend church as my daughter, statistically speaking.

My purpose here is to explore aspects of how men relate to the contemporary church, with the twin aims of helping men, in Christian community, relate better to God; and helping the Church better understand, help and edify men. My vision is that men throughout Britain will come to recognise Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and choose to follow Him. In taking their place in the Body of Christ, they should not have to surrender their masculinity or forsake the strengths that God Himself has given them.

My thanks go to Richard, my dissertation supervisor, for his encouragement, insight and support. I also want to thank the (unnamed) tutor who validated the idea for this research by having the honesty to confide that he too was one of countless men who longed to serve and worship God but found that a sentimentalised church had left him feeling alienated and on the verge of leaving. Thanks to Mark for his valuable insight and comments and, above all, to my wife Helen, for her support and understanding.

This dissertation is dedicated to my own 'band of brothers' who helped me explore the issue of male spirituality around our well-worn college pool table, on the mountains of the Lake District and in our prayer group.

“What it means to be a man under the Lordship of Christ seems to me a question of particular importance... The neglect of this question of the Christian man has severely damaged Christianity and contributed to many more men than women turning their backs on the gospel.”
(Neuer 1990, 169)

“There is a spiritual openness among many people:
frequently it is not God who is the barrier, but church.”
(Moynagh 2001, 188)

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing,
but let us encourage one another.”
(Hebrews 10:25)

CONTENTS

Preface	2
List of Tables	5
List of Figures	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Literature Review	7
3. The Gender Gap Measured (and Explained?)	10
3.1 Measuring the Gender Gap	10
3.1.1 Church Censuses	10
3.1.2 General Population Surveys	11
3.1.3 Local Case Studies	11
3.1.4 Summary	11
3.2 Key Variations	12
3.2.1 Variations by Region	12
3.2.2 Variations by Age	12
3.2.3 Variations by Denomination	13
3.2.4 Variations by Churchmanship	13
3.3 Conventional Explanations of the Gender Gap	14
3.3.1 Demographic Factors	14
3.3.2 Social and Cultural Factors	15
3.3.3 The 'Nature of Men'	17
4. Feminisation Alleged and Defined	18
4.1 Allegations of Feminisation	18
4.2 A Derived Definition of Feminisation	19
4.3 Aspects of Feminisation	19
4.3.1 Church Worship	20
4.3.2 Church Activities	22
4.3.3 Church Preaching	23
4.3.4 Language and Symbols	23
4.3.5 Leadership	24
4.3.6 Emasculation of Jesus	25
4.3.7 Spirituality	26
4.4 Some Survey Indicators of Feminisation	27
5. Androgyny – A Further Explanation?	29
5.1 Denial of Gender Differences	29
5.2 Some Survey Indicators of Gender Differences	31
5.3 Consequences of Denying Gender Differences	33
5.4 Concluding Remarks	34
6. Conclusion	35
Bibliography	36
Appendix 1: Survey Aims and Methodology	43
Appendix 2: Attitudes to Church – 2007 Survey	44
Appendix 3: Survey Results	47
Appendix 4: Some Reflections on Male Spirituality	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
<i>I.</i> Variation in Male Church Attendance by Region, 2000	12
<i>II.</i> Variation in Male Church Attendance by Age, Great Britain, 2000	12
<i>III.</i> Variation in Male Church Attendance by Denomination, Great Britain, 2005	13
<i>IV.</i> Variation in Male Church Attendance by Churchmanship, Great Britain, 2005 ..	13
<i>V.</i> Male Church Attendance by Age Cohort, Great Britain, 2000	15
<i>VI.</i> Gender of Ministers, Great Britain, 2005	25

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Male church attendance rates (% of total church attendance), 1979-2010	10
2. Survey Response to the Question: “Male church attendance rates are typically lower than female attendance rates. What do you think is the main reason for this?”	14
3. Estimated UK Population Distribution, 2005	15
4. Movements Toward Feminisation	19
5. Survey Response to the Question: “Do you believe that men-only church outreach and activities are a good idea?”	22
6. Crucifixion Scene from Mel Gibson’s <i>The Passion of the Christ</i>	26
7. Churches’ Advertising Network Easter Advertisement (1999)	26
8. Survey Response to the Question: “Church is as welcoming to men as it is to women – Agree or Disagree?”	27
9. Survey Response to the Question: “Women feel more ‘at home’ in church than men do – Agree or Disagree?”	27
10. Survey Response to the Question: “Do you think that UK church services in general appeal more to women, more to men, or equally to both?”	28
11. Survey Response to the Question: “Men and Women experience God differently – Agree or Disagree?”	31
12. Survey Response to the Question: “Men and women relate to God differently – Agree or Disagree?”	31
13. Survey Response to the Question: “Men and women reflect different aspects of God’s character”	32
14. Survey Response to the Question: “Do you believe it was a significant part of God’s plan for Creation to make men and women with fundamental differences?”	32
15. Survey Response to the Question: “Do you believe there will be male and female identities in heaven?”	32

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The central concern of this dissertation is, within the UK context, the relationship between male churchgoing and an alleged trend towards feminisation¹ in the Church. The hypothesis examined is that feminisation *has* occurred and has contributed towards fewer men belonging to UK churches.

Whilst the Christian faith is about much more than mere church attendance, such statistics can help us identify the impact of certain trends and can stand as a proxy for involvement in the ongoing work of God's kingdom. Church attendance is not regarded here as an end in itself, but rather a starting point that can facilitate discipleship, obedience to God and spiritual maturity (which are altogether harder to measure!).

Recent Christian literature has begun to question whether Western Churches have become somehow 'feminised' – tending toward feminine values and emphases; or 'sanitised' or 'tamed' – risk-averse, inward looking and passive. This dissertation tries to apply some of the insights of such literature, much of it American, to the contemporary situation in the UK.

Chapter Two, therefore, consists of a short literature review that will serve as an introduction to this topic and highlight some of the key themes. In Chapter Three, the gender gap in UK churches is measured using three approaches: national church censuses, general population surveys and local case studies. Some conventional explanations for the evident gender gap are examined, including demographic, socio-cultural and general ones.

With conventional explanations shown to be either inadequate, or incomplete, Chapter Four introduces the concept of feminisation as an alternative reason why women greatly outnumber men in the UK's churches, and why this is a *growing* trend. The chapter establishes a working definition of feminisation based on the term's usage in Western Christian literature, and then uses that definition to look for evidence of feminisation within the UK. Areas examined include Christian worship, Church activities, preaching, use of language and symbols, leadership and the portrayal of Jesus.

Whilst considerable evidence of feminisation is found, Chapter Five introduces a further perspective, the suggestion that aspects of the Church that are androgynous or 'gender blind' can be as alienating to men as much as feminisation. Four adverse consequences of the Church's ignoring of differences between men and women are outlined, and the chapter concludes with a clarion call that the Church comes to acknowledge and celebrate general differences, without rooting itself in one form over the other.

Beyond the scope of this paper is an analysis of historical 'masculinist' movements, an examination of the feminisation of other institutions or in non-Western cultures, or an in-depth study of the layers of masculinity that are socially-determined (although I have included some key quotes on masculinity and masculine spirituality in Appendix 4). Nor am I able, in the space here, to develop a deeper theology of the Church, other than working primarily with the metaphor of the Church as the Body of Christ.

Throughout this dissertation I draw on the results of a survey I conducted of 456 UK Christians (both male and female), which provides some data on how gender affects our beliefs. A complete set of survey results is presented in Appendix 3. My survey revealed that the Church's gender gap was deemed a "significant" issue by 62% of respondents, and a "fairly significant" issue by a further 33%.

¹ Sometimes but much less commonly called 'feminization' instead, e.g. Dalbey (1988, 48).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Increasingly, claims have been made by Christians in the UK that the Church is failing to attract men. It is further alleged that the Church has, in some sense, become 'feminised' (which warrants clear definition) and that, moreover, there is a clear link between the two, i.e. that as the culture of the Church increasingly reflects feminine values, it alienates men and leads to falling male church attendance rates. This in turn can lead to greater feminisation within the churches, since services will be addressed more to women than men, and church activities will reflect the priorities of the women they are run by, and often for.

These allegations deserve close scrutiny because they may offer a credible explanation for the recent decline in male church attendance, and we would not want the Church to alienate such a large proportion of the community, especially if such alienation were preventable.

That Western Christianity has become feminised is a concern expressed by many American Christians, and one purpose of this dissertation is to appeal for British Christians to develop their own understanding of, and response to, a trend that is shared with our American cousins. The literature relating to this area tends to fall into two related areas: men and the institution that is the Church (e.g. David Murrow's *Why Men Hate Going to Church* and Leon Podles' *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of the Church*); and men and their masculine spirituality (e.g. John Eldredge's *Wild at Heart*, Patrick Arnold's *Wildmen, Warriors and Kings* and Richard Rohr's *Quest for the Grail*). There have been obvious connections to the related issue of men and women's roles in the Church (now consolidated into 'complementarian' and 'egalitarian' camps²) and to gender studies (e.g. Roy McCloughry's *Men and Masculinity: From Power to Love* and Elaine Storkey's *What's Right With Feminism*). In this paper, I will focus more specifically upon men and the Church, although to do so one must necessarily be informed in related areas, especially that of male spirituality, to which it will be argued the Church has not adequately responded.

In this section, I introduce the three books that have most influenced the debate on the feminisation of the Church. This is followed by an overview of specifically British material.

Why Men Hate Going to Church – David Murrow

With its provocative title and accessible style, this book (first published in 2005) has made something of an impression in the UK. It has been reviewed by *Christianity* magazine (Horsfall 2007b, 58); it was one of the bestselling books at UK Christian conferences in 2006; and it has created something of a word of mouth sensation in certain (evangelical?) circles.

David Murrow is a lay Presbyterian American with a background in ethnography and the social sciences. His contention is that "today's church has developed a culture that is driving men away" (2005a, 7), leaving only a certain type of "churchgoing man... [one who] is humble, tidy, dutiful, and above all, nice" (2005a, 6). The key point here is not that church attendance rates are all important but rather that the Church has lost its "ancient, masculine voice" (2005a, 49) and has therefore become unbalanced. The result is a style of worship, liturgy, preaching, evangelising – even *being* as a Church – to which women relate much better than men. His work is not a call for the Church to become a masculine institution, but rather one that reflects both the masculinity and femininity of humanity (which is created in God's image). He concludes that "Perhaps it's time to drop our nets on the *masculine* side of the boat" (2005a, 232, emphasis his). Whilst its sociological observations are typically

² For a comprehensive introduction to the debate concerning men and women's roles in the Church, see Piper and Grudem's *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (1991) for a complementarian perspective; and Pierce and Groothuis' *Discovering Biblical Equality* (2005, 2nd ed.) for an egalitarian viewpoint.

astute, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* would benefit from a more developed theology of the Church, and is very obviously written for an American readership: its cultural references do not always translate very well into a British context.

The Church Impotent – Leon Podles

Leon Podles is an American Catholic scholar and author, and senior editor of *Touchstone Magazine*. Podles' book was written six years before Murrow's (who cites Podles as an authority) and takes a twofold approach, investigating "the lack of men in church and the lack of masculinity among some males in church" (1999, xi) but also covers church culture in general. Unlike Murrow, who locates the alienation of men in the upheavals of the industrial revolution, Podles takes a much longer term view, finding that "the feminisation of Christianity... goes back to pre-industrial times" (1999, 11). In the absence of reliable historical data, Podles is forced to draw on occasional quotes and observations from scattered historical sources, which lead him to conclude that "There is something about Christianity, especially Western Christianity, that drives a wedge between the church and men who want to be masculine" (1999, 26), and that something emerged in the High Middle Ages, i.e. the 13th century (1999, 101).

Podles (1999, 102) identifies the main reasons for this as being "a new affective spirituality and bridal mysticism" and scholasticism, which divorced spirituality from academic theology. He ends his book by calling for "The restoration of a balance in the Church between the sexes... The Church must develop a right understanding of masculinity and femininity, an understanding that is consistent with human realities and with the data of Scripture" (1999, 208). Leon Podles is working on a follow-up book provisionally (and provocatively) titled *The Castration of Christianity: Why Men Think Religion is Effeminate*. His thesis is certainly an interesting one but, given that it takes such a long-term historical perspective, it is doubtful whether it can explain the more recent acceleration towards feminisation.

Wild at Heart – John Eldredge

More influential than either Murrow or Podles has been another American popular writer, John Eldredge, whose books have topped the UK Christian book charts for some time. Eldredge's bestselling *Wild at Heart* (2001), which has sold well over a million copies, is not a book addressing men and the Church *per se* but rather men and their spirituality. Given the obvious links between this and the Church, and the remarkable popularity the book has found in both the United States and Britain, it is appropriate to include it in this brief survey. In my Church Attitudes 2007 survey, John Eldredge received twice as many mentions as any other author when respondents were asked to identify writers on male spirituality (see Appendix 3).

Eldredge reflects on the position of men in American churches and concludes that many are simply "bored" (2001b, 17). His explanation for this boredom is that "Adventure, with all its requisite danger and wildness, is a deeply spiritual longing written into the soul of man" (2001b, 5), something which has been suppressed by the Church and by society in general, which has "spent the last thirty years redefining masculinity into something more sensitive, safe, manageable and, well, feminine" (2001b, 6). Eldredge identifies three 'universal' longings in men, which are created as part of 'the original design': a battle to fight, a beauty to rescue and an adventure to live.

Eldredge's perspective is unapologetically essentialist – that is to say, it is based on an understanding that men and women have a created essence to which they must be true. He borrows from the mythopoetic writing of Robert Bly, whom he quotes extensively. In his later writings (e.g. *The Way of the Wild Heart – A Map for the Masculine Journey*), Eldredge identifies "God ordained... stages of masculine development" that pass from "Boyhood to Cowboy to Warrior to Lover to King to Sage," (2006, 11) utilising archetypes popular with Jungians such as Patrick Arnold, Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette and, to a lesser extent, Richard Rohr. Eldredge ultimately concludes that "We have got to recover the wildness of

spirituality – especially masculine spirituality” (2006, 288) and he urges men to recognise that “The masculine journey is the central mission of your life” (2006, 301).

Eldredge undoubtedly has great insight into a certain type of man, and this type of man is probably found more often in the United States than here in Britain. Even more so than Murrow, Eldredge’s writing is deeply embedded in American culture, and therefore the context of his argument does not always translate readily to the British one. When pointing to fundamental gender differences, Eldredge has a tendency to overstate precisely what constitutes essential masculinity and femininity, and to downplay men and women’s equally essential shared *humanity*. There is also some truth to the criticism that Eldredge has an underdeveloped theology of the Church. Perhaps his greatest contribution, however, has been to generate interest in male spirituality and to stimulate Christian response in this area.

Relevant British Literature

As mentioned above, there is a paucity of relevant literature in this area that is specific to the UK. Heather Wraight, Deputy Director at Christian Research, produced a briefing paper on *Men and the Church* in 2003 although, as the report’s subtitle indicates, this was largely concerned with ‘The role men play in running the church.’ Wraight (2003, 2) argues that “belonging works differently in church for men than for women” and that men are frustrated that “their working lives are neither understood nor valued by the church.” Wraight also suggests that men’s attendance of a church is primarily for spiritual reasons, whereas for women it is for a combination of spiritual and practical or relational ones. Her report, based on focus groups with 26 men, does not specifically explore men’s response to feminisation within the Church, although it does identify that the most common response to the question what they “least liked about being a man in church” was “being outnumbered by women” and “being in a minority” (2003, 21). Sociologist Grace Davie has investigated churchgoing in *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging* (1994) but touches on gender issues only fleetingly.

Other British books have tended to go down one of two routes: exploring contemporary masculine spirituality or writing to directly appeal to the type of “man’s man” who is seldom seen in most British churches. The first form is exemplified by the work of Mark Pryce, Dean of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, which invites men to respond to feminism by seizing the “opportunity... to re-shape their own self-understanding” (1996, 3), and Roy McCloughry, who urges men to transform masculinity – or, as he puts it, the “plurality of masculinities” in a specifically Christian way (1992, 249). Such pluralisation is usually indicative of a liberal understanding of masculinity, which is seen as a range of multiple social constructs.

The second type of literature is less academic in style and aims directly for men at the more ‘macho’ or ‘earthy’ end of the spectrum. Presumably such men were in mind when Dave Hopwood wrote his *Bloke’s Bible*, which reflects on 28 Bible passages and claims that God “wants us... to be blokes and have faith” (2006, xiv). Lee Jackson and Baz Gascoyne in *Dead Men Walking* (2002) and *Cut to the Chase* (2006) also write in a no-nonsense, blunt and even confrontational style and, at least in part, blame men themselves for their estrangement from Church: “They have legged it – simple as that!” (2002, 18).

In Chapter Three we evaluate the extent to which men have become alienated from the Church, by measuring the ‘gender gap’ seen in Church attendance. We then consider some conventional explanations for why this gap exists.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GENDER GAP MEASURED (AND EXPLAINED?)

