

The Implications of a Christian Feminist View of Human Nature:
A Core Definitional Approach

By

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THESIS ABSTRACT

The ancient Davidic anthropological question of "What is man that you are mindful of him?" is central to this thesis. An apologetic methodology that utilizes a synthesized core definition is introduced to establish common ground between Christian feminist and conservatives. From this common ground arises the avenues of legitimate comparison and critique.

Chapter I introduces the importance of human nature, clarifies a distinction between "prescriptive" and "descriptive" frameworks of human nature, and narrows the scope of the discussion. Chapter II establishes a justification for using a core definitional approach and surveys selected theologians/philosophers to develop a core definition. The core definition is non-contradictory, relevant to personal experience, and is systematically consistent. Chapter III provides analysis of the core definition: the definition is descriptive and prescriptive; the unity of mankind was destroyed; Christ is central in solving humanity's problem; males and females share the same nature/essence and are created equally in the imago dei; and the influence of matter/spirit dualisms. Chapter IV critiques the feminist hermeneutic as relativistic, acknowledges male prejudice in traditional, historical analyses, and summarizes the benefits of a core definitional approach.

Christian feminism initiates a more unified view of humanity. A proper understanding of the nature/function dispute is provided through Schaeffer's "order/chaos" argument. Future research is needed to more thoroughly answer the question of what Christ restores in light of male-female relationships.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF A CHRISTIAN FEMINIST VIEW OF HUMAN NATURE

A. Statement of the Problem

1. Importance of the Problem

It may be well to acknowledge the unusual nature of the subject "A Christian Feminist's View of Human Nature". In 1962, it was G. C. Berkouwer who said, "Today, more than at any time, the question 'What is man?' is at the center of theological and philosophical concern."¹ Why is such a topic even relevant to Apologetics or Christian Thought? Primarily because a view of human nature affects not only philosophical musings about people, but about what they used to be, are, or should become. Leslie Stevenson, in his book Seven Theories of Human Nature states, "The meaning and purpose of human life, what we ought to do and what we can hope to achieve - all these are fundamentally affected by whatever we think is the 'real' or true nature of man."² The word *Man*, understood in the traditional generic sense of the word, is used for both male and female.

This discussion, regarding the nature of *man* (human beings), has been an issue over the centuries. For example, Plato held to a dualistic view of human nature. The soul or mind which is non-material, is eternal, existing apart from the material body, which is limited and finite.³ More recently, Reinhold Niebuhr, reflecting upon a Christian view says, "Man is, according to the biblical view, a created and finite existence in both body and spirit. . . . He is made in the 'image of God'."⁴ The Christian view is based upon the presuppositions of the Christian faith.

Most who write about the subject of human nature usually refer to human nature in one of three ways. First, it may be viewed descriptively, denoting what people are; that is to say, denoting their condition or state of being as Plato's position just illustrated. Second, it may be viewed prescriptively, indicating what people should be because of their bent, or their natural inclinations. For example, G. C. Berkouwer commenting on Kant's view of evil in man and its impact on his nature says,

Kant's view on the radical nature of evil in man plays an important role in his philosophy. He held that man was evil by nature and a corrupt 'inclination' towards evil. Kant did not agree with 'various philosophers' who held to the essential goodness of human nature. Evil in man is radical, so much so that it cannot be overcome by human power. It is a 'perversion of the heart', a 'congenital guilt.'⁵

Third, it may be viewed both prescriptively and descriptively, denoting not only what people "are" but what they ought to be because of who they are. Rita Gross in her book Beyond Androcentrism: New Essays on Women and Religion, challenges

unconscious presuppositions that have been traditionally brought into the analysis of human nature and the manner in which they affect the viewpoint regarding who people are and what they can become at the level of model-building and theorizing.

The unconscious androcentric presuppositions undergirding almost all work done to date in the history of religions cause serious deficiencies, especially at the primary level of data-perception and gathering, and this deficiency in turn generates serious deficiencies at the level of model-building and theorizing whenever any hint of sexual imagery is present in the data analyzed.⁶

Recently George F. Will in his editorial for the June 17, 1991 issue of Newsweek magazine stated, "Stress Nature, its importance - and its incompetence. Nature blundered badly in designing males."⁷ In this example, the nature of males is seen as something, (descriptive) and that something needs correction, (prescriptive).

Christians and secularists, philosophers and theologians have all entered the debate. In contrast to those who hold the view that man has a nature, are those who maintain that man either has no nature or if he does, a nature that has consequence for his actions or life. It was Karl Marx who said, "the real nature of man is the totality of social relations."⁸ Marx would tend to say that there was no such thing as an individual human nature. "What men are coincides with what they produce and with how they produce."⁹ People are only what they make of themselves through production that contributes to society. They are simply a part of a social relationship designed for the good of the whole.

Taking another perspective, David Hume rejected the possibility of knowing man in man's original nature. It was Hume who postulated and denied the necessary connection between alleged causes and effects. Whatever people are in their nature and any knowledge of that nature is due to observation and experience, not because we have some insight into what people 'really are' in some original state. ". . . [T]he science of man . . . the only foundation we can give to this science itself must be laid on experience and observation."¹⁰ Hume would reject the idea that we can know the "original qualities of human nature."

And though we must endeavor to render all our principles as universal as possible, by tracing up our experiments to the utmost and explaining all effects from the simplest and fewest causes, 'tis still certain we cannot go beyond experience; and any hypothesis that pretends to discover the ultimate original qualities of human nature ought at first to be rejected as presumptuous and chimerical.¹¹

2. The Assumption of Human Nature

For the sake of this thesis, I shall set aside the arguments of Hume, Marx and others with similar positions temporarily. I will make no attempt to convince those who do not believe that human beings have a nature or a nature that affects human life. Yet, I may refer to such positions from time to time to establish a fuller understanding of various positions concerning human nature aligned within the feminist movement. Those references are necessary because there is

often extensive reliance upon Marx and other Marxists by many feminists in establishing views on human nature.

B. Occasion of the Problem

It is my goal to demonstrate one of the foundational tenets of the contemporary issue of Christian feminism, and explain how it affects the Church and society today. One key aspect of this foundation is the view of human nature and how feminists and Christian feminists, in particular, interpret and define this pivotal subject.

For example, there is perhaps no topic that draws more interest or fire than the role of women in the Church today. In the book Woman Be Free, Patricia Gundry discusses many rules and regulations in some churches today that cause so much conflict.

- A woman may not -
 - pastor a church;
 - speak in the morning service (although she may speak on Wednesday evening, or sing or present special music at any service, including the Sunday morning worship service);
 - serve on any governing board in the church;
 - serve in any capacity of authority in the church that involves a woman directing men;
 - teach a class composed of both men and women, unless her husband is also present;
 - teach a class with any men in it;
 - speak at all in church;
 - lead the congregation in singing unless it contains only females or children;
 - direct a choir;
 - wear cosmetics, short hair, short dresses, or pants.
- A woman must -
 - wear a hat in church;
 - obey her husband or father unless his commands are unbiblical or immoral;
 - obey her husband regardless of the command;

--believe that God directs her through her husband,
 making it unnecessary for God to deal with her directly;
 --consider her husband's will for her life to be God's
 will for her life;
 --not leave her husband regardless of the treatment. . . .
 Women know that not all these practices can be right.
 They are asking for the opportunity to examine for
 themselves which rules are biblical.¹²

In talking to lay people, theologians or biblical scholars, many would have different opinions on items in the list above. How are women's roles defined? Where did these roles originate? These and other questions lead to much of the controversy encompassing the issue of human nature. Add to this complexity the highly charged dynamic of the women's movement and it is obvious that the Church has a monumental task ahead of it in reaching a consensus for carrying out any commission of our Lord.

Carol McMillan in Women, Reason and Nature, states, "Feminists have been unanimous in their view that differentiation between men and women can be justified only if a male nature and a female nature can be separately identified."¹³ This factor of nature or natures, then, becomes central to this thesis. Only to the degree that we understand the Christian feminist position regarding human nature can we correctly enter into common ground debate with feminists on any issue about men, women, roles in the church, or society. The Church's conservatives, fundamentalists and evangelicals have levied large scale criticism and charges against the feminist movement in general. I am suggesting that it is paramount that we understand this fundamental building block of the feminist movement, their position on

human nature, before we can fairly or adequately critique feminism, defend conservative orthodoxy or biblical truth. The Christian feminist view of human nature then becomes a vital foundational piece of information necessary for feminists and non-feminists alike. Many arguments against feminism or feminists are moot to feminists, unless critics of feminism are willing to answer feminists' contentions about human nature. This argument is essentially, that there is no difference in human nature for males or females and therefore, all other differences are subjective, relative or the result of cultural bias.

C. Parameters of the Thesis

1. A Working Definition

a. A Survey of Feminist and Conservative Positions

The first task of this thesis will be to establish a working definition of human nature. I will survey some of the classic historical positions and contemporary feminist positions regarding human nature and attempt to synthesize a definition in order to compare and contrast feminist views with my working definition. Essentially I will use a "core facts" approach in establishing this working definition. What aspects, criteria or elements used by those who believe people have a human nature, are common in their definition or

description of human nature? This will be one of the more challenging aspects addressed in this paper. I would ask readers to keep in mind that it is not my purpose to create a universally accepted definition of human nature, but rather to postulate two basic premises. One, as has already been stated, human beings do have a nature, and two, humanity's nature affects what we are, do, or should become. It is a nature of consequence.

b. A Core Facts Approach

In addition, by utilizing a "core definition" approach for this discussion on human nature, I am attempting to incorporate a basic agreement of definition from Christian feminists and conservative scholars alike on the subject of what is human nature. A basic problem with the controversies and arguments surrounding the issue of feminism in the church today originates with the foundational question of human nature. Since a primary argument of feminists is that a basic misunderstanding of human nature has occurred since the church fathers and before, many challenges by biblical apologists have fallen on "deaf ears" in feminist camps. This is because fundamentalists, conservative evangelicals, orthodox and even neo-orthodox and liberal theologians/philosophers, have supposedly misdiagnosed the problem according to feminists. Male theologians and philosophers have analyzed mankind, its ills and cures, supposedly from a purely male perspective. As

a result of this analysis, all kinds of difficulty and error have been produced in the development of theology, sociology, psychology and anthropology. Therefore, I believe it necessary and prudent to start at this basic building block of theology, anthropology and philosophy, (what human nature is), and attempt to establish common ground for discussion and analysis about human nature.

c. Defining the term "Christian" for this Thesis

It also necessary to clarify my use of the term "Christian", in the title as well as in the general scope of this paper. The term is used broadly and generally.

"'Christian' *adj*'- 1. Professing belief in Jesus as Christ or following the religion based on his teachings. --*n.* 1. One who professes belief in Jesus as Christ or follows the religion based on his teachings."¹⁴ Many feminist writers would place themselves in the group of those professing to believe or to have a belief in Jesus Christ. Beyond this point there would be little similarity between a Christian feminist's position and an evangelical's definition of what it means to be a Christian and the general definition I am employing here.

2. A Nature of Consequence

Because there are so many different views about human nature there are naturally just as many views about what

people should or should not do. Again, Stevenson helps by focusing the discussion.

If God made us, then it is His purpose that defines what we ought to be, and we must look to Him for help. If we are made by our society, and if we find that our life is somehow unsatisfactory, then there can be no real cure until society is transformed. If we are fundamentally free and can never escape the necessity for individual choice, then the only realistic attitude is to accept our situation and make our choices with full awareness of what we are doing.¹⁵

This vital debate about human nature, its descriptive and prescriptive elements, has and should command the attention of any within the Christian community, but especially apologists. It is a commonly held belief that the solution for a problem depends largely on the diagnosis of its cause. So it is with Christianity, Marxism or Feminism, each proposes a different cure for society's ills. They not only have different cures but different diagnoses of the problems.

D. Stevenson's Challenge

Leslie Stevenson, in his book Seven Theories of Human Nature, suggests the main elements of common structure that offer hope to the problems that confront the human race.

[1] a background theory of the nature of the universe;
[2] a basic theory of the nature of man; [3] a diagnosis of what is wrong with man; and [4] a prescription for putting it right. Only theories that combine such constituents offer us hope of solutions to the problems of mankind.¹⁶

This paper assumes a theistic presupposition for the origin and development of the universe and utilizes authors that would concur with this position. No background theory of

the nature of the universe, its origins or ties to humanity will be presented here. To examine the parallels between a theistic view of the universe, a natural evolutionary view or multiple combinations and variants of either, is not the purpose of this thesis. This is not to suggest that there is not developmental linkage between the two positions of human nature and the theory one holds to the origin of the universe. But as Stevenson has said, that remains for others to take up. Instead, the issues raised in items 2-4 will be my focus.

In his revised 1987 edition Stevenson mentions what has become a primary reason for this paper. "This book does not attempt any systematic discussion of feminist issues: it presents some rival theories of general human nature. Some readers may wish to pursue the implications for gender differences...."¹⁷ I have accepted that suggestion for this paper and utilized a comparative format outlined by Stevenson. Until we are ready to acknowledge or rather listen to one-half of the Church or population, and explore, critique and analyze what these writers, theologians, and philosophers have to say, we will have a serious deficiency in our research and search for truth.

E. Thesis Expectations

I expect that we shall discover several key factors within this research. One, is the importance of knowing the Christian feminist view of human nature. Two, a synthetic

definitional approach in understanding and analyzing the Christian feminist view of human nature allows for a stronger critique and basis to evaluate the Christian feminist movement. Three, this methodology should provide for a clearer understanding of what the issues of contention are between Christian feminists and conservatives. Four, the Christian feminist movement may help the Church shed unnecessary restrictions on women that prevent the entire Church from experiencing the full gifts and talents that God gave the Church in order for us to serve and meet needs. "Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God," (1 Peter 4:10, Good News Bible).

CHAPTER II

A WORKING DEFINITION OF HUMAN NATURE

Who does not 'know' man, whom we daily encounter, and the man that we ourselves are? There can be only one answer to such questions; namely, that this almost irresistible problem appears to many a mind not to have found a clear and obviously irrefutable answer, and that this apparently general 'knowledge' of the nature of man is not so obvious after all.¹

As I mentioned in Chapter I and as G. C. Berkouwer states above, human nature and what it is, remains a subject of intrigue and controversy. My approach and method in this chapter is to draw from those who believe people have a nature of consequence and extrapolate like parameters or similar definitional framework in order to establish a working definition regarding what human nature is.

There are four parts to this chapter. Part one establishes a rationale for the methodology of utilizing a core definition approach. Part two surveys conservative, orthodox, and classical definitions and descriptions of human nature for both men and women. Part three will examine various Christian feminist definitions of human nature. Part three will be somewhat more detailed than part two since the Christian feminist position is not as well known as the conservative orthodox positions nor established either historically or traditionally, and it will not focus exclusively on definitions for human nature. Some material

will be dedicated to the method of establishing and formulating the feminist view of that nature. The fourth part attempts to identify common ground between conservative and feminist definitions, and to synthesize a working definition between the two. To do this, the question must be asked, what terms, phrases, aspects or denominators are common for both groups in defining human nature? These common factors become a *core definition* in establishing what human nature is. In so doing, differences will also become apparent and acknowledged.

A. Rationale for a Core Definition Methodology

The approach I am suggesting utilizes the establishment of a "*core facts*" type of foundation for a working definition of human nature. It should be remembered that my goal is not to create a universally correct definition of human nature, but simply a definition that would be acknowledged by Christian feminists and orthodox traditionalists alike, as being in part, essentially correct. The purpose is to establish a bridge of communication between Christian feminists and their more conservative brothers and sisters.

A brief explanation as to why I believe this method to be valid and important is in order. I would agree with Francis Schaeffer who said, "I do not believe there is any one apologetic which meets the needs of all people. . . . There is no set formula that meets everyone's need -- short of an act of God's mercy."² There are aspects of several apologetic

methodologies that can be valid and useful. Yet, there is no one method that I fully agree with or that has been presented as "the correct approach." Still, there is something to be gained from each of the methods studied. The method I am implementing, a core definitional approach, borrows from Edward J. Carnell's approach of verificationism. Gordon Lewis in his book Testing Christianity's Truth-Claims, says of Carnell's starting point for apologetics, "He begins conversations where people's interests happen to be. So Carnell's *temporal* starting point is a person's experiential conditioning."³ The key here is the "temporal starting point". Like Carnell suggests, I believe that if we start where many feminists are, regarding this issue of human nature, we can begin an effective dialogue rather than continuing to talk past one another. However, like Carnell, who continues eventually to a hypothesis about the triune God revealed in Scripture that is subject to testing by the law of non-contradiction and empirical experience, so too this core definitional approach will only be foundational in the whole discussion. I am suggesting that a core definition of human nature can be used as a "starting point" to test other hypotheses about human nature.

Now the whole purpose of apologetics, in my thinking, is not to argue someone into conversion or shame for having a belief system different from mine or even a different apologetic methodology, be they Christian or non-Christian, but to lovingly confront their thinking and rationale wherever they

may be. This is so the truthfulness of the Christian faith and Scripture may be presented and understood. As Schaeffer has said,

When we have the opportunity to talk to the non-Christian, what (if not the formula mentality) should be the dominant consideration? I think this should be love. I think these things turn on love and compassion to people not as objects to evangelize, but as people who deserve all the love and consideration we can give them, because they are our kind and made in the image of God. They are valuable, so we should meet them in love and compassion. Thus, we meet the person where he or she is.⁴

People are and should be the goal of our apologetic effort -- always! As Schaeffer has said above, it is "because they are our kind and made in the image of God" that people are our primary focus. And if we are to confront the non-christian in love, then should we not employ that same attitude toward the Christian? It is too easy to name call, label, and dismiss claims of those we disagree with as ignorant and unfounded, and not listen to what people are saying or struggling with. In fundamentalist circles this has been the problem far too often. Well, "our kind" includes women, even feminist women! "If we are to deal with people where they are . . . we have got to have enough genuine love for them and concern, as a human being, that we would take seriously what they are preoccupied with."⁵ Instead of the "pat" answers we need to come to where people are and "actually step into their world in order to talk in a meaningful way to them."⁶

Since a key element of disagreement and concern for Christian feminists and feminists in general is the subject of

human nature, what it is and how it is described, it is important to find common ground, to "step into their world" if you will, and dialogur lovingly with feminists. This is certainly not always easy to do, and at times can be very difficult. However, we are not to excuse ourselves from being unloving just because others may be hateful. A core definition approach provides a necessary bridge of communication with feminists.

Human nature is a key foundational issue in the feminist system. It is one of their "preoccupations". So many of the other issues, such as the role of women in church, hinge on this issue, that we must confront this subject at its point of divergence. Therefore, I believe it is valid and productive to analyze the agreements in the definitions of human nature, between feminist and conservative positions, and discuss the implications and proceed to the discrepancies and discuss those implications.

