

CHAPTER ONE

NATURE OF THE STUDY

AIMS, DEFINITIONS AND GOALS

As in most Western countries world wide, increasing numbers of women in Australia experience the Catholic Church as alienating. While many leave the structural church, many more seek accommodating change. The voices of Catholic women verify that this statement is true, but these voices also suggest causes of alienation and possible ways forward. This study gives voice to a select group of women in the Catholic Church in Australia about their experience of church and changes that they seek.

The present study draws on women's experience of the structural church. It seeks to delineate elements that allow women to construct their own reality, and examines implications for the structural church.

Specifically, the study explores the experiences of Catholic women who were self-selected members of Women and the Australian Church (WATAC) in New South Wales (NSW) at the time of undertaking the survey for this study. The stated goal of WATAC is 'a change in the understanding of the role of women in their participation in the Australian church and in society'. Its primary task is 'consciousness raising of women on Christian feminist issues'.¹ WATAC members could be expected to have reflected on these issues. While members include women who are not Catholic and men, responses from Catholic women only were analysed, and Catholic 'lay' women only were interviewed. As well as seeking to understand their experience of church, the study invited these women to voice also the changes they see as necessary if the Catholic Church is to accommodate more effectively the active participation of women.

¹ WATAC brochure (see Appendix 4).

This study represents a cyclical movement towards coherence and understanding. It began with a concern about the perceived alienation of women in the Catholic Church, and a conviction that many women seek unspecified accommodating change. Emerging patterns from survey responses gave rise to more meaningful questions to address and a deeper search for understanding.

For the purpose of the study, 'church' refers throughout to the Catholic Church in Australia within the universal Church of Rome. 'Women' refers to Catholic female members of WATAC (NSW) who were respondents to the survey, unless the context makes clear that reference is made to issues that affect women more widely. The 'structural church' is understood in regard to the authority, power and decision-making of governance, the language and liturgy of worship, the discipline and practice of teaching. The study does not address fundamental beliefs of Christianity. 'WATAC' refers to WATAC (NSW) unless otherwise stated.

The structural church is male in authority, power and decision-making, and in language and symbols, because only those who are ordained, and hence males only, may exercise the role of governing, teaching and sanctifying. A premise of the researcher in entering upon the study was that many females experience this male orientation as alienating because it renders women invisible or subordinate. The alienation of women in the church gives rise to another question that this study explores: 'why stay?'

Studies have been undertaken and books written about the issues surrounding the ordination of women in the Anglican Church in Australia (e.g. Field, 1989, 1992). A working hypothesis of this study is that, despite a general perception to the contrary, few women in the Catholic Church seek ordination in the present structure of ministry. What they do seek is the inclusion of women (and non-ordained men) in ministry and decision-making through a changed definition and practice of sacramental and pastoral ministry, and through changed structures. Ordination per se is not the issue, nor is it a present solution. Changed attitudes are needed.

The study does not measure the proportion of women who experience church in a particular way. Nor does it weigh different experiences, or exhaust the range of possible experiences. Instead, it considers insights into church that derive from ways in which it

is experienced, whether that experience is of one or of many, is typical or atypical. The atypical woman with atypical experience may have prophetic insight. Shared experience speaks with the authority of multiple voices. These voices are multiple in that they derive from specific and personal experiences, are formulated from these and from the experiences of others, and reflect acquired meanings.

The study and the problem are contextual. The experience is that of particular women in a particular church in a particular society and era. Biographical data show that two-thirds of the WATAC women in question are tertiary educated and aged 50+. Indirect evidence suggests that, with few exceptions, they were born and have lived only in Australia. The church is the Catholic Church in Australia in 1996, the year when the survey was undertaken and interviews conducted, within the particularities of the history of the Australian church and the culture of Australian society.

Within this background and context, the key research question addressed in this study is:

How do women experience the structural church and desire change within the church?

Subsidiary questions are:

- (i) How do women experience their present role and status, and what is their desired role and status within the structural church?
- (ii) What changes do women see as necessary if the structural church is to accommodate their active participation?
- (ii) What factors do women experience as inhibiting or militating against change in the structural church? How do women experience these factors and their causes?
- (iii) How do or might women work for change in the structural church?

A practical goal of the study is to provide a forum for voices of women, as described above. A theoretical goal of the study is to facilitate self-reflection and understanding of the situation. A political goal of the study is empowerment of women in the Catholic Church. These are intertwined, and are goals of feminist research.

Transparency of a problem comes through understanding the historical situation and realising that the organisational world in most societies is 'man'-made and can be re-

made. Reconstruction can lead to emancipation (Sungaila, 1978, 77f.). For example, Field (1992, 165) demonstrates that much resistance to the ordination of women in the Anglican Church in Australia relates to belief in the humanly constructed maleness of God. If it is possible to de-mystify practices, to de-mythologise traditions, to de-sanctify symbols and language, change can more easily occur. Self-reflection that brings about change in a person, and understanding that de-mystifies a situation, are essentially political (Reinharz, 1992, 191) and require active engagement, choice and commitment (Smith, 1990, 183).

SIGNIFICANCE

Because of the disaffection of women towards the structural church, this study has a present urgency. The women's movement in society exacerbates this disaffection of women who often feel more included in the public sphere than in the church (Franklin & Jones, 1987). The problem of change in the church is part of a larger societal change. Daly (1973, 1978) believes that the awakening consciousness of women is revealing inherent deficiencies in the Christian symbols and specifically in the fabric of Christology itself, and that 'sisterhood' directly threatens authoritarian religion. Osiek, cited in Nelson & Walter (1989, 33), sees that 'the situation of women in the Catholic Church of the industrial and post-industrial countries today is moving rapidly toward crisis... [Women feel] frustration, discouragement, burn-out and bitterness, often ending in complete alienation from the institutional church.' Quoting *Concilium* (1981), Field (1992, 17) argues that the church is facing crisis if it closes its mind to the cry from women for liberation.

Merely for women to participate in ministry and decision-making within present structures risks tokenism by church authorities in women's regard. There is a critical need for qualitative research into women's experience of church and into approaches to change that will not only empower women but lead to a more inclusive church. This study contributes significantly to this goal.

The researcher's value stance is as a member of a religious congregation that was founded at the start of the seventeenth century by an English woman, Mary Ward. She had visionary confidence in the potential of women, and deep loyalty to the church even

when she suffered at the hands of its officials. This founding charism impels active response to the position of women today in church and society.

All inquiry reflects the unique stance of the inquirer. The critical data of inquiry can begin with biographically troubling issues, and culminate in addressing publicly what was initially personal and private (Denzin, 1978, 7). The researcher, as a member of a religious congregation, brings to the research and especially to the interviews, both closeness and distance in relation to Catholic lay women whose experience is the primary focus of this study.

The timeliness of the study is obvious. In a society that gives increasing consideration to the position of women, that seeks their parity and equality with men in political, economic and social spheres, the Catholic Church has strongly affirmed on three occasions in the past two decades that women, because of gender, may not exercise certain office. This study thus addresses how women experience being in a church that excludes them on account of gender from its roles of governing, teaching and sanctifying. The study's main contribution is in giving voice to the genuinely felt experience of women, so that churchwomen might hear and respond to themselves, to each other, and to the organisational constraints of the structural church. It is anticipated that other contributions of the study will be to feminist scholarship, especially in the areas of empowerment, leadership and decision making, and to organisational studies.

CONTEXT

There are several contexts in which the study is positioned. Historically, the Catholic Church in Australia is Irish in the clericalism of its origins and influences, and its focus on unquestioning obedience and loyalty to the group (Campion, 1982, 46ff). The division among Australian bishops over The Movement and the ALP-DLP Split² of the 1950s contributed to their diminishing influence on the lives and thinking of church members, especially in the post-war period when social constraints were loosening (Campion, 1982, 121). With the Second Vatican Council, Catholics emerged in the

² The Movement began as a secret anti-communist organisation sponsored by the Catholic Church, and became a political apparatus attacking the left wing of the Australian Labor Party (ALP). The Split occurred in 1954, with the expulsion of Movement members from the ALP and the establishment of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) (Campion, 1982, 104ff).

1960s from a ghetto church. The publication of *Humanae Vitae* (1968)³ was a watershed for many Catholics who took personal responsibility for their moral choices and actions (Campion, 1982, 20).

Many Australian bishops were trained in Rome (Campion, 1982). Roman influences, combined with local distances and divisions, inhibited the early formation of a national church. Roman structures are hierarchical and clerical. They are exclusive of women because ordination is denied to women in the Catholic Church. The two decades of the present papacy have further centralised church authority and structures.

To understand how women experience the Catholic Church in Australia, it is necessary to understand many of the church structures and how these work. To enter into changes that women would like, it is helpful to understand change processes in complex organisations like churches. These are detailed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively.

Another context is the women's movement and feminist theory. Feminist theology is a more significant context. To the fore is Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza whose hermeneutic of suspicion, detailed in Chapter 3, provides a stance and tool from which to view church structures. Dorothy Lee's⁴ (1995) course in feminist perspectives in Scripture provides a framework and lens through which to view the presence and role of women in the early church.

A valid context is the experience of the Anglican Church in Australia in regard to the ordination of women (Field, 1986, 1992). The experience of Catholic women overseas is equally valid, such as the eight documents that Catholic women in Quebec have submitted to church authorities since 1971, that give rise to a model of church that is radically different from the present (Dumais & Roy, 1989, 30f.). However, limits imposed on this study confine it to the Catholic Church in the Australian context.

The urgency of the study has been referred to above. There is increasing alienation of women and especially young women from the structural church. At issue are a struggle for power in the realm of meaning and knowledge (Spender 1985, 161) and the

³ 'Of Human Life'.

⁴ Rev. Dr. Dorothy Lee, Lecturer in Scripture Studies, United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne College of Divinity.

liberation of naming (Daly 1973, 3) from the gender-constituting discourses of church (Field 1992, 57).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In 1978, Helen Sungaila presented her thesis: 'A new paradigm for policy research?'. When I read this thesis in 1994, it was not long released from embargo. It was one of several factors that excited and impelled me to my own research, and provided a conceptual framework for entry into the design of the present study.

Sungaila's underlying principle is that the self-understanding of a social group could facilitate its emancipation from the past. To understand how a social system arrests or denies wholeness and completeness to its members, to enable members to understand this more fully for themselves, is premised in the belief that we are capable of reconstructing our social world. To understand the meaning of what happens in a social context as persons in that context comprehend that meaning, gives insight into realities that define a social situation. Sungaila adopts a hermeneutic-dialectic approach - a descriptive analysis of the self's experience of being-in-the-world, and a dialectic between the 'accepted' world and the social-political forces that constitute it, similar to the Marxist view of the need to raise consciousness prior to political action for empowerment.

The hermeneutic-dialectic approach assumes multiple ways of knowing that begin with first-person experience. A social setting exists for persons via the meaning they give to it. Conversely, their meaning is given by the social setting (Harrold, 1983, 25). Human experience is mediated by interpretation and the individual constructs of meaning (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, 33). As Field (1992, 201) demonstrates in her analysis of discourse, Sunday after Sunday men and women receive messages from the ritual and language of Bible and liturgy that women do not exist at all, or are subordinate and inferior.

Phenomenology attempts to view a social setting from the perspective of the persons in it, to understand the setting as they do (Deutscher, 1973, 328). It is interested in how the social world becomes subjectively real to the individual, and how subjective reality interacts with the objective real world (Foster & Harman, 1992, 18). It operates on the

premise that knowledge is rooted in immediate personal experience of aspects of reality, and seeks to depict the basic structure of this personal experience (Fenichel, 1988, 193). The task of the researcher is to approach interactions without prejudice. The conclusions drawn about the meaning of the situation seen through the eyes of participants enable the development of second-order constructs which explain meaning (Foster & Harman, 1992, 18).

In the 1980s, I was at a public meeting held to discuss the location of a Mental Health institution in an upper middle class residential setting. Many elderly residents, living alone, expressed their fear of possible violence. The spokesperson for the institution stated that he accepted their fears as real fears, and that he sought to demonstrate that these fears were not realistic. By analogy, the phenomenological perspective treats as 'real' personal experiences of a social setting. Sungaila analyses the socio-historical factors that constitute the setting of her research, so that its members could determine whether their experience was 'realistic'. The present study uses this model of research to explore how women experience church as a social setting and to reflect on historical developments in the church.

Guba (1990, 25) posits that reality exists only within the construct for thinking about it, and that many constructs are possible. While I subscribe to this in my understanding of 'real', I believe that reality is also the referent of what is 'realistic', and that information and knowledge are distinguishable. Information relates to empirical reality and derives from direct observational understanding of ideas and activities within a given social-cultural context. Knowledge is the abstract representation of reality, and is value relevant and culturally significant (Le Compte, 1990, 250f).

To develop his view of constructivism, Guba and others use the concepts: ontological (the nature of the knowable or reality), epistemological (the nature of the relationship between the knower and the known), and methodological (how we go about finding knowledge). The conceptual – ontological and epistemological – or theoretical framework leads to a methodological framework. A theoretical phenomenological stance in this study, where first-person experience constructs subjective reality, led to a choice of the ethnographic tool of key informant interviewing to get to this experience.

Constructivism posits relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. Meaning lies within symbolic fields whose categories and distinctions are positioned within language, which participates in turn within social practice (Popkewitz, 1990, 56). Understanding the meanings of persons in a given social setting is time-and-place-bound, communicated from words and from the shared context of the experience within which meaning is embedded (Eisner, 1990, 91). It is not conceived against a regulative ideal, but is at all stages mediated and emergent (Schwandt, 1990, 273). Because persons in context negotiate the social order, the realities of all groups and stakeholders must be accepted non-judgmentally (Firestone, 1990, 112). Knowledge is interactive and is situated locally and politically (Lincoln, 1990, 80).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Research methodology incorporates the means by which data are gathered, processed and analysed, and the justifications for these choices. If methodology is a way of discovering, methods used should be faithful to the subject matter of the inquiry. The methodology used in this study stems from both the theoretical stance outlined above and the nature of the questions that the study addresses. These are elaborated further in Chapter 4.

'Real' is interpreted individually and defined socially. Meaning is embedded in the history of a group and is guided by prior rules that are the outcome of circumstance (Le Compte, 1990, 254). The present study attempts to ascertain the meaning of church as a social construct for some members, and the social meaning that is embedded in the history of the role and position of women in the church.

The present study is phenomenological in that it is concerned to understand women's experience of the church as a social construct from their perspective. Ethnographic tools are used to elicit this experience, and hermeneutics are used as a method of achieving interpretive explanation.

