

# CHRISTIAN MASCULINITY



# Christian Masculinity

Men and Religion in Northern Europe  
in the 19th and 20th Centuries

YVONNE MARIA WERNER ED.

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# CONTENTS

Studying Christian masculinity. An introduction <i>Yvonne Maria Werner</i>	7
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>KEY CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES</b>	19
The unrecognised piety of men. Strategies and success of the re-masculinisation campaign around 1900 <i>Olaf Blaschke</i>	21
Masculinity and secularisation in twentieth-century Britain <i>Callum G. Brown</i>	47
<b>PART II</b>	
<b>VISIONS AND IDEALS OF CHRISTIAN MANHOOD</b>	61
Heroic men and Christian ideals <i>Tine Van Osselaer and Alexander Maurits</i>	63
Masculinity, memory, and oblivion in the Dutch Dominican Province, 1930-1950 <i>Marit Monteiro</i>	95
The man in the clergyman. Swedish priest obituaries, 1905-1937 <i>Anna Prestjan</i>	115
Crises of faith and the making of Christian masculinities at the turn of the twentieth century <i>David Tjeder</i>	127

## PART III

### MISSIONARY MASCULINITY

147

Protestant mission in China. A proletarian perspective  
*Erik Sidenvall*

149

Alternative masculinity? Catholic missionaries in Scandinavia  
*Yvonne Maria Werner*

165

## PART IV

### FOSTERING CHRISTIAN MEN

189

The making of Christian men.  
An evangelical mission to the Swedish army, c. 1900-1920  
*Elin Malmer*

191

Danish folk high school and the creation of a new Danish man  
*Nanna Damsholt*

213

## PART V

### TRANSGRESSING GENDER BOUNDARIES

233

Literary transgressions of masculinity and religion  
*Inger Littberger Caisou-Rousseau*

235

A manly queen with feminine charm.  
Intersectional perspectives on gender  
*Anders Jarlert*

257

The new Catholic feminism.  
Tradition and renewal in Catholic gender theology  
*Gösta Hallonsten*

275

Bibliography

293

Contributors

317

Index

319

Colophon

323

# STUDYING CHRISTIAN MASCULINITY

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## AN INTRODUCTION

YVONNE MARIA WERNER

Christianity has markedly patriarchal traits, and by tradition men have played the dominant role in the affairs of all churches. Yet from the middle of the nineteenth century, when the idea that religion was a private matter won acceptance in liberal, middle-class circles, and belief in science and social progress gradually replaced Christianity as a normative guideline, Christian faith and religious practice became increasingly associated with womanliness and docility. If religion was to have any place in modern society, then it was in the private home sphere, not in (male) public life.<sup>1</sup> The feminisation of Christianity went hand in hand with the division into private and public, and the spread of the idea of the ‘separate spheres’ that marked the initial stages of modern society. It was in the light of these developments that Christian manliness appeared as one of modernity’s paradoxes.

Religion and modern masculinity thus seemed incompatible<sup>2</sup>, and this idea has since continued to characterise historical research on religion and gender, in which the theory of a feminisation of religion has found growing acceptance.<sup>3</sup> From the 1980s onwards, several studies have established the importance of religion in the struggle for woman’s emancipation in the Protestant world, in which religion figures both as a hindrance for the emancipation movement, and as an instrument of empowerment used by women. It has been noted that religious engagement offered women

<sup>1</sup> McLeod, “Weibliche Frömmigkeit - männlicher Unglaube”.

<sup>2</sup> The difference between manliness and masculinity is blurred. According to Gail Bedermann, manliness, with its allusions to character, conduct, and an ideal of manhood, was the more common term in the nineteenth century, whereas masculinity refers to all-male characteristics, both good and bad (Bederman, *Manliness & Civilisation*, 17-20).

<sup>3</sup> Bradstock et al., eds, *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture*, 1-9.

an alternative to their confined, domestic sphere.<sup>4</sup> Other studies have pointed to the extent of female engagement in the Protestant missionary movements and the growing importance of female religious orders and congregations in the Catholic world.<sup>5</sup> While women's and gender history has increasingly heeded the role of religion, religious issues have until recently been overlooked in the increasingly popular field of men's history, particularly in research on masculinity in the modern period. On those rare occasions that Christian ideas and ideals are addressed, they are usually interpreted in a middle-class, liberal perspective. The unspoken assumption is often that religion was a private matter, restricted to the ambit of home and the female sphere, and therefore of no relevance to public life, the male domain.<sup>6</sup>

The theory of the feminisation of Christianity in the nineteenth century, which has become the master narrative within modern research on religion and gender, posits women's increased religious commitment, but it also asserts that religious attitudes, symbols and practices were discursively feminised, and that many men distanced themselves from the church and religion.<sup>7</sup> According to the British historian Callum Brown, women promoted and preserved Christian values and norms, whereas masculinity developed into the antithesis of feminised religiosity. He concludes that it was thanks to women that the Christian discourse continued to hold sway in Britain in the modern period. When many women abandoned specifically Christian values and traditions in the early 1960s, Britain lurched from a Christian to a secular discourse. The historians Norbert Busch and Raymond Jonas have arrived at similar conclusions in their analyses of Catholic spirituality in nineteenth-century Germany and France<sup>8</sup>, while elsewhere it has been noted that pious ecclesiastical associations found more female than male adherents, and that Catholic women were more fervent churchgoers than their husbands.<sup>9</sup>

Secular worldviews emerged alongside Christianity, and liberal demands that religion should be a private matter served to undermine the old political and social

<sup>4</sup> Welter, "The Feminisation of American Religion"; Götz von Olenhusen, "Die Feminisierung der Religion und Kirche", 69-88; Busch, "Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit"; Hölscher, "'Weibliche Religiosität?"; Kimmel, "Consuming Manhood"; Saurer, "Gender and the History of Religion".

<sup>5</sup> Baumann, *Protestantismus und Frauenemanzipation in Deutschland*; Hill Lindley, ed., *You Have Stepped Out of Your Place*; Götz von Olenhusen, ed., *Wunderbare Erscheinungen*; Meiwes, *Arbeiterinnen des Herrn*; Hammar, *Emancipation och religion*; Markkola, ed., *Gender and Vocation*; Okkenhaug, ed., *Gender, Race and Religion*; Norseth, *La os bryte over tvert med vor stumhet*.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Stearns, *Be a Man!*; Mosse, *The Image of Man*; Schmale, "Einleitung, Gender Studies, Männergeschichte, Körpergeschichte"; Tosh, *A Man's Place*; Tjeder, "Maskulinum som problem"; Sidenvall, "Manlighet och mission"; and Tjeder, *The Power of Character*. There are a few honourable exceptions, however: see, for example, Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortune*, 71-191, in which the impact of religion on the construction of manliness is discussed.

<sup>7</sup> Feminisation theory was introduced to American research in the 1970s by Welter in "The Feminisation of American Religion". For an overview, see Van Osselear and Thomas Buerman, "Feminisation Thesis".

<sup>8</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*; Busch, *Katholische Frömmigkeit und Moderne*; Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*.

<sup>9</sup> Götz von Olenhusen, ed., *Wunderbare Erscheinungen*; Meiwes, "Religiosität und Arbeit als Lebensform für katholische Frauen".

order. Christianity in all its various denominations ceased to be the fundaments of society, and the connection between state and church became ever weaker. In a broad study of religion and society in Britain, France, and Germany, the British historian Hugh McLeod asserts that piety was seen as a normal and desirable part of womanhood in many parts of Western Europe, whereas religious indifference was regarded as an equally normal part of manhood. In many regions, not least in parts of Catholic France, but also in Protestant Scandinavia, there was a drastic reduction in church attendance, particularly amongst men.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, women's importance for church life increased, reinforcing the image of churchgoing and worship as a female affair.

However, recent research has also pointed to other developments in modern society. Several researchers have stressed the link between confessional or denominational culture and national identity. Inherited Christian confession was thus an important factor in the construction of nineteenth-century national identities. In particular, nationalism and religion frequently intermingled to produce, as McLeod puts it, nationalist religions and religiously shaped nationalisms.<sup>11</sup> The German historian Olaf Blaschke, in drawing an analogy with the Reformation's confessionalisation, describes the period between 1830 and 1960 as 'a second confessional age', characterised by church consolidation and conflicts between the denominations. Bourgeois liberalism was certainly of crucial importance for the political developments of the period, yet it accounted for only a minority of the population, while despite dwindling attendance at religious services, Christianity in its different denominational forms in many ways continued to serve as the normative basis of society.<sup>12</sup>

Men ran the churches, and the clergy long remained exclusively male, but at the parochial level women began to dominate more and more. Similarly, men were heavily over-represented in free thought and secularist movements. In middle-class, liberal, anti-clerical, and socialist circles, the exercise of religion became identified as a female concern. But was this really the case? What were the outlets for male religiosity? And how to explain the large numbers of men who were committed to the church and the Christian faith? These are the questions addressed in the multidisciplinary research project *Christian manliness - a paradox of modernity* that concluded its work in 2010. Nine scholars from different Swedish universities and the previously mentioned Olaf Blaschke from the University of Trier in Germany have been engaged in the project, which was sponsored by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. We have been fortunate enough to have Hugh McLeod and Callum Brown as advisers to the research group, and have benefited immensely from our collaboration with researchers working on similar issues in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands,

<sup>10</sup> McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 124-136. However, he notes that the differences in religious commitment between men and woman varied greatly according to country and region.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 216-247, 286. Sweden followed much the same course, as is clearly shown by Blücker, *The Church as Nation*; Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 1-25, 41; Haupt and Langewiesche, eds, *Nation und Religion in Europa*.

<sup>12</sup> Blaschke, "Das 19. Jahrhundert. Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?"; *Id.*, "Der Dämon des Konfessionalismus"; see also Jarlert, "State Churches and Diversified Confessionalisation in Scandinavia".

and Belgium, of whom Tine Van Osselear, Marit Monteiro, and Nanna Damsholt have all contributed to this volume.<sup>13</sup>

Our work is part of the rapidly growing field of men's studies, which was originally closely connected to feminist-oriented women's studies, but has now developed its own profile. Whereas women's and gender studies largely deal with woman's subordination and the struggle for emancipation, men's studies often focus on ideals of manhood and the construction of masculinity. That said, both research traditions build on the assumption that men exercise true power, which explains why most studies of men and masculinity deal with homosocial relations between men and groups of men.<sup>14</sup> The overall aim of our project was to shed light on the relationship between Christianity and masculinity in Northern Europe between 1840 and 1940, a period marked first by the emergence and ascendancy of the liberal-bourgeois gender discourse, and then by its initial decline. Here we consider how Christian ideals such as humility, self-abnegation, and piety, which were defined as female qualities in the middle-class, liberal discourse, affected the construction of Christian manhood, and how this was reflected in men's lives. Ideals of manliness are discussed, as are male piety and religiosity, male engagement in missionary and reform work, and the image of Christian masculinity in literature. Further, we analyse the wider theological and ideological perspectives, and their importance for the construction of manliness as well as for the relationship between manliness and womanliness, masculinity and femininity. The length of the period under consideration and the diversity of religious contexts make it possible to draw a broad picture of the complex relationship between confession, nation, religious culture, and the construction of Christian manliness.

Our starting point is a critical attitude towards the feminisation theory and the all too simplistic use of this concept to be found in many studies. Further we have adopted an equally cautious attitude towards the term 'religion', which is often used in a way that disregards the political significance of religious activities. As the German theologian Bernhard Schneider points out in a critical examination of the feminisation theory, the organisational and political dimensions of religion - the engagement in church and religion shown in politics, social organisations, and public debate - must also be taken into consideration.<sup>15</sup> The sweeping generalisation that religion

<sup>13</sup>The research projects "Katholieke intellectuele voorhoedes: dragers van traditie en moderniteit (1900-2000)", led by Marit Monteiro at the Radboud University Nijmegen, and "Op zoek naar de goede katholieke m/v. Feminisering en masculiniteit in het katholicisme in België sinds de vroeg-moderne tijd (ca. 1750-1950)", led by Patrick Pasture and Jan Art at the Universities of Ghent and Louvain; see also Werner, "Religious Feminisation, Confessionalism and Re-masculinisation in Western European Society"; and Id., ed., *Kristen manlighet*.

<sup>14</sup>Rotundo, *American Manhood*; Mosse, *The Image of Man*; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*; Göransson, ed., *Sekelskiften och kön*; Hirdman, *Genus: om det stablas föränderliga former*; Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*; Ekenstam, "Män, manlighet och omanlighet i historien". Earlier studies of masculinity often focused on typical ideals of maleness, whereas the more recent tend to concentrate on men's actual lives. See also Broughton and Rogers, eds, *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century*.

<sup>15</sup>Schneider, "Feminisierung der Religion". The theory of feminisation has also been criticised by feminists for anthologising gender differences and deeming men's religious lives more important than women's. See also Warne, "Making the Gender-Critical Turn".

was a female concern excludes the possibility that men might have been religiously committed in their own way. In studying masculinity and religion, the focus must thus be moved from the places where women dominated to those where Christian men were active on behalf of the church. Blaschke goes one step further, interpreting this transfer of religiosity into the professional, public, and political sphere as a deliberate strategy of re-masculinisation, used by the churches to counteract the feminisation of religion.

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The trend towards an ever more diversified society, in which Christianity was reduced to the status of one model of belief amongst many, unleashed a strong counter-reaction. Across Europe, religious revivals sprang up that contributed to the revitalisation of Christianity in the nineteenth century. In Protestant countries, these revivals often originated in Pietistic and Low Church movements, while the ultramontane revival in the Catholic world drew its inspiration from Counter-Reformation ideology. All these religious movements strove to restore a religiously determined social order, based on a traditional understanding of Christianity along confessional lines. The German historian Hartmut Lehmann argues that religious revival, church mobilisation, and de-Christianisation were the dominant cultural trends in the Western world in this period.<sup>16</sup> It is this development that Blaschke describes in terms of confessionalisation. The word ‘confession’ is understood in a broad sense, comprising not only a community based on Christian belief but also the cultural context that it produced.

We have drawn on this perspective in analysing the debate on manliness and ‘unmanliness’, inspired by the work of the likes of Evelyn Kirkley. Using American material, Kirkley has shown how freethinkers and Christians alike claimed to represent true masculinity, while at the same time accusing the other side of being unmanly.<sup>17</sup> Several historians have shown that the idea of unmanliness has had a great impact on the construction and impact of masculine ideals, including George L. Mosse, who writes of types and counter-types of masculinity, a perspective that has been further developed by the Swedes David Tjeder and Claes Ekenstam.<sup>18</sup>

Historians such as Gail Bederman, Norman Vance, Donald E. Hall, Clifford Putney, Allen Warren, and Anne O’Brien have analysed the reactions the feminised image of Christian religion provoked amongst Christian men in the English-speaking world. Movements sprang up that tried to find a spiritual dimension to typically male activities such as sports, politics, and business, and to shape the new synthesis of masculinity and Christian practice. Christianity was to be infused with manly vigour, and the current ideals of manliness were to be infused with Christian virtues. One example is the Anglo-American muscular Christianity movement, whose advo-

<sup>16</sup> Lehmann, “Von der Erforschung der Säkularisierung”; Graf, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter*, 69-101; Lehmann, *Säkularisierung*.

<sup>17</sup> Kirkley, “Is it Manly to be a Christian?”.

<sup>18</sup> Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 56-76; Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 283-285, 290-292; Ekenstam, “Män, manlighet och omanlighet”, 41-47.

cates tried to combine physical activity and Christian faith, and stressed the spiritual value of sports; another is the Christian scouting movement. The ideas of muscular Christianity were articulated within the missionary movements, and went on to inspire and influence both the Christian Socialist movement in Great Britain and the Social Gospel movement in the United States. These latter abided by the idea that religion and politics were inseparable, and that it was the duty of the church to find solutions to social problems.<sup>19</sup>

In our work we have also found inspiration in the gender theories of the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and R. W. Connell. In brief, Bourdieu's theory of male dominance states that manhood is construed in competition between men in public spaces where women only play a marginal role. Yet women have an important function as onlookers, and their voluntary subordination confirms male patterns of behaviour, or *habitus*, and manly identity. Taken to the extreme, it descends into a struggle for power and dominance. Similar ideas are found in Connell's theory of 'hegemonic masculinity', which deals with the crystallisation of dominant ideals of manhood in a given social milieu. The relationship between different kinds of masculinities form a dialectic interplay of alliance, dominance, subordination, and - in the case of unorthodox forms of manliness - stigmatisation.<sup>20</sup> In these two theoretical models, it is primarily in the relationship between men and groups of men that manhood is constructed, while women play a passive role. Male dominance over women is asserted, as Bourdieu put it, through the 'symbolic violence' he saw embedded in the social order, and which is most evident in the religious sphere and in traditional forms of marriage.

According to the German historian Wolfgang Schmale, the liberal-bourgeois discourse of masculinity made triumphant progress in Western European society in the course of the nineteenth century, leaving its mark on the church. He follows Connell in writing of a hegemonic Western concept of manliness, derived from biological categories that centred on ideals such as self-control, endurance, rationality, patriotism, heterosexuality, and physical beauty. Hegemonic masculinity, Schmale suggests, was an expression of social modernisation, and the alternative constructions of manhood were either surviving remnants of older social structures or, as was particularly the case with the new homosexual movement, consequences of a radicalised modernity. The religious revivals and church mobilisations of the period were elements in the modernisation of society, and thus contributed, directly or indirectly, to the prevalence of the hegemonic concept of masculinity and its successive integration into the norms of the established churches. Schmale gives few concrete examples, however, and instead calls for empirical studies of actual church milieus.<sup>21</sup>

Established confessional culture was an important marker in national identity. Several historians have pointed out the extent to which this fusion of confession and

<sup>19</sup> Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*; Bederman, "The Woman have had Charge of the Church long enough"; O'Brien, "A Church Full of Men"; Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity*; Warren, "Popular Manliness"; Putney, *Muscular Christianity*; O'Brien, "Missionary Masculinities".

<sup>20</sup> Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*; Connell, *Masculinities*. See Dinges, "Hegemoniale Männlichkeit".

<sup>21</sup> Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa*, 153-154, 227-230.



nation was characterised by a desire to strengthen masculine identity.<sup>22</sup> In order to counterbalance the ‘effeminate’ image of religious practice, the churches developed male semantics, often fused with notions of nationhood, that were supposedly appealing to men, and offered a framework of associations and organisations in which male Christian identities could be formed. The re-masculinisation that followed in the wake of confessionalism made it possible for Christian men to compensate for the feminisation of religious culture, real or imagined, for it offered an arena where male virtues and powers could be used for religious purposes. Using the theoretical perspectives presented above, we have formulated a general hypothesis of church mobilisation and Christian confessionalism as a strategy used by the churches to counteract the secularisation of society and the feminisation of religion, and to restore and reinforce male domination in the religious sphere. This hypothesis should not be thought of as essentialist, however.<sup>23</sup> We are not intent on reconstructing true Christian manhood, but the prevalent ideas of masculinity and femininity, and how these categories were related to religious values, attitudes, and practices.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This volume of essays is divided into five thematic parts, each consisting of a number of essays produced within the project *Christian manliness* or in connection to it. The first part addresses the key concepts and theoretical perspectives of the project. Olaf Blaschke begins, with an analysis of constructions of masculinity in German Catholicism and Protestantism. He identifies the various strategies used by the churches to make religious life more attractive to men. Religious actions, attitudes, and people regarded as feminine, weak, and submissive in the hegemonic bourgeois discourse were re-coded into something masculine, strong, and heroic, and vice versa. Blaschke pays special attention to the Catholic Men’s Apostolate, a campaign that began in the 1880s with the aim of bringing religiously indifferent men back to church and to engage them for the sake of the Church. The issue of the feminisation of religion was also debated amongst German Protestants. However, due to the amalgamation of Protestant culture, legitimate masculinity, and nationalism this question seems to have been less problematic for Protestant men, at least for those wrapped up in the hegemonic culture of male, bourgeois Protestantism. Blaschke concludes that while Protestants tended to use religion for the sake of nationalism, Catholics tended to use nationalism for the sake of religion.

In a chapter on masculinity and secularisation in Great Britain, Callum Brown shows that the image of men as naturally ‘more secular’ remained very strong in the first part of the nineteenth century. Masculinity was still seen as an innate problem

<sup>22</sup> McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 217-247; Blücker, *The Church as Nation*, 148-203, 313-320.

<sup>23</sup> Van Osselear has pointed out that the terms ‘feminisation’ and ‘masculinisation’ easily lead to an essentialist view of gender characteristics, and instead argues for a shift in focus from gender constructions to differentiation within various religious groups along the lines of membership, class, gender, practices, and the like (Van Osselear, *The Pious Sex*, 274-278).

for the Christian faith, something that needed the discipline of increased 'feminine' attributes. Yet later the inter-war years witnessed the emergence of a new form of male relationship to organised Christianity that provided an alternative non-church focus, one in which male faith could be expressed and gave men a religious focus within popular culture. In the 1960s, when Christian culture was deeply affected by the sexual revolution, and many women adopted a secular identity, the moral problem of British society changed gender from male to female. According to Brown, women's changing relationship to church and religion lies at the heart of late twentieth-century secularisation. Perhaps, he concludes, secularisation in the shape of de-Christianisation is turning out to be a woman's thing, not a man's, as has been asserted for so long.

The second part of the volume is concerned with visions and ideals of Christian manhood. Alexander Maurits and Tine Van Osselear analyse the concepts of male Christian heroes in conservative, neo-Lutheran confessionalism, represented by the writings of Swedish theologians, and in the Catholic Sacred Heart movement in Belgium in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. In both cases the Christian heroes, with Jesus as the ultimate example, were described as the instruments of God, distinguished by religious zeal and a willingness to refrain from the success and comforts of this world. In both cases, martial metaphors were used. Yet whereas the Protestant heroes to be admired were either kings or male church reformers, held up as model leaders and educators, fighting for the true faith or for their nation, the Catholic heroes were either heroic religious, zealous missionaries, or fervent laymen (or women), defending the rights of the church. Although the Lutheran heroes were also characterised by Christian virtues such as piety, humility, and self-denial, these 'soft' ideals were more frequently used in the Catholic discourse, together with asceticism and strict obedience to the ecclesiastical authorities.

The importance of these ideals is reflected also in Marit Monteiro's chapter on constructions of masculinity and identity in the Dominican Order in the Netherlands in the 1930s and 1940s. She focuses on the conflicts over the redefinition of the Dutch Dominicans' identity, and their impact on the understanding of Dominican manliness as expressed in the narrative structures of collective memorials. Whereas the international Order emphasised the monastic dimension of the Dominican tradition, the Dutch Preachers, who mainly served as parish priests, had developed a clerical identity, guarding the patriarchal structure of clerical authority. By the 1920s, this identity was questioned by some of the younger Dominicans who wanted to tone down the clerical dimension, underscore the monastic qualities of the Order's tradition, and at the same time open up for a more democratic relationship between the laity and the religious. Monteiro highlights the fact that, as a category, Christian manliness functioned across the boundaries between lay and clerical, clerical and monastic.

Several historians have pointed to the differences between what is best characterised as secular masculinity and the Christian ideals of manliness. This is the starting point for Anna Prestjan, who analyses the qualities, virtues, and characters to be found in the published eulogies for priests in two Swedish dioceses. Prestjan, who has studied around two hundred such texts, shows that contemporary, secular ideals of masculinity were the order of the day. She interprets this as an attempt to show that the clergymen were ordinary men with worldly interests. A humble, mild clergyman

could be shown as masculine by demonstrating physical strength or an inclination to wrath, and a passive virtue such as trust could be balanced by more active qualities such as initiative and rationality. In Prestjtan's view it was this mixture of traditionally Christian ideals and contemporary masculine qualities that distinguished the image of Lutheran priestly manliness.

Modernity was an important tool in the construction of the hegemonic bourgeois ideals of masculinity. This is the starting point in David Tjeder's chapter on religious faith and crises of masculinity in the writings of two theologians, Archbishop Nathan Söderblom and J. A. Eklund, the leader of the Swedish Young Church movement, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Tjeder shows how these church leaders tried to come to terms with the accusation that the Christian faith was incompatible with modern manhood by redefining both the content of modernity and their understanding of Christian faith. By referring to nationalist ideology and the Christian rhetoric of struggle, they sought to create an up-to-date male ideal that was modern, manly, and Lutheran; the diametric opposite of the 'effeminate' ideals of the 'foreign' free churches and the unmanly ideologies of the secularists. Tjeder reveals the importance played by the experience of crises of faith in the writings of these men. In their view, it was this intellectual fight in itself that made the Christian faith truly male, and distinguished it from the more 'natural' female religiosity.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, almost every Christian church and denomination had overseas missions. This should perhaps be seen as the overflow of the religious mobilisation of the period. Gender historians have pointed to the importance of these missionary endeavours for women, because foreign missions provided a space where renegotiations of traditional gender roles became possible.<sup>24</sup> But such studies have rarely focused on masculinity. Missionary masculinity is thus the subject of the third part of the volume. Erik Sidenvall's chapter is a micro-study of a Swedish evangelical missionary in China, who like his fellow missionaries had a rural, working-class background. Sidenvall shows that for these working-class men, missionary work was an alternative to emigration, and their engagement can be understood in part as their striving for middle class respectability. Thus they adopted the middle-class ideals of the American evangelical missionary movement to which they were connected, which they tried to combine with the traditional ideals of masculinity derived from the ideal of the Lutheran household, and personified above all by married clergymen.<sup>25</sup>

The ideals of missionary masculinity are also discussed in my own chapter, which deals with the Italian Barnabites and German Jesuits who worked as missionaries in the Nordic countries. The Barnabites were important in the initial phase of the Nordic Catholic mission in the 1860s and 1870s, whereas the Jesuits, ostensibly the most fervent defenders of ultramontane confessionalism, held a dominant position in the Swedish and Danish Catholic Church in the ensuing period. The humble, pious, obedient, and self-sacrificing ideals of manliness expressed in the reports of these celibate missionaries stood in sharp contrast not only to modern Protestant ideas of manhood, but also to the prevailing middle-class understanding of mascu-

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Rowbotham, "Soldiers of Christ?"

<sup>25</sup> See also Sidenvall, *The Making of Manhood amongst Swedish Missionaries in China and Mongolia*.

linity. Similar perspectives are also found in Catholic magazines, in which male saints are described as being just as pious and eager to live up to the religious virtues as female saints. But in a Catholic understanding, the question was not about male and female ideals, but about Christian ideals and their absence.

The fourth part of the volume focuses on the strategies adopted to foster young men as good Christian men. Elin Malmer explores the evangelical Swedish Mission Covenant's missionary work with conscripts and establishing a network of 'soldiers' homes', in which a specific evangelical male identity was formed. The mission was motivated by the idea that sin was more likely to take hold during conscription. Yet in Malmer's view, their determination to engage young men for the sake of Christ can also be interpreted as a strategy of re-masculinisation. The membership of the Swedish Mission Covenant was highly feminised, whereas the leadership was almost totally male. Malmer pays particular attention to the debate over military conscription, and to the boundaries created on a rhetorical level between good and bad types of manhood in the movement's youth magazine.

Nanna Damsholt's chapter deals with the discourse of masculinity in the Danish folk high school movement in the second half of the nineteenth century, focusing on the writings of one of its pioneers, Ernst Trier. These schools, which were part of a revivalist movement, represented a new kind of educational establishment, intended for young adults from rural areas. Damsholt traces the emergence of a new type of Danish masculinity at these educational institutes, characterised by a mixture of middle-class liberal and traditional Christian ideals. Certainly, a patriarchal model and the ideology of the separate spheres were upheld, but at the same time the young men were also taught to develop the 'feminine', gentler parts of their personality.

In the three chapters of the fifth part of the volume, a number of different perspectives are brought to bear on transgressions of gender boundaries. Inger Littberger Caisou-Rousseau describes the relationship between masculinity and Christianity in Swedish fiction. In analysing literary works by leading Swedish authors such as Carl Jonas Love Almqvist, August Strindberg, and Selma Lagerlöf, she illustrates the extent to which the fictional representation of Christian manliness was an unstable construction full of contradictions and rifts. The concept of masculinity is present in many different forms, and is described both as a female potential of Christian faith, as priestly activism, and as an androgynous potential for transgressing gender boundaries. The literary texts studied illustrate the complex character of both masculinity and Christianity, and reveal the importance of women for the religious identity of men, with the unavoidable conclusion to be drawn that the male characters portrayed would not survive without either women or the Christian faith.

The rhetoric of a positive combination of womanly and manly qualities is the frame of Anders Jarlert's study of Sweden's Queen Victoria, who was characterised by her contemporaries as 'manly', although with a certain feminine charm, in descriptions that refer to her self-discipline, firmness, spiritual strength, and strong sense of duty. Jarlert's analysis of the queen's correspondence reveals that her Christian faith, which was influenced both by Charles Kingsley's devotional books and by high church Lutheranism, should also be understood as manly by the lights of the gender discourse of the day. As queen, she regarded herself in the spirit of the old Lutheran social teaching as the matron of the nation. By emphasising the manly virtues in a

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woman inspired by Kingsley, Jarlert questions the usual picture of this British novelist and Christian activist as one of the chief representatives of muscular Christianity.

The construction of Christian manliness can be seen as the rejoinder of a long-standing Christian pattern of interpretation to the modernity that confronted it. In the writings of the church fathers, male superiority in the order of creation is taken for granted and used to motivate male dominance at all levels of society. Even if women were seen as equal to men in spiritual matters, this very equality was conceived as 'spiritual manliness'. Mystical writings, however, tended to emphasise that both men and women adopted a 'feminine' role in relation to Christ. These different ways of using gender in theological metaphors is prevalent also in today's Catholic theology, which at the same time is exerting itself to come to terms with modern gender ideology. This is the starting point for the theologian Gösta Hallonsten, who analyses so-called new feminism in the Catholic Church. His focus is the problematic relationship between traditional theological anthropology and modern thinking, which underpins the notion of a 'feminisation' of religion in modern times. His conclusion is that feminist theologians, by taking physical sex differences as a given point of departure and emphasising (potential) female virtues, seek to transcend the gender stereotypes that characterise bourgeois modernity.

A common finding in all our studies is that social and missionary engagement on confessional grounds, whether interpreted in a Protestant state church, revivalist, liberal theological, or Catholic manner, were the main components in the construction of Christian manliness. Another is that there was a widespread determination to re-code as contemporary male values those classical, Christian ideals that were gendered feminine in the dominant discourse, and to harness the masculine combative spirit to Christian ends. In Catholicism, where regulated religious life served as a normative foundation, classical Christian ideals such as humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice played a more central role than in the family oriented Protestant gender ideology, with its sharp demarcation between male and female. For their part, Protestant ideals of manhood were more tightly entwined with nationalist ideologies, and accorded more closely with the gender ideologies of contemporary bourgeois society, whereas piety and the political struggle on behalf of the church were the most significant features of Catholic ideals of manliness. Our research thus illustrates not only of the importance of religion in any understanding of gender constructions, but also the need to take into consideration the confessional and institutional aspects of religious identity.



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**PART I**  
**KEY CONCEPTS AND THEORETICAL**  
**PERSPECTIVES**

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# THE UNRECOGNISED PIETY OF MEN

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## STRATEGIES AND SUCCESS OF THE RE-MASCULINISATION CAMPAIGN AROUND 1900

OLAF BLASCHKE

As soon as we could babble our first words, mother never put us to bed without letting us pray, and thanks to father fostering this domestic custom, we became accustomed to saying grace and to family worship. At the same time, father was most particular about attending divine service. He duly took us at least once every Sunday, if not twice. We did not really like going.<sup>1</sup>

When Willibald and Franz Beyschlag were children, services at their local Protestant church were not in the least interesting. The services were too sober; the sermon, boring. Yet when he wrote his memoirs in 1858, Willibald Beyschlag was evidently appreciative of his religious upbringing, especially by his father, a bank clerk in Frankfurt. Born in 1823, the young Beyschlag studied Protestant theology in the 1840s, and in 1851 became a pastor in Trier; later he would be a professor of theology in Halle, and one of the leading figures of German Protestantism.

If we accept that Beyschlag's memories of his pious parents and petty bourgeois family are reliable, the question remains whether they are representative. To set against the recurring complaints in the nineteenth century about men missing divine service, we have Beyschlag and his extraordinarily pious father. To be fair, growing anxiety about men neglecting their religious duties overshadowed the last decades before his death in 1900. Some historians see a general 'crisis of masculinity' at the *fin de siècle*, others a crisis of male religiosity. A striking indicator of this 'crisis' is the book published by Franz Xaver Wetzel in 1887, the title of which said it all: 'Men also

<sup>1</sup> Beyschlag, *Aus dem Leben eines Frühvollendeten*, 15. All translations in this chapter are my own.

must pray'. Obviously Wetzel, a Catholic priest, had detected some deficiency here. Would he have felt called on to publish a work entitled, 'Women also must pray'? Nor was Wetzel alone, for publications admonishing men were becoming increasingly common.<sup>2</sup>

It seems as if institutionalised Christianity was faced with a growing problem - the problem of male religiosity. The contemporary preoccupation corresponds perfectly with the notion of a 'feminisation of piety'. Many scholars use this 'key concept in feminist historiography', which is equally important in the historiography of religion.<sup>3</sup> Its validity has been demonstrated for many countries in the Western world - Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, and Sweden, for example - and in the US where it was initially developed.<sup>4</sup> Callum Brown has demonstrated for Victorian and Edwardian Britain that "women were the religious solution, men were the religious problem".<sup>5</sup>

In recent years, the feminisation of religion as a concept has been the subject of growing criticism. It is said to be of limited value, especially as the religiosity of ordinary men still remains to be scrutinised. The feminisation model is one-sided. Where do men appear in its scenarios? While taking a general view of the problem, this chapter examines German examples to establish the scope of the feminisation and, by way of balance, suggests that it be matched by the notion of re-masculinisation.

## A DOUBLE MARGINALISATION OF MANLINESS, A TWO FOLD FEMINISATION

Men and manliness seem to have been doubly marginalised: initially as social-religious actors living in the period of religion's feminisation; and subsequently as worthwhile subjects to historians. In gender history, men's studies, generally occupied with the construction of manliness, enjoyed something of a boom in the 1990s. Nevertheless, Nina Baur and Jens Luedtke could still reasonably claim in 2008 that "men's studies are still in its infancy".<sup>6</sup> True, many issues have now been addressed: heroism, militarism, and nationalism; the male body; homosexuality; male societies; hegemonic masculinity; and the 'crisis' of manliness around 1800, around 1900, or in the inter-war period; indeed, whether there was a specific 'crisis of manliness' around

<sup>2</sup> Wetzel, *Auch die Männer müssen beten*.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 58-59. See also Brown's chapter in this volume.

<sup>4</sup> Welter, "The Feminisation of American Religion"; Douglas, *The Feminisation of American Culture*; for Protestantism, see Ford, *Divided Houses*.

<sup>5</sup> Brown, *Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain*, 69.

<sup>6</sup> Religion plays no role in Baur and Luedtke, eds, *Die soziale Konstruktion von Männlichkeit*, 8, 20; and the same is true of Martschukat and Stieglitz, *Geschichte der Männlichkeiten*; Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeiten in Europa*. Connell, *Masculinities*, remains the classic on manliness, but is equally silent on religion. General surveys are Hanisch, *Männlichkeiten* and Kühne, ed., *Männergeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte*.

1900, sparked by women's emancipation<sup>7</sup>, or whether it was part of a 'constant crisis of masculinity'.<sup>8</sup> Yet there remains one theme generally unrecognised by men's studies: men's religion. A few striking exceptions have dealt with issues of fairly limited scope, such as nineteenth-century 'muscular Christianity' (winning for Christ)<sup>9</sup>, and we can draw on a handful of specialised studies, ranging from nineteenth-century wills to the masculine *Deutschchristen*, the German Christian Nazi Movement<sup>10</sup>, yet the fact remains that the field needs to be expanded, even if the topic of manliness and religion at first hearing may have a paradoxical ring.<sup>11</sup> Had not all church history been male history? Yet while church history dealt with popes, bishops, consistorial boards, priests, and pastors, a closer look reveals that it did not gender its subject. The manliness of the social actors was taken for granted, and thus ignored. Church history has dealt with religion while neglecting masculinity; social history has dealt with religion and gender while neglecting men's religiosity; and gender history has neglected religion, especially in its male form.

Since one reason for the scholarly disregard of men lies in the dominating concept of the feminisation of piety and religion, it is worth looking at feminisation more closely. At its heart lies a twofold notion of the feminising process: it posits women's increasing religious commitment; and it implies that religious content, symbols, and practices, where gendered, became especially feminised.<sup>12</sup> Thus it first deals with the commitment and agency of individuals. Men retreated from church, which remained in all essentials a male society, while it was women who availed themselves of what the church had to offer. "Similarly in Germany, there is no doubt that men retreated from the religious field in the wake of the secular, scientific, social, and political revolutions of modern times, especially in the nineteenth century. ... Due to better education, an unrestricted life, and their professions outside the home, men were more susceptible to secular influences than women."<sup>13</sup>

The family was the stronghold of the church. In the course of the separation of the public sphere from the private, mothers, often at the behest of their confessors, became responsible for religious socialisation. The segregation of gender spheres went hand in hand with the feminisation of religion.<sup>14</sup> 'Religion was coming to be

<sup>7</sup> Brunotte and Herrn, eds, *Männlichkeiten und Moderne*, write of momentous shifts around 1900. See also Hämmerle and Opitz-Belakhal, eds, *Krise(n) der Männlichkeit*.

<sup>8</sup> Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 287.

<sup>9</sup> Watson and Weir, "The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond".

<sup>10</sup> Schlögl, *Glaube und Religion in der Säkularisierung*, 249-252, 316-326, 331 ff; Bergen, *Twisted Cross*; Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*; Gross, *The War against Catholicism*; see also my review in *European History Quarterly*, 37 (2007), 149-151.