Gordon R. Lewis in Testing Christianity's Truth Claims, establishes Carnell's verificational approach for a test for truth by saying, "A true hypothesis must be non-contradictory and it must fit the facts of experience, both internal and external."⁷ In the application to this thesis, I have postulated a question that asks, is there a definition of human nature that can be constructed that will both cohere with the greatest number of variant definitions within feminist and orthodox positions concerning what human nature is and be noncontradictory? I believe this is possible and

necessary. To further illustrate, there are many competing claims, opinions, and definitions about human nature. Since many of these definitions and descriptions about human nature disagree or even contradict each other, they cannot all be true. A true hypothesis, or in this particular case a working definition of human nature, must then be noncontradictory. In agreement with E. J. Carnell, a contradiction is "our surest test for the absence of truth."⁸ A core facts definition accomplishes the avoidance of contradiction with the other definitions surveyed, and provides a kind of "systematic consistency" for the greatest number of variant opinions, descriptions and definitions about human nature. It also provides a relevance to personal experience. By not accepting in totality the "traditional views" of human nature, a core definition approach allows the consideration of personal experience from feminists as well as conservatives. Again Gordon Lewis says in referring to Carnell system,

A 'systematic' hypothesis fits all the relevant facts of experience. . . . Our experience brings to us certain givens. These data cannot be irrelevant to our formulation of truth about the world. An acceptable truth-claim fits the fact covered by it. All the facts are consistent with one another. . . . The 'world-viewish' hypothesis cohering with the greatest number of facts with the fewest difficulties is most systematically consistent.⁹

Therefore, a core definition approach is an attempt to meet people where they are, with what they are preoccupied with, in order to build a bridge for dialogue. This method also employs a similar approach to that of Carnell's verificationism. The core definition will be non-contradictory, have relevance to personal experience, and

utilize "systematic consistency" to account for the greatest amount of relevant data.

B. A SURVEY OF CONSERVATIVE/ORTHODOX POSITIONS

I have chosen five representative thinkers who are theologians, apologists and philosophers to formulate the orthodox position. Some may argue that a specific name or author missing from the list should be included. However, it is not my purpose to be comprehensive but merely to represent the conservative/ orthodox positions. Neither is it my intent to try and present a thorough outline of any one person's anthropology. A simplified synopsis of each author is presented in the following pages.

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274)

For both Catholic and Protestant theologians alike, Thomas Aquinas is acknowledged as one of the great theologian-philosophers of all times. Aquinas was influenced greatly by Aristotle and Augustine, with the latter having the single greatest influence on his life. However, Aquinas's philosophy is heavily influenced by Aristotle in the dichotomy of matter/form, potential/act approach and structure, in his concept of being/ontology, and his epistemology. For example, while God is actuality, man is potentiality. Man has the

potential to be rational, while an inanimate being like a rock does not.

Aquinas believed that man's rationality was the primary evidence of the imago dei. "We must say," said Aquinas, "that when man is said to be made in the image of God in virtue of his intellectual nature, he is chiefly in God's image according as his intellectual nature is most able to imitate God."¹⁰ Man has a rational ability to know and comprehend a loving God. It is man's rationality that is the image of God, for it is the nature of man's mind to understand and love God. Thus, the corruptible aspect of man was identified with man's material part, while rationality was assigned to the soul.

Aquinas's anthropology is that basically man is a body/soul, intellect and matter, creation of God. Man is an individual substance that has joined body and soul, matter and form.

For just as it belongs to the nature of this particular man to be composed of this soul, of this flesh, and of these bones; for whatever belongs in common to the substance of all the individuals contained under a given species must belong also to the substance of the species.¹¹

Mankind's knowledge therefore, comes through the body or matter. Whatever mankind knows he knows inferentially. Man's nature determines how he will know what he knows. In his original state man could know truth without the aid of additional light (supernaturally). However, after the fall, human nature was left in a weakened state unable to fulfill its natural potential.

Now, in the soul is located the mind or the intellect. The soul's function is separate from the body and as the body is corruptible, the soul incorruptible. "It must be said that the intellectual principle which we call the human soul is incorruptible."¹² While Aquinas adopted the Aristotelian emphasis of the soul energizing the body, and knowledge of the soul through the acts of the soma, Aquinas's point of reference was different from Aristotle's. Aquinas viewed man himself as the ultimate subject of operation, while Aristotle considered the soul as the ultimate principle of operation. Aquinas's view is more holistic in his approach to defining what man is than Aristotle's.

It is true that Aquinas, like Aristotle, maintained that man is a natural being who will have a natural end, however, Aquinas also believed that man was a child of God, and therefore had a higher end. This higher end is a knowledge of God. Aquinas in the Summa Contra Gentiles, says,

Now, seeing that all creatures, even those that are devoid of reason, are directed to God as their last end: and that all reach this end in so far as they have some share of a likeness to him: the intellectual creature attains to him in a special way, namely through its proper operation, by understanding him. Consequently this must be the end of the intelligent creature, namely to understand God. . . .¹³

The human being is a composite creature, spiritual and material, who is in the center of God's creative order. Angels, which are purely spiritual -- incorruptible, and plants and animals, which are purely material -- corruptible, represent the two ends of the creative order. Aquinas, being a hierarchicalist, placed mankind just after the angels in the

creative order, with woman slightly behind man. This order was chronological, functional, and substantive.

As Scripture says, it was necessary for woman to be made so that she could be a helpmate to man, not, as some say, to help him in his work, for man could be more suitably helped in his labours by another man rather than by a woman, but to help him in his work of procreation.¹⁴

Here Kari Borresen in quoting Aquinas finds convincing evidence that the woman's stature is not quite equivalent to man's. Her creation was good, but only in so far as it benefited mankind in his procreative need. This leads us to a key aspect within much conservative thinking. Because woman is slightly inferior to man, in position and nature, her subordination therefore, is not a result of the fall or sin. Hence her subservient role is what she was made for.

Adam and Eve then, are a prototype of all couples, which is willed by the Creator. It is therefore, accepted as the norm for theology and an expression of the order of Creation.

Concerning matter, Aquinas maintained that, like everything else belonging to the realm of created things, matter is good and created by God.¹⁵ Unlike the Manichaeans, who considered matter to be evil and assigned it a creative principle distinct from God, Etienne Gilson in his book The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, speaking of Aquinas's view of matter, says,

. . . not only is matter good in itself, but it is a good and a source of good for all the forms which can be united in it. It would be completely foreign to the Thomistic perspective to regard the material universe as the result of some calamity and the union of soul and body as the consequence of a fall.¹⁶

This issue is important because many feminists tend to lay exaggerated charges against Aquinas, and other orthodox theologians for their connections of body-with-female and soul-with-male analogies and therefore create great arguments against traditional theology and philosophy. Because, according to many feminists, matter/body is evil (like the Manichaeans) while soul/spirit is good, orthodox theology (which feminists say is based upon Aristotelian philosophy), must be cleansed of its biases and that which is not redemptive to female experience or praxis.

Finally for Aquinas, while image was rationality, *likeness*, in man's creation, was related to his holiness. This condition of holiness was lost as a result of the Fall. Only through man's redemption by Christ, can this condition of lost holiness be corrected. Aquinas believed that the loss of original righteousness was the formal element of original sin, which caused the corruption of human faculties manifested in the material elements of man.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

For John Calvin, human beings were created in the image of God. This image of God was evident in both the body and the soul, the immaterial and the material, though greater in the former than the latter. "For although God's glory shines forth in the outer man, yet there is no doubt that the proper seat of his image is in the soul".¹⁷ ". . . yet there

was no part of man, not even the body itself, in which some sparks did not glow".¹⁸ This view stressed a more holistic view of man in contrast to the image of God being understood as corporeal, as taught by Osiander, or just as spirit as suggested by Laird-Harris.¹⁹

In addition, evident from the above quotation, is that man is a duality consisting of both body and soul. "Furthermore, that man consists of a soul and a body ought to be beyond controversy. Now I understand by the term 'soul' an immortal yet created essence, . . .".²⁰

Man had a free moral will to obey or disobey God's commands. With that free will came responsibility to choose what was good.

Therefore God provided man's soul with a mind, by which to distinguish good from evil, right from wrong; and, with the light of reason as guide, to distinguish what should be followed from what should be avoided.²¹

In mankind's original state, there was unimpaired ability. There was no sin to cloud his judgment, reason, or any of his faculties. He enjoyed harmonious fellowship with the Creator and his fellow man - woman. This fellowship with God was established by God through a covenant relationship with man. God blessed human beings and in return, they were to acknowledge God's sovereignty and exercise dominion over the rest of God's creation. Most importantly, their will was free to choose the good.

However, because mankind chose to disobey God and assert their own autonomy, they fell under the judgment of God and consequently became totally corrupted in their nature.

Calvin said, " . . . we are so vitiated and perverted in every part of our nature that by this great corruption we stand justly condemned and convicted . . . " ²² For Calvin, our corrupted nature was not just an absence of good, but our nature became "fertile and fruitful of every evil." It is important to remember that sin is not man's nature but a derangement of that nature. This corruption of nature was also generational. Sin not only affected the man and woman, but their offspring as well.

This total corruption, according to Calvin, is checked somewhat by the common grace of God which allows people to do "good" deeds but not deeds meritorious of salvation. Salvation can only come about through the "effectual call" of God by His saving grace.

Francis Schaeffer - (1912-1984)

Mankind is searching for an answer to the question of, "Who am I?" The answer according to Francis Schaeffer is in the divine creation of man and woman. For Schaeffer, the creation of the man and woman was distinct from the rest of creation. Only mankind bears the image of God. "What differentiates Adam and Eve from the rest of creation is that they were created in the *image of God*," ²³ (*italics his*). This phrase is important for Schaeffer because of the inability of people today to know who they are before God or their fellow man.

Because of this created uniqueness, mankind's relationship to God is also unique. Human beings are different from the rest of the universe. "And that which differentiates man from the machine (*the universe*) is that this basic relationship is upward rather than downward or horizontal."²⁴

For Schaeffer the nature of man and woman were identical before the fall. There was a unity because of origin.

Certainly the fact of the woman's creation out of the man has a very definite philosophic importance, because it means that mankind is really a unit. . . . There was a real beginning, . . . a real unity in one man, one individual, differentiated from all that preceded him, and then differentiated in terms of male and female. It is this picture of man which gives strength to the Christian concept of the unity of mankind . . . the Christian . . . understands why mankind is really united. . . . Man, with a capital M, equals male and female. . . .²⁵

Mankind equals male and female. Due to the fact that they shared the same origin, their nature was necessarily the same.

Regarding their relationship, an unstructured democracy was possible due to the absence of sin. However, that unified equal relationship was adversely affected by the choice of both the male and the female. "By the action of one man in a historic space-time situation, sin entered into the world of men. It is that in reality . . . man was and is a sinner."²⁶ So too, Eve, by her choice affected the course of human events. "Eve was faced with a choice. She pondered the situation, and then she put her hand into the history of man and changed the course of human events."²⁷ Everything became abnormal because of sin. The result of all this was that

mankind was in rebellion against God from that moment on and under God's judgment.²⁸

Not only was the relationship between mankind and God adversely affected, but also between man and woman. The unity was broken. They attempted to pass the guilt they felt and had off on each other. The roles of the man and woman were changed. This is evidenced by the pronouncement of God to Eve, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee," (Gen. 3:16b). Schaeffer says, "This one sentence puts an end to any unstructured democracy. In a fallen world, unstructured democracy is not possible."²⁹ For Schaeffer, it is God who introduces the roles or *structure* to men and women as a result of their disobedience. In a fallen world, only through structured man/woman relationships can chaos be avoided. This structure is to be guided by love as commanded in Eph. 5:23. What has changed for Schaeffer is not the nature of man or woman, since they are still viewed as a unit, but the roles they play within that unit. God imposes structure upon the human relationship to avoid the disorder that would result because of sin.

Notice that God's pronouncement to avoid chaos in human relationships should not be confused with a curse, as was done in the case of the earth and the serpent. God cursed the serpent in Gen. 3:14 and the earth in 3:17. But to the man and woman, a pronouncement of judgment is made that affects them both personally and relationally. God was describing what males and females will do *because of sin* in

regard to their relationships. However, Christ came and shed His blood to redeem fallen mankind, not in just some future state, but to also affect life as it is lived now.

The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ will give an absolute and perfect restoration of all these things when Jesus comes. But in the present life there is to be substantial healing, including the results of the separation between a man and himself. This is the first step toward freedom in the present life from the results of the bonds of sin.³⁰

This aspect of restoration is prescriptive. Schaeffer states that we are to live this life free from the bondage of sin.

To live with each other as equals, not mechanistically.

"... *all who come from Adam are my kind.* This is as wide as the human race, and I am to have a person-to-person relationship, as an equal, with each of those with whom I come in contact."³¹ So for Schaeffer, sin's result on human relationships is the descriptive element and should be superseded by the prescriptive element of relationships between our fellowman based upon equality of worth and value.

In summary, humanity is unique in its creation with a nature that was relational to God by virtue of being created in *God's image*. For Schaeffer, human nature was different from all other nature(s). There was a unity of mankind before the Fall represented by both sexes, equal in nature and structure. However, males and females are now estranged from God and each other because of sin. As a result, they are sinners placed in a relationship where unstructured democracy is impossible.

Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928 -)

Wolfhart Pannenberg maintains that the "traditional doctrine about man developed around two central ideas. One was the classical concept of man as created in the image of God. The other was constituted by the notion of sin and referred back to the primordial fall of Adam."³² However, there is an even more fundamental notion of man that is distinctive to Christianity, and that is "that man has been reconciled to God in Christ."³³ This concept according to Pannenberg, is responsible for any basic alterations in the first two ideas about man.

Pannenberg, in reacting against classical liberalism which borrowed from the Stoics the assertion that originally *all* men were free and equal by nature, holds the position that

Without the Christian experience of individual freedom in being united to the absolute reality of God, the ideas of natural law had continued to function as pure abstractions. And without that religious basis and content they function even today as pure abstractions, fraught with all the dangers and injustices of mistaking the abstract for the concrete.³⁴

For Pannenberg, human nature is not self-evidenced by individual freedom, rather man must be set free from his bondage to sin. Freedom can be experienced only by those who through communion with Christ and His power over sin and death, have been reconciled to God. Freedom is not an abstract idea then, contra classic liberalism, but rather, in essence it is what it means to *be human*.

Pannenberg believes that human nature is defined by the history of man and man's destiny. History cannot be sidestepped. "In Biblical terms, man is the history from the first Adam to the second Adam, who, according to Paul, has become manifest in Jesus Christ and especially in the new life of his resurrection."³⁵ Man was created in the image of God. However, that is only part of the equation. It is in the person of Christ that man is realized, because Jesus Christ is the image of God.

What we see here is Pannenberg utilizing a descriptive and prescriptive method in defining human nature. Human nature is described throughout history as what it was in the creation of man. This has already been illustrated above. Additionally, Pannenberg's prescription is seen as he continues working out his view of human nature. "There is much in human nature that has to be overcome. . . . The consequence is that the desires of men and their claims are often not identical with, but are sometimes contrary to, their actual needs."³⁶ Pannenberg believes that it will only be through the reign of God Himself that peace and justice will be perfectly realized. This eschatological view is consistent with traditional Christian teaching, and supported by Pannenberg's contention that Jesus himself was "not a zealot" interested in political revolution. However, this method by Pannenberg and others is a new approach in doing theology and anthropology by means of its resurrection centered perspective and its future oriented hope.

This perspective demonstrates itself through actual content, the believer united with God in Christ, versus an abstract understanding of freedom which is merely formalistic. Christ prevails over the human condition of sin and death. His historical resurrection communicates to man the reconciliation available in Christ to God. Human nature is a history, if you will, a history of the first Adam to the second Adam and beyond. Since man according to the Old Testament was created to be in the image of God, and sin destroyed that relationship, Christ restores the reality of existing in the image of God.

Harold O. J. Brown (1933-)

Brown stakes out a classic fundamentalist position when he says, "Scripture teaches us that man is God's creature, made in His image, and called to a personal relationship of faith and thereby to adoption as God's child."³⁷ People are created beings by God, with a likeness of image that results in a relationship between the Creator and the creature. This relationship was negatively affected by people through a volitional choice of rebellion against God's prohibition. "Man's problem . . . is moral in nature, resulting from our willful rebellion against the law and authority of God."³⁸ However, this rebellion though resulting in complete separation from God, did not destroy the natural correspondence to the Creator. "Hence there will always be something in

him that remains untrue to presuppositions of an apostate world-and-life view and longs for the message that tells him of his real place in the scheme of creation."³⁹ Man knows there is something out of place - something not right with himself. This estrangement is the result of separation from God. It is not illusory, but real. "Any view of man that rejects an actual, historic Fall leaves one to the unpleasant conclusion that evil, therefore, is part of man's nature - essential, not moral."⁴⁰ And in reacting to Tillich and others whose supposition is that man actualizes himself through rebellion, Brown maintains that man's rebellion is real "but not essential to our humanness; we can be redeemed and sanctified without losing our essential personhood."⁴¹

An over simplified synopsis of Brown's analysis of human nature would be that people are creatures, beings created by God, in God's image, with a likeness so that there could be a relational aspect between God and the person. This relationship with God was affected negatively by people through free choice in disobedience to God's commands. The choice of disobedience against God was an act of rebellion that took place historically and literally. A result of this literal historical act of disobedience was that the nature of humanity was affected morally and thus evil became part of mankind's existence.

In summary of our five representative theologian/philosophers, there are several elements found to be consistent in each. Again, there may be many other views of

man shared between several of the five, but the following are consistent with all. In addition, these similarities will be compared to the consistent positions of the feminist representatives. One, mankind is a being created by God. (I utilize the term "mankind" since that term is consistently used by the aforementioned authors.) His existence and continuance are connected to God's initiative. Two, mankind was created in God's image and after God's likeness. While image and likeness are interpreted variously, all representative orthodox or conservative theologian/philosophers concur, that mankind had an original likeness and an imago dei that was untainted. Three, logically following number two, mankind's original relationship with God was adversely affected by sin. Men and women no longer had a direct communion with God. Four, mankind's original relationship with each other was negatively affected. The unity between the man and woman was disrupted, and the bond of peace between other men and women was destroyed through the seeds of sin and covetousness. Five, mankind's problem is a moral one. There is an "oughtness" that people expect now in others, an "oughtness" of what they should do and are not doing. Six, Jesus Christ is the solution to righting the relationship of man to God, with their fellow man and the answer for the moral shortfall in everyone's life. Jesus ultimately restores that which was lost through sin.