One part of the issue of whether the UK Church has become feminised, or lacking in gender balance, is the extent to which its constituent members are female. In the previous chapter, we saw suggestions that, if churches are predominantly female, their culture and practices will have a greater resonance with women and will tend towards feminine values rather than masculine ones, or a balance between the two. In Chapter Four we will consider the extent to which this assertion is true, but it is first instructive to examine existing data for the general composition of the UK Church. This will be done in three ways – by looking at: (a) national church censuses, (b) representative surveys of churchgoing, and (c) case studies of specific churches.³

3.1 Measuring the Gender Gap

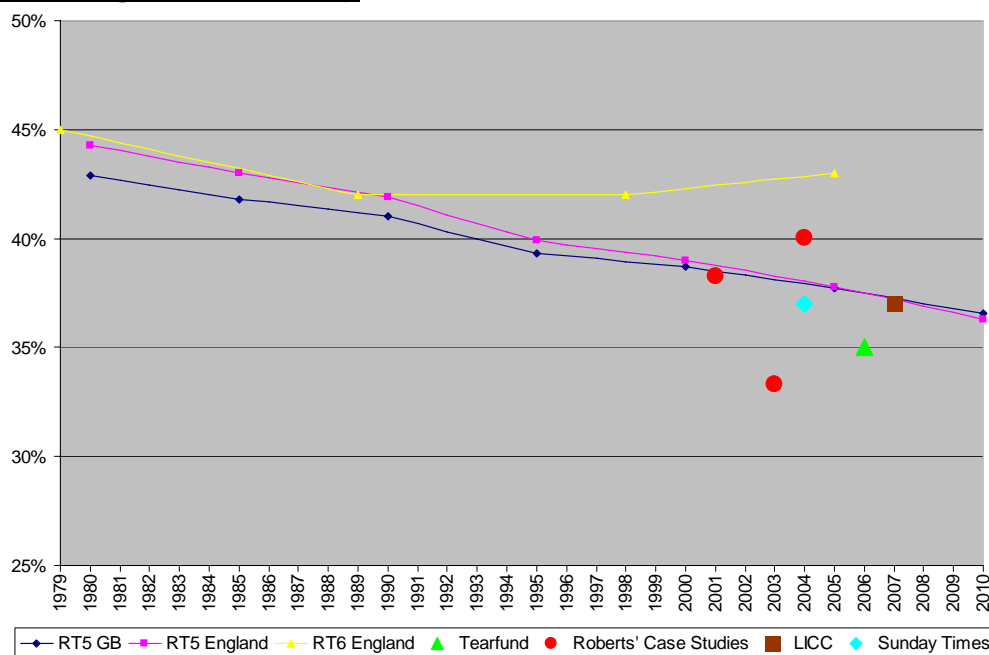


FIGURE 1. Male church attendance rates (% of total church attendance), 1979-2010

Sources and notes:

RT5 GB – Great Britain, all ages. Figures for 2005 and 2010 are estimates (*Religious Trends 5*, Brierley 2005, Table 2.21.4).

RT5 England – England only, all ages. Figures for 2005 and 2010 are estimates (*Religious Trends 5*, Brierley 2005, Table 2.21.1).

RT6 England – England only, all ages (*Religious Trends 6*, Brierley 2006, Table 5.8).

Tearfund – United Kingdom, ages 16 and above, surveyed February-March 2006 (*Tearfund 2007*, 15).

Roberts' Case Studies – 3 English case studies (see section 3.1.3 below), all ages (*Roberts 2007*).

LICC – unsourced figure used in *LICC (2007)*

Sunday Times – unsourced figure used in the *Sunday Times* (Morgan and Keenlyside 2004).

3.1.1 Church Censuses

The *UKCH Religious Trends* series has included occasional data on church attendance by gender (as well as analysis by age, denomination and churchmanship). *No.5* in this series (2005/2006) provides evidence for two main trends: that women outnumber men in the UK's churches, and that the proportion of men in church congregations is falling. The figure for

³ I would like to introduce this statistical section by echoing Peter Brierley's (2005b, 2) admission that "The Holy Spirit does not use statistics in His work, He uses people" – although, as we see in Acts 2:41 and 4:4, we are sometimes left with an indication of *how many* people we are talking about!

2005 estimates that men constituted 37.7% of Sunday churchgoers in Great Britain – down from 42.9% in 1980, 41% in 1990 and 38.7% in 2000 (Brierley 2005, 2.21).

No.6 in this series (2006/2007) estimates a different church attendance rate for men: 43% (Brierley 2006, 5.8), based on the English Church Census of May 2005. There is some difficulty interpreting this figure since, although it also indicates a gender deficit, the gap is smaller than that suggested by other datasets. Confusingly, *Religious Trends 6* also indicates a male attendance ratio of 42% in 1998, which seemingly contradicts the rate given for 2000 (38.7%) in *Religious Trends 5*. For this reason, it is probably best to treat the higher figure of 43% for 2005 with some caution.

3.1.2 General Population Surveys

In February-March 2006, Tearfund commissioned a poll of 7,000 British adults, which yielded 1,126 respondents who attend church. On the basis of these responses, Tearfund created a profile of a typical church – for example, 25% of regular churchgoers have the 'social grade' AB, 30% are aged 65 or older, etc. These results indicated that for adults (defined in the survey as aged 16 or above), only 35% of regular churchgoers are male (Tearfund 2007, 15). Given that studies have shown that, for those identified as churchgoers, *frequency* of attendance does not vary by gender (men who do attend church will go 48 times a year, women 47 times), the Tearfund survey therefore indicates an adult male church attendance rate of 35%.

An unsourced figure in the *Sunday Times* on 5 September 2004 put the proportion at 37% (Morgan and Keenlyside 2004), although it is not clear whether this figure refers specifically to the Church of England or to all churches in the UK. This figure of 37% has consequently been regularly cited elsewhere, although it remains unclear where the number originated. A similar figure was used by the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity in promotional literature for an event this year (LICC 2007).

3.1.3 Local Case Studies

We can complement these general surveys and extrapolations from church censuses with information from specific churches or localities. This can be a very precise method since the name of each person in church is noted, and their attendance pattern recorded over a period of time (say, 8 weeks). Three such studies are as follows:

- Wirral North Deanery Survey (2000/2001), consisting of seven parishes, had an average male attendance rate of 38.29% (1,367 out of 3,570 attendants).
- An unnamed rural parish (2003) had an average male attendance rate of 33.33% (49 out of 147 attendants).
- An unnamed gathered parish (2004) had an average male attendance rate of 40.05% (149 out of 372 attendants).⁴

3.1.4 Summary

There is no definitive number we can cite when illustrating women's numerical dominance in UK churches. The very fact that numbers are difficult to come by suggests that this issue has received insufficient attention.⁵ Using the limited data that we do have, we find that there is considerable convergence of estimates for the male proportion of those in Church, which typically fall within the range of 35% to 40% for the period 2005-2007. This proportion is lower than at any recent point of church history and is part of a trend going back at least as

⁴ My thanks to John Roberts who kindly supplied me with this case studies data. Some of his broader findings can be found in *Counting Sheep: Attendance Patterns and Pastoral Strategy*, co-authored with Paddy Benson (Grove Publications, 2002).

⁵ It is interesting to note, for example, that the 1998 English Church Attendance Survey did not ask about the gender of those surveyed (but found space to ask, for example, about access to public toilets!). It remains the case that the Research and Statistics Department of the Church of England's Archbishops' Council does not collect or monitor attendance by gender, an omission which they explained as being "purely for practical reasons" (personal e-mail correspondence, 22 March 2007).

far as 1980, when approximately 44% of those in Church were males.⁶ There are signs that this trend is now stabilising.⁷

3.2 Key Variations

The picture across the UK is not uniform when it comes to attendance rates by gender. There are fluctuations according to region, age, denomination and churchmanship. The figures below are extracted from the *Religious Trends* series (Nos. 5 and 6) and build upon the average male attendance ratios given in No.5 (38.7%) and No.6 (43%). Whilst we have expressed reservations about the higher, outlying figure of 43%, the tables below are helpful in demonstrating *variations* around the supposed average figure.

3.2.1 Variations by Region

TABLE I
VARIATION IN MALE CHURCH ATTENDANCE BY REGION, 2000

Region	% male attendance
Great Britain	38.7%
England	39.0%
Scotland	39.6%
Wales	31.6%

Source: Brierley (2005, Tables 2.21.1-2.21.4)

This table shows that the male attendance rate for Wales is, at 31.6%, much lower than for other regions, but this does not have a very significant effect on the national figure due to Wales' relatively small population.⁸

3.2.2 Variations by Age

TABLE II
VARIATION IN MALE CHURCH ATTENDANCE BY AGE, GREAT BRITAIN, 2000

Age Group	% male attendance
<15 years	47.4%
15-19 years	35.0%
20-29 years	34.0%
30-44 years	35.4%
45-64 years	38.0%
65 years and above	37.8%
All adults (>15 years)	36.7%
All ages	38.7%

Source: Brierley (2005, Tables 2.21.1-2.21.4)

This table suggests that male attendance rates are lowest for those in the 20-29 years (34.0%) and 15-19 years (35.0%) cohorts. Significantly, the overall figure of 38.7% can be regarded as artificially high since it includes children, who may not be free to choose whether they attend Church. The more pertinent figure, therefore, is the *adult* male attendance rate of 36.7%.

⁶ As Wraight (2001, 112) observes, "Two-thirds of the fall in churchgoing in England in the 1980s was due to men dropping out."

⁷ This is scarcely surprising since, if the rate of decline continued, by 2021 only 10% of those in Church would be men! (Jackson and Gascoyne 2006, xxviii).

⁸ Based on Brierley's (2006, 12.4-12.116) national average male attendance rate of 43%, the English counties with the lowest male attendance rates in 2005 were Shropshire (38%), Tyne & Wear (39%), Wiltshire (39%), Durham (39%), East Yorkshire (39%) and the Isle of Wight (39%). The Isle of Man also had a low rate (39%), as did the Channel Islands (37%).

3.2.3 Variations by Denomination

TABLE III
VARIATION IN MALE CHURCH ATTENDANCE BY DENOMINATION,
GREAT BRITAIN, 2005

Denomination	% male attendance
Anglican	40%
Baptist	41%
Roman Catholic	45%
Independent	48%
Methodist	36%
New Churches	50%
Orthodox	45%
Pentecostal	49%
URC	35%
Smaller denominations	42%
All churches	43%

Source: Brierley (2006, Table 5.8.1)

Variations around Brierley's estimated figure of 43% show that the New Churches are the only denomination appearing to have a gender balance, with Baptist, Anglican and, especially, Methodist and URC churches typically have lower male attendance rates than the average UK church.

3.2.4 Variations by Churchmanship

TABLE IV
VARIATION IN MALE CHURCH ATTENDANCE BY CHURCHMANSHIP,
GREAT BRITAIN, 2005

Churchmanship	% male attendance
Anglo-Catholic	41%
Broad	40%
Catholic	46%
Broad Evangelical	41%
Mainstream	43%
Charismatic	45%
Liberal	39%
Low Church	37%
All Others	42%
All Churches	43%

Source: Brierley (2006, Table 5.8.2)

This breakdown by churchmanship indicates that liberal and low churches are more likely to have a large gender gap, with male attendance rates of 39% and 37% respectively.

It is possible to create a composite picture of different variables, which reveals where the problem of low male attendance is particularly acute. Against the benchmark of an average, hypothetical UK church, URC churches have 19% fewer men than this average. Other significant variations are numbers attending in Wales (18% below the national average), in the Methodist Church (16%), in low churches (14%) and for the age groups 20-29 (12%) and 15-19 (10% below the average).

3.3 Conventional Explanations of the Gender Gap

Whilst the main thesis of this paper is that the feminisation of the Church in the UK should be understood as a major force towards the alienation of men from the Church and a consequent gender gap, it is informative to survey other factors that might help explain the imbalance.

When this question was presented as part of my research survey, no consensus emerged. Participants were offered three options – which are detailed in greater depth below – focusing their responses into explanations that were (a) social, (b) ecclesial, and (c) related to the “nature” of men:

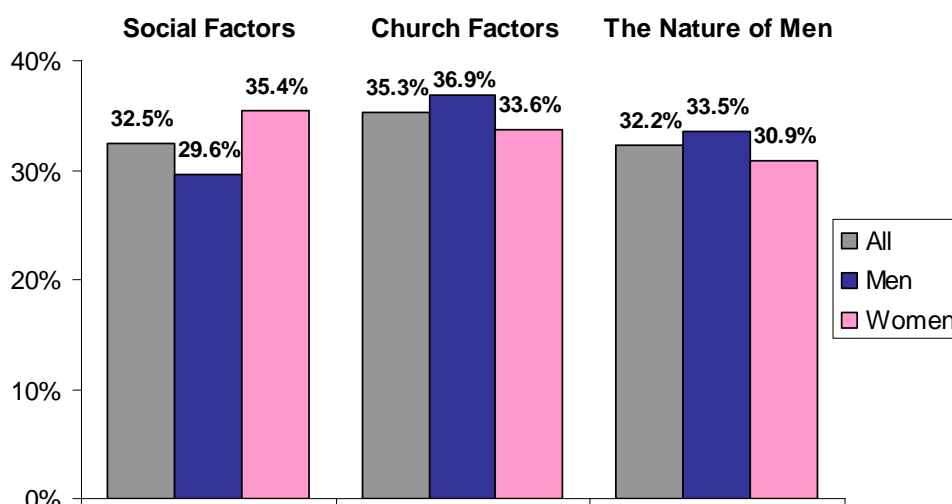


FIGURE 2. Survey Response to the Question:
“Male church attendance rates are typically lower than female attendance rates.
What do you think is the main reason for this?”

These survey results are extremely close, a fact that could be seen as either reflecting how complex the underlying causes are, or revealing a failure of Christians to have deeply considered this issue previously. Whilst the three suggested causes were difficult for respondents to separate, it is worth noting that men found the Church itself to be the most significant cause (36.9% of male respondents), whilst women were more likely to blame social factors (35.4% of female respondents).

Several survey participants objected to having to select just the “main reason” when they thought that more than one factor was crucial. The purpose of the question, however, was to test whether there was one reason that, in the opinion of British churchgoers, stood out as an obvious explanation for why men and women attend in different quantities. The fact that there was no clear preferred explanation confirms the ongoing validity of Walter’s assertion (1990, 74-75) that “there is as yet no generally accepted theory of why women in general seem to be more religious than men... Throughout the modern world, more women than men go to church.” This conclusion was echoed by Grace Davie (1994, 118): “Despite the pervasiveness of the gender variable in studies of churchgoing, no really convincing explanation for this persistent feature exists.”

In this chapter, therefore, we consider three alternative, non-ecclesial explanations for the gender gap in UK churches: (a) demographic, (b) social and cultural, and (c) the ‘nature of men.’

3.3.1 Demographic Factors

This form of explanation – specifically, that differences in the *age profile* of churchgoers could account for differences in male/female attendance rates – was deliberately omitted

from the research survey. However, its omission was queried by some participants, and so it is reviewed here by way of an explanation.

Whilst there is anecdotal evidence that there are churches throughout the UK consisting mostly of elderly widows who have survived their husbands, this is not actually a representative picture of our country's churches. Nor does it have a very significant influence on the overall demographics considered here. Two points can prove the demographic argument to be flawed. Firstly, the combined, net effect of differences in male/female birth rates and different life expectancies is that the British population is, in its totality, 50.9% female and 49.1% male (National Statistics 2007a). That is the relevant number and, when we talk of churches having an appropriate balance of the two sexes, that would technically be in the ratio of 50.9:49.1 (in the UK at least) rather than 50:50. Clearly, then, this theory cannot explain why the overall male church attendance rate is between 35% and 40%, when males constitute 49.1% of the British population (see Figure 3).



FIGURE 3. Estimated UK Population Distribution, 2005
Source: National Statistics (2007b)

Secondly, and perhaps even more convincingly, is the fact that female churchgoers outnumber males in every age cohort, and not just those in old age when women tend to outlive men (see Table V below). In fact, the gender gap is greatest not for those aged 65 and above but for those aged 20-29. It is apparent, therefore, that we must turn to other possible explanations for the Church's gender gap.

TABLE V
MALE CHURCH ATTENDANCE BY AGE COHORT, GREAT BRITAIN, 2000

Age cohort	% of church attendees that are male
<15 years	47.36%
15-19 years	34.97%
20-29 years	33.98%
30-44 years	35.39%
45-64 years	37.97%
65 years and above	37.82%
All ages	38.70%

Source: Brierley (2005, Table 2.21.4)

3.3.2 Social and Cultural Factors

Whilst it is not unusual to hear social and cultural factors blamed for men's low church attendance, it is not always clear *which* factors are being referred to. At this stage it is worth clarifying how an explanation may be considered plausible. Firstly, it must be *causative*, that is to say there is a logical and predictable relationship between a trend (or event) and its

consequence. Secondly, it must have a *different impact* upon men and women, since the phenomenon being observed is relative. Thirdly, it must be *historically applicable*, i.e. the causative trend (or event) must chronologically fit (though possibly lagged) the trend in men's church attendance. Thus, we are looking for an explanation that could logically lead to falling men's church attendance relative to women's *and* which will fit the trend of the last thirty years or so. If a suggested cause has not changed in degree or nature during that period, it would be difficult to accept it as the reason for changes in male attendance rates. Likewise, if a suggested cause acts *equally* upon men and women, that too should be rejected as an inadequate explanation.⁹

With this in mind, let us examine sociological factors that might account for the Church's gender gap. Davie (1994, 118) rightly observes that this area has been "understudied," which she attributes to its falling between the interests of sociologists of religion and gender specialists. Whilst Davie is right to say that this area falls into this middle ground, this does not explain why it has been taken up by neither, rather than both.

Leisure Alternatives

Wraight (2001, 35), in her groundbreaking contemporary study of women in the Church in the UK, notes that, in 1995, men were twice as likely as women to be involved with sport as a leisure activity (31% and 15% respectively). There is a suggestion that, given the preponderance of alternatives, men choose sporting activities such as football on a Sunday morning, rather than Church. Certainly, there are anecdotal examples of men having to choose between Sunday morning worship and playing football, rugby etc.