<sup>11</sup> See Yvonne Maria Werner's introduction to this volume; Blaschke, "Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus"; Werner, "Religious Feminisation".

<sup>12</sup> Busch, "Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit", 204.

<sup>13</sup> Götz von Olenhusen, "Die Feminisierung von Religion und Kirche", 9-21; McLeod, "Weibliche Frömmigkeit - männlicher Unglaube?", 134-156.

<sup>14</sup> Schlögl, *Glaube und Religion in der Säkularisierung*, 316 ff. In 1811 the pastor Friedrich Darup could still place the prayer of the father of the household alongside the prayer of the housewife. On the other hand, as Theodor von Hippel, a pupil of Kant, remarked as early as 1792, "The basic trend of Christian religion is feminine".

seen as a woman's sphere'. The 'feminisation of Christianity' can be observed in Protestantism, especially since women had more say there<sup>15</sup>, but it was far more evident in Catholicism, which laboured under the Protestant offence of being effeminate.<sup>16</sup> Catholicism was said to be a 'female' confession, whereas Protestantism praised itself for its masculinity. British readers will know of the controversy between Charles Kingsley and John Henry Newman in the 1860s, in which the socialist Anglican cleric Kingsley accused Catholicism of effeminacy. Protestants began to herald Anglo-Saxon Christian manliness and British imperial culture, and to contrast them with celibate clerics and feminine Catholicism.<sup>17</sup>

Protestantism became the epitome of masculinity. Anglo-Saxon developments were matched in German countries. Indeed, there was a positive explosion in Catholic nunneries and female congregations, so much so that historians speak of a 'spring of female congregations'. In 1855 the gender ratio for people living in religious congregations in Prussia was already uneven at 397 men to 579 women, but by 1872 we find eight times more women (8,000) than men (1,037). This has been termed the 'féminisation du clergé'.<sup>18</sup> The same was true of Belgium, Spain, and France, where the number of nuns increased from 12,000 in the early nineteenth century to 135,000 in 1878.<sup>19</sup> Statistics on ecclesiastical orthopraxy, and especially on church attendance, clearly indicate the predominance of women in the Catholic and Protestant churches alike.

The second element to the feminisation argument is concerned less with believers and more with cultural patterns. The churches reacted against the fundamental threat of enlightenment and revolution, declining church attendance and secularisation, by specifically approaching women and emphasising feminine forms of the religious cult. It is tempting to think of it as intentional feminisation. Conceptually, the feminisation of religion offers a macro-theory and master narrative. A new theological discourse of feminism accentuated the feminine elements of symbolic communication, especially in Catholicism, but also in the Pietist movement. In Catholicism, the cult of Mother Mary was revitalised, as is evident in the enunciation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin in 1854 by Pius IX. It is not for nothing the nineteenth century is called the 'Marian century', a period that only really came to a close in the 1950s.

The combination of religion and femininity was new. Before 1800, it had been women who had been suspected of lacking religious commitment. The Latin word *femina* revealed the true nature of women, declared Heinrich Kramer in his *Malleus Maleficarum*, 'The Hammer of Witches', a treatise first published in 1486, and running to twenty-nine editions by the seventeenth century alone. According to his interpretation, the word derives from 'fe', from the Latin 'fides' or faith, and minus, thus announcing that the woman, 'fe-mina', was the less believing. Yet in the nineteenth

<sup>15</sup> McLeod, "Weibliche Frömmigkeit - männlicher Unglaube?", 151-152. This is clearly demonstrated in several of the articles in the present volume.

<sup>16</sup> Blackbourn, *Marpingen*, 30-31.

<sup>17</sup> Alderson, *Mansex Fine*. The same tendencies can be observed in Scandinavia, as shown in the chapters in the present volume by Kristin Fjelde Tjelle, David Tjeder, and Yvonne Maria Werner.

<sup>18</sup> Meiwes, "Religiosität und Arbeit als Lebensform für katholische Frauen", 70.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman*, 35.

century it was not the woman who was the less believing; on the contrary, she was thought religiously reliable, while now it was the man whose belief was uncertain.<sup>20</sup> While for the eminent Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) the fusion of Christianity with femininity and emotion posed no problem - indeed he thought it indispensable - later Protestants struggled with the notion that Christianity might possibly have feminine traits.<sup>21</sup>

There is plenty of evidence to bear out the concept of the feminisation of religion. The iconography changed, as angels that had been male or genderless until the 1790s thereafter became more and more feminine. Church attendance was predominantly female, congregations became overwhelmingly female, and the Brotherhood of the Sacred Heart and other ecclesiastical associations found more female adherents than male.<sup>22</sup> What then counts against the feminisation model?

## A CRITIQUE OF THE FEMINISATION CONCEPT

The problems start with the statistical evidence. Often the priests and visitation reports from Catholic parishes gave no indication of female dominance in church attendance. On the contrary, they vehemently underlined that in church, men and women were represented evenly.<sup>23</sup> However, since Catholics only started to count in the early twentieth century, it is more profitable to look at Protestantism to trace long-term developments, and to Lucian Hölscher's historical atlas of the religious geography of Protestant Germany - four volumes overflowing with statistics on baptisms, church-elections, conversions, and church attendance.<sup>24</sup>

Let us consider the statistics on Sunday communion (*Abendmahl*) in a gendered perspective. For the Protestant parish in Trier we have figures running back to 1861, with the distinction between female and male attendees noted from 1890. The black line shows that shrinking numbers of Protestants attended communion. In 1865 the proportion had been as high as 75 per cent of all Protestant members of the parish, a total from which children must be subtracted since they were not allowed to take communion, giving a percentage of communicants higher than 75 per cent; but then again, people taking communion twice were counted twice. The figures are not without their problems, but what is important is the trend. The proportion dropped to 66 per cent in 1890, climbed slightly during the First World War, but plummeted to 40 per cent in 1931. Today its range is under 20 per cent. This process can be observed in every region in Germany, and has often been taken as evidence of secularisation, though it should only be interpreted as a distance from ecclesiastical rites.

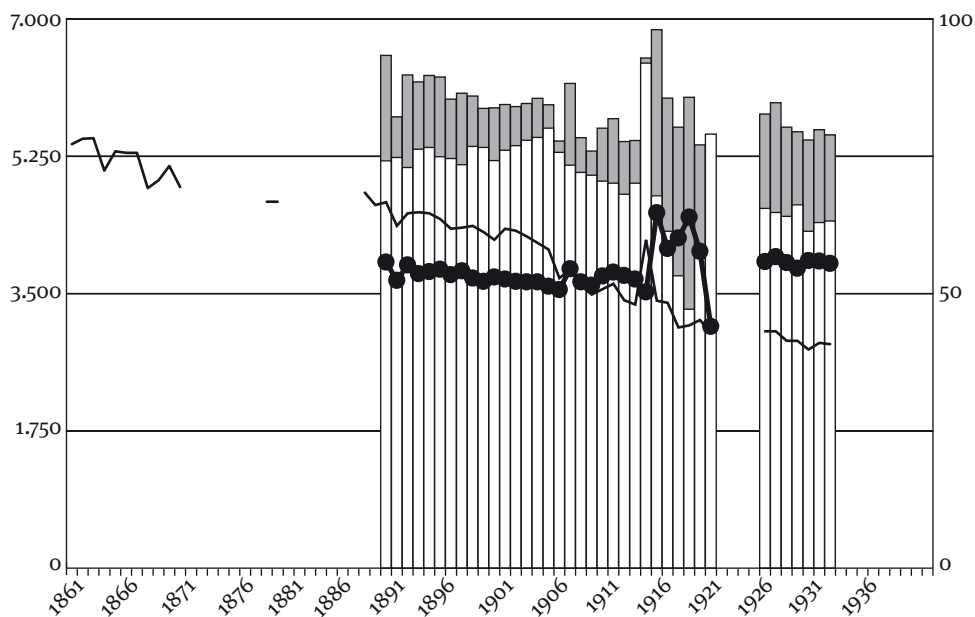
<sup>20</sup> Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum*, VII.

<sup>21</sup> Hartlieb, *Geschlechterdifferenz im Denken Friedrich Schleiermachers*.

<sup>22</sup> Busch, *Katholische Frömmigkeit und Moderne*, 277-278, for his discussion of feminisation: Id., "Frömmigkeit als Faktor des katholischen Milieus"; Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*.

<sup>23</sup> Schneider, "Feminisierung der Religion".

<sup>24</sup> Hölscher, *Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie im protestantischen Deutschland*, III, 135 and IV, 479 ff., 581, 598 ff. The communion statistics count communions, not communicants (some of whom went several times, driving the numbers up). On the other hand, the percentages are too low, since underage children should be subtracted.

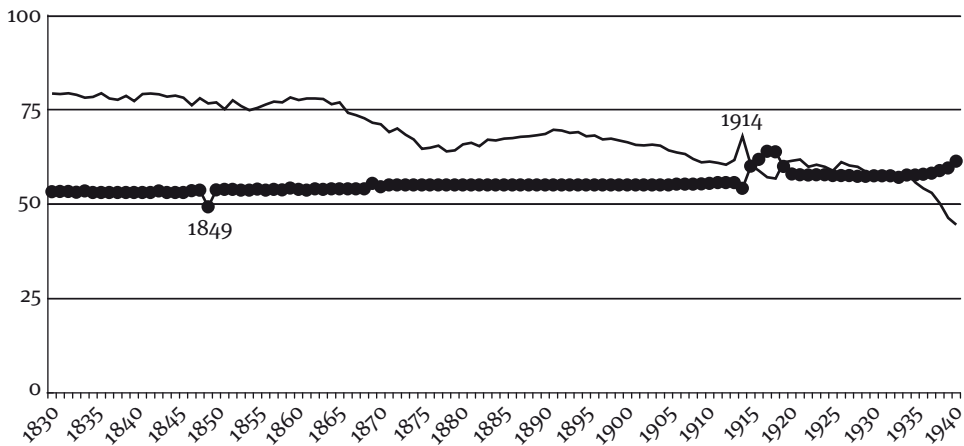


Communion attendance in Trier by gender (Church province of Rhineland)

- Women attending
- Men attending
- Attendance in %
- Female attendance in %

For some four decades, we have information on the gender ratio. In 1890 about 6,500 women took communion as against 5,200 men (first column). Indeed, the proportion of women was if anything higher, as 55 of 100 participants were female. Statistics do seem to bear out the concept of the feminisation of piety. Women were definitely over-represented in church as they were in the confessional.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, a *process* of feminisation cannot be traced. Rather, calculating the ratio between men and women, an amazing result is revealed, for expressed as a percentage, an almost straight line appears for the entire period: the proportion of female attendance oscillated steadily between 53 and 55 per cent. During the First World War it increased, of course, when the men were serving in the trenches - and possibly attending divine service in the field. Again, in the inter-war period the proportion stabilised again, with 55 per cent of church participants being female against 45 per cent male, suggesting a clear continuity, given the fact that women were over-represented in society in general thanks to their longer life expectancy and the recent loss of two million men in the war. In the course of more than forty years, nothing changed in the ratio between male and female church attendance: nearly half of the people in church were men.

<sup>25</sup> Dietrich, *Konfession im Dorf. Westeuropäische Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert*, 237.



Proportion of female communion in the Lutheran Church in right-bank Bavaria

— Communion in %  
 ● Female communion in %

A much longer data sequence survives for the Lutheran Church in right-bank Bavaria (Bavaria minus its left-bank Palatinate districts). Apart from the fact that the general communion attendance rate remained stable at nearly 80 per cent until the 1870s, raising doubts about the idea of a continuous secularisation process beginning in the Enlightenment, the data confirm the continuity evident from gender statistics: in 1830, the proportion of men was 47 per cent; in the German Empire's heyday it still was as high as 45 per cent; and it only dipped just before the outbreak of the Second World War, standing at 41 per cent in 1938. Where else in *la longue durée* can we find such a straight and impressive line? Not a glimpse of the flight of men from church in the nineteenth century, nor a dramatic process of feminisation. In other words, the glass remained nearly half full for more than a century.

There was feminisation, but it was less dramatic than the literature suggests. Women doubtless went to church more frequently. But how much visible piety was authentic piety, and how much was instrumentalised for other reasons? Some historians argue that piety was for many women a means to compensate for their disadvantaged social positions and even for their lack of emancipation. By feminising religion, they found a proper identity and improved their position in a society that only granted certain rights, such as suffrage, in the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, there may have been other reasons why women went to church more often. Severe normative and legal restrictions surrounded female activities in public. Until 1908 women were forbidden to participate in political associations in Germany. Church was thus an ideal place to meet, socialise, and communicate, and church attendance could have greater social than religious motives. Equally, there may have been very personal and private reasons. Some women felt an intense relationship with their priest; in

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Meiwes, "Religiosität und Arbeit als Lebensform für katholische Frauen"; Abrams, *The Making of Modern Woman*.



some parishes a veritable personality cult grew up around the priest, of which there are both Catholic and Protestant examples.<sup>27</sup> Certainly a closer look at the female population in church on Sundays reveals that many of them were single women, and while their souls' comfort may well have been their prime reason for going to church, another was the gender matrix's requirement that women be pious and demure. Men expected this, and single women could enhance their chances on the marriage market if they made a show of submitting to this ideal. As late as the 1950s, advertisements for a marriage partner were designed according to this gender matrix, for in both men's and women's advertisements religion ranked higher than everything else, while in the 1960s it fell off dramatically, and virtually disappeared in the 1970s.<sup>28</sup> In short, the higher figures for women attending church, mass, communion, and confession do not necessarily prove that they were more pious. Other motives must be taken into consideration, and in so doing the piety gap between women and men dwindles.

Traditionally, scholarship adduces the intensified Marian cult, the appearances of Mary, and the 'Marian century' (1854-1954) as strong arguments in favour of a feminisation of religion. In most female congregations, Mother Mary played a central devotional role, and thus a tendency towards feminisation seems obvious.<sup>29</sup> Yet why should Marian devotion necessarily indicate feminism? Mary was more than just a symbol of feminine virtues such as motherhood and love, submissiveness and sympathy. The other tradition of Marian devotion, originating in the seventeenth century, emphasises Mary's strong and combative traits. She is a protective patron; it is she who crushes the Satanic snake. This tradition was revitalised in the late nineteenth century. In the village Marpingen, where Mary appeared to three girls in 1876, police dispelled the crowds of Catholics because the Prussian authorities feared the Marian fans and pilgrims would cheer the 'French Goddess of Revenge' from Lourdes. Beginning in the 1920s, Mary was militarised and updated to serve male semantics and male interests. During the Spanish Civil War, Mary fought on the side of the Church against the Communist menace. The blue uniform of the Falangists, harking back to workers' clothing, was sometimes associated with Marian blue.<sup>30</sup>

Mary was also drawn in to play a crucial role in the Cold War. Marian pamphlets claimed that it was she who had defeated the Turks at Vienna in 1683 and, thanks to her, the anti-Christian Third Reich was overthrown; once again Christian Europe is in danger, the Communist East waiting to conquer it in the name of Satan, and against this new peril, Mother Mary will guarantee victory. When Mary was accorded the virtues of a soldier, a fighter, and a leader it was not only with the Soviet threat in mind. It was meant to touch male listeners and to encourage them to identify with Mary.<sup>31</sup> *Maria vom Siege*, 'Victorious Mary': this Mary does little to prove feminisation theory.<sup>32</sup> Bernhard Schneider recently distinguished a three-stage scale in feminisa-

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 331.

<sup>28</sup> For rural role models, see Dietrich, *Konfession im Dorf. Westeuropäische Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert*, 140; for marriage advertisements in the period 1953 to 1983 see Gern, *Geschlechtsrollen*.

<sup>29</sup> Meiwes, *Arbeiterinnen des Herrn*, 226-230; Blackbourn, *Marpingen*.

<sup>30</sup> Perry and Echeverría, *Under the Heel of Mary*, 210-218.

<sup>31</sup> Scheer, *Rosenkranz und Kriegsvisionen*, 355. Cf. Kirby, "Religion and the Cold War".

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Höcht, "Maria vom Siege", quoted in Scheer, *Rosenkranz und Kriegsvisionen*, 357.



tion, at least as far as Catholicism is concerned: a high degree of feminisation in the ecclesiastical field (church attendance, confession, pilgrimages); some in religious education and charity, for men participated as well; and no feminisation in the fields of politics and associations. Schneider suggests that men's activities in the public sphere can be seen as a "transformation into another state of religiosity".<sup>33</sup> I would go further. There was a specific male transfer of religion from the ecclesiastical into the professional, public, and political sphere, matched by a wave of manifest religious re-masculinisation and re-masculinised religion.

## REACTIONS TO FEMINISATION

Contemporaries were already talking about religious 'feminism'. How were Catholics, confronted head-on by the 'reproach of 'feminism''<sup>34</sup>, to cope with this challenge? How should the churches and Christian men react to when piety was feminised and retreated to the private sphere? The world of men is now split into two great armies, Wetzel observed in 1887:

In the one, men who pray, and in the other, men who ceased praying. The number of the latter is shocking. They are sadly deluded that praying is of no use, and is only good for women and children. No, men must pray too; yes, praying is even more necessary for men than for women. Generally, in church you see more women than men, especially on Sunday afternoon. In France and Italy things are even worse. ... Where does this painful phenomenon arise? From men believing they do have not time to pray.

Wetzel saw it as his mission to drive men back to church. In the wake of his 'Word addressed to men' this sort of agitation intensified. However, the reaction to the de-masculinisation of religion was not limited to campaigns of re-masculinisation.<sup>35</sup>

Protestantism ensured its male identity with a detour past nationalism: the feminist aspects of the Protestant religion were assigned to women, aspects external to it to Catholicism. For the majority who lived in the hegemonic culture of male, bourgeois Protestantism, the issue of true manliness was less of a challenge. In his *fin de siècle* lectures, Heinrich von Treitschke, the eminent German historian, gendered nearly everything: the German Reformation and Luther were masculine, and so too Prussia, and the State in all its powerful, nineteenth-century glory; in stark contrast to Catholicism, France, and the Baroque eighteenth century, all so womanish.<sup>36</sup> Mascu-

<sup>33</sup> Schneider, "Feminisierung der Religion", 143.

<sup>34</sup> Sträter, *Das Männerapostolat*, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Wetzel, *Auch die Männer müssen beten*, 6; cf. Schlich, *Der gläubige Mann in der modernen Welt*; Mack, *Katholische Männer heraus!*, II, 71-78; Sträter, *Männerpredigten*; an example of the Protestant equivalent is Lemmermann, *Die christliche Jungmännerbewegung und die moderne männliche Jugendpflege*.

<sup>36</sup> Treitschke, *Politik*, I, 246-248; see also Planert, *Antifeminismus im Kaiserreich*, 36; and Gross, *The War against Catholicism*.

linity was an essential component in Protestant identity, matching anti-Catholicism. Confession and gender were co-constitutive of each other.

Catholicism, for its part, succeeded in pursuing a dual strategy in coping with the feminisation of religion. Legitimate femininity was cultivated; the required dose of masculinity was boosted. Ideally, Catholic men should keep their distance from any exaggerated cult of manliness in order to avoid becoming national heroes when they should be the servants of Christ and the Pope. How different from hegemonic Protestant culture. Duelling was forbidden for Catholics, and Catholic students avoided the academic fencing fraternities.<sup>37</sup> This does not mean Catholic men were more feminine, but it remained the case that priests had to relinquish certain attributes of hegemonic manliness. This group was as much idealised by their henchmen as it was stigmatised by anti-clerics. Their ‘habitus clericalis’ was the manifest expression of a limited but legitimate femininity. In the early nineteenth century, as part of a series of ultramontane sanctions to discipline them in body and mind, priests were obliged to wear the soutane, or cassock, making them look more female than male, at least in the eyes of caricaturists. The beard, a manly *accessoire* growing in importance from the middle of the century, was taboo for priests.<sup>38</sup> Soon they were even forbidden to wear glasses.

Normative texts about how to behave only tell half the story if they are not translated into practice. ‘Doing gender’ means that gender is not only inscribed into discourses and mentalities, but also into everyday practices and on the body. In this respect, the petitions addressed by Catholic priests to their authorities show how they respected the rules. When the regulation on glasses was introduced in September 1838 in the diocese of Mainz, many short-sighted clerics petitioned the bishop for an exemption, arguing that their request was motivated not by vanity or a desire to impress women, but only so they could read the sermon. Frequently the exception was granted.<sup>39</sup> In the early nineteenth century, glasses became a fashionable item for well-off bourgeois men who wanted to flaunt their good taste and education. Some even wore them though they had no need.<sup>40</sup> Priests were not meant to participate in the bourgeois habitus, but to rise above it. Efforts to draw a line between the distinguished laity and priests were to be constantly repeated throughout the nineteenth century. With the advent of the bicycle, priests were forbidden to use it for fear of losing their dignity, just as women at the turn of the century would be ridiculed for

<sup>37</sup> Frevert, *Ehrenmänner*; Wöhrmüller, *Mannhaftes Christentum*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Oldstone-Moore, “The Beard Movement in Victorian Britain”; cf. “Habitus Clericalis”, *Pastoralblatt des Bistums Münster*, 1 (1863), 72.

<sup>39</sup> Dom- und Diözesanarchiv Mainz (hereafter DDAMz), Generalakten, G XX, 11: L. Schneider (deacon), “Signing the petition of Pfarrer Keller zu Bodenheim to Erzbischöfliches Ordinariat, 16 October 1838”.

<sup>40</sup> Rossi, *Brillen*, 87-92, 142-144. There was an optimal ‘codex of behaviour’. On greeting people were expected to remove their glasses, especially in Germany, Britain, and France, while official military regulations demanded that they be removed during greetings and remain off in the presence of superiors. Students wearing glasses were not allowed to approach professors. During the Great Parade of the Emperor, the wearing of *Kneifer* (pince-nez) and other glasses was absolutely forbidden (Rossi, *Brillen*, 118, citing Schmitz, “Die Sehhilfe im Wandel der Jahrhunderte”).

bicycling. The ‘flying priest’ was not welcome amongst the guardians of distinction, though rural population was unfazed by the more pragmatic of the priests.<sup>41</sup>

Other clear examples of ‘doing gender’ are to be found in pictures. The image shown here introduces an article on the Forty-sixth General Assembly of the Catholics of Germany held in Neisse in 1899, one of the principal platforms for social and political communication amongst Catholic associations, begun in 1848. Women were only allowed to attend to listen, a form of discrimination that remained in force until 1921.<sup>42</sup> The picture shows only men: a collection of photographs of the seventeen leading figures of the organising team, all men aged somewhere between 30 and 70. Two groups can be distinguished, nine laymen and eight priests, the latter easily spotted by their clothing and special clerical collar. In contrast, most laymen wear a jacket cut to show shirt and the tie. The caption supports the observation, in which the laymen are identified as lawyers, politicians, architects, and merchants, along with two aristocrats. However, there are other more subtle differences that signal that the group is made up of two classes of men. Of the eight priests, none has a beard; of the nine laymen, all. In other words 100 per cent of the priests are beardless, 100 per cent of the laymen are bearded. And the fact that the beards are worn differently also conveys a range of meanings. No priest would have dared to wear a handlebar moustache like Prince Löwenstein, in imitation of the Emperor Wilhelm II. Löwenstein was an aristocrat, not middle-class.

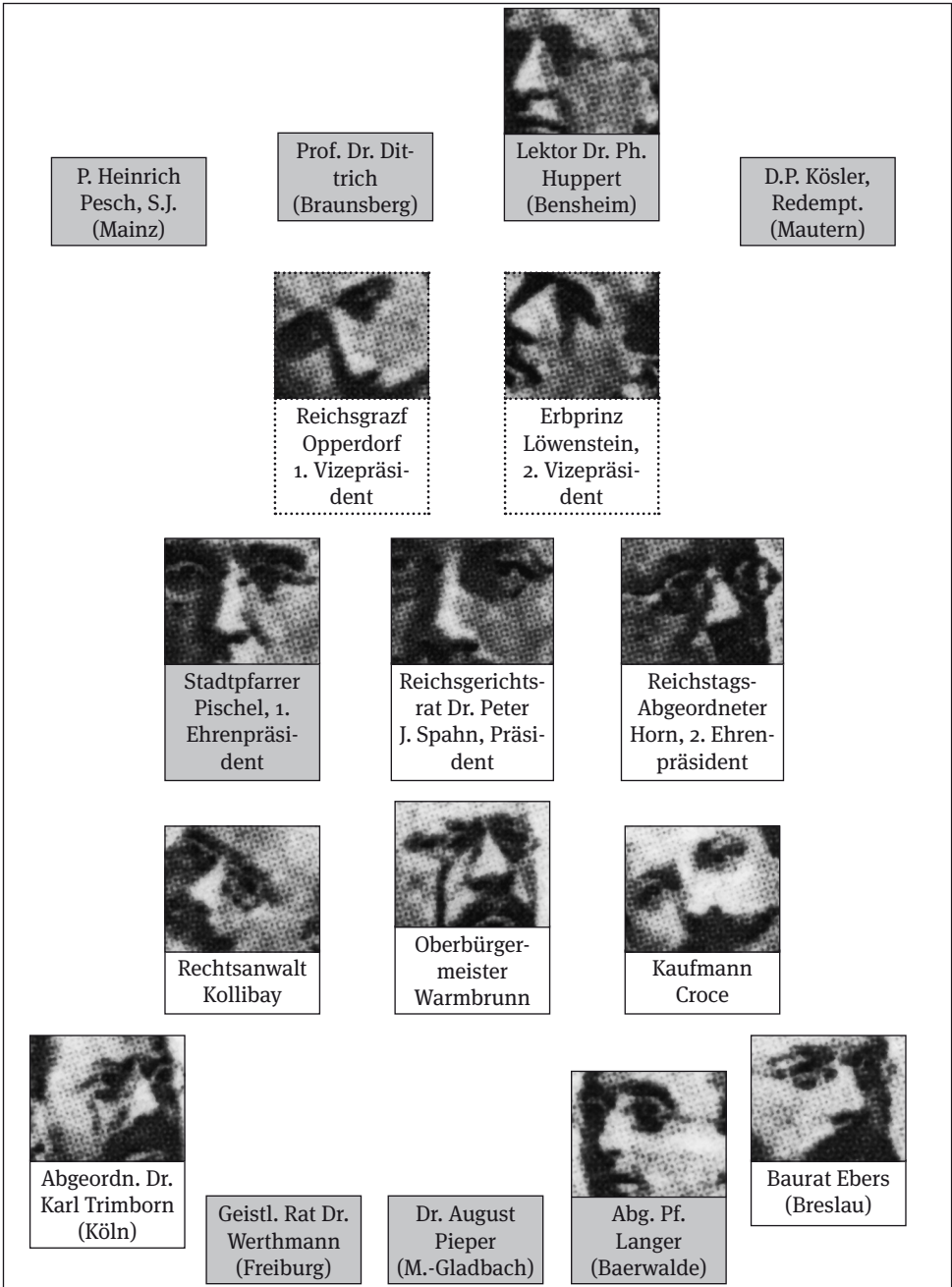
The other feature worth pausing over is the glasses the men are wearing. Although the initial prohibition was as old as the eldest person depicted, five of the eight priests still had no glasses while the majority of laymen, six of nine, wear them. Glasses were used to enhance a distinguished gentleman’s appearance: the dictates of vanity showed not in their absence, but in sporting them. For the bourgeoisie, and especially for educated or academic middle-class men (*Bildungsbürger*), spectacles or a monocle (for officers) indicated that they belonged to the better classes. Clothes, beards, and glasses served as signs of distinction; an important means of reinforcing masculine differences that simultaneously indicated the wearer’s social position. Hence the three priests who are wearing glasses wear only plain models, while half of the laymen wearing glasses have modish *Klemmer*, pince-nez. The image shows that a variety of masculinities was tolerated in Catholicism, while in hegemonic masculinity priests represented a legitimate form of femininity.

Alongside legitimate femininity, Catholics were also offered an outlet that compensated for the lack of legitimate bourgeois masculinity. If confession, prayer, and sanctimony appeared to be too embarrassingly ‘female’ for them, they could don the mantle of manly champion of their group in the public sphere: as brave parliamentarian, writer, or perhaps leading a public procession. Catholicism’s dual strategy was to permit a reasonable measure of femininity while cultivating masculinity and masculinising religious culture. In total there were four ways to deal with the accusation that piety, especially Catholic piety, was effeminate. Firstly, there was the

<sup>41</sup> Diözesanarchiv Köln, Archivs des Erzbistums Köln, CR 21.6.1: Deacon Christmann, St. Vith, to curate Dr. Kreuzwall, 7 July 1899, asking for an exemption; for another example from 1907 see DDAMz, Generalakten, G XX, 9.

<sup>42</sup> Schneider, “Feminisierung der Religion”, 140.





- Priest
- Lord
- Bourgeois



manoeuvre to reinterpret supposedly female activities and symbols as male. Secondly, religion was transferred from the ecclesiastic sphere into professional life, and more particularly into the public arena, with its political conflicts reserved for men. In the tense atmosphere of religious mistrust, thirdly, neo-confessionalism served as a means to compensate for the feminisation of piety, while, fourthly, at times there were intentional campaigns of re-masculinisation, commencing in the late 1880s and reaching a peak in the 'Men's Apostolate' (*Männerapostolat*) of 1910, with its eponymous monthly periodical.

## RE-EVALUATION: 'FEMALE' RELIGIOSITY BECOMES 'MALE'

Of all the strategies, perhaps the most significant was the careful *re-coding* of masculine and feminine attributes. Many men did not think that attending church required anything like male courage. Their wives and children went, so why would it be brave for them to do so? It took nerve to duel with another student or to march to war; going to a priest or praying were nothing like as impressive, and did not guarantee a positive response from their male peer group. In the face of mainstream opinion, church authorities set out to re-code attitudes, actions and attributes usually counted as feminine, weak, and submissive as masculine, strong, and heroic - and vice versa. Joseph of Nazareth and prayer were militarised. The tenderly loving Christian paterfamilias was transformed into a soldier fighting for the rights of Christ. The man who refused to attend church should no longer be admired as an independent, free character but should be disdained as a man insufficiently courageous to go to church - the one who was more feminine than his pious fellows.

From the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to Johan Count Tilly, from Joseph Haydn to Hermann von Mallinckrodt - so many of the exemplary heroes of history, politics, art, and scholarship had, like Solomon, prayed, wrote Wetzel in 1887. Where there is no prayer, there is no manhood: "Is there anything more beautiful than tall youths and hardy men, rosaries in their muscular hands, kneeling to pray? Is there anything more beautiful than leading statesmen and eminent officers, scholars, and artists, priests, and soldiers, their hands folded in prayer? Be therefore men of prayer. ... Good, praying men are good, real men."<sup>43</sup> Social male virtues were pinpointed and linked to Christian ideals, using encouraging male homo-stereotypes to enlist them as ecclesiastical propaganda. Values widely acknowledged to be feminine and masculine were combined with Christian values. This mechanism was even applied to the delicate issue of the Sacred Heart, a cult definitely preferred by women. Recalling a phrase of Leo XIII's, when he compared Constantine's Cross to a new battle emblem, the Sacred Heart, and put it to all Christians - especially the men - that it was the battle emblem of their day, the *Männer-Apostolat* in June 1914 exclaimed that "Sometimes people claim that Sacred Heart worship is a matter for women. Nothing could be more wrong! It is men who must stand for law and justice in public and

<sup>43</sup> Wetzel, *Auch die Männer müssen beten*, 15-16, 29-30.

private life. To worship the Sacred Heart is to help Jesus claim what is his by right. His divine rights are in danger.” It was men’s duty and honour to reinstall these rights.<sup>44</sup>

A closer look at this journal, the *Männer-Apostolat* reveals that it did not report exclusively on piety and the Sacred Heart. For religious reasons, it also instrumentalised topics that men were likely to be interested in. There were articles about heroes in the sea battle of Tsushima (1905), the invention of manned flight, the dangers of socialism, about politics in general and current affairs. Religious messages were skilfully woven in. Heroes appeared everywhere, so why not be a hero for the church? In the very first article of the very first issue the pattern of linking male-oriented semantics with Catholic propaganda is set. The article dealt with John the Baptist, “a true man, enlightened by his belief in the Redeemer”, who from small beginnings in Galilee helped to unleash the Christian movement. Men joined in their ones and twos, then hundreds and thousands, and finally millions, in imitation of Christ. John “created the first *Männer-Apostolat* in order to save the world”, the reader was told. He should act just like John had done: “As a grown man you are aware of the pressures of our time. Save! Courage! If the handful of men in Galilee in a pagan age could win such a success, should anyone be afraid today? Be bold and courageous! ... Some men proclaim their disbelief, others the decline of moral standards - you should promote Christ!”<sup>45</sup> Another article in 1914, an elaboration on why Mother Mary was the ideal mother men should look up to, ran under the headline *Stahlhart*, ‘Hard as Steel’. It deals with an exemplary worker in the steel company in Essen. “He is always dutiful and his character is as hard as steel. He never missed the congregation’s Holy Communion.”<sup>46</sup>

Harping on traits such as courage and steeliness was supposed to charm men. Such characteristics were not to be banned; rather, they were to be embraced. The only remaining step was to translate them into Christian values. The *Männer-Apostolat* addressed male homo-stereotypes and linked them with Christian ideals, but the concern here was not in re-masculinising men, but in persuading men to accept the preferred gender role, and to make pious values palatable by painting them in manly colours. Military metaphors, which were also applied to Mother Mary, were supposed to satisfy the inherent belligerence of men. The ploy of using semantics of this kind had been well established ever since the mid nineteenth century, had intensified around 1900, and expanded rapidly during the First World War. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, the *Männer-Apostolat* explained that this was a just war, and it assured its readers that as long as they prayed diligently, Germany would win. “An army of prayers on their knees in church at the communion rail - a brave army out there in the field - together victory is ours!”<sup>47</sup> The close pairing of real soldiers and virtual soldiers for Christ was meant to convince men that they were man enough already, although ultimately they were not required to do anything their wives did not already do: go to church.

<sup>44</sup> “Heilandsrechte”, *Männer-Apostolat. Monatsblätter für die katholische Männerwelt* (hereafter *MA*), 6 (1914).

<sup>45</sup> Otto Cohausz, SJ, “Werben für Christus”, *MA*, 1 (1914).

<sup>46</sup> *MA*, 5 (1914).

<sup>47</sup> “Jetzt geht in die Kirche, kniet nieder vor Gott und bittet ihn um Hilfe für unser braves Heer”, *MA*, 9 (1914).

The introduction of figures to identify with was meant to stabilise male identities for ecclesiastical purposes. Faced with a raft of medals, heroes, and battles, at the end of 1914 the *Männer-Apostolat* pointed to heavenly heroes like the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV and Joseph of Nazareth.<sup>48</sup> During the war Fr. Hermann Sträter (1866-1943), one of the main initiators of the *Männer-Apostolat* in the city of Krefeld in the upper Rhine area, published a collection of sermons. One began by speaking of the horrors of warfare, and then continued: “But now I would like to talk to you about another battle. A battle everyone has to join, in the field and at home ... You, men, are in the vanguard. In the *Männer-Apostolat* you gathered, determined to wage this battle. You have to protect three sanctuaries: your soul, your family, your fatherland.”<sup>49</sup> Sträter, later made suffragan bishop of Cologne in 1922, retained the war metaphors in the second edition of his sermons in 1929. During the war, more and more heroes were brought into play: military, Christian heroes such as Ignatius of Loyola, who served as a shining example for the brave men of the Apostolate. Even Jesus was pictured as a great ‘field marshal’ in 1915, a good decade before he had to compete as the superior ‘Führer’ with the Führer of the Nazi party.<sup>50</sup>

## RELIGIOSITY TRANSFERRED TO ‘MASCULINE’ SPHERES

Women were excluded from the public sphere, and obliged to care for the private and religious spheres. Nevertheless, the sweeping generalisation that religion was a female sphere excludes the possibility that men got involved in their own way. They just got involved in ways that historians today do not expect. That it was hoped men would attend church more often is certain. However, at the same time they were encouraged to continue to act as before in their normal haunts: in the public sphere and politics; in schools and universities; in newspapers. Religion was not only performed in church but also in the Catholic milieu with its Catholic parties, associations, and media; areas from which women were explicitly excluded, such as the General Assembly of Catholics (later called the *Katholikentag*). Men’s favourite activities were recruited to ecclesiastical ends. Established patterns of masculinity were taken on board and organised, but then transformed into domesticated forms of masculinity for Christian purposes.

This framing of conventional male activities also amounted to an act of tolerance towards them. Men did not need to change utterly, and they did not have to stop fighting and become Holy Joes; on the contrary, they should keep on fighting if it was in the right cause. Men’s activities in the public sphere were embraced, and thus served pious needs. “The Catholic man has to be a man of action”, high school teacher Johannes L. Schlich underlined in 1911 in his manual for men, and certainly

<sup>48</sup> “Jetzt geht in die Kirche, kniet nieder vor Gott und bittet ihn um Hilfe für unser braves Heer”, *MA*, 9 (1914).

<sup>49</sup> Sträter, *Männerpredigten* (2nd ed.), 18.