C. A SURVEY OF CHRISTIAN FEMINIST POSITIONS

It will be beneficial at this time to be reminded of a common element concerning feminist thinking about the differentiation of male and female natures. There is a general consensus among many Christian feminists, and feminists in general, that unless it is established that there is a different *nature* for men and women, then the treatment of women, roles for women and opportunities for women cannot be justified apart from prejudice, jealousy, misinterpretation of liberating truth, or patriarchal bias. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza comments,

From countless pulpits and Sunday school classes, such patriarchal attacks are proclaimed as the 'word of God.' Anti-ERA groups, the cultural Total Woman movement, and the Moral Majority appeal to the teachings of the Bible on the American family and on *creational differences between the sexes* supposedly resulting in a different societal and ecclesial calling.⁴²

This premise, that there is no difference in male and female natures, which therefore equates to no justification for societal or ecclesial differences, becomes for feminists and Christian feminists a major foundation point in their thinking and apologetics.

In addition, another key thought in feminist thinking and theology is that feminism stands for the full humanity and equality of women. Logically then, whatever detracts from that humanity, dehumanizes, or ignores women is unworthy to be adhered to or kept. Such a message cannot be authoritative or revelatory. As we examine feminist definitions and

descriptions of human nature these premises will be evident from time to time. Conversely, as Rosemary Radford Ruether says, ". . . what does promote the full humanity of women is of the Holy, . . . the true nature of things, the authentic message of redemption and the mission of redemptive community."⁴³

Following, are the feminist theologians, philosophers, and authors used to represent the Christian feminist perspective of what is the nature of man and woman. All are twentieth century authors.

Rosemary Radford Ruether

Rosemary Radford Ruether acknowledges the historical fallenness of human nature. "Historically, human nature is fallen, distorted, and sinful. Its original and authentic nature and potential have become obscured."⁴⁴ Whatever man and woman were in their original state has been altered and blurred. Primarily, the unity of man and woman with God has been lost and this is not to be debated says Ruether. But what is a concern for feminist theology "is how this theological dualism of imago/dei - fallen Adam, connects with sexual duality, or humanity as male and female."⁴⁵ Ruether believes that woman, because of her sex, has been historically 'scapegoated' and faulted. Ruether, in quoting Philo, says, "'man as originally created from clay and divine spirit, was in a state of immortality and happiness as long as he remained

single.'" Ruether cites this as an example of the prejudice of sexual identity with the fall of humanity.⁴⁶ It is this connection, of Eve and her creation with the fall of humanity, that concerns Ruether. It was through Eve that Adam was seduced. Because of Eve, Adam capitulated to his lower material nature. Eve thus became associated with Adam's lower self.

Ruether further charges that Aristotle develops this same line of thinking from Philo and Plato, which resulted in Aristotle's formulation of his dualism of form and matter. This dualism of form and matter also discriminated against women. Ruether goes on to say,

Aristotle describes the reproductive act as a relationship of active male formative principle to female materiality. The male semen provides what we today might call the entire genetic code of the embryo or its active power of formation. The blood of the female womb provides only the matter shaped by the active power. But the female herself is a deformed or imperfect human. And so, although, every male seed strives to fully form the maternal matter and produce a male, sometimes this fails to be perfected. The resistance of the female matter fails to 'take' the male form perfectly, and so a defective human, or female, resembling the mother is born.⁴⁷

For Ruether, the impact of Aristotelian biology on Christian theology and anthropology cannot be minimized or ignored. Maleness became equated with the normative expression of what it meant to be human, while femaleness was somehow lacking in full human status. "This 'lesser nature' thus confirms the female's subjugation to the male as her 'natural' place in the universe," says Ruether.⁴⁸

The fall of mankind did produce a change in human nature. However, for Ruether and other feminists, the

implications of that change, the results of that change and the human response to that change vary greatly from conservative and orthodox theology. What is it that was associated with fallenness, and what is it that was associated with the imago dei? Ruether claims that Aristotelian dualism, as cited above, which was adopted by Church fathers such as Augustine and Aquinas, was nothing more than the scapegoating of women for sin. Women were associated with the lower base elements such as nature and matter, while males were identified with the rational and spirit.⁴⁹ "The dualism of nature and transcendence, matter and spirit as female against male is basic to male theology."⁵⁰ This for Ruether was not only faulty reasoning and theology but the reinforcement of androcentrism (maleness as normative).

Ruether also believes that psychological labeling of certain capacities as masculine or feminine has perpetuated gender role stereotyping. This charge clarifies an important concept for her anthropology. "We need to affirm not the confusing concept of androgyny but rather that all humans possess a full and equivalent human nature and personhood, as male and female."⁵¹ Human nature for men and women is the same. People's maleness and femaleness exist for reproductive roles, for biological function. "There is no necessary connection between reproductive complementarity and either psychological or social role differentiation. These are the work of culture and socialization, not of 'nature'."⁵² For Ruether, sex or biological determination play no role in what

is our true nature. Each male and female is made up of both male and female characteristics.

In addition, since men and women are fallen, both are in need of redemption. (Again for feminists, the particulars of redemption vary significantly from traditional orthodox views.) "All of us, both men and women, oppressor and oppressed, need to be converted, in somewhat different ways, to that whole humanity which has been denied to us. . . ."53 Ruether goes on to say that while humanity needs a conversion of the self into its full potential, equally, a "transformation of those social structures that set people in opposition to each other"54 needs changing. The emphasis is placed upon a change in the individual's stereotypical thinking and upon social reformation.

Ruether and feminist theology tend to take redemption a step further than traditional orthodox theology and stress the dynamic interconnection of the personal with social change. Even though human nature is fallen equally for women and men, the full human potential remains intact but, it has been clouded by warped thinking because of patriarchy. Yet, patriarchy is the result of the fall, not the fall a result of patriarchy. Therefore, human nature must undergo a change of thinking, a change of praxis, and rediscovery of its original unblemished state; (A state of mutual respect, where full human potential can be realized, and where an individual can be free from the restraints of sexual prejudice.)

Valerie Saiving

Valerie Saiving in her article "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," expresses her bewilderment at whether or not theologians, when speaking of "*man*" generically, are truly using it in an inclusive way after all?

It is, after all, a well-known fact that theology has been written almost exclusively by men. This alone should put us on guard, especially since contemporary theologians constantly remind us that one of man's strongest temptations is to identify his own limited perspective with universal truth.⁵⁵

Once again notice the prominent theme of suspicion when evaluating or analyzing existing positions in theology, a type of theology-of-suspicion. Is the feminine perspective included in man's analysis or has it been overlooked and assumed? For Saiving, the answer is yes to the latter. Contemporary theology, which is the target of this specific article, and particularly Anders Nygren and Reinhold Niebuhr because of their representation of contemporary theology's tendencies "to describe man's predicament as rising from his separateness and the anxiety occasioned by it and to identify sin with self-assertion and love with selflessness,"⁵⁶ are remiss for not providing "an adequate interpretation of the situation of women."⁵⁷ Theology has in fact been rooted in the male experience. Yet for Saiving it is not just contemporary theologians who make this error, the inadequate human condition of women from male perspectives, but woman's perspective in general has been neglected historically and this situation has been replicated throughout theological

history. Theology, maintains Saiving, is told not only from a male perspective, but from the male experience almost exclusively. Why is this issue important to Saiving?

It is my contention that there are significant differences between masculine and feminine experience and that feminine experience reveals in a more emphatic fashion certain aspects of the human situation which are present but less obvious in the experience of men.⁵⁸

So in essence, the whole human situation has been misdiagnosed and therefore, the prescribed treatment, of course, is shortsighted at best.

For Saiving, mankind is considered free and this freedom is what separates humans from other creatures. Yet out of this freedom stem both mankind's creativity and his temptation to sin. The masculine and feminine experience reveal different aspects of the sin problem. Since the masculine experience and viewpoint have been codified through Scripture and history, we are left with a "one-sided" description of the human condition. Therefore, Saiving asks the question as to whether it is even meaningful to speak of the feminine experience. "The only question is whether we have described the human situation correctly by taking account of the experiences of both sexes."⁵⁹

Saiving takes exception to many contemporary descriptions of mankind's condition in terms of "anxiety, estrangement, and the conflict between necessity and freedom; . . . sin with pride, . . . exploitation . . ."⁶⁰ by connecting these descriptions with male perspectives. For Saiving, ". . . this theology is not adequate to the universal human

situation; its inadequacy is clearer to no one than to certain contemporary women."⁶¹

In summary, we have in Saiving an example of what is wrong with male anthropology according to feminists, but very little to enlighten us about the feminine view of human nature. We can establish that mankind is free and that freedom enables people to be responsible moral agents. However, we may also understand from her writing that she believes mankind to have made improper choices in light of that freedom resulting in sin. What has been done with most traditional and anthropological analysis is that the traditional descriptive view of human nature and its prescribed remedies are flawed. The description of human beings must be reworked to include feminist perspectives if the description is truly going to represent mankind in general. For Saiving, this has yet to be done adequately, although some feminist writers have begun the task.

Nancy A. Hardesty and Letha Scanzoni

This section reflects upon the position of two writers Nancy Hardesty and Letha Scanzoni. Hardesty and Scanzoni outline four streams of thought they believe are found in Scripture in regard to women and men and their relationship to and with each other. The four approaches are distinctiveness, complementarity, synthesis, and transcendency. Examples of each are: *distinctiveness* - women set apart during

menstruation or segregated in the temple and synagogue; *complement* - the woman and man are not independent of one another and both came from God 1 Co. 11:11-12; *synthesis* - the marriage union; and *transcendancy* - from Gal. 3:28, in Christ there is neither male nor female.⁶² These approaches have explained and justified the necessary and obvious differentiation between the sexes used by Christians over the centuries.

Scanzoni and Hardesty believe that the key for the Christian woman's liberation is not through an organization or movement as much as it is the "state of mind in which a woman comes to view herself as Jesus Christ sees her - a person created in God's image whom he wants to make free to be whole" ⁶³ For both writers it is sex role stereotypes which hinder the "true humanness that God intended when He created male and female in his own image to delight in fellowship with Him and with one another." ⁶⁴ Woman was created to be free, to enjoy fellowship with God and men on an equal plane. She was created in the image of God as much as he was.

The fall of humankind brought about the curse which affected male and female equally. Consequently, the relationship between men and women, and mankind with God, was also adversely affected. However, to suppose that the redemption of mankind through Christ should affect only our spiritual standing and not apply or work itself out to the social misunderstanding between the sexes, is shortsighted and incorrect.

To suggest that the curse upon man is lifted through the redemption offered in Christ, but that the curse upon woman somehow remains (with the result that all women must forever be penalized because of Eve's transgression) seems to be a false and inconsistent theological assumption.⁶⁵

There can be no social absolutism justified through Scripture maintain Scanzoni and Hardesty. If social relationships can be adversely affected then it only logically follows that they can also be corrected if the adversity is nullified, corrected, or removed. Even though human nature has been corrupted, it can be renewed "in the spirit of [our] minds, and put on the new nature, created in the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness," Eph. 4:23-24.⁶⁶ Sin shattered what God had intended. A perfect communion between male and female was destroyed. However, Scanzoni and Hardesty make an interesting point when they state that "God speaks of what will be" referring to the curse, "not what should be; His words are descriptive, not prescriptive."⁶⁷ Male rule was not an imperial order by God but rather a result of the disorder and broken communion because of sin. The oneness prescribed was replaced by the disunion described as a result of mankind's sin.

How should women view themselves? First, "Women have just as much right as men to think of themselves in God's image and of God as similar to them."⁶⁸ There are a number of factors however, that cause this not to be true. One is language. The masculine gender has been traditionally and currently used when referring to both males and females or when referring to a group of people. Since God is most

commonly referenced with the male gender, it has been mistakenly assumed that God is male as human men are male in their maleness. God is of course neither and both. God is not male or female as humans are in their maleness and femaleness, but "contains all personhood; we are all made in his image, male and female."⁶⁹ The authors believe that the image of God is "not only rationality but 'relationality.' All persons, male and female, are created by God with rational self-awareness and also with the capacity for self-transcendence."⁷⁰ An escape must be made from the prejudices and traps that language, mistakenly understood, forces us into.

Second, they must view themselves through a proper interpretation and exegesis of Scripture. Hardesty and Scanzoni illustrate by comparing the nature of the Trinity to the nature of mankind. In 1 Co. 11:3, where the issue of headship is discussed by Paul, the writers believe that there has been a basic misinterpretation of this passage. Instead of outlining some divine "chain of command", the real intent and message of the passage is of unity.

As Chrysostom argued fifteen hundred years ago, the emphasis is on unity, not hierarchy. As Christ is one with God in substance, so the husband is one flesh with his wife. Every Christian is united with Christ. The purpose of head-coverings (the point made in 1 Cor. 11:2-16) is to display the marital union and thus glorify the triune God in whose image male and female are created.⁷¹

Christ is and was no less God than God the Father. The relationship of the Trinity is reflected in the image of mankind through their relationship with each other.

Third, women's sexual differentiation is not reflected in the Godhead, and yet God created male and female and pronounced it good. To see sexuality and especially female sexuality as somehow evil is Platonic and distorts the creation value God placed upon woman. The authors believe that the purpose of sexual difference created by God is for propagation. They, male and female, were to be fruitful and multiply and fill God's creation after their likeness.

Additionally, the order of creation is not an issue for subordination or woman's value either. "After all man was made from dust but this does not make him subordinate to the earth."⁷² Again, Scanzoni and Hardesty believe that much of the "value of women" question, stemming from "order" texts, such as Col. 2:9-10, have their problem in traditional exegesis. For example, kephale translated as "head", instead of meaning a place for rule and authority is better interpreted as "source" or "beginning". So that what is in subjection is not the body of Christ, "but the world which is 'under his feet.'"⁷³

Finally, Scanzoni and Hardesty argue that since Jesus treated women with equality, should not his example be followed by us today? Several examples are given by the authors in making their case. Jesus taught women openly when it that day ". . .most rabbis refused to teach women because their minds were supposedly incapable of grasping God's truth, . . ."⁷⁴ He talked publicly with women, touched them and allowed them to touch him. Mary of Bethany kissed and caressed Jesus' feet

which brought disapproval from those present. Some of the greatest truths in Scripture were revealed to women, such as Martha at Lazarus' death and resurrection, that he (Jesus) was the resurrection and the life. Scanzoni and Hardesty give several other examples and have made a solid case for Jesus' treatment of women, in that it was indeed socially challenging of the traditional treatment of women of that day. Jesus made women full participants in His ministry.

Phyllis Tribble

Phyllis Tribble is refreshingly honest and balanced in her analysis of the women's liberation movement in relation to the movements' approach to Scripture. "On the whole, the Women's Liberation Movement is hostile to the Bible, even as it claims that the Bible is hostile to women."⁷⁵ She is referring to the Yahwist account of creation and the fall as an example.⁷⁶ Tribble sees in the Yahwist account a culmination, a climax in the creation of the woman, not an afterthought or decline. "The creation of man first and woman last constitutes a ring composition whereby the two creatures are parallel. In no way does the order disparage woman."⁷⁷ It is interesting to note that despite the weaknesses in accepting the Documentary Hypothesis Theory in regard to Scripture, Tribble believes there is much to salvage in this Yahwist account. She develops arguments for androgyny. ". . . sexuality is simultaneous for woman and man. The sexes

are interrelated and interdependent. Man as male does not precede woman as female but happens concurrently with her."⁷⁸ This for Tribble is the first act of creation, the creation of androgyny, mankind created as two separate beings having male and female characteristics. Later comes the creation of sexuality found in Genesis 2:23. Tribble does not however, believe that they existed in paradise for a period of time sexless. But rather that,

Both are equal in birth. There is complete rapport, physical, psychological, sociological, and theological, between them: bone of bone and flesh of flesh. If there be moral frailty in one, it is . . . in two. Further, they are equal in responsibility, . . . judgment, in shame . . . guilt, in redemption and grace. What the narrative says about the nature of woman it also says about the nature of man.⁷⁹

In addition, the whole idea in Genesis 2:18 according to Tribble, is that the helper God provided for the male adham, was to be someone who would be his equal. While the animals were found to be unsuitable (inferior), the woman was found to be suitable. She was created for this purpose, and he for her. Again Tribble contends that the context of the passage supports the contention that, "ezer (helper) entails a relationship that . . . connotes equality: a helper who is a counterpart."⁸⁰

Finally, for Tribble, the introduction of sin disrupted the original peace and unity between the sexes. "Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they know alienation and discord."⁸¹ Alienation and sin that can only be corrected by God through grace. Grace allows for the restoration of the original fellowship between the sexes. To

interpret the judgment of the male and female as prescriptions by God would be incorrect.

We misread if we assume that these judgments are mandates. They describe; they do not prescribe. They protest; they do not condone. Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16). This statement is not license for male supremacy, but rather it is condemnation of that very pattern. Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of creation.⁸²

What God intended for mankind had been ruined. However, through God's grace mankind can return to liberation. The repentance of both male and female is necessary, a repentance from oppression and sin.

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, in her article "Making Baskets or Building Houses?" examines gender roles in relation to one's biology. Her anthropological approach highlights what she believes is the relativity gender roles play when examining various cultures. Although cultural diversity is great, there are common threads that weave through all cultures and societies. Warfare would be an example of this. Yet, this does not mean warfare is "biologically programmed, or else we would expect all cultures to be equally warlike at all points in history."⁸³ Another universal seems to be the lower status of women no matter what they do. If men are engaged in activity [A] in one culture and women activity [B], and in another culture just the opposite is true, men [B] and women [A], whatever activity men do, that activity will

receive higher value. Why this is true cannot be attributed to biology alone says Van Leeuwen. ". . . it is human culture that sets differing values on biological differences."⁸⁴

The fall, Van Leeuwen posits, is the basis for "male domination -- and female acceptance of it . . ."⁸⁵ This is the cause for what *was* equality in relationships to the present inequality that is now prevalent in all societies. Van Leeuwen gives three theories in her article that are attempts to account for the universality of male dominance and female subordination.

First, "In all cultures women are seen as closer to nature than men, whereas men are seen as more involved with culture than women."⁸⁶ Why this is true is because of the need of women to devote more time, energy and risk to reproductive function than men. Men are free to pursue and devote their time, energy and effort to "technology, trade, games, arts, politics and religion. Since these activities separate humans from mere animals, the sex which practices them most is seen as superior."⁸⁷ Due to the time women must spend with children who are "unacculturated" this connection with children allows for the closer identification with nature. Van Leeuwen disagrees with this assessment and postulates a biblical critique for women with nature and men with culture phenomena.

I see both sexes tending to accept men's overinvestment in dominion and women's overinvestment in sociability (see Gen. 3:16). Thus, this 'nature vs. culture' reason for differing gender status is more likely an unconscious rationalization for the fallen state of both.⁸⁸

What Van Leeuwen seems to be suggesting is that what God described would be the result of the fall, mankind saw as a prescription or justification for social order.

A second theory centers around the domestic versus public spheres of influence and involvement. Woman, because of her reproductive assignment is forced to assume the domestic childcare role more likely than not, while man is free to participate continuously in the public forum. "These public, male-dominated activities almost always have more cultural respect than the domestic, less visible activities of women."⁸⁹ While the first theory emphasizes the biological constraints that limit women's involvement in culture, this theory follows from the first in that it continues the division in domestic versus public interaction for women and men. Women continue to receive less recognition than men for their contributions simply because of the lack of cultural respect associated with domestic investment.