The ethnographer's goals are to share in meanings that participants take for granted, and to depict new understanding. They do not pass judgement. They have regard to what others experience, how they interpret that experience, how they structure the social world in which they live (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, 36, 41).

Ethnography is based on phenomenology, that is, on understanding human behaviour from the actor's reference. Open-ended interviews enable the inquirer to see the social setting as the other sees it, and produce descriptive behaviour in the other's written or spoken word (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, 2, 4). Qualitative studies such as this one seek to understand human experience from the actor's frame of reference. Their focus is the nature of understanding (Owens, 1982, 7). Their methods have regard to multiple realities, to contextualisation and to non-judgmental orientation (Borg & Gall, 1989, 385, 389). They have potential for theory development, for identifying and defining variables, and for hypotheses (Borg & Gall, 1989, 408).

Ethnographers attempt to make explicit and to portray in terms of many what is understood individually and to identify and label common patterns, discerning how ordinary people in particular settings make sense of the experience of their everyday lives (Wolcott, 1985, 191ff). They try to unravel the 'webs of significance' and to interpret meaning for those involved (Duignan, 1981, 287). Their goals are to share in meanings that cultural participants take for granted and then to depict new understanding for outsiders (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, 36).

In qualitative research, the inter relationship of data collection and analysis is a spiral procedure. The design emerges as the research progresses and theory is grounded (Borg & Gall, 1989, 386). Categories are developed from the data after collection (Owens 1982, 11) and are self-generating (Marshall, 1986, 175). Poststructural insight accommodates differences (Field, 1992, 44). Microlevel analysis allows the personal to be seen as the political (Farell, 1992, 59). In communicating qualitative data, 'thick description' ensures the texture, the quality and the power of the context as the participants in the situation experienced it (Owens, 1982, 8).

In accord with the positions expressed above, this study considers women's experience of church in a natural setting, and their response to that setting. It seeks to illuminate social realities, human perceptions and organisational realities. It strives for validity through personalised, intimate understanding and close observation to achieve factual, reliable and confirmable data (Owens, 1982, 7, 10).

Inquiry must yield authentic outcome. It is ontologically authentic when it leads to heightened awareness of one's constructions and assumptions. It is educative when it leads to increased awareness and appreciation of the constructions of other stakeholders. It is catalytic when inquiry is a prompt to action. It is tactical when it has the ability to engage the political on behalf of the participant group. It empowers when it evokes and facilitates action on the part of the readers in their circumstance and social context (Lincoln, 1990, 71). These aims, values and social-political realities shape both the theoretical underpinnings and the methodology.

Feminist research theory was invoked in determining methodology. 'It is essential that research on women be positive, provide role models, and promote a sense of visibility.' (Neville, 1988, 29). Open survey and open interview involved the women in the construction of data about their own lives, and enabled the women to discuss and understand experiences from their viewpoint. Survey and interview 'identified with' as a research principle. They produced non-standardized information that allowed use of difference and variation as a valuable reflection of a social setting. Through open survey and interview, the inquiry learned from women, as an antidote to their being absent, or to their being present only through the perspective of men. Open survey and interview produced 'connected knowers' in an atmosphere in which women felt knowledgeable and that their experience was relevant (cf. Reinharz, 1992, 18ff).

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Data collection methods comprised an initial postal survey administered to all members of WATAC (NSW) and in-depth interviews of women selected as a result of the survey. The survey sought biographical data from which a profile was derived. Respondents were asked to describe their experience as women in the church and to suggest changes they would like. Women were selected for interview on the basis of their response to this question and included those who were divergent in perception or experience. Thus a purposive sample was used. The biographical data and profile indicated the extent to which these women might be representative or deviant within the sample.

The validity of purposive sampling is supported in the literature. Purposive sampling can select as key informants those who possess more or special kinds of knowledge, or those who present counter perceptions (Owens, 1982, 15). It allows questions about

difference and implications for theory (Borg & Gall, 1989, 386), and materials generated are useful for patterning (Pelto & Pelto, 1978, 76).

In-depth interviews of key informants were unstructured. To acquire social knowledge it is necessary to participate in it, and face-to-face interviews are particularly valuable as a way to participate in the mind of another person. The unstructured interview seeks to discover the other's experience of a particular situation, to understand the meanings that a social setting has for others in how they define it for themselves (Lofland & Lofland, 1984, 12).

A caveat pertains. Survey and interview, used in this study, are fine tools insofar as they reveal others' constructs of themselves and of their social setting. However, inherent difficulties relate to whether the women were able to describe and explain their experience, and the extent to which the survey and interviews constituted situations in their own right (Schatzman & Strauss, 1972, 6). Because the women surveyed and interviewed were observers of external events and of their own feelings and dispositions, they were subject to the fallibility of observation, as was the interviewer (McCall, 1969, 129). These limitations on data are acknowledged and discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 on methodology.

The presentation of survey and interview data offers resonance and vicarious experience. Ethically, the presentation represents faithfully the meanings of the persons interviewed while maintaining their privacy and anonymity. They in turn, through the process, have been granted dignity, agency, freedom and independence (Lincoln, 1990, 83).

STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The thesis is structured around ten chapters. The following chapter, Chapter 2, is positioned against the background of the Catholic Church in Australia. Chapter 3 discusses theory and literature that are pertinent to this study. The methodology, data collection methods and ethical issues are described in Chapter 4. In the following five chapters, findings are presented from the data generated by the survey – how women experience the Catholic Church in Australia (Chapters 5 and 6), what changes they desire (Chapter 7), what they believe inhibits change (Chapter 8), and how they view

change (Chapter 9). The final chapter draws together the threads of the study and considers implications for women in relation to the structural church.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF WOMEN'S CONCERNS ABOUT CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

In order to help the reader to understand women's experience of oppression in the Catholic Church and why women view the structural church as they do, this chapter outlines current structures and policies of the church, and describes the view of women that church structures and writings convey. Because this study provides background to the experiences and issues stated by women who were surveyed and interviewed in late 1996, this date is the point of closure for events that the chapter narrates.

Although the study relates to the Catholic Church in Australia, concerns held by participants in the study tend to be international,¹ such as the role of women in the church, lay leadership, consultation and decision-making, human sexuality, Eucharistic ministry, clerical celibacy, collegiality and subsidiarity. These relate to the structural church that is the explicit focus of this study. The study does not relate to Christian beliefs and participants do not question these within the study.

Specific issues are significant for women within the patriarchy, hierarchy and clericalism of church structures. The issues of ordination of women and of celibacy of the clergy are associated with clericalism and with the availability of the Eucharist to a sacramental church. They are key issues and belong to the external or public forum. The issue of sexual morality and especially contraception, and of the reception of communion by divorced Catholics who have married again, are issues about which an increasing number of women exercise personal moral responsibility

¹ cf. 'Catholic Common Ground Project' (USA), *The Mix* 1.7, October 1996, 3-4; 'We Are Church' (Austria), *The Tablet*, 22/2/1997, 274

in the internal or private forum of their conscience. Non-inclusive language in liturgy and church documents is a gender issue in the church that contrasts with anti-discriminatory policies and practices in the wider society.

The church in Australia is to be understood within the wider context of the Church of Rome. However, the Australian church reflects its own history and culture as well as that of Rome.

The self-understanding of the Catholic Church was defined at the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II), 1962-1965, in two key documents: *Lumen Gentium (LG)*, the 'Dogmatic Constitution of the Church', and *Gaudium et Spes (GS)*, the 'Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World'.² The Council overturned the 'Catholic culture' of centuries, at a time of wider social and cultural change (Arbuckle, 1993). Reversals during the two decades of the present papacy have brought disillusionment and frustration to those who expected the realisation of a Vatican II model of church as People of God (O'Sullivan, 1997).

Dunn (1996, 980f.) suggests that the church as system is malfunctioning because in a malfunctioning community the female principle is suppressed, leadership is idealised and the past is deified as authority for maintaining the status quo. Her comments relate to the current issues of women's role in the church, authority and the struggle between traditionalism and liberalism. Collins (1997, 103) points to clericalism as a symptom of the pervasive dysfunction of the structural church, with similarities to addictive families in its pattern of control and the co-dependence of its members. Courage to name or to break out leads to anger and accusation. Likewise, Punch (1998, 12) sees the church as a dysfunctional system in its secrecy and control, its members abandoning their inner authority to give autonomy over their lives to outside authority figures.

The focus of this chapter is on perceptions of church structures, power and policies. While these perceptions are from the perspective of female participants in this study, many males and clerics engage in discussion from this perspective. The purpose of the chapter is to provide a context for understanding references made by these participants in survey responses and interviews. The chapter addresses the issues, and those issues only, that are relevant to the study. These include: how women experienced the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and its teachings; how they

² Walter M. Abbott, ed, The Documents of Vatican II, London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965.

are affected by societal influences and feminism; how they perceive Pope John Paul II and Vatican structures, and the exercise of authority and discipline in regard to sexual morality and clerical celibacy; how they view the church's teaching on women, and the issues surrounding the ordination of women and non-inclusive language; and what are their expectations.

HOPES ENGENDERED BY VATICAN II

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) proclaimed the baptismal call to holiness and mission, the inherent good of sexuality and marriage, relatedness and collaboration as central to the nature and message of the church (Sheldrake, 1993). It described the church as pilgrim people and as existential rather than doctrinal, lived rather than professed (Lennan, 1997). Its self-actualisation as Church in the World, and as People of God, created a shift from the dualism of sacred and secular, spiritual and temporal, clergy and laity (Edwards, 1987). The Council spoke of church from the perspective of Baptism, a perspective from which *Christifideles*, Christ's faithful, becomes the root term in place of the term 'laity' with its dominant clerical perspective (Robinson, 1996a, b).

Vatican II stated the equal dignity of all people: 'there is in Christ and in the Church no inequality on the basis of race or nationality, social condition or sex' [LG 32]; 'every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's interest' [GS 27].

The Council professed the rights of all Christians:

[The gospel message] requires in the first place that we foster within the Church herself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony, through the full recognition of lawful diversity. Thus all those who compose the one People of God, both pastors and the general faithful, can engage in dialogue with ever-abounding fruitfulness ... Hence, let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case [GS 92].

However the Council left power at each level with pope, bishop and priest, a hierarchical-clerical structure with ordination as source of power. This has created ill will and tension (Robinson, 1996b). Change of attitude is needed so that change of structure could follow:

Focus should move from ordination to ministry, to the rights of community to the Eucharist, and to the needs of the community. The model of servant leadership cannot operate in a church where status is conferred by ordination (Thurston, 1995, 102).

Documents of Vatican II inform current discussion: the priesthood of the baptised (*LG* 10) informs discussion of ministry and ordination; the right to Eucharist (*LG* 37) informs discussion of clerical celibacy; conscience, (*GS* 16) *sensus fidei* (*LG* 12) and assent (*LG* 25) inform discussion of sexual morality; the importance of Scripture (*SC*³ 24) and selection of readings (*SC* 35, 51) inform discussion of lectionary and inclusive language in liturgy; collegiality, (*LG* 25) dialogue (*LG* 27-28) and lawful diversity (*LG* 37; *GS* 62, 92) inform discussion of authority.

Vatican II was a turning point, initiating extraordinary changes in thinking and practice, thrusting Catholics into a new way of being church (Moorwood, 1997). It was a period of anticipation and hope that has not been realised. This led to disappointment and disillusionment. The Catholic Church is seen to be presently more polarised, alienated and divided than perhaps since the Reformation (O'Sullivan, 1997), and to be in perhaps the greatest time of change in Christian history. Religious culture built on uniformity and conformity that shaped Catholic identity has broken down. There is unprecedented division of opinion and questioning of church authority on matters of faith and morals (Moorwood, 1997).

Vatican II was 'a stepping stone' that 'prepare[d] for the future' (Dulles, 1965). The church had changed and was not immutable. It was capable of self-criticism and self-development (Outler, 1965), willing to learn from the world and to work collaboratively for human betterment (McAfee Brown, 1965).

Participants in the study, many of whom were young adults during Vatican II, have absorbed demonstrably the vision of the Council and operate largely from a Vatican II model of church.

SOCIETAL INFLUENCES

External influences have compounded the situation. Concurrent with Vatican II was the social momentum of the 1950s for personal freedom and attack on institutions (Arbuckle, 1993). Today's cultures have experienced a questioning of authority and a shift to a growth model of organisation that emphasises the individual, difference

³*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy.

and creativity (Moorwood, 1997). Not only did the momentum of Vatican II for change in the church not parallel the momentum for change in society, but the restorationism of the present paucity over the past two decades magnified the gap between the church and the world. Instead of the Vatican II 'church in the world', the pope's sense of mission is of a church as 'sole guarantor of future survival' (Zizola, 1998b, 1353).

Some influences for change were specific to Australia. Irish inheritance remained strong through to the Vatican Council years, contributing in part to present tensions, especially in attitudes to hierarchy and clergy (O'Farrell, 1985). The Penal Laws of the eighteenth century that robbed Ireland of its natural leaders created a vacuum that was filled by the clergy (Campion, 1982). Culturally and within pre-Vatican II theology, Australian Catholics deferred to the clergy. As Campion writes of the period in which many participants in this study grew up: 'when we were growing up we did not criticise the clergy. They were part of the God-ordained Church; and to criticize them was, we felt, somehow to criticize God' (Campion, 1982, 164).

Significant among cultural pressures in Australia for change were the Movement and the Labor split that resulted in the formation of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP).⁴ The appearance of the DLP provided a political stage for the drift of the emerging Catholic middle class towards the conservative coalition parties. Catholics abandoned philosophical social criticism in the face of deep anti-Catholicism (Campion, 1982). The divided attitudes of the hierarchy towards the Movement, especially Archbishop Daniel Mannix in Melbourne and Cardinal Norman Gilroy in Sydney, caused many ordinary Catholics to lose confidence in their bishops. 'What was significant for our generation was that, for the first time, the hierarchy were seen to be split over an issue they had made their own' (Campion, 1982, 165). Issues surrounding the Vietnam War also divided Catholics, and the Australian Catholic hierarchy, in a joint statement April 1967, confirmed personal moral choice (Campion, 1982).

⁴ The Movement began as a secret anti-communist organisation sponsored by the Catholic Church, and became a political apparatus attacking the left wing of the Australian Labor Party (ALP). The Split occurred in 1954, with the expulsion of Movement members from the ALP and the establishment of the DLP (Campion, 1982, 104ff.; O'Farrell, 1985, 392ff.).