<sup>50</sup> “Ein edler Kriegsheld”, *MA*, 6 (1915); see also Konrad Algermissen, “Ein Führer und sein Testament”, *MA*, (1931); and Otto Cohausz, SJ, “Unser Führer”, *MA*, 10 (1932): “The world needs a great Führer. Many set themselves up as Führer nowadays. But the only Führer who possesses all *Führereigenschaften* [qualities of a Führer] is Jesus.”



many men would have agreed. "In our turbulent times in particular, a man does not fulfil his duty if he does not care for public life, the state, and politics. Those cowards who do not dare defend their religious and moral convictions in public betray the holy cause of their religion and their church."<sup>51</sup>

The Men's Apostolate was so called in an attempt to avoid the connotations of an association, with all its duties, or a fraternity, with its endless obligations. It was not founded to promote the transfer of piety into other spheres. Instead, given that its members were already committed to this transfer, the Men's Apostolate planned to appeal to piety in the narrow sense again. Their aim was not to reverse the transfer, but to recombine it with traditional piety. Piety was not 'feminine', as the contemporary reproach ran, and men as such did not have a religious tin ear. It only remained to give men the proper framework and to dispel the whiff of feminism. "Did we not underestimate the religious energy of men? Did not some of us at times ask them to demonstrate a firm belief in *public life*, while failing to ask them to believe in private life and family life?" In his retrospective, the man behind the Apostolate, Hermann Sträter, suggested in 1917 that Church's pastoral care used to neglect men's piety, though the "reproach of 'feminism' brought against the 'church pastoral'" was exaggerated. Sträter admitted that he and others had been convinced that a life dedicated to piety was out of reach for most men. "We were blind". The success of recent religious campaigns proved that thousands of men were looking for deeper piety.<sup>52</sup>

In other words, the Men's Apostolate stressed men's double duty. They were meant to remain as active in public life as before, but should also find their way back to piety. Both sides of the coin were important. They should vote for Christian parties, thus defending the throne; they should take communion, thus defending the altar.<sup>53</sup> Membership of the *Volksverein*, the People's Association for Catholic Germany, which stood at 800,000 in 1914, was promoted as another male obligation. Even wielding a pen against the Church's enemies was hailed as an especially male activity if undertaken in the name of religion. In March 1914, the Jesuit Anton Hellmich reminded his readers of bygone "German days of heroism", with victory in war and the victory of Christianity over paganism. Just as Germany should look to its defences, so the Church should guard the achievements of Christianity. "It is only in battle that this can succeed." The urgent task was to supply the Church with constant flow of new 'fighters', and they were to be found in the ranks of the Men's Apostolate. Nevertheless, this regiment would be useless if it could not fight the battles of modern times with modern weapons - the press. Unfortunately, the Jesuit continued in openly anti-Semitic vein, it was "our enemies" such as the Jew Adolphe Crémieux who realised this before "we" did. "You, a Catholic man, had to read yet again how meanly we were treated. There is lightning in your mind; there is thunder in your chest. Why do you keep the flashes within? Why do you smother the holy anger? Try to use it for the sake of other people. You may discover that you are a skilled writer." The male reader is explicitly asked to use his feelings of rage to spur him to put his thoughts

<sup>51</sup> Schlich, *Der gläubige Mann*, 254.

<sup>52</sup> Sträter, *Männerpredigten*, 3-4.

<sup>53</sup> "Apostelarbeit in der Osterzeit", *MA*, 4 (1914).

down on paper, and then in print. "Then you have perfected our weapon."<sup>54</sup> If ever a time needed men, it was now, proclaimed an anti-Socialist pamphlet in 1911: "We need Catholic men, not dim-witted philistines; men, not sullen sluggards; men, not miserable whingers who are indifferent to everything higher than the head on their beer", and the answer was for Catholic men to support Catholic newspapers.<sup>55</sup> There was the terrain where men could legitimately demonstrate their piety.

## NEO-CONFESSIONALISM: COMPENSATING FOR FEMINISATION

As well as positive role models, it was important to conjure up enemies and then fight them. The clear separation of friends and enemies, of 'in-group' and 'out-group', was well established in ultramontane Catholicism long before the *Kulturkampf*. No wonder that this scheme was evident in the early issues of *Männer-Apostolat* before the war. In March 1914 we read: "Man's atonement is sorely needed in our times. God is reviled, denied, hated. Catholic man, does God deserve to be mocked, and Christ the King derided? Can you not feel the holy melancholy and holy wrath within you? Atone!"<sup>56</sup> Protestants, Jews, Freemasons, and Social Democrats, liberalism and materialism: they were all already out there, a well-established set of wicked enemies and evil structures, menacing the bastions of the Church. A notionally just version of anti-Semitism - not in hatred but in defence - was encouraged by the *Männer-Apostolat* in 1921.<sup>57</sup> It was thought to be especially appealing to men to dramatise the dangers, to paint an image of malevolent enemies, and to appeal to sentiments like wrath.

The fierce antagonism between Christian denominations during the second confessional age (c. 1830-1960)<sup>58</sup> went some way to compensating for the feminisation of religion, since confessionalism was the arena in which male virtues and powers, used in the service of religion, could let off steam in a legitimate way. Re-confessionalisation was a reaction to a series of developments such as the problems arising from confessionally mixed states after 1806, secularisation, and the growing conflict between state and church. Yet it was also a reaction to the danger of losing the entire male population to the secular world. Since feminisation preceded re-confessionalisation, neo-confessionalism provided an outlet in the bourgeois society for men to

<sup>54</sup> Anton Hellmich, SJ, "Die Waffe", *MA*, 3 (1914). Adolphe Crémieux (1796-1880) was a French politician and a leading figure in the French Jewish community.

<sup>55</sup> "Warnung von einem falschen Stück Papier" (undated pamphlet), quoted in Mack, *Katholische Männer heraus!*, II, 71-78.

<sup>56</sup> Otto Cohausz, "Sühnende Männer", *MA*, 3 (1914).

<sup>57</sup> P. Christ, SJ, "Christliche Sittenlehre und Antisemitismus", *MA*, 6 (1921); *MA*, 7 (1921). Cf. Blaschke, *Katholizismus und Antisemitismus im Deutschen Kaiserreich*.

<sup>58</sup> See Werner's introduction to this volume. See also Blaschke, "Der 'Dämon des Konfessionalismus'"; Id., "Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein Zweites Konfessionelles Zeitalter?"; while for an English summary see Id., *Offenders or Victims?* See also Steinhoff, "Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?"; Anderson, "Living Apart and Together in Germany"; and Hildmann, *Schreiben im zweiten konfessionellen Zeitalter*.

act as *milites Christi*. During the second confessional age, specifically ultramontane forms of piety propelled masculine re-confessionalisation, and at the same time nourished the feminisation of religion.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand, the distinction between different gender roles in the religious sphere served merely to reinforce the general direction taken by bourgeois society, and preserved distinctions in the religious sphere which had been established long before. A commitment to politics, journalism, or business offered a way to compensate for the feminisation of religion. Secular actions were religiously masculinised; writing for Christian newspapers and voting for Christian parties were acts of male commitment to the church, be it Catholic or Protestant. The separation of the (female) private and (male) public spheres allowed men both to hold on to their Christian beliefs and prove their masculinity in the public arena. Since public politics and public authorship in the second confessional age were conspicuously aggressive towards whatever was confessionally ‘other’, men could fight for their faith and at the same time leave religious devotion to their wives. Writing religious articles and condemning those who endangered one’s church was already felt to be a religious activity of sorts. The confessional age provided a battleground for men that saw religion gain a certain degree of re-masculinisation. This compensated for the feminisation of religion.

## OVERT MASCULINISATION

Latent re-masculinisation should be distinguished from manifest re-masculinisation. Societies need constant reassurance about gender differences, balancing them with religious standards in daily practice. Feminisation and re-masculinisation, preserving male predominance and dealing with female demands, were constant, and latent, challenges.

One of the historian’s tasks is to reconstruct the “permanent reproduction of the objective and subjective structures of male dominance” from generation to generation.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, there are occasional phases of explicit, and partly intentional, re-masculinisation, evident from the increased frequency and intensity of utterances about masculine values, and the studied actions on the part of the relevant actors or agencies, whereas latent re-masculinisation reveals little of either intention or agency. Men as men were scarcely the focus of society and the church authorities in the nineteenth century, even if some studies mistakenly extend pastoral care specifically directed at men back into the early nineteenth century, confusing profession and guild concerns (for apprentices and journeymen) with gender concerns (for men in general).<sup>61</sup> Some papal encyclicals mentioned the role of wives, but none of them discussed men in the Church. For nearly two thousand years the Church’s most

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Busch, “Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit”, 105-131.

<sup>60</sup> Bourdieu, *Die männliche Herrschaft*, 144.

<sup>61</sup> Bürger, *MännerRäume bilden*, 117-118; Rosowski, “Die Männer und das Wort”. Bürger and Rosowski summarise Hoerschelmann, “Männerarbeit”, ignoring his distinction between social corporatism and (later) natural corporatism.

important pronouncements pondered women, the laity, priests, bishops, children, and young people, and sometimes fathers, but never men per se.<sup>62</sup>

One striking example of their invisibility is offered by German encyclopaedias and dictionaries. From the mid nineteenth century, 'man' was rarely defined, and where there was an entry it was reduced to a short remark. The entry for *Mann* in Meyer's *Conversations-Lexicon* of 1851 begins by referring to the entry for *Mensch* (human being), and was absent altogether from the seven subsequent editions, only reappearing in the ninth edition in 1975. In the same period, while men vanished from the reference books, the entries for 'woman' grew constantly, much like the entries for 'gender', which basically restricted their explanations to women. In the nineteenth century it was women who were at issue, not men. Men and male values represented the social norm; any explicit debate would have run the risk of fostering critical thoughts. The male component was not completely absent from the encyclopaedias, of course, since 'implicit misogyny'<sup>63</sup> was always present, alongside the explicit misogyny of entries for subjects such as gender, woman, family, and marriage. When 'man' re-entered the dictionaries in the 1960s, the dichotomies and biologisation in the entries for *Frau* and *Geschlecht* ('woman' and 'gender') of the last hundred and fifty years were finally called into question.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, the suspect absence of men from the national encyclopaedias and religious dictionaries broadly coincides with the second confessional age.<sup>65</sup> As confessionalism was increasingly visible, men as men were increasingly invisible. It seems as if there was a negative correlation between the two factors. Men were less in evidence than women in the discourse on gender, and less in evidence at mass on Sundays. Recognising this fact was a prerequisite for any attempt to make them visible again, be it in the gender discourse or in church: it was their very invisibility that prompted the unambiguous rhetoric of re-masculinisation in the years following 1887 and, with a slightly different emphasis, around 1950.

The term re-masculinisation has already been used in previous gender studies, though not in religious studies, in a very specific way. Back in 1989, Susan Jeffords published *The Re-masculinisation of American Culture*, in which she argued that much as a result of the peace movement, flower power, and opposition to the Vietnam War, and particularly because American soldiers returned defeated, men's identity was severely challenged. In an attempt to turn the tide, Hollywood took the Vietnam theme and played it out with muscular, aggressive men. In the era of Ronald Reagan there was a re-masculinisation of politics and culture. Similar claims for the 're-masculinisation' of societies, especially following defeat in war, have recently been made for Germany in the 1950s and for South Korea.<sup>66</sup>

The idea of religious re-masculinisation was inspired by the findings of Norbert Busch on the 'masculinisation' of the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the early

<sup>62</sup> Juchem, "Sag mir, wo die Männer sind", 8.

<sup>63</sup> For the homosocial discussion of masculinity in moralist manuals, see Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 282.

<sup>64</sup> Frevert, 'Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann', 13-60.

<sup>65</sup> Blaschke, "Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus", 32-35.

<sup>66</sup> Jeffords, *The Re-masculinisation of American Culture*; Poiger, "A New, 'Western' Hero?"; Kim, *The Re-masculinisation of South Korean Cinema*.

twentieth century.<sup>67</sup> All these approaches, whether converging on Jesus or on Rambo, share a tendency to single out a limited time span, a decade for example, in which the effort to re-masculinise society thought to have been particularly marked. It seems as if a determined wave of de-feminisation around 1900 came in reaction to a period of feminisation. The Catholic Church successfully started to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart from the mid nineteenth century on. Though this cult proved to be successful in the extreme, there is no doubt that it attracted far more women than men. Men, amongst them even some priests, found the practices and symbols of the cult too saccharine and soft, too sentimental and effeminate. No wonder that 76 per cent of members of Sacred Heart associations were women. The feminisation of this form of popular piety is very well documented. Men, meanwhile, kept their distance. Alarmed by this, in the early twentieth century the Church authorities launched a campaign to win over the men. There was a deluge of national vocabularies; there was a semantic shift from Jesus the devote and suffering lover to Jesus the 'ideal man'; and even the iconography of the Sacred Heart abruptly changed. The image of a bleeding, submissive 'softy' was no longer in favour, and instead Jesus, still showing his Heart, was transformed into the King of Love, with crown and sceptre. The attempt to de-feminise the cult was institutionalised in the Men's Apostolate, which in turn originated in a missionary campaign in Krefeld. The requirements for its members were not especially exacting:

1. Manly commitment to the cause of Christ and his Holy Church (and as of 1915) and his Vicar.
2. Dedication of one's work, prayer, and suffering to the Sacred Heart.
3. Eager participation at the monthly male communion on Sacred Heart Sunday, the first Sunday of the month.

In an illuminating text, Sträter later admitted that the threefold slogan was carefully chosen to play on men's expectations. Thus it opened with an appeal to men's bravery. Placing the monthly communion as number three and starting with the manly commitment to the Church was an ingenious strategy. And what did 'manly commitment' mean? "Steadfastness and bravery should grace a man, who nowadays more than ever stands at the centre of public life; he has to speak up for Christ, the Pope, and the Church - the first basic principle." Religion is in growing danger. "The man has to be a brave fighter for God ... As a convinced Catholic, he defends his religion from attack, repels all evil forces that invade the sanctuaries of mankind, fights immorality ... [and] alcoholism, supports the good [Catholic] press, ... participates in Catholic associations, .... [and] is a member of the Catholic People's Association." Only the second principle risked an appeal to heart and minds, while the third demanded minimal orthopraxy.<sup>68</sup>

The overt campaign of re-masculinisation in the early 1900s was inherently reflexive. Although the lack of religiosity had long been lamented over, the complaints about the problem intensified. In 1901 the 'Pastoral Papers' of the diocese of Cologne

<sup>67</sup> See Busch, "Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit".

<sup>68</sup> Sträter, *Das Männerapostolat*, 23; for his sermons see *Männerpredigten*; Klassen, *Sei ein Mann!*

included in its series a disquisition on the subject ‘Why are women often more religious than men?’ The author refuted biological explanations. The notion that women are more emotionally driven while men possess greater reason, courage, and spirit did not convince him. Women’s stronger religious passion cannot be explained by the “natural superiority of the wife”. The real reason for the “religious indifference amongst men” had to be sought amongst men themselves. Amongst the upper classes, education hindered religious devotion. What would happen if women were allowed to register at universities? As for the lower classes, the Social Democrats and alcohol alienated them from the Church. The article ends with an appeal to men to be “good soldiers of Christ under his banner” and to fight for the truth.<sup>69</sup>

Besides the increasing element of reflexivity, another clear expression of a re-masculinisation project around 1900 was the institutionalisation of pastoral care for men, as evident both organisationally and in the press. A Protestant pendant to the Men’s Apostolate only came into existence five years later, since manliness there was apparently less called into question, and an amalgamation of Protestantism, legitimate masculinity, and nationalism made it less likely that it would be viewed as a problem. In 1915 the *Kirchliche Männerdienst* was founded under the auspices of the Inner Mission. The burdens of warfare made extra pastoral care necessary. On a local level, some Protestant associations had begun to address male issues as early as the 1880s.<sup>70</sup> All these branches were united in one organisation in September 1933, the *Deutsches Evangelisches Männerwerk* (German Protestant Men’s Association). Under the leadership of Helmuth Johnsen it sympathised with the Nazi-friendly *Deutsche Christen*. The *Männerwerk*’s journal was called *Mann und Kirche* (Man and Church, 1939-1941). The tradition of hegemonic masculinity in Protestantism made it easy to collaborate with the Nazi movement. While Protestants tended to use religion for the sake of nationalism, Catholics tended to use nationalism for the sake of religion, and accordingly used masculinity for the sake of religion. However, Protestantism never was homogeneous. The German Christian Movement and the *Deutsche Christen* presented an explicitly masculine habitus, whereas the opposing *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church) was accused of being effeminate. Such gender-dualism did not only lend itself to combating other denominations; it could be used against other Protestants. Because of the close ties with the *Deutsche Christen*, the Men’s Association in Württemberg refused to join the united *Männerwerk*, and in 1934, driven by the ‘resistance’ of the Confessing Church, branches split off in Westphalia, the Rhineland, and later in Bavaria. They went back to their former name, *Männerdienst*.<sup>71</sup>

On the Catholic side, initiatives to place male issues high on the agenda of church politics were more visible. This might have been due to the greater degree of religious

<sup>69</sup> “Woher kommt es, dass die Frauen meist religiöser sind als die Männer?”, *Pastoralblatt der Diözese Köln*, 35 (1901), 204-208, 237-243, 273-279.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Vorstand des Evangelischen Männerdienstes, *Evangelischer Männerdienst Asseln*; Moering, *Kirche und Männer*.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Johnsen, ed., *Die Männerarbeit der Kirche*. For Johnsen, who in 1935 joined the National Socialist male *Deutsche Christen*, see Zirlewagen, “Helmuth Johnsen”; Schröder, “Männerwerk”; Id., “Männerarbeit der evangelischen Kirche”; Schirmmacher, *Männer in der Kirche*; see also Bergen, *Twisted Cross*; and Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 294-300.



feminisation (the prominent role of Mary, the Sacred Heart cult) and the questionable role of manliness in Catholicism, which had been vilified since the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> The first monthly journal explicitly to deal with men and target male readers was the *Männer-Apostolat*. While the Protestant *Männerdienst* was founded during the First World War, the Catholic *Männer-Apostolat* had got underway in 1910; the journal *Mann und Kirche* first appeared in 1939, whereas the Catholic journal was launched in January 1914, seven months before the outbreak of the First World War. Though Protestant and Catholic institutions had different backgrounds - Inner Mission, Sacred Heart - and their journals were not identical, they still had several crucial things in common. They were the first and only journals in Germany produced by church authorities in the early twentieth century that explicitly tackled men and their problems. After the Second World War new journals were created in this tradition.

These institutions, with their journals and morals, can also be read in the opposite direction. Do they not confirm the feminisation of religion by the simple fact that men obviously needed to be catered for separately? Textual discourses and moral postulations might well indicate that the moral was missing. In fact, the whole enterprise of re-masculinisation was a double risk, firstly because it addressed itself to men, and they were known to be less involved than women, and secondly because it chose a cult, the Sacred Heart, which was especially pious and feminised, and thus at first glance unlikely to suddenly begin to attract men. Nevertheless, the enterprise was successful. In fact, the Men's Apostolate enjoyed rapid growth. In February 1914 the "triumphal march of the Men's Apostolate" was reviewed, from small beginnings in Krefeld, winding down the Rhine, stretching from Metz to Breslau, from Cologne to Berlin, and numbering more than 60,000 members. By May 1914 more than 100,000 men had joined<sup>73</sup>, and the influx did not stop there. In 1919, while the 10-*pfennig* monthly reached a circulation of 200,000 copies, the movement itself comprised 300,000 members.<sup>74</sup> In 1925 the monthly had climbed up to 250,000 copies, with "hopefully many more readers".<sup>75</sup> The peak was reached in 1933 with 800,000 members. Similar associations were founded in other countries, including Ireland, Belgium (500,000 members), and Canada (*Ligues du Sacré-Cœur*, with 350,000 members).<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Gross, *The War against Catholicism*.

<sup>73</sup> "Siegeszug des Männer-Apostolates", *MA*, 2 (1914); "Vom Herzen des Welterlösers", *MA*, 5 (1914).

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Busch, "Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit", 253-254.

<sup>75</sup> *MA*, 3 (1925).

<sup>76</sup> Schwendimann, "Männerapostolat". This gives the figure of 250,000 members for 1914, and no year for the figures for Belgium and Canada.

## RECAPITULATION

Men's piety has been widely underestimated. The theory of feminisation neglected men, but also their contemporaries suspected them of lacking belief. Pastoral care concentrated on women. It was only in the face of the 'reproach of feminism' in around 1900 that new initiatives were taken. The Church authorities realised that men were looking for religious edification and needed special provision to be made for them, while at the same time it was recognised that their existing commitment to public life, politics, and media could be interpreted as another, different demonstration of church loyalty. The wave of Catholic re-masculinisation in the early twentieth century concentrated on piety, while accepting male preferences. It was able to be successful because it picked up on established tendencies. It played on masculine and feminine values and tried to re-code them, but, more importantly, it interpreted male activities, which were not purely pious beforehand, as if they were pious enough. The theory of religious feminisation has overlooked this phenomenon because it concentrates on religious activities in the narrowest sense: prayer, confession, and attending mass regularly. Certainly, feminisation theory holds water. It is true that men were constantly accused of being under-represented in church. Nonetheless, men were over-represented in Catholic associations with public influence and in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Indeed, men dominated the most important and socially relevant parts of the Catholic milieu: mass organisations like the *Volksverein*, the Catholic parties, and the press. Women were explicitly excluded from active participation in the *Augustinusverein* (the Catholic Association of Journalists), the *Volksverein* until 1907, and the General Assembly until as late as 1921.<sup>77</sup>

The manifest re-masculinisation so evident around 1900 was not particularly innovative, except clearly for the fact that male institutions were now intentionally rather than accidentally male institutions. Monasteries are monasteries, just 'naturally' separated according to gender. There were no journals explicitly directed at men; they first appeared well after 1900. There are several ways to approach the period from 1800 to 1900 even in the absence of a journal as handy source material: through the *habitus clericalis*; by looking at how hegemonic social male virtues were identified and linked to Christian ideals; by studying the male homo-stereotypes pressed into the service of ecclesiastical propaganda. Church authorities and priests, clerical and lay leaders, they were all well aware that they had to confront the 'reproach of feminism', but that they could not completely twist feminine values into masculine virtues, and neither could they turn ordinary men into devotees. It would be success enough to convince hundreds of thousands of men to take communion on the first Sunday of the month before a freshly masculinised Sacred Heart. Above all, they knew that what made men feel really secure was to appeal to their conventional masculinity.

Another wave of re-masculinisation followed the Second World War.<sup>78</sup> Germany's men and their ideals were defeated, and with that they lost their authority as

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Schneider, "Feminisierung der Religion", 140-141.

<sup>78</sup> For re-masculinisation, see Poiger, "A New, 'Western' Hero?"; for Protestant crisis management see Bürger, *MännerRäume bilden*, 125-126.



the *caput familia*. The response was several initiatives launched on either side of the confessional spectrum. In May 1946 Protestants relaunched *Männerarbeit der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Men's Work), combining the ideas of the (Nazi-resisting) *Männerdienst* with the organisational framework of the (*deutschchristlichen*) *Männerwerk*. In 1948 the journal *Mann und Kirche* from the Nazi period found its successor in *Kirche und Mann*, which continued until its bankruptcy in 1986.<sup>79</sup>

Catholics based their provision for men in Fulda, where Bishop Johannes Baptist Dietz (1879-1959), head of *Kirchliche Arbeitsstelle für Männerseelsorge und Männerarbeit in den deutschen Diözesen* (Ecclesiastic Institute for Men's Pastoral Care in the German Dioceses), took responsibility - and was soon being called the *Männerbischof*. The name of the journal, *Mann in der Zeit*, founded in 1948, echoed its forerunner the *Männer-Apostolat* (1914-1934) and its successor *Der katholische Mann* (1935-1941). Another journal from Fulda, launched in 1950, addressed priests committed to the care of men's souls, and was called *Der Männer-Seelsorger* (Men's Pastoral Care).

In 1952 *Mann in der Zeit* had a print-run of 320,000 copies, making it the biggest journal for men in Germany, and 1958 it even reached 600,000 copies.<sup>80</sup> Its nationalist and masculine overtones still existed, but had been toned down remarkably. This generation of men was said to be a beaten generation. Their image was shaken. People cast about for new versions of masculinity. The sword-wielding man who believed in aggression was outmoded. Yet one thing was certain: men were meant to be independent, fatherly, and pious. However, as the journal concedes, "who wants to be pious as a man?" That men were unable to be pious is denounced as one of the gravest misunderstandings of former centuries; on the contrary, the true man, the real father, is deeply pious.<sup>81</sup> After the last war, the possibility of rediscovering a more childlike existence was emphasised. New feminine sides to male existence were the subject of much reflection. At the same time, the old patterns of mimicry and re-coding were popularised again.

Confessionalism stirred up men's fighting morals. It was appropriate for priests to appeal to men's masculinity in the second confessional age, while commitment in the public sphere, in politics and journalism, associations and culture, was the legitimate way for men to behave in a manner that was at once bourgeois, manly, and pious. In the 1980s men were rediscovered again by gender studies and by anxious theologians, but this time Jesus was popularised as a truly feminine new man. Men's identities multiplied, as did confessional and secular identities. The second confessional age was history, and so was the religious re-masculinisation of piety and the re-masculinised religion of men.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Hoerschelmann, "Männerarbeit", 662.

<sup>80</sup> Wohlgemuth, ed., *Männerarbeit aus der Wirklichkeit des Gnadenlebens*; see also Bleistein, *60 Jahre Männerseelsorgekonferenz in Fulda*.

<sup>81</sup> "Männer in Entscheidung und Bekenntnis", *Mann in der Zeit*, 2 (1948).

<sup>82</sup> A cluster of books that are more normative than analytical, produced by religious publishing houses, have tried to lure men back to the church with new kinds of personification (man as split personality, sensitive, domesticated, but still seeking his religious identity). See Fraas, *Mann mit Eigenschaften*; Lehner, *Männer an der Wende*; Hofer, *Männer glauben anders*.



# MASCULINITY AND SECULARISATION IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITAIN

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CALLUM G. BROWN

There is growing evidence that secularisation has been accompanied by a shift in the gender of Christian adherents and practitioners from female to male. For example, in France during the twentieth century there was a major decline in the proportion of women who were religiously active, leading to a significant narrowing of the traditional gender gap which had made for higher churchgoing by women.<sup>1</sup> In Scotland between 1984 and 2002, there was a net loss of 168,560 churchgoers over 15 years-of-age, of whom 129,040 (or 77 per cent) were female.<sup>2</sup> Equally, there is evidence that the growth between 1945 and 2008 of those identifying themselves as being of 'no religion' has been accompanied by a significant increase in the proportion of 'no religionists' who are women: in Canada women 'no religionists' rose from 30.7 per cent of the total in 1951 to 45.4 per cent in 2001, in the USA from 29.2 per cent in 1957 to 39 per cent in 2001, in Ireland from 36.3 per cent in 1960 to 40.6 per cent in 2006, in Australia from 42.4 per cent in 1976 to 45.9 per cent in 2006, and in New Zealand from 44.4 per cent in 1991 to 47.3 per cent in 2001.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe*, 35.

<sup>2</sup> Calculated from data in Table 4.4, Brierley, *Turning the Tide*, 53.

<sup>3</sup> Data from, or calculated from, Statistics Canada Table 075-0016 CANSIM (database), <[http://cansim2.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-wein/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&CNSM-Fi=CII/CII\\_1-eng.htm](http://cansim2.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-wein/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&CNSM-Fi=CII/CII_1-eng.htm)> accessed 13 November 2009; Table 3; 2001: 2001 Census, Summary Tables, <[www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)>, Population by Religion, accessed 13 November 2009; Current Population Report, Series P-20-079 (1957), cited in *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1968*, Population, table 49, page 41; and Kosmin, Mayer and Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey 2001*, Exhibit 13 p. 35; <<http://www.cso.ie/statistics/popnclasybyreligionandnationality2006.htm>> accessed 27 November 2009; Commonwealth of Australia, *Census of Population and Housing 1976: Summary Tables*, 3; New Zealand Census, 2001, Table 16 Religious Affiliation at <<http://search.stats.govt.nz/search?af=&w=2001+census&date=>>> accessed 20 May 2010.

In England, the evidence is more confused. Between 1979 and 2005, the proportion of women in the Christian churchgoing population in England as a whole rose from 55 per cent to 57 per cent (whilst the proportion of women in the population was largely static); the biggest increase was in the 45-64 age group, where the percentage rose from 55 to 58 per cent. However, there were significant regional variations; in Greater London, with a population of 7.5 million in 2005, the proportion who were female fell very significantly during 1979-2005 from 57 per cent to 52 per cent. Moreover, the highest levels of male participation were amongst the growing and least declining denominations: New Churches were 50 per cent male, Pentecostal churches 49 per cent, Independent churches 48 and Roman Catholic Church 45. Meanwhile, the lowest male participation was in the most crisis-ridden denominations: the United Reformed Church was only 35 per cent male, the Methodist Church 36 per cent, and the Church of England 41 per cent.<sup>4</sup> What is also interesting is that London, experiencing growth in male participation, is the part of England where the high-growth churches, notably the Pentecostal churches, have been the most vigorous and important parts of organised Christianity. London had had the lowest rate of churchgoing in Britain for the majority of the nineteenth and twentieth century (and in 1979 still had the seventh lowest church going rate of English counties). But by 2005 the capital had become amongst the highest (being exceeded only by Merseyside) - resulting not from church growth but from a low rate of decline.<sup>5</sup> In this regard, the question arises: has twentieth century secularisation been affected by changing gender composition in Christianity?

A major factor to contend with is that of changing ethnic composition of churchgoers, resulting from the large-scale immigration of non-white Christians (especially Black Caribbean and African) after 1945. In an examination of twenty-seven English counties (including Greater London) drawn from the Church Research organisation censuses, there was a very significant positive correlation of 0.6208 between the decrease in Christian churchgoing between 1979 and 2005 and the percentage of churchgoers who were black/Caribbean/African/other (BCA) in 2005; this suggests that the higher the proportion of BCA in congregations, the lower was the rate of church decline. But there was an almost equally significant correlation of 0.5396 between the percentage who were BCA and the density of men amongst churchgoers<sup>6</sup>; this suggests that counties with high proportions of black Christians have a tendency to be areas also with relatively high density of men. Moreover, a correlation coefficient of 0.5237 was produced between churchgoing levels in 2005 and the density of males in Christian congregations. Taken together these data suggest a close connection between rising proportion of non-whites in Christian congregations on the one hand, and high male density on the other. However, ethnicity is only part of the explanation for high male density in the congregations of some regions of England. Part of the reason may be age: growing denominations may be younger in composition and recruiting more young people. Certainly, the gender ratio for churchgoers in 2005

<sup>4</sup> Brierley, ed., *UKCH Religious Trends No. 6 2006/2007*, 5.8, 12.3, 12.47.

<sup>5</sup> These figures calculated from data in *Ibid*, *passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Density is here defined as the proportion of men in the population minus the proportion of men in Christian congregations.

was stronger in Greater London for under 20 year olds (at 8:7) than was the case for English Christianity as a whole (where the ratio was 1:1). But the changing construction of gender itself needs to be closely examined as a major determining factor.

In a further twist, there is evidence from England that during post-war church growth in the period 1948-1960 the role of women was extraordinarily important. In those years, female confirmations in the Church of England rose from 33.6 to 40.9 per 1,000 population (a rise of 28 per cent). By contrast, male confirmations were static at 27.3 and 27.6 per cent, showing no meaningful growth at all. This suggests that young women were very responsive in the 1950s to the last strong blast of the traditional discourse on femininity and piety that characterised this period.<sup>7</sup> But, though from 1960 to 1974 female confirmations fell marginally slower than men's (a drop of 52 per cent compared to 56 per cent), the male figures showed a continuous decline since at least 1934 (of 61 per cent) whilst female decline only *started* in 1960-1962.<sup>8</sup> A haemorrhage of male recruitment had existed for thirty years prior to the 1960s, whilst women's recruitment actually grew; the result was an ever-increasing imbalance down to 1960 towards a 'woman's church' in the Church of England. When decline started, however, it was the change in female recruitment that was important, since there was no change to male recruitment.<sup>9</sup> The implication is that the wider collapse of Church of England recruitment, church going and church membership in the early 1960s may have been triggered in 1960-1962 by suddenly slowing female recruitment.

These data are suggestive of a significant pattern to secularisation. They may be the first consolidated evidence that the gender imbalance in the worshippers who attend Christian church on Sundays - an imbalance stretching back at least four hundred years<sup>10</sup> - is starting to narrow appreciably. It may be that secularisation turns out to be a highly feminine thing. This is important because the churches and historians have tended to look upon men as the more secular, and thus the more prone to secularisation. There may be a case for arguing that in the special circumstances of rapid church decline, it is women who leave the church faster and, or, show lower inclination to be recruited.

<sup>7</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 170-175, 227.

<sup>8</sup> McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*, 40.

<sup>9</sup> Currie et al., *Churches and Churchgoers*, 129.

<sup>10</sup> Field, "Adam and Eve".

## THE SECULARISED MAN AND THE RELIGIOUS WOMAN

The image of men as naturally 'more secular' has a long pedigree. It was certainly very strong in the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Within the twentieth century, little changed quickly. In the First World War, the traditional image of men as naturally impious was hardly shaken by the war. The natural goodness of women contrasted with men's innate religious disorder. Physical prowess and bravery in battle came at a cost - men were naturally less likely to go to church and lead a religious life, were subject to weakness of character, and were tempted to drink, gambling and rough culture. In his New Year message at the beginning of 1918, the Archbishop of Canterbury said: "It is from sternly disciplined men, trench-trained and battle-hardened, that we are to draw and fashion for the coming years young clergy, young schoolmasters, young Parliament men. It is from the ranks of women who have toiled unceasingly, uncomplainingly, in humblest paths of common service, that our young wives and mothers will come. In a different sense from that in which the words were first used, the new world will come to redress the balance of the old."<sup>12</sup>

The vision here is profoundly conservative and backward-looking. Though he said that 'what lies ahead must needs be new', there is a certainty and desire for a return to old structures of gendered roles, of a society that will have middle-class men toughened in war serving in leadership roles in a new and strengthened manner, and women returning after war service to be wives and mothers. The sense of the 'new' is nothing like novel; the Archbishop was locating religious and social newness within unchanged structures of the status quo. In popular culture, too, traditional gendering of religion and morality was reinforced. Wartime fiction, and stories at the end of the war, continued the Victorian and Edwardian themes of men's innate weakness and women's inbuilt religious value. Adultery was an issue that was raised in popular culture during the war; with so many men away, wives and 'sweethearts' at home did not always stay faithful. Yet, stories tended to hinge their narrative interest upon men's religious problems, not women's.

This continued focus upon men became intensified within the churches. The nature of the Great War was seen as spiritually different from the peace or, indeed, of earlier wars. The trenches formed an environment of peculiar religious results. Firstly, there was the constant exposure to fear and to the smell and experience of death and mutilation. Secondly, men on their own lacked the important soothing spiritual comfort of womanhood; women were the very essence of Christian piety, and men without that were likely to drift from a true Christian path. The churches dreaded that British men were being brutalised beyond the reach of religion, perhaps permanently. An Anglican clergyman, Canon James O. Hannay, wrote of his experiences as a chaplain in France, and told an audience at a public lecture in January 1918 in London: "On the one hand, there were those who expect that the war would produce a tremendous revival of religion, a revival both at home and abroad, of the religious spirit latent in the nation; in the other, a smaller class, who expected with

<sup>11</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 88-114.

<sup>12</sup> *Church Times*, 4 January 1918.

equal confidence that it would finally chip away the veneer of religion that made the nation appear Christian. After more than three years of war we know that it has done neither. There has been nothing like a general revival of religion either at home or abroad, and certainly nothing like a wave of definite unbelief. What has happened is that it has changed the average man's attitude towards religion."<sup>13</sup>

Before the war, he said, men had looked upon the church parson amiably, perhaps indifferently, but things had now changed: "There was little active hostility, though there was a suggestion of contempt. The ordinary man stood remote from the Church, neither blessing nor cursing; patient, tolerant, broadly indifferent. Now there is a change. Religion is still the parson's job, or the padre's, as the case may be. He is still paid for it; still has the church or hut; but no one expects any longer that it is all right; on the contrary there is a general feeling that the parsons have messed [up] their job. There is tendency to blame no particular individual or Church for the failure. The state of mind is just one of confused puzzledness; religion has failed us." Hannay still had hope: "The average Englishman, the man of the workshop of yesterday, of the trenches of to-day, wants religion ... [But] his religion is an imperfect thing - Christ and the Cross are not in it. In some degree then, the Church has succeeded. The souls of men are not asleep. That is something."<sup>14</sup>

Other religious developments of the period reinforced the strong view that women remained the heart and soul of popular Christian piety. Christian Science and spiritualism, which were areas of significant growth during the 1910s, gave a boost to the place of women in religious matters. Spiritualism was overwhelmingly a woman's domain, and seen to be so, and its rise during the war years contributed to an acknowledgement by the churches that women's position in society was changing. Yet, for the conservatives in all Christian denominations, women were perceived as coming to the aid of Christ's church in rather conventional ways. Anglo-Catholics in the Church of England saw women as having a role in fighting the threat of Protestantism: "Women are on the threshold of great and magnificent opportunities".<sup>15</sup> The Congregationalist evangelical preacher Dr John Henry Jowett said in a sermon two weeks after the Armistice: "They will bring to our national affairs a spirit that contends for the maintenance of the spiritual idea. ... The reforming fire needs to be fed by the breath of heaven. A woman's power of spiritual vision is her supreme endowment. She reaches spiritual realities, not by a tedious train of reasoning, but by intuitive discernment. We men say that woman is naturally religious. Her chief task in the next twenty years will be to keep alive in England the sense of God. ... If our women abide by the Cross, they will save our Country."<sup>16</sup>

The role of women in sustaining the moral fibre of the nation in the aftermath of the Great War was perceived to be even greater in the countryside than in the towns. The British rural areas were seen to be in crisis - a crisis revealed during the war. The crisis was one of national ill-preparedness in which long-term out-migration

<sup>13</sup> *Church Times*, 4 January 1918; Bellasis, "Hannay, James Owen".