The third theory has to do with object relations and family life. How do boys learn to be men and girls women? Boys must separate from the primary nurturer and identify with the seldom seen male figure, while girls emulate whom they are surrounded by, female or mother nurturers. During this process, boys move from the all-powerful mother relationship to an identification he has had little contact with, the father. This is a source for much male insecurity as seen from generation to generation. The solution to this lays not in gender role reversal, as espoused by some sociologists,

"but rather the degree of proximity, cooperation, and role flexibility that men and women share."⁹⁰

In conclusion, biology cannot account for male dominance alone. The equality of the sexes and their roles viewed culturally, were distorted because of the fall. Many theories have been proposed to account for the division of males and females, however, Van Leeuwen espouses the historical biblical narrative as a reasonable hypothesis. She would reject a difference-in-natures theory and would more likely choose "an unconscious rationalization" process that would account for sexual differentiation. Nature should then be viewed descriptively and not prescriptively.

Aida Spencer

Aida Spencer in her book Beyond the Curse, states that depending upon one's perspective and viewpoint the equality of the sexes hinges upon the emphasis of two different chapters in Genesis. "If they favor the equality of women and men they prefer chapter one. If they favor the submission of women to men they prefer chapter two."⁹¹ In chapter one Spencer identifies a double image of God in relation to the creation of mankind.

'Adam' is made in the image of God. Who is the 'Adam'? The 'Adam' is a 'they.' The clause 'he created him' is parallel to the following clause 'he created them' indicating that the 'him' is synonymous with the 'them.' 'The Adam' is a 'male and female.' Thus 'the Adam' could be translated 'Human' or 'humanity'; however the effect of the synecdoche would be lost. The synecdoche 'Adam' is a singular which represents the plural 'male and female.'

By having the one 'Adam' represent the two 'male and female,' the writer has emphasized the essential unity and diversity of Adam and Eve.⁹²

For Spencer we have a unity in diversity and a diversity in unity with the relationship between male and female and their representation of the image of God. The image of God becomes a kind of double image as seen in both male and female. So as "Adam" is plural yet singular, so too is God singular yet plural as seen in the Trinity.

According to Spencer, Scripture does not teach a hierarchy of the sexes.

God's original intention for women and men is that in work and in marriage they share tasks and share authority. Females as well as males are needed in positions of authority in the church to help people better to comprehend God's nature. God's image needs male and female to reflect God more fully.⁹³

Both sexes have a nature that is reflective of God's image. Conversely, to establish a male God at the elimination of "God's femaleness" or to establish a female Goddess at the elimination of "God's maleness," misses the point of Genesis chapter one and two. God created male and female to reflect His image.

The fall did not affect the ability of the man and woman to reflect God's image. However, due to sin, both sexes struggle under the curse along with the rest of creation. "Eve's curse, then, is to desire to be ruled or to desire to rule. . . . Either type of behavior by women and men's resultant rule over women are clearly part of Eve's and her descendants' curse."⁹⁴ Adam (the man) was likewise cursed but in three ways. His source, the earth, was cursed. His

relationship with woman, her source, was broken. And third, he would return to his source, the dust of the ground. But it is through Jesus that the curse is redeemed. Spencer advocates that men and women should live beyond the curse because of the redemption found in Christ. What was affected by the fall was source and relationships. However, Jesus gives us the opportunity to live a restored relationship between males and females.

Beverly Wildung Harrison

Without trying to present Ms. Harrison's complete view of human nature I would like to offer the following as additional data in formulating the Christian feminist view of human nature. First of all, regarding the aspect of spirit and gender dualism and its influence in Christianity, Harrison offers the following:

The full force of Christian sex-negativism cannot be understood, however, without recognizing the interconnection between the spiritualistic dualism, with its antisexual and anti-body bias, and that other dualism, gender dualism in which, male is superior to female. The concrete, historical-social relations between men and women in Christian history has constituted an oppressive praxis which shapes our theology.⁹⁵

Spirit/matter dualism and gender dualism have produced a praxis that has been detrimental to women. A natural result of this dualism in the description of female nature "is a truism of feminist analysis that in Western tradition, women have symbolized sexuality, animal nature, and body."⁹⁶

The source of dualism and its logical conclusions are "Whether in the appalling biology of classical Hellenic philosophers like Aristotle, or in the teachings of the church fathers, women, unless committed to asceticism and unqualifiedly 'pious', are evil."⁹⁷ There has been little relief for women within the church. Even the church's theology reinforced the oppression placed upon women and brought on by dualism.

Finally, on the importance of Jesus and His work:

Jesus' paradigmatic role in the story of our salvation rests not in his willingness to sacrifice himself, but in his passionate love of right relations and his refusal to cease to embody the power-of-relation in the face of that which would thwart it. It was his refusal to desist from radical love, not a preoccupation with sacrifice, which makes his work irreplaceable.⁹⁸

Harrison minimizes the cross in order to elevate the love that sent Jesus there. It is not love for individuals, per se, but love of "right relationships" between those individuals. Here is a striking example of the danger that can come from emphasizing a redemptive social purpose for Jesus life. The work of the cross becomes secondary to the "radical love" displayed for "right relations."

Patricia Gundry

As was true with Ms. Harrison, I shall give only a few brief points concerning Patricia Gundry's position about human nature, taken from her book Woman Be Free. Human nature is not tied to what we do, practice or how we act, but rather

what we are. In responding to those who say women are acting too much like men and living contrary to their natures, Gundry says,

No one need fear the loss of a nature given to her by God. If God created her female, she is feminine. Her culture may say certain mannerisms, actions, and speech are feminine, another culture may say the reverse, but they are only learned responses. Basic femininity comes with the body -- it's permanent.⁹⁹

It is nature given by God. Gundry seems to say it is a distinct nature, different from men. Not a nature identified by certain folkways, for that varies from culture to culture, but a nature that is connected to who she is as a person.

"Femininity is the very essence of a woman. And she cannot lose what she is."¹⁰⁰ Gundry would say that femininity, what she uses somewhat synonymously with nature, is undefinable.

Both men and women have masculinity and femininity respectively because of who they are, men and women. However, "Like the aroma of coffee or the fragrance of a meadow, it is indefinable but appreciated."¹⁰¹ So with Gundry we have distinct natures given to us by God, that are difficult to define yet obviously discernible. Human nature is connected to who we are bodily, man or woman.

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza

With the writer-theologian, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza we discover a primary methodology in understanding a Christian feminist approach to biblical hermeneutics. While Fiorenza does not develop a complete anthropological position

herself, most of her energy has been devoted to outlining the prejudices and assumptions of the Church Fathers and their androcentric tradition, her views concerning Scripture are important for understanding many Christian feminists' approach to hermeneutics and their subsequent views of human nature. That is why I have included her in the summary account of feminist positions.

Fiorenza suggests utilizing a "feminist hermeneutics of remembrance . . . to keep alive the memory of patriarchal biblical oppression as well as the memory of the struggles and victories of biblical women who acted in the . . . Spirit."¹⁰² This "feminist hermeneutical" approach questions the validity of accepting the Bible in terms of divine revelation and canonical authority only. Fiorenza refers to

. . . suspicion rather than acceptance of biblical authority, critical evaluation rather than correlation, interpretation through proclamation, remembrance and historical reconstruction, and interpretation through celebration and ritual.¹⁰³

What we find in Fiorenza is a critical element of Christian feminist methodology in interpreting Scripture. Scripture must be interpreted and understood not as an "archetype but as a prototype. . . A prototype, therefore, is critically open to the possibility of its own transformation."¹⁰⁴ This allows feminists the freedom to uncover "lost traditions" and provides for "correcting mistranslations", for the "peeling away" of layers of androcentric scholarship, and the "rediscovering" of the "new dimensions of biblical symbols and theological meanings."¹⁰⁵ Part of the "layering" of

androcentric scholarship includes the traditional view of man from an androcentric dualistic viewpoint such as Augustine's or Aquinas'.

Further, Fiorenza does not suggest trying to replace the biblical texts with a reduced feminist analyzed and evaluated text, a text within the text if you will, but rather to sift through the texts and find that which "affirms" or "promotes" the humanity and full participation of women. Conversely, those texts and traditions that devalue or oppress women must be understood for what they are, worthless.

"A feminist hermeneutics cannot trust or accept Bible and tradition simply as divine revelation."¹⁰⁶ Yet, it is not sufficient to just throw away or abandon the biblical texts either, because according to Fiorenza, that is where women's heritage is, and without that heritage there is no power. Fiorenza suggests the need of an approach that salvages that which "empowers women," yet reject that which holds women back.

A critical feministic hermeneutics of liberation therefore seeks to develop a critical dialectical mode of biblical interpretation that can do justice to women's experience of the Bible as a thoroughly patriarchal book written in androcentric language as well as to women's experience of the Bible as a source of empowerment and vision in our struggles for liberation.¹⁰⁷

By using this hermeneutical process, feminists and Christian feminists in particular can utilize the Bible and allow it to "become Holy Scripture for women-church."¹⁰⁸ Only this time the biblical accounts are told from the feminist perspective. If this happens to involve renaming God, then so be it. "Only

by reclaiming our religious imagination and our ritual powers of naming can women-church dream new dreams and see new visions."¹⁰⁹

Fiorenza identifies three hermeneutical models for biblical interpretation: the doctrinal model centering around teachings, creeds and the authority of the Bible itself; the historical-factual model which understands the Bible as a collection of more or less true and historically reliable information; and the "dialogic-pluralistic model of form and redaction criticism," the Bible reflecting the society and life of its historical and cultural circumstances.¹¹⁰

From this last model, a feminist critical interpretation method used by Fiorenza "subjects the Bible to a critical feminist scrutiny and to the theological authority of the church of women that seeks to assess the oppressive or liberative dynamics of all biblical texts and their function in the contemporary feminist struggle for liberation."¹¹¹ This becomes the lens through which feminist determinations can be made which are to be authoritative and liberating. Fiorenza maintains this is what Jesus did when he set aside Scripture and tradition to benefit humanity (Mark 2:27).

What we find primarily in Fiorenza is not a formal anthropology per se, but the reason and method for questioning Scripture and traditional sources within the Church. Fiorenza's contention is that only one side of the Church has had its perspective and history shared. History has been codified into an androcentric oppression of women, an

oppression that has been built upon a faulty foundation from Jewish culture and religious patriarchy and Greek culture and philosophic patriarchy.

Conclusion

The following summary regarding human nature demonstrates consistent positions with the aforementioned feminist authors. One, humans are beings created by God. Two, all humans possess full and equivalent human natures. Women have natures of no less value or importance than men. Three, as beings created by God, women bear the image and likeness of God as much as men. Women are rational, have self-awareness, and have a capacity for self-transcendence. Four, human beings have been equally affected by sin. Women and men bear equal responsibility, guilt and shame as a result of their choice to disobey God. As a result, alienation and separation mark the relationship between God and mankind and between men and women. Five, Jesus Christ is central to restoring the proper relationship between men and women and mankind and God. Though this agreement is limited primarily to conservative and moderate feminists, even liberals acknowledge Jesus as one remarkably free from bigotry and the patriarchal influences of His day. (See Chapter 3 C. for a fuller explanation of the various camps. Also, please note the comments of Mary Daly in the same chapter section 7. "Centrality of Jesus as a Solution.") Six, mankind's problem

is rooted in wrong thinking. There needs to be a conversion of the mind along with a change in praxis. There is little spiritual reality unless it produces a change in thinking, which produces a change in action. Many feminists would state that this last point is a result of number four, personal and social sin.

D. A Core Definition

1. Common Ground/Disagreements

Finally, in this chapter I shall outline briefly what I believe to be the common denominators between the conservative orthodox positions and the Christian feminist positions of human nature. The following table gives a side by side comparison of the two summaries.

Conservative/Orthodox

1. Mankind, beings created by God.
2. Mankind was created in God's image after His likeness in the original creation.
3. Sin affected the original relationship between God and mankind, between man and woman.*
4. Mankind's "problem" is a moral/spiritual problem.
5. Jesus Christ provides the solution to righting mankind's relationship to God, fellowman, and spiritual turmoil. Jesus will ultimately restore that which was lost by sin.

Christian Feminist

1. Humans, created beings by God.
2. Women and men bear equally the image and likeness of God. The nature of both full and equivalent.
3. Sin affected men and women equally. Equal blame, responsibility, guilt, resulting in alienation and separation.
4. Humanity's "problem" is rooted in wrong thinking.
5. Jesus Christ is foundational to restoring relationships, challenging patriarchal folkways, and providing an example for praxis.

*It should be noted in the conservative summary list above, that number three has combined two different points from the previous summary given earlier in this chapter. That is why I originally had six summary points versus five now. Basically, this allows an easier comparison between the two systems.

2. A Synthesis

What has been gleaned from the various writers, theologians, and philosophers on the issue of what is human nature? What commonality or agreement is shared in answering that question? The following summary is offered.

1. Human beings are creatures of God. This would imply a dependence of existence and continuance.

Conservatives often use the terms *mankind*, *man*, *humans*, *human beings* and similar terms interchangeably, but they are not always consistent in their meaning. The meaning of these terms sometimes refers primarily to males to the exclusion of females, or there is some kind of qualitative difference as in Aquinas. At other times the language is inclusive, applicable to both sexes. There is at times confusion as to whether or not inclusive terms are truly inclusive. However, there is basic agreement that males and females are direct creations of God and they are dependent upon God. Feminist language is almost always inclusive, except in radical feminism. Even the terms are more general: *humanity*, *human beings* versus the generic *man* and *mankind* which is not always so generic.

2. There was a created likeness and image of God that all human beings had originally that was unaffected by sin.

Christian feminists and conservatives agree that God's original intent for humans at the time of creation was peace, harmony and unity. That unity reflected the unity of God. Because the male by himself was "not good," God created another human in likeness to the male to complete that which was lacking. These human beings lived in harmony and peace with God, each other and nature. They were one, bone of bone and flesh of flesh.

3. Because of sin, humanity's relationship with God and each other have been adversely affected.

There has been a distortion or disruption in the relationship between God and humans and between human beings. Sin's effect disabled and prevented a peaceful accord between the sexes. The unity became disunity because of sin. Perfect harmony and cooperation was no longer possible.

4. Humanity has a problem.

Again, there is agreement that humans have a problem and the problem is a result of sin, but there the similarities cease. Conservatives would emphasize the moral and spiritual depravity of humanity which produces all manner of evil, while Christian feminists would add that a change of perspective and thinking is what is also needed for humanity.

5. Jesus Christ is central in providing a solution to numbers three and four.

Jesus provided an example and way for humans to live and resolve the "sin" problem. By love, redemption, and a change of heart and thought, humans have hope for their dilemma.

In this chapter I have outlined my rationale for a core definitional approach in order to establish a foundation for analyzing human natures. I have surveyed both conservative and Christian feminist positions to construct that foundation. The synthesis between the two positions has been listed above. My next step is to evaluate Christian feminist and conservative positions in relation to the core definition/description of human nature.

CHAPTER III

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN FEMINISTS AND CONSERVATIVES ABOUT HUMAN NATURE FROM A CORE DEFINITIONAL APPROACH

In this chapter I shall test other hypotheses about human nature against the core definition and examine areas of agreement and disagreement. However, before proceeding it will be beneficial to briefly reconsider the issues concerning our understanding of human nature and why the core definitional approach is valid.

A. Understanding Human Nature; A Review

In Chapter I, I identified several approaches in understanding human nature. One, human nature may be viewed descriptively, prescriptively, or both. Two, humans do have a nature, a given for this thesis, and three, we can know something in regard to that nature, contra Hume. Along that line of thinking, mankind is also more than just the totality of his work, as in Marx. He is not just what he makes of himself, a producer and therefore a product of his work but, four, humans are creatures of God. Also as Stevenson has said, since we are made by God it is reasonable to postulate that God has a purpose for us "that defines what we ought to

be,"¹ an example of the prescriptive element. Mankind is understood from the standpoint of the eternal with a purpose to their existence. Reinhold Niebuhr rightly observes,

The Christian faith in God's self-disclosure, culminating in the revelation of Christ, is thus the basis of the Christian concept of personality and individuality. In terms of this faith man can understand himself as a unity of will which finds its end in the will of God.²

People will only comprehend who they are from within the will of God and from God's eternal perspective. And five, as Stevenson has set forth, a definition of human nature provides a basic theory of the nature of man, a diagnosis of what is wrong with humanity, and a prescription for correction.

B. Review of a Core Definitional Approach

In Chapter II, I established four basic reasons for using a core definitional methodology. It would be prudent to review as to why a core definitional approach is being used.

- 1) To establish a bridge of communication between conservatives and Christian feminists for dialogue, model building and discovering truth.
- 2) To test other hypotheses about the definition of human nature.
- 3) To evaluate the implications of a core definition in light of various Christian feminist and conservative positions.
- 4) To examine discrepancies or similarities from the core definition and suggest possible insights and truths from these.

In essence, the core definition is a series of summary conclusions that are based upon points of agreement or

similarity between Christian feminists and conservative Christians regarding their views of human nature.

Chapter II was devoted to primarily establishing a bridge of communication for Christian feminists and conservatives. It was an attempt to reduce the main points of agreement or similarity to essential core facts of human nature. This chapter concentrates on the remaining three purposes listed above for both feminists and conservatives (non-feminists).

C. Three Feminist Camps

It is important that I focus the lens of our analysis on the various Christian feminist groups in order to provide a more complete framework of this discussion. When analyzing or evaluating Christian feminist positions on any issue, there are usually three basic groups that can be referred to: conservatives, reformists and radicals. These divisions are also true for non-Christian feminists, and would probably hold true for most socio-religious groups or political organizations. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, who edited and compiled the book Womanspirit Rising, identify these three divisions.

There are essentially three groups within feminist experience. Conservatives who want to maintain a biblical tradition of women submissive to men only within the context of marriage or teaching men biblical theology. However all other avenues of leadership are open to women and should be vigorously pursued.

. . . Reformists . . . feminists who struggle to maintain a creative tension between Judaism or Christianity and feminist experience.

. . . Radicals . . . who are rejecting the biblical traditions and instead grounding theology and ritual primarily in women's lives. For these revolutionary thinkers, the essential theological task is not to reconstruct tradition but to explore the religious dimensions of women's experience free from constraints imposed by loyalty to a particular past.³

The survey of Christian feminist positions concerning human nature have cut across this spectrum. However, the majority of my concentration has been on those that would identify themselves as reformers or be identified as conservatives.