FEMINISM

Much social upheaval from the 1960s was connected with transformation in the roles of women (Glendon, 1996) which gave rise to feminism, variously understood. I identify with explanations of feminism that pertain to: women and to men who speak and act from a relational world-view and perspectival way of knowing (Lather, 1991); those who make conscious and explicit attempts to portray or direct emancipatory movements (Steinfelds, 1996); those who work to transform 'dualistic' into 'dialectical' (Glennon, 1983); and those who take seriously a person's view of self as subject for equal consideration, leading to treatment that is fair and just, not benevolent (Benn, 1988).

Mary Daly (1973) applies feminism to church practices and attitudes. She writes of the role of women in supporting the sexual caste system that is perpetrated through sex role socialisation, segregation and derivative status. She highlights the awakening consciousness of women in revealing inherent deficiencies in Christian symbols and structures. She notes in particular that the qualities that the Church idealises, especially for women, are those of victim, namely sacrificial love and passive acceptance of suffering, humility and meekness. Feminist theologians have since renamed male sins of anger, pride and lust, and encouraged women to rage against denial of personhood, to assert and delight in personhood. They have renamed traditional virtues, designating as sinful female meekness and submission to patriarchy, female purity that denies the body (White & Tulip, 1991; Maitland, 1998).

PERCEPTIONS OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

The past two decades of church structure and policies reflect the pontificate⁵ of John Paul II whose person and style have dominated the church since his election in 1978. He is named by a number of participants in the study as central to how they experience the church.

Reviewed early in 1998, a biography of the current pope, John Paul II, entitled him 'Man of the Century'. It highlighted his influence as a political figure, especially in relation to the fall of Communism in his native Poland, while contrasting his

⁵ Pontificate – the period for which an individual is pope.

championing of human rights with his ecclesial autocracy (Stenhouse, 1998; Cornwell, 1998).

John Paul II has been credited with a determination to restore a moral centre to the world through a church that is disciplined yet outspoken. His influence on the church lies in the volume of his public pronouncements and teachings, in his appointment of more than half the church's current bishops and almost all the cardinals who will elect his successor, and in his actions to silence dissent. His convictions and certainty mean a world-view of depth and consistency that no contemporary leader can match. Ironically, his drive to unify the church by his forceful teaching has divided it, and his authoritarianism may destroy his authority.⁶

John Paul II was the first non-Italian pope in recent history. From the shadow of Auschwitz, and from the successful struggle of the Polish Catholic Church against the atheistic State, he is concerned with the forces of evil as perceived in the form of marxism, atheism and consumerism. As pontiff and pastor he came from an ecclesiastical career through the clerical system. His personal emphases reflect concerns of the Polish Church. His constant travelling and his flair as an actor in his use of modern communications make the papacy omnipresent. His agenda is normative and he seems not interested in the questions that haunt many Catholics today. He appears to seek to re-fashion the church according to his own insights. This has increased the tensions inherent in the post-Vatican II period (Collins, 1986). In the media and more widely, the pope is equated with the church. This 'papalism' weakens local church leadership, and distorts the traditionally understood structure of the church (Collins 1997), and the collegiality and subsidiarity that were upheld by Vatican II.

When the French Revolution removed Catholic kings who had ruled local churches, popes assumed the appointment of bishops. This is arguably the single most crucial practical power possessed by popes, yet it is theirs in canon law from 1917 only (Duffy, 1998; Chadwick, 1998). John Paul II has used the appointment of bishops as a tool in the reconstruction of the local church⁷ that goes against Vatican II (King, 1997; Quinn, 1996). The lack of consultation of priests and people in the appointment of bishops is an issue named by participants in the study.

⁶ *The Economist* 29/4/95, 23-25. Cf Zizola (1998b).

⁷ *The Tablet*, 13/12/1997, 1591.

VATICAN STRUCTURES

Surrounding the pope is 'the Vatican' - collectively the Vatican City State and the Roman Curia⁸, variously referred to by participants in this study. It is effectively an all-male enclave, except by default for the brief period 1967-1975 when Rosemary Goldie was under-secretary of the Council of Laity. She was then and still the 'only curial woman'. In 1975 the Council of the Laity became the Council for the Laity with no lay person at any level of responsibility in the Curia (McEnroy, 1995, 238).

Weighty criticism has been brought to bear on church structures. Paul Collins (1997, 1), Australian priest-historian, raises 'the problem of papalism: the identification of Church and pope' and 'the need to distribute power throughout the Church'. John Quinn (1996, 121f.), retired archbishop of San Francisco, speaks of the need to 'reform the papacy' and 'Curial system', noting that Paul VI in 1963 and leading bishops of Vatican Council II in 1965 had called for reform of the Curia. Reinhold Stecher (1997, 1668) writes as bishop of Innsbruck of 'theological and pastoral deficiencies of the Church's present leadership', and 'the tendency to place human laws and traditions above our divine commission'. Owen O'Sullivan (1997, 184ff.), priest and pastor, describes the growing credibility and endurance gap between the church and the Vatican, and asserts that the only thing to be done with the Vatican is to remove it totally and permanently, an assertion made also by several respondents.

The Vatican exists in an imperial organisational model in its ritual, ranking systems, dress and titles. It has diplomatic recognition and exchanges ambassadors with countries. Nuncios and pronuncios, appointed to countries or nation-states, provide the key to centralised power. They play a pivotal role in the appointment and transfer of bishops, can veto representatives to synods of bishops, and effectively control information to the Vatican (O'Sullivan, 1997). Their directive power weakens the national episcopate (Quinn, 1996). John Paul II has emphasised a worldwide social and ethical role for the church as bearer of salvation for humanity. Vatican diplomacy as a result developed on an unprecedented scale. From 89 nunciatures in 1978, there are now 167 nunciatures, as well as 24 offices attached to international organisations (Zizola, 1998b, 1353), a growth from fewer than 200 curial staff at the turn of the century (Collins, 1997, 84). This imperial model has

⁸ Curia – the juridical and administrative institutions of church government comprising congregations, e.g. the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), tribunals, chancery and secretariat.

fostered and maintained the patriarchy, hierarchy and clericalism that women experience as alienating in the male-female and clerical-lay divide.

Historically, primary teaching authority or magisterium lay with bishops, and with theologians advising bishops. The people's role was enshrined in *sensus fidelium*, the doctrine of reception, whereby teaching was confirmed when the Christian community accepted it. General acceptance by the People of God is the ultimate guarantee of truth and, conversely, a definition not accepted by the people may be defective (O'Sullivan, 1997, 66ff).⁹ Papacy lay at the end of the process. This order was inverted when Vatican Council I (1869-1870) defined papal infallibility and papal primacy (Collins, 1997).

The concept of reception was re-vitalised by Vatican II and is in danger of again being lost (Collins, 1997; King, 1997; O'Sullivan, 1997). Doctrine and teaching have been subsumed in jurisdiction, the papal or Vatican view has become normative, and theologians are relegated to the role of apologist. Papal teaching authority has extended to the Curia. In 1990 papal and curial magisterium were declared to be equally binding and the role of theologians and of the believing community in the process of discerning and developing Christian tradition was explicitly denied (Collins, 1997, 16). Although the Curia lacks foundation in Scripture or tradition (Quinn, 1996), control by Pope and Curia now flourishes at the expense of the prophetic role of theologians and the pastoral voice of the parish.¹⁰

The following comment highlights the tension between revisionist tendencies of the present papacy and the reforming vision of Vatican II:

The tension between the political model and the ecclesial model [is] at work in the Church. The fundamental concern of the political model is order and therefore control. The fundamental concern of the ecclesial model is communion and therefore discernment in faith of the diversity of gifts and works of the spirit. The claims of discernment and the claims of order must always coexist (Quinn, 1996, 126).

One of the Congregations within the Curia is the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), headed by Cardinal Josef Ratzinger. Such is the centralisation of

⁹ cf. *The Tablet*, 4/6/1994, 691-2.

¹⁰ *The Tablet*, 27/7/1996, 975.

bureaucratic control and adherence to the papal line on issues like ordination of women, that the CDF required the Liturgical Press of St. John's Abbey, Minnesota, to destroy the 1,300 unsold copies of Lavinia Byrne's Women at the Altar.¹¹

VIEWS ON AUTHORITY

Use of power, authority and authoritarianism are significant issues for many participants in the study, as they are for many writers on the subject.

The Curia is criticised widely for its manner in dealing with issues and for exercising oversight and authority over bishops. Decisions are reached without consultation with the episcopate and without appropriate dialogue, and can be implemented against the objection of those affected. Although collegiality of bishops is doctrinally and historically based, and 'the collegial nature and meaning of episcopal order' was emphasised at Vatican II (*LG 22*), the 'Vatican' is seen to be using central authority to impose doctrinal uniformity.¹² Bishops seem not free to express dissenting views (Dullès, 1995) and collegiality appears reduced to embracing decisions made by others (Quinn, 1996). Bishops are themselves excluded from decision-making; they are not consulted and often they are not informed (O'Sullivan, 1997).

The Curia has been described as having a 'pathology of control' (McGillion, 1996, 10), as existing to serve papal power and not the ministry of the church (Collins, 1997), and as being guilty of 'ecclesiolatry' in the plethora of official documents in which the church talks to itself about itself (O'Sullivan, 1997, 27). Women, however, are not the only members of the church who are alienated. Stecher, (1997, 1668) comments on the damaging impact of authoritarianism:

The tendency to place human laws and traditions above our divine commission is the most shocking aspect of many church decisions at the end of this millennium ... [T]he oft-repeated tendency to subordinate Jesus' teaching to administrative practices and the exercise of human authority ... is the real reason for the decline in papal authority ... Rome has lost the image of mercy and assumed the image of harsh authority.

¹¹ The Tablet, 11/7/1998, 905.

¹² The Tablet, 16/12/1995, 1607.

In 1994, the pope declared in *O. dinatio Sacerdotalis*¹³ that 'the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and this judgement is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful' (Vatican Press). This statement led to considerable discussion on the nature of the new level of authority in 'ordinary' teaching claimed by the pope (O'Shea, 1994, 45), that was without basis in the ecclesiology of Vatican I and Vatican II (Sullivan, 1994).

The CDF followed with a statement in 1995 that gave rise to further discussion and comment, as in the following:

This unexpected and unprecedented reinforcement of a doctrine which has already been declared by the Pope as 'definitive' suggests that ... the arguments so far adduced have not, by themselves, carried the day. In the thinking of the Vatican, therefore, those arguments had to be buttressed by a further use of authority ... Nevertheless, any exercise of supreme doctrinal authority in the Church, especially when it curtails freedom of debate, must be scrutinised carefully. Such a response is by no means incompatible with the loyalty that is owed to the teaching office (The Tablet 25/11/95, 1495).

The issue of clerical celibacy illustrates the use of central authority to impose doctrinal uniformity. Paul VI withdrew the topic of celibacy from the agenda of the Second Vatican Council (Collins, 1997). The openness of the majority of bishops at the 1971 Synod to new practice was rejected (Schillebeeckx, 1981). As recently as 1995, the prefect of the Congregation of Bishops in Rome demanded that an Irish bishop who suggested consideration of change in the rule of celibacy retract the statement, not speak publicly on the issue again, and never again speak in a way that might cause scandal.¹⁴ As was commented:

If there is scandal in this affair at all, it is scandal given by the Vatican itself. Its manner of treating bishops is causing damage to the morale of the clergy throughout the world, not to mention dismay to the laity. The profound alienation that this is causing is far more harmful to the Church than disagreements about the issue of celibacy could ever be (The Tablet, 29/7/95, 956).

¹³ 'On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone'.

¹⁴ The Tablet, 22/7/1995, 946.

MORALITY EXPERIENCED AS DISCIPLINE

The premises and emphases of church teaching have been problematic for women, especially in relation to the church's attitude to marriage and birth control. Events surrounding the issue of contraception began in 1966 when the papal commission on birth control, that had deliberated over a period of three years, brought down a majority recommendation that papal teaching be changed. A majority of the world congress of Catholic laity in Rome in 1967 also wanted relaxation of the church's ban on artificial contraception, knowing this was favoured by the papal commission (Campion, 1987).¹⁵ Pressure was brought to maintain the teaching because change would undermine papal authority by contradicting the condemnation by Pius XI. Pope Paul VI's encyclical letter, *Humanae Vitae*¹⁶ (1968), reiterated the ban. Ironically, papal authority was weakened by ensuing dissent (Collins, 1997).

Two members of the papal commission wrote recently of divergent views of church that emerged within it. One view was of the People of God bringing their experience to be shared and reflected upon by the authorities. Their criterion was the expression of love in the context of responsible parenthood, not an analysis of isolated acts of intercourse. The other view was of a church where the authorities already possessed the truth, even on secular and scientific matters, and had the task of asserting it in spite of the evidence. This model of church and its lack of understanding of the nature of marriage are epitomised in the requirement of the three married couples on the commission that they be housed separately. The husbands lived with the clerics in the Spanish College. The wives lived in a convent 1-2 kilometers distant (Marshall, 1995).

Failure to listen and to reflect upon the experience of faithful Christians led to a crisis of authority. The teaching that contraception is intrinsically evil has not been accepted by the People of God, and the disparity between official and daily practice has undermined the credibility of the church (Marshall, 1995). *Humanae Vitae* (1968) was a turning point for many Catholics and many participants who assumed

¹⁵ Resolution of the Third World Congress for the Lay Apostolate, 1967:

In view of the agonizing problem of demographic expansion [the Congress recalls] the very strong feeling among Christian lay people that there is need for a clear stand by the teaching authorities of the Church which would focus on fundamental moral and spiritual values, while leaving the choice of scientific and technical means for achieving responsible parenthood to parents acting in accordance with their Christian faith and on the basis of medical and scientific consultation (Goldie, 1998, 106).

¹⁶ 'Of Human Life'.

personal responsibility for their moral behaviour, viewing the church as lacking credibility in the area of sexuality. Personal and sexual morality became displaced as central moral issues, and were superseded by issues of social justice (Collins, 1986). Widespread rejection was evidenced by a published survey in Brisbane in 1978 that showed that only 24% of laity under the age of forty accepted the teaching (Campion, 1987). Women, and men, invoked Vatican II teaching that conscience is a higher moral authority than official teaching, although an informed conscience takes teaching into account.

A proposal was made at the Synod on the Family (1980) that a group reinvestigate the ruling on artificial contraception in view of its evident rejection by a substantial majority of practising Catholics. The proposal argued that what Catholics felt about the issue had to be taken into account, and that behaviour that contradicted teaching would not be resolved by repeating rulings (McGillion, 1996). It was not accepted.