However, we need to question the magnitude of this phenomenon, and also the extent to which it would affect men and women differently. If we consider *all* leisure alternatives to church then we see, for example, that women are twice as likely as men to go shopping as a leisure activity (30% to 17% respectively, Wraight 2001, 35), and Sunday shopping has boomed since Sunday trading was legalised in 1994. The full scope of leisure and recreational alternatives includes gym membership and use, visiting family members, sightseeing and cultural visits and so forth, as well as stay-at-home alternatives. There is little evidence that men are more involved in these activities during times of worship, especially since many of these activities are those of families and couples, rather than being individual pursuits. Yet we cannot dismiss this argument entirely, and more research in this area would be welcomed.

Social Acceptability

One interesting suggestion is that it is more socially acceptable for women to go to church than for men in the UK. If the Church has a reputation for being feminine – or being especially welcoming to women; or if society defines masculinity in ways which in some sense are counter-church, it is conceivable that male churchgoing could be somewhat stigmatised. This stigmatisation would be compounded if males were more sensitive to social criticism of their masculinity than women were to their femininity.

Whilst this is an interesting suggestion, it is not one that has yet been supported by any evidence. Moreover, it is not clear that social pressure on men has changed in the last thirty years to make church attendance, and association with Christianity, less socially acceptable.

⁹ It is worth noting that, if there have been different periods of feminisation of the Church throughout history, these could have been caused by different factors. Although we are concerned here with the more recent relationship between men/women and the Church, a 'feminine' constitution of the Early Church has often been proposed, based on Celsus' second-century description of the Church as including "slaves, and women, and children." To conclude from this phrase that the Church had a similar gender gap to today, would be a step too far: the comment comes from an antagonist who was writing *against* Christianity. Moreover, Origen takes issue with Celsus' description: "This statement also is untrue, that it is 'only foolish and low individuals, and persons devoid of perception, and slaves, and women, and children, of whom the teachers of the divine word wish to make converts'" (*Origen Contra Celsus*, Book III, Ch.49 in Roberts and Donaldson 1994, 484). The safest way to interpret Celsus' claim is probably that it shows evidence of the *inclusiveness* of the Christian Church at that time.

Whilst there have undoubtedly been shifts in the socially-determined aspect of masculinity there is, if anything, greater tolerance for men being 'in touch with their feminine side', or being a more emotionally (and spiritually) aware 'new man'. So these social changes cannot readily be seen as having alienated men from the Church. We will have to conclude that this suggestion also remains unproven.

Socio-economic Factors

It has been proposed that women may benefit socio-economically from church attendance. A Marxist interpretation of religion has, according to Podles, posited that women's interest in religion "somehow compensates for their inferior social position" (1999, 28-29). A related argument is that churchgoing gives women a sphere of influence or the ability to exercise some power in terms of being able to influence society, organise activities and small groups and generally consider that they are 'making a difference'.

Again, we must question whether this suggestion can explain the recent trend towards greater gender imbalance within the UK Church. Indeed, as women's social status and relative earning power have improved steadily since the 1960s, this argument's logic suggests women's involvement in religion would diminish, relative to men's. The fact that it has not done so suggests that, whilst this argument might have something to say for the *historical* involvement of women in the Church, it does not seem to account for recent changes in church attendance patterns.

3.3.3 The 'Nature of Men'

This phrase is something of a catchall: exactly what part of men's 'nature' is being referred to? It hints that something intrinsic, possibly mysterious and indefinable, about men causes them to shirk things spiritual and religious, including churchgoing. I am aware of many Christian young men who have been brought up to believe that men are not as spiritual as women, and many Christian leaders have been complicit in this expectation that men will not be as interested in things spiritual. This belief that men are not, or cannot be, as spiritual as women takes a wide range of forms, including Freud's argument that women are more emotional than men and hence more alert to the spiritual (cited in Podles 1999, 31), which seems to confuse emotionalism and sentimentality with spirituality and religious belonging.

It is somewhat disturbing to note that, according to my survey, 13.2% of Christians agree with the statement that "men are less spiritual than women" (including 19.3% of men, who are repeatedly told that their forms of spirituality are not the real thing).¹⁰ Yet, as Murrow (2005a, 8) points out, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam all have at least as many male adherents as female ones. Podles (1999, ix) also notes that, within Christianity, the Orthodox Church has a general balance. The implication is clear: it is not that religion or spirituality *per se* are inimical to men. Rather, it must be specific forms and expressions of religion or spirituality that alienate men and deter their participation.

In addition, as Arnold correctly points out, the belief that "spirituality or religion is inimical to males is totally absent from the Christian Bible" (1991, 68). We must look beyond conventional explanations, therefore, for a theory that can account for the alienation of men from the UK's churches. In the next chapter, we ask what has changed *within* the Church that could be causing this trend?

¹⁰ There are very real theological difficulties to supposing that God has created men with a lesser spirituality; what sort of God would this imply? Perhaps survey respondents were not considering men's spirituality capability, but rather their involvement in spiritual matters.

CHAPTER FOUR

FEMINISATION ALLEGED AND DEFINED

As we shall see in this chapter, allegations are widespread that the Church – in both the United States and the UK – has been feminised. Yet no serious attempt has been made to *define* what is meant by the ‘feminisation’ of churches. This chapter will develop a working definition of feminisation based on its usage by authors and commentators in this field. Such a definition will necessarily be much more complex than that expressed by a simple dictionary definition of “to make, or become, more feminine.”

4.1 Allegations of Feminisation

Jesuit scholar Patrick Arnold has claimed that “Western Christianity is dominantly feminine in its heart and soul” (1991, 19) and that there has been a “largely unacknowledged... historical tilt in Christian spirituality toward feminine values” (1991, 67). The fact that “the church’s political structure is clearly patriarchal and male-oriented” does not militate against the fact that “its spirituality is both heavily directed towards females and quite alienating to men” (1991, 18). A near identical point is made by Franciscan author Richard Rohr: “For all of the patriarchal structure of the church, its symbols and liturgies are very feminine” (2004, 145). Also writing from a Catholic perspective is Leon Podles, who says that, despite some local variations in degree, “there are no exceptions to the feminisation of Western Christianity” (1999, 10).

Podles’ perspective is predominantly historical but his conclusion is shared by those approaching the subject from a sociological or psychological perspective. Robert Moore and Douglas Gillette, for example, explore male spirituality from a Jungian perspective, and also point to “the rapid feminisation of the mainline religious community” (1991, xviii). Counsellor and spirituality author Gordon Dalbey concurs that “The Western Church... has surely become feminized” (1988, 48) and argues that, if it continues to scorn “masculine values [it] must ultimately lose all men and become wholly feminized” (1988, 180).

Such beliefs have entered popular Christian periodicals, such as *Christianity*, which carried an article acknowledging this viewpoint, without being wholly sympathetic to it: “A growing number of evangelical thinkers argue that the problem is with the church’s structures and ethos. Churches have become increasingly feminised over the last few decades, so that women feel perfectly at home there. But men feel uncomfortable, disenfranchised, unchallenged” (Allan 2006, 24). Patrick Johnstone has argued that the feminisation of the Church reflects a feminisation of Western culture at large (quoted in Pivec 2006), and others referring to feminisation include Violi and Joyce (1994, 359) and, as one would expect, David Murrow: “I began to wonder what is a man and I began to notice how feminized everything in our churches has become – how women were into it and men weren’t” (2005a, 7).

Examples specific to the UK include comments attributed to Edwin Barnes, former Bishop of Richborough, who said that he was appalled by the “feminisation of the Church of England... It will be one more step on the road to the division of the church. This is reducing the church’s authority. It’s becoming risible” (Morgan and Keenlyside 2004). Men’s retreat leader and *Christianity* contributor Tony Horsfall (2007a) has asked “Is it possible to reverse the trend towards the feminisation of the church?” and other UK Christians have explored the same issue, sometimes using alternative expressions such as ‘emasculatation’ or ‘domestication,’ possibly because of how provocative the term ‘feminisation’ can seem. Evidence of the currency of this issue can be found in LICC’s hosting an evening seminar entitled “Church is for Girls” in May 2007, which promised to explore “why men don’t get church” and why “only 37% of Church is made up of blokes” (LICC 2007).

4.2 A Derived Definition of Feminisation

From these extracts above, we can see that the allegation of feminisation within the Church has been made by many Christians, writing from a range of perspectives. These tend to refer generally to Western Christianity but sometimes specifically to the United States or the UK (or a particular denomination therein). We will now attempt to formulate a working definition of feminisation, informed by these quotes, and considering the *direction*, *scope*, *form* and *consequence* of feminisation of the Church.

	Feminisation (in the context of the Church) is here defined as:
<i>Direction</i>	A trend towards, and usually predominance of, the feminine,
<i>Scope</i>	which is expressed more frequently and more profoundly than the masculine in
<i>Form</i>	a Church's ethos, activities, symbols, values, theology, modes of being and, especially, its spirituality.
<i>Consequence</i>	The logical consequence of feminisation is its greater appeal to those who are themselves feminine.

Thus a feminised church has: (a) increased in its femininity, especially to the point whereby this dominates over the masculine; (b) a more frequent and deeper appeal to the feminine, so that *more often* and *more profoundly* there will be a feminine emphasis; (c) a range of activities, ways of being Church, and a liturgical and linguistic preference for feminine forms of expression, with an emphasis on characteristically feminine values and empathy with feminine spirituality; and (d) consequently attracts more feminine people.

It is important to stress that, in this understanding, feminisation is a movement towards the feminine (in the same way that, say, industrialisation or mechanisation can be seen as processes as well as end states), and not always to the point of feminine dominance (see Figure 4).

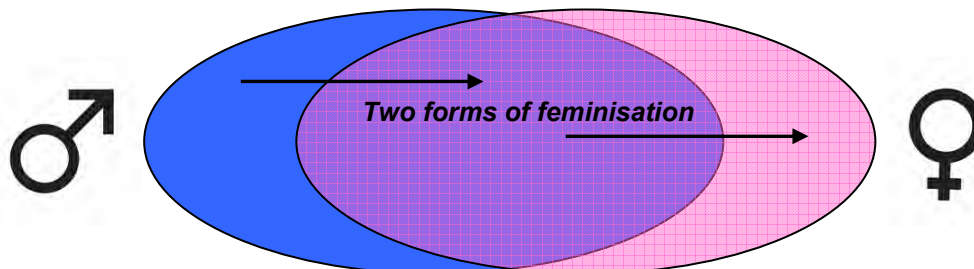


FIGURE 4. Movements Toward Feminisation: from the exclusively masculine toward that which is shared with femininity and, especially, from that which is shared to that which is exclusively feminine.

This tentative definition will inform our exploration of the extent to which the UK Church has been feminised and what response may be appropriate.¹¹

4.3 Aspects of Feminisation

As a result of its qualitative nature, it is difficult to prove that church culture in the UK has become feminised. There is no obvious benchmark against which to measure such a claim, unless we are prepared to accept Murrow's contention that, if we understand the Church as a mechanism, it *must* be feminised since it is predominantly attended by women. Such is the logic of his deterministic claim (following 'business guru' W. Edwards Deming) that "Your system is perfectly designed to give you the results you're getting" (2005a, vii).

In churches where some two-thirds of attendees are women, any men present will be in a minority. This is not a position than men are used to being in since their workplaces, social

¹¹ Contrary to Wilson's criticisms of Podles' thesis regarding feminisation (2001b), there is no suggestion that feminisation is a "conspiracy theory."

spaces (whether playing or watching football, going to the pub, etc.) and other contexts of their lives are predominantly male, or gender balanced. It is worth recognising that many men may feel threatened by this unfamiliar minority status. If the adults in the typical church described by Tearfund (which was only 35% male) were to sit in a circle for a time of worship or prayer, an average man would have two women on his left and two women on his right, and he may be tempted to conclude that Christianity is for women rather than men. We turn now to look at some specific aspects of feminisation.

4.3.1 Church Worship

Perhaps the main focus of those who criticise the Church for having become feminised is that its worship is too 'touchy-feely', overemotional or over-personal. This has been derogatorily called 'Jesus is my boyfriend' (or, more provocatively, 'girlfriend') worship. As Murrow (2005a, 187) argues, "today's praise music invites the worshipper to assume the feminine role" and praise music can resemble the Top 40 love songs.¹² Here are three examples from (many) such worship songs:

"By Your Side" by Noel and Tricia Richards

©1989 Kingsway's Thankyou Music

By Your side I would stay;
In Your arms I would lay.
Jesus, lover of my soul,
Nothing from You I withhold.

*Lord, I love You, and adore You;
What more can I say?
You cause my love to grow stronger
With every passing day.
(Repeat)*

"From the Sleep of Ages" by Stuart Townend

©1995 Kingsway's Thankyou Music

(Based on the 'beloved' woman's responses in Song of Songs 1-2)

From the sleep of ages,
I am stirred by the kiss of love,
By the fragrant perfume
When His name is mentioned.
I have learned to wait for Him,
To receive His presence
With the sound of laughter,
And the joy of resting.
But listen, my Lover
Is coming from heaven's throne!

*Over the mountains, leaping the hills,
He runs like a deer through the open plain;
Gazing through windows,
Peering through doors,
My Lover is calling and calling again...*

"What a Friend I've Found" by Martin Smith

©1996 Curious? Music UK

What a friend I've found,
Closer than a brother;
I have felt Your touch,
More intimate than lovers.
Jesus, Jesus,

¹² Pivec (2006, 14) finds corroborative evidence from Dr Barry Liesch, author of *The New Worship*, that "There's definitely a trend toward a more intimate music style."

Jesus, Friend forever.
(Repeat)
What a hope I've found,
More faithful than a mother;
It would break my heart
To ever lose each other.

Significantly, Matt Redman, composer of several worship songs in this vein, recently admitted that he was

"re-visiting a couple of things [that he had] written before" because they were too effeminate: "If a blokey bloke comes into church, is he going to connect with what's going on? Some of the romantic imagery used in worship, the more I think about and study scripture, I'm not so sure about it... In the Bible you don't have people coming up to Jesus saying, 'You're beautiful...', even in Revelation before his throne... [One song ended with] 'I'm so in love with you'... Maybe I should have written, 'I'm so in awe of you.' It's a learning process." (Interviewed by John Buckeridge in *Christianity*, March 2007, pp.12-13)

However, the backlash against over-feminised worship has sometimes gone too far. Rohr (2005, 130) claims that "We [i.e. the Church] are clearly much more concerned with worshipping him [Christ] than following him, which is all he asked us to do." Yet worshipping Christ is the natural and appropriate response of the Christian believer.¹³ Perhaps the most significant point to be made here is that expressions of worship must be culturally relevant, and that if there is no resonance with men or with masculinity, the Church's modes and expressions of worship may be meaningless or empty to them. Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Reading, introduced a 2006 report on *Churchgoing Today* (Barley 2006, vi) with this challenge: "are we stubbornly going to fight a corner for a certain way of being church, or go with the flow of the Spirit and develop ways of worshipping that chime with our culture?" There is a twofold meaning of 'worship' that includes living and meeting as a Christian community, as well as specific acts of (usually musical and vocal) worship. The question is whether either of these in their current forms resonates with men. Barley's own conclusion is that "church worship must be attractive to busy twenty-first century dwellers" (2006, 46), and this must be not too readily dismissed as a commoditization or 'McDonaldization' of the Church.

Arnold (1991, 77) is highly critical of what he regards as "Butterfly, Banner, and Balloon Extravaganzas" that severely alienate men, observing that worship services that are "entirely nice, sweet, and happy usually strike men as phony." In Arnold's view, men resonate more with transcendent and vertical worship, yet contemporary worship stresses God's immanence, and the personal relationship or friendship one may have with Christ. Whilst Arnold's primary focus is the Church in the United States, the same argument is frequently true of worship in Great Britain.

An in-depth study of worship by Rosalind Brown covered 1,347 services in 235 churches in 2000, and also compared hymns from *Ancient and Modern Revised* with songs in *Songs of Fellowship* (1998 edition). Her study found that an increasing number of songs and hymns began with "I" or "we" and were more likely "to place us at the centre of the action" (Brown 2001b, 19) rather than stressing God's otherness. Her conclusion was that "feeling-based texts [i.e. lyrics] when sung to tunes that engender emotion... move us much further into the right-brain world of emotions and away from the integration of head and heart" (2001b, 23-24). This was exemplified by the most sung church song, 'Be Still for the Presence of the Lord,' which "keeps and leaves us in passive, receptive mode before God" (2001b, 20).¹⁴

¹³ Acts gives examples of the Church, e.g. at Antioch, collectively "worshipping the Lord" (Acts 13:2) and individuals worshipping Jesus after encountering him, e.g. the Magi (Matthew 2:11), the Disciples (Matthew 14:32, 28:9, 28:17, Luke 24:52) and the healed blind man (John 9:38). It is the *form* of worship, not the *action*, which is negotiable.