<sup>14</sup> *Church Times*, 18 January 1918.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 December 1918.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in *British Weekly*, 28 November 1918.



from farming areas, including by those in small towns which sustained the infrastructure of agriculture, had weakened the rural economy and the 'yeoman' heart of the nation. The Board of Agriculture became so concerned that it became involved from 1916 in developing a strategy. At the heart of this was the role that women should play in preventing families from giving up life in farming areas. In turn, women were perceived as possibly leading - or at the very least allowing - the haemorrhage of country people. And women, the reasoning went, were inclined to accede to leaving the countryside because they were bored. They craved the excitement of towns, of meeting people, and of socialising. The countryside was seen to reduce women's natural instinct to meet and gossip, to support each other in creating a contented rural life. So, the Board turning to a new-fangled idea from Canada - that of women's meeting groups. This led to from 1918 to the government supporting the foundation and spread of branches of the Christian-aligned Women's Institute in England and Wales, and, its equivalent north of the border, the Scottish Women's Rural Institute. These two bodies became quickly seen as the bulwark to social life in the countryside, and to this day are regarded as important facets of the life of British farming areas. In this way, there was a translation into even apparently 'secular' organisations of an ideal to uphold women's key role in church and society.

Calls also grew for greater things for women. The admission of women to the ministry and the priesthood in the Protestant churches seemed to become near when an Anglican, Maude Royden (1876-1956), was close in the 1910s to being the first to preach the gospels, and be a priest, in the Church of England, having strong support from the archbishop of Canterbury; though she accepted a preaching post in the Congregational Church, the strong opposition amongst Anglicans, notably high churchmen, prevented this.<sup>17</sup> Women's suffrage, won in 1918, was enthusiastically supported by evangelicals who associated it with continuing moral change. But the war put into relief the chasm of thought between Christian feminism and a libertine feminism; the flamboyant and secular-style 'New Woman' of the pre-war era, imported from America, met with hostility by British churchwomen.<sup>18</sup> It was a more traditional vision of women's influence in society that attracted British churchwomen.

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed renewed emphasis upon male culpability in the threat to Christendom. This was particularly apparent in the moral campaigns of the temperance, anti-gambling, anti-sport and anti-cinema movements. Women were portrayed as the moral guardians of their families - of fathers, brothers, husbands and sons. The British Women's Temperance Association - known as the 'White Ribboners' because of their uniform - provided moral and spiritual protection for working-class women in vulnerable occupations (notably mill-work) by confronting male drunkenness. Their main propaganda device was a community parade in which the daughter of a well-known drunken father would be dressed in white and placed at the head of the marching band. One woman to whom this happened in the early 1920s recalled: "I went to the White Ribboners, and they had a parade. My father didn't know that I

<sup>17</sup> Fletcher, "Royden, (Agnes) Maude".

<sup>18</sup> See book review of Mabel Potter Daggett, *Women Wanted*, in *Church Times*, 15 November 1918.



had been going to the White Ribboners. But he was standing at the corner when he saw us coming down with the white banners, and somebody said: 'My Archie, see who's leading it?' He says: 'Aye, an' I'm going to the pub tonight.'<sup>19</sup>

Virtue and piety were on parade, and they were female. In this way, on the face of it, men's position in the Christian culture of the inter-war years seemed to be little changed from Victorian representation. For conservative Christians, and indeed for many women in British families, men remained the problem, and their moral disciplining was depicted as depending on self-discipline and deprivation of 'natural' instinct. In David Thomson's Episcopal Church in Scotland, the minister was expected to prepare a boy for confirmation through introducing "his charge into knowledge of the physical transformation from boyhood into manhood"; as Thomson experienced it, the sex education was not merely clumsy but useless, surrounded by a blustered euphemism that left no boy in any clear idea of the facts of life.<sup>20</sup> But the main point was that moral training for men was not about sex, but about gambling, games and above all drink. Unlike most protestant churches, the Roman Catholic Church in Britain often offered outlets for sports and games; games like billiards and cards were organised or permitted on church premises, in clubs designed to entertain young men and keep them from more dissolute activities, as well as keeping them within the general orbit of the Church.<sup>21</sup> Only outdoor games were banned by Catholic families in many protestant areas for fear of adding fire to sectarian tensions.<sup>22</sup>

The Protestant view on games was sterner. It was focussed especially on the keeping of the Sabbath. This was an issue that rose to new prominence in both England and Scotland in the inter-war years. In England, a sheaf of legislation came in the late 1920s and early 1930s, giving new prominence to Sabbath observance. This was the result of a long-term concerted campaign by English Sabbatarians who wished to close down male pastimes on the Lord's Day. Acts of Parliament banned the sale of all but certain specified goods (like newspapers, newly cooked food and milk), and controlled the opening of cinemas and banned theatres. But in addition, there were campaigns until the end of the thirties to suppress Sunday golf; from 1906 the Evangelical Free Churches' Council lambasted railway companies and golfers jointly for the spoliation of Sundays.<sup>23</sup> In 1926, golfing was reported as becoming more restricted in England on Sundays where town courses were largely shut. The English urban middle classes were banned from playing on their local courses, so they took to country courses where they played "when they can break the Sabbath discreetly shrouded by trees". One newspaper reporter found a Scots golfer who travelled to an English country course to play golf on Sundays: "Wild horses shall drag no more from me lest his cook, resenting the glare of publicity, should give him notice."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Brown and Stephenson, "'Sprouting Wings?'," 105-106, 115-116.

<sup>20</sup> Thomson, *Nairn in Darkness and Light*, 203-204.

<sup>21</sup> Ayers, *The Liverpool Docklands*, 50.

<sup>22</sup> Crampsey, *The Young Civilian*, 175.

<sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 8 March 1906.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 December 1926.

In the inter-war years, the English-based Lord's Day Observance Society and the *British Weekly* newspaper campaign tirelessly against that most masculine of sports - boxing - when it took place on Sundays. Some 12,000 spectators turned up to watch boxing in a former evangelical chapel in West Bromwich in 1929; the paper said that "crowds of sportsmen (of a kind) gather Sunday by Sunday in order to satiate their basic instincts by gazing upon the brutalities of a Prize Fight" worth up to £400 to the winner, describing it as "a blot on a Christian land". In 1929, the LDOS successfully got boxing contests at Ilford, Gravesend and Stratford stopped, and sought Home Office legislation to stop them nationally.<sup>25</sup>

In Scotland, there was little national legislation on the issue of the Sabbath; this was because few had thought it likely that there would be a significant breaking down of conventions on Sabbath keeping, and, in any event, there was already considerable power vested in local authorities to ban Sabbath games from council property (including parks) and from the streets. In Scotland, golf was mostly unknown on Sundays. *The Times* golf correspondent in 1926 wrote an eloquent tirade against the Scottish Sabbath, after travelling up from London to St Andrews on a Saturday to play (for no trains went on Sundays), and then of having to wait out Sunday with scores of other would-be golfers who roamed the Old Course, swinging their walking sticks in frustration at not being able to play: "I am on fire for this eternal Sabbath to end".<sup>26</sup> Sunday leisure was a growing target generally for Sabbatarian ire. The rich were targeted by many critics. In Lewis the presbytery of the Church of Scotland saved its greatest wrath for the shooting tenants "who drive on the Sabbath to the Druidical stones in Callernish [sic]" - the pagan destination compounding their neglect of Christian ordinances.<sup>27</sup> There was particular furore with "the idle rich of Edinburgh" for Sunday leisure.<sup>28</sup> A.H. Dunnett, a leading figure in the Church of Scotland in the early 1930s, attacked the rich man who played golf or drove his motor car on Sundays: "His soul is in darkness, selfish and arrogant and carrying of his heathendom on the wings of a prosperous independence."<sup>29</sup>

Working-class men were the objects of the most severe criticism. In Scotland, working men's clubs were a new fad early in the century, which had started in some small towns and were spreading to the larger ones; in 1900 it was estimated one Sunday that 1,380 men were entering clubs in Edinburgh.<sup>30</sup> Those complaining of working men's clubs were considered off beam by some; they weren't 'lost' churchgoers: "A man does not spend part of his Sunday in church and another part in a Sunday drinking-club."<sup>31</sup> Ice-cream shops were a particular target of Sabbatarians as "they are a source of demoralisation to young lads and children and give an unhappy

<sup>25</sup> *British Weekly*, 7 November 1929, 20 February 1930.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 August 1926.

<sup>27</sup> Committee on the Observance of the Lord's Day, *Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland* (hereafter *RGACS*), 1906, 1126.

<sup>28</sup> *The Scotsman*, 29 May 1906.

<sup>29</sup> Dunnett, *The Church in Changing Scotland*, 63.

<sup>30</sup> Committee on the Observance of the Lord's Day, *RGACS*, 1900, 1150-1152.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 1902, 1152.

publicity to godless frivolity".<sup>32</sup> Sunday games, especially casual football matches, were a constant target.

Unusually, the Revd D. H. Soutar of Tayport near Dundee defended Sunday football in 1935, saying he himself had played on that day, but his was a rather lone voice in his presbytery.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, the attempt to suppress male games reached a new high point in that decade. In 1934, Glasgow Corporation - by 40 votes to 36, four abstaining - voted against allowing golf courses, tennis courts and bowling greens to open for play on Sundays.<sup>34</sup> Paisley rejected Sunday golf in 1936 by 2 to 1, whilst in Edinburgh the town council by 37 votes to 26 refused permission for Merchants Golf Club at Craiglockhart (which was on council land) to play golf on Sundays. But the fiercest action was reserved for working-class men. In 1937, 26 men and youths were arrested in Prestonfield in Edinburgh one Sunday charged with playing football, gambling, and breach of the peace. Seven who admitted the charges were fined £2 or 20 days imprisonment; this was only achieved after a large planned operation involving scores of police hidden in bushes and woodland to catch the culprits in the midst of their game.<sup>35</sup>

## THE PROBLEMATIC MASCULINITY

Part of the drift detected by the churches lay in the paradox of plebeian male religiosity in the inter-war years. Masculinity was still seen as an innate problem for Christian faith, and something that needed the discipline of increased feminine attributes. Men were clearly alienated from churchgoing in very large numbers, making up no more than a third of congregations. Yet, the inter-war years witnessed perceptible innovations in working-class male spirituality. One was the crisis of the masculine body created by the death and maiming of the First World War.

This led to a new culture - what Mike Snape has termed a remembrance culture<sup>36</sup> - in which there was little glorification of war, but rather a new form of comradeship based from the 1920s around rituals (including the 11 November remembrance service each year), architecture (of bland war memorials and cenotaphs without any significant representation of war or its glories), and organisations of war remembering (notably the British Legion for ex-servicemen and the Anglican Toc H association that started in 1920 from impromptu wartime centres for men near the western front).<sup>37</sup> A third development was the introduction from 1927 of religious themes into English FA Cup Final, including singing of the hymn 'Abide With Me', whilst Welsh rugby matches had choral hymn-singing. A series of cultural accommodations was growing, renegotiating men's relationships with the Christian religion. Not centred

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1901, 1085.

<sup>33</sup> *The Scotsman*, 3 October 1935.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 March 1934.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1947.

<sup>36</sup> I am grateful to Mike Snape for allowing me to use his term.

<sup>37</sup> Nicholls, "Clayton, Philip Thomas Byard".

so much on 'churchianity', nor even in a supportive role to female domesticity, what was emerging was something that gave men a religious focus within popular culture. And yet, these trends also acknowledged the alienation men felt from the churches; churches were not meeting their needs. As Hugh McLeod has observed: "For millions of working-class families it was a day for digging the garden, visiting relatives, or snoozing over the *News of the World*."<sup>38</sup>

The 1920s and 30s witnessed the rise of a longer-term crisis for British Christianity - that of sex and sexuality. Churchmen identified declining sexual morality as reducing the religious condition of the nation, with sex before marriage as a new critical indicator of de-Christianisation. Birth control clinics, starting with those of Marie Stopes, gave couples advice on contraceptive methods, responding to escalating demand for condoms to limit family size and pregnancy outwith marriage. For Catholic bishops, this was the beginning of a long-term struggle with artificial methods of birth control, which they saw as "examples of the breakdown of the moral life of the country".<sup>39</sup> Protestant churches were divided on contraception and whether it made sex immoral (or 'unchaste' as it was put). The Church of England and the Church of Scotland gave something less than wholehearted approval of condoms in the 1930s, and there was no cultural shift to open access; they remained items furtively bought and sold from men's barber's shops. Sexual affairs and scandals - ranging from the Anglican vicar Revd Harold Davidson's relations with prostitutes to King Edward VIII's love affair with Mrs Simpson - introduced a lasting obsession of the British press with the sexual antics of royalty and men of the cloth. Scandal made the churches objects of derision, and exposed their vulnerability to the accusation of sheltering scoundrels and deviants.

The mid-twentieth century seemed to indicate that British Christianity was still a strongly female affair. In a 1947 survey, 11 per cent of men and 18 per cent of women claimed to go to church weekly; a further 18 per cent and 26 per cent respectively claimed to go between once every 3 weeks and once every 2 months, whilst another 15 per cent of men and 12 per cent of women claimed to attend church less frequently. Added up, this meant that a total of 44 per cent of men and 56 per cent of women claimed to be churchgoers. This was a highly religious society, and one in which there was a significant gender imbalance.

The nature of the 1950s, as a period of sexual restraint and moral austerity, impinged strongly upon men as it did upon women. In the whole of the modern era, sexual activity outside of marriage appears to have reached its low point in the 1950s in England and Wales, and to have dipped dramatically in Scotland after a high point in the inter-war years. Across the whole of the UK in the late 1940s and 1950s, the low figures for illegitimacy confirmed the austerity of the moral and religious climate; in England and Wales, and in Scotland, the illegitimacy rate reached a low point of little over 4 per cent in the mid 1950s. This reflected a high degree of sexual abstinence before marriage - and of marriage following immediately upon any pregnancy. As many commentators suggested, virginity dominated amongst both men and women

<sup>38</sup> McLeod, *Religion and the Working Class*, 66.

<sup>39</sup> *The Tablet*, 20 February 1937.

into their twenties in this decade. So much so that it became in the following, more liberal decade something of a standing joke, with men on national service being termed ‘the virgin soldiers’. The novelist Ian McEwan wrote of a young man undergoing national service as more morally naive, unadventurous and abstemious than older men and women who served in the war: “It was not so extraordinary a thing in nineteen fifty-five for a man of Leonard’s background and temperament to have had no sexual experience by the end of his twenty-fifth year.” And as the poet Philip Larkin noted, sexual intercourse was not invented until 1963, “which was rather late for me”.<sup>40</sup>

## RELIGION AND GENDER AFTER 1960

The decade of the 1960s is becoming the object of increasing attention from historians. It is being examined ever more closely to see if it deserved its reputation as an era of shocking sexual change, promiscuity and high levels of moral change.<sup>41</sup> The decade certainly marked one of transition in Christian culture. No longer was the language of taken-for-granted moral rectitude accepted as normative; scandals of rank hypocrisy, such as that of Secretary of State John Profumo in 1963 when he was forced to resign after first denying, then confessing, an adulterous relationship with Christine Keeler, a woman tarred as a prostitute and a security risk because of her liaison with a Soviet official.<sup>42</sup>

The real significance of the 1960s is that it marked a profound sexual turn, and one affecting Christianity very deeply. In the sixties, the moral problem of British society changed gender - from male to female. An analysis developed in both the churches and in the wider throes of the establishment that the sexual revolution was being caused not by men, but by women. Girls and young women were seen in the sixties to lose their reserve and innocence over sexual matters. The willingness of many to adopt new clothing styles which bared more flesh than ever before, the tremendous popularity of the oral contraceptive pill (which became available for single women in Britain from 1968), and the rise of a popular culture based on ‘sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll’, signalled to many churchmen that there no longer was a reliable female model for piety and purity. It was the position of women in relation to sexual purity that was the hallmark of 1960s’ moral panic. The 1960s turned attention upon femininity and secularisation in a way unheard of really since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Women very suddenly became the problem for the churches in the 1960s. As the Church of Scotland most famously said, “It is the promiscuous girl who is the real problem here.”<sup>43</sup> In this utterly sexist statement, the Church actually understood that

<sup>40</sup> Thomas, *The Virgin Soldiers*, turned into a film in 1969; McEwan, *The Innocent*, 57; Larkin, “Annus Mirabilis”.

<sup>41</sup> The key work here is McLeod’s *The Religious Crisis*. See also Marwick, *The Sixties*.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Machin, *Churches and Social Issues*, 195.

<sup>43</sup> RGACS, 1970, 399-410.

the sexual turn was in female permissiveness, not in men's. The Christian churches were losing their central, popular paradigm of Christian behaviour - the respectable and sexually abstinent single woman.

The 1960s created a situation in which it was possible for the individual British young woman to legitimately, and quite without fear for her 'reputation', leave Christian religion and 'respectability'. The possibility was one that was novel for women. Men had been able to leave, or forgo regular attendance, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But women had found such freedom extremely limited; only the necessities of family care had developed as a legitimate excuse for missing Sunday worship. But the late twentieth century introduced the wide possibility of massive change to women's lifestyle and religious activity. One of the major consequences was demographic. Women started to bear children out of wedlock in massive numbers; increasingly they got married without religious rites; and increasingly, they did not get married at all.<sup>44</sup> These demographic consequences signalled the death of one of the grandest ideas of European Enlightenment culture - that woman was the pious core of modernity.

This opened up the possibility, perhaps the inevitability, that men would become more important to the Christian religion. If women's changing relationship to religion lay at the heart of late twentieth-century secularisation, then men could become more important in the gender mix of the religious community. As the numbers going to church reduced, then men became more numerically significant. At the same time, perhaps masculinity became more important. The evidence of the 1990s seems to suggest that as churches contracted, they became more militant, and in the militancy of the modern Christian church, there was a growing role for laymen. Men might have declined as a proportion of the professionals in the Protestant churches. The ordination of women in the Church of England from 1992, and in the Episcopal Church of Scotland from 1994, led to a decline of men being ordained; only 26 per cent of ordinations in 1994 were female, but the proportion rose to 44 per cent by 1999 and remained at that level into the new century.<sup>45</sup> Similar trends occurred in the Church of Scotland, creating competing militantcies - between opponents and proponents of women's ordination.<sup>46</sup> But the declining numbers of men in the clergy of the churches (including the Roman Catholic Church) masked the increasing role of men *overall* in the churches. Indeed, there may be an argument to explore that the decline of male clergy was a concomitant not of secularisation and a male crisis of faith as such, but was rather the product of a shift in Christian men's conception of religiosity away from professional vocations and towards secular roles. This is not to deny that secularisation has taken its toll upon male religiosity as a whole, as it has of women's. Merely, there may be a case to examine that amongst men still in association with the Christian churches there has been a shift from the vocation to the secular. Masculinity may be being accommodated in the churches in a new way.

<sup>44</sup> See Brown, *Religion and Society*.

<sup>45</sup> Calculated from data in *The Church of England Yearbook 2003*, xliii.

<sup>46</sup> *The Guardian*, 12 July 2005.

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Femininity, by the same token, is not to be understood solely in relation to the ordination of women and the increasing role and freedoms of Christian women in Europe. By far the greater implication is that the decline of Christendom in Europe is being fuelled by the rapidly declining association of women with Christianity. Perhaps secularisation, in its format of de-Christianisation, is turning out to be woman's thing, not a man's, as we have been led to believe for so long.





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**PART II**  
**VISIONS AND IDEALS**  
**OF CHRISTIAN MANHOOD**

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# HEROIC MEN AND CHRISTIAN IDEALS

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TINE VAN OSSELAER AND ALEXANDER MAURITS

Heroes have been defined in various terms, be it as men of extraordinary bravery or superhuman strength, or as the chief male characters in an epic. In recent decades the definition has shifted towards a hero who is ‘any man or woman’, ‘endowed by others’ with special ‘symbolic significance’.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the central focus of the latest studies is no longer a character study of male warrior heroes, but an analysis of the social construction of a heroic reputation. Heroic individuals are analysed as instruments of propaganda, and as “a site on which a range of cultural attitudes and social practices can be examined”, meaning that a hero could be seen as the embodiment of virtue and a role model who inspired imitation and veneration. In this depiction of the hero as a model, heroism depends upon the appreciation of certain characteristics and their estimation as ‘more than human’. Given that there were different degrees of appreciation, the heroic constellation has varied according to history and geography, to nation and denomination. It all depended on who created the heroes or their image, stressing in the process certain qualities, neglecting others.<sup>2</sup>

Although these definitions are interesting starting points, the selection of the heroes analysed in this article did not depend upon a restrictive definition of the terms ‘hero’ and ‘heroism’. This open approach makes it possible to define how heroism is described in the sources, and how it is characterised as ‘Catholic’ or ‘Lutheran’ heroism. It focuses on different texts that offer descriptions of the ‘heroic’ and explicitly allude to ‘heroism’ and ‘heroic’ men. By focusing both on the Catholic (Belgium) and the Lutheran (Sweden) situation, this article gives a view of the confessional landscape in Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century and the first four decades of the twentieth century. To this end we have studied the Belgian branch of the Sacred

<sup>1</sup> Cubitt and Warren, eds, *Heroic Reputations*, 3; Jones, “What Should Historians Do With Heroes?” 441, 447.

<sup>2</sup> Frijhoff, “Témoins de l’autre”, 12. Frijhoff’s observation that in the hand of other producers and protagonists, accentuations change (*Ibid.*, 43), may well be as true of heroes as of saints.

Heart devotion, primarily led by the Jesuits, and a group of leading Swedish Lutheran theologians, strongly influenced by so-called *Neuluthertum* (New Lutheranism). The source material consists of periodicals and books published on the Sacred Heart devotion, and academic articles and speeches by the theologians of the Lund High Church movement. Thus our material offers a glimpse of the normative level - of how Catholic and Lutheran authors wrote about heroes and heroism, and what ideals they brought to their subjects.<sup>3</sup>

## ‘HEROES OF THE HEART’

In 1937, the Jesuit father A. De Pauw published an article in *Bode van het Heilig Hart* (Messenger of the Sacred Heart) in which he criticised the way in which the label ‘hero’ was bandied about. “Sometimes”, he remarked,

one gets the impression that heroism is for sale with the other articles in the shops, and costs almost nothing. Succeed, no matter what the exploit, win a race, knock someone knock out, and you are put on a pedestal. There is no end to the admiration and devotion. We have sunk that low. Recklessness and ambition, a stupid contempt of death, and brute force incite the enthusiasm of a people who no longer know how to value silent sacrifice and invisible dedication for what they are worth. It proves that paganism and the deification of materialism have polluted the people of the twentieth century. Someone who is able to perform a valiant action is not necessarily a hero.<sup>4</sup>

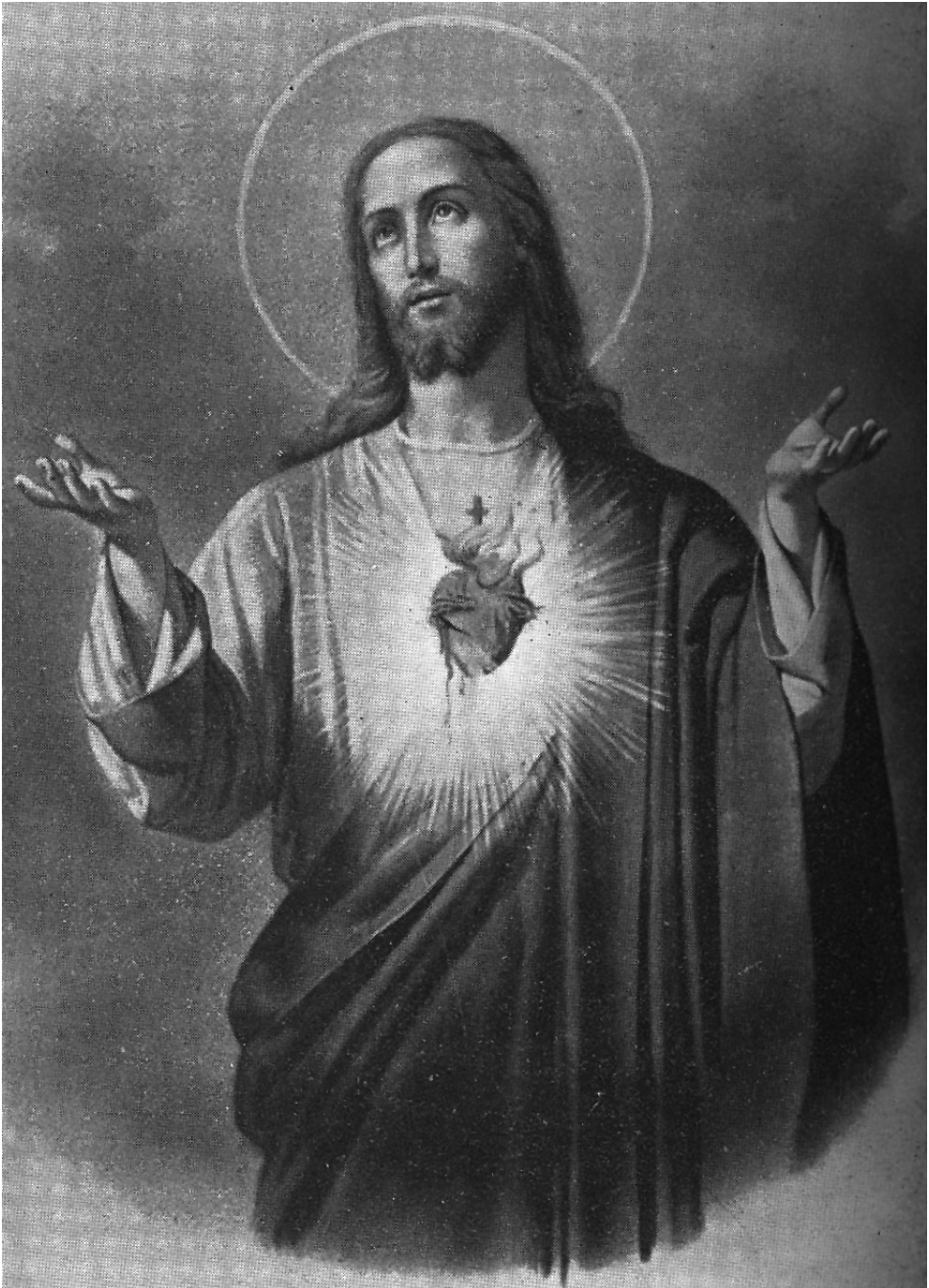
His criticism of the adulation of contemporary ‘heroes’ not only points to the importance De Pauw attached to values that were - supposedly - at the heart of a heroic personality, but also to the changeability and variety of those personifications of ‘heroic’ principles.

It is the complexity of heroism that is the theme here, and more specifically the rhetoric of heroic men in the Belgian Sacred Heart devotion.<sup>5</sup> This Catholic cult became very popular in nineteenth-century Belgium, and characterised a sentimental and vivid ultramontane Catholicism. As there were various devotional organisations dedicated to the Sacred Heart, this analysis concentrates on one of the most important movements, the *Apostolat de la Prière*. This organisation, which aimed at the restoration of Christ’s honour, was introduced to Belgium in the 1860s, and evolved into the Leagues of the Sacred Heart at the turn of the twentieth century. These Leagues presented themselves as part of the *Apostolat*, but since they were gender exclusive they clearly differed from the *Apostolat de la Prière*, which was a mixed movement.

<sup>3</sup> Sections of this article were presented at the European Social Science History Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, 1 March 2008, and have been published online (Maurits, “The Exemplary Lives of Christian Heroes”; Van Osselaer, “Heroes of the Heart”).

<sup>4</sup> A. De Pauw, “48 Jaar bij de Melaatsen”, *De Bode van het Heilig Hart* (hereafter *BHH*), 69 (1937), 73-76 at 73. Our translation here *et passim*.

<sup>5</sup> See Van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*, III.



Devotional image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.  
[Louvain, KADOC-K.U.Leuven]

To gain a clearer view of any historical variations and possible shifts in the nature of the cult, the analysis compares two time spans, an approach which though it does not permit generalisations on the evolution of the Catholic heroic discourse, does allow similarities and differences to be detected. The first is the period immediately following the consecration of Belgium to the Sacred Heart in 1868; years that also witnessed the beginnings of the Belgian *Apostolat de la Prière* movement and the founding of its periodical *Bode van het Heilig Hart van Jesus* in 1869.<sup>6</sup> Prior to this the French version, *Le Messager du Sacré Coeur de Jésus*, had circulated in Belgium, and since it continued to do so both periodicals have been included in the analysis. Other sources are devotional books on the cult of the Sacred Heart that were edited in Belgium. The second is the 1930s, something of a hey-day for the cult, with the blossoming of the Leagues of the Sacred Heart. These Leagues have been described as “la formule belge de l’Apostolat de la Prière”.<sup>7</sup> Originally only all-male Leagues were founded, but a women’s movement developed as well.<sup>8</sup> For this reason the sources for this inter-war period necessarily include the *Apostolat de la Prière*’s Belgian periodical as well as other periodicals and devotional books published by the Leagues.<sup>9</sup> Some of the heroes described in this devotional discourse were explicitly associated with the cult, as was the case with the martial hero fighting under the banner of the Sacred Heart. Others were depicted as an “apostle along the line of Jesus’ Sacred Heart”, but often there was no direct connection between the devotion and these exemplary men.<sup>10</sup>

However, it must be noted that heroism was not only the province of men, nor of the proverbial ‘great men’ who excelled and rose above the Catholic crowd. On the contrary, it was explicitly stated that heroism was a quality that might be possessed by women too. As he contemplated the heroic souls of Moses and Paul, the Jesuit author Toussaint Dufau, one of the main promoters of the cult of the Sacred Heart in Belgium, remarked that “God loves to operate through the people who are the frailest”, reversing his earlier belief that the “weaker sex” were created by God “solely to be man’s help”, and were incapable of this “angelic ardour”.<sup>11</sup>

It seems heroism readily coincided with ‘sanctity’. The parallelism of both terms finds an echo in the Dutch historian Wilhelm Frijhoff’s remark that both heroes and saints are presented as role models who with strenuous efforts can be imitated, but

<sup>6</sup> Gevers, “De ‘belle époque’ van de kerk in België”; Rion, “Une illustration du patriotisme du cardinal Van Roey”; Marx, “De cultus van het Heilig Hart”; Gabriëls, *De Bonden van het Heilig Hart in het bisdom Gent*; Quaghebeur, “De Eucharistische Kruistocht”.

<sup>7</sup> Heverlee, Archives of the Flemish Jesuits, *Bonden van het Heilig Hart*, III. *Apostolat de la Prière*, 5. Correspondentie anderen: Letter on the centenary of the *Apostolat de la Prière*, 2 February 1944.

<sup>8</sup> Van Osselaer, “‘From That Moment On, I Was a Man!’”.

<sup>9</sup> *Maandelijksche Mededeelingen over de Bonden van het H. Hart*; *Bondsblad voor Bonden van het Heilig Hart*. The periodical produced by the Leagues of Wallonia, *Regnum Christi*, has not been studied in detail, but seems to have been a translation of the Flemish periodical *Maandelijksche Mededeelingen*.

<sup>10</sup> Smit, *Generaal de Sonis*, 14; “Le Bienheureux Canisius, apôtre selon le coeur de Jésus”, *Messager du Sacré Coeur de Jésus* (hereafter *MSC*), 8 (1865), 131-135 at 131.

<sup>11</sup> Dufau, *Beautés de l’âme*, 557.

whose example is hard to follow.<sup>12</sup> In the hagiographic accounts in the devotional literature (both periodicals and books), the label ‘saint’ was easily replaced by ‘hero’. St Joannes Berchmans, for example, a Belgian Jesuit who died in 1621 at the age of twenty-two, was described as someone whose “sanctity was heroic” and whose “heroism was saintly”.<sup>13</sup> Sanctity might therefore be regarded as the ratification of heroism by the Catholic Church, since heroic virtues, or to be more precise the exercise of virtues to a heroic degree, are one of the conditions for being proclaimed a saint.<sup>14</sup>

Many of the heroes described and promoted within the Sacred Heart devotion were in fact saints, which is why an analysis of the male hero may well result in a better understanding of the male saint and, as such, contribute to the study of the construction of masculinity in hagiography which, despite the numerical preponderance of male saints, is still in its infancy according to the theologian Teresa Berger.<sup>15</sup> Even though in the devotional literature numerous saints were described as heroes, it was by no means the case that the two were interchangeable. Since there were evidently other variations on the heroic theme, this chapter considers more than a male hagiography.

## ‘MALE’ AND ‘MASCULINE’ HEROISM

Since a hero can represent virtues and figure as a role model<sup>16</sup>, it is worth pausing a moment to reflect on the ‘maleness’ of the heroic men depicted in the devotional literature. Although these men embody virtues, do they as biological ‘men’ explicitly symbolise ‘masculine’ qualities?<sup>17</sup> According to Frijhoff, “great men” have always outnumbered women over the course of history, “at least in public memory”. In his opinion this is because “exemplary values and ways of life belong to the public realm” in which women only could play “a minor part, if they were not excluded”. However, men’s dominance must also be linked to the “public discourse” that “has assigned the realm of virtue, intelligence and action to men, and that of emotions, spiritual experience and self-denial to women”.<sup>18</sup>

If ‘spiritual experience’ is defined as a matter for women, then the Catholic heroes represent an interesting case. However, there is more to Catholicism than

<sup>12</sup> Frijhoff, “Témoins de l’autre”, 36. To Saroglou, however, a hero is the exemplary figure in an urban context, while the saint has the same function in the religious sphere (Saroglou, “Saints et héros”, 314-317).

<sup>13</sup> R. Stoffels, “Bij het 50-jarig jubileum van Berchmans’ Heiligverklaring”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 16-20, at 17.

<sup>14</sup> Frijhoff, *Heiligen, Idolen, Iconen*, 14; Wilhelm, “Heroic Virtue”.

<sup>15</sup> Berger, “Femininity and Sanctity”, 64, 75.

<sup>16</sup> Frijhoff, “Témoins de l’autre”, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Since we have an open approach to ‘heroism’, there does not necessarily have to be a relationship between masculinity and heroism. However, gender-exclusive approaches might be signalled as well. Jones, for example, in his analysis of the use of the term ‘hero’ in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, shows the interrelationship between masculinity, warfare and heroism (Jones, “What Should Historians Do With Heroes?”, 440). The same connection is pointed out by Dawson, though he adds national identity as well (Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, 1-8).

<sup>18</sup> Frijhoff, *Heiligen, idolen, iconen*, 9.



‘spiritual experience’, for it offers a male-dominated hierarchy, a political ideology, and military campaigns, and as such its heroes can fit into the ideal images that populate the ‘escapism’ that Martin Francis describes in his study of modern British masculinity. They offer a means by which men “travelled back and forward across the frontier of domesticity, if only in the realm of imagination, attracted by the responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood, but also enchanted by fantasies of the energetic life and homosocial camaraderie of the adventure hero”.<sup>19</sup> Since heroes can represent ideal qualities, an analysis of Catholic heroes offers an insight into which characteristics were considered exemplary.

According to the Catholic authors who commented on heroism in the Sacred Heart devotional publications, Catholic heroism was not to be equated with ‘ordinary’ heroism. They illustrated this idea with the description of the prototypical Christian hero, who inspired and surpassed all other Catholic champions - Jesus.<sup>20</sup> As noted by the abbot Henri Saintrain, who published his book *Le Sacré-Coeur de Jésus, étudié dans les livres saints* in 1868, the Gospel is a strange book since it stressed the humiliations of the main hero, not even hesitating to describe his agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and treating those moments with the same calm simplicity as they recounted his glories, without any attention to the effect that it may have on the mind of the reader. “One might even say that it treats the humiliations of the Son of Men more elaborately than his glories. It thereby differs from human writers, as they like to hide all that could diminish the reputation of their heroes, or present it in more favourable colours or even change it completely, so that they can go on focusing gladly on all that might exalt them.”<sup>21</sup>

What was true of the 1860s was also true of the inter-war period: Catholic heroism differed qualitatively from other forms of heroism. Not everyone perceived it as heroism, of course, and in 1935 the Jesuit Renatus Hardeman commented upon this disparagement: “In many German circles, the religion of the crucified is considered to be too weak and insufficiently heroic, and they try to replace Christ with some other pure German god, and heaven with Walhalla.”<sup>22</sup> Regardless of such views, Catholic authors explicitly stressed Jesus’ heroism even as they depicted his qualities as ‘more than human’, and placed him at the centre of a Catholic epical history. Secular heroes, as one author expressed it, had “succeeded for a time in placing themselves above the mediocrity of their environment by their exceptional bravery, perseverance, contempt for death”, yet they were not of a constant and all-encompassing quality, and failed from a moral and religious point of view: they did not place the love of God above all other things, and their “glorious deeds” were driven by “thirst for power, a longing for glory, greed, self-love, haughtiness, vanity, or other not so honourable passions”. To this Catholic author’s mind they did not measure up to Jesus’ heroism, a moral and

<sup>19</sup> Martin, “The Domestication of the Male?”, 643.

<sup>20</sup> For representations of Jesus as an ‘ideal man’ see, for example, Troughton, “Jesus and the Ideal of the Manly Man in New Zealand”; Gill, “Ecce Homo”.

<sup>21</sup> Saintrain, *Le Sacré-Coeur de Jésus*, 245-246.