Kevin Kelly, a moral theologian, states that Catholic sexual ethics is based on a faulty understanding of Christian anthropology. The theory that there are complementary differences between men and women colludes in oppression of women. He states also that respect for living Christian tradition should lead to celebration of the goodness of faithful loving homosexual relationships and recognise them as 'sacraments' of God's loving presence among us, especially in the self-sacrificing love and faithfulness of many couples affected by AIDS.¹⁷ Australian bishop, Pat Power, expresses personal sorrow for the pain that homosexual Catholics feel as a result of the Church's teaching. 'At times the Church's teaching on human sexuality has been overly negative and there have been times when it has been out of touch with human reality. Together we need to find new and better ways for the Church to enunciate its teaching on sexual morality'.¹⁸ The negativity described here was an issue for several participants in this study and especially for the young woman who identified herself as lesbian.

Marriage after divorce is another significant moral and pastoral issue for the Catholic Church and for participants. A letter from the CDF (1994) declared that the second marriage of a divorced person contradicts the union of love between Christ and the church that is signified by the Eucharist. A divorced and remarried person who takes communion gives the impression that the church does not believe in the

¹⁷ The Tablet, 11-18/4/1998, 498, re Kelly, Kevin. New Directions in Sexual Ethics: Moral Theology and the Challenge of AIDS. London: Chapman, 1998.

¹⁸ The Tablet, 20/6/1998, 824.

indissolubility of marriage. The contrary assertion is that across-the-board denial of sacraments weakens the witness of the church to compassion, forgiveness and healing mission (Kelly, 1994).

Several participants referred to issues raised by the church's policy on the annulment of marriage. The practice of annulment is related to church teaching that marriage is intrinsically insoluble. Instead of allowing that a marriage is over, canon lawyers will investigate a contract to ascertain whether full conditions for validity, such as full consent and consummation, were present in a marriage. If a church tribunal finds that one of these conditions was not present, the marriage can be annulled. This means that in church law there was never a marriage. Many spouses are offended by declaration of invalidity and regard the process as hypocritical (Stuart, 1997). For those caught in the sadness and hurt and loneliness of a failed marriage, the Catholic Church offers only a long legal process, full of secrecy and unpleasantly intimate questioning.¹⁹ That women whose lives are affected have no say in official church process is borne out by Kennedy who struggled against church structures in contesting her husband's filing for annulment.²⁰

CLERICAL CELIBACY AND CLERICALISM

Clerical celibacy also is a significant issue for many participants in the study, from the perspective of both clericalism and access to the Eucharist.

Clerical celibacy does not have ecclesiological basis (Schillebeeckx, 1981). It was introduced progressively from the fourth century, initially for reasons of ritual purity and later for property control (Malone, 1993). It is a perversion of the dualism of 'material' and 'spiritual' as irreconcilable opposites, and is contrary to the biblical world-view (Brown, 1988). Clericalism and clerical celibacy are intertwined, with the law of celibacy defending boundaries that underpin the clerical culture of separation and superiority (Sheldrake, 1993).

Those who seek change in church discipline are concerned at the refusal of church leadership to recognise the pastoral situation, and its insistence on treating human regulations as absolute in a way that ignores theological and sacramental reality. 'Instead of making provision for the Eucharist based on the spiritual health of the

¹⁹ *The Tablet*, 9/1/1993, 30.

²⁰ Kennedy, Sheila Rauch. *Shattered Faith*. NY: Pantheon, 1997.

Christian community we concentrate on purely human laws about who is authorised to do what ... Everything is sacrificed to a definition of church office for which there is no basis in revelation' (Stecher, 1996, 1668).

Although the community's right to the Eucharist has priority over imposed celibacy (Schillebeeckx, 1981), irreconcilable difference exists between official statements about the significance of the Eucharist and consequences concerning the availability of the Eucharist that result from the requirement of male celibate ordained ministry (Hypher, 1995). This is of particular concern to women who are engaged in parish leadership and pastoral ministries.

Several participants in this study questioned whether women would be required to be celibate in order to be ordained. This has not been an issue in the literature. Because there is precedent for married priests, it is widely assumed that change in church practice relating to clerical celibacy will antedate ordination of women.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL²¹ CONCEPTS - WOMAN AND GOD

Many issues that impinge directly and specifically on women, and were identified by participants, derive from the theological issue of what it means to be male and female in relation to God. The Christian tradition has conceptualised God as male, man as image of God and head of woman, woman as help-mate of man and divinely decreed to be for man as wife and mother (La Cugna, 1994). While equality of male and female imaging God can be argued from Genesis 1:26-28 (Trible, 1978), the traditional view prevailed. Femeness as body became symbol of the fall and of sin (Ruether, 1974). Limitation of women's roles was justified by appeal to Biblical texts that upheld women's subordinate status at creation and her guilt for the original sin (Clark, 1982). Woman was regarded as 'temptress' and 'occasion of sin' (Punch, 1998, 31; O'Sullivan, 1997, 106f).

Hebrew monotheism imaged God primarily as male (Lerner, 1986) and the maleness of Jesus was seen as revelatory confirmation of the maleness of God. The metaphor of God as father was literalised to justify patriarchal domination; the metaphor of God as male was literalised to confirm males as divine and maleness normative (Schneiders, 1986).

²¹ '2. Religious teaching about the origin, nature, and destiny of man [sic] from the perspective of his relation to God; *specif.*: the branch of systematic theology dealing with anthropology' (Webster's Third New International Dictionary. Springfield, Mass: G&C Merriam, 1968).

Anatomy and biology became historical and social determinants of roles for women, and the cultural structure of male dominance was read as pre-ordained (Lerner, 1986; Thurston, 1995). Aristotelian biology influenced the thinking of church writers through to the medieval period. According to Aristotle, the male alone provided the seed and genetic form. The female was the result of defect in gestation, 'defective male', inferior in body, intelligence and moral self-control (Ruether, 1990).

Because woman was perceived from the creation stories and from biology to be not normative and not fully possessing human nature, medieval theologians, especially Aquinas, concluded that the maleness of Christ was an ontological necessity (Ruether, 1990). The female image of the church was used to reinforce the hierarchy of men over women, seeing it within subjugation of creatures to God, of the church to Christ (Ruether, 1985).

The double definition of woman was submissive body in the order of nature and 'revolting' body in the disorder of sin. Women were doubly inferior according to nature and to sin, and could be redeemed only by transcending their female nature. Salvation was equated with negation of female bodily image (Ruether, 1974). The soul could be redeemed from the body, and rewarded in the next world. Women, inferior by nature, by law and by the social order, could become 'perfect man' by renouncing body and sexuality (Fiorenza, 1983).

Pope John Paul II wrote *Mulieris dignitatem*²² (1988) to deal with the anthropological and theological bases for the meaning and dignity of being a woman and being a man, a study suggested by the 1987 synod of bishops on the role of the laity [1]. The pope uses the creation story of Genesis 2:18-25 to establish the spousal nature of relationship between persons, from which he argues that motherhood and virginity are a particular dimension of the vocation of women [6-7]. In the 'beginning' woman was entrusted to man with her feminine distinctiveness and her potential for motherhood [13]. In her openness in conceiving and giving birth, woman discovers herself through the gift of self. Motherhood develops woman's predisposition to pay attention to another person [18]. The spousal predisposition of the feminine personality finds a response also in virginity and spiritual motherhood [20-21]. The pope derives from Genesis 2:18-25 and the bridal image of Ephesians 5:25-32 that woman was called into existence at man's side as 'a helper fit for him', that woman as bride receives love in order to love in return [29].

²² 'On the Dignity of Women'.

Richard Leonard (1995) devotes considerable attention to *Mulieris Dignitatem* as the longest and most complex document written by any pope at any time on the dignity and vocation of women, and because the letter generally summarises the positions of earlier papal thought. Leonard judges that the letter was a development in that it equates women as equal ontologically in dignity and status with men, names male domination as a consequence of the rupturing of humanity's relationship with God, condemns any form of abuse or objectification of women by men, and challenges assumptions about gender classifications within families. Leonard is critical of the letter because gender complementarity is based on questionable philosophical considerations, categories of motherhood and virginity are restrictive and do not speak to the reality and demands of women's social situation, women are not accorded equality and opportunity in the Church that is argued for them in society.

In his 1995 'Letter to Women', John Paul II affirms 'women who work', and thanks women for roles broader than those of wife, mother and consecrated virgin. He recognises ways in which women 'have often been relegated to the margins of society and even been relegated to servitude'. Acknowledging 'the many kinds of cultural conditioning which down through the centuries have shaped ways of thinking and acting', John Paul II (1995, 917) apologises:

And if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed, on the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision. When it comes to setting women free from every kind of exploitation and domination, the Gospel contains an ever-relevant message which goes back to the message of Jesus Christ.

The inconsistency between words such as these and actions of the official church was noted in the address to the pope by the bishops of New Zealand in November 1998:

We appreciated your encyclical letter *On the Dignity of Women* (1988) and your *Letter to Women* (1995). As we listen to Catholic women, we believe that the core of their claims, and the intensity of their concerns, is the need for a greater share of responsibility within and for the Church. You yourself

have called on 'the ecclesial community to foster greater appreciation of women's rights and to enable them to be more actively involved in roles of responsibility' ... We look to the Holy See to exercise leadership by sharing with women all those roles which do not require ordination (The Tablet, 28/11/1998, 1589).

The pursuit by women of their role within the Catholic Church is hindered by the overlay of Christian anthropology, restated by John Paul II, and by the traditional and patriarchal imaging of Mary as Virgin-Mother, also restated by John Paul II, that reversed the emphasis of Paul VI on Mary as model of Christian discipleship (Leonard, 1995). Mary as Virgin-Mother is an impossible ideal for women. She is who men have needed her to be for them (Ohanneson, 1980). The few respondents who made mention of Mary rejected this image.

ORDINATION OF WOMEN

John Paul II states in *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* (1994) why women could not be ordained:

Priestly ordination, which hands on the office entrusted by Christ to his apostles of teaching, sanctifying and governing the faithful, has in the Catholic Church from the beginning always been reserved to men alone ... The example recorded in the Sacred Scriptures of Christ choosing his Apostles only from among men; the constant practice of the Church, which has imitated Christ in choosing only men; and her living teaching authority which has consistently held that the exclusion of women from the priesthood is in accordance with God's plan for his Church.

Pottmeyer (1996), a member of the International Theological Commission in Rome, gives parameters for discussion: In calling only men as the twelve apostles, did Jesus reveal the will of God for the church? If Jesus, in complete freedom, acted in accordance with the culture of the day, does faithfulness to him require us in our day to take account of the changed role of women in the modern world?

The Pontifical Biblical Commission investigated the issue of women's ordination (1975) and concluded unanimously that the Christian Scriptures do not settle in a clear way whether women can be ordained priests. A two-thirds majority affirmed

that scriptural grounds alone are not enough to exclude the possibility of ordaining women, and that Christ's plan would not be transgressed by permitting the ordination of women (Wainwright, 1987). However, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* makes no reference to the findings of the Biblical Commission.

Feminist Scripture scholars raise issues regarding 'The Twelve'. Fiorenza (1992) cites technical evidence and scholarly consensus that the apostles and the twelve were different within Jesus' ministry, and came later to be identified with each other. Their function was symbolic-eschatological. Lee (1993) cites their position in the Gospel narratives as ambiguous, with a complex pre-history. They appear to be a post-Easter construct, growing in importance in the later decades of the first century as the early Christians struggled to justify their identity in relation to Judaism. Gospel features suggest that a wider group of disciples was present at the Last Supper and was written out of later tradition in favour of the twelve.

The argument from tradition has been challenged as relying on cultural norms and social structures (Schneiders, 1986). Because the question of women in society and the church has only been raised in recent times in decisively new ways, it does not suffice that it was taken for granted that only men were ordained (Sullivan, 1994). The exclusion of women from ministry is neither 'revelatory' nor 'unbroken' practice, and is sustained by patriarchal structures (St.Pierre, 1994). Tradition has maintained that the maleness of Jesus is theologically, christologically and sacramentally irrelevant, so any attempt to assign to it theological significance is non-traditional (Schneiders, 1986).

Many feminist writers address the wider implications of the exclusion of women from ordination:

Women-church needs to step beyond the inclusion of women as priests, and to change the structures and cultural symbols of the ecclesia of patriarchy. Women-church must reject the myth that the particular form of an historical institution is the only legitimate one and is dominically or apostolically founded. All forms of church polity are non-dominical, and are historical creations in the context of particular social and political configurations (Ruether, 1985, 65).

The question whether the Church prefers maleness to the Eucharist may become a critical Church issue, given that the sacramentality of the Church and the style of Christian ministry are in flux. The exclusion of women from

ordination undermines the credibility of the efficacy of baptism, grace and the incarnation by setting differences between women and men (Chittester, 1986, 85).

Agitation to change the ruling on ordination is ill-directed because it connives with an over-clerical reading of Christian ministry, whereby the work of the priest is the only form of Christian ministry that is made absolute, and ordination is objectified (Byrne, 1988, 31).

The real theological issue is belief about God, about divine-human relationships, and about the nature of the human person and human destiny, illustrated in gender both as biology and as social-political construct. The Catholic Church's policy on ordination is consistent with its interpretation of complementarity based on deficient theology of God and of the human person. Ironically, denied ordination, Catholic women have become educated and employed as theologians; ironically, exclusion invited feminist critique and provided the conditions under which religious feminism has flourished (La Cugna, 1994, 13).

The Church talks about the dignity of women so that it does not have to deal with the equality of women. The pope's letter seemed like a set-back but gave rise to sympathetic reaction, to a focus on what is do-able, and to the development of a diversity of ministries. The fact that the pope had to take the step meant that he felt a high level of threat on the issue (Osiek, 1994, 22).

It is clear that participants in this study are familiar with arguments surrounding the issue of ordination. Women are not voiceless, even if they do not have formal avenues for voice.

O'Leary's (1977, 34) comment on Paul VI's precluding the ordination of women remains applicable. He defines by historical examples five stages in reversing a church law that occur in practice: (i) the new discipline is not mentioned; (ii) it is rejected; (iii) it is allowed as exception; (iv) it is encouraged; (v) it is imposed. He concludes: 'Is it too much to suggest that with the recent declaration on the question of the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood, this matter has now moved from Stage I to Stage II?'