D. Evaluating The Core Definition

1. Descriptive, Prescriptive or Both?

Before evaluating various positions concerning human nature, what conclusions can be drawn from the core definition? In evaluating the synthesized core definition which has been formulated, we find several factors. The core definition is primarily descriptive but it is also prescriptive. Human beings are creatures dependent on God (both descriptive). There is a finite existence (descriptive) unlike the Creator, Who is infinite. They were created in the image and likeness of God (descriptive). Sarah Grimke in the early 1800's said, "They were both made in the image of God; [descriptive] . . . Created [descriptive] in perfect equality [descriptive and prescriptive], they were expected to exercise

the vicegerency [prescriptive] entrusted to them by their Maker, in harmony and love [prescriptive]."⁴ Thomas Boston echoes that sentiment by stating that "Man was then holy in soul, body, and spirit [descriptive]; while the soul remained untainted, its lodging was kept clean and undefiled; the members of the body were consecrated vessels, and instruments of righteousness [descriptive]."⁵ There was an original perfection [descriptive] of humanity that allowed for a perfect relationship between God and mankind.

In fact, one thing that the core definition clearly supports is that any description of humanity that does not stress the relationship of humanity to the Creator is in error. G. C. Berkouwer says it well, "If man's relation to God is not merely something added to man's nature, then it is clear enough that any view which abstracts man from this relation can never penetrate the mystery of man."⁶ Humanity cannot be isolated from the relationship to the Creator. This leaves mankind purely as an abstraction, a totally unbiblical view of humanity.

2. Corruption of Human Nature

a. Unity Destroyed

Human nature lost its perfection however, and *sin*, *wrong choices*, *wrong thinking*, or *corruption*, described differently by different authors, disrupted the unity between

God and humanity and the relationship of the male with the female. The emphasis in the core definition is on broken relationships. In place of harmony and unity are their opposites. Aida Spencer, in Beyond the Curse, refers to the curse faced by Eve after the temptation and failure:

Eve's curse, then, is to desire to be ruled or to desire to rule. Both tendencies certainly are operant today. Women want to dominate men and they want to be subservient to men. Women even want to dominate men by insisting that men take on an apparent commanding role which the women then secretly manipulate. Either type of behavior by women and men's resultant rule over women are clearly part of Eve's and her descendants' curse.⁷

Relationships are broken through manipulation and control. Spencer cites an almost schizophrenic behavioral pattern in women that destroys unity. This malady is not unique to women.

What has been consistent with both sides is the emphasis on the corruption of the relationships. Where the divergence begins is in the diagnosis. Both groups see the broken relationships but feminists see the problem stemming from a distortion of the original creation intent of God. Conservatives see the issue as a lack of submission on the part of women, women's unwillingness to assume the proper God assigned role, and men not loving their wives as Christ loved the Church. Men do not love enough and therefore women have a more difficult time submitting.

b. A Moral Premise

Herein lies a major problem of humanity, a problem that is relational in nature, premised upon a moral argument

as to the "oughtness" of the way things should be. These are the elements of the core definition that are basically prescriptive in nature. The prescriptive portions of the core definition stem from the *corruption* that has indeed destroyed the original unity and harmony and therefore, we can expect to see disunity in relationships. As Gilbert Bilezikian observes,

The fall had catastrophic consequences for the relationship between God and humans. The humans became alienated from God, and each one of them assumed primal dependency on his or her original element. The ruler/subject relationship between Adam and Eve began after the fall.⁸

c. Solution in Jesus

Jesus Christ is central to providing a solution to the human dilemma or problem in the core definition. "Christian anthropology," says Moltmann, "is an anthropology of the crucified Lord: it is in relation to this 'Son of Man' that man recognizes his truth and first becomes true man."⁹ While Denise Lardmore Carmody says in Feminism and Christianity: A Two-Way Reflection, "Were the core symbolism of Jesus' death and resurrection to be taken to heart, were Jesus' central commandment of love to be obeyed passionately, the human condition could change very rapidly."¹⁰ Although there are certainly different emphases about Jesus, what He represents, what He solves or does not solve between conservatives and Christian feminists, Jesus remains a primary player to the *corruption* problem in human beings.

3. Male and Female Nature Separately Identified

Third, the core definition does not elaborate or identify a separate nature for males and another one for females. This position is beyond the scope of the core definition. This becomes a foundational starting point which is supported by various conservative and Christian feminist authors. As Thomas Boston says, "The state of innocence wherein man was created. 'God hath made man upright.' By 'man' here we are to understand our first parents; the archetypal pair, the root of mankind, the compendized world, and the fountain from whence all generations have streamed"11 Both male and female are seen in unity, in "innocence" and "upright"[ness]. However, as this starting point is explained or expanded upon, especially with conservatives, a divergence often takes place. While conservatives emphasize, in the classical tradition, the self-transcendent aspect of humanity, humanity's vicegerent role over nature, humanity's moral reflection, the perfect harmony of corporate structure, Christian feminists focus on the relationship of the female to the image of God and her interrelationship to the male. Many conservatives deal with human nature purely from a generic standpoint, not clearly establishing a separate identity or criteria for women. But when they do, it is often accompanied by some explanation as to why women are not quite up to the same level as men or why they (women) are to be in subjection to males as in Augustine

or Aquinas. Nevertheless, a conclusion that can be made is that human beings have a nature, and since woman had come from the man, her source, for she was formed out of the male, her nature would be of the same sort or kind of nature, not a male nature, but a human nature.

In citing this concept of source from Christian feminists, authors Scanzoni and Hardesty comment on the New Testament language found in Col. 2:9-10,

'Head' here obviously means 'source'. And we (females) have been made one with that source, not subject to it. A similar thought is found in Ephesians 1:22 where God is said to have raised Christ above every rule and authority, submitting all things under his feet and making him head over his body the church. Again, what is in subjection is not the body, but the world which is 'under his feet' (a reminder of Gen. 3:15?).¹²

Though I will not try to fully establish their argument here, they make an interesting case that "head" (kephale) as used metaphorically in the New Testament, points overwhelmingly, not to some "corporate structure" but to a "dynamic, organic, living unity -- a 'one flesh' relationship, if your will."¹³ Scanzoni and Hardesty would agree that unity was broken between the male and female. Yet to foist upon the text a cultural mandate of "male the chief executive" and "female the executive vice president" is erroneous. "Kephale is used almost synonymously with archel, 'beginning', somewhat similar to our use of the 'headwaters of a river' or fountainhead."¹⁴ The position here is that since the male *Adam*, was the source of female *Adam*, *Adam* being understood generically, woman's nature must be the same as the man's both before and after the fall.

4. Stevenson's Outline

Fourth, in light of and in agreement with Stevenson's outline in Chapter I, a basic theory of the nature of human beings is established in the five points of the core definition. The definition also provides a diagnosis that there is something wrong, and states there is a remedy for what is wrong.

E. Implications for Christian Feminists and Conservatives

1. Moral Arguments or Premise

What then, are the implications for Christian feminists and conservatives in light of the core definition of human nature? First, it is evident from Christian feminists that there is a central theme that underscores a primary position of theirs, which is morally prescriptive in nature, and is illustrated by Carol McMillan.

This is the notion that the process of moral argument presupposes the principle that everyone should be treated equally. This principle derives from the view that since the common respect due to all persons is based on the fact that they are rational beings, there is no moral justification for treating people differently because of their age, sex, intelligence or colour.¹⁵

Christian feminists have postulated repeatedly, that if there is no substantive difference between male and female natures, there is no basis for different treatment or role justification outside of reproductive function. "The feminist's moral, . . . is this: confine women to the domestic sphere, make them

fit primarily for looking after a husband and children, and you will be faced with a debased creature lacking human dignity."¹⁶ Treat women differently from men by way of opportunity or limiting personal growth and you will have a human being that is ultimately lacking in self-worth. Feminists maintain that there is no justification for limited role opportunities for women.

And yet this principle for equality must be based upon more than just an argument of rationality, for that would leave a purely liberal rationale as A. M. Jagger points out.

The fundamental moral values of liberalism are predicated on the assumption that all individuals have an equal potentiality for reason. This assumption is the basis of liberalism's central moral belief, the intrinsic and ultimate value of the human individual.¹⁷

Jagger, who espouses a Marxist feminism, maintains that it is praxis, the physical act, rather than pure rational thought, which is the essential human activity. Therefore, while agreeing there is no basis for role differentiation between the sexes, liberal feminist theory ignores the biological factor. Rationality must express itself through human activity.

To avoid the weaknesses of liberalism, Jagger believes Christian feminists must appeal to more than just arguments based upon rationalism, the innate ability of human reason to know truth. Christian feminists must make recourse to history, Scripture, praxis, and experience. Again, any appeal that is used would be grounded upon a moral argument that postulates that there should not be a difference in the way

the sexes are treated. Different treatment and opportunity based upon sex is wrong. The "why" this is wrong, is addressed to some authority, power structure, or to the autonomy of the individual, that should or could correct this wrong. The whole nature of a moral argument is an "oughtness" which is prescriptive in nature. "Oughtness" implies what we should be doing versus what is taking place.

When discussing a moral argument in the field of ethics, I am referring to Christian ethics. I am not disallowing either philosophical, theological, or biblical ethics, for each could be a sub-group of Christian ethics or system of their own, but simply for clarification I am stating which ethical approach I am appealing to. "God . . . has in these last days spoken to us in his Son" Heb. 1:1-2. Christian ethics is the evaluation of human action in light of Christ's revelation.

Is there within the core definition a basis for a moral premise or argument which would establish either a differentiation of treatment of the sexes solely upon creation or because of sexual differences? From the core definition the immediate answer to role differentiation based upon creation by God is "no." Male and female were both created by God. Their existence and continuance were miraculous. Divine activity was responsible for both. Eve was not an afterthought, says Phyllis Trible,

. . . she is the culmination. Genesis 1 itself supports this interpretation, for there male and female are indeed the last and truly the crown of all creatures. . . In Hebrew literature, the central concerns of a unit often

appear at the beginning and the end as an inclusio device. Genesis 2 evinces this structure. The creation of man first and woman last constitutes a ring composition whereby the two creatures are parallel. In no way does the order disparage woman.¹⁸

The Genesis account does not seem to utilize any kind of negative language in describing the creation of the woman. In fact, according to Tribble's interpretation Eve, is part of the "culmination." Rosemary Ruether adds, that "Maleness and femaleness constitute a second separate clause that is not intended to modify the image of God It simply defines Adam as bisexual as a creature. . . ." ¹⁹ Humanity was created male and female in the image of God. Both were given the mandate to propagate and "fill the earth."

2. Sex Differentiation

The next question is, does the core definition support a differentiation in the sexes? Paul K. Jewett outlines for us three general schools of thought reflected in our representative Christian writers about the issue of sexual polarity. "First of all, there is the position that male/female distinction has nothing to contribute to our understanding of Man as created in the divine image."²⁰ To understand the true nature of man is to see humanity as transcending the duality of male and female. This position was influenced heavily by the Greek fathers who saw sexual polarity relating to man's fallen condition, not the original position. Sin is basically sensuality, and sexual lust is a prime example. Sexual differences

merely confuse the issue of what it means to be human. This view influenced the Church as evidenced by Origen who mutilated himself sexually to avoid lustful passion. Although the view of humanity transcending male and female stresses unity, it does so at the expense of what humanity is, male and female. This view is now generally disregarded by most Christians. Jewett continues,

A second view affirms . . . male/female distinction is not an essential part of the doctrine of Man, it is evident from Scripture that both . . . share alike the distinctive endowments whereby Man differs from the animals, . . . men and women both participate in the divine image.²¹

The key to this position is that although sexuality is recognized as a creation of God, there is a dualism of male and female natures implied. Thomas Aquinas, through the nine articles in the Summa which deal with the creation of man, views male and female creation as distinctive in kind and purpose. Jewett summarizes from the Summa Theologica, Q. XCIII: "The Production of the Woman," points out that the creation of the woman is distinct from the creation of man. Likewise Calvin in the Institutes, writes considerably about human nature (I, XV,) but the woman is not mentioned until (II, viii, 43) where Jewett writes about Calvin that,

. . . in expounding the seventh commandment, he observes that celibacy is the gift of the few and marriage the guarantor of chastity in the many. In all of this, he simply assumes what had not been questioned for centuries, that is, that the woman was given to the man as a helper in the one and only work in which he really needed her help, namely, the work of procreation.²²

The woman is seen as similar and like the man, yet different

in quality. Her role was to help the male accomplish only that which he could not do, procreate.

A third view postulates that "to be in the image of God is to be male and female. . . men and women alike participate in the divine image, . . . their fellowship as male and female is what it means to be in the image of God."²³ This position sees male and female and their distinctiveness as a manifestation of the *imago Dei*. According to this view, Genesis 1:27b ("male and female made he them") is an exposition of 1:27a ("in the image of God created he him"). Gilbert Bilezikian supports this concept in his book Beyond Sex Roles.

God determines to make 'man' (singular), but refers to 'man' as them (plural). The same phenomenon occurs in verse 27. These seeming anomalies are not grammatical errors in the Hebrew text. They reflect the fact that the designation 'man' is a generic term for 'human beings' and that it encompasses both male and female. This fact is made especially clear in Genesis 5:2 where the word man designates both male and female. . . .²⁴

Support for this thought is also found in the New Testament. Jewett believes that exegetes "have too easily inferred from Mark 12:25 that where there is no marriage there will be no male and female, . . . however, . . . marriage should be understood in terms of the male/female distinction, the latter being the more fundamental reality."²⁵ This type of position is similar to that of Karl Barth, who believed that "Man's being is a being-in-fellowship. . . . in genuine mutuality and reciprocity."²⁶ This position, how best to understand the image of God, is summarized by humanity being viewed as the fellowship of male and female.

In disagreement with Jewett's and Barth's conclusion about the image and likeness of God being best understood as male and female in relationship, Philip Hughes believes that the statement in Genesis 5:2 is better taken as a clarification to give additional information.

. . . not only did God create man in His own image, but he also created man as male and female. . . . It would seem more reasonable to connect the statement "male and female he created them" with the divine command to "be fruitful and multiply" which follows rather than with the declaration of man's formation in the divine image which precedes, since sexual differentiation and reproduction or procreation belong together, the latter being a primary end to which the former is the means.²⁷

Male and femaleness for Hughes is a characteristic that is shared with the animals. It is not a unique expression of the image of God. Hughes maintains that even with the advent of the male Christ child, "the duality of man and woman was in no way determinative of the incarnation and its purpose. All that is truly and fully human is revealed and defined in him who himself is the True Image."²⁸ Hughes seems to indicate that sexuality is incidental to our humanity except for procreative purposes. In support of Hughes' criticism, Berkouwer agrees that Barth,

. . . is right in pointing to the unique importance of the man/woman relation in creation; but he is wrong in further concluding that this relation is the specific content of the image of God, and all the more so in that other Scriptural declarations concerning the image make no direct reference to this relation.²⁹

What was common in Greek philosophy was that women were analogous to the lower realm of body while males were analogous to the transcendent mind (spirit). There was in essence a hierarchy of beings. As Ruether says, "The chain of

being, God- spirits- male- female- non-human- nature- matter, is at the same time the chain of command."³⁰ This was not meant to be. The whole question of hierarchy that has dominated Western theological thought as a result of this mindset must be reevaluated and challenged, believes Ruether.

Ruether rightfully challenges the historical presuppositions of Augustine and Aquinas. The Aristotelian influence seen in Aquinas and Augustine cannot, I believe, be denied. These influences no doubt have created an interpretive framework that have led to errant conclusions that have indeed affected the Church and society today. Ruether continues,

Although Augustine concedes woman's redeemability and hence her participation in the image of God, it is so overbalanced by her bodily representation of inferior, sin-prone self that he regards her as possessing the image of God only secondarily. The male alone possesses the image of God normatively. Thus in his discussion of the image of God, reflected in the Trinity (see De Trinitate 7.7.10) Aquinas continues the Augustinian tradition. But he makes woman's 'symbolism' of the inferior side of the self literal by accepting a biological theory of women's inferiority. Aquinas adopted the Aristotelian definition of woman as a 'misbegotten male'. According to Aristotelian biology, the male seed provides the 'form' of the human body. Woman's reproductive roles contribute only the matter that 'fleshes out' this formative power of the male seed.³¹

Augustine believed that although women could share equally in spiritual redemption, their full participation in the image of God was secondary. The implication, which is not clearly stated, is that physically, mentally, or spiritually she is not equal to the male. And what was symbolic in Augustine is stated explicitly in Aquinas.

Elaine Pagels in her article "What Became of God the Mother?" quotes Clement of Alexandria in supporting equality for the sexes.

. . . in describing human nature, he insists that 'men and women share equally in perfection, and are to receive the same instruction and discipline. For the name "humanity" is common to both men and women; and for us "in Christ there is neither male nor female." '32

Here the reference is to male and female nature after salvation. Both are to receive "instruction and discipline" because of what Christ has done in their lives. There is unity once again. Neither is more perfect than the other, but this is reflective after the work of Christ and speaks more to their spiritual rights than to their nature. But it is interesting to see an early example of inclusion for women in teaching and discipline long held for men only.

The core definition, by itself, does not and cannot encompass the conclusions reached by either Augustine or Aquinas as highlighted by Ruether. Some other vehicle, such as a divine command, a sociological, philosophical, or theological system is needed if we are to differentiate treatment of the sexes. The core definition and understanding of male and female created by God, in the image of God, in an original state of perfection, and being made male and female as adham, does not provide a foundation for inequality. Thus a major tenet of feminism, which believes that if there is no difference in natures for male and female then there should be no difference in role or treatment of the sexes, is given initial credibility. However, this does not and should not be

taken as an endorsement of the entire Christian feminist system either. For their conclusions conservatives also rely upon the same "systems." These systems must themselves, be analyzed and evaluated as any other approach or truth claim.

As we analyze the core definition as to which is the correct approach, there is no specific answer. But the burden of proof, it seems to me, would rest not with those who postulate an equality in natures, but with those who would hold to any differentiation. Anyone who espouses treatment, role, function, or anything that requires submission on the part of another, would need to establish a basis for the hierarchical structure that is sought to be implemented. It would seem to me that any subjection of another human being created in the image of God requires a far greater moral justification than a system that asks for equal consideration.

3. Helpmate or Servant?

Does the aspect of woman, created as a helpmate to the male, affect her value or equality? Phyllis Tribble maintains, "The context for the advent of woman is a divine judgment: 'It is not good that adham should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him' (Gen. 2:18). This phrase is relational to that which benefits."³³ Also, with the word *helper* in the English text and the word ezer used in the Hebrew for helper, Tribble states we find a word that ". . . connotes equality: a helper who is a counterpart."³⁴ When God brought the animals

to the male adham, none were found to be his equal, all were inferior. God fellowshiped with the man, but He, of course, was superior. The female adham, who was taken from the male adham, was made equal in nature and status to be a helper of the same kind. Scanzoni and Hardesty in their analysis of Ezer state that it is a noun which is used twenty-one times in the Old Testament. Of these, sixteen times it refers to a helper who is superordinate as in Psalm 121:1-2 "From whence does my help come? My *help* comes from the Lord." "At no time is ezer used to indicate a subordinate helper unless the references in Genesis 2 are taken to be exceptions to the general rule."³⁵ Although meaning cannot always be construed from an analysis of its most common usages, it is more prudent and proper to stay within the confines of a word's general meaning rather than to postulate an exception based upon an a priori theological or cultural bias of woman's inequality. Woman was created to be a helper that would be equal to man in every way.