¹⁴ I am aware of counter-criticism from Lorry Lutz (1997, 242) that we should "think about the male-oriented [song] words that exclude women." Likewise, Elaine Storkey (1985, 50) complains that Christian worship "is often drenched in male language. Many hymns address the congregation as 'brothers' or 'men'... The militaristic aspect of many of our hymns is also disconcerting." It is proper that we should listen to such responses but do so whilst asking which style (a) uses the more authentically biblical language and metaphors, and (b) has the greater impact in terms of alienation, or the creation of emotional and psychological barriers to worship. Besides, I would argue that the "militaristic aspect" that

4.3.2 Church Activities

One writer has referred to the ‘MothersUnionisation’ of the Church, that is to say that the Church has taken on the characteristics of Mothers’ Unions, being composed mostly of women and focusing on the preferences of women. Murrow generalises the fact that men are “project oriented” and that women are “program oriented” (2005, 94); the Church, he says, is similarly “program oriented” and this suits women more than men. It is also argued that there are more women’s and mothers’ prayer groups, social groups and an informal network connecting adult women within the Church. This observation is echoed by Wraight (2003, 2) who speculates whether “the way churches function socially is more feminine than masculine,” and therefore helps women belong more than men.¹⁵

In the early 1990s, Derek Cook wrote about the relationship between men and the Church, partly inspired by the fact that UK churches were losing a hundred men a day (Cook 1992, 13). He flagged up an important issue about how churches respond to allegations of sexism by noting anecdotally how there is an over-sensitivity towards being seen as chauvinistic. One result of this is a reluctance for churches to have male-only activities or groups (which could be construed as ‘sexist’) despite the fact that men are more likely to attend, participate and share within such groups – and despite the fact that UK churches have a long tradition of women’s Bible study groups, prayer meetings, mums ‘n’ toddlers, Mothers’ Unions and so forth.

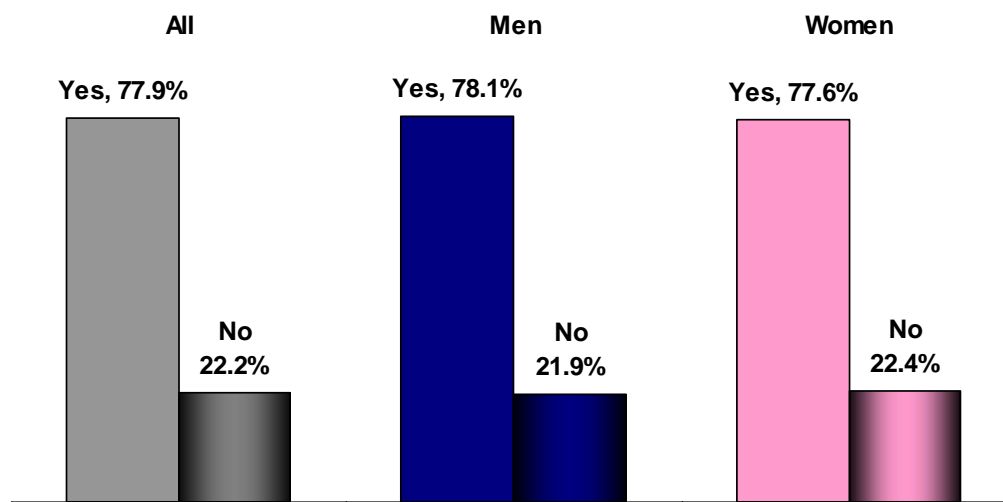


FIGURE 5. Survey Response to the Question:
“Do you believe that men-only church outreach and activities are a good idea?”

My own survey results suggests that there is strong support for men-only church outreach and activities (77.9% of respondents), with marginally more support amongst men than women (Figure 5). Where there is continued reluctance to organise men-only activities, it is possible that opposition to them is overestimated by church leaders, or that their opponents are disproportionately influential within the church. Where male-only groups and activities are discouraged, yet women’s groups are permitted, the feminisation of a church deepens.

Whilst it has often been argued that men prefer the outdoors as their spiritual and religious environment, and that they prefer more individualistic and less communal encounters with God, my survey did not find unambiguous evidence that this was the case. For example, whilst 23% of men did claim to “feel closer to God when I am outdoors (e.g. in the

Storkey refers to has all but disappeared in the twenty-two years since her book was published – a further indication of feminisation.

¹⁵ Statistics from Christian Research substantiate this claim: in 2005, those attending midweek church-run activities were 62% female and only 38% male. Male participation rates were as low as 31% for independent churches, 33% for the URC and 35% for Baptist churches (Brierley 2006, Table 5.20.3).

countryside),” 21% of women also agreed with this statement, making no significant genderal difference. However, this result may be due to the nature of the survey itself, which was amongst UK Christians who were typically churchgoers: men who prefer communing with God outside of Church may well be absent from our sample of churchgoers, by definition.

4.3.3 Church Preaching

It has also been suggested that sermons in church are somehow more feminine than masculine. This argument is perhaps the weakest amongst the purported evidence of feminisation within the Church. Murrow (2005a, 79) contends that men are less able than women to focus during sermons, since they are testosterone-driven and have a more active, participatory style of learning. A different line of argument suggests that sermons tend to address things that women are interested in, because (a) women outnumber men within the church and therefore preachers in some way tailor their sermons for women; and (b) church sermons tend to ‘spiritualise’ topics, rather than addressing real issues that concern men, especially the workplace. This tendency could be seen as a consequence of a popular but false dichotomy between the spiritual and the secular.

German theologian Werner Neuer, whose writing in the early 1980s anticipated much of the discussion of the 1990s and was later published in English, argued that:

“There are good reasons to suppose that the church’s preaching has overstressed the comfort of the gospel and has failed to emphasise that we are conscripted by Christ to build the kingdom. It is the latter that appeals to man’s nature, which is geared to action and change. The passive side of faith... has often been overstressed at the cost of the active side of faith” (1990, 170).

More recent Christian books have also addressed the perceived imbalance between the active and the passive aspects of Christianity, although not always couching them in genderal terms. Erwin Raphael McManus’ *The Barbarian Way* (2005, 5), for example, argues that the Church’s message has been “Come, and listen,” rather than urging Christians “Forward” in what McManus describes as “a revolutionary call to fight for the heart of humanity.”

4.3.4 Language and Symbols

The language used by the Church to express itself and to communicate with non-Christians has increasingly been an area of debate. New liturgies, songs and translations of the Bible are dispensing with both ‘traditional’ expressions of God’s ‘masculine’ identity and with traditional references to a generic person as ‘man’ or ‘brother.’ This trend reflects a broader social shift away from employing words such words in the gender-neutral sense of *any* human.¹⁶

Perhaps surprisingly, one of the leaders of the men’s movement in the United States, Sam Keen, has suggested (1991, 202) “that the time has come to cease using general metaphors for God.” The more popular trend, however, has been to increasingly use male *and* female language and metaphors for God, evidenced in prayers such as “Our Mother...” and even in Christological references to ‘Christa’, with some feminist theologians casting doubt on whether a specifically male Christ could be capable of redeeming the other half of humanity.¹⁷

Podles (1999, 119) has said that language which feminises all Christians *individually* as the ‘bride of Christ’, rather than the Church collectively (Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-9, 21:1-2), has had a “disastrous” impact: “Bridal language used to describe a Christian’s

¹⁶ A recent example of this was the heated debate over Today’s New International Version (TNIV) of the Bible, a translation that was intended to be easier to understand but which also made gender-neutral (or ‘gender accurate’) language (which accounted for 30% of the changes made). This led Poythress to complain in *Christianity Today* that “political correctness puts pressure on translators to change details of meaning that do not fit modern egalitarian (or feminist) expectations” and to dispute the accuracy of the new version (Poythress 2002, 45). The same publication also carried a corresponding defence of the TNIV (Strauss 2002, 43-45).

¹⁷ For an introduction to the concept of the “Christa [who]... more truly than the man epitomises the sacrifice that is made for the sins of the world...” see Storkey’s review of feminist theology (2000, 104 et seq.).

relationship with God has homosexual overtones to many men... bridal mysticism and the metaphors and attitudes to which it gave rise have placed a major obstacle to men's participation in the Church."

Arnold (1991, 12) contends that the Church "has failed to understand men and to speak to them in a language that they can comprehend" or, we might say, relate to. Davie (1994, 119-120) mentions research indicating that women tend to focus on a God of love, comfort and forgiveness, whilst men relate more to a God of power, planning and control. Whilst obviously this is a generalisation, it strongly suggests that we must be aware of the language we use of God, since it has the potential to encourage or discourage communion with Him. It is striking to reflect on the truth of Arnold's conclusion (1991, 78) that "it is surprising how very few sermons today use masculine language and metaphor or employ examples drawn from the everyday life of men." Murrow (2005a, 136) is more direct in his criticism, observing that some of the Church's favoured expressions such as "family of God" and "personal relationship with Jesus" are not Biblical phrases and possibly not even Biblical concepts. New Testament concepts that use military and athletic language and metaphors are nowadays seldom employed within the UK Church, possibly because so many Christians are uncomfortable with the realities of modern day warfare.¹⁸

Whilst my survey results did not always provide evidence of strong differences in male/female use of language, there were some variations. For example, although both men and women's strongest preference was the expression "I accepted Jesus as my personal saviour" to describe their becoming a Christian, men were more likely to say they "recognized Jesus as Lord" (7.3% of men described their conversion this way, compared to just 2.7% of women). Conversely, women were slightly more likely to say "I gave my heart to Jesus" (4% versus 3%).

In using language to relate to God, men and women generally preferred the same names: Father (used by 84% of men and 85% of women), Lord (68% and 65% respectively) and Saviour. Women, however, were more likely to name God 'Friend' (47%, compared to 36% of men) and, perhaps not surprisingly, 'Lover of my soul' (13% versus 6% of men). Men were more likely to consider God their King (31% versus 25%), Judge (12% versus 6%) and Master (13% versus 5%).

4.3.5 Leadership

This is one of the two most contentious issues when it comes to discussing the involvement of men and women within the Church. Important though this debate is, however, it will only be considered here in relation to the feminisation of the Church. Whilst theological arguments will continue over the proper exercise of leadership, authority and headship, we are limited here to a more immediate concern: what is the actual effect of different types of leadership on male church participation?

Several writers have noted the apparent contradiction between the claim that the Church has become feminised, and the fact that its leaders are still predominantly male. A common response to this claim is that many of the Church's male leaders are actually rather effeminate, and therefore have themselves contributed to feminisation. A more quantifiable suggestion is made by Murrow (2005a, 157-8), who suggests that churches with female leaders tend to deter men from attending and participating in Church life. To the best of my knowledge, this claim has not been systematically investigated within the UK, and to do so would encounter difficulties of establishing causality. It would be interesting to see whether the gender of clergy is correlated to male/female attendance rates, and whether it is significant that two denominations that have had women ministers since the early 1970s (URC and Methodism) also have two of the lowest rates of male participation (35% and 36% respectively). Re-examining his most recent dataset, Christian Research's Dr Peter Brierley

¹⁸ One topical example of this is the revision of 'Onward Christian Soldiers' to 'Onward Christian Pilgrims' (see, for example, *Hymns Old and New – new Anglican edition*).

has found that “where there is a female minister the percentage of men in their congregations is only 38%” compared to the “overall proportion of churchgoers [which is] 43%” (personal correspondence, 9 May 2007).¹⁹

TABLE VI
GENDER OF MINISTERS, GREAT BRITAIN, 2005

Denomination	Male Ministers	Female Ministers	% Female Ministers
Anglican	2,417	445	15.55%
Baptist	707	43	5.73%
Roman Catholic	1,448	0	0.00%
Independent	262	7	2.60%
Methodist	464	149	24.31%
New Churches	607	76	11.13%
Orthodox	87	0	0.00%
Pentecostal	1,141	80	6.55%
URC	148	44	22.92%
Smaller Denominations	312	225	41.90%
Total	7,593	1,069	12.34%

Source: Brierley (2006, Table 5.5.1)

Murrow’s claim (2005a, 59) is that men follow men, especially those who are inspiring and are strong leaders; they do not follow women. His conclusion, therefore, is that “Whenever possible, put men in leadership positions” (2005, 156). The Church of England’s 1992 approval of the ordination of women has coincided with a fall in male attendances rates, and this coincidence suggests that this could be a causal factor in some churches. The *Sunday Times* drew such a connection, reporting in 2004 that as female ordinands overtook male ones in the Church of England, this trend was “mirrored by congregations which are also becoming increasingly female.” The article quoted sociologist David Martin that “It’s obvious that over time the priesthood will become increasingly a female profession. As far as the church has a future it will include a predominant ministry of women and they will get to the top” (Morgan and Keenlyside 2004).²⁰ Table VI above shows that as of 2005, approximately one in eight ministers in Britain is female.

4.3.6 Emasculation of Jesus

The other most controversial topic is the alleged emasculation of Jesus. Put simply, this is the claim that Jesus has been portrayed either as non-gendered (as if that were possible) or effeminately. Whilst the historical reality of Jesus’ maleness is not in question, the significance of it is. There is a disturbing trend towards denying that Jesus’ maleness was accompanied by any masculinity. This view is typified by Roy McCloughry (1992, 140), who argues that Jesus was incarnated and lived “of the male sex but not the masculine gender... Jesus subverts masculinity.” This is a dangerous line of reasoning, with the implication being that men who follow Christ should imitate his “rejection of masculinity” (1992, 143). McCloughry’s view is that Christians should transform and redefine masculinity, in a trajectory that he describes as “the movement from power to love” (1992, 256). Whilst any appeal for men to be loving should of course be welcomed, it is regrettable that masculine

¹⁹ The issue of leadership within the Church is closely related to the concept of headship in the home. Pivec (2006, 15) cites some Promise Keepers’ statistics that when a mother becomes a Christian, her family will join her 34% of the time – but for a father the figure is 93% of the time. This statistic suggests that men have some *de facto* spiritual leadership in their families, and that evangelism which targets men will be the most effective in reaching whole families. Murrow controversially argues (2005a, 43) that this was Jesus’ method: “Jesus’ approach was *men first*... His example is clear: if we want to change the world, we must focus on men” (emphasis his).

²⁰ The *Survey of Christian Men 2005 Report*, published in January 2007, specifically looked at the “issue of the lack of young men going into Christian ministry” (Generation Next 2007, 4). It noted that “some men felt that the undermining of male headship in the church was having a detrimental effect” and quotes one participant who reasoned that “The increasing feminisation of the church in many denominations, both amongst leaders and congregations, discourages some young men [from going into Christian ministry]” (2007, 32).

power and strength are seen as being in opposition to love, rather than working alongside it – as if ‘loving power’ or ‘powerful love’ were oxymorons.²¹

In Christian art and iconography, poetry, hymns and literature, the masculine side of Jesus is very often downplayed. It seems that we find the sentimentalised and tender “little Lord Jesus” of Victorian hymnody more comforting – and less challenging – than the table-turning, Pharisee-confronting, Wilderness-seeking, determined and resolute leader of men depicted in Scripture. Little wonder, then, that many people were uncomfortable with the graphic (some would say exaggerated) suffering of Jesus in the film *The Passion of the Christ* (Figure 6), or that an Easter advertising campaign in 1999 (Figure 7) portraying Jesus as a revolutionary was labelled ‘blasphemous’ by some.²²



FIGURE 6. Crucifixion Scene from Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (Icon Productions, 2004)



FIGURE 7. Churches' Advertising Network Easter advertisement (1999)

4.3.7 Spirituality

It is a commonplace that masculinity is in crisis. Men are experiencing considerable confusion over their identity, in terms of *who* they are and *what* their roles are. As the end of the millennium approached, Roy McCloughry reported “a loss of definition and a confusion about what is expected of men... It is amazing how quickly men seem to have lost their confidence” (1994, 4). However, such complaints were already familiar, having their origin in the turbulent changes in gender relations in the 1960s, and the ensuing ‘sex war’. By the mid-1980s Leanne Payne was able to note that this “growing cultural malady” was already “epic in proportions” and equated to a full-blown “crisis in masculinity” (1985, 9). The Church’s response to this disruption to men’s identities, labelled “gender dysphoria” by Culbertson (2002, 221), has been both feeble and disappointing, yet this is a profoundly spiritual issue.

Instead of affirming men in their created, masculine identities, the Church has tended towards a general notion of spirituality that is unmistakably feminine. Thus, the desirable virtues of churchgoers are that they are ‘nice’, ‘friendly’, ‘polite’ and ‘well-behaved’. They should be contemplative, quietly prayerful, intuitive and able to express their ‘personal relationship’ with Jesus articulately and emotionally. Whilst these characteristics may well reflect a certain type of spirituality, it is not one that men will necessarily identify with and as such is further evidence of the feminisation of Church culture.

²¹ Many writers on male spirituality develop this point, e.g. Rohr argues that “Love without power... is only sentimentality... However, power without love becomes brutality” (1994, 177) and Dalbey argues that this is specifically Christian: “It is not enough for Christians to portray weakness and tenderness as acceptable in a man. We also must portray the manly strength and firmness that is of God” (1988, 180).

²² For a rebuttal of such claims by the then Bishop of Ely, Stephen Sykes, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/250752.stm>.

4.4 Some Survey Indicators of Feminisation

The Attitudes to Church 2007 Survey detected some additional indications that feminisation is taking place (or that it is perceived as occurring) within the Church:

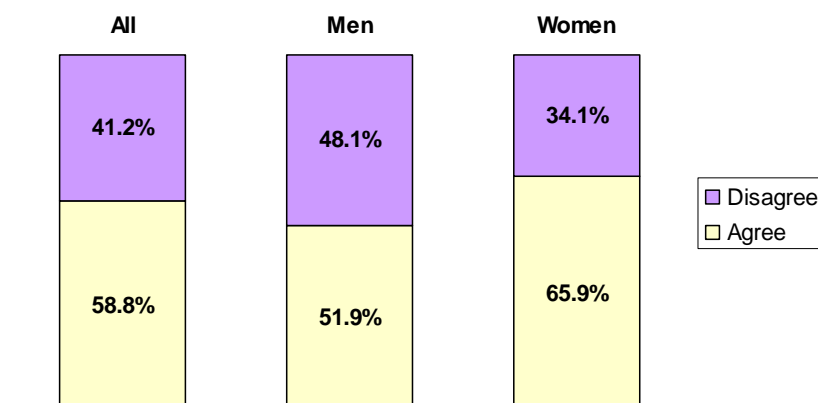


FIGURE 8. Survey Response to the Question:
“Church is as welcoming to men as it is to women – Agree or Disagree?”