<sup>22</sup> R. Hardeman, “Liefdevolle kennis van den Gekruiste (Pauselijke Maand-intentie)”, *BHH*, 67 (1935), 138-142 at 138.

supernatural quality that sprang from humility, self-denial, sacrifice, and the love of God.<sup>23</sup>

Although Christ was the Catholic hero par excellence, he was far from alone. Since Catholic heroism and sanctity were often used as synonyms, the attention the Catholic heroes received in the periodicals often coincided with the run-up to their canonisation or beatification. In spite of the temporary concentration on specific heroes, the depictions of heroic Catholic men in both the 1860s and the 1930s were rather similar. In both periods the various 'types' of hero were largely the same - martial men, missionaries, and martyrs - and were presented as an 'encouragement' and 'model' for the Catholic public.<sup>24</sup> The heroes who populated the Catholic epos were frequently military men. It seems the battle field offered an ideal stage to outshine one's fellow man and demonstrate qualities that were more than human. In the Catholic context, the *miles Christi* had worn the armour of the crusader, of the Zouave, of the army chaplain, and of the ordinary soldier in the First World War.<sup>25</sup> The martial qualities of these men were combined with their romantic idealisation to evoke medieval knighthood.<sup>26</sup> These nostalgic identifications were apparent, for example, in descriptions of Joannes Berchmans, the young Catholic 'hero', and by no means a martial man, who was hailed as a knight in service of his lady, Mother Mary.<sup>27</sup>

Contemporary Catholic soldiers were also presented as heroes, among them the Zouaves who defended the Papal States in the 1860s, who in turn became objects of a nostalgic idealisation in the inter-war period, the personifications of an idealised past.<sup>28</sup> The close connection between the military, that stamping ground of lay heroes, and heroism was also apparent in the military metaphors used to define other (non-martial) heroic categories. The Christian martyrs of Japan, for example, were portrayed as a "glorious army"; a religious sent to a remote place entered a "battlefield".<sup>29</sup> Warlike metaphors were also used to stir Catholic readers in both nineteenth- and twentieth-century sources: they were saluted as "soldiers of Christ" with "a duty to do battle" and in the middle of "a crusade".<sup>30</sup>

Military nerve was not the only way to demonstrate heroism. Missionary work was at least as fruitful ground as the battlefield in creating and inspiring Catholic

<sup>23</sup> S. Vermeulen, "De Beminnelijkheid van Jezus", *BHH*, 12 (1937), 523-526 at 525.

<sup>24</sup> S. O., "Patron du mois de juin: Saint Pierre et Saint Paul, Saint Jean-François Régis", *MSC*, 3 (1863), 279-292 at 280; A. D., "Saint Stanislas Kostka", *MSC*, 6 (1864), 257-266 at 259.

<sup>25</sup> "Het dagboek van een Spaansch legeraalmoezenier", *BHH*, 69 (1937), 35-37; Quirijnen, *Soldatenziel*, 3-4; Smit, *Generaal de Sonis*, 4, 21; for the Belgian Zouaves, see Buerman, "Lions and Lambs"; for the Zouaves as atypical heroes, see Harrison, "Zouave Stories"; for the Zouaves and their connection to the cult of the Sacred Heart, see Jonas, "Anxiety, Identity, and the Displacement of Violence"; Id., *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*, 147-176.

<sup>26</sup> A. De Pauw, "De Heilige Jean de Brébeuf", *BHH*, 71 (1939), 203-209 at 204; for similar comparisons, see "Gevoelens van een christenen krijgsman", *BHH*, 1 (1869), 169-170.

<sup>27</sup> L. Arts, "De H. Joannes Berchmans en Maria", *BHH*, 70 (1938), 225-229.

<sup>28</sup> "Over een vaandel", *Bondsblad voor Bonden van het Heilig Hart*, 6 (1937), 6.

<sup>29</sup> H. R., "St. Pierre II, archevêque de Tarentaise et fondateur de l'abbaye de Tamié", *MSC*, 5 (1864), 16-29 at 18-27; N. P., "Les deux cent cinq Martyrs japonais", *MSC*, 14 (1868), 18-27 at 19; see also A. De Pauw, "Carlo Spinola (1564-1622)", *BHH*, 68 (1936), 101-106 at 101-102.

<sup>30</sup> "Le bienheureux Pierre Canisius", *MSC*, 7 (1865), 14-30 at 27; A. D., "Saint Stanislas Kostka", *MSC*, 6 (1864), 257-266 at 264-265; G. D., "St Jean de Capistran (1389-1456)", *MSC*, 14 (1868), 282-291 at 282.

heroes.<sup>31</sup> The emphasis on the mission was only to be expected given that the Jesuits, the main promoters of the Sacred Heart cult and publishers of the various periodicals, were active as missionaries in both periods studied here. Since by its very nature their mission took them to ‘savage’ areas among the enemies of the Catholic faith, it was presented as being virtually synonymous with a martyr’s death, “a sacrifice without return”.<sup>32</sup>

Although heroic religious were more often than not missionaries, there were others whose heroism was not revealed by their (martyr’s) death in the missions, but by their heroic qualities as the founders of religious orders, as religious authors, or through their exemplary life and ‘angelic youth’.<sup>33</sup> Their brand of heroism consisted in the display of virtues to a heroic degree - charity, discipline, humility, and obedience. Although these qualities might seem unheroic to modern eyes, it was precisely this kind of heroism that was presented as attainable for readers of devotional literature. Heroism was above all a victory over the self: “It is the quality of a heroic disciple of my heart to pray and make every effort to conquer himself, both in the things that bad nature repulses and in the things towards which he carries himself.”<sup>34</sup>

Just like some of the portrayals of the military men, most of these descriptions of missionaries situate their heroic biographies in a distant past; a historical framing in which these martyrs of the faith resemble the first Christians, who are likewise presented as Catholic heroes, ready to sacrifice their lives as the ultimate testimony of their faith.<sup>35</sup> Although heroism was by no means described as a thing of the past, it was often linked to the heroic qualities of bygone ages as if to render contemporary heroism part of a Catholic heroic tradition and increase its worth. As such, the first Christian martyrs and the crusaders were held up as examples to the readers of nineteenth-century devotional periodicals, and the Zouaves were depicted with the “features of Christian heroism, worthy of the age of the martyrs”.<sup>36</sup> The twentieth-century public, on the other hand, was encouraged to live up to the example of the martyrs or indeed the Zouaves, who had already attained mythical status.<sup>37</sup> Bygone heroic ages were thus echoed not only in descriptions of heroes, but also in compari-

<sup>31</sup> For the image of the Catholic missionary, see Dujardin, “Gender”, 293, 295; for Protestant missionaries and gender differences in heroism, see Rowbotham, “Soldiers of Christ?”, 88.

<sup>32</sup> J. D., “Le B. Jean de Britto martyr apôtre du Marva”, *MSC*, 9 (1866), 188-197 at 189; “Een missieheld herdacht”, *BHH*, 68 (1935), 294-298; A. De Pauw, “De zalige Andreas Bobola”, *BHH*, 67 (1935), 207-214; Id., “De H. Charles Garnier”, *BHH*, 71 (1939), 80-84 at 82; Id., “De Heilige Noël Chabanal”, *BHH*, 71 (1939), 151-156 at 155; A. Van den Daele, “Bij het eeuwfeest van Pater J. Marquette, S.J.”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 8-9 at 9.

<sup>33</sup> E. Régnauld, “Saint Pierre Damien”, *MSC*, 7 (1865), 78-93; L. Arts, “Berchmans ... onze man”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 298-302 at 299; A. Stracke, “Piotr Skarga (1563-1612)”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 249-253.

<sup>34</sup> Arnold, *Imitation du Sacré Coeur de Jésus*, 383.

<sup>35</sup> Dufau, *Beautés de l’âme*, 198.

<sup>36</sup> “Les défenseurs de la papauté et ses ennemis”, *MSC*, 12 (1867), 397-409 at 397; “Départ des zouaves pontificaux canadiens”, *MSC*, 13 (1868), 380-388 at 380; G. D., “Antonio Goldoni, artilleur pontifical”, *MSC*, 15 (1869), 285-295 at 287; for the use of the Crusades as a reference point, see Knobler, “Holy Wars, Empires, and the Portability of the Past”.

<sup>37</sup> “Over een vaandel”, *Bondsblad voor Bonden van het Heilig Hart*, 6 (1937), 6; “Gedachten”, *BHH*, 69 (1937), 275-278 at 276.

sons of the qualities of heroic men with those of the contemporary heirs of the heroic tradition.

Although it is not wise to attempt to standardise heroes, even Catholic ones, or to make universal claims, it is still true that across the wide range of heroic categories, lay and religious heroes seem to have had some basic qualities in common that were significant both in the 1860s and 1930s. The most prominent quality was a hero's readiness to strive, battle, and die for Catholicism. In the various narratives, Catholic heroes consider it a privilege to sacrifice their lives for the Catholic faith and Catholic military and missionary actions.<sup>38</sup> These activities, be they missions among the heathens, Crusades, wars against anti-popes, or the Roman question, were rendered 'heroic' by the heroic qualities of their participants. The reverse, however, was also true: taking part in these heroic missions could set someone on the path to heroism. As the price of participating in these actions was often one's life, the descriptions often pay great attention to a hero's reaction to his looming death. One missionary for example "could not control his joy" after hearing his death sentence<sup>39</sup>; another was disappointed that he was not selected for a mission and was therefore unable to shed his blood in Christ's honour.<sup>40</sup>

However, one could also sacrifice one's life without the intervention of an enemy of the Christian faith. The trials of sickness were therefore to be regarded as divine favours.<sup>41</sup> Less bloody though the scenario might be, it remained the same in all essentials as the Catholic hero dedicated his whole life to a Catholic cause. There is an illuminating description of the Dutch Jesuit Petrus Canisius, one of the main representatives of the sixteenth-century Counter-Reformation, whose life was summarised in the following phrase: "He dedicated himself completely to the Mother Church, and that constantly and with a heroic generosity."<sup>42</sup> In these Catholic narratives it was therefore not victory over an enemy that revealed heroic qualities, but victory over life and its challenges.

The will to sacrifice oneself was found expression in the broad field of 'Catholic courage'. This bravery might be demonstrated in a willingness to fight (military) enemies, to face the challenges of a mission (an unforgiving environment, lack of food, sickness), or to make an all-encompassing sacrifice.<sup>43</sup> However, Catholic courage apparently also included the avowal of one's Catholic faith in more ordinary circumstances. According to the Catholic periodicals, openly professing to be a Catholic proved that Catholic courage was as present in daily life as it was in the

<sup>38</sup> For the tension between the sacrificial ideal (based on revenge), the anti-sacrificial ideal (based on forgiveness), and the self-sacrificing ideal (conflating prowess and piety) in knighthood, see Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> N. P., "Les deux cent cinq Martyrs japonais", *MSC*, 14 (1868), 24; similarly "Gedachten", *BHH*, 69 (1937), 275.

<sup>40</sup> "Patron du mois de Février: Saint Ignace, Evêque d'Antioche", *MSC*, 3 (1863), 70-80 at 71.

<sup>41</sup> G. D., "Le P. Libermann", *MSC*, 11 (1867), 374-385 at 377.

<sup>42</sup> "Le Bienheureux Pierre Canisius", *MSC*, 7 (1865), 30; L. Arts, "De moderne St. Rochus. Pater Damiiaan", *BHH*, 68 (1936), 223-225 at 225; Van Mierlo, *De dienaar Gods Adolf Petit*, 250.

<sup>43</sup> G. D., "Le P. Libermann", *MSC*, 11 (1867), 382; H. R., "St. Pierre II", *MSC*, 5 (1864), 17; "Le bienheureux Pierre Canisius", *MSC*, 7 (1865), 29.

missions or battlefield<sup>44</sup>, yet with the proviso that Catholic courage was ‘dry-eyed’<sup>45</sup>, for although it was considered suitable (for a man) to express enthusiasm, sadness, or grief in tears, it was not proper to weep when faced with a challenge.<sup>46</sup> Henri Suson, a German Dominican mystic who had the bad luck to forget how he should comport himself, was reminded by Jesus himself, who asked him if he was not “ashamed to cry like a woman”.<sup>47</sup>

These heroes were held up as grand examples to the Catholic public because of their courage and self-sacrifice. Yet their modesty and the humiliations they suffered were valued as highly as their bravery. It was because they remained humble at heart that they showed true magnanimity. Their modesty was thus described as a challenge to so-called heroes who lived for praise and attention; how unlike the Catholic heroes, who did not like to be praised for their efforts, and for that reason did not want to take positions that were honoured highly.<sup>48</sup> It was their obedience to the ecclesiastical hierarchy that pushed them to climb the professional ladder, for after all no one could refuse an honourable job imposed by one’s superior.<sup>49</sup> In their modesty they mirrored the “soft humility of Jesus’ heart”<sup>50</sup>, and in their gentle disposition they echoed his loving and caring nature symbolised in Jesus’ bleeding heart, the main symbol of the Sacred Heart devotion. As such, Catholic heroes were praised in the devotional discourse for their gentle, soft, and loving character.<sup>51</sup> In the accounts, this tenderness and love were sometimes reflected in descriptions of the men’s physical appearance, while the gentleness of their character was mirrored in the “softness of their traits”.<sup>52</sup> Their compassionate nature thereby triggered the somewhat surprising use

<sup>44</sup> G. D., “Antonio Goldoni”, *MSC*, 15 (1869), 286; Smit, *Generaal de Sonis*, 25; A. Stracke, “Opdat iedereen, in ’t openbaar; God erkenne en vereere als aller Schepper en Vader”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 98-102 at 99.

<sup>45</sup> Even in the case of a child martyr, as evident in “Béatification de deux cent cinq martyrs japonais”, *MSC*, 11 (1867), 248-253 at 249; for the absence of tears in Joannes Berchmans’ life, see Arts, “Berchmans ... onze man”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 300.

<sup>46</sup> G. D., “Antonio Goldoni”, *MSC*, 15 (1869), 289; “Les zouaves hollandais du Saint-Pierre”, *MSC*, 15 (1869), 215-225, 217; “Les défenseurs de la papauté”, *MSC*, 12 (1867), 404; as Heywood writes, in discussing this emotional aspect of Catholic heroes; “Pour les ultramontains, les pleurs jouent un rôle primordial comme expression extérieure de l’âme. La religion, c’est l’amour, et l’amour émeut.” (For the ultramontanes, tears play a very important role as the expression of the soul. Religion is love, and love affects.) (Heywood, “Les ‘petits garçons modèles’”).

<sup>47</sup> G. D., “Le B. Henri Suson”, *MSC*, 9 (1866), 243-253 at 248.

<sup>48</sup> For example, H. R., “St. Pierre II”, *MSC*, 5 (1864), 25; G. D., “Saint Jérôme Emilien”, *MSC*, 10 (1866), 366-375 at 370; G. Longhaye, “A Saint Stanislas Kostka”, *MSC*, 13 (1868), 99-103 at 102; L. D., “Le Bienheureux Nicolas de Flue”, *MSC*, 7 (1865), 187-199 at 191. Hyacinth Hermans commented on the missionary Ter Maat that “The old ascetic was apparently afraid to be regarded as a hero” (Hyacinth Hermans, “Melaatschheid”, *BHH*, 68 (1936), 270-273 at 272).

<sup>49</sup> A. Stracke, “St. Canisius-Erasmus”, *BHH*, 69 (1937), 54-57 at 54.

<sup>50</sup> S. O., “Patron du mois de juin”, *MSC*, 3 (1863), 280.

<sup>51</sup> L. D., “Les amis du Cœur de Jésus: Saint Lazare, Sainte Marthe et Sainte Marie-Madeleine”, *MSC*, 4 (1863), 262-272 at 269; H. R., “St. Pierre II”, *MSC*, 5 (1864), 17, 24; “Le Bienheureux Pierre Canisius”, *MSC*, 7 (1865), 135; L. D., “Le Bienheureux Nicolas de Flue”, *MSC*, 7 (1865), 196.

<sup>52</sup> J. D., “Saint Patrice, apôtre d’Irlande”, *MSC*, 10 (1866), 13-21 at 13, 18; similarly, G. D., “Saint Jérôme Emilien”, *MSC*, 10 (1866), 369; and G. D., “Antonio Goldoni”, *MSC*, 15 (1869), 286.

of the metaphor “as a mother”: Jesus, St Jérôme Emilien (the founder of the Society of the Servants of the Poor who was canonised in the eighteenth century), and general Louis-Gaston de Sonis (who led the defence of the Papal States) were all compared to a ‘mother’.<sup>53</sup>

However gentle towards their companions and fellow men, towards themselves Catholic heroes - and above all heroic religious men - displayed a strict discipline. As they disciplined their body they embodied their own heroism, or more precisely their own saintly heroism, by fasting, depriving themselves of sleep, flagellation, and wearing a cilice.<sup>54</sup> Although these might seem practices that could easily become outdated, they were still part of the descriptions of heroes in the inter-war period. ‘Heroic’ discipline was also represented as a stony path to sanctity. Joannes Berchmans thus figured as an example of how discipline not only implied physical discipline but also strict obedience of every rule to which one felt subject. His biography illustrated how one could attain sanctity through strict observation of every rule that one was expected to obey or imposed upon oneself. As such, he represented a model that might be imitated by the Catholic public.<sup>55</sup> Although this self-control appeared to be an important component of Catholic heroism, it could be counterbalanced in the descriptions of visions and ecstatic experience that in some cases were an equally important part of saints’ portraits.<sup>56</sup>

Gentleness was often a central heroic quality in these Catholic narratives. As such soft physical traits were a positive thing (for they mirrored the mental disposition of the heroes), they did not make Catholic heroes less heroic. The gentleness and dedication of heroic men could even enlist a comparison with women. In the passages in which heroes were compared with ‘mothers’, they were equipped with ‘feminine’ qualities that were viewed positively, a far cry from the depreciatory “weeping like a woman”. These descriptions can be linked to the German historian Martina Kessel’s definition of the ‘whole man’ who combines both ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ characteristics (contrary to a more polarised model).<sup>57</sup>

However, although this chapter focuses on heroic men, there were only very few references to men’s bodies and characteristics in the descriptions of the nineteenth-century heroes. Most of them are found in the depictions of heroic soldiers,

<sup>53</sup> Saintrain, *Le Sacré-Coeur de Jésus*, 19; G. D., “Saint Jérôme Emilien”, *MSC*, 10 (1866), 374; De Sonis took as “a mother” care of those who were entrusted to him (Smit, *Generaal de Sonis*, 32), Joannes Berchmans is described as “a little mother” (Schoeters, *De H. Joannes Berchmans*, 65); for the cult of Jesus as a mother in the Middle Ages, see Walker Bynum, *Jesus as a Mother*; for the cult in nineteenth-century France, see Gibson, “Le Catholicisme et les femmes en France au XIXe siècle”, 63-93; Arts, “Berchmans... onze man”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 299; Arts, “Het ‘kleine’ met ‘grote liefde’ gedaan...”, *BHH*, 71 (1939), 538-542 at 538; Schoeters, *De H. Joannes Berchmans*, 84-86.

<sup>54</sup> Régnauld, “Saint Pierre Damien”, 84; L. D., “Le Bienheureux Nicolas de Flue”, *MSC*, 7 (1865), 194; G. D., “Saint Jérôme Emilien”, *MSC*, 10 (1866), 374; De Pauw, “Carlo Spinola”, *BHH*, 68 (1936), 105, 162-168.

<sup>55</sup> Schoeters, *De H. Joannes Berchmans*, 212-213.

<sup>56</sup> For example, G. D., “St Jean de Capistran (1389-1456)”, *MSC*, 14 (1868); Id., “Saint Jérôme Emilien”, *MSC*, 10 (1866), 367.

<sup>57</sup> Kessel, “The ‘Whole Man’”.



and more specifically the papal Zouaves.<sup>58</sup> These martial heroes clearly had “male figures”, wrote songs of “a simple and masculine poetry”, and were encouraged to show themselves to be ‘men’. They were praised for physical qualities such as their valour in battle and their ability to take a bullet.<sup>59</sup> The “maleness of their bodies” was mentioned only once, but that was more than could be said about other Catholic heroes. The heroism of other (non-military) Catholic heroes might also take a physical form - as was the case with the martyrs, who were described as “athletes of Christ”<sup>60</sup>, or the heroes who excelled in heroic physical self-discipline (fasting and flagellation) - yet however strange it may seem the ‘maleness’ of their bodies was not mentioned. The same was true of the inter-war period: a military hero’s ‘male body’ might be mentioned<sup>61</sup>, but there were no references to the ‘maleness’ of the body in descriptions of non-military heroes, even though much was made of their physical beauty.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps, unlike military men, it was because the maleness of their bodies brought no extra quality to their heroism, and therefore did not need to be included in the description. Or was it because Catholic heroism, as opposed to military heroism, did not require the physical strength and vigour of a (male) body?

References to ‘masculinity’ in descriptions of Catholic heroes are equally infrequent in the inter-war sources, and such as exist primarily allude to men’s courage and seriousness.<sup>63</sup> This lack of concern for their heroes’ ‘masculinity’ is remarkable since the general discourse of the Leagues of the Sacred Heart frequently touched on ‘men’s character’ and presented the movement as a ‘masculine’ movement.<sup>64</sup> However much the periodical of the *Apostolat de la Prière*, the main source of ‘heroic’ references, drew attention to religious ‘masculinity’, its heroes were no more ‘masculine’ in definition than those in the Leagues’ periodical.<sup>65</sup> Did these exemplary Catholic heroes figure as models of heroic Catholic masculinity, or, in a step away from binary, gender-exclusive thinking, of a more general Catholic heroism?

It must be borne in mind that the Leagues’ periodicals in the inter-war period were intended for an all-male audience, and perhaps did not need to mention explicitly that they were ‘for men’. The periodical of the *Apostolat de la Prière*, however, remained gender inclusive in the 1930s, as did its heroic narratives. There is no

<sup>58</sup> The exception is Nicolas de Flue, who is described as having a “candid and masculine eloquence”, although it should be borne in mind that he was a layman and ex-military (L. D., “Le Bienheureux Nicolas de Flue”, *MSC*, 7 (1865), 191).

<sup>59</sup> “Départ des zouaves pontificaux canadiens”, *MSC*, 13 (1868), 381-382; “Les zouaves hollandais du Saint-Pierre”, *MSC*, 15 (1869), 216-218, 220, 222; “Les défenseurs de la papauté et ses ennemis”, *MSC*, 12 (1867), 401-404.

<sup>60</sup> Dufau, *Beautés de l’âme*, 199, 365; N. P., “Les deux cent cinq Martyrs japonais”, *MSC*, 14 (1868), 22; athletic references are found also in the description of the missionary Damian (*Arts*, “De moderne St. Rochus. Pater Damiaan”, *BHH*, 68 (1936), 223).

<sup>61</sup> Smit, *Generaal de Sonis*, 18, 34.

<sup>62</sup> De Pauw, “Ralph Serwin en Alexander Briant”, *BHH*, 67 (1935), 104-108 at 105, 106, uses terms such as ‘supernatural beauty’ and ‘charm’.

<sup>63</sup> Arts, “De H. Joannes Berchmans”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 225; Stracke, “Piotr Skarga (1563-1612)”, *BHH*, 70 (1938), 302-305 at 304.

<sup>64</sup> Van Osselaer, “From That Moment On, I Was a Man!”.

<sup>65</sup> For example, in the article by Arts, “Mannelijk Christendom”, *BHH*, 68 (1936), 32-35.



specific mention of the (gender-exclusive) intended audience.<sup>66</sup> Still, any conclusions are at best provisional, given that an analysis of the rhetoric of heroic women would contribute to a better understanding of the specificity of Catholic heroic men.

## CATHOLIC HEROISM

An analysis of the devotional discourse shows that Catholic heroism was described as differing from other forms of heroism because it focused on sacrifice, humility, and humiliations, and not on 'grand' actions.<sup>67</sup> As Catholic heroism did not build on the reputation of its heroes, but on their ability to humble themselves in the service of God, it was, according to various authors, not always perceived as heroism. Expressions in the devotional discourse such as "heroic victim" made sense because a Catholic hero attained heroism by sacrificing and humiliating himself.<sup>68</sup> Catholic authors realised that this kind of heroism raised problems with their non-Catholic contemporaries since they were thought to find it difficult to make the distinction between an "act of heroism or foolishness".<sup>69</sup> However, heroism was deliberately presented as part of a Catholic tradition in which figures such as General de Sonis proved that "Christianity grows heroes and knights".<sup>70</sup> According to the Jesuit Henri Ramière it was through the actions of these heroes that God saved his people. Their courage, however, had to find continuation in the "less brilliant bravery" of others, while it was the fervour of the many that gave birth to the heroic few.<sup>71</sup> Heroes could only exist and shine thanks to the existence of other Catholic souls, so it behoved readers to try to imitate, or at least support, these Catholic heroes, as their salvation depended upon their efforts.

However, heroes did not only function as the *synecdoche* of a general package of ideals, but also as reference points on which to build an identity. They offered self-affirmation in moments of despair and defeat, and shaped a collective identity through commemorative rites and a shared history.<sup>72</sup> Catholic heroes were presented as part of a unifying Catholic tradition. They were the heirs of the heroic ages that witnessed crusaders, missionaries, and 'great' men.<sup>73</sup> However, the heroes of bygone

<sup>66</sup> Articles aimed at a younger audience explicitly mention their audience in their introductions. See, for example, A. D., "Saint Stanislas Kostka", *MSC*, 6 (1864), 257-266; Stoffels, "Bij het 50-jarig jubileum van Berchmans' Heiligverklaring", *BHH*, 70 (1938), 16-20.

<sup>67</sup> For example, much is made of Machiavelli's comment that religion did not create 'great men' because it focused on humbleness and self-denial (J. B. Goetstouwers, "1513 or 1938?", *BHH*, 71 (1939), 36-37).

<sup>68</sup> A. D., "Saint Stanislas Kostka", *MSC*, 6 (1864), 265.

<sup>69</sup> G. D., "Saint Jérôme Emilien", *MSC*, 10 (1866), 370; Arts, "De moderne St. Rochus", *BHH*, 68 (1936), 223.

<sup>70</sup> Smit, *Generaal de Sonis*, 4.

<sup>71</sup> Ramière, *L'Apostolat de la Prière*.

<sup>72</sup> Gerbod, "L'Éthique héroïque en France".

<sup>73</sup> For the 'heroic times' of the Jesuit Missions in the New World and India, see Schoeters, *De H. Joannes Berchmans*, 147; for the Crusaders as a popular reference point, see Frantzen, *Bloody Good*, 2.

ages ran the risk of being regarded as outdated<sup>74</sup>, and to make them attractive their historical context was presented as comparable to the public's own situation.<sup>75</sup>

Catholic heroes were not only part and parcel of a unificatory and explicitly Roman tradition; they could also belong, and contribute, to a national or regional identity. Since love of country and the service a hero owed his nation were recurring themes, Catholic heroes could be presented as national or regional heroes and so contribute to popular myth. This 'appropriation' has proved elusive in the two periods studied here. Although it is clear from the inter-war sources that 'Flemish' roots (and not 'Belgian' roots) were generally mentioned in the description of the heroes in the Flemish sources, heroic narratives also frequently described other non-Flemish heroes.<sup>76</sup> In the 1860s a large proportion of the publications that circulated in Belgium were produced in France<sup>77</sup>, making it uncertain whether it was as important then as it was in the 1930s to have one's own - Belgian or Flemish - Catholic heroes depicted.

In a 1930s' description of Joannes Berchmans' life, the Jesuit Lode Arts remarked that in the Middle Ages, Christians could not imagine saints "other than buried in a desert, or hidden in a lonely cell, with rigid, gaunt faces, in stiff, grubby, hair shirts, and with an annoying aureole around their heads!" He countered this image with someone he believed to be a modern saint: Joannes Berchmans. In his opinion, Berchmans was a saint "who speaks and acts like other people, and walks with them the 'normal', the 'small', way of daily life!" He believed that it was a "special sign from God" that modern saints were common people.<sup>78</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that saints were generally regarded as heroes, the heroic category was, as we have noted before, broader than the Catholic saints. However, Arts' remarks indicate that he believed that there had been a change in the representation and appreciation of Catholic saints.<sup>79</sup>

Can the same be said of Catholic heroes? True, the basic heroic typology (military men, missionaries, heroic religious, lay martyrs) remained much the same in both periods studied, yet this is why it is remarkable that lay heroes such as Matt Talbot, a pious Irish labourer who died in 1925, became very popular in the Leagues of the Sacred Heart. Talbot was neither a military man (like General de Sonis, for example)<sup>80</sup> nor a Catholic author or politician, nor did he suffer a martyr's death. He therefore might be indicative of a new kind of hero, whose popularity depended as much on his working-class background as on his exemplary life<sup>81</sup>, although it should be noted that

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, the comments in Stracke, "Piotr Skarga (1563-1612)", *BHH*, 70 (1938), 302; and Stoffels, "Bij het 50-jarig jubileum van Berchmans' Heiligverklaring", *BHH*, 70 (1938), 17.

<sup>75</sup> Arts, "Berchmans... onze man", *BHH*, 70 (1938), 298.

<sup>76</sup> For "Flemish soul", see Van Mierlo, *De dienaar Gods Adolf Petit*, 11; for 'Flemish boys', see Quirijnen, *Soldatenziel*, 3; for "young Fleming", see Arts, "De moderne St. Rochus. Pater Damiaan", *BHH*, 68 (1936), 223; for "Flemish hero", see "Een missieheld herdacht", *BHH*, 68 (1935), 294.

<sup>77</sup> As noted, the Belgian periodical *Bode van het Heilig Hart van Jesus* was started in 1869. However, the French periodical (*Messenger du Sacré Coeur*) circulated in Belgium from its launch in 1861.

<sup>78</sup> Arts, "Het 'kleine' met 'grootte liefde' gedaan", *BHH*, 71 (1939), 539-540.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Frijhoff's note on the 'democratisation' of the Saints (Frijhoff, "Témoins de l'autre", 10).

<sup>80</sup> For example, Smit, *Generaal de Sonis*.

<sup>81</sup> M. Dewickere, "Heilig Hart. Wederliefde", *BHH*, 67 (1935), 67-72 at 69, writes on "Talbot's heroic soul", whose popularity is illustrated by the fact that the Leagues visited his grave on their journey to Dublin (Heverlee, Archives of the Flemish Jesuits, Bonden van het Heilig Hart, IX Bondsleven, 8).

he was a member of the third order of the Franciscans and lived an ascetic life marked by mortification and prayer. However, the question remains whether his popularity was due to the laicisation of Catholic heroes in general, or whether it should be linked to the broadening of the cult's base and the working-class adherents of the Leagues.

In their study of the cult of the Sacred Heart, Norbert Busch and Olaf Blaschke posited a 're-masculinisation' of the Sacred Heart devotion at the beginning of the twentieth century, having noted the renewed stress on male involvement and the changes in the nature of the Sacred Heart devotion.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, an analysis of Catholic heroism indicates that its exemplars were not depicted as particularly 'masculine' in the inter-war period. It seems Catholic heroic men could do without the references to their male bodies or male characteristics. If a hero represented a "mould of imagined masculinity"<sup>83</sup> then the Catholic heroes left the reader various options. Although their main characteristics were very similar, there was no one way to be a Catholic hero, and there were as many, or perhaps even more, Catholic heroisms in the 1930s as there were in the 1860s. If nothing else, these Catholic heroic men show why we should avoid defining heroism too strictly, and point to the importance attached to having one's own heroes.

## THE LUTHERAN EXAMPLE

Of course, heroes and heroism were not only a matter for Catholics. In the Protestant parts of Europe the concept of the Christian hero was equally important, and it is for this reason we will now shift our focus from Belgium to the Lutheran kingdom of Sweden, and more particularly to the dons at the theological faculty of Lund University who formed the so-called Lund High Church movement. These theologians had an ecclesiology and political agenda that was notably conservative.<sup>84</sup> Like-minded men were appointed to positions of authority in the Church of Sweden, and since until 1867 Sweden had a four-estate parliament, and the clergy, not least the bishops, had a great influence on politics in Sweden, it meant that the Lund theologians came to exert great influence upon both theology and Swedish politics.

Whatever else, the High Church theologians were eager to defend the dominant position of the Lutheran Church of Sweden and maintain its normative position in Swedish society. In speeches and in articles in periodicals such as *Swensk Kyrkotidning* (The Swedish Ecclesiastical Journal) they were severely critical of the consequences of modernisation, especially the effort to abolish the estate-based society and the budding female emancipation movement. They opposed liberal reforms and

<sup>82</sup> Busch, "Die Feminisierung der Frömmigkeit"; see Olaf Blaschke in this volume and Id., "Field Marshall Jesus Christ".

<sup>83</sup> Davin, "Historical Masculinities", 137.

<sup>84</sup> For an introduction to *Neuluthertum* and the conservative ecclesiology that informed the Movement, see Fagerberg, *Bekennnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionelle Theologie*; see also Nordin, *Romantikens filosofi*, 383-390. The term 'High Church' should in this context be understood as an expression of a neo-Lutheran revival, not as a counterpart to the Anglican High Church (see Jarlert, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, VI, 179-181).

defended the strict laws on religious worship and restrictions on religious dissenters.<sup>85</sup> Like their Catholic counterparts, they reacted against the progress of liberalism, rationalism, and secularisation.<sup>86</sup>

According to the Lund theologians, the moral and ethical standards of society were dependent on the safeguarding of the family as an institution. This idea was part of their understanding of the Lutheran theological-political doctrine of the three estates, which held the family, the church, and the state to represent the natural order of creation and God's presence in the earthly kingdom. Each estate had its 'natural' authority exercised by the head of the family, the priest, and the king. Each estate had its task: the family to raise the new generation and form the basis of society; the church to lead the people to God through scripture and the sacraments; and the state to punish crime and maintain order and peace in society.<sup>87</sup> The teaching of the three estates was well known from the *tabula oeconomica*, a collection of biblical quotations appended to the Swedish translation of Luther's Catechism and thus widely available to the Swedish public.<sup>88</sup>

From a strictly Lutheran perspective the High Church theologians emphasised personal vocation, and held that the nature of any vocation was closely connected to gender. In accordance with traditional Christian teaching, they believed in gender equality on a spiritual level but that man was superior to woman. Both sexes had to fulfil a function but within certain constraints, however, so it is reasonable to see the ideology of the three estates as a sex-typing ideology, which in ideological terms accorded women a deprived and often subordinate position.<sup>89</sup>

By studying the main representatives of this Swedish High Church theology - Wilhelm Flensburg (1819-1897), Anton Niklas Sundberg (1818-1900), and Ebbe Gustaf Bring (1814-1884) - we can obtain a sense of the movement's use of history, and more specifically the concept of the historical hero.<sup>90</sup> How did they apply this concept? Did

<sup>85</sup> The agenda of the Lund High Church theologians, which comprised both theological and political aspects, and was distinguished by its conformism, was presented to the public in *Swensk Kyrkotidning* (hereafter *SK*), for example. The Movement's opposite number in Germany, which the theologians often referred to, was Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-1869), the editor of the conservative Protestant journal *Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung* (McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 35-36).

<sup>86</sup> McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 3-12, 285-289; Blücker, *The Church as Nation*, 115; Lehmann, "Von der Erforschung der Säkularisierung", 10-13; McLeod, "New Perspectives on the Religious History".

<sup>87</sup> Witte, *Law and Protestantism*, 7, 93, 100, 109-110. The idea that the state was an instrument that would instil Christian standards and morality led the theologians to repudiate all mention of religious freedom from the mid nineteenth century onwards.

<sup>88</sup> Wallgren, *Individen och samfundet*, 271-285, 291-301, 320-321; Jarlert, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, VI, 179-181; Aulén, *Hundra års svensk kyrkdebatt*, 26-27.

<sup>89</sup> Jarlert, "Fostran till man". For an example of the Lutheran theology as a sex-typing ideology, see Roper, *The Holy Household*, 253-267.

<sup>90</sup> Wilhelm Flensburg was a minister in the Church of Sweden (1849), a professor in Lund (1858), a member of parliament, and bishop of Lund (1865-1897); Anton Niklas Sundberg was a minister in the Church of Sweden (1845), a professor in Lund (1852), a member of parliament, bishop of Karlstad (1864-1870), and archbishop of Sweden (1870-1900); Ebbe Gustaf Bring was a minister in the Church of Sweden (1837), a professor in Lund (1848), a member of parliament, and bishop of Linköping (1861-1884).

they use history to promote their political and theological aims within the Church of Sweden? And does this reflect their ideas on Christian manliness? To answer these questions we will analyse a number of articles in *Swensk Kyrkotidning* in a gender perspective, with particular focus on the characters of the heroes, and scrutinise two speeches given in an ecclesiastical context: a meditation delivered by Sundberg in Riddarholm church in Stockholm in 1882 in memory of King Gustavus Adolphus; and a sermon by Bring in Linköping cathedral in 1883 in commemoration of Martin Luther.

According to the theologian Erik Wallgren, who published a book on the Lund High Church theologians in the 1950s, German idealism and the particular philosophy of history of which the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel was a leading proponent had an important influence on the Lund theologians. From this philosophical standpoint the theologians made critical judgements on contemporary ideas such as rationalism, liberalism, and Pietism; equally it was their conviction that history should be judged not using the abstract terminology of the present but rather as an organically evolved entity. The concept of personality was closely related to the notion that society and history formed a single organism, a concept that in turn was connected to larger entities such as the nation and the people - and it was these larger entities that shaped history.<sup>91</sup>

In this structural system the freedom of the individual was very restricted. It was only in interplay with the organically evolved social order that the individual was thought to have the opportunity to create something new. Thus the concept of history and social order was integrated in a distinctly collectivist mindset. The individual was assigned a certain position in society and expected to function as a part of the organism. This theoretical superstructure corresponded well with the Lutheran teaching of the three estates, which was central for the theologians in question. Hegel's philosophy of history had a theological aspect, since historical development was seen as the result of divine will, and for the Lund High Church theologians it was this that informed their view of the prevalent political system as a God-given social order, and prompted their determined criticism of what they considered to be divisive tendencies within society. The church had a crucial function to ensure 'true' social progress, and accordingly should fight all manner of religious separatism, avoid isolation, and convey its divine message at all levels of society.<sup>92</sup>

For the High Church theologians, the concept of the hero was not merely related to the concept of history; it amounted to its distillation. They saw the divine spirit both as the creator of history and its driving force, believing that progress occurred when the intention of this spirit was made fully manifest in the human social order, in other words in the three estates and in various individuals. Yet in addition, God could work his purpose for mankind by electing individuals for specific divine purposes

<sup>91</sup> Wallgren, *Individen och samfundet*, 80-83; Beiser, *Hegel*, 261-281.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-101.

and missions. These chosen individuals were described as heroes.<sup>93</sup> Initially God intended his spirit to be active through all humans, but this plan was overthrown by mankind's sinful nature. Unlike others, heroes were able to grasp God's true intention as reflected throughout history.<sup>94</sup> This stress on 'great men' was an expression of the historical-Romantic emphasis on the importance of great figures in history that was so widespread in the nineteenth century. Heroes distinguished themselves by their ability to establish new epochs. They also had the gift to articulate the main ideas of such a new epoch and put them into action. In this they were the ideas of the new epoch incarnated. Some periods were seen as more important than others, and their heroes were thought prophetic and normative prototypes for all other periods in Christian history. If contemporary times seemed chaotic, the key historical periods and their heroes could help with advice and guidance.