The hierarchical view of human relationships believes that headship by the man is by divine appointment. This is most readily seen within the context of the family where the wife submits to the husband, the children to the parents, and the husband to God. Francis Schaeffer says that order was introduced because of sin. Schaeffer maintains that the "Bible makes a distinction between the relationship of men as creatures (and therefore equals) and the "offices" God has set up among men. The central thing is the fifth of the Ten

Commandments, 'Honor thy father and thy mother' This is the core of the whole matter."³⁶ There is a place for form and structure because of sin, but that is not all that God requires. There must be a love relationship that fulfills the legal necessity of form and structure.

This carries over into the church where everything is to be done decently and in order (1 Co. 14:40). It would follow logically for Schaeffer that, if there is to be order in the Church, there is to be order in the family and the state as well. Schaeffer continues,

Man is a rebel, and there needs to be order in this poor world; but when I use whatever office God gives me, whether it is in the state, the church, or the home, or as an employer, it is to be for God's glory and for the other person's good.³⁷

This is a difficult argument for Christian feminists to answer. It is not an argument against the nature of women as being less than the nature of men because of their assignment of role or function, but the assignment was by sovereign command. A command that is designed for the overall good of the body due to mankind's rebellion. Schaeffer's approach appears the most reasonable to me. While feminists have no room for nature/function distinctions, mostly due to reactions against the dualism of spirit/matter and the encroachments this philosophy made in the early church and its influence even upon the church fathers, their assumption of "if the same nature then no justification of role differentiation," does not logically or necessarily follow. Jesus' position as Son of God, though equal with God, was still subject to the

Father/God. "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me" (John 6:38). But even more remarkable is the example of the incarnation. Jesus subjected himself to human form to be sin for us and even made Himself subject to His human parents (Luke 2:51).

Because mankind is still subject to sin and lives in a sinful world, which has been cursed by God, there is need for an ordered structure to avoid chaos and anarchy. Male and female are still a unit and possess the same nature, but they have different roles now within that unit.

Philip Hughes states that there is a gradation of headship within the marriage.

God is over Christ the incarnate Son, who is over man, who is over his wife. As head of the home the husband is described in relation to the wife, not as being God, but as imaging God, something that, . . . is not true of the wife. It is simply a relationship of order: it is an expression of the orderliness of creation. But not in a quasimechanical sense; for the 'imaging' displayed by the husband is intended to be a manifestation or reflection of the self-sacrificial love and protection of the divine Redeemer for his bride the church. . . .³⁸

This quote taken from Hughes' book The True Image picks up the same theme of order as mentioned by Schaeffer, but Hughes' emphasis is different. It refers back to the "orderliness of creation." Instead of Schaeffer's divine command for the general welfare, Hughes references the order, male first, which would best image God. This position is more Augustinian than Schaeffer's. Both male and female possess the image of God but the female only in a secondary sense. Somehow the male will better demonstrate the "self-sacrificial

love" of the Redeemer. For Hughes, the creation and redemption are inseparably connected. The husband is to manifest sacrificial love for his wife as Christ does for the Church. The issue of creation order will be discussed later in this chapter.

What the core definition provides for, is a clarity concerning the specific issues. The primary concern, from the core definitions' standpoint, becomes an exegetical issue. What is the best interpretation and analysis of key terms such as ezer, kephale, and other such words or phrases? This is the battleground.

4. The Dualisms of Matter/Spirit and Male/Female

Not only are hierarchical systems in need of thorough review and evaluation, but the dualisms of matter/spirit and the influences on anthropological systems in need of careful appraisal. What connections from dualistic thinking have been made to male and female? Beverly Harrison states that,

The full force of Christian sex-negativism cannot be understood, however, without recognizing the interconnection between the spiritualistic dualism, with its antisexual and anti-body bias, and that other dualism, gender dualism in which, male is superior to female.³⁹

Is there within Christian historical thought an oppressive "anti-body," "antisexual" influence that has in fact shaped our theology? Again by reviewing the core definition, there is no support or foundation for establishing a dualism of matter/spirit that interrelates to male/female.

This would be a Platonic approach that essentially has been rejected by the conservatives. However, whether or not these influences have been totally eliminated is another question. Francis Schaeffer correctly reminds us that "the emphasis in the Scripture is upon the unity of the person -- the unity of the soul and the body."⁴⁰ There can be no justification of role differentiation based upon a dualistic methodology of body/spirit -- male/female. If this methodological dichotomy occurs, there is disruption within adham himself, and in the man/woman relationship. From the core definition adham is best understood as male and female, a position not dissimilar to Barth's but not with all of his conclusions. Again I would suggest that it is the systems that are built from the premise of unity and equality before God, that are in need of review and scrutiny. Berkouwer reminds us of the change that has occurred through time as theologians have reflected on this concept of unity.

Contemporary theologians lean in this direction . . . which is related to a strong consciousness of the integral unity of man, producing an opposition to any 'division' of man into 'spiritual' and 'bodily' aspects and viewing the content of the image as lying exclusively in the former aspect.⁴¹

I believe the core definition readily supports this inclusive aspect of humanity. Scripture supports both camps on the emphasis of the whole man in the image of God. Scripture never limits the image of God to the spiritual, as providing the only proper analogy between God and humanity.

5. Creation Order

The order of creation is not a valid argument concerning woman's value, worth, or her designation as second to man in some hierarchical order. If that were true, argues feminists, then since man was made from the dust of the ground he should be subordinate to the earth. In 1 Co. 11:8-9 Paul states, "For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man." Hardesty and Scanzoni argue that the thrust of Paul's teaching here in chapter 11, is that mankind is a reflection of the Godhead, as Christ, the second Adam, is a reflection of God in the flesh, rather than a teaching about the importance of the creation order. Hardesty and Scanzoni continue,

Woman reflects humanity or perhaps more precisely in this passage the wife represents her husband. Paul is not here making a major theological point but simply using what seems to us a rather curious rabbinic interpretation to underscore his instruction that in order to glorify God alone in worship men should have uncovered heads while women should veil their heads to obscure the 'glory of man'.⁴²

And yet, the whole creation account is evidenced by a hierarchical structure laid out meticulously in Genesis 1. However, there appears to be no suggestion or text that would support a carry-over of structure into the male/female relationship. It is interesting to note that while Scanzoni and Hardesty state the obviousness of the hierarchical nature of the creation order, Gilbert Bilezikian points out that this

does not carry over to the relationship between the man and woman.

. . . nowhere is it stated that man was intended to rule over woman within God's design. The fact that no reference is made to authority roles between man and woman in a text otherwise permeated with the concept of hierarchical organization indicates that their relationship was one of mutuality in equality and that considerations of supremacy of one over the other were alien to it and may not be imposed upon it.⁴³

This "fact that no reference is made" is primarily an argument from silence, but the text is silent in both directions.

Bilezikian's contribution here is pointing out that the text stops short of continuing the hierarchical structure, as it extends to the male and female. The relationship of the man and woman was to be one of mutual responsibility in an equality of natures. The core definition cannot support a hierarchical system based upon the creation order. Nor does Scripture implicate such a system in the creation account. Those who would make such a case do so from a New Testament interpretive framework. That is, they use interpretations from New Testament passages to explain what is meant in Genesis 1 and 2. Although this may end up being the most accurate approach, it is not evidenced by the core definition.

6. Consequences of Sin

Here, however, is where the major divergences begin to take place between conservative and Christian feminists. There is agreement among conservatives and feminists that humanity has a problem. We described this earlier as a

corruption in humanity. This corruption has affected humanity's relationship with God and their brother and sisters. The unity was broken. Ruether in quoting Martin Luther on the original state of the woman and how sin has affected her says:

For the punishment that she is now subjected to the man was imposed on her after sin and because of sin, just as the other hardships and dangers were: travail, pain, and countless other vexations. Therefore Eve was not like the woman of today: her state was far better and more excellent, and she was in no respect inferior to Adam, whether you count the qualities of the body or those of the mind.⁴⁴

Luther's point is that we cannot know the original Eve from the current one except through negation. What woman was, was not as she is today. According to Luther, Eve was at one time in no way inferior to Adam. This also means he believes, and logically so, that woman is inferior today because of sin. Sin was the cause for her "hardships, dangers, travail, pain, and countless other vexations."

There was an original intention for humanity that has been corrupted. Harold Brown states, "It is the historic fall that explains the pervasiveness and power of evil as we experience it. Further, a historical fall means that evil is neither a part of God's purpose nor a necessary attribute of human nature."⁴⁵ Since evil is not a part of God's original plan, and female subordination may be a result of the fall, then that which continues as a result of sin is wrong and should not be practiced within the redemption that we experience in Christ. Of course the major issue here then becomes whether or not female subjugation is a result of the

fall as commanded by God or if the subjugation is part of the corruption of human relationships? If it is the latter, then the Church must begin to evaluate relationships in light of Christ's deliverance from the bondage of sin and sin's affects.

Phyllis Tribble's analysis of this problem makes a separation between what was cursed and what was judged. Judgments are not mandates.

Though the tempter (the serpent) is cursed, the woman and the man are not. But they are judged, and the judgments are commentaries on the disastrous effects of their shared disobedience. They show how terrible human life has become as it stands between creation and grace. We misread if we assume that these judgments are mandates. They describe; they do not prescribe. They protest; . . . not condone. Of special concern are the words telling the woman that her husband shall rule over her (3:16). This statement is not license for male supremacy, but rather it is a condemnation of that very pattern. Subjugation and supremacy are perversions of creation.⁴⁶

Tribble provides a thought provoking analysis. The verse in 3:16 of Genesis, which has been used by countless biblicists and conservatives as justification for male supremacy, may in fact be a description and not a prescription. This does highlight a major divergence between feminists and conservatives. Yet, it is interesting to note that this verse comes after the fall of humanity and must certainly be viewed in the context of not belonging to God's original plan for relationships. Tribble continues, "Whereas in creation man and woman know harmony and equality, in sin they know alienation and discord. Grace makes possible a new beginning."⁴⁷ A question must be asked. Are we violating Scripture if we treat women or wives as equals in decision making and leadership in the

home and church? Tribble has issued a valid challenge. Her distinction of the serpent being cursed but not the man and woman is critical. According to orthodox theology Satan will never be redeemed. The ground which was also cursed will ultimately be destroyed by fire and be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth. But mankind can be redeemed, not just his soul, but his mind and consequently his actions and relationships.

Tribble is partially correct in stating that the judgment of God in Genesis 3 is descriptive. Yet, it is also prescriptive for the man and woman in that it provides a temporary remedy for the chaos introduced in their relationship. Like the imperfect animal sacrifices of old which were unable to take away sins, [they were a requirement of the Law (see Hebrews 10:1-10)], the social order introduced by God after the Fall, was not to be mistaken as God's original intent or design. We do not violate Scripture if we treat women as full partners and equals in our human relationships.

Philip Hughes identifies the corruption as man's "determination to deny God as the source of his personhood and to sever the I-Thou line that links him to his Creator."⁴⁸ It is an autonomous willful assertion of individuality that results in mankind being isolated from God and himself. Why is this so? "Because man cannot cease to be what by constitution he is, it is a stupid and a futile act. . . "⁴⁹ It takes an act of the will to deny the very being man is, a creature of God, stamped with the personality of God. As a

result of this act of the will a curse was pronounced against the sinner. His work became toilsome labor and "His personal communion with God shattered. . . ." ⁵⁰ Man then tries to hide himself from God because of his guilt but "this is also the shattering of the meaning of his existence." ⁵¹ Hughes believes that mankind was cursed. A curse that cannot be remedied except spiritually in this existence. Since man certainly continues to toil and labor even after salvation, his deliverance will not be complete until total redemption is achieved (eschatalogical in nature), a redemption of spirit and body.

He has robbed himself of harmony with his creator, harmony with himself, and harmony with his fellow human beings. This is the source and explanation of all that is wrong with man and the world he inhabits. It is the sickness unto death from which man in his fallenness inescapably suffers. ⁵²

Spiritually the fellowship can be restored through Christ. However, it is limited to a spiritual restoration. Yet the issue still concerns us. Does the spiritual restoration not impact the social? And if so to what degree? Hughes would agree that there are social implications because of our salvation, but the primary emphasis is spiritual.

For Gilbert Bilezikian, the consequence of sin was the introduction of the ruler/subject hierarchy. "The entrance of sin in human life dislocated the 'one flesh' union into a ruler/subject hierarchy." ⁵³ The relationship between man and woman was corrupted. Humanity's relationship with the Creator was broken.

The fall had catastrophic consequences for the relationship between God and humans. The humans became alienated from God, and each one of them assumed primal dependency on his or her original element. The ruler/subject relationship between Adam and Eve began after the fall.⁵⁴

The obvious conclusion for Bilezikian is that the ruler/subject relationship is Satanic in origin. He is similar to Tribble in describing the ruler/subject relationship as a distortion of God's original intent which should be discarded in favor of a new community of relationships. Since the fall was the origin of inequity on the human plane, there is no reason to continue practicing that which is a distortion of the original plan.

What God did in the Old Covenant was to provide a moral code which did not eliminate the corruption of relationships that had occurred since the fall, but provided a partial revelation of God's intent to restore all things through His Son.

The advantages of divine revelation and of moral guidance available to the old-covenant people did not suffice to help them recover the reciprocity that had prevailed before the fall. Man continued to rule over woman under the cover of a depraved family structure that dehumanized both.⁵⁵

We find in Bilezikian a position that espouses that God through the Old Covenant and Law, attempts to modify patriarchal attitudes and practices. This is not the only reason for the Law, but he certainly implies that this is one of the more important purposes. However, since mankind's socialization had become so warped and distorted, not even the Law and its accompanying requirements were able to correct

this area. In this writer's opinion, not only is this position unlikely, it would be difficult to defend. For even the Decalogue, which is God's most concise moral code, mentions not coveting your neighbor's wife and property, but nothing about coveting your neighbor's husband. Yes, the principle of not coveting anyone is certainly implied and understood today, but strictly from the framework of Bilezikian's thinking that the Law and other revelations by God is an attempt by God to rectify patriarchalism, I believe is a weak argument. Surely if God wanted to address inequities in human relationships He could have been a little more direct as was done concerning the issue of stealing. God simply said, "You shall not steal."

Mankind's society and socialization have been corrupted. Personal relationships are not what they were originally nor should be. The corruption in relationships and society plays a particular role in our thinking and attitudes, says Bilezikian.

. . . fallen society overwhelms us from a very tender age with the physiological and symbolic differences that exist between the sexes. This process of socialization is so thorough and so pervasive that it becomes second nature for us to regard the opposite sex as opposite.⁵⁶

As members of this "fallen society" we accept what is abnormal and corrupted and think oddly or adversely to that which is proper. Even Jesus, when confronting the people, often had to correct their thinking by challenging them with words such as "You have heard it said, . . . (thus and so), but I say unto you" Bilezikian believes, that so it is in the manner

of human relationships that have been distorted for so long, that females who are not opposites of men at all, are viewed as such, and therefore, thought of as less than men. There is in all of us a tendency toward an egocentric worldview where normalcy and good begins with us and extends comparatively to others. This happens with other men and with women. And because others do not share our qualities or normalcy, there is the tendency to view others as a little "less than."

From the core definition we understand two things implicitly: 1) Humanity has a sin problem, and, 2) because of sin, relationships were corrupted between humanity and humanity and God. There is disagreement as to which priority the order should take in number one, but the list usually includes spiritual and moral depravity, wrong thinking, and imperfect social systems. What the core definition provides for is a focusing of the corruption issue concerning relationships. Where the debate should continue between conservatives and feminists is over, "What was the nature of relationships between the man and woman before the corruption?"

7. Centrality of Jesus as a Solution

In this final section we will look at the importance of Jesus as proposed by conservative and feminist authors. I will concentrate on feminist positions first and primarily since the conservative viewpoints will be more widely known.

Scanzoni and Hardesty

For Scanzoni and Hardesty, transcendency in Christ provides a solution to corruption in relationships between men and women.

Christianity has the potential of offering transcendency as the solution to the problem of suspiciousness and separation between the sexes -- a transcendency made possible because men and women stand on equal footing as fellow members of the kingdom. Galatians 3:28, in our opinion, holds the key to bringing harmony and removing the dissonant clash that is bound to exist as long as one sex is looked upon as superior and the other as being inferior and the source of evil.⁵⁷

Through Jesus Christ and the work of redemption there is a solution to the relational problems between the sexes.

All are equal before Christ. The truth in Galatians 3:28 is the capstone upon which an equality of believers is possible, transcending sexual identities and their barriers. Biblical truth becomes pivotal in establishing their position.

R. R. Ruether

Ruether is hesitant to fully embrace Jesus as he is traditionally understood and read. ". . . Christ as symbol is problematic for feminist theology. The Christologic symbols have been used to enforce male dominance. . . ."⁵⁸ Ruether believes that even if we were to get beyond masculine Christology and find the historical Jesus and His true praxis, it is questionable whether a model of redeemed humanity is historically retrievable. And most importantly there needs to be a model from women's experience. Yet, Ruether is not willing to give up on Jesus either.

This does not mean that feminist theology may not be able to affirm the person of Jesus of Nazareth as a positive

model of redemptive humanity. But this model must be seen as partial. . . .⁵⁹

What is redeemable for Ruether is Jesus' teaching and example. Jesus criticized existing power structures. He turned conventional thinking on its head. "The first will be last and the last first. The poor will be filled . . . the mighty put down The prostitutes and tax collectors will go into the Kingdom of God ahead of the Scribes and Pharisees."⁶⁰ Jesus is seen on the side of the oppressed, but more than that, he sought to reshape relationships among the people with God and with each other.

Ruether challenges the idea that Jesus' teaching was only to affect people spiritually. Otherwise, where would be the relevancy of His message to the audience to whom He was speaking? What the mainstream church has done today is to establish existing power structures and the resulting social injustices in the name of an otherworldly Christ, which are the very structures Jesus challenged.

And, it was Jesus who confronted people with the cost of discipleship by declaring, "in order to follow Jesus one must 'hate' (put aside one's loyalty to) father and mother, sisters and brothers. . . . This new community is a community of equals, not of master and servants, father and children."⁶¹ The relationship that abolishes all others in the Jesus community would be the Abba God relationship. "'You are to call no man father, master or Lord'. The relationship between Christians is to be one of mutual service and not of mastery and servitude."⁶² For Ruether, Jesus provides an initial

example, teaching, and redemptive opportunity for a new community of believers based upon equality and mutuality.