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Inclusive language and images of God are issues for participants and for many women. Language includes actions and space and movement and relationships of people. Messages about gender relations are implied in the all-male sanctuary party and in the height and distance of the priest from the congregation, which is mostly women (Field, 1992). Exclusion of women from preaching and presiding at worship becomes a public, visual, verbal embodiment of male control of the institution of worship (Smith, 1994). In the Catholic liturgical tradition the male celibate clergy assert superiority as the primary mediators, reinforced by posture and religious gestures, dominance and subordination. who stands while others kneel, who blesses while others bow their heads (Fairbanks, 1995).

In the Sunday Lectionary, common to the Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches in Australia, none of the readings are of women of the Hebrew Scriptures (Field, 1992). Fox (1994, 14) notes that criteria to omit or abbreviate passages include: 'texts that contain serious literary, critical or exegetical problems or ... [are] of little pastoral worth'. She questions: 'For which of these reasons do Catholics seldom, or not at all, hear at their liturgy of the defiant midwives Shiprah and Puah? Of the prophets Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, Anna? Of the heroines Judith and Esther? Of the wisdom and astuteness of the worthy wife? Of Mary's Magnificat? Of the woman who anointed Jesus on the head? Of Joanna, Susanna, Priscilla, Lydia, Tabitha? Of Jesus' appearance to Mary Magdalen in the garden?'. Her concerns are because she views liturgy as central to Christian life, the means to nourish and celebrate spirituality, the action of remembering salvation history in story and ritual, based on Scripture. These concerns are shared by others. Scripture passages included in the lectionary are central parts of the teaching process of liturgy. Absence of women renders them insignificant in salvation history (Uhr, 1992). The question follows: does liturgical spoken and sign language promote the preaching of Jesus? (Fairbanks, 1995).

EXPECTATIONS

Vatican II gave reason to expect differently of a Church self-defined by baptism as People of God instead of defined by ordination as hierarchy. Gerald Arbuckle (1993, 77) comments:

The coercive powers of Rome over the Church worked effectively without the faithful questioning its effectiveness only as long as the latter were aware of only the pre-Vatican II model; with the Council we know there are alternative models of being Church and, since people are now living according to these models, tensions between the people and the centre are bound to increase.

In the context of expectations derived from Vatican II, present alienation is experienced as disappointment and disillusionment. The vision of Vatican II is the model and source for many of the changes that women seek in the church. Vatican II teachings, social and cultural changes since the 1960s, and divided opinions and attitudes of members of hierarchy and clergy, gave rise to the fact that many Catholics take personal responsibility for moral decisions on issues such as contraception, obligation of Sunday Mass attendance, and communion of divorced persons who have married. The related meaning of 'Catholic' and self-identification as Catholic will be examined within the findings and outcomes of the present study.

It is significant that the majority of the women surveyed experienced as young adults the changes of Vatican II. They are in a position to measure the twenty years of John Paul II's pontificate, with its tendency to siege mentality, dogmatism and centralised government (Zizola, 1998a), against the pontificates of John XXIII (1958-1963) who called the Second Vatican Council and presided over its first session, and Paul VI (1963-1978) who presided over the second, third and fourth sessions, who symbolically invited women to attend, and who sought to implement strategic framework for reform and dialogue within and beyond the church (Zizola, 1998a).

Older women in the church have experienced the changes of Vatican II, know that change is possible, and have energy to work for change. Many younger women, who are increasingly absenting themselves from church pews and taking their families with them, are alienated by their experience of church as irrelevant and out of touch.

It is easy to put Vatican II thirty years into the past, several generations for those who are older, a lifetime for those who are younger, and to not realise the extent to which the Catholic Church is still in the early stages of the change process of culture reversal and paradigm shift. This will be explored within a cultural anthropological model presented in the literature review that follows in the next chapter.

Vatican II is pivotal for understanding the Australian Catholic Church and the wider church in the present. Its teachings shed many accretions of history, and reversed entrenched culture. The Council was responsible for new awareness, new practice and enhanced expectations. The teachings of Vatican II inform discussion and provide vision and reason to hope for the reality of a church that is People of God and open to the world.

Owen O'Sullivan (1997) addresses present tensions within the Catholic Church. He writes of inability to think of the church apart from the present model, of the need for fundamental re-orientation and for restoration of the spirit and structures of dialogue. In opposition to present centralising tendencies and 'creeping infallibility', O'Sullivan posits starting from the bottom up: to respect individual conscience exercised in fidelity and responsibility, to emphasise the family as the domestic church, to foster small Christian communities as a new way of being church,²³ to develop intelligent choice and personal responsibility through adult education. He suggests separation of legislative, executive and judicial powers, and election of bishops and parish priests with limited term appointments.

He writes of change mechanisms, that if the goal is renewed community then renewal must start with the community, citing Gandhi: 'The end must be prefigured by the means' (O'Sullivan, 1997, 32). He writes that the Christian faith, as distinct from the Christian Church, has a very positive attitude towards women, and asks 'Do we believe our own teaching?' He suggests inclusion of a feminine view of God to broaden and deepen our vision of God and our understanding of person and society. He cites changes in the church as grounds for hope of changes in moral theology and sexual morality.

He reminds his readers that there is a lot more right with the church than wrong with it. He posits a church reformed in its structures: a church which does penance and apologises, which welcomes all God's gifts and includes women priests and married priests, which is open to people, motivated by mission and empowered by prayer. The need is real. 'For many people, the Church is not a good advertisement for Christianity, nor is it seen as a paradigm for human society' (O'Sullivan, 1997, 188).

²³ The archdiocese of Adelaide embraced Basic Ecclesial Communities as its official pastoral strategy, the first English-speaking diocese in the developed world to do so (Hebblethwaite, 1996). The Home Church movement began in Canberra in the late 1960s (Hammerton, 1995).

SUMMARY

It is evident that tensions and polarisation, which particularly involve women, exist within the Catholic Church. Forces for change in the spirit of Vatican II are in tension with revisionist and centralising forces of the Vatican and the present papacy. 'Laity' are in tension with clericalism. Women are in tension with exclusionary language, symbols and myths. History and theology are in tension with authoritarian discipline.

These tensions will be developed further in Chapters 5-9 that examine how the women who participated in this study described their experience of church, changes that they would like and factors that they perceived might limit or prevent change. It will be clear how well women in the study understood Vatican II, and the extent to which their present alienation resulted from their disappointment and disillusionment that so much in the present church denies and negates Vatican II.

The hopes and expectations that derive from Vatican II are one of the themes of this chapter. These hopes and expectations derive also from societal changes and the rise of feminism.

Contrasting themes of the chapter are exclusionary Vatican structures, teaching and practices, and the conservatism that mark the two decades of the present papacy. The tension between these contrasting themes gives rise to specific issues for women: women's role and status in a church that is patriarchal, hierarchical and clerical; teaching on sexuality derived from moral absolutes and not from women's experience; gender exclusion from ordination based on faulty Christian anthropology; non-inclusive language; insistence on clerical celibacy at the expense of access to the Eucharist.

The following chapter will consider themes of alienation, loyalty and exit, culture and chaos, and re-writing women into the history of the early and the current church, as these themes are presented in the literature. These themes, like the themes of this chapter, provide frameworks for understanding and giving meaning to women's experience of the structural church.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

ALIENATION, LOYALTY, CHANGE AND HER-STORY

INTRODUCTION

Catholic women who experienced the changes and the promises of Vatican II (1962-1965) are now aged 45+. In 1964, twenty-three women, a small but symbolic group, were invited by Paul VI to attend as auditors the third and fourth sessions of the Second Vatican Council. McEnroy (1995) relates the testimony of those women still alive thirty years after the Council. They give insight into what they sought to achieve at the Council within the framework of the period, and how they perceived the Council and what has followed. They retain the vision and conviction of Vatican II that the church is the People of God, and so 'we are church'. It is clear from the reflections of these conciliar women that unfulfilled expectations have contributed to the pain and alienation of many who internalised the spirit and values of the Council.

While an observable decline in church attendance suggests that women from a range of backgrounds feel alienated in the structural church,¹ the nature of these feelings of alienation are not generally known. Nor is it known to what extent are feelings of alienation held by women who are church members, what supports women who feel alienated to remain in the church, or why some women who leave the church retain a sense of loss and of belonging. An American study (Winter, Lummis & Stokes 1995) shows that many women who are active church members endure love-pain tension and many redefine the meaning of membership. Many of these women opt to stay in the church in an attempt to exercise voice and to contribute to grass-roots change. For them, active dissent is loyalty, but loyalty contributes to pain. The

¹ Published annual diocesan count of Mass attendance e.g. Catholic Research Office for Pastoral Planning (CROPP), Melbourne Archdiocese.

conjunction of 'loyalty' and 'dissent' or 'voice' is suggested by Hirschman's (1970) theory of exit, voice and loyalty developed in regard to organisations.

Arbuckle (1993) uses a model of change derived from cultural anthropology to depict Vatican II as a culture reversal for the Catholic Church, an overturning of the church's understanding of itself and its relationship with other churches and religions and the world at large. He describes this culture reversal as chaos and demonstrates the consequent polarisation between restorationist forces that want to return uncritically to pre-Vatican II certainties and boundaries, and conversionist forces that want to pursue structural reform. He posits that this polarisation and especially the forces of restorationism are a necessary stage of change. Sungaila (1990) derives her model of change from science and chaos theory. Both models ascribe to the potential for grass-roots change

Recent writings by feminist theologians, especially Fiorenza (1983), have made women aware of how they have been written out of the Gospels and early church. Women have drawn on the re-writing of her-story to understand that what is 'man'-made can be remade, that the Catholic Church has changed and can change again.

Through relevant literature, this chapter explores themes of alienation, loyalty and voice, theories of chaos and change, and her-story of women in Scripture, the early church and Vatican II. These themes will help the reader to understand the love-pain tension that is the experience of church for many women, and why women stay in a church that frequently alienates them.

ALIENATION – AN AMERICAN STUDY

Alienation as the reality of church for many women was researched in the USA by Winter, Lummis and Stokes (1995). These researchers were supported in their national study by a team of sixteen women who were sociologists of national and international repute. These acted as consultants and advisers to develop their sixteen-page questionnaire and interview guide, and met with the researchers over a mid-project weekend to evaluate the data. Responses were received from 3,746 women, predominantly well educated, white and aged 35-55, half of whom were married. There was a 55% return, with supplementary mailing to groups that were under-represented.

Research questions were specific: Why do feminist women remain in congregations? How alienated are they from the institutional church? How does their involvement in feminist spirituality groups composed of like-minded women affect their relationship to their denomination and congregation? Respondents had opportunity to make comments as well as to answer the above.

The target group of the American study comprised feminist women who are or were within the Christian tradition and belonged to a women's spirituality group. Of the one-third of the group who were Catholic, 80% stated that they often felt alienated from the institutional church compared with 62% of Protestant women. The researchers perceived from this that more Catholic women were more angry more of the time.

In order to participate fully in the church, American women wanted access to decision-making responsibilities and positions of leadership. They wanted inclusive language, female images and names for God, and women priests. They considered that the celibate male system was central to the exclusion and oppression of women by the institutional church. While there was general agreement that the system needed to change, some of these women would withdraw and let it crumble and others would foster systemic change.

Those American Catholic women surveyed who struggled with negativity engendered by church participation, described their feelings as alienating. Other women described being in a love-hate relationship with the church. Analysis showed that the priest or pastor influenced significantly how parish was experienced.

For many women in this American study, being feminist and being Catholic became a struggle for spiritual survival. Of the women who felt alienated from the church, 82% remained 'in the church', even the 30% that did not 'go to church'. This self-identification of who is Catholic and what it means to be Catholic, gave rise to the metaphor 'defecting in place'. Women did not want to lose the tradition and relationship associated with church community. The American study also demonstrated that 'feminist groups' provided support to enable women to remain in congregations, and that Catholic women with strong feminist spirituality were more involved than other women in social justice and political action.

This American study concluded that feminist women in the Christian tradition distinguished between religion and spirituality, claimed responsibility for their own religious lives, and joined with other feminist women to explore and nurture spirituality. Feminist spirituality was different from traditional forms of Christian spirituality and often led to a new understanding of 'church'; women who espoused feminist spirituality said they often felt alienated from the institutional church. The majority of 'feminist' women in the study remained in the church but on their own terms.

The present study explores women's experience of the church from a broader perspective than the research published in 1995 by Winter, Lummis and Stokes whose specific focus was the relationship between women who feel alienated by church and their participation in feminist spirituality groups. Other American writers address the challenge of being feminist and being Catholic. Osiek (1986) develops a spirituality for women who try to remain loyal to the church in spite of frustration and pain. Weaver (1985) explores the conjunction of feminism and Vatican II in relation to structural change and the political implications of universalism, collegiality and social justice. She explores likewise the disjunction of the church's social justice advocacy and its discrimination against women that make it difficult to be Catholic and feminist. Weaver (1993) also shows that there has been a marked increase in feminist consciousness on the part of American Catholic women.

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH

Australian feminist scholarship related to themes addressed in this study ranges over studies in religion, theology, spirituality, and the history of women and religion. Wainwright (1996), drawing on recent compilations,² notes that what is uniquely Australian is found in the expression of spirituality by indigenous women in literature, music, dance and art, and in intersections between literature, spirituality and theology.

McManus (1991) collected writings that explore how Australian women view the Catholic Church. These stories have in common that personal spirituality, found apart from the church, sustains the women to remain in the church. Some women juxtapose directly or by inference how they experience God personally and how they

² See, for example: Morny Joy & Penelope Magee eds. Claiming our Rites: Studies in Religion by Australian Women Scholars. Adelaide: AASR, 1994; and Maryanne Confoy, Dorothy Lee & Joan Nowotny eds. Freedom & Entrapment. Women thinking theology. Melbourne: Dove 1995.

learned about God in the church: 'My God was a *verb* ... the God of the patriarchy is a *noun* - a static notion' (McManus, 1991, 4f.). 'My schizophrenic God: the one who is present and supports and the one who stands back and judges' (Hera, 1991, 19f.).