In his useful survey of the movement's theological system, Wallgren has shown that Flensburg was most keen to emphasise the role of heroes as leaders and educators. The three theologians analysed here considered that society in general, and the church in particular, were characterised by the work and progress of these great men. These manly heroes revealed the workings of divine guidance in the history of the Swedish nation, and in an ideal world Swedes would look to the exemplary lives of their great men. It was in these heroes that the idea of the nation was personified.<sup>95</sup> Thus Wallgren sees the link between the nation and the historical hero in the theologians' work, but he does not make the connection with the fervent nationalism of the period. Moreover, Wallgren's book, published in 1959, also leaves out the question of gender.

According to *Swensk Kyrkotidning*, heroic efforts were most common during the apostolic age and the Reformation. The apostolic age was considered the prototype for the Church in all ages. In the Reformation, the hero Martin Luther appeared to reunite the Church with the lost principles of the apostolic past. It is important to note that Flensburg made a distinction between human heroes who promoted the causes of religion and morality in their own time, and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was seen as the absolute hero of all times. While human heroes tried to curb sin, Christ defeated it.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 103. The inspiration came from both Luther and Hegel: Luther used the concept *virii heroici* when writing about the hero (see Wingren, *Luthers lära om kallelsen*, 166-170, 223-238); Hegel speaks about men of action that can lead others since they have insight in the inexorable course of history (Beiser, *Hegel*, 269). Thomas Carlyle was another nineteenth-century exponent of the cult of the hero, for whom the hero was far more autonomous than for Hegel. In Carlyle's view the course of history was sometimes subordinated to the will of the hero (Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 17).

<sup>94</sup> Wallgren, *Indviden och samfundet*, 99, 102-104, 112-114.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-106, 109-110.

<sup>96</sup> Wilhelm Flensburg, "Om den enskiltes förhållande till det kyrkliga samfundet", *SK*, (1859) 24, 375. See Ebbe Gustaf Bring, "Om kyrkan", *SK*, (1855) 1, 5.



## THE CONCEPT OF THE HERO IN *SWENSK KYRKOTIDNING*

The theme of the hero occurs in several essays in *Swensk Kyrkotidning* (1855-1863).<sup>97</sup> One example is an article about the relationship of the sectarian movements to the Church published in 1855. According to Flensburg, sectarian tendencies can be traced in every ecclesiastical community whenever established dogma and cults are brought into question by the spread of abuse and spiritual lethargy. In this situation great reformers appear in order to restore the Church. Despite the heroic character of these men, there are flaws: "The endeavours of these men can easily be regarded as separatist since they seem to oppose the permanent social order of society. This feeling is all the greater since they often are afflicted by the human trait of refraining from revolutionary tendencies."<sup>98</sup> True heroes are characterised by their ability to restore the Church in a manner that befits its true nature; like prophets they promote the emergence of a new religious order. Yet they also have their faults. They may even abandon the good fight because the temptations of earthly recognition lead them to give in to 'revolutionary tendencies'.

Sundberg, in a review of the German liberal theologian C. C. J. Bunsen's book *Die Zeichen der Zeit*, surveyed the ecclesiastical situation in Sweden, placing particular emphasis on the organic concept of history that he and his fellow theologians thought so important.<sup>99</sup> He described how the divine spirit worked in the present to ensure the advent of a more moral way of life - yet the divine spirit itself seldom interfered directly in history. Instead God used different societal institutions and individuals as tools to bring his divine plan to fruition. This was a problem, since there was a discrepancy between God's intention and what actually came about, because of mankind's weak character and sinful nature. In that sense the 'spirit of the times' was a mere caricature of divine will. Luckily, Sundberg pointed out, there were certain individuals with a better understanding of divine will: "A chain of witnesses for the truth could be found in history. In defiance of humanity's flaws they are the tools by which God's intention in different times is executed. This task is not performed with the consent of the majority, but rather in strong opposition to it."<sup>100</sup>

Once again we see that heroes, 'witnesses for the truth', were men who gave utterance to the divine message and thus stood against the prevailing wickedness of society. In another book review, Flensburg discusses three books by the German church historian Karl Rudolph Hagenbach, which he welcomed for their attention to the great men in church history. Flensburg argued that this biographical brand of historiography is of immense value in the presentation of the endeavours of the true Church throughout history:

<sup>97</sup> The articles in *Swensk Kyrkotidning* were unsigned. On the question of the authorship, see Ölander, "Författareproblemet i Swensk Kyrkotidning".

<sup>98</sup> Flensburg, "Om förnufts- och samvetsfrihet", *SK*, (1855) 14, 216.

<sup>99</sup> Compared to the Lund High Church theologians, Bunsen represented the opposite theological view. In *Die Zeichen der Zeit* Bunsen attacked the anarchy of political, religious, and intellectual life, advocating toleration and liberty of conscience, and opposing the doctrines of Stahl and Kettler (Stahl in particular was of major importance for the Swedish theologians).

<sup>100</sup> Anton Niklas Sundberg, "D:r C. C. J. Bunsen om tidens tecken. Ett bidrag till vår tids behandling av de kyrkliga frågorna", *SK*, (1856) 8, 113-114.



It is not sufficient for the author to give a general and thus rather colourless account of the state of the Church in different epochs. Instead the innermost thought of the Church, its purpose and strife in different periods, appear in individual form in its magnificent characters. In men such as Irenaeus, Tertullian and Origen, as Athanasius, Augustine and Chrysostom, as Luther and Melancton and Zwingli and Calvin, as Johan Arndt and Paul Gerhard, as Spener and Schleiermacher, the Church has a concentrated revelation of the divine spirit which leads the Church in truth and righteousness. The inner thoughts of these individuals are the examples brought to our attention by the author. We will forget ourselves to live and fight and suffer with them, we take joy in their courage of faith, we take part in their interest, we take great joy in their victories. With the men mentioned here and their equals, the author's survey presents us with a sky thronged with holy witnesses. They all have sealed the truth of Christianity and the Reformation with their blood, or renounced the happiness and welfare of the present to plant the cross of Christianity in surroundings where the name of Christ was not spoken before. Surely it is difficult to imagine a more marvellous gallery of holy images.<sup>101</sup>

Thus the innermost thought of the Church became apparent in the thoughts and actions of its great theologians and reformers. Given that the theological position differed among these great men, it would seem that the theological standpoint was of minor importance for Flensburg; he seems to have considered their faithfulness towards the Church and the Christian confession as the most important part of their heroic conduct. He considers these and other great Christian men as role models and sources of inspiration for all Christians<sup>102</sup>: it was not only theologians but also representatives of the old Church who were guardians of the true Christian faith. The weight he accords some of the great fathers of the Church was perhaps the consequence of feeling he was living through a period marked by upheaval in the Christian order. It is obvious that he regarded Hagenbach's work on church history almost as a religious tract because it underlined the importance of the great Christian men. According to Flensburg, the exemplary lives of the heroes gave Christian leaders the strength to resolve the most critical ecclesiastical problems.<sup>103</sup> In the passage quoted above, Flensburg also highlights the character of the great men of the Church. The possession of high morals and good character was a major theme in the discourse on masculinity in middle-class circles in the nineteenth century.<sup>104</sup> The characters of the heroes were marked by their courage of faith and willingness to give their lives for their Christian faith if necessary.

A few years later Sundberg reviewed a collection of lectures by the Swiss theologian Jean Pierre Trottet. Sundberg reflected upon the ideals and community life of the first Christians, concluding that the apostolic age was normative for the Church in all times, when, as he put it, the seed was planted for everything that was to occur later in

<sup>101</sup> Flensburg, "Utländsk litteratur", *SK*, (1857) 6, 95.

<sup>102</sup> Id., *Om den naturliga viljans förmåga i andligt hänseende*, 13.

<sup>103</sup> Id., "Utländsk litteratur", *SK*, (1857) 6, 95; for how other nineteenth-century Swedish theologians used the example of 'great men', see Göransson, *Folkrepresentation och kyrka*.

<sup>104</sup> Tjeder, *The Power of Character*.

the history of the Church, and was thus the principal age of Christian heroes who, to his mind, served as universal models for all times. The Apostles, as the first disciples of Christ, were to be regarded as the pillars of the Church and its most distinguished teachers. Among all these heroes not a single woman was mentioned, not even the Virgin Mary. Clearly, Christian heroism was thought the privileged domain of men, and not only in the apostolic age, for Sundberg believed there were other great periods when brave men determined the course of history and gave guidance to future generations.<sup>105</sup>

Flensburg elsewhere takes up the problem of the relationship between the individual and divine spirit. The crucial point comes when a person becomes aware of the will of the divine spirit and receives 'real freedom'. He then has to make his decision whether to fulfil the will of God and make himself a divine tool. Heroes are seen as examples of individuals with a sense for the will of the divine spirit, and thus possess the most sincere and highly developed personality. Divine will takes its uttermost expression in the hero.<sup>106</sup> According to Flensburg, Christian heroes can be seen as the eyes, reason, leaders, and teachers of other humans. Some people adapt to this order and follow the heroes faithfully, whereas others dismiss the ideas of these great men, and this insubordination has negative consequences for society.<sup>107</sup> The hero in Flensburg's article, which clearly relates to the contemporary difficulties of the Church of Sweden, is the defender of the existing ecclesiastical and social order against tendencies of religious separatism. In accordance with the Lund High Church movement, the hero defends the social order based on the Lutheran doctrine of the three estates, and is thus important as a promoter of the political and ecclesiastical agenda of the movement.

The use of the hero to provide answers to contemporary problems is equally evident in Flensburg's comparison between the sectarian movements in his own times and during the Reformation. He rejects the idea that there were any similarities between these two periods. Even if the Reformation could be regarded as something new, it was not the intention of Martin Luther to abandon the principles of the Church, as the contemporary sectarian movements were about to do. Luther wanted to purge the Church of false tradition and to restore faithfulness to God. It was this subordination to God and his eagerness to work for the salvation of man that was the main force behind his actions. Flensburg considered this to be an act of true Christian heroism - and used Luther (whom he considered to be a tremendous man and the hero of the Reformation) to counteract the ecclesiastical disorder of his own time.<sup>108</sup>

The most important characteristic of the Christian hero in Flensburg's view was his willingness to make personal sacrifices for the sake of the Church and the true faith. He underlined that this was not due to their own good character, and that Luther and the other reformers sometimes felt doubt as to the rightfulness of their actions. For these heroes the Reformation meant sorrow and spiritual agony beyond words. In this difficult situation "the true and Holy Spirit" came to their rescue and gave them the courage to complete the work of the Reformation.<sup>109</sup> A hero was in need of divine support if he was to succeed.

<sup>105</sup> Sundberg, "Svensk literatur", *SK*, (1857) 11, 161.

<sup>106</sup> Flensburg, "Om den enskiltes förhållande till det kyrkliga samfundet", *SK*, (1859) 2, 19-21.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, (1859) 8, 112-114.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, (1859) 24, 374.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.



The death of a hero: Soldiers mourning the dead king Gustavus Adolphus.  
[Photo Scanpix]

## THE EXEMPLARY LIVES OF TWO CHRISTIAN HEROES

The memory of the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632) occupies a special place in Swedish nationalist history writing, but also in a wider Protestant context.<sup>110</sup> Traditionally he has been regarded as the great king who gave his life for the cause of Sweden and Protestantism in the Thirty Years' War. Almost from the moment of his death on the battlefield near Lützen in Germany he was hailed as a hero. At a commemoration on 6 November 1882 in Riddarholm church in Stockholm, Archbishop Sundberg gave a sermon in which he reflected on Christian heroism.<sup>111</sup> He took as his starting point Matthew 16: 25, where Jesus says that the one who saves his life will lose it and the one who loses his life for the sake of Christ will find it. According to Sundberg, Christ refers to two different attitudes, selfishness and willingness to make

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, Friedrich's examination of the importance of the German *Gustav-Adolf-Verein* as an exponent of nationalism and *Vermittlungstheologie* (Friedrich, "Das 19. Jahrhundert als 'Zweites Konfessionelles Zeitalter'?", 108-109; Oredsson, *Geschichtschreibung und kult*).

<sup>111</sup> Riddarholm Church is the final resting place of the Swedish kings, and almost all Sweden's monarchs from Gustavus Adolphus (d. 1632) to Gustav V (d. 1950) are buried there.

sacrifices. The selfish person only seeks to satisfy his or her earthly needs, which according to Sundberg not only destroys the person's relationship with God, but also has devastating effects for society as a whole.<sup>112</sup> Willingness in this pericope refers to: "those people who wander the roads of the Lord, those people who ignore their own needs and take the Cross and follow Him, those who realise that the gift of life is *His* gift, and that this is a gift that should be managed for eternal purpose and thus not be used arbitrarily. Instead it should and *must* be sacrificed, to honour his name when it is demanded."<sup>113</sup>

The self-sacrificing human thus takes his vocation very seriously and is prepared to sacrifice his life for the sake of the Christian faith if necessary. Such a person was like Christ himself and the martyrs of the Church. A Christian had to walk the narrow path of Christ to be able to win his own life and thereby gain the greatest victory of all: eternal life.<sup>114</sup> According to Sundberg, Gustavus Adolphus was such a man, a real hero chosen by God to fulfil a great task: "Can there be any Swede - man or woman - who declines to recall the glorious memory of the brief legend of his short life? Is there anyone who does not feel impelled to send a sincere prayer of gratitude to God for the unconquerable force he bestowed upon the hero? In a difficult time he was elected to glorify the name of God."<sup>115</sup>

Sundberg describes the king in a way that calls to mind the biblical story of Jesus. In his résumé of the situation in Sweden during the king's lifetime he is eager to emphasise that the country faced major challenges because of the strengthened position of the Roman Catholic Church and the emperor.<sup>116</sup> In this difficult situation Gustavus Adolphus came to the rescue of liberty won by the Reformation:

Without considering the risk to his life he entered, he won victory and fell. 'The best safeguard is to put trust in God', he was recalled to have said on a previous occasion. In accordance with this humble and noble-minded idea of his *heart* he acted. This idea was the foundation when he decided, and when he accomplished, his great achievements to defend the faith and the fatherland, which in his mind were *one* and the same.<sup>117</sup>

Here we can see clearly the characteristics Sundberg ascribed to Gustavus Adolphus. His reason for joining the Thirty Years' War and all of the king's political efforts were the result of his humility and noble mind. For the king the major task was to defend both the Lutheran faith and the fatherland, something that in Sundberg's version he considered to be the same thing. In this respect the king had the same convictions as the Lund High Church theologians.

It was Sundberg's opinion that Gustavus Adolphus's campaign was marked by self-denial and outspoken confidence, and that his military success was a conse-

<sup>112</sup> Sundberg, *Vid Gustaf II Adolfs minnesfest*, 3-4.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 5; similarly, Sundberg, *Om den svenska kyrkoreformationen*, 98-99, where Sundberg speaks of the king as a hero, though he emphasises that '*solī Deo Gloria*'.

<sup>116</sup> Sundberg, *Vid Gustaf II Adolfs minnesfest*, 5.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

quence of his Christian faith, and especially his devoted and sincere prayers, and bore witness to his altruistic intentions. From the account of the king's endeavours on the battlefield at Lützen we can conclude that Sundberg was of the opinion that the king's political aims coincided with the Protestant cause, and that the king sacrificed himself for the cause of the Christian faith. Since Sundberg believed that there was a symbolic connection between a king and his people, this symbiosis between Gustavus Adolphus and his subjects meant that the Swedish people were part of his extraordinary act of sacrifice.<sup>118</sup>

At the end of his sermon Sundberg raised the question whether or not the listeners had lived up to the memory of the king. Were people faithful to the Swedish Church and fatherland in the same way as the king had been? By this emphasis on the close relationship between thanksgiving and critical self-examination, Sundberg thus used the hero as a corrective role model for contemporary Swedes, exhorting them to be grateful for their heroic heritage and to uphold the same moral standards as the royal hero had done. He regretted that many Swedes seemed to prioritise the needs of the individual instead of the good of society as a whole, abandoning principles formerly considered holy and inviolable.<sup>119</sup> It is obvious that Sundberg used history to promote a social order that he cherished, making an historical event with confessional implications normative for the duties of contemporary Swedish citizens.

Whereas Sundberg reflected on a national hero, Ebbe Gustaf Bring, bishop of Linköping, chose a different perspective to preach about Martin Luther. At a commemorative service for the fourth centenary of Luther's birth in Linköping cathedral on 10 November 1883, Bring spoke from the Book of Proverbs (10: 7), which deals with the memory of the righteous. According to Bring, the verse reminds us of the fact that human acts and ideas can have consequences beyond the lifetime of the person. One of the most important of those leaders and pioneers on the road of righteousness was Martin Luther.<sup>120</sup> Yet Bring found it important to stress that neither the centenary nor the sermon should be seen as a cult-offering to a genius, or as praise of Luther for having unimpeachable theological standards. The thanksgiving should be directed to God, and not Luther, since God was the one to choose Luther as a divine tool. From Bring's point of view it was obvious that God used Luther for his divine purpose. In some sense the intention of God is rendered incarnate in Luther. Sincere faith is a prerequisite of being a hero. According to Bring, it was only when Luther became aware of the importance of the principles of the Reformation that he was able to commence the fight for evangelical emancipation.<sup>121</sup>

In his sermon Bring also reflected upon the concept of liberty, and argued that Luther was an advocate of liberty but that he had to fight misleading concepts of freedom. Such false understandings of freedom caused some people to misinterpret divine will, and threatened the social order established by God. Since Luther, from Bring's point of view, was faithful to the word of God, he could avoid such misinter-

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 6-8.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>120</sup> Bring, *Minne från Lutherfesten*, 5-6. Olaf Blaschke sees the different anniversaries in Germany in connection with Luther's birthday 1883 as an expression of confessionalisation, Blaschke, "Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?", 53.

<sup>121</sup> Bring, *Minne från Lutherfesten*, 10-12.

pretations, and so it was he who could purify the Christian faith but also defend the established social order.<sup>122</sup> It is clear that Bring was criticising certain contemporary trends in Swedish society by preaching about these issues. After all, he and the other High Church theologians considered the established social order to be on the brink of collapse brought on by different religious movements who regarded themselves faithful to the gospel.

Like Sundberg, Bring ends his sermon by emphasising that gratitude toward God and Luther must include penance and self-examination. Everyone had to ask themselves whether he or she had administered Luther's heritage correctly. Bring takes the example of Luther's adversaries to argue that even in the sixteenth century there were many who searched for a false freedom unsupported by the Bible, and for worldly success and welfare. In accordance with his picture of Luther, Bring directed sharp accusations against the separatist evangelical movements of his time, whom he likened to the false doctrines that Luther had to fight. Both then and now such communities formed a threat to the established social order.<sup>123</sup> It is clear that the question of social and ecclesiastical order and the definition of freedom were central to Bring, and he used Luther as a tool to strengthen his argument and to promote his own political and ecclesiastical views.

## LUTHERAN HEROISM

The idea that God chooses certain men to serve as a model for other Christians and to impel social change was an essential part of the concept of history held by the Lund High Church theologians. Historians of nationalism have pointed out that the idea that certain countries were chosen by God, who furthered the development of that particular nation, was an important component in the nationalistic discourse at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>124</sup> This study shows that the idea that certain *men* were chosen was equally widespread.

Anthony Smith has argued that nationalism and national identity have their roots in religion, and that consequently ethnicity and religion are key concepts to understanding nationalism and national identity. In his view the ideas of the golden age, the hero, and the nation as a chosen people were constitutive for national identity. As for heroes, Smith argues that they were models of conduct and that they exemplified true virtue, and thus were worthy of emulation.<sup>125</sup> According to the Swedish theologian Kjell Blücker, 'ecclesial nationalism' grew stronger in the Church of Sweden in the nineteenth century in response to the sectarian movements and shifts towards a multi-ideological society. The purpose of this ecclesial nationalism was to "preserve, reconstruct and develop a lost unity". We would argue that this was equally true of the prominence the theologians gave certain heroic men. Blücker also

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 15-17.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-19.

<sup>124</sup> Hutchison and Lehmann, eds, *Many are Chosen*.

<sup>125</sup> Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 1-25, 41.



emphasises that a pronounced ecclesiology and a touch of nationalism were central in Church history writing of the period.<sup>126</sup>

Nationalistic fervour played a prominent part in the rhetoric of the theologians. In the Swedish context it has been common to regard fervent nationalism as a phenomenon that had a broad impact at all levels of society, primarily in the last decades of the nineteenth century, and at an earlier stage the nationalist discourse was confined to the upper strata of society and academic historians.<sup>127</sup> Among the theologians of the Lund High Church movement, nationalistic rhetoric and the promotion of Christian ideals were already interwoven by the mid-nineteenth century. Their writing has a distinct nationalistic flavour. To take Flensburg as an example, he seems to have held the opinion that a nationalistic ideal was an inherent part of people's mentality, and that this idea was epitomised by the chosen hero.<sup>128</sup> It is clear that the Lund High Church theologians expressed what Blücker refers to as ecclesial nationalism. It is also evident that ecclesiology and nationalism were central themes in the history writing of the Lund High Church movement.

The theologians regarded the chosen men - the 'heroes' - as tools of God whose main task is the defence of the Christian faith. This position often meant exposure to criticism from people who were enemies of the faith. The high ideals that the heroes expressed often ran directly counter to existing trends in society. We would argue that the heroic deeds as articulated by the theologians were intended to serve as role models, for, as Geoffrey Cubitt has found, the exemplary and pedagogical aspect of the hero was very important, and the exemplar of a certain individual, the hero, was much more effective than abstract ideas concerning morals and behaviour.<sup>129</sup>

The hero symbolised a good Christian. He was characterised by his trust in God, his religious zeal and his willingness to refrain from the success and wellbeing of this world to promote the cause of the Christian faith. Like Christ, he was prepared to sacrifice his life for the benefit of the salvation of his Christian sisters and brothers. Due to his faithfulness and strong belief he was the perfect example and source of inspiration for Christians in all times. Since the hero was well acquainted with the will of the spirit of God, he was considered the obvious leader and teacher. He could subordinate himself to the will of God, and was humility and self-denial personified. In a traditional Christian context these men were generally Christian paragons of virtue, but in the nineteenth century ideals such as humility and self-sacrifice were increasingly associated with femininity. Yet although the Christian hero was in possession of all these exemplary virtues he could accomplish nothing without the help of God. Christian hero worship was meant to be limited, and on several occasions the theologians emphasised that the hero was only a divine tool and thus the gratitude and the glory was God's alone. Obviously it was impossible only to focus on the hero in an orthodox Lutheran context.

The Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus was considered a true hero. Like Christ he bore the burden of the cross. The fallen king had taken his vocation seriously since

<sup>126</sup> Blücker, *The Church as Nation*, 106, 159-161; see also Thorkildsen, "Scandinavia".

<sup>127</sup> Edqvist, *Nyktra svenskar*, 17-18.

<sup>128</sup> Flensburg, "Om den enskilt förhållande", *SK*, (1859), 24, 52.

<sup>129</sup> Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 10, 14.



he had not hesitated to sacrifice his life for the sake of the faith. For Sundberg the king was an imitator of Christ, and with his act of sacrifice, he, like Christ, glorified the name of God. It is obvious that Sundberg used Christ as a role model, and this seems to have been common among different denominations and churches in the period.<sup>130</sup> The similarities between the picture of Gustavus Adolphus that Sundberg painted and religious texts in other parts of Europe do not stop there. Jeremy Gregory has showed that the hero of the long, British eighteenth century was often used “to define the character of the ideal Christian man”. In the prescriptive literature studied by Gregory, religious faith evolves as the most important component of true heroism. The hero in Gregory’s account of the eighteenth century was an unselfish man who could control his passions, had strength of character, and was able to show considerable magnanimity. According to Gregory these characteristics could be regarded an example of evolving bourgeois gender roles.<sup>131</sup> Meanwhile, Sundberg also emphasised the importance of the king’s intense prayers, which he regarded as the most important explanation of Gustavus Adolphus’s success. It is also interesting to reflect upon the fact that his heroicness was intensified by his death in battle. According to Sundberg this heroic act - to give one’s life for the faith - bestowed even more glory on the king and gave him a direct entrance to the Kingdom of God.

Looking at the two texts that honoured the memory of Gustavus Adolphus and Luther, it becomes apparent that the myth of the hero was used as a corrective device for the people who heard or read the addresses. Positioning the hero as an ideal role model seems to have been the most important function of the myths about these brave men. In both addresses the question is asked whether or not the listener is prepared to make an equal sacrifice for God and nation. It is not irrelevant that the historical heroes were used to promote the nationalistic discourse of the time. This is most obvious when considering Sundberg’s description of the heroic king Gustavus Adolphus. In this king, the Christian and the national hero merged into one, and his sacrifice for the sake of the nation was considered equal to the sacrifice of losing one’s life for the Christian faith.

In the sacred roots of nationalism, the hero as corrective and example was very important, according to Anthony Smith. The sacred past stimulates emulation and leaves the public eager to adopt the virtues of the hero. It is, as Smith emphasised, not the person of the hero that is important, rather his virtues, conduct, and qualities.<sup>132</sup> A similar point is made by Cubitt, who argues that the function of the story about the hero is twofold. On the one hand the hero is an important historical agent, and on the other his agency is as an exemplar and a role model. At some point the latter became the most important function.<sup>133</sup>

Given the Lund theologians’ concept of history and their work on heroes and ‘great men’, theories of the ‘use of history’ could be of some help. In short, the use of history means using historical sources to form specifically meaningful and action-based entities. Accordingly, historical consciousness is the sum of different uses of

<sup>130</sup> Gregory, “Homo Religiosus”, 100-101.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 91-92.

<sup>132</sup> Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 41, 171.

<sup>133</sup> Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 9.

history; the perception of the relationship of the past, present, and future which exists at any given moment.<sup>134</sup> From the theories of the use of history, and bearing in mind the assumption that the nineteenth century was a second confessional age, it seems reasonable to speak of a confessional use of history.<sup>135</sup> In such a use, the historical sources (in the present case, the stories of certain heroes) are marshalled to support confessional aims. It is interesting to note that Smith argues that oral traditions could be used by nationalist movements to “seek and recover a golden age for the designated nation, and to draw from it the moral lessons needed to mobilise and unify the people”<sup>136</sup>, while Cubitt stresses that heroes are often “presented as elite representatives of the values on which society is or ought to be based”.<sup>137</sup> Such descriptions fit very well with the actions of the Lund High Church movement.

The countertype of the hero was the person who only strove for worldly wealth and success. According to the High Church theologians, such selfishness had consequences, not only for the individual but also for the people surrounding him and sometimes even for the nation as a whole. In some ways the ideals the theologians accentuated seem to contradict the middle-class ideals so prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>138</sup> Even if the context has a distinct character, Sundberg’s and Bring’s words on Gustavus Adolphus and Luther could be considered evidence of an opinion that certain men brought about historical change. However, the actions of the heroes depicted by Sundberg and Bring do display certain contradictions. Sometimes the historical hero is honoured because he upholds an existing social order, and sometimes the hero’s contribution to societal change is lauded. The hero is considered the upholder of social order at the same time as he founds a new era.<sup>139</sup>

According to the theologians of the Lund High Church movement, one of the more important tasks for the hero was to protect the freedom of the Church. As an example, a hero like Luther prevented the Church from becoming a sectarian group, and ensured that the Church remained faithful to its divine mission. As such a guardian, the hero personified the pure essence of the true Church. The hero was also considered the watchman of a certain ecclesiastical and social order, and the heroes in the material analysed here closely mirror the ecclesiastical and political agenda propagated by the Lund theologians. In this context it seems reasonable to regard their efforts to be a confessional use of history. For example, it is clear that Bring utilised Luther’s life to criticise contemporary phenomena that he and his fellows opposed - the hero was used to uphold the prevailing order of society, which for them meant a society based on the Lutheran doctrine of the three estates.<sup>140</sup> This finding is important, if perhaps unsurprising, since it has been showed how the conception

<sup>134</sup> Aronsson, *Historiebruk*, 7, 17-19.

<sup>135</sup> Blaschke, “Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein zweites konfessionelles zeitalter?”, 38-58; Id., ed., *Konfessionen im Konflikt*, 7-9, 13-18; Jarlert, “State Churches and Diversified Confessionalization in Scandinavia”.

<sup>136</sup> Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 190.

<sup>137</sup> Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 8.

<sup>138</sup> Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 199-232.

<sup>139</sup> Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 9.

<sup>140</sup> Cubitt also sees the hero as an element in moral indoctrination and the maintenance of society’s traditional order (Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 13).

of Luther was used and transformed in different epochs, and during the nineteenth century we can find several Swedish examples where Luther was seen as God's chosen instrument. Luther was the hero and the reformer who made the world a better place, and the virtues that he held were an intense faith, a horror of violence, and unselfishness.<sup>141</sup>

The historian Mary Spongberg argues that ideals of masculinity were an inherent part of the historiography of the nineteenth century, and that history writing was used as a tool to foster a strongly masculine mentality.<sup>142</sup> Clearly the historiography of the time was gendered male and reproduced a patriarchal system. It would thus be fair to consider ideals of masculinity to be constituent parts of a confessional use of history. Following the historian George Mosse, it could be argued that there also is a connection between masculinity and nationalism.<sup>143</sup> Blücker argues that both the national and the religious discourse of the nineteenth century were male, and Gregory hints at the connection between religion, manliness, and national identity.<sup>144</sup>

Neither Bring, Sundberg nor Flensburg mentions women when speaking or writing about heroic deeds. In this regard no heroines could be found in texts written by the Lund High Church theologians. Despite this, it was not thought impossible that women could possess heroic qualities.<sup>145</sup> Even though the confessional use of history seems only to have included masculine references, further research is needed to shed light upon this question. Yet from the texts analysed in this chapter, it must be concluded that the confessional use of history was an expression of masculinity. In accordance with Blücker and Spongberg it also could be argued that both the national and ecclesiastical discourse and historiography in this period were male.

Gender is seldom expressed explicitly in the material. However, it was men - and only men - who founded new epochs, gave voice to new ideas, and showed how the concepts behind these ideas should be interpreted. Even if gender seems to be a subordinate theme in the texts, the theologians chose to emphasise men as heroes in an age they considered revolutionary, and indeed the description 'implicit misogynies' would not be misplaced.<sup>146</sup> Because they believed the ecclesiastical order in Swedish society to be under attack, they used the exemplary lives of a variety of heroes to 'save' the Church, the orthodox Lutheran faith, and society. In so doing they formulated a Christian masculinity that to some extent was in contrast to normative middle-class ideals. Furthermore, the theologians who wrote about these heroic men were men themselves, and this had an impact on their view of history and heroic conduct.

<sup>141</sup> Aurelius, *Luther i Sverige*, 14-15, 114-117, 144-145.

<sup>142</sup> Spongberg, *Writing Women's History*.

<sup>143</sup> Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality*.

<sup>144</sup> Blücker, *The Church as Nation*, 105; Gregory, "Homo Religiosus", 109-110. The connection between Protestant religion, manliness, and national identity to which Gregory refers was often seen in the anti-Catholic rhetoric of nineteenth-century Britain.

<sup>145</sup> Gregory, "Homo Religiosus", 105. Gregory emphasises that the role models (and thus the heroes) in the prescriptive literature he has studied are predominantly masculine. In the British case, the heroines often transcended traditional gender roles.

<sup>146</sup> See Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 282-283.

The concept of history was fundamental to the theologians' views on ecclesiastical and societal order. For example, the idea of previous golden ages can be seen in their material. The idea that certain epochs in history were cultural models and a source of inspiration was a feature of both the nationalist and religious discourses. These periods were considered "extraordinary, canonical and sacred" according to Anthony Smith.<sup>147</sup> Important normative periods in the past and central figures from the past were used to emphasise the indispensability of the political and ecclesiastical agenda of the Lund High Church movement. When it comes to Lutheran heroes and 'great men' presented in the articles and speeches analysed here, the heroes were used to express the ecclesiology and historiography of the Lund High Church movement, a nationalistic conviction, and a sex-typing ideology shaped by the Lutheran *tabula oeconomica*. Thus the hero of the theologians is found at the intersection of ecclesiology, historiography, nationalism, and gender.

Any historian takes a risk when claiming that decades such as the 1850s and the 1880s were times of greater unrest. Is there any time that has not in some way been regarded a period of transition and upheaval? Nevertheless, from the perspective of Bring, Sundberg, and Flensburg these two decades, and especially the ecclesiastical context, were characterised by a paradigmatic shift. The intense philosophical-religious debates of the times may have been one reason for the intensified use and reinterpretation of history. From the perspective of the Lund High Church theologians the present and the future were more than uncertain.<sup>148</sup> In such a situation, they believed it was wise to look for guidance to the exemplary lives of the heroes, even if in many ways those were historical constructs.

## THE CATHOLIC HERO, THE LUTHERAN HERO

Our analyses of a Catholic devotional discourse and Lutheran heroic examples show something of the complexity of 'heroism' and its expression in a religious discourse. Although our case studies only represent small parts of the Catholic and Lutheran landscapes, they offer useful material with which to compare our findings, for despite the dissimilarities - and here it is important to note that in the Catholic context it was possible to speak of 'heroic women' whereas no such allusions are found in the Lutheran texts - there is one thing that must be stressed: both the Catholic and the Lutheran heroes were types of the Christian hero. It was their Christian identity that made these men worth referring to for the authors studied here. It was their Christian faith that was portrayed as the important factor in their lives.

It seems that both Catholic and Lutheran heroes functioned as role models, used to encourage the laity to live a Christian life according to the teaching of their respec-

<sup>147</sup> Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 171; similarly, Cubitt sees the 'Golden Ages' as periods against which to measure the achievements and heroic attitudes of the present day (Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 5).

<sup>148</sup> Aronsson argues that the use and reinterpretation of history are intensified in periods when revolutionary or subversive views are ascendant (Aronsson, *Historiebruk*, 7, 17-19) and Cubitt underlines that heroes were more important in times of uncertainty (Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations*, 14).

tive churches and to defend the morals of family and society. In both case studies the hero is found to symbolise a good Christian. He was characterised by his trust in God, his religious zeal, and his willingness to refrain from the success and wellbeing of this world in order to promote the cause of the Christian faith. Like Christ, he was prepared to sacrifice his life for the benefit of the salvation of his Christian sisters and brothers. Due to his faithfulness and strong belief he was the perfect example and source of inspiration for Christians in all times.

In both the Catholic and Lutheran discourses Christ was depicted as a prototypical Christian hero<sup>149</sup>, although the fact that Christ was the hero without parallel was expressed rather differently. Lutheran heroes (Luther and Gustavus Adolphus) showed similarities with the Saviour, whereas in the Catholic devotional discourse, Christ's heroism was compared to that of secular heroes in history (war heroes). He excelled all these 'heroes' because of the constancy of his heroism, and his moral and religious superiority. Catholic heroes, however, were not really compared to Christ in their biographies. As there was a Rome-based ratification of heroism - the processes of beatification and sanctification - Catholic heroes did not necessarily need to be compared to the ultimate hero in order to grow in importance.

For the Catholic devotional discourse, it was stock-in-trade to present the heroes as heirs of heroic ages that had witnessed crusaders, missionaries, and other great men. Apart from his historical circumstances, a hero's geographical contextualisation often received special attention (as was the case with the 'Flemish hero'), and he could belong and contribute to a regional or national tradition. In the Catholic discourse not only the national but also the Catholic context has to be taken into account. More specifically, it must be borne in mind that the *Apostolat de la Prière* and the Leagues of the Sacred Heart were Rome-oriented. In looking at these devotional movements, the importance of this becomes apparent, on the one hand in the increased attention paid to certain heroes while their canonisation or beatification was in hand, and on the other hand in descriptions of contemporaneous heroes with Roman connections such as the Zouaves who were enlisted to help the Pope when the Papal States were under siege.

History was a key theme in the writings and speeches by the Swedish theologians. This may well reflect the significance of a particular view of history and the nationalism that was so dear to many Lutherans; equally it may be a product of the subject matter of the speeches and reviews analysed. A 'shared' primal history cannot be ignored, however, for in both Catholic and Lutheran examples there are references to the first Christians. Yet one difference between the Catholic heroic ideal and its Lutheran counterpart is that the Catholic heroes focus more on pious activity - or rather on activities inspired by their Catholic beliefs such as missions or crusades - while the heroes described by the Lund High Church theologians focus on defending the social order as it was formulated in the Lutheran teaching of the three estates.

If we take a closer look at the Christian heroes' heroic qualities, then we might conclude that some of these were fairly similar in both case studies. In a traditional

<sup>149</sup> Cubitt elaborates on Christ as 'the supreme heroic reference', and emphasises the duality inherent in the Christian hero: better than other humans, but not as great a hero as Christ (Cubitt and Warren, *Heroic Reputations and Exemplary Lives*, 7-8); see also Gregory, "Homo Religiosus", 100-101.