"Redeemed humanity, reconnected with imago dei, means . . . recovering aspects of our full psychic potential. . . ." ⁶³

E. S. Fiorenza

Fiorenza compares Jesus with radical feminists' idea of spirituality in the goddess religion. This comparison is done from the basis that those who preach Jesus ". . . spell out that Jesus rejected all hierarchical forms and power in his community of followers and explicitly warned that Christian leadership should not be exercised in the 'power to Lord over others', but in serving." ⁶⁴ Jesus is sought out because of His opposition to existing power structures. When His mother and brothers sought him in Mark 3:31-35, Jesus' response was to declare a new inclusive definition of family. A family that would be comprised of the community of disciples (His new brothers and sisters). The ones who did God's will were His mother, sisters and brothers.

From Galatians 3:28, Fiorenza maintains we have a pre-Pauline baptismal confession used by Paul to support his view of a new community of believers. "In the new, Spirit-filled community of equals all distinctions of race, religion, class and gender are abolished. All are equal and one in Jesus Christ." ⁶⁵ Jesus is viewed as a cornerstone for a new and equal community.

Finally for Fiorenza, Jesus is valuable for His usurping of Scripture. ". . . Jesus . . . realized freedom

towards Scripture and tradition for the sake of human well-being and wholeness (Mark 2:27). . . ."66 Feminists use this as an example and justification for a critical examination of the Bible in terms of women's liberation.

M. Daly

Even more radical feminists such as Mary Daly have grudging admiration for Jesus.

The Jesus of the Gospels was a free person who challenged ossified beliefs and laws. Since he was remarkably free of prejudice against women and treated them as equals insofar as the limitations of his culture would allow, it is certain that he would be working with them in their liberation today.⁶⁷

For Daly, Jesus would no doubt be at the NOW conventions and pushing for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. The question that we should pose to Daly is how could Jesus, raised and brought up in a patriarchal society, be so "remarkably free of prejudice"? A final comment from radical feminists is Hester Eisenstein commenting on Daly's analysis of Christianity.

The Trinity, the cross, the Chalice of the Mass, the virgin birth of Jesus, and the rebirth of Jesus in the resurrection, all drew on and transformed elements of the Goddess religion as retained in Greek mythology. But in the Christian version, female symbols were turned into male: thus the rebirth of the Son of God repeated the myth of Demeter and Persephone.⁶⁸

Though Eisenstein approaches negatively the issue of Christ, yet her energy is directed to the centrality of Christ and its borrowings from mythical religions. All the symbols of Christianity have been borrowed from Greek mythology or distorted from what was the Goddess religion. (See comments on endnote 70 concerning this diatribe.) Yet, through all

this Daly, states that Jesus remains "free of prejudice"? As to how this occurred, Daly remains silent.

D. L. Carmody

Carmody sees in Jesus and the Christian religion an essential kernel of truth which centers on the problem of evil.

For the Christian delineation of the problem of evil and its solution stems from the axial part of Jesus story, his death, and resurrection. Convinced that there is a solid historical nucleus to the reports of Jesus' death and resurrection, most Christian theology has probed the problem of evil more realistically, and I would say more profoundly, than Goddess religion does.⁶⁹

Carmody provides some insightful critiques of feminism's attempt to move away from the historical Jesus in the Goddess religions. Jesus is historical and provides the only "realistic" approach to answering the problem of evil which feminists would say certainly includes patriarchy.⁷⁰

A. Spencer

Finally, for Aida Spencer, Jesus is central if we are to get beyond the curse that not only affects women and men but their relationships as well. "Jesus redeems not just humanity's curse but nature's curse as well."⁷¹ Jesus' death provided the means for all humanity to share the Spirit of God. His Spirit no longer dwelt in a place but in the hearts of men and women. This was a radical transformation for all humanity. God moved out from the Holy of Holies to the Court of the Women and Gentiles, to break down barriers. "The very barriers Jesus had dismantled were later to be rebuilt: barriers between priest and layperson, man and woman, Jew and

Gentile. . . ."72 These barriers were rebuilt by men and prejudice. But it was Jesus who opened the door for full participation in the Spirit for women to move "Beyond the Curse."

J. Calvin

Christ remedies the problem of mankind's original sin.

. . . that sin and death crept in through Adam, only to be abolished through Christ. . . . Here, then, is the relationship between the two: Adam, implicating us in his ruin, destroyed us with himself, but Christ restores us to salvation by grace.⁷³

All humanity was in need of rescuing. "The whole human race perished in the person of Adam. . . until God, . . . appeared as Redeemer in the person of his only-begotten Son."⁷⁴ Jesus the God-man redeems all of humanity who are helpless in sin.

F. Schaeffer

Jesus Christ restores the unity in humanity.

"Salvation is a unity. When I accepted Christ as my Savior, when my guilt was gone, I returned to the place for which I was originally made."⁷⁵ "Second, when I accept Christ as my Savior, I immediately come into a new relationship with God the Son."⁷⁶ Jesus makes it possible for a new restored unity of the male and female through their relationship with God. Third, the blood of Jesus will provide future restoration of all things that have been disordered because of sin.

G. C. Berkouwer

Jesus Christ not only changes relationships, restores unity, provides salvation, but changes human nature.

The new man - that is the mighty change which in Christ comes over human nature. It is not a change in the sense

of a 'transubstantiation'. . . . Rather man comes to his true nature, . . . as God intended it to be No matter how deep-seated the differences between men may be, in Christ the tension and convulsiveness vanish before the new nature.⁷⁷

This new nature is described by Berkouwer as a right or corrected relationship with God.

P. Brand and P. Yancey

Paul Brand and Philip Yancey describe an interesting concept of the restored image of God through Christ.

. . . we will center on a community, that group of God's people who are called, . . . Christ's Body. All of us joined to Him are an extension of the Incarnation. God reproduces and lives out His image in millions of ordinary people like us. . . . We are called to bear that image as a Body because any one of us taken individually would present an incomplete image, one partly false and always distorted, . . . But collectively, in all our diversity, we can come together as a community of believers to restore the image of God in the world.⁷⁸

The image of God is best reflected through the community of believers, the body of Christ, which is made up of male and female. The image of God is dynamic, not static as it is "lived out" by Christians. How this is done is a "mystery," declares the authors. This is not to be confused with eastern religions where the individual is to lose one's identity in unity. (For further development of eastern religions and their critique, please see endnote 70).

Finally, several factors become apparent from the core definition as we explored various viewpoints and positions regarding Jesus. First, Jesus is central to both feminists and conservatives when they discuss human nature. Second, Jesus provides a positive step toward finding a solution to the problem in human relationships. Third, those systems that

do not accept Jesus as part of the solution, have a real dilemma in resolving the problem of evil. Fourth, Jesus' ministry and life was unique in His treatment of women. Fifth, Jesus did challenge social and religious structures of His day in order to better humanity. What then may we conclude about all this?

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Nothing is more usual and more natural for those, who pretend to discover any thing new to the world in philosophy and the sciences, than to insinuate the praises of their own systems, by decrying all those, which have been advanced before them.
David Hume¹

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the previous discussions. It is prudent to state that it has not been my intent to necessarily suggest that the methodology presented here is better than all others. Nevertheless, I do believe that there needs to be a more productive effort on the part of conservatives (non-feminists) and Christian feminists to dialogue and establish areas of common ground as I suggested in Chapter II.

A. A Brief Evaluation of Christian Feminist Hermeneutics

Before I summarize the conclusions reached in this paper, a brief discussion concerning Scripture and its use is in order. Elisabeth S. Fiorenza in chapter II indicated a hermeneutical approach used generally by reformist feminists that I believe warrants a brief discussion.

Inherent with both Christian feminists and conservatives is a reliance upon Scripture. Yet, there is a strong

divergence after that statement especially in the area of hermeneutics or how the term "reliance" might be defined.

1. A Conservative Apologetic and Hermeneutics

Conservatives traditionally maintain that the Bible is the Word of God, inspired, inerrant in the original autographs, and the reliable source of truth to guide our lives and to further our knowledge of God. In fact the only proper understanding of Jesus is through the Scriptures.

But the character of Jesus can be known only from the New Testament records; the influence of His character is therefore tantamount to the influence of the New Testament records. . . . Whether our approach is theological or historical, it does matter whether the New Testament documents are reliable or not.²

As F. F. Bruce states, only through the Scriptures can we know of Jesus' moral purpose. Bruce documents the reliability and trustworthiness of the New Testament in his work The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable? (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984).

Perhaps one of the strongest arguments for the authority of Scripture comes from Jesus, who taught that the Old Testament was the authoritative Word of God (Luke 24:44). Jesus also confirmed that His disciples would be guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth (John 16:13). This proposition, that establishes the authority of Scripture because of the deity of Jesus, is a retrospective argument. With Jesus' deity validated by His resurrection, His claims are also established.³

Popular writer Josh McDowell, in his two books Evidence That Demands a Verdict, and More Evidence That Demands a Verdict, presents a thorough compendium of evidence, quotes and arguments about the Bible's uniqueness, its preparation, the canon, its reliability and historicity.⁴ In the second book he examines arguments against the Bible's supernatural origin, the various literary hypothesis, different form and redaction criticisms, and evidence for the trust worthiness of Scripture.⁵ I would also suggest Harold Lindsell's book The Battle For the Bible, as a source for the importance of inerrancy. I will not attempt to reconstruct any of those arguments here. Sufficient for this discussion is that conservatives uphold and defend a high view of Scripture.

It is Scripture that teaches conservatives that man is God's creature, he was made in God's image, and had a personal relationship with God. Scripture informs man of the source of his corruption and alienation. And it is Scripture that provides the answer to that corruption and a restored relationship with God and his fellow man. As Francis Schaeffer said, "The Scriptures give the key to two kinds of knowledge -- the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of men and nature."⁶ While we do not have "exhaustive knowledge, we have true and unified knowledge."⁷ We have what Schaeffer calls "true truth." We have a God who loves the whole person, not just the Platonic understanding of the soul being of far greater value than the body. Scripture gives us knowledge

that even the body is important. The Bible is the authoritative archetype for life.

Conservatives believe, not only that the Bible is the authoritative, reliable, "archetype for life," but that there is "a relationship between the human mind and the divine mind that is sufficient to ground the communication of truth from God to humans. . . ." ⁸ Ronald Nash reasons convincingly that humanity can know the divine mind because there has been sufficient revelation and communication through propositional truth (the Word of God) to man because of the relationship of the divine Logos to the human logos. Nash, in quoting Carl F. Henry, continues:

. . . the God of the Bible is a rational God; that the divine Logos is central to the Godhead and is the agent in creation and redemption; that man was made in the divine image for intelligible communion with God; that God communicates his purposes and truths about himself in the biblical revelation; that the Holy Spirit uses truth as a means of persuasion and conviction; and that Christian experience includes not simply a surrender of the will but a rational assent to the truth of God. ⁹

Since it is reasonable to believe that God communicated to humanity His will and plan for our lives, one cannot dismiss Scriptural references about relationships simply because they do not "fit" into our political or social ideology. Liberal feminists, especially, reject most Scripture outright because of patriarchal influences and texts. However, this is simply an a priori rejection of the biblical texts.

2. An Evaluation of Feminist Hermeneutics

The feminist approach to Scripture varies depending upon the group one comes from. As I mentioned at the beginning of Chapter III, there are conservatives, reformists and radicals. The following excerpts are primarily from reformist feminists.

Probably the single most accurate term that could be used to describe most Christian feminist views about Scripture and its traditional interpretation, is "suspicion." Christian feminists wonder if they have gotten the real story. Even conservative Christian feminists, who maintain a relatively high view of Scripture, have considerable suspicion for much of the exegetical work and theology produced to date. For example, I will give several quotes from Christian feminists that underscore this point.

Sheila Collins,

The herstorian recognizes and affirms the noble impulse, the thrust of promise and fulfillment which lies behind the biblical epic, *but laments some of the ways in which this impulse was translated.* She is therefore not likely to find in particular biblical passages, events or people that completeness of intent that the tradition claims of itself, but looks before, behind, beyond, and even outside the tradition as well as at it for her affirmation. . . .¹⁰

Paul K. K. Tong

Today we are well aware that *patriarchal prejudices* were reflected in biblical narratives and theological interpretations; that the *Church Fathers twisted the early Christian teachings to afford justifications of ecclesiastical practices against women; and that Christian spirituality became an ideology pitted against the flesh and sexuality, i.e., against women.*¹¹

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza

All interpretations of texts depend on the presuppositions, prejudices, and questions of those who attempt to

exegete them. *Since most biblical scholars and historians are men, they usually study and preach the New Testament from a male point of view.*¹²

Rosemary Radford Ruether

Feminist theology seeks to transcend the dichotomy of biblical exclusivism or a reversed exclusivism that would call for the rejection of biblical religion in favor of a 'goddess religion.' Instead, it should seek to recapitulate the religious journey of . . . both non-Christian and Christian traditions, both suppressed and dominant . . . 'to a new synthesis.'¹³

Human experience is both the starting point and the ending point of the circle of interpretation. . . . *If the symbol does not speak authentically to experience, it becomes dead and is discarded or altered to provide new meaning.*¹⁴

*Whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts the full humanity of women is, therefore, to be appraised as not redemptive. . . . The uniqueness of feminist theology is not the critical principle of 'full humanity' but that women claim this principle for themselves.*¹⁵

Margaret Farley

The biblical witness, on the contrary, claims to present a truth that will heal us, make us whole; it will free us, not enslave us to what violates our very sense of truth and justice. . . . As a revelation of truth, it asks for something less like a submission of will and more like an opening of the imagination -- and thence the whole mind and heart. In its own terms, then, *it cannot be believed unless it rings true to our deepest capacity for truth and goodness. If it contradicts this, it is not to be believed. If it falsifies this, it cannot be accepted.*¹⁶

*(Passages are italicized for emphasis, not in the original copies.)

In each of the above selections the theme of "suspicion" is evident. Fiorenza summarizes the approach by feminists into four categories.

First, feminist and liberation interpreters struggle with the texts that they believe historically have been used against them and that deny them their full participation in

the Church and in their faith. Therefore, the hermeneutical approach is one of suspicion rather than accepting authority. All texts are viewed with scepticism.

Second, since men have dominated the interpretive apparatus throughout history concerning Scripture, women must now exercise their authority as a community of believers to determine if the texts truly are liberating to women. A critical evaluation is utilized by women to "correlate both the prophetic-biblical and the feminist-critical principles with each other."¹⁷ This allows for the discovery of liberating truths from the texts.

Third, because of opposition from conservatives, feminists must challenge the Word of God and undercut its authority specifically in those texts that are patriarchal in nature. Therefore, feminist need to:

. . . denounce all texts and traditions that perpetrate and legitimate oppressive patriarchal structures and ideologies. We should no longer proclaim them as the 'word of God'. . . if we do not want to turn God into a God of oppression.¹⁸

Fourth, this challenging of patriarchal texts is balanced by seeking to recover all passages and traditions that speak to women's experience and sufferings. For this indeed is "herstory." This becomes what Fiorenza identifies as the "hermeneutics of remembrance."¹⁹ Women therefore become the center of biblical history.

As for conservative Christian feminists, they are much closer to their conservative non-feminist counterparts in their view of Scripture. They would hold to the position that

the Word of God, if properly interpreted, can be liberating and authenticating to women. Authors such as Spencer, Scanzoni, Hardesty, Mollenkott, Carmody, Gundry and others will argue the interpretation of passages and prejudicial hermeneutics as to why women have been subjugated and oppressed. Only as Scripture is properly understood will it provide full liberation to all the body of Christ.

3. A Critique of the Feminist Hermeneutic Approach

Christian feminists and particularly reformists have several issues with which they must contend. There is the obvious *a priori* ideological commitment to the oppression of women that presupposes and prejudices their hermeneutical approach. This is typical in liberation methodology. In fact, Judith Weidman states, "Feminists have taken a clue from black theology, and they draw upon liberation theologies; . . ." ²⁰ In responding to that foundation, Harvie Conn believes that theology's starting point preconditions its outcome.

Liberation theologians insist that theology must start, not with theories and not with views from above, but with 'the view from below.' All theology is necessarily partisan. It starts 'where the pain is, the sufferings of the excluded and oppressed.'²¹

This is the premise that feminists use: "What is it that speaks to the pain and suffering of women?" In evaluating this premise, it seems to me that to replace ideologies of male supremacy with the ideologies of female oppression leaves

us no better off for securing and knowing what is true. Any sociological presupposition required for interpreting Scripture leaves one open to relativism. This not to say that the Scripture should be separated from any social or political scrutiny, but the gospel must view the ideology and not ideology the gospel. Ideological prejudices and theologically "correct" lenses are used by conservatives and feminists alike.

Second, to reject any text because one does not agree with its message and or because it has been traditionally interpreted by male scholars, is simply an *a priori* rejection. Again, logic would seem to indicate from the Christian feminist perspective, that if male predominance means error in understanding, then the same would hold true for female predominance. At the very least, the best one could hope for in arriving at truth would be some sort of synthesis between conservatives and feminists in regard to Scripture.

Third, to move beyond the bounds of Scripture to incorporate other liberating truth and experience for women, as some reformists argue, and place those texts on the same level as the Bible, challenges the very core of inspiration, inerrancy, or truth. This is no doubt the intent of reformists, but it leaves us again with a totally relativistic foundation for truth. For, if determining truth is established upon what speaks correctly to the interpreting audience, then truth will obviously vary from audience to audience. There remains no absolute from which to navigate.

Fourth, feminists challenge the supernatural content of Scripture in an attempt to establish the prejudicial arguments against accepting all of the biblical witness. For feminists to admit supernatural guidance in the collection of Scripture, severely undermines their positions. For example, Jesus proclaimed the Pentateuch was written by Moses, which speaks directly to the issue of inerrancy and inspiration, John 7:19. If Jesus was divine, and under divine inspiration, he established some of the most patriarchal accounts in the Pentateuch. This creates a difficulty that feminists would rather avoid. Therefore, feminists challenge the supernatural aspects of the various accounts in Scripture. But even Rudolph Bultmann, an anti-supernaturalist, asserts that Jesus accepted the infallibility of Scripture.

Jesus agreed always with the scribes of His time in accepting without question the authority of the (Old Testament) Law. When he was asked by the rich man, 'What must I do to inherit eternal life,' he answered, 'You know the commandments,' and he repeated the well known Old Testament Decalogue. . . . Jesus did not attack the Law but assumed its authority²²

This method by feminists essentially incorporates an anti-supernatural presupposition to the biblical texts. For one cannot accept the truths of the resurrection, virgin birth, or miracles without believing in the supernatural content and origin of the Bible. But like Bultmann, feminists seek to demythologize the Bible. They seek that core of truth beyond Scripture. However, this is nothing new, but rather a variation of the historical-critical method.