Several of these women describe their relationship with the church. 'I cannot avoid the contradiction of a church that speaks of its God of love and compassion but is bound by unimaginative and unloving structures, practices and attitudes ... I feel caught between fidelity to this institution which has been part of my psyche all my life, and to God who gives meaning to my life' (Lee, 1991, 69ff). '[The church] is absent in areas where I find meaning and in areas where I feel the need of spiritual sustenance' (Rooney, 1991, 51). 'We link ourselves with our children to the local church as a means of gaining a sense of history and tradition and belonging. We choose to involve ourselves and our children in a number of non-church activities because it is here that so many of our needs can be fulfilled' (McKinnon, 1991, 104). 'Sometimes I think it's only bloody-mindedness that has kept me more or less calling myself Catholic and more or less going to Mass! ... No sooner do I start thinking that we need to start a revolution in the Australian Catholic Church, than I wonder if it is worth the trouble. Can we afford to give the amount of time and energy it would take. We live in very urgent times for our whole planet ... There are better things to do' (Donaldson, 1991, 111, 117). 'I am a Catholic single mum. I remain in the church through God's grace and my guts. I ask for change' (Pidd, 1991, 85).

This impassioned but incidental evidence from Australian women parallels findings from the American research that many women are alienated from the church but remain in it and seek spiritual support elsewhere.

Australia lacks serious research and scholarship in the area of women's perspectives on the Catholic Church. An important departure is seemingly to be found in a national Inquiry launched by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference (ACBC) in August, 1996. The Report is due to the ACBC in April 1999, but is unlikely to be made public until a later date. No draft has yet been released.

The genesis of the Inquiry was a formal proposal in 1992 from a sub-committee of the Catholic Coalition for Justice and Peace to the Bishops' Social Justice Committee for an independent study financed by the bishops to research sexism in

the Catholic Church in Australia.³ The proposal was passed to the Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace (BCJDP). A research group, later the Research Management Group (RMG), was established in 1994, with members from BCJDP, the Australian Catholic University and the Research Department of the ACBC, and with a bishop as convenor. In 1995, the Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes was approached to contribute finance to the project, and is also represented on the RMG. The Inquiry, *The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia*, aims to provide the ACBC with a basis for theological reflection, pastoral planning and dialogue with women and women's groups on particular issues.

The Inquiry addressed four key questions:

- (i) What are the various ways in which women participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- (ii) What assistance and support are currently offered to women to participate in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- (iii) What are barriers to women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia?
- (iv) What are some ways in which women's participation in the Catholic Church in Australia can be increased?

Written submissions were invited through Catholic and secular press, and through direct mailings. The Secretariat received more than 2,500 submissions from individuals and groups, predominantly women, reflecting a wide range of views and experiences. A panel comprising members of the RMG and the local bishop conducted public hearings in all capital cities and several regional centres. Appearances were by ballot, and approximately 400 presentations were made by groups and individuals, predominantly women, across a spectrum of views and attitudes. A statistical survey of parishes, the National Catholic Church Life Survey (1996), included a questionnaire relating to the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia, that was given to five percent of the sample or 4,500 church attendees, women and men of all ages and backgrounds. Analysis of positions of responsibility held by women in dioceses and church agencies was also undertaken.⁴

³ WATAC NEWS 7.4, Sept. 1996; cf. Research into Sexism in the Church, by the New Zealand Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace & Development (1987), reported in Women-Church 17, Spring 1995.

⁴ Published materials and reports of BCJDP.

Hearings comprised the third part of the Inquiry. These were held in State and Territory capital cities and several regional centres, 22 April-1 July 1997. The hearings were public and presentations were by appointment.

The Inquiry did not invite women directly to identify experience and feelings, as were the intentional focus of the American research and the spontaneous focus of the stories by McManus's Australian women. However, many women elected to do so. Experience and feelings are part of women's agenda. The Inquiry's agenda and process are those of the bishops, who will control results and findings. Accordingly, the Inquiry is research *about* women, not *women's research*.

Although the Report has not yet been presented, there are already outcomes from the Inquiry. In his intervention at the November 1998 Synod of the Bishops of Oceania, Bishop Manning, Chairperson of the BCJDP and the Inquiry, spoke on the issue of women:

Across society, women have become more conscious of their equality with men. In this light they were struggling to maintain loyalty to the church as evidenced in their reaction to Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae* or Pope John Paul II's apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* ruling out women's ordination. Women felt they were excluded from decision-making processes and under-represented at administrative levels. Women are not treated as equal to men. All roles in the church should be open to them unless church law specifically stated otherwise (The Tablet, 5/12/98, 1624).

Final proposals of the Synod 'strongly promoted women's participation in the church'. It was proposed that: language of liturgy and all church statements be consistently gender inclusive, lay ministries and formation programs and employment opportunities in the church be open to women, and a Commission for Women be established at the Vatican.⁵

In Australia, a Joint Working Party comprising representatives of WATAC and other women's organisations and bishops has developed a proposal to the ACBC for a National Board of Catholic Women to dialogue with the ACBC. The Joint

⁵ The Catholic Weekly, 20/12/98.

Working Party was an initiative of WATAC. The proposal for a National Board of Catholic Women reflects submissions and presentations made to the Inquiry.⁶

The 'Women and the Church' Committee of the Marist Fathers Province of Australia conducted a survey in 1995 of women associated with their parishes and schools. Of 112 replies to the question: 'How does it feel to be a woman in the Church today?' half (64) used negative words and phrases. Issues of most concern (24) were contraception, abortion, and divorce and remarriage. The greatest response to the question 'what would you say to men involved in ministry in the church?' was 'listen' (16), followed by 'don't feel threatened' (10). Women's 'dream' of church was 'equality' (12) with a further 12 related replies.⁷

Another survey was conducted in the Australian diocese of Bunbury (1996), based on an American study,⁸ to consider ways in which Catholic women are interacting with, or leaving, the institutional church as well as the ways Catholic women achieve, or seek to achieve, participation in the church. The specific and detailed nature of the 'yes/no' type questions⁹ do not allow ready comparison with the open-ended questions of the Marist 'Women and the Church' survey, nor of the present study.

Alienation is not a new theme. As one participant in this study responded: *Have you read Gage Women, Church and State?¹⁰ She wrote it in the 1890s and it could have been just written. Nothing has changed (M338).*

LOYALTY AND VOICE

It is incontrovertible that women experience alienation yet remain in the church. The American study suggests that they remain through the support of feminist spirituality groups. Hirschman (1970) gives meaning to why people remain in such circumstances. While he developed his theory of exit, voice and loyalty as an

⁶ WATAC Vic News, 5.4, 1998, 10.

⁷ Published materials and reports of the 'Women and the Church' Committee.

⁸ O'Connor, (Sr) Francis Bernard. Like Bread, Their Voices Rise! Global Women Challenge the Church, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1993.

⁹ Published materials and reports of the Catholic Women's Survey, Bunbury Diocese, 1996.

¹⁰ Gage, Matilda Joslyn. Woman, church and state: a historical account of the status of women through the Christian ages: with reminiscences of the matriarchate. Chicago: C. H. Kerr & Co., 1893. (M338 – cf 'Data Reporting' pp. 75-76).

organisation's response to decline, this study draws on his concept of loyalty¹¹ as applicable to an organisation's members.

Voice is defined by Hirschman (1970, 30) as any attempt to change, rather than to escape or exit from, an objectionable state of affairs. He posits (1970, 78f.) that voice is conditional on having influence, and that an individual can be loyal without being influential, but is unlikely to remain loyal without expectation that someone or something will improve the situation. He argues that loyalty defers exit and activates voice, and that likelihood of voice increases with degree of loyalty. Loyal members will stay in the hope or expectation of improvement 'from within', and will use voice to effect change.

Family, church and state are institutions from which Hirschman (1970, 76ff.) considers that exit is ordinarily unthinkable. This is because loyalty raises the cost of exit, which is internalised as disloyalty. The member who exits will often continue to care. In this sense, full exit is impossible, and one remains a member in spite of formal exit.

Hirschman suggests (1970, 92ff.) that loyalty-promoting institutions often repress voice and endeavour to convert conscious into unconscious or conforming loyalist behaviour. These institutions impose high cost for exit, and threaten penalty of expulsion or excommunication. This may stimulate self-deception of members whose investment in the institution refuses to acknowledge its defects.

In a repressive situation of this kind there is resemblance to domestic violence in which women are victims. Research into 'battered women as survivors' show that the women concerned, without exception, exhibited 'loyal' behaviour such as acknowledging positive qualities, forgiving, excusing, continuing to hope for change. They acted on their commitment to make the relationship work in spite of obstacles (Hoff, 1990, 61).

Statements made by battered women suggest that women's acceptance of male authority is linked to traditional teachings of religion and other powerful social institutions that are loyalty-promoting. Throughout history, patriarchal societies have inculcated the notion of women as subordinates, and women often remain in

¹¹ Chapter 7, 'A Theory of Loyalty', pp. 76-105.

victim roles because of learned power disparity, cultural rules and the traditionally defined role of women (Hoff, 1990, 41f.).

Related to this theme, Friere argues (1974, 28ff.) that those who are oppressed are conditioned and shaped by their situation. Their perception of themselves as oppressed is impaired by their submersion in the oppression. The oppressed must discover themselves as 'host' of the oppressor, and perceive the reality of oppression as a limiting situation that they can transform by taking away the oppressor's power to dominate and suppress.

The love-pain tension that is the relationship with the church of many of this study's participants fits well into Hirschman's (1970) model of loyalty and voice. These were demonstrated well by the women of this study, more than loyalist conforming behaviour. 'Voice' describes stances and actions as well as words.

THE WOMEN OF VATICAN II

'Voice' is a telling concept in relation to the women who attended sessions three and four of Vatican II. As auditors, they were not allowed to speak from the council floor. Prohibition went further in women's regard than in men's, to the extent that Barbara Ward, an expert economist from the USA, was not allowed to deliver her prepared address on world hunger and poverty. Instead, a male read it (McEnroy, 1995, 157). Two proposals to have a woman as spokesperson for the auditors were to no avail. 'It had been thought premature to let a woman's voice be heard in the aula' (Goldie, 1998, 73). While the church proclaimed women's equality and dignity, it refused to let women speak in council for no apparent reason when laymen were permitted to do so (McEnroy, 1995, 157).

Horton, a Protestant observer, records his impression of something stranger than his insertion among a sea of Catholic bishops at the first session of the council.

It suddenly came over me, as I sat looking at this vast assembly of almost three thousand people today that it has about it an air of artificiality and that the main reason for this is that there is not a single woman in the whole company. Up and down the nave you look, and into the transepts, nothing but men. It is an abstracted body, incomplete, a torso of true catholicity,

speaking more of an outmoded past than of a living present (McEnroy, 1995, 13f.).

Even when women gained visibility, they had no voice.

A different exercise of voice was exemplified by Jose and Luz-Marie Alvarez-Icaza, the only married couple invited to the Second Vatican Council. Jose, on receiving his invitation, insisted that both should be invited as he and Luz-Marie were both presidents of the Christian Family Movement. They spent nine months preparing for their attendance during which time they set up eighteen teams in their homeland Mexico, visited thirty-six countries, sent out questionnaires to which they received 40,000 responses, and took with them to Rome a resource group of twenty-five persons. Acting on advice, they established 'family' in Rome with two of their daughters in a rented house to which, over one hundred days of two sessions, they invited more than one thousand or one-third of the council fathers (McEnroy, 1995, 90, 133ff.).

The story of the women of Vatican II was researched painstakingly by Carmel McEnroy (1995). Pointing to the significance of the first ever presence of women at a church council McEnroy (1995, 5) comments:

Women are seldom mentioned, and the impression is given that they were not there or they did nothing worth recording. The more serious problem is that women, *all of us*, were so conditioned that we did not expect to find ourselves there, and we did not miss ourselves when we were left out.

However, as Goldie (1998, 71) notes, 'by the end of the Council our presence was – happily! – part of the normal scene and our contributions were taken seriously in commission meetings'.

McEnroy (1995, 1) notes that in a volume that 'revisited' Vatican II¹² twenty-three clerical contributors made no reference to the presence of women other than wives of 'Protestant' observers. McEnroy (1995, 131) notes likewise that Abbott (1965) listed the invitation to other Churches to send observers in *Important Dates of Vatican II*, but not the invitation to lay men or to women.

¹² Alberic Stacpole, Vatican II Revisited by Those Who Were There. Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1986.

Her research began with Mary Luke Tobin, auditor from the religious congregation with which McEnroy was staying at the time of the Council. Through Tobin, she made contact with Australian Rosemary Goldie¹³ and accessed collated material that Goldie had given to Vatican archives and without whom the archives might have held only fragmentary correspondence. Locating others among the twenty-three women was a detective project that has still to yield the whereabouts of one auditor.

Goldie and other conciliar women stressed that women were primarily laity in the Catholic Church, that whatever pertained to laity pertained equally to women and to men and that this was the way into women's recognition as active members of the church. They were concerned that women should not be isolated as a problem apart. That conciliar texts contain few explicit references to women was the result of their deliberate action. 'Women are not a *category* in the church. They should not be honoured as women more than men should be honoured as men. Men and women *are* the church' (McEnroy, 1995, 226).

During the Council, lay auditors were active in commissions that wrote and amended documents. Formal efforts to have women religious invited onto the commission for religious were refused, so Bernard Haring, theologian and secretary of the Mixed Commission for Schema 13 that resulted in *Gaudium et Spes*, took the initiative to write to women to join this commission and its sub-commissions. McEnroy (1995, 128) cites Pilar Bellosillo, one of the women auditors: 'It was both exciting and gratifying to be part of this magisterium of the laity in practice'.

Barriers to acceptance of women were strong, especially segregation at the coffee bar that narrowed the opportunities for the women to mingle informally with the bishops and to communicate their ideas. When women invited men to their bar, a Swiss guard attempted to exclude them. Jose Alvarez-Icaza insisted that the president intervene to allow him to have coffee with his wife. 'This is very important because you are discussing at this moment the changing front of the world today, the theme of *The Church in the Modern World*, while it is being played out here in front of your eyes' (McEnroy, 1995, 103). McEnroy (1995, 101) cites Eva Jung-Inglessis, conciliar journalist and wife of a male auditor, as saying that the council fathers did

¹³ Goldie was executive-secretary of COPECIAL (Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate) 1958-67. She was under-secretary of the Council of the Laity 1967-75, then and still the 'only curial woman'. In 1975 it became the Council for the Laity with no layperson at any level of responsibility (McEnroy, 1995, 238).

not want to admit women to the r bars, not because they didn't like women but because it was so overcrowded that very close contact was unavoidable!

Gladys Parentelli was part of a committee of four chosen to prepare a text. Cardinal Suenens, the intermediary between auditors and the council secretariat, although considered a progressive, would not allow it to be read because it criticized a schema, a right reserved to council fathers. McEnroy (1995, 146) cites Parentelli's reaction to 'the lack of respect' and that 'our work was for nothing':

I was very disconcerted at the church or the ugly face of the church that I was coming to know ... My disillusionment had reached a point that led me to decide not to stay in Rome wasting my time ... I didn't return to attend the council, which closed the same year.