Christian context these men were generally Christian paragons of virtue. In both examples we find that giving one's life for the faith was regarded the ultimate sacrifice and expression of heroism. A hero should be able to subordinate himself to the will of God and should be humility and self-denial personified. Yet bravery and courage were as highly valued as humbleness and modesty. What was true for Catholics was true for Lutherans: to stay humble at heart would lead to true magnanimity. In both confessions heroes were meant to avoid praise and attention. The Lund High Church theologians express this common notion by saying that the focus should be on God alone.

In some sense it could be argued that the heroic ideals for Lutherans were harsher, while the ideals found in the Sacred Heart devotion focused on charity, discipline, humility, and obedience, and gentleness is an essential character trait among the Catholic heroes. This 'soft' ideal occurs nowhere in the Lutheran material analysed. Masculinity is seldom mentioned explicitly in the Catholic periodicals, nor in the reviews and speeches by the Lund High Church movement, although in the latter case it was perhaps closer to the surface - and definitely not mixed with female metaphors. It seems as if the Catholic heroes were less gender exclusive than the Lutheran heroes.<sup>150</sup> What could be the reason for this? Could it be the connection between church, state, and fervent nationalism in the Swedish context? Whatever the case, the Catholic hero is the more transnational.

In the Christian discourse, heroism could easily be combined with ideals of sacrifice and humility. Where Christian values were mixed with nationalism the 'masculine' virtues became more important, as some of Lutheran examples discussed here show. In the depiction of both Lutheran and Catholic heroes, their Christian faith was portrayed as the major principle in their lives. Both confessional discourses could refer to the same heroes, be they Jesus or the first Christians. What might be more important is that there was something that was constructed as Christian heroism, that there were Christian heroes to be extolled, and to be compared with other forms of hero.

<sup>150</sup> See Yvonne Maria Werner and Gösta Hallonsten in this volume.

# MASCULINITY, MEMORY, AND OBLIVION IN THE DUTCH DOMINICAN PROVINCE, 1930-1950

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MARIT MONTEIRO

Unfortunately I lost your last letter; it was probably torn up by the brother responsible for the cleaning. I do know, however, that your words (mostly of complaint) made me think: why is he always thinking about what he should *become*, and not so much about what he actually *is*; why doesn't the priesthood suffice us? At the age of 24 we have become what we are supposed to be, our duties have been carefully mapped out for us, as is our entire life, and we are equipped to live up to what we should be. You know exactly to what you should dedicate your strength, a certainty that precludes the hesitation that is common amongst other youngsters, a hesitation that diminishes the productivity of so many lives. We are so used to saying that besides a priestly ideal we also have a Dominican ideal, which, as we point out, prevents us from reconciling ourselves with the clerical existence of a chaplain (!) for example. Yet, I am pretty sure that this is definitely the wrong way of looking at things.<sup>1</sup>

**T**his is what the Dominican Pius de Winter (1914-1944) wrote to his fellow brother Lucas Grollenberg (1916-1997) in December 1943, in the thick of the Second World War. De Winter had been stationed in Teutonia, the Dominicans' German province, since 1941, more specifically the Thomas Convent in Venlo, a town just over the German border in north of the county of Limburg. Here, he was supposed to become more proficient in the German language that he was meant to teach at Saint Dominic's College, the minor seminary of the Dutch province, located in Neerbosch, a village in the vicinity of Nijmegen. Grollenberg lived in the Thomas Convent in

<sup>1</sup> Sint Agatha, Erfgoedcentrum Nederlands Kloosterleven, Provincial Archives of the Dutch Province of the Order of the Dominicans (hereafter PAOD), 8359a: Pius de Winter to Lucas Grollenberg, Nijmegen, 2 December 1943.



Zwolle, approximately 160 kilometres from Venlo. Ten of de Winter's letters survived the war and are kept in the archives of the Dutch Dominicans. The letters Grollenberg wrote to de Winter were probably lost during the war, when de Winter was killed on 22 February 1944 when Allied Forces mistakenly bombed Nijmegen.<sup>2</sup>

De Winter's letters grant us a glimpse of the conceptions of masculinity in the constructions of identity and collective memory amongst a group of prominent 'priests religious' in the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup> Both he and Grollenberg were part of a generation of angry young Catholics who brooded over the clericised Catholic culture of the Netherlands. As representatives of this very culture, these young preachers naturally profiled themselves as only moderate malcontents. They did, however, seriously ponder the dominance of the clerical dimension in their Dominican identity. Although the exchanges in their private correspondence were personal, their letters reflect the collectively construed and gendered parameters of that identity. Their discussions of its clerical and monastic dimensions are entwined with notions of masculinity and authority. Lay members of their generation challenged existing patriarchal patterns of authority within the Catholic community with new, essentially virile and vital repertoires of Catholic masculinity, in which evangelical zeal and vigour defied the established clerical control upon which the Dominican self-image as 'men of their times' essentially relied.

Conceptions of masculinity remained part and parcel of the central narrative of Dominican identity. In this chapter I explore these conceptions and their function in the commemorative culture of the Dutch province between the 1930s and the 1950s. By focusing on this particular group of core Catholics, I will show that in the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western Europe 'Christian manliness' has no fixed meaning, but requires a more nuanced analytical differentiation. Recent scholarship is dominated by sweeping theses that posit the masculinisation or re-masculinisation of religion in reaction to what came to be known as the feminisation of religion during the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Both the narrative of feminisation and the perceived need for a re-masculinisation of religion do in fact tally with the secularisation thesis as an explanation of religious transformation; this thesis contends that religion dominated the women's sphere, particularly among the bourgeoisie. Recently this secularisation thesis has lost ground because it largely neglects the social, cultural, and political forcefulness of religion since 1840, a period marked by burgeoning modernity.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See also Rosendaal, *Nijmegen '44*.

<sup>3</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*.

<sup>4</sup> See Yvonne Maria Werner's introduction to this volume and the chapter by Olaf Blaschke. The term 'feminisation of religion' was used by the French historian Claude Langlois (*Le Catholicisme au féminin*) in order to describe the increasing number of women attracted to Catholic religious institutes in nineteenth-century France, as well as the feminisation of religious practice, reflected in an intensified Marian devotion since 1854. See also Busch, "Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit". American historians have instead focused on the feminisation of Protestantism, relating it to the separation of spheres in bourgeois culture. See in particular Welter, "The feminisation of American Religion" and Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class*.

<sup>5</sup> See Cox, "Secularisation and Other Master Narratives of Religion in Modern Europe"; Id., "Master Narratives of Long-Term Religious Change". See also Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*; and McLeod, *The Religious Crisis of the 1960s*.

The German historian Olaf Blaschke has characterised the century to 1940 as the second era of confessionalisation, in which religion in all its denominational variants, far from being pushed to the margins of society, fostered a variety of essentially gendered processes of confessionalisation to which both women and men were party.<sup>6</sup>

This chapter aims to establish that the processes and patterns of the gendering of religion were invariably subtle, and at times almost undetectable. Moreover, it highlights that Christian manliness as a category applied in a variety of collective identities: lay and clerical, clerical and monastic.<sup>7</sup> Although the Dutch Dominicans are centre stage, the patterns of masculinity they cultivated in their community can be considered valid for other male religious orders in the Netherlands.<sup>8</sup> Until well into the twentieth century male religious institutes administered an increasing proportion of the parishes in the Netherlands, and left their mark on confessional Catholic culture.

I have chosen the relatively new field of memory studies as my frame of reference, in particular the work of the German literary theorist Aleida Assmann. Memory studies concentrate on the dynamic and essentially social character of collective memory. Within the context of what is termed ‘the new cultural history’, ‘memory’ has acquired the status of a meta-category that serves to explore the boundaries of history. Many theoretical appreciations of memory therefore invest in its specific relation to history, whereas the direct link to current constructions of identity is no less relevant.<sup>9</sup> For this chapter I concentrate on memory as a narrative structure that channels historical perception into canonised memory through what Assmann has called *Erinnerungspraxis*.<sup>10</sup> ‘Memory practice’ refers to the process of selection and appropriation by which ‘history’ becomes ‘memory’ that serves to underpin collective identities.<sup>11</sup> My exploration starts with an analysis of the re-invention of the Dominican identity in the 1850s as an essentially monastic identity. This re-invention, devised by the master general of the order, imposed a problematic outline on the Dutch Dominicans, who mainly served as parish priests rather than contemplative monks. The tension between being a man of God or a man of the Church, *homo Dei* or *homo Ecclesiae*, had to be solved periodically, and collective commemorations proved to be the favoured means. I will illustrate this by focusing on two cases: the celebration of the seventh centenary of the canonisation of the founder of the order in 1934, marked by the appearance of a commemorative volume; and the appear-

<sup>6</sup> Blaschke, “Der Dämon des Konfessionalismus”.

<sup>7</sup> See also my article, “Repertoires of Catholic Manliness in the Netherlands”.

<sup>8</sup> See for example De Kok, *Acht eeuwen Minderbroeders in Nederland*.

<sup>9</sup> In this fast-growing field, see in particular Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen*; Erll and Nünning, eds, *Cultural Memory Studies*; and the critical evaluation by Klein, “On the Emergence of ‘Memory’ in Historical Discourse”. Theoretical discussions in the Netherlands focus on the role of an historical canon, as well as the relation between heritage and history: Grever, “Nationale identiteit en historisch besef”; Jonker, “Wilde herinnering en getemde geschiedenis”; and Frijhoff, *Dynamisch erfgoed*.

<sup>10</sup> Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*.

<sup>11</sup> Assmann limits herself to this interpretation, whereas the notion of *Erinnerungspraxis* seems to be equally valid for the practice by which the social or generational memory of eyewitnesses or participants is transformed into (scholarly) history. See Schloesser, “Against Forgetting”.

ance in 1948 of the brochure entitled *Wat is een Dominicaan?* (What is a Dominican?). Whereas the first had academic ambitions but only a small print run, the second was an illustrated leaflet, printed in a run of 10,000, intended mainly for the recruitment of pupils for Saint Dominic's College. These publications illustrate how the Dutch Dominicans forged and disseminated a self-image that can aptly be summarised as *monastic, masculine, and missionary*. In both publications the Preachers actively instrumentalised the past, bringing the monastic and missionary aspects of their order to the fore, while maintaining a tactful silence on the bulk of the Dutch province's parochial responsibilities. On an ideological and mental level they affirmed a heroic monastic masculinity that was both militant and mobile, thereby distancing themselves from what they disdained as a sedentary, even bourgeois clerical manliness associated with the parishes in the Netherlands and in the missions overseas to which they were bound on a practical level.

### HOMINES DEI, HOMINES ECCLESIAE?

Since the revival of their order, to which the Dutch Dominicans made a substantial contribution, they had never doubted their superiority to the diocesan clergy. Secular and regular clerics alike supported the parochial structure of the Dutch Church after the episcopal hierarchy had been restored in 1853. However, the monastic character of the restoration programme of the entire order, forged by its master general Vincent Jandel (1810-1872), put their commitment to the parishes as well as their actual function as parish priests under severe pressure. Jandel's programme prioritised monastic observance and rigorous discipline, interweaving historical repertoires with urgent concerns about present and future legitimacy. His answer to these concerns was to refer to the history of the order and reframe it as tradition. Jandel thus attempted to direct the energy and expectations of his fellow brothers beyond the temporary toward less ephemeral tenets, anchored in the founder and foundation of the order and the first centuries of its existence. It is therefore not surprising that most efforts at historical research in the order were, and are still, concentrated on this initial period, neglecting later and less heroic episodes in its history.<sup>12</sup>

Jandel's project in fact aimed to disconnect social memory from actual experience. Aleida Assmann points out that severing the ties between experience and social memory is a prerequisite for the creation of a shared cultural memory. She characterises social memory as short-term memory, which relies mostly on communication, and is (biologically) limited to a time-horizon of three, perhaps four subsequent generations. Cultural memory, however, has a performative power that transcends time, although it is based on images and symbols derived from history. History is transformed into sustained forms of cultural memory by objectifying these images and symbols into experiences that are thus cut loose from actual historical subjects, and turned into material or immaterial bearers and markers of cultural memory. These bearers or markers can be appropriated and internalised by those who were not eyewitness participants; they can join and stabilise a collective memory by this proc-

<sup>12</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*, 29-33, 84-87.

ess of appropriation, and ground their identity on this memory, which is designed to transcend time. As Assmann aptly puts it, institutions do not possess a collective memory, yet they create it.<sup>13</sup>

This applies neatly to the order of the Dominicans, yet the history of the Dutch Province also allows us to fathom the impact of contesting memories on Jandel's creation of collective memory. His programme of re-monasticisation met with resistance in the Netherlands because of the parochial responsibilities of the Dutch Dominicans.<sup>14</sup> Although the Dutch Dominicans felt superior to the secular clergy, their communal culture was inherently clerical, and nowhere more so than in the rectories, where they came close to mirroring the way of life of the secular clergy that dated back to the second half of the nineteenth century. It was then that the Dutch Church had changed its outward appearance and inner self-conception from the missionary church it had in truth been since the end of the sixteenth century, partly priest-less and dependent on lay patronage, into a full-blown institutional church under clerical control.<sup>15</sup> Since the end of the nineteenth century, secular clerics had been more consistently trained to become men of the Church (*homines Ecclesiae*) rather than men of God (*homines Dei*). The Church came to be defined in terms of ultramontane Catholicism: a manual for priests of 1938 explained that the heart of the clergy should pound for Rome, "for the throne of unity, for the centre of the entire community".<sup>16</sup> It went without saying that it was the Papal throne that was meant.

This dominant construction of clerical identity had far-reaching consequences for regular clerics such as the Dominicans, whose collective identity since about 1850 had been framed in monastic rather than clerical terms, as we have seen. From the outset, their founder Dominic (1170-1221) had envisaged a fruitful combination of monastic and clerical traits in the way of life of his followers. In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas conceptualised the functional relationship between the active and contemplative elements in Dominican identity, expressed in the order's motto, *contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere*; to him, contemplation and sharing the fruits of contemplation with others ultimately exemplified religious life. In the daily reality of the Dutch province, the attempt to strike a balance between action and contemplation often proved to be rather trying. As a result of the liturgical and pastoral duties in the parishes for which the Preachers were responsible, *action* was easily equated with parochial obligations, reinforcing the clerical dimension of Dominican identity. The need for contemplation was emphasised in order to keep a necessary check on action in the busy and time-consuming parishes. Between 1900 and 1920 the Dutch Dominicans attempted to balance the two poles of their identity by distinguishing between *identity* and *function*. They considered themselves to be *Dominicans* and, as such, monastic men, whereas the majority functioned as parish *priests*.<sup>17</sup>

Continuous attempts to balance action and contemplation, the clerical and monastic attributes respectively, nearly succumbed in the 1930s to the pressure of

<sup>13</sup> Assmann, *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, 29-36.

<sup>14</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*, 75-89.

<sup>15</sup> Id., "Mannen Gods", 16-18.

<sup>16</sup> Stockums, *Priesterschap en ascese*, 253.

<sup>17</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*, 184-196.

two, interrelated developments. The often far-reaching authority of the clergy within the Dutch Catholic community had been under open attack since the mid 1920s from a new generation of young, academically trained Catholic laymen who saw their hopes of significant professional positions in part thwarted by the clergy. They scorned the clerical monopoly on areas not directly related to the Church, and claimed recognition as Catholic professionals. In a broader perspective, their criticism echoed the consequences of the process of confessionalisation that in the Netherlands had amounted to pillarisation: a largely autarkic denominational subculture dominated by Catholic schools, newspapers, and social, political, and charitable organisations. For the Dutch Catholics, over a third of the entire population around 1900, this subculture provided the context for their social emancipation and religious revival. In contrast to similar subcultures or milieus in Germany and Switzerland, the Catholic pillar in the Netherlands was very much led by clerics, who sternly directed the degree of rapprochement of their flock to what was summarised as modernity.<sup>18</sup> This pillarisation provided ample training and battlegrounds for the secular and regular clergy, dressed in cassocks and habits, to demonstrate their authority and masculinity by their organisational and managerial skills far beyond the actual ecclesiastical domain.<sup>19</sup>

Once Catholic emancipation seemed to be complete with the settling of the long-lasting controversy over the state funding of confessional schools in 1917 and the advent of universal suffrage in 1919, the dominant role of the clergy in the Catholic milieu was openly called into question. Thus, in the Netherlands the end of the second age of confessionalisation in around 1930 went hand in hand with attempts by laymen to separate once again the ecclesiastical sphere from the professional, public, and political domains that had become entwined, pushing back the clergy to Church affairs, which were considered their proper business. This runs contrary to Olaf Blaschke's analysis in this volume, which puts the laity rather than the clergy in the centre of the transfer of religion from the Church's domain into the public, political, and professional spheres underway since the end of the nineteenth century.

With their authority challenged, the Dutch episcopate turned against what they defined as internal anticlericalism, embarrassing in the process the regular clerics like the Dominicans, who themselves had questioned the extent and impact of clerical control in an attempt to engage young Catholic intellectuals in new, modern forms of apostolate. In the Dutch province the debates over the extent and justification of clerical authority reached their peak in December 1932, when the young Dominican Raymund van Sante (1896-1946) was relieved of his duties on account of a booklet he had written entitled *Gezag* (Authority). Van Sante had pointed the finger at the moral and spiritual fragility of the clergy, encouraging well-educated lay Catholics to take the lead in the Catholic community and to support the clergy. This form of lay empowerment was condemned by the episcopate and by van Sante's own superiors, even though he had scrupulously based his argument on Thomas Aquinas, whose authority remained uncontested.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Righart, *De katholieke zuil in Europa*, 29-36.

<sup>19</sup> Monteiro, "Mannen Gods", 16-22.

<sup>20</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*, 203-211; Id., "Repertoires of Catholic Manliness".

This affair caused young Dominicans like Grollenberg and de Winter to experience the full power of the order's existing structures of authority. In a series of retreats and conferences following van Sante's departure into exile in April 1933, *decorum sacerdotale* (priestly propriety) was drilled into these youngsters, in an unequivocal reassertion of the hierarchy of clergy and laity. At the same time, this *decorum* was intricately linked to what was called *la virilité chrétienne*. By demonstrating their dedication as religious, the Dominicans would not only embody the elevated nature of the religious state, but would also permit the laity to identify the characteristics of the priesthood more clearly. In 1935 one of the prominent Dominicans, the university professor Jan Benedict Kors (1885-1966), was keen to impress on an audience of younger fellow brothers the fact that: "A layman does not want a priest to be like a layman, but like a cleric, he does not want a priest to refrain from bad things, but wants to see that a priest behaves differently from a layman in what is permitted."<sup>21</sup>

His Flemish brother L.J. Callewaert (1886-1964) had in 1932 exhorted a similar audience to demonstrate their manliness in *decorum sacerdotale* by dutifully executing their tasks, and to be everything to everyone in the name of Christ, but equally to maintain a distance suitable for clerics in their contact with the laity. Being *Godsmannen*, 'men of God', demanded that "we avert our eyes from the people of this earth and turn them up high, to God".<sup>22</sup>

Propriety largely determined the career of each Dominican. In yearly reports on the condition of the province, the father provincial sent a catalogue of its individual members to the master of the order in Rome.<sup>23</sup> It listed information on the entrance, profession, ordination, stations, and functions of each of the sons of the Dutch province. Moreover, it reveals how each father provincial in turn assessed the intellectual capacities, theological expertise, morality, and decency of their 'sons'. This assessment proved to be a reasonable forecast of the direction and career trajectory of each Preacher. Those who were endowed with a good mind, were theologically sound, and could boast of an impeccable record, were invariably chosen for administrative or academic responsibilities within the province or the order. Those who were judged to be intellectually or morally mediocre or somewhat fragile ended up in one of the parishes, whereas those with blatant moral or theological failings were considered a menace to the reputation of the order.

<sup>21</sup> PAOD 5868, Records of the Lacordaire debating club XVII, 242: Lecture by Jan Benedict Kors, OP, for the Lacordaire debating club of the young friars (2 May 1935), entitled *Wij en onze tijd* ('We and the present times'). See also PAOD 4589: Acts of the provincial chapter 1924, *admonitio* 6. A similar reasoning can be found in Stockums, *Priesterschap en ascese*, 288-289.

<sup>22</sup> PAOD 839: Notes of Bonaventura Jansen on the retreat by Callewaert, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Rome, Santa Sabina, Archives of the Generalate of the Order of the Dominicans, XIII, 77020: *Catalogus omnium Fratrum Ordinis Praedicatorum Provinciae Reginae SS. Rosarii in Germania Inferiori*.



## GENERATIONAL DYNAMICS

The majority of candidates for the order in fact wanted to become priests rather than monks. Interviews with Dominicans born between 1915 and 1940 clarify that it was often a mere coincidence that they had become a Preacher, and as such a 'priest religious'; they belonged to one of the parishes administered by Dominicans, or were related to a member of the order. All of them testify to a youth spent in an obviously Catholic culture, dominated by an active and intense practice of faith, anchored in parish life. Some of them practised being priests when they 'played Mass' (*misje spelen*) in their childhood. The privileged ones had been decked out for this purpose with decorated miniature cassocks and equally small replica altars. Between the ages of ten and twelve, most of these men had been selected as altar boys, assisting the priest, responding to his prayers, and ringing the little bell as the priest consecrated the Eucharist. Serving at Mass gave them a chance to experience - and enjoy - what it would be like to be a priest at the centre stage of a parish church.<sup>24</sup>

Contacts between parents and priests usually decided the selection of a minor seminary. The interviews illustrate that the standing and status of the Dominican order to a great extent determined its recruitment. Before the Second World War candidates were middle and upper middle class, often the sons of successful Catholic entrepreneurs who considered their entrance in the order befitting their social position. In the eyes of the young candidates, life as a Dominican mirrored the sophistication they had been used to since birth. "The liturgy, the culture, they [the Dominicans] were *predikheren* [gentlemen preachers], as they used to be called. I was used to that. At home everything was ... Well, we were well off, so everything was decent, sophisticated, and I recognised that way of life with the Dominicans."<sup>25</sup>

In the 1920s the Dutch province witnessed a generational shift. According to Aleida Assmann, such shifts clarify how historical change affects both individual biographies and perceptions of history. Generations do not merely share a specific range of birth years, but also the experiences and patterns of interpretation that set them apart from other generations. Collectively shared processes to handle fundamental societal changes weld the members of a generation together, and determine by means of communication and discourse the parameters of their shared identity.<sup>26</sup>

The generation that died in the 1920s was strongly associated with the heyday of Catholic emancipation. Amongst the grand old men who fostered a recognisable, self-reliant Catholic culture in the Netherlands were the Dominicans Vincentius de Groot (1848-1922), professor of Thomistic philosophy at the University of Amsterdam, Alfons Rijken (1859-1924) who had been a close friend and even the ghost writer of the Catholic social leader Alfons Ariëns (1860-1928), and Gerrit Meijer (1857-1925), the historian who had moulded the history of the Dutch Dominican Province into something of a success story. This generation was succeeded by younger Preachers whose lives and careers testified to their struggle against theological modernism between 1908 and 1914, as well as to their patriarchal clericalism. Their coping strategies,

<sup>24</sup> Interviews with Kees Strijbos, OP, 29 September and 4 October 2000.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Alphons Voss, OP, 6 February 2001.

<sup>26</sup> Assmann, *Geschichte im Gedächtnis*, 32-36.



which can be summarised as theologically cautious and socially self-glorifying, were subsequently resisted by the younger generation of intellectually trained Catholics. Although the Netherlands had been able to maintain its neutrality in the First World War, nonetheless its immense impact would be the deep-seated bond of the generations born between 1895 and 1910.

Dominicans who entered the order between 1915 and 1930 testified to differences of opinion with their older brothers over definitions of Catholicism as well as the role of the clergy in the Catholic milieu. Some of them discarded what increasingly was seen as a traditional and devotional Catholicism, rooted in an intense church-based practice of faith; they were inspired by new youth movements and student organisations that, in their opinion, reflected more decisive and effective forms of religious activism that they thought necessary for a revival of faith after the disillusionment caused by the First World War. For their part, the older brothers rejected this activism as anti-clerical, scorning the younger brothers for their energy, which they deplored as self-indulgent and anti-intellectual. The younger generation, in turn, complained about restrictions on their religious idealism, and questioned whether the spiritual needs of the times could indeed be met by the classical clerical repertoire of predications, which were centred on dogma and morality. If the Dominicans wanted to remain persuasive ‘men of their times’, they must recognise that this era called for different kind of men. Men of the new generation boasted that they were not stuck in any particular time, and were committed whatever the present times might demand.<sup>27</sup>

Van Sante was an extreme exponent of the views that welcomed attempts to strengthen the monastic dimension of Dominican identity. For the youngsters, it seemed to offer an escape from a lop-sided, clericalised Catholic culture that so incensed the more outspoken and critical members of their generation. The commemoration of the seventh centenary of the canonisation of St Dominic illustrates the search for a compromise between the generations, which turned on the proper balance of action and contemplation in Dominican life. Due to the acute controversy over clerical authority, which came to a head in the Dutch province in the van Sante affair, the centenary proved to be emotionally charged. Whereas in 1921, on the occasion of the seventh centenary of Dominic’s death, members of the younger generation were invited to portray the founder of the order as they saw him, in 1934 only members of the established generation contributed to a commemorative volume. In 1921 the youngsters - of which van Sante was one - recast St Dominic as a heroic but mystically talented martyr for his faith whose moral rectitude and religious activism were founded in contemplation.<sup>28</sup> In 1934, their older brothers concentrated on the history of St Dominic’s reception instead, carefully balancing his contemplativeness with apostolic action, and not mincing their words as to the clerical character of the foundation, highlighting both the self-assurance of its founder as well as his humble

<sup>27</sup> The records of the Lacordaire debating club of the young friars are particular testimony to this: PAOD 5865: Lecture by Rafaël Meussen, January 1928 (Verslagboek XV, 55-57); PAOD 5867: Lecture by Pius Kok, 8 March 1931 (Verslagboek XVII, 67-70).

<sup>28</sup> *Feestuitgave van De Rozenkrans; De Rozenkrans*, 43 (1921), 9-10.

obedience to the Church hierarchy.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the contributions to the 1934 volume clearly continued the dual discourse of the reconciliation of clerical and monastic aspects of Dominican identity, yet overvaluing the monastic dimension by arguing that contemplation represented the true aim of the order in which the apostolate should be firmly grounded. They advocated an ‘interactive’ relation between action and contemplation, through which Preachers in their predication only shared with the faithful the things they had actively appropriated through contemplation. This approach influenced their interpretation of the order’s motto, *Contemplari et contemplata aliis tradere*.<sup>30</sup>

Whereas the authors of the 1934 volume agreed that the exact combination of contemplation and action highlighted the specificity of the Dominican’s identity compared with the identities of diocesan priests or other priests religious, their discussion continued by considering the balance to be struck in this combination. This surely met with the approval of youngsters such as de Winter and Grollenberg, whose exchanges show that in their opinion they could effectively become men of their times without drawing any rigid distinctions between action and contemplation. De Winter, after all, questioned whether Dominicans in their daily lives were capable of distinguishing between the Dominican and the priestly ideals. He nevertheless remained aware of the implicit underappreciation of parochial work in his own province. When all was said and done, in their disquisitions on action and contemplation, and the so-called homogeneous activity in which both were harmonised, his learned brothers tended to equate action without saying with a professorship at one of the order’s seminaries.

A professorship may be the most perfect form of homogeneous activity, but it is most certainly not the only one possible. Dominican Thomistic spirituality influences our predications as well as how we function as confessors, ... in fact all our actions ... and turns them into instruction; then, too, our actions are toned with our contemplation. This is not a mere pretext for those who have not been called to a professorship, for they too are called to homogeneous activity. The more one thinks about this, the clearer it becomes that it is very, very useful, perhaps even necessary, that we influence the people by our actions in a Dominican manner.<sup>31</sup>

Like other members of his generation, de Winter recognised that some Catholics had distanced themselves from their Church and its clergy. He attributed this to the lopsidedly moral interpretation of faith, in which religion was equated with asceticism and the mere practice of virtue, humility, chastity, and mortification, instead of prioritising love fostered by contemplation. “What this actually means is that the

<sup>29</sup> Daniëls, OP, and Bruineman, OP, eds, *Gedenkboek op het zevende eeuwfeest der heiligverklaring van St. Dominicus*.

<sup>30</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*, 307-314.

<sup>31</sup> PAOD 8359a: Pius de Winter to Lucas Grollenberg, Nijmegen, 2 December 1943.

attention to the transcendent life is concentrated on what is merely derivative of what is godly.”<sup>32</sup>

Such ascetic approaches to faith - which de Winter mainly associated with the Jesuits - seemed to result only in a loss of faith. He illustrated his point by referring to the novel *Het geschonden gelaat* (The disfigured countenance), by a Roman Catholic convert, Dick Ouwendijk (b. 1907) that had just appeared in 1943.<sup>33</sup> In 1953 Ouwendijk's oeuvre was hailed in an appreciation by L. J. Rogier, the prominent historian of Dutch Catholicism, as a model of the baroque, and inspired by French authors like Georges Bernanos and François Mauriac. Rogier ventured to guess that Ouwendijk's work was better received in Germany than in the Netherlands<sup>34</sup>, although this seems to be contradicted by the fact that the novel had already reached its fifth edition in 1947, a mere four years after its appearance. Rogier had reservations about the pessimism of Ouwendijk's work, with its recurring theme of a loss of faith because of legalistic interpretations of Christianity. Indeed, this sums up *Het geschonden gelaat*, which sets out to demystify Catholic family life and veneration for the clergy by describing the emotional disintegration of a family mirrored in the crumbling of the priestly calling of its eldest son. The son's unforgiving self-analysis was dismissed as “unchristianly dispirited and comfortless” by de Winter in his letter to Grollenberg in December 1943,

because Christian life is conceived merely as a battle ... against sin. Being Christian then means fighting evil and suffering on account of this battle; restlessness and discontentment are inherent to this outlook. ... God only enters the picture as a cause or a solution to these problems. Christ is nothing more than a hero of spiritual agony, a fearfully tormented human, without the peace of his *Visio* on his disfigured countenance. I truly fear that this will not help the mass of Christians to move beyond courageous resignation.<sup>35</sup>

According to de Winter, contemplation could provide a more suitable answer to the questions with which his fellow Christians constantly wrestled, and without falling prey to the *Weltschmerz* Ouwendijk displayed in his book. These Christians lacked adequate guidance, and for that reason they were not aware of the peace and joy they were endowed with as tokens of the holiness of life. “Here lies a beautiful task for us [Dominicans] with our *theo*-logical training and our Thomistic spirituality, to take on Dominican *instruction*, in writing, from the pulpit, as confessors, by all our actions - that is our ‘homogenous’ activity.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ouwendijk, *Het geschonden gelaat*.

<sup>34</sup> Rogier and de Rooy, *In vrijheid herboren*, 807.

<sup>35</sup> PAOD 8359a: Pius de Winter to Lucas Grollenberg, Nijmegen, 2 December 1943.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. It. in original.

## RESTORING ORDER

Pius de Winter did not get a chance to practice what he had preached to Lucas Grolenberg. He was one of over 760 casualties of the accidental bombing of Nijmegen by Allied Forces on 22 February 1944. At half past twelve, just as he finished eating lunch with his brothers in the rectory of Maria's Nativity just outside the city centre, the air-raid alarm sounded. After about three-quarters of an hour the all clear sounded. De Winter helped wash up, and left for his rooms at the Dominican Sisters of the Most Sacred Sacrament in the lower town. Soon after, at a quarter past one, the city was bombed without warning. The teachers and pupils of St Dominic's heard an enormous explosion, which later turned out to be the tower of St Steven's Church collapsing. Immediately afterwards they saw disoriented people wandering the streets; some rang their doorbell, looking for help. The older pupils were drafted to clear the debris from the city centre, and were confronted with the full horrors of war from which their professors and superiors had tried to shield them.<sup>37</sup>

Since the outbreak of war in the Netherlands on 10 May 1940, the provincial Basil Schaab (1880-1956) had made every effort to ensure normality. He was responsible for nearly five hundred subordinates (*subditi*), including the pupils of St Dominic's, who needed to be fed, clothed, and housed once the Germans started to requisition the friaries in 1942. In spite of the ensuing diaspora, the business of the Dominican province went on much as usual if we are to believe the yearly chronicles that until 1945 listed deaths, funerals, appointments, exams, and ordinations. It was all as if there was no war on - and exactly as Schaab had hoped. In the midst of fear, insecurity about the future, and drastic upheavals such as those caused by the Germans' requisitions, he attempted to safeguard some continuity. He tried to do what most of the Dutch did during the German occupation: he carried on as normal. For the Dominicans, the monastic rhythm of the day provided a mental substrate for longed-for stability in turbulent times. It was only years after the Second World War that the Dominicans looked back with amazement on these years:

'Just do what you always did' seemed to be our loftiest ambition. That is why they [the superiors and teachers] withheld a great deal of information from us [the students and pupils]. The war was 'just' a passing thing. God and the Church and the vows and the scholarship with which we were acquainted were considered to be of lasting value. We were supposed to 'keep on doing what we always did' in order to become people of great worth after we had finished our education. And we did nothing but learn to argue in Latin ... as if the world depended on it.<sup>38</sup>

The efforts to cling to routine as if nothing had changed also reflect the somewhat odd position of priests in society. In the Netherlands, diocesan priests and the ordained members of religious institutes were exempt from military service. Clerical

<sup>37</sup> PAOD 614: Diary of Remigius Bruineman, prefect of Saint Dominic's, I, 19-20; interviews with Bert Robben, OP, 22 August 2002, and Ad Willems, OP, 13 and 22 February 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Salemans, OP, "De oorlog dóór met de blik op oneindig", 212.

and monastic varieties of Christian masculinity were generally cultivated without the battlefield as frame of reference. Army almoners were an exception to this rule, although they did not actually fight.<sup>39</sup> However, the exemption from military service did not extend to the lay brothers at these institutes. During the Second World War, Dominican lay brothers were drafted as forced labour in the German war industry. This touches upon an intriguing paradox of masculinity in the Dominican community. Before the war every effort had been made to masculinise the way of life and duties of the lay brothers. Callewaert had explained in a brochure about the lay brothers (*De dominikaansche leekebroeder*, published in 1931) that they cared for the Dominican fathers like mothers for their sons. Without infringing upon the internal hierarchy of ordination, he circumvented the pecking order by upgrading the work of lay brothers, and even spiritualising its impact with allusions to what Mary had done and had meant for Jesus. Callewaert voiced the general opinion that by running a friary's household effectively, the lay brothers enabled the ordained Preachers to engage in a fruitful apostolate. Nevertheless, the Dominicans periodically felt obliged to clarify the fact that the lay brothers' chores were manly, and called for sacrifices that should be viewed as heroic: "The art and diligence of the moment are also one of the characteristics of the manliness of the heroes. That manliness, that heroism has always been one of the features of the order of the Dominicans."<sup>40</sup> Yet when it came to their actual sufferings and heroism, however, there was a deafening silence when the enlisted lay brothers returned after the war. They were welcomed with a brief announcement to the effect that it was good to have them back as there was much work to be done.

This incident, which survives in the social memory of the Dutch province, illustrates both the immense variations in what its members experienced in the war, and the skimpy attention paid to those experiences afterwards. The Dominicans were not unusual in this<sup>41</sup>, but in their particular case it contributed to the image of unworldly Preachers who had only a slight idea of what was going in the world, and this was the image that stuck in the minds of young candidates for the order who received a letter from provincial Schaab when the war was over, ordering them to report to the noviciate in Huissen in July 1945. Arnold Diephuis (1926-2004) remembered the hardships he had to endure in order to get to Huissen from the west of the country where his parents lived, without valid travel documents in a country under military rule that closely monitored travellers, when there were still no trains running. He managed to get to Nijmegen, where the fathers of St Dominic's saw to it that he got to Huissen. There he too was welcomed as if nothing had happened; he was merely asked whether he still wished to become a novice.<sup>42</sup>

The privations are also illustrated by the preparations for Diephuis and the other members of his class to take the habit in September of 1945. There were no new habits available. They had to borrow habits from their brothers to be, which they wore for

<sup>39</sup> For example, the Dominican Ignatius de Boer (1895-1966), who was praised for his peace-loving heroism: PAOD, Personal file of Ignatius De Boer: Cutting from the *Gelderlander*, 16 April 1966; Lemeer, "Jan de Boer".

<sup>40</sup> PAOD 8478: Retreat for the Brothers, 7 July to 3 August 1938.