A very significant minority of respondents (all of whom were UK Christians) claim that the Church is *not* as welcoming to men as it is to women – 41% said this was the case. Moreover, there was a different response from men and women, with 48% of men claiming church was less welcoming for men, compared to 34% of women saying this was the case. This suggests that women may be underestimating the extent to which some men feel alienated (or at least unwelcomed) by the Church.

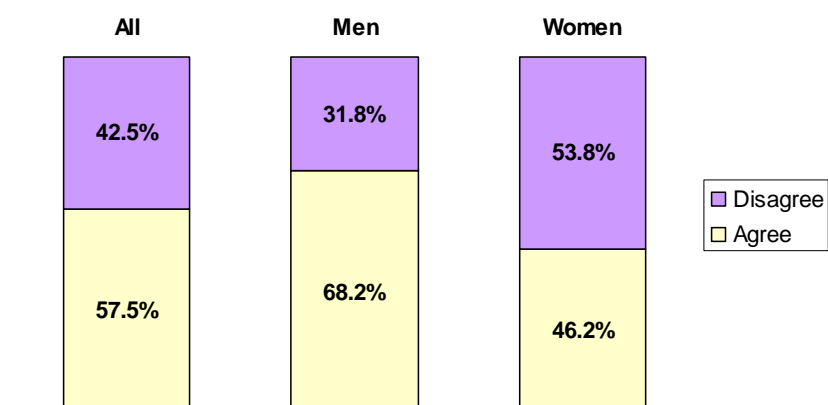


FIGURE 9. Survey Response to the Question:
“Women feel more ‘at home’ in church than men do – Agree or Disagree?”

Again, this question provides an indirect method of testing for feminisation within the UK Church. A majority of respondents (58%) agreed with the statement that women feel more ‘at home’ in the Church than men do. And again, there is significant variation by gender: more than two-thirds of men felt that women were more ‘at home’ in Church compared to 46% of women. This again suggests that women may be underestimating how men feel about their (un)belonging in Church.

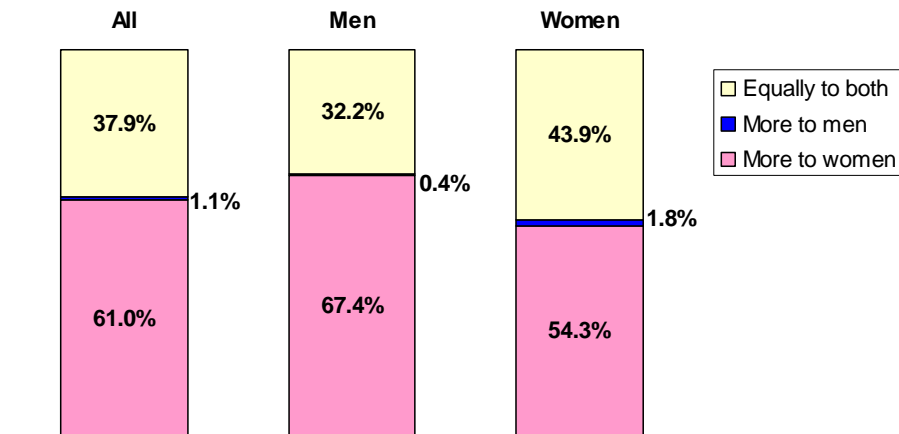


FIGURE 10. Survey Response to the Question:
 “Do you think that UK church services in general appeal
 more to women, more to men, or equally to both?”

There seems to be a consensus (61%) that UK Church services generally appeal more to women than to men. Yet again, we see significant gender differences, with 67% of men believing that churches appeal more to women, compared to 54% of women agreeing.

Overall then, there is a significant proportion of Christians whose descriptions of the UK Church support the view that it has become feminised and, if not quite alienating men, is at least perceived to be more welcoming to women. It is highly significant that men’s perceptions and sensitivity to these signs of feminisation are different to women’s. In the next chapter, we consider whether gender differences within the Church are ignored or downplayed, and whether this too could be a cause of men’s alienation from the Church.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANDROGYNY – A FURTHER EXPLANATION?

We have seen that there is evidence of feminisation within the Church, both generally in the West and specifically within the UK. I propose that there is an equally serious trend accompanying feminisation that also discourages men from belonging to the Church: that of androgyny, an artificial state of gender neutrality. The accusation here is that the Church has failed to recognise the profundity and significance of differences between the sexes and has failed to value men as men and women as women, to the detriment of both.²³

5.1 Denial of Gender Differences

One term that has been applied to this condition is ‘gender blindness’, whereby essential and fundamental differences are ignored or denied, either unintentionally or deliberately, often in the name of ‘equality’. Within the Church, this reasoning is conventionally based on two Biblical passages: Genesis 1:26-27 and Galatians 3:26-29.

The first passage reminds us of the profundity that, from Creation, men and women are both made in God’s image:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Genesis 1:26-27, NIV)

It is rightly observed that men and women are both created in God’s “image” and “likeness” and, in some sense, have joint rulership over the earth. Whereas some would read from this passage the essential fact that humans were created in two distinct forms, male and female, others argue that the key point of this text is the commonality of humans, since they are all “in the image of God.”

The second passage also addresses sexual distinctions (although verse 28 is often removed from its context in the rest of Galatians):

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:26-29, NIV)

These verses have frequently been used by those arguing against gender distinctions in the Church, since Paul claims “There is neither... male nor female.” Equality in salvation (“you are all one in Christ Jesus”) is extended to include functional and even essential sameness, or homogeneity. Christian feminists would argue, therefore, that differences between men and women have sociological, environmental and historical origins, rather than divine ones, and have downplayed differences between men and women. See, for example, Mary Stewart van Leeuwen’s chapter on ‘How to Think About Sex and Gender’ (1990, 53-71) which takes a study on verbal abilities and extrapolates its results to conclude that men and women are more alike than different.²⁴

²³ Whilst there have been specific men’s movements or Church organisations for men (such as the Promise Keepers in the United States, or Christian Vision for Men in the UK), these have tended to be either short-term and transient with limited impact (Promise Keepers) or an optional extra for some churches (CVM) rather than influencing and transforming all aspects of a Church. This issue should not be seen as something merely for a ‘band of brothers’ or men’s group but rather something that must lead to a fundamental shift in Church culture in its totality.

²⁴ Whilst that assertion might be true, the more pertinent issue is what are the differences and how significant they are. On the question of polarity (as suggested by the title of John Gray’s bestselling *Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus*) versus continuity, which Dorothy Sayers called “neighbouring sexes” rather than “opposite sexes” (cited by van Leeuwen 2002a, 28), it is interesting to recall suggestions that characteristics of masculinity include otherness and apartness, whilst characteristics of femininity include sameness, togetherness and inclusivity: could men tend to believe that men and women are differently, whilst women tend to regard them as the same?

This paper, however, argues that essential differences between the sexes are God-given and should be acknowledged, embraced and celebrated. As Vanier (1985, 49) observes, “The difference between men and women is a radical and fundamental one which permeates the depths of their consciousness and affects all human behaviour. It is at the beginnings of life itself.” Beyond essential differences, there are undoubtedly sociological and cultural ones, but these are derivatives of the deeper, more fundamental ones. For example, it is obvious that some aspects of masculinity are culturally determined – but this should not blind us to the fact that there is an essential masculinity evident in all societies and emanating from man’s creation as male.

An examination of what some of these differences may be will help us consider how the Church can respond to them, with the very real hope that men will find it easier to attend and belong to a church. Before we explore gender differences, it is worth pointing out that, irrespective of whether male/female characteristics are essential and innate, or products of society, they are real and current. In other words, this debate should not blind us to the fact that men and women *are* different, even if we may not agree on *why*. Several Christian writers have explored the full range of differences: Neuer’s discussion of physiological and intellectual/psychological differences, together with differences of outlook, is a good example (1990, 32ff), whilst Wraight has demonstrated how men and women “see religion differently” (2001, 112). One good example of this is that they even read the Bible for different reasons: women to seek guidance and inspiration and to find comfort; and men to study and learn about God and to follow up references made in sermons and Bible study (2001, 115). Regrettably, we prevented by limited space from exploring such differences in detail.

Yet it is true to generalise that almost every single generation of every culture, in every part of the world, has taken it as obvious that men and women are different. There may be variations in how these differences are understood or explained, but their existence has not been in doubt. It is only now, in the postmodern period since the 1960s, and predominantly in Western countries, that serious debate has taken place concerning the construction of gender identities, and claims have been made that those identities are artificial and human products.²⁵

Historically, and perhaps ironically, some of the blame for the ignoring of gender lies with the patriarchal constitution of the Church and other social institutions. Male theologians, philosophers, authors and even laymen assumed their interpretation of the world to be normative. One can have some sympathy with contemporary (feminist and other) theologians who complain that Western theology – as with Western history – was created by men, for men. Yet this stereotypical complaint does an injustice to our forefathers, whose intention was to create discourses through which humans could interpret and understand the world. Their attempt was to build human understanding; we can see only now with hindsight that this construct was based on male ways of reasoning, perceiving and theologising.

Despite the complaints of feminists and some revisionist historians, this was never intended to be an articulation of *masculine* values and viewpoints. It was instead a flawed, biased articulation of *human* values. The recent feminist articulation of women’s views is a much-needed addition to the interpretation of ourselves and our world, but what is urgently needed is a parallel male articulation of men’s views *as men*.²⁶

A powerful response to the issue of androgyny has been made by Violi and Joyce (1998, 361), and merits quoting at length:

²⁵ Such social constructs will inevitably be imperfect, and we must be capable of surrendering all constructed identities at the cross.

²⁶ Such is the thinking behind James Nelson’s argument that “what we failed to notice is that treating dominant males as generically and normatively ‘human’ has made men largely invisible to themselves. It has prevented men from exploring self-consciously and self-critically their own distinctively masculine experience” (1992, 4) and, specifically, that because “traditional scholarship and theology made men into pseudo-universal generic human beings, it excluded from consideration whatever was specific to men *as men*” (1992, 18, emphasis his). This same point was made, apparently independently, by Roy McCloughry (1992, 7), who claimed that “men are invisible to themselves as men.”

But to the extent that the androgynous programme is an attempt to impose a philosophical abstraction on the complicated paradox of human sexuality, it can only result in new oppressiveness at least as serious as that which it sets out to correct... To ignore or repress essential sexual, spiritual and psychological differences between men and women not only violates common sense and experience, but it sets the stage for more oppression in the name of abstraction...

The attempt to repress or obliterate sexual differences and produce the ideal androgynous person or society disguises a devastating attack on masculinity and males. In many ways, the whole phenomenon of masculinity is founded on its separation from the feminine world and is energized by its continual contrast to femininity. To eliminate sexual distinctiveness amounts to an unconscious attempt to suppress masculinity.

Whilst we may not agree with a definition of masculinity that contrasts it so starkly to femininity, it is an interesting issue whether men are more damaged by androgyny than women are, which would provide one mechanism for linking androgyny with lower male church attendance. A more persuasive rationale might argue that androgyny has partially blinded us to gender differences, and therefore prevented the Church from addressing general issues directly.

5.2 Some Survey Indicators of Gender Differences

The survey found significant appreciation of gender differences amongst churchgoers. For example, 72% agreed that men and women experience God differently (Figure 12) and 81% agreed that men and women relate to God in different ways (Figure 13). The existence of such broad acknowledgement of gender differences makes it all the more frustrating that these differences are insufficiently preached on, addressed or responded to within the Church. Figure 14 reveals that Christians strongly believe that men and women *do* have fundamental created differences but, as Figure 15 shows, there is uncertainty as to whether these differences are of eternal significance.

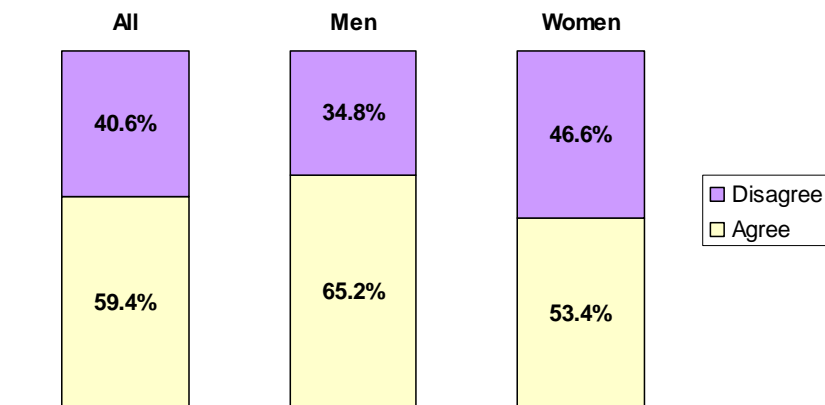


FIGURE 11. Survey Response to the Question: “Men and Women experience God differently – Agree or Disagree?”

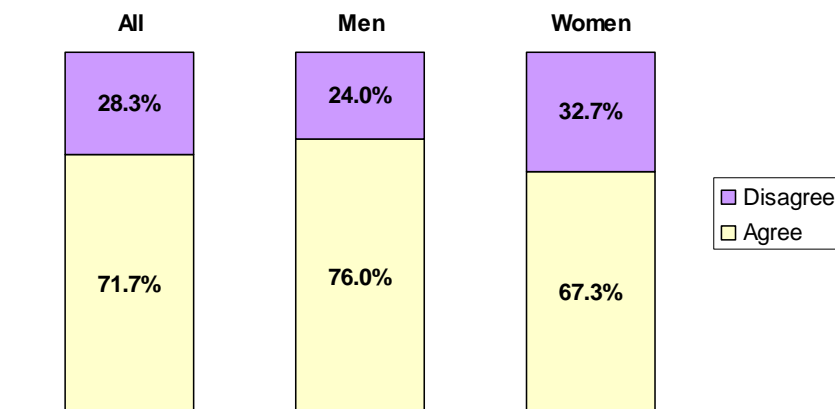


FIGURE 12. Survey Response to the Question: “Men and women relate to God differently – Agree or Disagree?”

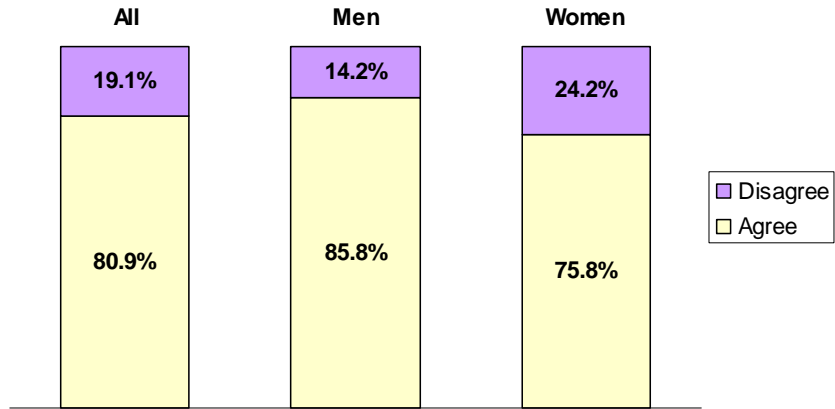


FIGURE 13. Survey Response to the Question: "Men and women reflect different aspects of God's character"

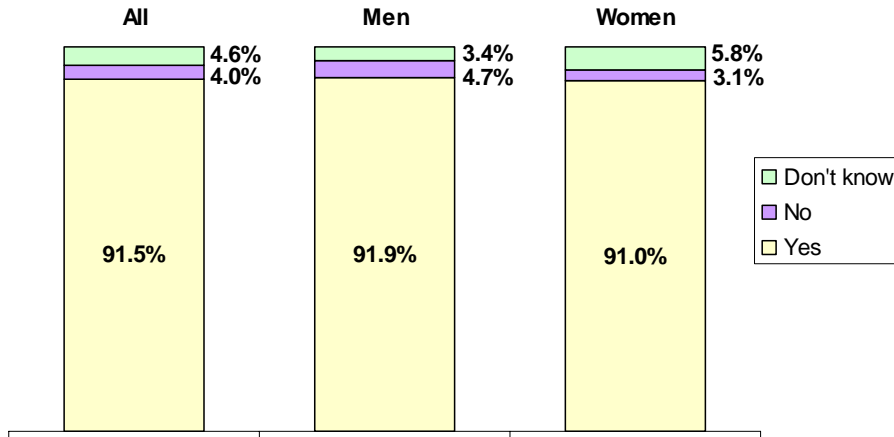


FIGURE 14. Survey Response to the Question: "Do you believe it was a significant part of God's plan for Creation to make men and women with fundamental differences?"

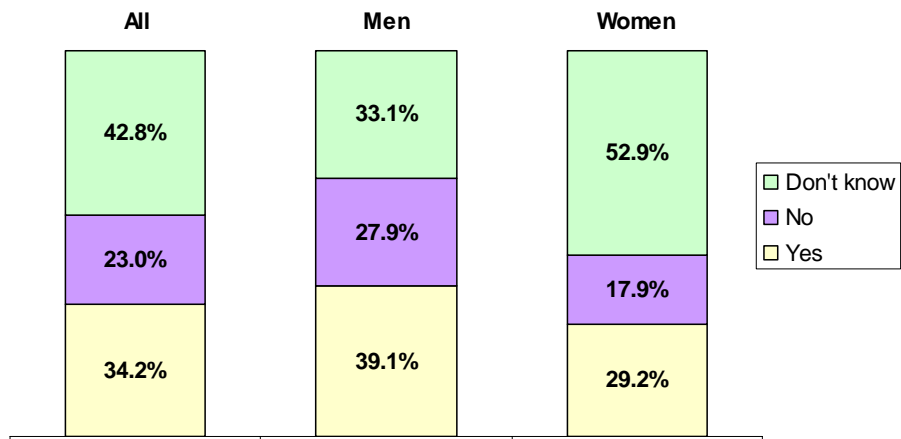


FIGURE 15. Survey Response to the Question: "Do you believe there will be male and female identities in heaven?"