The period following the Council disappointed the women:

The council was very open. Soon afterward many things were closed as progress halted or slowed down. The direction of openness and closing was obvious to me in regard to three particular themes: (i) women in the church, (ii) ecumenism, and (iii) private initiative in the church; ... significant is how soon there appeared in church government the *fear of liberty and autonomy* which the council recognised and conceded to the laity - Bellosillo (McEnroy, 1995, 232ff.).

Now to go back to the strict marching along with everything controlled seems a contradiction to what the council wanted – Alvarez-Icaza (McEnroy, 1995, 246).

Fundamentally I hoped that Vatican II would orientate itself toward an opening to the world, that the church would open itself to the 'signs of the times', that it would give a greater participation to the laity in all structures of the church, that women would be considered a member with full rights in the church, that the hierarchy would be less authoritarian, that the church would have an organizational charter that was more democratic and less hierarchical. To the contrary, the current Roman Curia is the most authoritarian, dogmatic, inhuman, and hard-hearted that the church has had in this century – Parentelli (McEnroy, 1995, 248).

A sequence of events that followed the Council ended in reversal for women:

(i) WUCWO¹⁴ undertook a worldwide study on liberty of women in society and church, 1966-1969.

(ii) The Third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate (1967) 'expressed the wish that the church grant women their full rights and responsibilities as Christians and that a serious doctrinal study be undertaken into the place of women in the sacramental order and in the church' (McEnroy, 1995, 260).

(iii) WUCWO presented a memorandum in 1969 to the Commission for the Revision of Canon Law that 'requested that discriminatory measures with regard to women should be reformed and that there should no longer be a contradiction between the affirmation of the gospel principle of the equality of the sexes and the justification of inequality in practice and in discipline' (McEnroy, 1995, 260).

(iv) Two lay women, Barbara Ward and Pilar Bellosillo, and two women religious participated in the 1971 Synod of bishops. Ward spoke on this occasion! The synod requested the pope to set up a mixed commission to study the question of women in church ministries.

(v) The commission was set up in 1973, with fifteen women among its members, including Bellosillo. The issue of priesthood for women was precluded. Five women resigned when they saw the futility of the commission, but agreed to continue. They and a sixth woman wrote a minority report that was not included in the dossier sent to the pope. They went public in 1987 when they felt that in the name of justice and for the good of the church and of women they could no longer keep silent.

As McEnroy (1995, 262) comments: 'The commission was worse than nothing. It gave the semblance of responding to the synod's recommendation, while masking the stagnation regarding women in the church'.

Of the contribution of the women auditors, McEnroy (1995, 265f) summarises:

¹⁴ World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations.

In keeping with the conciliar spirit, the women of Vatican II were convinced that they had turned the corner in terms of being accepted as equal human beings and full church members ... They wanted simply to be accepted as equal human beings with equal voice and recognition in the church and a fair share in decision-making ... As the conciliar women still emphasize, 'We laid the foundational principles'.

Goldie (1998, 76-77) enlarges:

The approach of the women auditors was to encourage all statements against discrimination, but to oppose any attempt to define strictly 'women's role', whether in society or in the church ... In the end, all that remained was the general principle: 'Since in our days women are taking an increasingly active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that their participation in the various sectors of the Church's apostolate should likewise develop' (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*¹⁵ 9). Nevertheless, everything said about lay participation in the Church's mission was unequivocally intended to refer to both men and women ... [in] recognition of the equal dignity of men and women as a 'sign of the times'.

McEnroy describes her research as an historical contribution to the mainline ecclesiology of Vatican II, as *dangerous memory* because women moved closer to being taken seriously as full church members. McEnroy (1995, 272) concludes: what women now are asking the Catholic Church is no more than 'please continue the *aggiornamento*¹⁶ of Vatican II by *implementing your own teaching in our regard*'. As Goldie (1998, 78) comments: 'Vatican II invited the people of God to take a new look at their church and to be open for a change of mentality, for a "conversion of heart" regarding women's full human and Christian dignity.'

A STUDY OF CATHOLIC LAITY

Goldie (1998) published her account of five decades of the church and Catholic laity. Prior to Vatican II, through a laity initiative, World Congresses for the Lay Apostolate were held in 1951 and 1957. In contrast, before Vatican II there were no Synods of bishops and no continental or regional bodies of bishops with the

¹⁵ Decree on the Laity.

¹⁶ *Aggiornamento* – modernisation.

exception of Latin America from 1955. Apart from nuncios, bishops who had been chaplains or experts in organisations of Catholic laity were the exception to the general inexperience of international matters among those who attended the Council. It had been the laity who provided almost the only occasions for serious study of world problems in relation to the church's pastoral mission (Goldie, 1998, 44ff.).

From early 1959 when the Second Vatican Council was announced, COPECIAL¹⁷ and the conference of Catholic International Organizations (CIO) explained its significance and drafted memoranda for the Preparatory Commission on the Lay Apostolate. This form of lay involvement continued through the Council (Goldie, 1998, 68f.).

The Mixed Commission that discussed Schema 13 was the first to issue official invitation to lay people. Within months, collaboration of lay people became normal procedure, often with decisive impact, especially in relation to marriage, economics and politics. Amendments reflected at least twelve instances of positions taken by lay people (Goldie, 1998, 74f.).

During the Council, in 1965, a group of auditors signed a letter to Paul VI concerning birth control, in an initiative that was seen to be 'the proper role of the laity':

We feel it our duty in conscience to express ... our grave anxiety ... It seems to us of the first importance that the answer should be adequately developed and given in conditions that would facilitate confident reception by the faithful and respectful understanding from a watchful world. Such a reception would be gravely compromised by a partial and unexpected response in the form of last-minute modifications of a text which, in general terms, is already known to the public (Goldie, 1998, 75f.).

Goldie (1998, 114ff.) devotes a short chapter to 'why speak about "laity"?' and explores a definition and theology of laity. She cites Yves Congar: 'there can be only one sound and sufficient theology of laity and that is "total ecclesiology"' (Goldie, 1998, 114).¹⁸ She links Congar's post-Conciliar approach to an

¹⁷ Permanent Committee for International Congresses of the Lay Apostolate.

¹⁸ Congar, Y. *Lay People in the Church*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985, xvi.

‘ecclesiology of communion’ and ‘a community based on ministries and charisms’ (Goldie, 1998, 118)¹⁹ with his pre-Conciliar insights on lay secularity:

Over and above the exclusively negative canonical definition of the lay person as one who is not a cleric and has no power of order or jurisdiction, there is practical agreement on a positive definition: the layman (or woman) is the Christian who contributes to the work of salvation and the advance of God’s Kingdom – to the twofold task of the church – in and through commitment in the structures of the world and temporal activity (Goldie, 1998, 53).²⁰

Other approaches to understanding ‘laity’ are cited:

Too much attention has been focused on the role of the layman [sic] in the Church and not enough on the role of the Christian in the world (Goldie, 1998, 60).²¹

Layman [sic] is a ‘pastoral concept’, not a theological category. ‘There are as many lay vocations as there are lay people’ (Goldie, 1998, 117).²²

Unfortunate though the name laity may be, we nevertheless need a term to designate Christians who are not members of the clergy or religious institutes, and no other term seems to be available (Goldie, 1998, 117).²³

[There is] the distinction between decision making and decision taking. Even when decisions to be taken are of the competence of pastors, lay Christians can, and should as a general rule, be involved in their making (Goldie, 1998, 108).²⁴

Although theological debate about ‘laity’ disappeared in the light of the concerns and urgencies of the 1970s (Goldie, 1998, 115), it has re-surfaced today because of

¹⁹ Congar, Y. ‘Itinerary in the Theology of the Laity and of Ministries’ in Ministeres et Communion Ecclesiale. Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1971.

²⁰ Congar, Y. Esquisse d’une theologie de l’action Catholique, August-September 1958.

²¹ Cogley, John in Michael Greene ed. The Layman (sic) and the Council. Illinois: Templegate, 1964.

²² Citrini, Tullio in Presenza Pastorale. Rome, March-April 1978.

²³ Dulles, Avery. ‘Can the Word Laity be Defined?’ in Origins 18.29, Washington DC, 29/12/1988, p. 71.

²⁴ Veronese, Vittorino. Indirect citation.

growing awareness of language as symbol that constructs reality, and because of renewed interest in the ecclesiology of Vatican II. The Second Vatican Council stopped short of 'positive definition' of 'laity' and simply completed the negative definition (Goldie, 1998, 114), retaining the dualism of spiritual and material, of clergy and lay: '[The lay Christian] is called to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to the plan of God' (*LG* 31).

THEORY OF CULTURE, CHAOS AND CHANGE

Vatican II promoted a spirit of dialogue and collegiality within and beyond the Church. Paul VI, who presided over the second, third and fourth sessions of the Second Vatican Council, and who invited symbolically the women auditors, endeavoured to translate this spirit into structural reform. He was hindered by the opposition of conservative forces, especially within the Curia, and the twenty year papacy of John Paul II has reversed the spirit of reform and change (Zizola, 1998a).

According to a model from social anthropology used by Arbuckle (1993, 4):

Efforts to take the Church back to a pre-Vatican II period is one of the culturally predictable, but theologically unacceptable options in reaction to the chaos precipitated to a considerable extent by the theological/cultural revolution of Vatican II.

Arbuckle's model is based on the premise that chaos results from culture reversal, and gives rise to tension and alienation as conflicting forces struggle for ascendancy. He applies his model to the Catholic Church, and demonstrates that Vatican Council II reversed the church's self-definition / creation mythology / culture. This led to present restorationist forces in the Church, especially evident at hierarchical level, that seek to return to pre-Vatican II certainty and control. Arbuckle defines restorationism as an ill-defined but powerful movement within the Catholic Church towards uncritical reaffirmation of pre-Vatican II structures and attitudes, in reaction to the stress resulting from the theological and cultural changes of the Council and the modern world at large. Forces for change or conversionist forces are more evident at grass-roots level, where frustration and alienation are engendered by attempts to return to the pre-Vatican II model. In this climate there is need for

dissent - a willingness to question the status quo and to propose alternatives (Arbuckle, 1993; O'Sullivan, 1997).

Arbuckle uses the term 'chaos' to denote the sudden cultural breakdown in which the network of meaning systems disintegrates. He explains (1993, 37, 50, 62):

The Council's values helped to undermine the creation mythology of a vigorously strong church culture, and chaos was a logical consequence. In the light of this analysis it will be seen that the contemporary restorationist emphasis in Rome is understandable, even predictable, but sadly unfortunate.

Interfere with a culture's creation mythology - even for the noblest of reasons - and chaos results. Rapid culture change is not an abstract concept, but a high order of human drama in which most people feel uprooted, lost, disillusioned, angry. Vatican II had to be. The tragedy is that it was too long delayed, thus allowing the Catholic culture to become increasingly rigid and removed from reality. When change became possible through the Council, the explosion of expectations and anxiety-created counter-reactions startled all with its intensity and ferocity.

Many forces helped cause disintegration of traditional Catholic culture, but Vatican II was undoubtedly the most significant long-term factor.

Arbuckle (1993, 47) cites Alexis de Tocqueville, 1805-1859, whose writings on democracy, revolution and society span the fields of history, political science and sociology as these are currently defined.²⁵

Dissatisfaction becomes increasingly evident whenever the conditions that give rise to it cease to be seen as inevitable and the possibility for correcting them arises. In these circumstances the momentum for changing them cannot be slowed down.

Although it is more than thirty years since Vatican II, Arbuckle's model demonstrates that present tensions and alienation within the Church belong to a

²⁵ See: Stone, John & Mennell, Stephen, eds. Alexis de Tocqueville On Democracy, Revolution, and Society. Selected Writings. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. 'The Ancien Regime and the Origins of the French Revolution' (163-214); 'The Dynamics of Revolution' (215-249); 'The Revolution of 1948 and Its aftermath' (250-279).

process of change initiated at Vatican II and still in process. Of his six-stage model, Stages 1 and 2 are in the past - cultural consensus, and initial experimentation; Stages 3, 4 and 5 overlap in the present - political reversals, chaos, and self-help restorationist and conversionist movements; Stage 6 remains in the future - new cultural consensus.

The premises on which Arbuckle's model was derived and applied to the Catholic Church are substantiated in the literature. Owen O'Sullivan (1997) describes the scale of division within the Church as 'schism'. His argumentation for change corroborates Arbuckle's analysis of pre-Vatican II consensus, of Vatican II as catalyst for chaos and change, and of present restorationism. Other writers also confirm facets of the model.

Conditions for change include significant disruption in previous patterns. Because change intrudes upon deeply rooted symbols and rituals, collective reactions to change are confusion, conflict and loss (Bolman & Deal, 1986, 1991). These emotional responses belong to the initial stages of the grieving cycle - denial, anger and resistance, depression and inactivity (Clements, 1995). Anxiety and polarisation belong to the transition between letting go and beginning, without which 'change changes nothing' (Bridges, 1995, 29). Another condition for change is a period of rising expectations followed by disappointment of those expectations. This has a positive aspect according to Tribe and Beyer (1993, 251):

As people become more equal, they find the remaining inequalities harder and harder to tolerate ... Individuals tend to grow more discontented with their social system as it offers them, on the average, better opportunities for success and promotion than they have enjoyed in the past. In particular, women and minority group members seem ripe for this type of discontent.

A different model is offered by Sungaila (1990) who, in her study of educational leadership, applies the scientific theory of chaos to social systems. Most systems are dissipative structures exhibiting the dynamics of self-renewal and self-organisation, establishing order through fluctuation. When fluctuations cannot be absorbed or dampened by the self-renewing dynamic, they push the system over the threshold into a qualitatively new existence, and self-organisation prevails. This second-order change can only be achieved through the self-reinforcement of fluctuations within the system to the point where they cannot be contained. Because of the 'butterfly

effect' (tiny fluctuation can produce massive change) second-order change can be brought about by an individual or an event, and by 'small start' action that reinforces fluctuations from within.

Sungaila's self-renewing and self-organising dynamic, and Arbuckle's restorationist and conversionist forces, explain that tension and polarisation within the Catholic Church are a natural part of change process, and a reaction to change already occurring. Sungaila's self-reinforcement of fluctuations and Arbuckle's Self-Help demonstrate the potential of grass-roots change. Women should have confidence in their insights and in the effectiveness of partial action (Welch, 1990; Sungaila, 1990; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Women are correct, as their experience shows them, to cultivate inner growth (Greenleaf, 1977; Welch, 1990; Bridges, 1995; Chaleff, 1995) and to develop supportive networks (Sungaila, 1990; Welch, 1990; O'Sullivan, 1997).