Yet there is an element within the feminist hermeneutic which I believe warrants taking a second look, which I will mention a little later in my conclusion. Generally, the approach advocated by reformers in Christian feminism fail for the above mentioned reasons and other arguments that I will not take time to list here.²³

B. What Can Be Learned, What Can Be Gained and Future Research

Finally, there are several things that can be observed from the material presented. First, the general objectives of this paper have been reached. As I established earlier, this methodology provides a bridge of communication for cooperation between Christian feminists and conservatives. Name calling or ridicule accomplish very little by way of ascertaining what truth is or should be. It is the contention of this writer that sufficient common ground has been demonstrated between feminists and conservatives concerning the subject of human nature to permit focused dialogue and debate. This common ground of a core definition of human nature also permits the second general reason for this thesis, which allowed for a comparative analysis of various positions concerning what human nature is or is not. Instead of talking past one another, we can begin by affirming areas of mutual agreement and proceed to discrepancies in systems and interpretations. For example, this issue of scriptural authority,

infallibility, and inerrancy becomes more clearly focused once there is a general understanding of the idea of "reliance upon Scripture" as used by feminists and conservatives. The third general area of implications for the two groups from a core definitional standpoint has been highlighted in Chapter III. And fourth, divergences and disagreements become more pronounced so that future research and debate may continue.

Second, a core definitional approach has as one of its presuppositions the tenet of supernaturalism. Specifically, there is a Creator responsible for humanity, animating humanity, in fellowship with that humanity, and maintaining its continuance. There is no independent existence of humanity in the core definitional approach. We must ask then, what systems best account for this supernatural origin? We have demonstrated that either conservatives or the camp of conservative feminists have a means by which to account for humanity's creation, fall, and redemption. Reformists at this point have no objective starting point and probably will face their most difficult obstacle in explaining the problem of evil, as well as the historical evidences for Christianity.

Third, I believe the challenges of Christian feminism are unique and capable of providing a more unified view of humanity. Traditional theology should be reanalyzed to discern patriarchal prejudices and agendas that have been incorporated into orthodoxy. Matter/female and spirit/male dualisms should be scrutinized and rejected when applied to humanity.

In traditional and conservative theology and history, mankind is presented as a unity of male and female, but not quite, due to the special role responsibilities of the female, the order of creation, the woman's responsibility to submit and other gender specific assignments. In so many words, she is not to function equally with the male. As I have pointed out, differences in treatment or roles where one party is required to submit, inherently requires a moral argument or premise to establish such treatment. I believe the greater responsibility for proof lies with those that insist upon the submission of another.

Discrimination of any kind is a monstrous denial of the oneness of the church of Christ. The Scripture promises destruction for anyone who thus destroys the church, the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16-17) and judgment without mercy to anyone who is found guilty of practicing discrimination within the body of Christ (James 2:1-13).²⁴

However, through a combination of Schaeffer and Tribble a reasonable and correct answer to this issue is provided by addressing it from a chaos/order necessity hypothesis (*Schaeffer*). Because of sin and its affect upon human relationships, God described what would happen (*Tribble*), but also prescribed a remedy that was short-term in its purpose until the long-term solution in Christ was provided.

Traditionalists have relied upon just that, tradition, to establish the woman's place. This position presents a challenge to conservatives (non-feminists) that we have not fully answered. Yes, we may have convinced ourselves, but if the core definition points out that the relational differentiation between males and females took place after the fall,

which I believe we can conclude, then we may need to rethink what it is that Christ restores and removes in light of corrupted relationships.

The answer may be in two areas. One, which I have already mentioned by Francis Schaeffer, provides for the necessity of order in the world, church, and family because of sin and was therefore instituted by God. Or two, which the first does not preclude, is that in Christ full equality of the sexes should be practiced in the Church. This of course is a basic tenet of feminism. This whole debate and its resolution is for another paper.

Fourth, I believe the influences of the dualism of body/spirit, mind/matter, and the carry-over to male/female need to be reexamined in light of those philosophies' reliance upon Greek thought and its impact on the Church Fathers such as Augustine, Aquinas, and others. Kari Borresen documents an excellent case. "The doctrine of the natural subordination of woman is therefore supported by affirming the imperfection not only of her body, but also of her rational faculties."²⁵ She presents a rather convincing case that Aquinas and Augustine both made the connection of subordination of the woman to the man because of inferiority. I believe in taking the Genesis account literally, but reviewing it through a non-dualistic, hierarchical lens may provide a more unified understanding of human nature for male and female.

Fifth, the core definition calls for a humanity that is created in the image of God, that there is an adequate

explanation for corruption in humanity and relationships, and that there is a solution to this corruption. Only the Bible provides a comprehensive answer for all three. Therefore the core definition supports a position that endorses the reliability and trustworthiness of the biblical witness. As a result, many feminists point out that the Bible, and the New Testament more specifically, give many examples of women in significant positions of leadership and authority in the early church. The Bible points out that Jesus by His example and teachings made women full participants in the gospel and that Jesus liberated women to minister in areas where only males were welcome. Feminists rightfully argue, why did Jesus challenge any of the patriarchal traditions if this was part of God's original intent? However, when reformists leave the moorings of the Bible and ask us to search for women's experiences and feelings to find truth, they have asked us to take a leap of faith of which only Kierkegaard could be proud. How far should we take these new opportunities for women? As far as the biblical texts allow. Certainly this debate is and should continue to rage.

Sixth, we understand from feminists their desire to view the Bible as a historical prototype rather than a mythical archetype, as they charge conservatives. "A mythical archetype takes historically limited experiences and texts and posits them as universals that become authoritative and normative for all times and cultures."²⁶ It is a rereading of the Bible from women's perspective and challenging

androcentric scholarship. The weakness of this approach is merely replacing one "mythical archetype" for another. From the core definition we need to look more closely at whether or not cultural experiences and practices have indeed been elevated to the same level and priority of biblical absolutes. As Harvie Conn admits, "I must begin by endorsing the need for a theology with a truly universal orientation. Our theologies have been formed out of the affluent white world, and they display that ideology."²⁷ Not only the dominance of white theology but of male theology, too. Let us not be afraid to reexamine concepts of relationship from a feminine perspective to determine the truth claims of those systems. The prototype/archetype issue is but one of those systems to be evaluated.

Seventh, if Schaeffer and others are correct that God imposed structure in the relationships of male and female for the purpose of order and the avoidance of chaos, women must ask themselves about their willingness to yield not to some male but to the Sovereign of the universe. And as McMillan, who has not identified herself as a Christian points out, "Clearly not all authority is legitimate, and not all consent to powers above is genuinely given, but it does not follow from this that all submission to authority threatens a person's autonomy."²⁸

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. . . . Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in

everything. Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, (Eph. 5:21,22, 24,25).

Submission has a spiritual connotation that pictures what the Church is to do unto Christ, and provides for God's plan for order and love to be demonstrated in human relationships. The point is, we do not need to "react" in any social or theological direction simply because of the concept of submission. Submission can be incorporated by both sexes in a unified system without the loss of autonomy Ephesians 5:21.

And finally, a core definition is but one element in our human task of understanding what humanity is and our purpose for existence. It provides the basic framework to launch many investigations and discussions with Christian feminists. It postulates by presupposition God's existence, God's desire for a personal relationship with humanity, and our creation in that image. It establishes a springboard to evaluate our estimation of male and female relationships and to answer critical issues raised by that investigation. It places a greater burden on conservatives to justify role differentiation and subjection to males in light of questions concerning human nature and what it is, the lack of substantiated differences qualitatively (either mind or body), or participation in the Church in light of passages such as Gal. 3:28. It asks feminists to rethink their approach to Scripture in light of the hermeneutics of suspicion, to honestly evaluate prejudices they carry into discussion, i.e. if it comes from a male dominated tradition it must be wrong,

and for reformists to evaluate the Bible in light of the issues of inerrancy and truth. For if this cornerstone is removed the entire system, no matter what it may be, stands upon a relativistic foundation.

I will contend that embracing a doctrine of an errant Scripture will lead to disaster down the road. It will result in the loss of missionary outreach; . . . passion, it will lull congregations to sleep and undermine their belief in the full-orbed truth of the Bible; it will produce spiritual sloth and decay; and it will finally lead to apostasy.²⁹

And last, it posits the possibility that men and women are both equally created in the image of God and both bear the imago dei. For all that was corrupted in the fall, Jesus Christ provides a hope of restoration to that which was lost spiritually and socially.

The world Jesus entered largely discriminated against women. He rejected the false criteria upon which the double standard was built. He measured men and women by the same standards, the inner qualities of character and not by such accidents of birth, ethnic or sexual differences. He affirmed women by His manner, example and teaching.³⁰

ENDNOTES

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3. Ibid., pp. 26-27.
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6. Rita M. Gross, "Androcentrism and Androgyny in the Methodology of History of Religions," in Beyond Androcentrism: New Essays on Women and Religion (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), p. 7.
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4. Schaeffer, The Complete Works, vol. 1, The God Who Is There, p. 176.

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21. Ibid., p. 195.
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23. Francis A. Schaeffer, The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer: A Christian View of the Bible As Truth vol. II, Genesis in Space and Time (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1985), p. 31.
24. Ibid., p. 32.
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27. Ibid., p. 59.
28. Ibid., p. 64.
29. Ibid., pp. 65-66.
30. Francis A. Schaeffer, The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian View of Spirituality, vol. III, True Spirituality (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1985), p. 298.
31. Ibid., p. 343
32. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Human Nature, Election, and History, trans. not listed (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977), p. 13. Pannenberg maintains, and I believe correctly so, that

It has been the thesis of Stoic philosophy that originally all men were free and equal by nature; the development of social relationships among men, it was thought, had produced inequalities and corrupted that primordial equality and freedom. Ibid., p. 18.

But Christians believed that in order for humanity to be free, that freedom must be realized through unity with Christ.

Through this communion with Christ the believer has victory over the power of sin and death.

33. Ibid., p. 13.

34. Ibid., p. 22.

35. Ibid., p. 24.

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67. Ibid., p. 34.

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71. Ibid., p. 22.

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75. Phyllis Trible, "Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread," Womanspirit Rising, ed. by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 74.

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popular explanation, research sources, and apologetic on the rejection of the Documentary Hypothesis, please see Josh McDowell, More Evidence That Demands a Verdict (San Bernardino: Campus Crusade for Christ Publishers, 1975), Section II, pp. 25-169.

77. Tribble, "Eve and Adam: Genesis 2-3 Reread," Womanspirit, p. 75.

78. Ibid., p. 77.

79. Ibid., p. 79.

80. Ibid., p. 75.

81. Ibid., p. 80.

82. Ibid.

83. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, "Making Baskets or Building Houses," Daughters of Sarah, September/October 1989, p. 3.

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88. Ibid.

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98. Ibid., p. 157.

99. Gundry, Woman Be Free, p. 32.
100. Ibid., p. 31
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3. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, ed. and comps., Womanspirit Rising (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 193.
4. Sarah M. Grimke, Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Woman (Boston: Source Book Press, 1970), pp. 4-5.

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6. G. C. Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God, p. 29.
7. Aida Benson Spencer, Beyond the Curse (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 1985), p. 37.
8. Gilbert Bilezikian, Beyond Sex Roles (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 58.
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31. Ibid., p. 96.
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38. Hughes, The True Image, p. 22.
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57. Scanzoni and Hardesty, All We're Meant to Be, p. 15.
58. Ruether, Sexism and God-Talk:, p. 114.
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60. Ibid., p. 30.
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63. Ibid., p. 113.
64. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, "Feminist Spirituality, Christian Identity, and Catholic Vision," ed. by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow in Womanspirit Rising (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), p. 138.
65. Fiorenza, "Women in the Early Church," Womanspirit Rising, p. 88.
66. Fiorenza, Emerging Issues, in Christian Feminism, p. 46.
67. Mary Daly, "After the Death of God the Father", in Womanspirit Rising. ed. by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), pp. 59-60.
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70. For Denise Carmody's development of religious feminism's move from a historical Jesus and toward the mythical goddess religion see her book, Feminism and Christianity: A Two-Way Reflection, especially pp. 33-35. The goddess religions tend to prize myth more than anything else. History and ontology are less important. Feminism's mythology ends up functioning more as a psychology for women rather than a historical reference point. Carmody maintains that feminism blurs the comparisons that it ought to be making between patriarchy and the goddess religions. History should be contrasted to history and myth to myth, but instead the goddess myth is often compared to patriarchal history. Carmody, Feminism and Christianity.

Mystery religions do not offer a verifiable historical religion. Jesus is historically provable from both secular and biblical accounts. Jesus' historical incarnation and resurrection are unique among the world's religions. For further study see J. N. D. Anderson's book Christianity and Comparative Religion (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1970), and John W. Montgomery, ed., History and Christianity (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1973), and Ronald H. Nash, Christianity and the Hellenistic World (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 1984). Many contend that early Christianity borrowed from first century pagan religions and philosophical systems. Nash establishes a careful critique of those claims by showing Christianity's independent development out of that time period. Special note should be taken of Part Two, chapters 7-11, concerning mystery religions. Ibid.

Elizabeth Dodson describes "our Judeo Christian tradition [as] being . . . a male fertility cult . . . [because] the covenant is passed from generation to generation . . . [by] the circumcision of the male phallus. . . ." Elizabeth Dodson, Patriarchy as a Conceptual Trap (Wellesley: Gray Roundtable Press, 1982), p. 25.

Dodson subscribes to Fritjof Capra's blending of eastern mysticism and physics. She states, "We are not separated from one another. . . but participate in nature. In short, we are profoundly inter-connected." Dodson, Patriarchy, p. 124.

I am not objecting to the aspect of unity, for indeed that is a biblical concept, but Christ should not be thought of in terms of "the more people saved, the more complete is the image of Christ." In my thinking, this presents the Spirit of Christ as each person having an 'X' percentage of God so that if added up equals a correct image of Christ. As Christians we do not just become "one" with part of Christ. Rather "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (John 17:21 NIV). The same oneness Christ had with God is what Christ prayed for for His disciples. But in that oneness the individual is not lost, for there is unity in diversity and diversity in unity.

Dodson has a problem not only with her critique of Christianity and Judaism but also her proposed solution.

Fritjof Capra, who provides Dodson's solution, falls short in both his analysis of the Judeo/Christian systems and eastern religions. The Bible teaches unity and dynamism as much as and even more than eastern religions. Mysticism cannot be valid as religious revelation since it elevates that which is created over the Creator. Eastern thought cannot be verified by evidences or direct verification as there is in Christianity. For further study, see C. S. Lewis, Miracles (New York: Macmillan, 1947), and The Complete Works, vol. 1, He is There and He Is Not Silent (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1982).

71. Spencer, Beyond the Curse, p. 41.
72. Ibid., p. 63.
73. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, p. 248.
74. Ibid., pp. 340-341.
75. Schaeffer, The Complete Works, vol. III, True Spirituality, p. 269.
76. Ibid., p. 270.
77. Berkouwer, Man: The Image of God, p. 99.
78. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey, In His Image (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), p. 40.

Chapter IV

1. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge, Books I-III (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. xv.

2. Bruce's work establishes a strong apologetic for the historical reliability of the New Testament documents. Dating the text, the establishment of the canon, miracles, and archaeological evidence all contribute to this convincing case. F. F. Bruce, The New Testament Documents (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), p. 9. Recommended reading on the importance of Scripture's reliability and its historicity include: F. F. Bruce, The Books and the Parchments (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell, 1963), F. G. Kenyon, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1958), and J. A. T. Robinson, Redating the New Testament (Philadelphia: SCM Press, 1976).

3. For further establishment of Jesus' theistic world views and the validity of the retrospective argument, see Gary R. Habermas, The Resurrection of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980). Readers should note especially pp. 67-68 and 73-75.

4. For a more scholarly research on the subject of Scripture, its reliability and historicity, see McDowell's bibliography in Section 1, "The Bible - I Trust It," pp. 76-79. Josh McDowell, Evidence That Demands a Verdict (San Bernadino: Campus Crusade For Christ, 1972). The summary is taken from the table of contents. Other recommended selections include: Sir Frederic Kenyon, The Bible and Archaeology (New York: Harper and Row, 1940), and Laird Harris, Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964).

5. Summary taken from table of contents. McDowell, comp., More Evidence That Demands a Verdict, p. ix. Other popular authors include Arthur Pink, who maintains that if Christianity does not have Scripture as its foundation, it is like a ship without a rudder. "Christianity is the religion of a Book. Christianity is based upon the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture. The starting point of all doctrinal discussion must be the Bible." Arthur W. Pink, The Divine Inspiration of the Bible (Grand Rapids: Guardian Press, 1976), p. 5.

Conservatives maintain a strong, literal interpretation of the Bible. The attitude one has toward Scripture determines not only one's faith but also one's practice. Conservatives have maintained two primary things, the trustworthiness of Scripture and its infallibility and inerrancy. Harold Lindsell states, "When all has been said and done, the only true and dependable source for Christianity lies in the book we call the Bible." Harold Lindsell, The Battle For The Bible (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 1976), p. 17.

6. Schaeffer, The Complete Works, vol. I, Escape From Reason (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1985), p. 218.

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8. Ronald H. Nash, The Word of God and the Mind of Man (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), p. 14.

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11. Paul K. K. Tong, "A Cross-Cultural Approach to Women's Liberation Theology," in Beyond Androcentrism: New Essays on Women and Religion, ed. Rita M. Gross (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977), p. 337.

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15. Ibid., p. 115.

16. Margaret A. Farley, "Feminist Consciousness and the Interpretation of Scripture," in Feminist Interpretation of the Bible, ed. by Letty M. Russell (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), p. 43.

17. Fiorenza, "The Will to Choose or to Reject: Continuing Our Critical Work," in Feminist Interpretation p. 132.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid., p. 133.

20. Judith L. Weidman, Christian Feminism (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), p. 2.

21. Harvie M. Conn, "Theologies of Liberation: Toward a Common View," in Tensions in Contemporary Theology, ed. by Stanley N. Gundry and Alan F. Johnson (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), p. 395.

22. Rudolph Bultmann, Jesus and the Word (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 61.

23. Three other critiques are worth mentioning: (1) The mythical goddess religion has little or no historicity and evidence versus a fully demonstrated historical Christian faith, *contra Ruether*; (2) Assumptions of intentional prejudice and bigotry on the part of the Church Fathers is not provable. Historical evidence speaks little to motive, *contra Tong*; and (3) Human experience as a starting point for the interpretation of truth is totally relativistic, *contra Ruether and Farley*.

24. Bilezikian, Beyond Sex Roles, p. 128.
25. Borresen, Subordination and Equivalence, p. 178.
26. Fiorenza, "Emerging Issues," Christian Feminism, p. 42.
27. Conn, "Theologies of Liberation," in Tensions, p. 418.
28. McMillan, Women, Reason and Nature, p. 65.
29. Lindsell, The Battle For The Bible, p. 25.
30. Frank and Evelyn Stagg, "Jesus and Women", in Christian History, vol. VII, No. 1, Issue 17, p. 29.

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