5.3 Consequences of Denying Gender Differences

It is somewhat alarming to read in a volume of *Christian Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender* that androgyny “has been helpful in overcoming the bondage of gender roles” (Hester in Thatcher and Stuart 1996, 94) since, if anything, it has confused what such roles actually are. I argue here that the Church’s disregard of differences between the sexes is wrong and damaging for at least four reasons:

(i) It oppresses men

As Arnold has pointed out, “To ignore or repress essential sexual – and spiritual – differences [is] ... oppression.” By assuming that all are equal in function, role and purpose because they are equal in status is flawed logic, and has led to the Church advocating (or at least practising) a “bland uniformity” (1991, 21). When sermons and Church teaching instruct people generically, without taking into consideration their innate differences, then the Church fails to affirm people in their specific maleness or femaleness, potentially leading to the suppressing of their masculinity or femininity. Whilst the Church’s truths are equally pertinent to men and women, sometimes specific teaching must be addressed to a particular gender (or, say, age group). This is a practice that we see in New Testament letters to churches, e.g. in Colossians 3 there are separate instructions to wives, husbands, children and fathers; in Ephesians 5, wives and husbands are addressed separately; and in 1 Timothy 5, older men, younger men, older women and younger women are spoken to in turn, in recognition of the fact that different messages may be applicable to them as they experience life in different ways, have different roles to perform, and may be susceptible to different temptations.

(ii) It stifles the richness of life and the glory of creation

Harper (1994, 21) is not alone in concluding from Genesis 2 that men and women “were not created at the same time, they were not created in the same way, and they were not created for the same purpose.” This duality is essential and foundational, and a mysterious and unknowable reflection of God’s own identity. To deny these God-created differences is not just to “reduce the richness of our life together” (Penner 1998, 38), it is to subdue the glory of creation and akin to choosing a monochrome existence over a colour one. As Munroe says (2002, 196), “no one gender can look at the world with complete perspective.”

Ultimately, it is to insult our creator God if we repress that which He has created and deemed ‘very good’. As Eldredge (2001b, 27) has said, “God doesn’t make generic people; He makes something very distinct – a man or a woman.” Elisabeth Elliott (in Piper and Grudem 1991, 394) further argues that this distinction is “one that meets us on an altogether different plane from mere anatomical distinctions. It is unfathomable and indefinable... [yet] It is unavoidable and undeniable.” Concluding an attack on ‘Christian feminists’, Sharon James pleads “We’ve been fully liberated to be human now, but please, can we be liberated to be *women* again?” (2001, 61, emphasis hers).

(iii) It leads to a poor model of Church

Paul’s writings about Church form and structure have created both controversy and confusion, and he has been decried as sexist, patriarchalist and culture-bound, yet lauded for his so-called Christian ‘charter of equality’ in Galatians 3. Metaphors for the Church used by Paul and other New Testament writers include the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12-31, Rom. 12:4-5, Eph. 4:16,5:30, Gal. 2:19), the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-23, Rev. 19:6-9,21:2-9,22:17) and the Building of God (1 Cor. 3:9-17, Eph. 2:19-22, 1 Ptr. 2:4-8). Let us look specifically at one of these, the Church as the Body of Christ.

If we fail to recognise men and women’s differences, we most likely will interpret and live out passages about the Body of Christ wrongly. As Jones (1998, 97) stresses, the Church is “one of the key ways God uses to teach [us] about himself: the sheer diversity of the church.” When Paul speaks of the body, he is referring to something that is a single, unified entity – but his *greater* emphasis is on diversity and different parts (people) working together: “The

point Paul wants to make is that unity does not mean uniformity” (Jones 1998, 63). If we fail to appreciate differences between men and women, we will misunderstand the diversity of the Church, which is what Paul is driving at in 1 Corinthians 12:

“Now the body is not made up of one part but of many...” (v.14) “God has arranged the parts in the body, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body...” (vv.18-20) “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it” (v.27).

(iv) It leads to an ineffective Church

The final problem with the Church’s ignoring differences between men and women is that it will necessarily be ineffective: its preaching, evangelism and pastoral care will all be less effective than if men and women’s God-given identities were acknowledged, responded to and worked with. The strengths and contributions of men are under-utilised and undervalued²⁷ – who would claim that men’s God-given abilities, passion and courage have been harnessed by the Church for the work of God’s kingdom? Yet God has endowed men with a *Fire in the Belly* (Keen 1991), “unquenchable hunger” (Dittes 1996, 9) and a “holy restlessness” (Dalbey 1988, 183) that most writers on male spirituality identify.

Failing to appreciate what it means to be male and female in Christ will make it less likely that the Church is able to speak to people at the core of their being, since in essence they are ultimately male or female. If our outreach activities fail to differentiate between men and women, and fail to recognise that they respond differently to different messages, imagery and stimuli, they will run the risk of reaching neither men nor women. And if the Church’s pastoral care fails to recognise the intrinsic differences between men and women, how can it respond to their different emotional, psychological and spiritual needs? Churches that are able to build up and edify their members will properly recognise the diversity of those members.

5.4 Concluding Remarks

The results of my survey of UK Christians can be seen as providing something of a mandate for the Church to recognise and respond to men and women’s distinctiveness and differences. A majority of participants (66%) agreed that, when planning Church services, gender should be taken into account. There was even greater support for men-only outreach activities – 78% of both men and women recognised that this could be appropriate and effective for evangelising men and overcoming the alienation they may feel from the Church. Responding in these ways should halt the trend of feminisation within the Church and make it a more welcoming body for men to be distinctively part of. Our intention is emphatically *not* to suggest ridding the Church of its feminine elements but rather to bring them into balance with the masculine.

²⁷ Wraight’s focus group study of Christian men found that 40% claimed to have management skills that were not used by their church, 36% had unused ability in outreach/evangelism, 36% had preaching ability that was not used and 32% had untapped ability in organising (2003, 11). Their most fully utilised strengths were hospitality and caring.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This paper has investigated the gender gap within the UK Church and found conventional explanations inadequate in accounting for the recent growth in women's majority over men. There is a growing body of Christian literature that attributes this imbalance to a feminisation of the Church. Some of the main aspects of feminisation were examined in Chapter Four, and this paper has found various indications that such feminisation has indeed occurred. Whilst feminisation is, by its very nature, almost impossible to measure, we have found literary, anecdotal and statistical indicators that show that not only is it present within the UK Church but also that it has grown more dominant in the last two decades.

This paper has further argued that the general issues affecting the Church have been complicated and exacerbated by two factors: a general reluctance amongst Christians to engage with this topic and, moreover, an underlying 'androgyny' or 'gender blindness' that fails to recognise and respond to men and women's distinctiveness. A consequence of this has been further alienation of men from the Church, since their differences from women have not been fully appreciated or spoken to by the Church.

Now that men's alienation from the Church has been identified and, at least in part, explained, questions arise as to what the response ought to be. That an ecclesial response is called for does not negate the fact that men still have a personal responsibility to seek Christ and follow Him, irrespective of any barriers they may face. For our part as the Church, however, we must acknowledge the times and the ways we may be responsible for such barriers, and do what we can to guide people to the Way. This is a highly significant missiological issue and one that calls for a mature understanding of how Christianity in this country must be appropriately contextualised.²⁸

I look forward to exploring this in greater depth in a subsequent paper. In the mean time, however, I would like to outline some aspects of a possible trajectory that the Church may wish to consider:

- Reinvigorating our understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ in such a way that holds in proper tension both the Body's unity and its diversity, with regard to gender.
- Repenting of the abuses of patriarchy and masculine excesses, without condemning or vilifying masculinity itself.
- Recognising that Biblical role models, including and especially that of Jesus Christ,²⁹ are instructive in helping men live authentically masculine lives.
- Accepting, valuing and celebrating our distinctiveness as males and females, a God-created differentiation that is part of the glory of His creation.
- Without compromising any aspect of the Christian gospel, developing language, metaphors and methods of communication that men relate well to. This may involve restoring the balance between how we speak of God's transcendence as well as His immanence.
- Acknowledging that some aspects of how we meet as Church work to alienate men, and that we should therefore endeavour to create forms of worship and expressions of being Christian communities that are as attractive and open to men as they are to women.

²⁸ For example, Charles Kraft (1980, 211) speaks of a 'dynamic equivalence church' that has three elements: it "(1) conveys to its members truly Christian meanings, (2) responds to the felt needs of its society, producing within it an impact for Christ equivalent to that which the first-century church produced in its society, and (3) appropriates cultural forms that are as nearly indigenous as possible."

²⁹ Hawkins and Tunnell (2002, 16) are entirely correct to state that "our best example of masculinity comes from what we can glean from the example of Christ" and, just as all humans must learn to shape their humanness in the light of Jesus' example, so too men must shape their masculinity after Jesus'. Other, lesser, role models for men can also be found in the Bible: see for example Goldingay (2000) and Boyer (1996).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allan (2006) Allan, John, 'Where are the Men?', *Christianity*, August 2006, p.24
- Archbishops' Council (2007) Archbishops' Council (Research and Statistics Department), personal e-mail correspondence, 22 March 2007
- Arnold (1991) Arnold, Patrick M., *Wildmen, Warriors, and Kings: Masculine Spirituality and the Bible*, New York: Crossroad, 1991
- Arterburn (2003) Arterburn, Stephen et al, *Being God's Man... in Leading a Family*, Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2003
- Atkins (1998) Atkins, Anne, *Split Image: Discovering God's True Intention for Male and Female*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1998
- Barley (2006) Barley, Lynda, *Churchgoing Today*, London: Church House Publishing, 2006
- Barna (1991) Barna, George, *User Friendly Churches: What Christians Need to Know About the Churches People Love to Go to*, Ventura: Regal Books, 1991
- Baumgaertner (1991) Baumgaertner, Jill P., 'The New Masculinity or the Old Mystification?', *The Christian Century*, May-June 1991, pp.593-6
- Benson & Roberts (2002) Benson, Paddy and Roberts, John, *Counting Sheep: Attendance Patterns and Pastoral Strategy*, Cambridge: Grove, 2002
- Biddulph (2004) Biddulph, Steve, *Manhood* [UK edition], London: Vermilion, 2004
- Bisson (1998) Bisson, Donald, 'Men's Spirituality', *The Way* 38:4, October 1998, pp.318-327
- Bly (1990) Bly, Robert, *Iron John: A Book about Men*, London: Rider, 1990
- Boyer (1996) Boyer, Mark G., *Biblical Reflections On Male Spirituality*, Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1996
- Brierley (1999) Brierley, Peter (ed.), *UKCH Religious Trends No. 2 – 2000/2001*, London: Christian Research, 1999
- Brierley (2000a) Brierley, Peter, *The Tide is Running Out: What the English Church Attendance Survey Reveals*, London: Christian Research, 2000
- Brierley (2000b) Brierley, Peter, *Steps to the Future: Issues facing the church in the new millennium*, London: Christian Research and Scripture Union, 2000
- Brierley (2005) Brierley, Peter (ed.), *UKCH Religious Trends No. 5 – 2005/2006: The Future of the Church*, London: Christian Research, 2005
- Brierley (2006) Brierley, Peter (ed.), *UKCH Religious Trends No. 6 – 2006/2007: Analyses from the 2005 English Church Census*, London: Christian Research, 2006
- Brown (2001a) Brown, Callum G., *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation, 1800-2000*, London: Routledge, 2001
- Brown (2001b) Brown, Rosalind, *How Hymns Shape Our Lives*, Cambridge: Grove, 2001
- Buckeridge (2007) Buckeridge, John, 'Beautiful [An Interview with Matt Redman]', *Christianity*, March 2007, pp.12-15
- Butcher (2000) Butcher, Catherine, 'Heart Searching', *The Christian Counsellor* 7, October-December 2000, pp.43-45
- Butcher (2001) Butcher, Catherine, 'Wimps or Warriors', *Christianity and Renewal*, June 2001, pp.19-21
- Capps (2002) Capps, Donald, *Men and their Religion: Honor, Hope, and Humor*, Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2002
- Carmody (1989) Carmody, John, *Toward a Male Spirituality*, Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1989
- Carter (2002) Carter, John, *The Pastoral Care of Men*, unpublished thesis, Redcliffe College, 2002
- Christian Research (2005a) Christian Research, *12 Trends in British Society: Some statistical trends and what they imply for church leaders*, London: Christian Research, 2005
- Christian Research (2005b) Christian Research, *Opportunities and Challenges for the Church of England over the next 15 years: Some statistical trends and what they imply for church leaders*, London: Christian Research, 2005
- Christianity (2005) Editorial: 'New Bible triggers Gender row,' *Christianity*, May 2005, p.10

- Clare (2000) Clare, Anthony, *On Men: Masculinity in Crisis*, London: Chatto & Windus, 2000
- Clowney (1995) Clowney, Edmund P., *The Church*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1995
- Cohen (1990) Cohen, David, *Being A Man*, London: Routledge, 1990
- Cook (1992) Cook, Derek, *Men! What's Missing in Today's Church*, London: MarshallPickering, 1992
- Coon (1990) Coon, Lynda L. et al (eds.), *That Gentle Strength: Historical Perspectives on Women in Christianity*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990
- Crabb (1995a) Crabb, Larry, *Be Strong, Be Courageous: God's Calling to Men*, London: Marshall-Pickering, 1995
- Crabb (1995b) Crabb, Larry, *The Silence of Adam: Becoming Men of Courage in a World of Chaos*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995
- Culbertson (2002) Culbertson, Philip L. (ed.), *The Spirituality of Men: Sixteen Christians Write About Their Faith*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002
- Dalbey (1988) Dalbey, Gordon, *Healing the Masculine Soul*, Milton Keynes: Word (UK), 1989
- Dalbey (2002) Dalbey, Gordon, *Sons of the Father*, Eastbourne: Kingsway, 2002
- Davie (1994) Davie, Grace, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994
- Dittes (1991) Dittes, James E., 'A Men's Movement for the Church?', *The Christian Century*, May-June 1991, pp.588-590
- Dittes (1996) Dittes, James E., *Driven by Hope: Men and Meaning*, Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996
- Douglas (1998) Douglas, David, 'A Way in the Wilderness: Men and the Environment', *The Way* 38:4, October 1998, pp.340-351
- Duduit (2005) Duduit, Michael, 'Why men hate going to church: An interview with David Murrow', *Preaching* 21:1, September-October 2005, pp.6-14
- Eisenman (2004) Eisenman, Tom L., *The Accountable Man: Pursuing Integrity Through Trust and Friendship*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004
- Eldredge (2001a) Eldredge, John, 'Man: Made in God's Image', *The Christian Counsellor* 9, April-June 2001, pp.27-31
- Eldredge (2001b) Eldredge, John, *Wild at Heart: Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001
- Eldredge (2002) Eldredge, John, *Wild at Heart Field Manual: A Personal Guide to Discover the Secret of Your Masculine Soul*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002
- Eldredge (2003) Eldredge, John, *Wild at Heart Journal*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003
- Eldredge & Eldredge (2005) Eldredge, John and Eldredge, Stasi, *Captivating: Unveiling the Mystery of a Woman's Soul*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005
- Eldredge (2006) Eldredge, John, *The Way of the Wild Heart: A Map for the Masculine Journey*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006
- Ellis (2004) Ellis, Margaret, 'Boyz will Be Boyz,' *Christianity*, November 2004, p.44
- Fugate (2002) Fugate, J. Richard, *What the Bible Says About... Being a Man*, Citrus Heights: Foundation for Biblical Research, 2002
- Gaskill (2004) Gaskill, Rob, 'More Internet Ideas That Work – Men's Book Club', *Leadership* 25:4, Fall 2004, p.79
- Generation Next (2007) Generation Next, *Survey of Christian Men 2005 Report*, n.p., 2007
- Giles (2004) Giles, Doug, 'Where are God's Warriors and Wild Men?', *Cross Rhythms*, 3 May 2004, online at URL: <http://www.crossrhythms.co.uk/> [1 May 2007]
- Goldingay (2000) Goldingay, John, *Men Behaving Badly*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000
- Greene (2006) Greene, Mark, 'Call yourself a man?', *Christianity*, September 2006, pp.54-56
- Hagan (1992) Hagan, Kay Leigh (ed.), *Women Respond to the Men's Movement: A Feminist Collection*, San Francisco: Pandora, 1992
- Hampson (1990) Hampson, Daphne, *Theology and Feminism*, Oxford: OUP, 1990
- Harper (1994) Harper, Michael, *Equal and Different: Male and Female in Church and*