Grid-group theory offers a different understanding of the present polarisation within the Catholic Church, although Douglas (1982, 201) explicitly excludes the church as 'group' within her definition. A church of moral authority, such as Arbuckle's (1993) restorationist church, equates with Douglas's category 'C', strong grid and strong group, with separate grades and inequalities and boundaries against outsiders. Strong grid insulates the individual against others. Strong group subjects the individual to society. Disloyalty is unforgivable, and punishment is severe. In contrast, 'A' is diagonally opposite to 'C' and equates with modernity in the church and in society. It is loose grid and loose group, tolerant but competitive (Douglas, 1982, 210ff.).

Grid-group tension is evidenced in a section of the Statement of Resolutions that emanated from a four day meeting in Rome in November 1998 of officials of six Vatican Congregations, Australian archbishops, and five bishops who chair committees of the ACBC.

The tolerance characteristic of Australian society naturally affects the church also. While it has many positive elements, tolerance of and openness to all opinions and perspectives on the truth can lead to indifference, to the acceptance of any opinion or activity as long as it does not impact adversely on other people (The Courier Mail, 19/12/98).

RE-WRITING HER-STORY

Women experience alienation when they are written out of church structures. As Winter, Lummis & Stokes (1995) demonstrate above, many women seek support in feminist spirituality groups, and engage with the social issues that they perceive are neglected by church hierarchy. They remain members of the church, impelled by its traditions and fellowship. Because of feminist theological scholarship, women are increasingly aware of the extent to which they have been written out of church traditions, and that their exclusion from Scriptures renders them insignificant in salvation history. They do not exist or are subordinate and inferior (Field, 1992; Uhr, 1992; Fox, 1994).

The scholar who contributed most to re-writing women into Scriptures and the early church is Fiorenza (1983) whose feminist model of historical reconstruction uses feminist critical hermeneutics and feminist critical method.

In Fiorenza's argument, biblical textual sources are biased in their selection and canonisation and that they render women invisible. They leave to women only the limited resource of imaginative and credible reconstruction. She argues from historical-criticism that the life-setting of the text is basic to the reconstruction of early Christian history. Tensions exist between theological and historical claims of the Bible. Historically, divine revelation is expressed in human language that is limited and culturally conditioned. Theologically, the texts of the Bible are faith responses to concrete historical situations. They do not tell us historically how it was but theologically how its religious significance was understood. Reconstruction requires both theological and critical analysis.

According to Fiorenza, interpretive analysis is in the present. It derives from the interpretive stance of the past that was and is androcentric. Patriarchal culture has erased women from its consciousness and language, and hence from its construct of reality. Fiorenza argues that androcentric language functioned as inclusive language in patriarchal culture, and therefore that the text assumes that both women and men are intended unless a particular reading necessitates specific mention of women. She reads the polemic of the second and third centuries of the church as indicative that women held ecclesial office.

The criticism that feminist analysis is 'engaged' and the implied corollary that androcentric analysis is 'neutral', are challenged by Fiorenza. She argues that all interpretation is an interaction between the text and the interpreter and that it is impossible to be detached from pre-understanding. Distinguishing between social order and data (social), and explanatory theory and hypothesis (sociological), Fiorenza demonstrates how the social and political factors in patriarchalisation developed into sociological justification that does not prove historical necessity or theological rightness.

Fiorenza postulates that the Christian Scriptures are prototype and not archetype. She argues that biblical revelation is not in the androcentric text but in the life and ministry of Jesus and in the 'discipleship community of equals' that he called forth, and that patriarchalisation is not inherent in the Christian experience and community. She uses historical criticism to show the circumstances in which texts came into being. Her insights are out of the 'hermeneutic of suspicion' that the experience of women was not reflected or recorded, the 'hermeneutic of remembrance' of historical reconstruction, and the 'hermeneutic of proclamation' that is the engagement of the Christian reader.

Applying her feminist model of historical reconstruction, Fiorenza argues that the Jesus movement in Palestine was a prophetic renewal movement within Israel; that the Christian movement was a missionary movement within the Greco-Roman world that preached an alternative religious vision and practised a countercultural lifestyle; that the emergence of the patriarchal order of the Household of God restricted and subordinated women to the public interests of the Christian mission, whereas previously they were affirmed as equal and their charismatic gifts were recognised in leadership. The central perspective and vision of Jesus was two-fold: liberation from patriarchal structures and relationships, and the praxis of inclusive wholeness and equal discipleship.

The social world and vision of the Jesus movement are reflected in the gospel accounts that tell us as much about the community to whom the stories were transmitted as about the historical Jesus (Fiorenza, 1983). Women in the Markan community were regarded as exemplary disciples and occupied leading positions (Moltman-Wendel, 1982; Munro, 1982). Matthew's Gospel depicts women as having an active role in community and liturgy (Fiorenza, 1983; Wainwright, 1994). Luke's Gospel increases the number of stories about women, but women's roles in

community are restricted for edification in the convention of the imperial world (D'Angelo, 1990). Lukan exemplars are well-off women who provide for the twelve out of their resources (Seim, 1994). The Johannine community was the most inclusive and empowering of women, who are depicted as ideal disciples and models of Christian ministry (Lee, 1993).

Women in the Christian movement, from the evidence of Acts and the letters of Paul, were engaged in missionary and church leadership. The key self-understanding of the Christian missionary movement, pre-dating Paul, was the baptismal formula of Galatians 3:28: 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' The baptismal formula gave to the early Christian community its self-definition of ecclesiological oneness with no structures of dominance. However, the expectations of slaves and of women placed the Christian missionary movement in tension with the institutions of slavery and of the patriarchal family. Christians were suspected of political subversion by threatening social order and the patriarchal house, and by denying legal-societal and cultural-religious male privileges. Thus the socio-political implications of the 'new creation' of Gal.3:28 were 'tamed' into moral and ecclesial behaviour (Fiorenza, 1983, p.216ff.).

As communities developed, there was lessening in the equal esteem for women associated with the radical ethos and subversive attitude of the Jesus movement. Exclusion, subordination and inferiority returned in the community phase with family and social norms for Christian wives and mothers (Heine, 1987). The post-Pauline and pseudo-Pauline tradition changed equality in Christ into subordination in the household, eliminated women from leadership of worship and the community, and applied the pattern of patriarchal submission to communal self-understanding as the Household of God. Political-social equality of the 'new creation' was subverted into eschatological reward and punishment to lessen tension between the Christian community and the pagan patriarchal household (Fiorenza, 1983). By the end of the first century the alternative community had given way to the social structure of the patriarchal family (Ruether, 1990). Emphasis was on fixed order, sound doctrine, and assured ethic for everyday use (Heine, 1987). The Pastoral Letters reinforced traditional household ideals (Seim, 1994), and women's authority over men became a crucial issue (Kraemer, 1992).

The limitation of women's roles was part of the church's response to the Gnostics who allowed women as religious leaders (Clark, 1982, 1990). The religious leadership of women was an issue for 'orthodox' Christianity, and it seems that movements were labelled heresy primarily and precisely because they allowed to women a leadership role. Not all heresies accorded women authority over men, but churches that did so were ultimately labelled heretical even if there was nothing else offensive about them (Kraemer, 1992).

Related theory is that of social construction. Morgan (1997, 273ff.) explains:

Power relations [are] embedded in the language, routines and discourses that shape everyday life. People's views of reality are influenced by conscious and unconscious social constructions associated with language, history, class, culture and gender experience ... People often get trapped by the cultural beliefs and social practices through which they make their reality 'real'. They frequently lose sight of the ideas, attitudes, assumptions, and other social constructions that are ultimately shaping the structure and experience of their daily realities.

Humans have the potential to make and transform themselves ... [Words, images and ideas] are the means through which we make our reality ... [People] always have the potential to break into new modes of consciousness and understanding ... It is possible to increase individual and collective consciousness of how our realities are constructed and how we can tap our individual and collective imagination as a source of change ... The key role played by metaphor in helping us to understand our world has become obscured ... People have come to believe that they are living in a domain of meaning that seems much more real and concrete than it actually is.

Gilligan (1982, 19ff.) demonstrates that women were written out of moral development theory because they speak 'in a different voice'. She describes moral development for women, in contrast to Kohlberg's (1958) theory of moral development that was derived from male subjects only:

The moral problem arises out from conflicting responsibilities rather than from competing rights and requires for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and narrative rather than formal and abstract. This conception

of morality as concerned with the activity of care centres moral development around the understanding of responsibility and relationships, just as the conception of morality as fairness ties moral development to the understanding of rights and rules ... the morality of rights differs from the morality of responsibility in its emphasis on separation rather than connection, in its consideration of the individual rather than relationship as primary ...

Whereas the rights conception of morality that informs Kohlberg's principled level (stages 5 & 6) is geared to arriving at an objectively fair or just resolution to moral dilemmas upon which all rational persons could agree, the responsibility conception focuses instead on the limitations of any particular resolution and describes the conflicts that remain.

Thus it becomes clear why a morality of rights and noninterference may appear frightening to women in its potential justification of indifference and unconcern. At the same time, it becomes clear why, from a male perspective, a morality of responsibility appears inconclusive and diffuse, given its inconsistent, contextual relativism.

SUMMARY

The major themes of this chapter are alienation (Winter, Lummis & Stokes, 1995), loyalty and voice (Hirschman, 1970), change (Arbuckle, 1993; Sungaila, 1990) and her-story in Vatican II and laity (McEnroy, 1995; Goldie, 1998) and in Scripture and the early church (Fiorenza, 1983). Related minor themes are oppression (Friere, 1974) and victim (Hoff, 1990), social construction (Morgan, 1997) and moral perspective (Gilligan, 1982).

The application of Fiorenza's (1983) model of feminist historical reconstruction aims to empower women through retrieval and proclamation. This means of empowerment is premised by Sungaila (1978) who approaches history as a means to deconstruct the present, rather than to reconstruct the past. Sungaila argues that knowledge of the past, of origin and evolution, is a means by which society can understand itself and its present situation. It is emancipative, helping to make present reality transparent so that it can be surmounted. If what is 'man'-made can be remade, then we are capable of constructing and reconstructing our social world,

of making history, of changing ourselves. However, in Fiorenza's regard, the Pontifical Biblical Commission has criticised those who seek to reclaim the lost history of women and the discipleship of equals, and Ratzinger, Prefect of the CDF, has criticised those who seek to reconstruct the text based on suspicion rather than what is actually in the text (Leonard, 1995).

McEnroy (1995) uncovers her-story of Vatican II. Fiorenza (1983) uncovers her-story of the Scriptures and the early church. Sungaila's (1978) emancipative paradigm can be applied to church practices that alienate women, such as exclusion from ordained ministry, to demonstrate that the Catholic Church has changed and can change again.

Hirschman's (1970) theory of exit, voice and loyalty suggests that those who feel alienated bear the pain of caring and of loyalty because without these exit would not cost. Conversely, a person who is loyal and who leaves an institution as intrinsically part of one's values, culture and beliefs as church, carries the internalised penalty of disloyalty and partial loss of identity. Because feelings of loyalty/disloyalty can inhibit legitimate criticism, it is important to acknowledge that voice and dissent can be expressions of loyalty. This follows Hirschman (1970) who posits that the likelihood of voice increases with degree of loyalty, and Arbuckle (1993) who posits need for willingness to question the status quo and to propose alternatives. Vatican II teaching is relevant: 'An individual ... is permitted and sometimes even obliged to express his [sic] opinion on things which concern the good of the whole Church' (LG 37).

The her-story of Vatican II exemplifies how women are voiceless and deserve to be heard. It illustrates in microcosm patriarchal and clerical dimensions of the Catholic Church that alienate. It demonstrates, again in microcosm, how Vatican II raised expectations and how these were disappointed. Vatican II gave rise to dissatisfaction and alienation in the present, because the possibility of the alternative is known - the Church as People of God, exercising the priesthood of the baptised, collegial and open to the world, in which there is no discrimination. As was cited above, women today are saying: 'Please continue the *aggiornamento* of Vatican II by *implementing your own teaching in our regard*' (McEnroy, 1995, 272).

Reversals that have occurred in the Catholic Church since Vatican II are a natural and inevitable part of the process of change according to the models of Arbuckle

(1993) and Sungaila (1990). Revisionist forces and the self-renewing dynamic are not only part of change but, because they are reactionary phases, they give evidence that change has occurred. Although it is thirty years since Vatican II, we are within the change process of culture reversal and paradigm shift that the council initiated. Weaver (1985), in her analysis of the conjunction of Vatican II and radical feminism, comments that when John Paul II recalls the strengths of the pre-Vatican II church, this counter-balance of traditions to new questions should contribute to furthering the argument.

Through the scholarship of Fiorenza (1983), women are re-claiming her-story in the Gospels and the early church. They seek emancipation through the transparency that comes with knowledge of history. They bring the hermeneutic of suspicion of the overlay of patriarchy in the origins and evolution of church practices. They bring the hermeneutic of remembrance of women's role and contribution. They bring the hermeneutic of proclamation of the 'good news': 'There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Gal.3:28).

'There is no longer male and female'. McEnroy (1995) and Goldie (1998) show that the conciliar women worked to achieve an inclusive approach to the role of laity in the Catholic Church, to avoid the isolation of women as a problem apart, to circumvent the tendency to define woman in poetic ways that detached her from life. The women of the American study (Winter, Lummis & Stokes, 1995) considered that clericalism was central to the problem of a patriarchal, hierarchical church. The women of this study, as will be seen in chapters that follow, want a church in which female and male, ordained and lay, participate and minister and make decisions equally and collegially so that reality reflects conviction that 'we are church'.

The theories that have most informed this study are loyalty (Hirschman, 1970), change (Arbuckle, 1993; Sungaila, 1990) and the hermeneutic of suspicion (Fiorenza, 1983). Loyalty to an organisation postpones exit and gives rise to voice. Change gives rise to polarisation and restorationism. These reactions to change are an inevitable part of the process of continuing change. Similarly, fluctuations that cannot be contained will lead to large scale or second-order change. The hermeneutic of suspicion is a lens through which to review exclusionary writings and structures and practices. Its application allows identification of actual inclusion and reversal of prior assumptions.

The chapter that follows details the nature of the methods chosen for data collection and analysis for this study, and implications of this choice.