- Family*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994
- Hawkins & Tunnell (2002) Hawkins, David and Tunnell III, Ross A., *Reclaiming Manhood: A 12-Step Journey to Becoming the Man God Meant You to Be*, Wheaton: Victor Books, 2002
- Holloway (1991) Holloway, Richard (ed.), *Who Needs Feminism?: Men Respond to Sexism in the Church*, London: SPCK, 1991
- Hopwood (2006) Hopwood, Dave, *The Bloke's Bible*, Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2006
- Horrocks (1994) Horrocks, Roger, *Masculinity in Crisis: Myths, Fantasies and Realities*, Basingstoke: The MacMillan Press, 1994
- Horsfall (2006) Horsfall, Tony, 'Is Church "Man" Enough?', *Christianity*, October 2006, pp.14-18
- Horsfall (2007a) Horsfall, Tony, 'Spirituality for Men,' URL: http://www.leeandbaz.com/spirituality_for_men.htm [6 May 2007]
- Horsfall (2007b) Horsfall, Tony, 'Book Review of *Why Men Hate Going to Church*', *Christianity*, March 2007, p.58
- Hurley (1981) Hurley, James B., *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective: A Study in Role Relationships and Authority*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981
- Jackson (2005) Jackson, Clem, 'Something to Read Sir?', *Christian Marketplace* 4:7, July 2005, pp.18-19
- Jackson & Gascoyne (2002) Jackson, Lee and Gascoyne, Baz, *Dead Men Walking*, Eastbourne: Kingsway, 2002
- Jackson & Gascoyne (2006) Jackson, Lee and Gascoyne, Baz, *Cut to the Chase: Funny, Challenging and Straight Talking for Men*, Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2006
- James (2001) James, Sharon, 'Are there essential differences between the sexes? – A review of Storkey's *Created or Constructed?*', *Themelios* 26:3, Summer 2001, pp.51-63
- Janssen (1994) Janssen, Al (ed.), *Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*, Colorado Springs: Focus on the Family Publishing, 1994
- Jewett (1975) Jewett, Paul K., *Man as Male and Female: A Study in Sexual Relationships from a Theological Point of View*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975
- Jones (1998) Jones, Simon, *Struggling to Belong: What is the Church for Anyway?*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1998
- Keen (1991) Keen, Sam, *Fire in the Belly: On Being a Man*, London: Bantam Books, 1991
- Keyes (1998) Keyes, Dick, *Beyond Identity: Finding Your Self in the Image and Character of God*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998
- Kraft (1980) Kraft, Charles H. "The Church in Culture--A Dynamic Equivalence Model" in Robert T. Coote and John Stott (eds.), *Down to Earth: Studies in Christianity and Culture: The Papers of the Lausanne Consultation on Gospel and Culture*, 211-30, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980
- Küng (2001) Küng, Hans [Trans. John Bowden], *Women in Christianity*, London: Continuum, 2001
- Kunjufu (1994) Kunjufu, Jawanza, *Adam! Where Are You?: Why Most Black Men Don't Go to Church*, Chicago: African American Images, 1994
- LeBlanc (2004a) LeBlanc, Douglas, 'Affectionate Patriarchs – An interview with W. Bradford Wilcox', *Christianity Today*, August 2004, pp.44-46
- LeBlanc (2004b) LeBlanc, Douglas, 'Wildheart – An interview with John Eldredge', *Christianity Today*, August 2004, pp.30-36
- LeBlanc (2004c) LeBlanc, Douglas, 'Too Wild at Heart?', *Christianity Today*, August 2004, pp.34-35
- LICC (2007) London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, 'Church is for Girls' flyer promoting a 'Connecting with Culture Live Event' on 21 May 2007
- Lutz (1997) Lutz, Lorry, *Women as Risk-Takers for God*, Carlisle: WEF, 1997
- McCloughry (1992) McCloughry, Roy, *Men and Masculinity: From Power to Love*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992
- McCloughry (1999) McCloughry, Roy, *Hearing Men's Voices: Men in Search of their Soul*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1999
- McCloughry & McCloughry, Roy and Murphy, Roger, *Men Without Masks: New*

- Murphy (1994) *Directions for Men's Groups*, Cambridge: Grove Books, 1994
- McManus (2005) McManus, Erwin Raphael, *The Barbarian Way: Unleash the Untamed Faith Within*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005
- Meryon (2006) Meryon, Richard, *Winning Men*, Bath: Christian Vision for Men, 2006
- Mickelsen (1986) Mickelsen, Alvera (ed.), *Women, Authority and the Bible*, Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986
- Miller (2002) Miller, John W., 'Boys Will Be Boys – A book review of Van Leeuwen's *My Brother's Keeper*', *Christianity Today*, December 2002, online version at URL <http://www.christianitytoday.com/books/features/bccorner/021209.html> [16 April 2007]
- Molitor (2001) Molitor, Brian D., *A Boy's Passage: Celebrating Your Son's Journey to Maturity*, Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2001
- Moore & Gillette (1991) Moore, Robert and Gillette, Douglas, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover: Rediscovering the Archetypes of the Mature Masculine*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991
- Morgan & Keenlyside (2004) Morgan, Christopher and Keenlyside, Sarah, 'Women priests take ordination lead over men', *The Sunday Times*, 5 September 2004
- Morgan (1980) Morgan III, Edward, 'Implications of the Masculine and the Feminine in Pastoral Ministry', *The Journal of Pastoral Care* 34:4, December 1980, pp.268-277
- Morley (2000) Morley, Patrick, 'The Next Christian Men's Movement', *Christianity Today*, 4 September 2000, pp.84-86
- Moynagh (2001) Moynagh, Michael, *Changing World, Changing Church*, London: Monarch Books, 2001
- Munroe (2002) Munroe, Myles, *Understanding the Purpose and Power of Men*, New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2002
- Murrow (2005a) Murrow, David, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, Nashville: Nelson Books, 2005
- Murrow (2005b) Murrow, David, 'Interview with David Murrow, by Marcia Ford, 24 May 2005', URL: <http://www.faithfulreader.com/authors/au-murrow-david.asp#view050524> [10 November 2006]
- Murrow (2005c) Murrow, David, 'In spiritual matters, kids take their cues from Dad' [posted 12 June 2005], URL: <http://www.jknirp.com/cues.htm> [10 November 2006]
- Murrow (2005d) Murrow, David, 'Mild At Heart: Why gutless churches are guyless... and what you do to make your church a place men can't resist', *Ministry Today*, May/June 2005, URL: <http://www.ministrytodaymag.com/display.php?id=11036> [10 November 2006]
- Murrow (2005e) Murrow, David, 'How to meet men's needs', *Preaching Magazine* 21:2, September-October 2005, p.11
- Murrow (2005f) Murrow, David, 'Why Do Men Hate Going to Church? – An Interview with David Murrow', *Preaching Magazine* 21:2, September-October 2005
- Murrow (2006a) Murrow, David, 'Too few good men: why church is a turnoff for guys, and how to recover a spirit that attracts them', *Leadership* 27:1, January 2006, p.17
- Murrow (2006b) Murrow, David, 'Interview with David Murrow', URL: <http://www.biola.edu/admin/connections/articles/06spring/murrow-interview.cfm> [5 November 2006]
- Murrow (2006c) Murrow, David, 'Art Thou Bored?', *New Man Magazine*, November 2006, URL: <http://www.newmanmag.com/faith/content/faith129.html> [5 November 2006]
- Murrow (2006d) Murrow, David, [no title], *Boldman Chronicles*, October 2006, URL: <http://www.boldpath.org/Chronicles1006.htm> [10 November 2006]
- National Statistics (2007a) National Statistics, 'Age Structure of England and Wales,' URL: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/populationestimates/svg_pyramid/UK/UK%20files.zip [11 May 2007]
- National Statistics (2007b) National Statistics, 'Population Estimates', URL: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=6> [11 May 2007]

- Nelson (1992) Nelson, James, *The Intimate Connection: Male Sexuality, Masculine Spirituality*, London: SPCK, 1992
- Neuer (1990) Neuer, Werner [trans. Gordon Wenham] *Man and Woman in Christian Perspective*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990
- Neuger & Poling (1997) Neuger, Christie Cozad and Poling, James Newton (eds.), *The Care of Men*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997
- Osherson (1992) Osherson, Samuel, *Wrestling with Love: How Men Struggle with Intimacy with Women, Children, Parents, and Each Other*, New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1992
- Pawson (1988) Pawson, David, *Leadership is Male: A Challenge to Christian feminism*, Crowborough: Highland Books, 1988
- Payne (1985) Payne, Leanne, *Crisis in Masculinity*, Eastbourne: Kingsway Publications, 1985
- Penner (1998) Penner, Carol (ed.), *Women and Men: Gender in the Church*, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Publishing House, 1998
- Pierce (2000) Pierce, John, 'Can Men Really Talk?', *The Christian Counsellor* 4, January-March 2000, pp.35-37
- Pierce & Groothuis (2005) Pierce, Ronald W. and Groothuis, Rebecca Merrill (eds.), *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity Without Hierarchy*, 2nd ed., Leicester: Apollos, 2005
- Piper (1990) Piper, John, *What's the Difference?: Manhood and Womanhood Defined According to the Bible*, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1990
- Piper & Grudem (1991) Piper, John and Grudem, Wayne (eds.), *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1991
- Pivec (2006) Pivec, Holly, 'The Feminization of the Church: Why Its Music, Messages and Ministries Are Driving Men Away', *Biola Connections*, Spring 2006, pp.10-17
- Podles (1999) Podles, Leon J., *The Church Impotent: The Feminization of Christianity*, Dallas: Spence Publishing, 1999
- Poythress (2002) Poythress, Vern S., 'The TNIV Debate: Is this new translation faithful in its treatment of gender? No', *Christianity Today*, 7 October 2002, pp.37-45
- Pryce (1993) Pryce, Mark, *Men, Masculinity and Pastoral Care*, Edinburgh: Contact Pastoral Limited Trust, 1993
- Pryce (1994) Pryce, Mark, 'Sissy, Strong-Man, Saviour: The Masculinity of Jesus Christ in Men's Movement Literature', *The Way* 34:3, July 1994, pp.241-247
- Pryce (1996) Pryce, Mark, *Finding a Voice: Men, Women and the Community of the Church*, London: SCM Press, 1996
- Pryce (1998) Pryce, Mark, 'On Modelling Relationships: Jesus, Men and Friendship', *The Way* 38:4, October 1998, pp.307-317
- Richter & Francis (1998) Richter, Philip and Francis, Leslie J., *Gone But Not Forgotten: Church Leaving and Returning*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1998
- Roberts (2007) Roberts, John, personal e-mail correspondence, 24 April 2007
- Roberts & Donaldson (1994) Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James (eds.), *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to AD 325, Vol.IV*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994
- Rohr (2001) Rohr, Richard, *Quest for the Grail*, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2001
- Rohr (2004) Rohr, Richard, *Adam's Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation*, New York: Crossroad Publishing, 2004
- Rohr (2005) Rohr, Richard and Martos, Joseph, *From Wild Man to Wise Man: Reflections on Male Spirituality*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2005
- Rosen (2005) Rosen, Christine, 'Church Ladies: Women dominate America's pews. Is that a problem?', *Wall Street Journal*, 21 October 2005, online version at URL: <http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste/?id=110007439> [14 April 2007]
- Schmidt (1991) Schmidt, Stephen A., 'Recovering the Wild Man', *The Christian Century*,

- May-June 1991, pp.591-593
- Sheppard (2002) Sheppard, Lowell, *Boys Becoming Men: Creating Rites of Passage for the 21st Century*, Carlisle: Authentic Lifestyle, 2002
- Smith (1985) Smith, Jim, *Manhunt*, Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1985
- Smith (1998) Smith, Michael, 'When Vulnerability Meets Vulnerability: Men Sharing Faith at Mid-life', *The Way* 38:4, October 1998, pp.328-339
- Smith (2004) Smith, Jane, 'Thinking of Leaving?', *Christianity and Renewal*, July 2004, pp.26-27
- Staub (2003) Staub, Dick, 'John Eldredge is Wild at Heart', *Christianity Today*, November 2003, online version at URL: <http://ctlibrary.com/10750> [16 April 2007]
- Stevens (1992) Stevens, R. Paul, 'The mystery of male and female: biblical and trinitarian models', *Themelios* 17:3, April/May 1992, pp.20-24
- Storkey (1985) Storkey, Elaine, *What's Right With Feminism*, London: SPCK, 1985
- Storkey (2000) Storkey, Elaine, *Created or Constructed? The Great Gender Debate*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000
- Strauss (2002) Strauss, Mark, 'The TNIV Debate: Is this new translation faithful in its treatment of gender? Yes', *Christianity Today*, 7 October 2002, pp.43-45
- Tearfund (2007) Tearfund, *Churchgoing in the UK: A Research Report from Tearfund on Church Attendance in the UK*, Teddington: Tearfund, 2007
- Tennis (1978) Tennis, Diane, 'Reflections on the Maleness of Jesus', *Cross Currents* 28:2, Summer 1978, pp.137-140
- Terrien (2004) Terrien, Samuel, *Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood*, 2nd ed., Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004
- Thatcher & Stewart (1996) Thatcher, Adrian and Stuart, Elizabeth (eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996
- Themelios (1987) Themelios Editorial, 'Men and Women in the Church,' *Themelios* 12:3, April 1987, pp.73-79
- Torrance (1991) Torrance, Iain, 'Is Christianity Irredeemably Sexist? A Response to Daphne Hampson' in Holloway (1991), pp.75-84
- Van Leeuwen (1990) Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart, *Gender and Grace: Women and Men in a Changing World*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990
- Van Leeuwen (2002a) Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart, *My Brother's Keeper: What the Social Sciences Do (and Don't) Tell Us about Masculinity*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002
- Van Leeuwen (2002b) Van Leeuwen, Mary Stewart, *Fathers and Sons: The Search for a New Masculinity*, Leicester, IVP, 2002
- Vanier (1985) Vanier, Jean, *Man and Woman He Made Them*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985
- Violi and Joyce (1998) Violi, Dom and Joyce, Marie, 'Searching for Masculine Identity', *The Way* 38:4, October 1998, pp.352-364
- Walter (1990) Walter, Tony, 'Why are Most Churchgoers Women? A Literature Review,' *Vox Evangelica* 20, 1990, pp.73-90
- Warner (1999) Warner, Rob, *21st Century Church: Preparing Your Church for the New Millennium*, 2nd ed., Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1999
- Watson (1978) Watson, David, *I Believe in the Church*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1978
- Watts (1999) Watts, Greg, 'Then God made Man...: An Interview with Roy McCloughry', *Christianity*, October 1999, pp.28-33
- Weber (1997) Weber, Stu, *Four Pillars of a Man's Heart: Bringing Strength into Balance*, Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah, 1997
- Whitehead & Whitehead (1992) Whitehead, James D. and Whitehead, Evelyn Eaton, 'Re-imagining the Masculine', *The Way* 32:2, April 1992, pp.113-122
- Wilcox (2004) Wilcox, W. Bradford, *Soft Patriarchs, New Men: How Christianity Shapes Fathers and Husbands*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004
- Wilson (2001a) Wilson, John, 'Return to the Father's House', *Christianity Today* [web-only version], February 2001, URL: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/februaryweb-only/11.0a.html> [13 April 2007]

- Wilson (2001b) Wilson, John, 'Beware the Women!', *Christianity Today* [web-only version], February 2001, URL: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/februaryweb-only/11.0b.html> [13 April 2007]
- Wraight (2001) Wraight, Heather, *Eve's Glue: The Role Women Play in Holding the Church Together*, Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001
- Wraight (2003) Wraight, Heather, *Men and the Church: The Role Men Play in Running the Church* [Christian Research, Leaders' Briefing No.18], London: Christian Research, 2003
- Wren (1991) Wren, Brian, 'Language Change and Male Repentance,' in Holloway (1991), pp.135-148

APPENDIX 1

SURVEY AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

As an integral part of this dissertation, I conducted a survey of UK Christians. This took the form of an online questionnaire consisting of 21 questions (plus 5 profiling questions) and an opportunity for participants to give any further comments. The survey ran for two months from mid-February to mid-April 2007. A copy of the survey, which was conducted as the 'Attitudes to Church – 2007' survey, is included in Appendix 2 and a full set of results is in Appendix 3.

Participant Profile

The survey was completed by 456 British Christians, whose profile was as follows:

Gender		Region		Denomination	
Female	48.90%	England	94.96%	Anglican	41.89%
Male	51.10%	Scotland	1.32%	Baptist	26.32%
		Wales	3.73%	Brethren	1.75%
				Independent/New	10.09%
				Methodist	7.46%
				Pentecostal	4.61%
				Roman Catholic	0.88%
				URC	1.10%
				Other	5.92%

Average age: 42.8 years

Survey Aims

The aims of the survey were as follows:

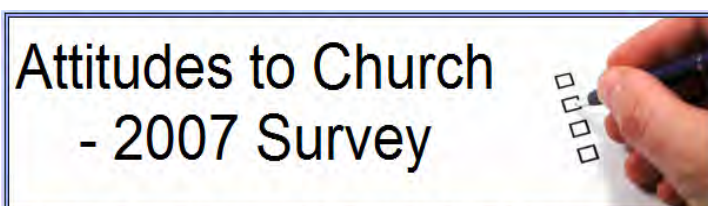
- To explore whether men and women use different language to relate to God and to describe their relationship with Him;
- To explore how male and female Christians perceive the Church's response to gender;
- To gauge the significance of the relationship between gender and the Church;
- To canvass opinion on why men attend Church in significantly fewer numbers than women.

Survey Methodology

It was necessary to develop a survey that was not too transparently about gender issues, at least initially, since responses would be conditioned by the knowledge that the research was testing for gender differences. Instead, the survey began with demographic profiling and then tested the language that people use or speak of their Christian faith and how they relate to God. Only as the survey progressed would it become apparent that most questions centred on general aspects of the Church.

Approximately 90% of those starting the online survey completed it, and all questions (apart from the closing comment option) were mandatory. Only complete results were included. Those (11) participants identifying their region as "non-UK" were excluded from the results, since the survey was explicitly concerned with the Church in the UK (there were no results received from Northern Ireland). The survey does not claim to be representative of all Christians in the UK, and the results have *not* been weighted to reflect denominational or other differences. However, this relatively large sample is intended to be indicative of general opinions held by churchgoers in the UK. The survey was specifically designed to identify differences in views held by men and women, irrespective of any denominational, regional or age differences.

APPENDIX 2
SURVEY QUESTIONS



This survey is intended to canvass thoughts on how church is expressed in the UK, and which forms attract and accommodate those currently outside the church. It will take about 10 minutes to complete, and all results will be anonymous.

We need to start with some profiling questions:

- * Church involvement: Church leader (e.g. vicar, pastor)
 Member of leadership team (e.g. elder)
 Regular attendee
 Occasional attendee

* Denomination or Affiliation:

- * Sex: Female
 Male

* Age:

* Region:

Page 1

* Christians use a wide range of language to describe how they became a Christian. Which of the following most closely describes your own experience?

- "I gave my heart to Jesus"
- "I chose to follow Jesus"
- "I committed myself to serve Christ"
- "I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour"
- "I saw the light"
- "I gave my life to Jesus"
- "I surrendered my all to Him"
- "I recognized Jesus as Lord"
- Other (please specify)

* The names of God have attracted a lot of attention from God's people seeking to relate to Him better and understand more facets of His character. Which of the following resonate most with you? (select up to 5)

- Advocate
- Ancient of Days
- Deliverer
- Father
- Friend
- Judge
- King
- Lamb of God
- Lord
- Lover of my Soul
- Master
- Messiah
- Mighty One
- Provider
- Redeemer
- Rock
- Saviour
- Shepherd
- Shield
- Teacher
- Other (please specify)

Some people have suggested that men and women have different responses to church and to spiritual phenomena. The following questions explore perceptions about these gender differences and the impact they may have on the Christian community.

* Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Agree	Disagree
• Church is as welcoming to men as it is to women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Men are less spiritual than women	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• When planning services/activities, churches should take gender into account	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Men and women relate to God differently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Women feel more 'at home' in church than men do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Men and women experience God differently	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• The church today is a patriarchal institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Men and women reflect different aspects of God's character	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* Male church attendance rates are typically lower than female attendance rates. What do you think is the *main* reason for this?

- The 'nature' of men
- Church forms and type of service
- Social factors, e.g. leisure alternatives

* If it were proven that certain types of church service were putting men off attending, what should the response be?

- The onus would still be on men to attend
- Existing services should be changed
- Additional ('male-friendly') services should be offered

* Do you believe that men-only church outreach and activities are a good idea? Why (not)?

- Yes
- No

*

	More to women	More to men	Equally to both
Do you think that UK church services in general appeal:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think that your own church services appeal:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

* Males constitute an estimated 38% of UK church-goers, meaning that, in relation to women church-goers, some 1.5 million British men are missing from church services. How significant an issue is this 'gender gap'?

- Very significant
- Fairly significant
- Not very significant
- Not significant at all

* Which of these statements do you agree with most:

- I tend to feel closer to God when I am indoors (e.g. a church building)
- I tend to feel closer to God when I am outdoors (e.g. in the countryside)
- I feel equally close to God wherever I am

* Which of these statements do you agree with most:

- I prefer to experience my relationship with God in the presence of other believers/worshippers
- I prefer to experience my relationship with God in private, on my own
- I have no preference

Page 4

* Do you believe it was a significant part of God's plan for Creation to make men and women with fundamental differences?

Yes
 No
 Don't Know

* Do you believe there will be male and female identities in heaven?

Yes
 No
 Don't Know

Who would you say are the most influential writers on male spirituality?

Please add any closing comments you wish to make:

Page 5

The findings of this survey will be included in a research paper examining the issue of the church's "missing men."

I would like to receive a free one-page summary of the results
 I would like to receive a free full copy of the research
 I would be happy to be contacted with some more in-depth questions

Please enter your e-mail address (optional):

Your e-mail address will not be used for any other purpose, and will not be shared with any other organisation.
* Indicates Response Required

Thank you for participation



Your time and input are greatly appreciated.

Should you wish to contact me directly, you can do so at ciducker@yahoo.co.uk or at cducker@redcliffe.org

Please encourage other Christians in the UK to take this survey too - church leaders and administrators in particular, can I ask you to forward details of this survey to your church email list.

Christopher Ducker, February 2007

APPENDIX 3
SURVEY RESULTS

Church Involvement

	All	Male	Female
Leader	13.82%	21.03%	6.28%
Elder	18.42%	22.32%	14.35%
Regular	65.35%	55.36%	75.78%
Occasional	2.41%	1.29%	3.59%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Age

	All	Male	Female
Average	42.8 years	43.8 years	41.8 years
Youngest	13 years	13 years	14 years
Oldest	80 years	80 years	73 years
Median	43 years	43 years	43 years

Sex

	All	Male	Female
Participants	456	233	223
Ratio	100%	51.10%	48.90%

Denomination

	All	Male	Female
Anglican	41.89%	44.21%	39.46%
Baptist	26.32%	25.75%	26.91%
Brethren	1.75%	2.15%	1.35%
Independent/New	10.09%	9.01%	11.21%
Methodist	7.46%	7.30%	7.62%
Other	5.92%	4.29%	7.62%
Pentecostal	4.61%	5.15%	4.04%
Roman Catholic	0.88%	1.29%	0.45%
United Reformed	1.10%	0.86%	1.35%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Region

	All	Male	Female
England	94.96%	95.71%	94.17%
Scotland	1.32%	1.72%	0.90%
Wales	3.73%	2.58%	4.93%
Northern Ireland	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Christians use a wide range of language to describe how they became a Christian. Which of the following most closely describes your own experience?

	All	Male	Female
I gave my heart to Jesus	3.51%	3.00%	4.04%
I chose to follow Jesus	19.52%	18.03%	21.08%
I committed myself to serve Christ	8.11%	7.30%	8.97%
I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour	32.02%	34.33%	29.60%
I saw the light	0.66%	0.43%	0.90%
I gave my life to Jesus	14.04%	13.73%	14.35%
I surrendered my all to Him	2.85%	3.00%	2.69%
I recognized Jesus as Lord	5.04%	7.30%	2.69%
Other	14.25%	12.88%	15.70%
Total	100%	100%	100%

The names of God have attracted a lot of attention from God's people seeking to relate to Him better and understand more facets of His character. Which of the following resonate most with you?

(Respondents could select up to 5 names)

	All	Male	Female
Advocate	2.85%	3.43%	2.24%
Ancient of Days	4.61%	5.15%	4.04%
Deliverer	7.24%	7.30%	7.17%
Father	84.21%	83.69%	84.75%
Friend	41.45%	36.48%	46.64%
Judge	9.21%	12.45%	5.83%
King	27.85%	30.90%	25.11%
Lamb of God	11.18%	10.30%	12.11%
Lord	66.45%	68.24%	64.57%
Lover of my Soul	9.87%	6.44%	13.45%
Master	9.21%	12.88%	5.38%
Messiah	12.72%	16.31%	8.97%
Mighty One	9.87%	10.30%	9.42%
Provider	14.69%	16.31%	13.00%
Redeemer	27.85%	24.46%	31.39%
Rock	24.12%	19.31%	29.15%
Saviour	53.95%	51.07%	56.95%
Shepherd	26.54%	24.03%	29.15%
Shield	4.61%	3.43%	5.83%
Teacher	16.01%	16.74%	15.25%
Other	6.58%	5.15%	8.07%

"Men are less spiritual than women"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	13.16%	19.31%	6.73%
Disagree	86.84%	80.69%	93.27%
Total	100%	100%	100%

"The church today is a patriarchal institution"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	43.42%	41.63%	45.29%
Disagree	56.58%	58.37%	54.71%
Total	100%	100%	100%

"Men and women experience God differently"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	59.43%	65.24%	53.36%
Disagree	40.57%	34.76%	46.64%
Total	100%	100%	100%

"Church is as welcoming to men as it is to women"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	58.77%	51.93%	65.92%
Disagree	41.23%	48.07%	34.08%
Total	100%	100%	100%

"Men and women relate to God differently"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	71.71%	75.97%	67.26%
Disagree	28.29%	24.03%	32.74%
Total	100%	100%	100%

"Men and women reflect different aspects of God's character"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	80.92%	85.84%	75.78%
Disagree	19.08%	14.16%	24.22%
Total	100%	100%	100%

"When planning services/activities, churches should take gender into account"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	65.57%	69.10%	61.88%
Disagree	34.43%	30.90%	38.12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

"Women feel more 'at home' in church than men do"

	All	Male	Female
Agree	57.46%	68.24%	46.19%
Disagree	42.54%	31.76%	53.81%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Male church attendance rates are typically lower than female attendance rates. What do you think is the main reason for this?

	All	Male	Female
Social factors, e.g. leisure alternatives	32.46%	29.61%	35.43%
Church forms and type of service	35.31%	36.91%	33.63%
The nature of men	32.24%	33.48%	30.94%
Total	100%	100%	100%

If it were proven that certain types of church service were putting men off attending, what should the response be?

	All	Male	Female
Additional ('male-friendly' services) should be offered	28.35%	27.04%	29.73%
The onus would still be on men to attend	7.47%	7.30%	7.66%
Existing services should be changed	64.18%	65.67%	62.61%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you believe that men-only church outreach and activities are a good idea?

	All	Male	Female
Yes	77.85%	78.11%	77.58%
No	22.15%	21.89%	22.42%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you think that your own church services appeal...

	All	Male	Female
Equally to both men and women	71.05%	64.81%	77.58%
More to women	27.63%	33.91%	21.08%
More to men	1.32%	1.29%	1.35%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you think that UK church services in general appeal...

	All	Male	Female
Equally to both men and women	37.94%	32.19%	43.95%
More to women	60.96%	67.38%	54.26%
More to men	1.10%	0.43%	1.79%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Males constitute an estimated 38% of UK churchgoers, meaning that - in relation to women churchgoers - some 1.5 million British men are missing from church services. How significant an issue is this 'gender gap'?

	All	Male	Female
Very significant	61.62%	61.80%	61.43%
Fairly significant	32.46%	33.05%	31.84%
Not very significant	5.48%	4.72%	6.28%
Not significant at all	0.44%	0.43%	0.45%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Which of these statements do you agree with most:

	All	Male	Female
I tend to feel closer to God when I am indoors (e.g. a church building)	8.55%	9.87%	7.17%
I tend to feel closer to God when I am outdoors (e.g. in the countryside)	21.93%	22.75%	21.08%
I feel equally close to God wherever I am	69.52%	67.38%	71.75%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Which of these statements do you agree with most:

	All	Male	Female
God in the presence of other believers/worshippers	20.39%	24.89%	15.70%
I have no preference	60.75%	54.08%	67.71%
I prefer to experience my relationship with God in private, on my own	18.86%	21.03%	16.59%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you believe it was a significant part of God's plan for Creation to make men and women with fundamental differences?

	All	Male	Female
Yes	91.45%	91.85%	91.03%
No	3.95%	4.72%	3.14%
Don't Know	4.61%	3.43%	5.83%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you believe there will be male and female identities in heaven?

	All	Male	Female
Yes	34.21%	39.06%	29.15%
No	23.03%	27.90%	17.94%
Don't Know	42.76%	33.05%	52.91%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Who would you say are the most influential writers on male spirituality?
255 mentions were made, referring to 111 different writers. Those with more than 2 mentions were:

John Eldredge	37
Philip Yancey	17
Paul	15
C.S. Lewis	14
John Stott	8
Richard Rohr	6
Christian Vision for Men	4
David Murrow	4
Henri Nouwen	4
Rick Warren	4
Rob Parsons	4
Adrian Plass	3
Brian McLaren	3
David Pawson	3
Jeff Lucas	3
Lee Jackson & Baz Gascoyne	3
Max Lucado	3
Roy McCloughry	3

APPENDIX 4

SOME REFLECTIONS ON MALE SPIRITUALITY

It is regrettable that in this dissertation there is no space to engage with what constitutes or defines male spirituality. By way of an introduction to this topic, however, I have selected some interesting quotes relating to spiritual aspects of masculinity:

“It would seem that there are four ‘primary colors,’ so to speak, of the masculine spirit that, blended together in unique combinations, compose the ingredients of masculinity: competition, vulnerability, independence, and responsibility.”
Patrick Arnold, *Wildmen, Warriors, and Kings* (1991, 30)

“The wild man is not easy to explain, although most men can in some way relate to the concept. The wild man is not savage or violent, but he is spontaneous and intuitive. He is the source of creative brilliance. He is what happens when we let go of control and trust to something inside of us to do the right thing.”
Steve Biddulph, *Manhood* (2004, 256)

“Spirituality today has a feminine mode of expression which leaves many men uninterested or threatened by the processes. Having networked in many spirituality circles, I am conscious that 90 percent of participants are women. The rituals, methods and topics reflect the clientele which utilizes these facilities. There are few deliberate attempts to integrate men into programming and to articulate their needs or spiritual search.”
Donald Bisson, ‘Men’s Spirituality,’ *The Way* 38:4 (1998, 321)

“When a contemporary man looks down into his psyche, he may, if conditions are right, find under the water of his soul, lying in an area no one has visited for a long time, an ancient hairy man... For generations now, the industrial community has warned young businessmen to keep away from Iron John, and the Christian church is not too fond of him either.”
Robert Bly, *Iron John: Men and Masculinity* (1990, 5-6)

“I am convinced that there is a direct psychodynamic connection between the formation of the melancholy self and the ways in which men are religious... the impulse of moral rectitude, the impulse of searching and questing, and the impulse that challenges the seriousness of the other two.”
Donald Capps, *Men and their Religion* (2002, 27, 102)

“In the struggle to develop a male spirituality for today, two of the emerging trends are to see, more and more clearly, that men do have an innate hunger for God... and that spirituality needs to be broken out of isolation and connected to every important aspect of a man’s life... I believe that accepting one’s masculinity ought to include accepting one’s inclination to be strong, take responsibility, hone a lucid mind, develop a warmth that mixes desire and tenderness, and make a virtue of the frequently more limited emotional range that, compared to women, men seem to exhibit.”
John Carmody, *Toward A Male Spirituality* (1989, 73, 94-95)

“The silence of Adam is the beginning of every man’s failure, from the rebellion of Cain to the impatience of Moses, from the weakness of Peter down to my failure yesterday to love my wife well... Since Adam every man has had a natural inclination to remain silent when he should speak... Men are uniquely called to remember what God has said and to speak accordingly, to move into dangerous uncertainty with a confidence and wisdom that comes from listening to God... Spiritual manhood involves the courage to keep on moving – in the middle of overwhelming confusion – toward relationships.”
Larry Crabb, *The Silence of Adam* (1995, 12, 14)

“The work of God among men today – and so, the work of the Church – is not to feminize our masculinity, but to redeem it... Certainly authentic masculinity includes such ‘feminine’ components as tenderness and nurturing care. But a man cannot duly embrace his ‘feminine side’ without first being grounded firmly in his masculine foundation.”

Gordon Dalbey, *Healing the Masculine Soul* (1988, 180)

“Men today must begin to dare regenerate a trust in the masculine... by surrendering to Father God and moving together in the fellowship of his Spirit at church.”

Gordon Dalbey, *Sons of the Father* (1996, 64)

“I propose in all seriousness that a man’s patient discontent with life as it is mirrors the discontent of God... In religious terms, men are afflicted with hope... This impatient goal-drivenness *is* masculinity... This is a hunger of the soul.”

James Dittes, *Driven by Hope – Men and Meaning* (1996, x, 4, 8)

“Subtract the relationship to transcendence and you lose the essence of man.”

Sam Keen, *Fire in the Belly – On Being a Man* (1991, 101)

“In the present crisis in masculinity we do not need, as some feminists are saying, *less* masculine power. We need *more*. But we need more of the *mature* masculinity... The four major forms of the mature masculine energies that we have identified are the King, the Warrior, the Magician, and the Lover. They all overlap and, ideally, enrich one another.”

Robert Moore & Douglas Gillette, *King, Warrior, Magician, Lover* (1991, xviii, 43-44)

“I see in Jesus a compelling picture of male sexual wholeness, of creative masculinity, and of the redemption of manhood from both oppressiveness and superficiality.”

James Nelson, *The Intimate Connection* (1992, 108)

“At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships.”

John Piper, *What’s the Difference?* (1990, 22)

“The masculine is spirit, mind, logos. The feminine is earth, body, pleasure. Both have half the truth... Masculine spirituality is an art of separation... the masculine journey is always about power, redeeming the name of power, the meaning of power, naming it correctly. Uniting it with love.”

Richard Rohr, *Quest for the Grail* (1994, 66, 89, 178)

“For starters, a masculine spirituality would emphasize movement over stillness, action over theory, service to the world over religious discussions, speaking the truth over social niceties and doing justice instead of any self-serving ‘charity.’ Without a complementary masculine, spirituality becomes overly feminine... and is characterized by too much inwardness, preoccupation with relationships, a morass of unclarified feeling and religion itself as a security blanket.”

Richard Rohr & Joseph Martos, *From Wild Man to Wise Man* (2005, 10)

“Despite the extensive work on feminist spirituality recently, a major barrier to the development of a genuine men’s spirituality is the still widespread unawareness in religious as well as cultural circles that one’s gender is important in spiritual matters.”

Dom Violi and Marie Joyce, ‘Searching for Masculine Identity’, *The Way* 38:4 (1998, 359)

“Men provide as a Servant-King, Protect as a Tender Warrior, Teach as a Wise Mentor, Connect as a Faithful Friend... The fact that these masculine qualities cut across the grain of history, race, tradition, and culture shouldn’t surprise us at all. They are like fingerprints, the telltale mark of the Artist on the wet clay of the original.”

Stu Weber, *Four Pillars of a Man’s Heart* (1997, 49)