<sup>41</sup> See for example Withuis, *Na het kamp*.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Arnold Diephuis, OP, 11 April 2002.

the few hours necessary for the ceremony before changing into civilian clothes again. After the Dominican missionaries stationed in the Dutch Antilles had come to their (financial) rescue, woollen fabric for new habits could be ordered from England.<sup>43</sup> Yet, instead of the usual two habits the novices had only one, so they still had to change into civvies once a fortnight when their habits were washed. And the habits they were given were old, threadbare, and heavily patched, “probably to teach us some humility”, as Diephuis ventured to guess.<sup>44</sup>

Teaching humility to a generation that had been mentally and morally uprooted by the war proved to be a key feature in the mental renewal embarked on by provincial Laurentius Teeuwen (1898-1973), who succeeded Schaab in December 1945. In the 1920s and 1930s Teeuwen had been friends with van Sante, which raised suspicions as to his trustworthiness amongst the older brothers. After his election he accentuated the need to restore Dominican life according to the constitutions of the order devised by St Dominic himself. According to Teeuwen, prayer, worship of God, and a contemplative life dominated by silence and study provided meaning for the Dominican motto *Contemplata aliis tradere*. He stressed that *renovatio*, renewal, should be specifically geared towards the regeneration of spiritual life, which in turn would provide a fertile breeding ground for an active apostolate.<sup>45</sup> Here Teeuwen’s argument echoes familiar pre-war positions on action and contemplation. Yet the response from the general chapter of the order in 1946 reveals the political purport of this argument. It was convinced that *Provincia Neerlandica est provincia optima*. This positive evaluation, however, relied on everything but the parishes that were still the mainstay of the province. In fact, assessments of the province’s financial situation established that the friaries, especially the *philosophicum* in Zwolle and the *theologicum* in Nijmegen, cost far more than they could ever bring in.<sup>46</sup>

What the superiors in Rome valued in the Dutch Dominicans was their theological orthodoxy, their missionary work in the Dutch Antilles, Puerto Rico, and South Africa, and their attempts to recruit new candidates for the order.<sup>47</sup> It was on the basis of these good points that the Dutch Dominicans attempted to restore their position as men of their times in the Dutch Catholic community, and to that end carefully blocked out the pre-war contention over clerical versus monastic identity, the dissension over authority in the Catholic community that had culminated in the van Sante affair, and even the Dutch Province’s very nature as a ‘parish province’. Instead, they tapped into the dual discourse of contemplation and action, bringing it to bear on a monastic and missionary masculinity that they in turn associated with St Dominic’s founding ideals.

<sup>43</sup> PAOD 1855: Letter of the vicar provincial of the Dutch Antilles, Zeppenfeldt, to provincial Schaab, 10 September 1945.

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Arnold Diephuis, OP, 11 april 2002.

<sup>45</sup> Van Waesberge, “Ter nagedachtenis aan pater Laurentius Teeuwen o.p.”; see also PAOD 4679: Record of the morning session of the provincial chapter, 19 December 1945.

<sup>46</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*, 392-394.

<sup>47</sup> PAOD 4778: Letter of Methodius Hudeczek, assistant to the master of the order, Suárez, 19 January 1954.



## ACCEPTED AND REJECTED LEGACIES

The strategy of improving on a recent and complex past with a constructed and often simplified memory proved to be vulnerable, and had some way yet to go when in 1946 history caught up with the Preachers with news that van Sante had died in Cologne. His loyal supporters published an obituary in one of the major Catholic newspapers that raised the question in Rome of whether van Sante was still a member of the order; provincial Teeuwen confirmed that he was. In fact, the class of novices to which Arnold Diephuis belonged was required to say the office of the dead for van Sante, as was customary amongst the Preachers. Piet Struik (1926-2010), who was in the same class and would later be the provincial from 1981 to 1993, remembers that he and his fellow novices were left completely in the dark as to van Sante's identity or the reason why he had died abroad.<sup>48</sup> Their curiosity was further piqued during their studies, for in preparing a paper on the subject of authority one of them came across van Sante's booklet on authority, that had caused such a stir after its publication in 1932. In his paper the novice rebutted van Sante's views on authority as unorthodox, whereupon their director of studies, Andreas Maltha (1904-1994), lectured him for this hostile and, in his opinion, unjust evaluation of van Sante's position. Maltha leapt to the defence of his old friend, neglecting to mention that he himself had been posted to Rome in 1933 because of this friendship, and had not returned to the Dutch province until 1946, having both exonerated himself from the suspicion that he was not a trustworthy member of the order, and proved that he would abide by the official line on the question of lawful authority within the Church and the order.<sup>49</sup> The whole affair thus reverberated amongst young Dominicans, no matter how much their older brothers tried to perform a *damnatio memoriae* on van Sante. It was not until the end of the 1950s that one of the brothers ventured to utter van Sante's name once more, but by then he could dismiss the form of authority to which van Sante was forced to yield as totalitarian - an allusion which did not provoke any repercussions this time.<sup>50</sup>

Besides such attempts to obliterate the unwanted legacies of the past, the Dominicans selected and appropriated other generally esteemed elements from the history of their order for a somewhat modernised self-presentation. In 1948 they published the small brochure, *Wat is een Dominicaan?* The initiator of this publication was Remigius Bruineman (1890-1970), the former prefect of St Dominic's, who had known Pius de Winter personally and had conducted his funeral. The father of de Winter's correspondent Lucas Grollenberg lent his professional support for the brochure's layout and publication, for he owned an advertising agency and was equipped to 'market' the Preachers and their apostolate through the modernised medium of the illustrated brochure.<sup>51</sup> The ambitions of the pre-war brochures stretched no further than show-

<sup>48</sup> Letter of Piet Struik, OP, to the author of this chapter, 28 August 2004.

<sup>49</sup> Monteiro, *Gods Predikers*, 515-519.

<sup>50</sup> It was Stephen Kreijkamp who mentioned van Sante in a lecture entitled 'Law and Conscience' given to the Nijmegen branch of the St Willibrord Vereniging, 21 February 1957 (Berg en Dal, Archive Sint Willebrord: Records of 18 October 1956 to 2 July 1959); see also my article "Clerical Authority and Prophetic Alternatives".

<sup>51</sup> PAOD 2849: Diary of Remigius Bruineman, 55 (1948), 94 (1951).





Conversation between a Dominican and pupils from the minor seminary.  
 [Picture taken from the brochure *Wat is een Dominicaan*, 1948]

ing the buildings of St Dominic's, with captions that lauded their modern comforts, leaving the question why young boys might want to become priests unanswered - it was supposed to be self-evident. In the brochure of 1948, the Dominicans themselves took centre stage, portrayed in action as missionaries, monks, preachers, and professors who devote their time to study and prayer. This combination was depicted as the fruitful basis of their missionary work at home and abroad. The effects of this apostolate are epitomised in three small pictures facing the first page. The first shows a Zulu who, according to the caption, has not remained unaffected by the majesty of Christ. It is the Dominicans, who have braved the dangers of the wilderness to bring the gospel to the heathens, as the second picture illustrates, who have revealed this dignity to him. In the third picture a group of people are sitting listening attentively to a Dominican preaching, as he towers over his audience in his white habit.

On the cover of the brochure a young Dominican is portrayed in the preaching attitude associated with Thomas Aquinas: right hand raised, index and middle finger held in the gesture of *distinguo* that befits the edifying Preacher. A group of young boys listens, apparently to the story that the leaflet tells from the perspective of a youngster. It begins in the present, not surprisingly at a missionary exhibition where

<sup>52</sup> *Wat is een Dominicaan?*, unpagged.

the narrator meets a Dominican, but smoothly moves on to St Dominic's life and the missionary quality of his original ideal. St Dominic is portrayed as both intelligent and obedient to the Pope, who is said to voice the will of God. Grateful for their assistance, the Pope dubs the Dominicans the "true champions of faith", even at peril of their lives, as a list of the most memorable martyrs of the order illustrates. Christian masculinity of a Dominican nature is thus delineated along the lines of bravery, selfless martyrdom, and theological orthodoxy founded on the teachings of St Thomas. His books are equated to the rock on which heresy and unbelief have shattered for centuries, and account for the second epithet bestowed on the Dominicans, "lights of the world" - echoing Jesus's name for the apostles in the Gospel of St Matthew (5: 13-14). When it comes to the history of the Dutch Dominicans, the narrator dives deep into history to talk of the friaries founded during the Middle Ages; the Reformation, after which the Dutch Catholics and their secular and regular priests were forced to practice their faith in secret; and finally the foundation of the friary of Huissen in 1858, where the assembled noviciate provided the seedbed for the future growth of the Dominican community in the Netherlands. This is followed by two pages filled with pictures that highlight the monasticism of several Dominican friaries, including one picture of a group of Dominicans during choral prayer. Only once is the word 'parish' mentioned: "Because the entire world is their parish."<sup>52</sup>

The trajectory for those who aspire to become Dominican is clearly laid out in the brochure, which goes on to address future candidates directly. It starts with the noviciate, where: "You learn to pray and meditate, where you will get to know your weaknesses that need remedy, and your strengths that ought to be further developed. In short: where you will learn to become a saint."<sup>53</sup> After the first, temporary profession, the novice continues his training to become "a champion of faith and receiving the light of the world" at the friary of Zwolle.

For you are not just a religious. You are a Dominican. Every order has its own character. That of the order of the Dominicans is summarised in the character of St Dominic, expressed in two words: Champion - Light. Whereas you continue to mould the religious in yourself by choral prayer and meditation, you are taught in Zwolle and ... Nijmegen how to become a learned bantam-weight.<sup>54</sup>

This would take some six years, successfully rounded off by ordination. After that, the world would provide ample opportunity for missionary activity "in foreign countries, or as itinerant preachers in our own country" which offered all sorts of work, including "modern parochial work". The brochure ends as it began, with a picture of small boys in scout uniforms listening to a young Dominican who grasps their attention with his pointed index finger, although now on the back of the leaflet we see a somewhat larger group of boys than on the front cover, implying that the story has attracted more listeners.

The answer to the question 'What is a Dominican' was self-evident: a hero in the name of Christ, a man who feared nothing, who was willing to sacrifice everything in

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

order to bring the faith to the entire world, which he could consider to be his parish. What was left unsaid was that over two-thirds of the Dutch Dominicans actually worked in parishes in the Netherlands and its dominions, and while the praises were sung of the missionary origins and character of the order, the brochure devotes little attention to the actual activities of the Preachers in their missions. In fact, the Dominicans did not consider them the preferred postings in the Dutch province because there they had to work in parishes that forced them to be men of the Church. Instead, the brochure moulded the Dominicans into monastic, militant and missionary men of God, excluding the historical development of the Dutch province as a province of parishes.

## CONCLUSION

Religious institutions such as the order of the Dominicans do not have a collective memory; they create it. Conceptions of masculinity were central to the *Erinnerungspraxis* of the Dutch Dominicans. Until the 1920s they profiled themselves confidently as men of their times within the Dutch Catholic community, ever protective of the patriarchal structure of clerical authority. The re-monasticisation of Dominican identity, instigated at the international level of the order in the 1850s, was instrumentalised by the Dutch members to proclaim their superiority to the secular clergy. They were convinced that the monastic discipline to which they were subjected better qualified them for an effective apostolate. By separating their identity as Dominicans from their function as parish priests, they were able to reconcile the monastic and clerical aspects of their identity.

By the 1920s, however, their position as priests religious working in parochial pastorates became particularly problematic. Internationally, they were the odd ones out in their own order, which considered parochial responsibilities a necessary evil rather than a proper Dominican concern, and proved increasingly ignorant of the parochial duties of the majority of its Dutch brethren. In the Netherlands, the Dominicans were confronted by the anticlericalism of young, educated Catholic men, who defied the patriarchal power of the priesthood with their vital and virile forms of Catholic engagement. The representatives of older generations now in charge of the Dutch province stuck with the familiar patriarchal repertoire of clerical authority, while emphasising the monastic dimensions of Dominican identity as a healthy check on the busy parish life that most of them led. Younger brothers had greater difficulties reconciling *homo Dei* with *homo Ecclesiae*. For some, like van Sante, there was an unbridgeable gulf between them. In his opinion, men of the Church represented the complacent Catholicism of bourgeois culture, to be contrasted with the authentic evangelical zeal displayed by men of God.<sup>55</sup> Others, like de Winter and Grolenberg, did not consider the distinction between *homo Dei* and *homo Ecclesiae* to be irreconcilable. Their views were echoed in the brochure of 1948 that explained what a Dominican was to potential recruits.

<sup>55</sup> For the tendency to contrast clerical masculinity with what was considered to be bourgeois manliness, see Yvonne Maria Werner's chapter in this volume.

Attempts to square both forms of Christian masculinity can be traced in the practices of memory common to these prominent priests religious in the Netherlands. Different emphases in these practices can to be related to particular generations or groups. Moreover, an analysis of the *Erinnerungspraxis* of the Dutch Dominicans reveals the continuous selection and appropriation of the main ingredients of their identity, action, and contemplation. The van Sante affair illustrates that this process also entailed intentional neglect and obliteration from memory. The experience of war threw into relief the exceptionality of the Christian masculinity embodied by the secular and regular clergy. No wonder, then, that right after the war, the Preachers saw fit to explain to a new generation that they in fact personified a mobile, militant, and monastic masculinity in the name of God.



# THE MAN IN THE CLERGYMAN

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## SWEDISH PRIEST OBITUARIES, 1905-1937

ANNA PRESTJAN

### MAN AND CHRISTIAN

A priest is the personification of a Christian man, or at least in Sweden he was until 1958, when female ordination was introduced to the Church of Sweden, and women were allowed to serve God and his flock in the same way as men.<sup>1</sup> Yet in the first decades of the twentieth century, Christian manliness was seen as subordinate to other masculinities, which makes it an ideal starting point for the work presented in this chapter. Changes in conceptions of masculinity and concurrent changes in the position, role, and function of church and religion in Swedish society conspired to make the combination of Christianity and modern masculinity difficult. The Christian man risked appearing less manly than other men.

The complex of problems regarding manliness and Christianity has been linked to changes at different levels of society at the turn of the twentieth century. The relation between 'masculinity' and 'femininity' underwent a fundamental shift, as did the position of the churches and religion in society, and these changes influenced conceptions of masculinity. Several historians have pointed out that what were thought of as Christian values and qualities no longer corresponded with notions of what was manly. According to the British Church historian Jeremy Gregory, the incidence of religious life guides for men in the eighteenth century indicates that religiosity was an important element of British manliness before the 1830s, but that this changed in the nineteenth century, when the religious overtones disappeared from this kind of literature.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For women priests in the Church of Sweden, see Sandahl, *Kyrklig splittring*.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory, "Homo Religiosus", 85-90, 109.

Which qualities are generally thought ‘Christian’, and which ‘manly’? In his monograph on Christian manliness, the British linguist and literary historian Norman Vance discusses the differences between what can be characterised as secular masculinity and the Christian character. An active, physical, strong, robust, heroic, militant, and tough man, with the power to act and the ability to determine his own fortune represents secular masculinity. This secular masculine ideal was in glaring contrast to what Vance describes as Christian virtues - patience, self-denial, confidence, restraint, and, especially for priests, the disavowal of worldly pleasures and enjoyments.<sup>3</sup> The Australian historian Anne O’Brien has studied how the British clergy in the Australian colonies handled nineteenth-century ideas of the religious man as feminised, and how different strategies were used to make Australian men interested in the church and religion. She shows that the traditional, Australian male type, the Lone Hand, was a macho cliché, glorifying independence, physical strength, practical knowledge, and frankness, and uninhibited when it came to women, gambling, and alcohol. This ‘masculinism’, to use O’Brien’s term, stands in contrast to the manliness of the priest, who was expected to be all the things that the Lone Hand was not.<sup>4</sup> According to the American theologian Evelyn Kirkley, manliness in the US at much the same time was associated with strength, vitality, virility, and mental freedom. This, Kirkley continues, was difficult to combine with a religiosity connected to femininity, weakness, sentimentality, irrationality, and ‘mental castration’.<sup>5</sup> The British historians Laura Lauer and Sean Gill have come to similar conclusions. Lauer identifies physical strength and homosociality as distinguishing late nineteenth-century masculinity, while spirituality, domesticity, and the repudiation of violence were not seen as masculine.<sup>6</sup> Gill points out that the Christian ideals of gentleness, lovingness, and humility could not be combined with a middle-class man’s place in modern, secular society: to be rational, determined, and bent on profit.<sup>7</sup> The project on Christian manliness that resulted in the present volume partly confirms this opposition of Christianity and manliness.

It is hard to miss the stereotypes: virile, secular manliness, distinguished for its autonomy, corporality, activity, and pragmatism, in contrast to Christian manliness, characterised by confidence, passivity, piety, sensitivity, gentleness, and weakness. It has to be pointed out that the difference between secular and Christian masculinity presented here is a cumulative picture based on existing research in which it is generally accepted that ideas of masculinity changed in the nineteenth century, which by the end of that century gave rise to problems in combining masculinity with Christianity. Christian virtues were seen as passive, while tenderness and compassion were linked to sentimentality, in contrast to rationality and sense. Mildness and humility were distinguished from supposedly manly characteristics such as aggressiveness,

<sup>3</sup> Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, “Introduction” and 10-17. Self-control as a quality is not solely a Christian ideal, of course.

<sup>4</sup> O’Brien, “A Church Full of Men”. The adjective macho is defined as “ostentatiously or notably manly or virile; assertively masculine or tough; producing an impression of manliness or toughness” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://dictionary.oed.com/>, s.v. ‘macho’, accessed 29 April 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Kirkley, “Is It Manly to Be Christian?”.

<sup>6</sup> Lauer, “Soul-saving Partnerships and Pacifist Soldiers”, esp. 198, 205.

<sup>7</sup> Gill, “Ecce Homo”, 166, 170.



drive, and high-handedness; when it came to commitment and interest in ordinary life, Christian spirituality, understood as an indifference to worldly matters, acquired negative connotations. Christian values, then, could be understood as the opposite to modern masculinity.

## BODY OR SOUL? STRATEGIES FOR MASCULINISATION

Christian manliness is a concept that necessarily comprises 'Christian' and 'manly'. The complex of problems surrounding Christian manliness is that since the nineteenth century, these two attributes have been thought incompatible. The focal point of this discussion is that the modern, secular concept of manhood has been associated with the public sphere, and to politics, social activities, rationality, and self-determination, while Christian values have on the contrary been associated with the home, the household, and things private, passive, and emotional - that is, the feminine. In the context of the central hypothesis of the project presented here - that the feminisation of religion led to strivings for (re)masculinisation - masculinisation should be understood as a goal, a striving to engage men for the sake of the Church, to re-establish the Christian faith as a central factor in society, and to restore the questioned masculinity of the Christian faith and lifestyle.

In my study, I have analysed masculinising strategies amongst priests in the Church of Sweden, who ran the risk of being seen as less manly than other men. How did they cope with this, given that as priests they were Christian men personified? Previous research on Christian manliness has mainly been concerned with so-called muscular Christianity, whose advocates tried to combine physical activity and Christian faith. Here masculinisation appears as what Tjeder has called 'musculinisation'<sup>8</sup>, that is, an attempt to combine Christian faith and values with the new, more physical ideals of manliness. The British-American phenomenon of muscular Christianity is in many ways the archetype.<sup>9</sup> Yet as is shown elsewhere in this volume, there were other ways to construct Christian manliness that did not find physical, or even worldly, expression.

I see clear a distinction between two types of strategy for Christian manliness. The first calls for the qualities and values thought masculine to be *added* to the Christian character - 'a Christian, but what is more, a man'. This Christian man is very much a Christian, but despite that he is also a muscular sportsman, a keen hunter, or a veritable Esau with a firm handshake. This strategy involves admitting that the connection between manliness and Christianity is problematic, and not readily resolved; indeed, the very ambition to combine them confirms that the two are conceived of as essentially distinct. The second type of strategy seeks to *unit* the prevailing ideals of masculinity and Christian virtues, while the latter are masculinised and described as truly manly virtues. Christian qualities, ideals, and values are, as Olaf Blaschke puts

<sup>8</sup> Tjeder, "Det manliggörandet tvivlet", 100.

<sup>9</sup> Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, 3; Kimmel, "The Contemporary 'Crisis' of Masculinity", passim; see also Prestjjan, "Christian Social Reform Work"; and Id., "En korsfäst främling på jorden?"

it, 'decoded' to correspond with secular masculinity,<sup>10</sup> and are interpreted as manly according to the device 'a Christian, and *therefore* a man'. In this way, confidence can be decoded from unmanly passivity into manly endurance; prayer and love can be decoded from unmanly sentimentality and weakness into the manly courage to stand up for the Christian faith and defend the church's position in society. It becomes an expression of manly bravery to dare to be a Christian at a time when the Christian faith is associated with feminine sentimentality, passivity, and humbleness.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the differences between the two types of strategy can be explained in a more simple way. To turn manly virtues into Christian ones by applying them to a Christian man or to Christian attitudes is, as I see it, different from transforming Christian virtues into manly ones by claiming that they represent true manliness. Be that as it may, in both cases the prevailing norms for masculinity and femininity are accepted and adopted, firmly linked to certain values, characteristics, and activities.

### CLERICAL MANLINESS, 1903-1937

In broadening my research on clerical manliness in the Church of Sweden in the early twentieth century, my choice fell on the clergy as men, and on their supposed specific masculinity; hence the use of the term 'clerical manliness'. The key figure studied was Erik E:son Hammar (1871-1943), a parish priest in northern Sweden, whose beliefs, and in particular his efforts in the field of alcoholism treatment, are speaking examples of a possible way to Christian manliness. He was the instigator of an ambitious project designed to help alcoholic men and their families by resettling them in 'colonies' that were also intended to serve as springboards for more extensive social reforms based on Christian principles.<sup>12</sup> Hammar's notions of how to be both a priest and a man at one and the same time were clearly affected by contemporary ideas of manliness. In his unpublished memories, he describes himself as a man of action, a strenuous man who is not satisfied with discussions, theories, and statements of principle; a man who dares to face contemporary social problems, and tries to solve them in his own way. Physical strength, competence, and courage are crucial qualities for Hammar's notion of the state of man, as both his social programme for alcoholics and his own way of life bore out.

In the event, this was to prove difficult to combine with his clerical duties, not to mention the problems he had reconciling his views with the prevalent ideas in the Church of Sweden. Not that commitment to social reforms was unacceptable in the Church of Sweden; far from it. The stumbling-block was instead the general ambivalence about the extent to which social commitment should be realised in the individual clergyman's actions. A very old idea that a priest, being a man of God, had to distance himself from the lifestyle of ordinary men still held good. There was

<sup>10</sup> See Olaf Blaschke's chapter in this volume; see also Blaschke, "Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus", 23, 44, 50.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, Alexander Maurits's study of the masculinity ideals of the Swedish bishop Wilhelm Flensburg (1819-1897), "Treståndsläran och den lutherske prästmännan".

<sup>12</sup> Prestjan, "Christian Social Reform Work", 22-30; Id., *Att bota en drinkare*.

also the question of time. Indeed, Hammar himself had difficulties sharing his time between his duties as a priest and his social work, even if he tried to live up to an ideal of Christian masculinity that combined Christian virtues with contemporary, more ‘muscular’ ideals of manhood. In many ways he personified the first of the two strategies presented above, for he wanted to bridge the gaps between the spiritual and the worldly, and to combine piety with physical activity and a willingness to act.

By relating Hammar’s views and actions to contemporary understandings of clerical manliness, the idea of priesthood in the Church of Sweden is brought into focus, along with the different approaches to handling the problem of Christian manliness. One fruitful approach is to look at obituaries of clergymen who served in the same dioceses and the same time as Hammar. I have thus analysed these tributes in order to establish the qualities, virtues, and characters that were most common when contemporaries described Hammar’s peers. These short texts amount to short biographies, written by fellow clergymen on behalf of the bishop;<sup>13</sup> they are thus written by clergymen for other clergymen (and for the late clergyman’s family). Even though masculinity is not an explicit theme, they lend themselves to a gendered interpretation, for whatever is written about the priest is at the same time said of the man. Although these obituaries can be said to reflect the views and opinions of individuals, the genre was bound by strong traditions, and the contents thus are broadly determined more by prevalent traditions than by the personal views of the authors. The obituaries are built upon serious and ambitious research, and demonstrate a keen awareness of the pitfalls of biographical writing: truth and reverence must be weighed against each other, as one writer put it in 1933.<sup>14</sup> The texts analysed for this study all share a spoken ambition to draw a careful, multifaceted, and authentic picture of the deceased, both as an individual and as an official. In her thesis on the medical ethos, the Swedish historian Motzi Eklöf has used physicians’ obituaries as ‘explicit testimonies of what is seen as honourable and ideal in the medical profession’. Only a few were honoured in this way - the ones who were thought the most prominent and worthy. Eklöf uses the texts to pin down current ideals of the physician.<sup>15</sup> However, when it comes to the clergy, obituaries were written for all priests in a diocese who had died since the last diocesan council, held each sixth year, so it was not only the exemplary or well-known priests who were memorialised. However, although the biographies thus cannot be said to depict ideal clerical manliness in the same, unambiguous way, the material still says something about what was seen as important when characterising clergymen in the early twentieth century.

I have analysed 220 texts, written by seven authors between 1905 and 1937<sup>16</sup>, focussing on the interior and exterior characteristics that are specified in the texts.

<sup>13</sup> Bexell, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, VII, 33.

<sup>14</sup> Löfvenmark, *De hädangångna*, 3-4; Montån, *Vittnen och ordets tjänare*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Eklöf, *Läkarens ethos*, 269-270.

<sup>16</sup> Boström, “Minnestal öfver hädangångne ämbetsbröder”; Arbman, “Minnesord öfver hädangångna ämbetsbröder”; Åkerberg, “Minnestal öfver hädangångna ämbetsbröder”; Palmquist, “Minnestal öfver hädangångna ämbetsbröder”, 97-104; Löfvenmark, *De hädangångna*; Garpe, *In memoriam. Ord om de hemgångna vid Västerås stifts prästmöte 1925, 1931 & 1937*; Montån, *Vittnen och ordets tjänare*.

The information offered about the priests is both extensive and varied. The descriptive terms or adjectives were sorted into groups, defined as either 'Christian' or 'manly' in line with the findings discussed in the literature.<sup>17</sup> There are a number of objections to this method, of course. The main obstacle is that the bulk of the literature refers to the Anglo-American context, which, while it has been confirmed for a Swedish milieu, does not necessarily make for direct parallels with the Swedish experience. Second, the division of the various synonyms according to attribute is my own, and like all categorisations of this kind can be said to be arbitrary. Third, working with types is always open to discussion. It should be noted that this is only one of a number of possible ways of handling the material, and the purpose is not to define and fix what constituted 'clerical manliness', but instead to establish the broad contours of Christian manliness in this period.

#### MANLY QUALITIES

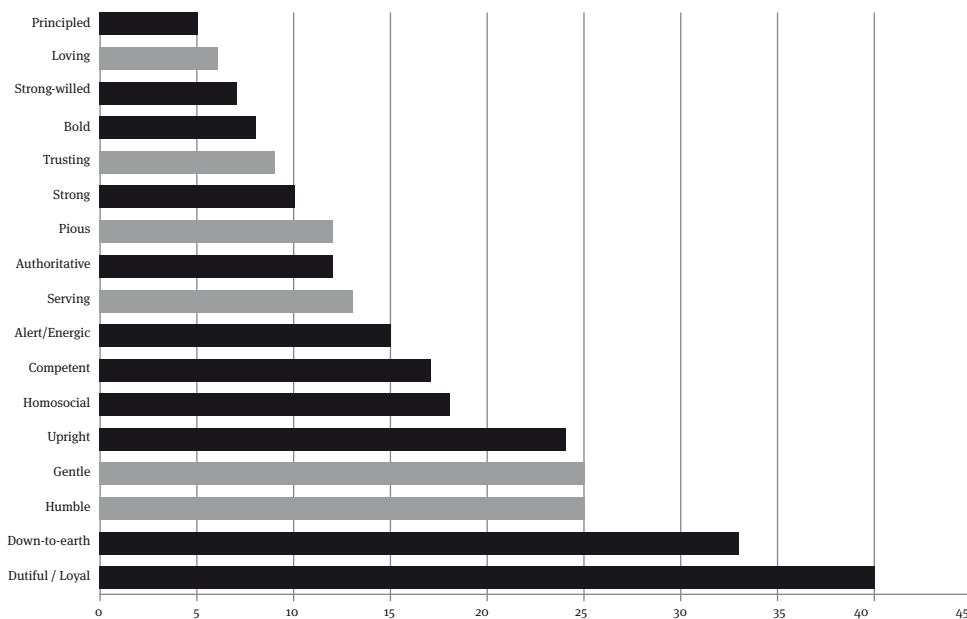
- dutiful and loyal (strenuous, orderly, punctual, careful, zealous, diligent, untiring, serious)
- down-to-earth (natural, undisguised, popular, frank, humorous, playful)
- upright and honest (honourable, reliable, confidence-inspiring, faithful, solid)
- (homo)social (hospitable, winning, pleasant, well-liked, charming, friendly)
- competent (practical, dynamic, resourceful, enterprising, energetic)
- authoritative (practical, dynamic, resourceful, enterprising, energetic)
- alert and energetic (witty, direct, lively, cheerful)
- strong (sturdy)
- strong-willed (obstinate, goal-oriented, convinced, determined, resolute, persistent, persevering)
- bold (fearless, intrepid)
- principled and strong in character

#### CHRISTIAN QUALITIES

- humble (simple, modest, unaffected)
- gentle (calm, quiet, delightful, harmonious, reserved, considerate)
- serving (helpful, unselfish, generous, accommodating, obliging)
- pious (piousness, devoutness)
- trusting (self-possessed, patient, enduring, contented, convinced, composed)
- loving (tender, charitable, benign)

With this data, it becomes possible to compare the frequency with which specific qualities characterised in earlier research as 'manly' or 'Christian' occur in the descriptions of the priests commemorated in obituaries.

<sup>17</sup> Some qualities used to describe the priests' personalities defy definition as 'Christian' or 'manly'. These 'neutral' adjectives, such as 'intelligent', 'happy', and 'noble', have here been passed over in silence.



Occurrence of 'manly' and 'Christian' qualities in % in 220 remembrance texts, 1905-1937

■ Christian  
 ■ Manly

Evidently the virtues traditionally described as 'Christian', and thus generally expected of a clergyman (humble, gentle, serving, pious, trusting, loving) are *not* the qualities predominantly used to characterise the priests in the obituaries, whereas virtues supposed to be 'manly' (dutiful, upright, homosocial, competent) are both more numerous and more frequently used. By contrast, some of the expected priestly virtues, such as piety and love, are *seldom* used in the characterisations of the deceased clergymen, to the extent that the qualities associated with the contemporary image of manliness are emphasised at the expense of Christian virtues. This may show that it was felt important to highlight the fact that the priest was first of all a man.<sup>18</sup> Another way to stress the priests' inner, original masculinity is to describe with all its contradictions the manly struggle with unbefitting, negative manliness - that is, the idea of the undesirable features of original and natural masculinity that should be in evidence, but must be disciplined and controlled: "... not even this man, as harmonious as he appeared, could escape serious battles with his own nature. Inside he housed a thunderstorm, a violent temper, which someone unaware of the nurturing grace of God never should have thought of him."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> It can be argued that some of these qualities were seen as so obvious, that there was no need in pointing them out, except when they were particularly prominent. This is contradicted by the fact that it is sometimes mentioned that a clergyman is more or less religious.

<sup>19</sup> Arbman, "Minnesord", 135. All obituaries quoted in my translation.

One priest showed a propensity to be a pompous bully, too fond of correcting others, and possessed of an almost crushing sense of self-worth. With utmost self-control and the help of God's disciplining grace, his temperament was moderated, and his persistent error could be conquered.<sup>20</sup> Sometimes, attention is called to a priest's masculinity by contrasting a harsh exterior to weakness, tenderness, and kindness inside: "He was a man of rapturous, almost brutal force ... he looked as if he was teeming with violence ... But this strong nature had both a manly openness, so that everyone could feel secure with him, and a sensitive weakness."<sup>21</sup> "... sharp harshness and suppressed force. ... he was the first in blunt candour, but this found its match in the open goodness of his heart."<sup>22</sup> The effect is the same. The priests' true and original masculinity is spelled out, which successfully control leads to specifically Christian manliness, or to its combination with virtues more appropriate for a priest.

These findings are borne out by the ideas of Ernst Lönegren (1862-1973), who was bishop of Härnösand in the period in question. In his writing, Lönegren characterises the ideal clergyman as a man engaged in worldly matters, but not without safeguarding his specific identity as a priest. Lönegren, who was chairman of the board of the Swedish Deaconess' Association, was himself very engaged in Christian social work, mainly expressed in his deep commitment to Christian social service.<sup>23</sup> He opposed the dualism that sought to separate the worldly from the spiritual, which he argued was contrary to the Lutheran ethos and could only limit pastoral work.<sup>24</sup> In a pastoral letter to the priests of his diocese in 1909, he advocated the widening of their priestly duties to include a more applied Christianity. Referring to the criticism of the Church of Sweden for ignoring the social issues of the day, he stressed the importance of priestly commitment to social reform work.<sup>25</sup> Lönegren's message to the clergy of his diocese was that a priest's calling could no longer be restricted to the spiritual sphere - even if he never failed to point out that the traditional priestly duties were still to be given priority. In 1923, he even warned of the dangers following the growing social commitment of the church, which added to the priests' workload and might lead to "concessions to a pushy worldly spirit". Lönegren stressed the importance of *balance*: "It appears to us that the type of priest most appealing and harmonious, and closest to the ideal [of a good priest], is he who stands safe above worldly concerns and who is strong in faith, with the roots of his soul and spirit in the Gospel, and thus, marked by the cross, a stranger on earth, but at the same time possessed of the wonderful, holy power that gives life and spirit to everything that comes near to it."<sup>26</sup> The ideal clergyman, according to Lönegren, should thus be firmly rooted in the Christian faith and spiritual life, wary of "infatuated sentimentality" and admiration, but still striving to be spiritually superior both relative to his parish and to the profane world as a whole. It was the duty of the clergyman to commit to both a spiritual and a worldly

<sup>20</sup> Boström, "Minnestal", 116.

<sup>21</sup> Arbman, "Minnesord", 115-116.

<sup>22</sup> Garpe, *In memoriam 1937*, 43.

<sup>23</sup> "Ernst Lönegren", 171-172.

<sup>24</sup> Lönegren, *Mot målet*, 5-6; Id., "Centralt och periferiskt".

<sup>25</sup> Id., *Till Härnösands stifts prästerskap!*, 66.

<sup>26</sup> Id., "Centralt och periferiskt", 55-56.

life, while “the carrying out the pastoral duties of his office as a priest should never be subordinated to tasks of secondary importance”.<sup>27</sup>

Much like Lönegren’s pastoral letters, the obituaries discussed here strive to show the priests striking a *balance* between spiritual and worldly concerns, however much more attention is paid to their worldly qualities than their spiritual virtues. The ambition here seems to be to show that the priests were not alienated from worldly realities, but were firmly anchored in the society of their time. Another obvious feature of these descriptions is the many references to gender; it is clearly pointed out that the clergyman in question was really a man. In considering masculinity, the Swedish historian Anna Hilborn has remarked on the importance of the fact that after the Reformation a priest was commonly assumed to be married, and thus could be defined as a man amongst men because of his relationship to the other sex.<sup>28</sup> Under these circumstances, the best way to make a point of a priest’s manliness would be to emphasise his role as a husband and father, and unsurprisingly this kind of information is given in about a third of the texts. Similarly, there are comments on the priests’ physique and appearance in a third of the texts, with an emphasis on bodily, masculine features accentuated in a positive way: tall, vigorous, big, fit, healthy, with sharp and noble features, and great attention to hair, be it bushy hair or eyebrows or an impressive moustache or beard. Another way to describe him as a man is point to his down-to-earth character and the ordinariness of his worldly pursuits: hunting, fishing, music, sports, botany, agriculture, and enjoying good company. A third of the priest are depicted in positive tones as popular, natural, approachable, open-minded, and affably humorous, whereas it is counted a shortcoming to be stiff, strict, insensitive, and distant. Several of the priests are also explicitly mentioned as *manly*, distinguished for their ‘manly openness’, ‘manly nature’, ‘manly beauty and power’, or ‘manly spirit’.<sup>29</sup>

The physical strength, authority, power and the like ascribed to these clergymen are characteristics that coincide with the hegemonic ideals of masculinity in contemporary society. Yet to be a man is not enough. Christian manliness, unavoidably, is composed of both Christian and manly features, in accordance with the *balance* bishop Lönegren was at pains to establish. Thus the obituaries have ways not only of stressing manliness, but *Christian* manliness. David Tjeder points out elsewhere in this volume just how often Christian men are surprisingly explicit and almost ostentatious about their religious crises, and suggests that this is a way to turn men’s Christian faith into something masculine; by showing how these serious crises of faith were overcome, and how in the end they won the fight to keep the faith, Christian men could demonstrate their manly characters, and Christian faith could thus be a manly victory. The fight for faith can also take other forms, as the Swedish church historian Alexander Maurits has established by examining the writings of the Swedish bishop Wilhelm Flensburg: Flensburg exhorted his clergy to demonstrate manly courage and strength in openly confessing the Christian faith at a time when the church and reli-

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 55, 57, 62 (quote from 57).

<sup>28</sup> Hilborn, “Prästerskap och manlighet”.

<sup>29</sup> Arbman, “Minnesord”, 115-117, 123, 130; Palmquist, “Minnestal”, 118.



gion were being called in question.<sup>30</sup> However, the variations on the idea of fighting for their faith is not a prominent theme in the obituaries, in which the focus is on a very different kind of fight: the calm enduring of difficulties and sufferings in everyday life by priests who with their 'quiet and kindly trust in God' bore their crosses bravely through physical suffering, misfortune, poverty, and grief. There is the priest who patiently suffered the loss of his wife and seven children without complaining over God's will; the priest whose life was 'a long and strenuous road of suffering' and was said to have battled on 'bravely and persistently' without complaint, in spite of poverty, lack of promotion, constant sickness, the early loss of a young wife, and the tragedy of having to leave his new-born son to be fostered; the priest, a father of ten, who endured total paralysis for the last ten years of his life without murmur, in the 'patience, hope and trust in the Father'; and the priest who died something of a martyr's death, for travelling under arrest to his court martial for refusing to do military service in 1914, he caught the pneumonia that would kill him shortly after his almost immediate release. This kind of humble trust and patience is a reoccurring theme in the obituaries, yet shows not the slightest link with the hegemonic construction of middle-class masculinity of the day. What it does relate to, however, is bishop Lönegren's opening lecture to a meeting of Nordic bishops in 1930, in which he specifically addressed to priests-to-be, praising what he describes as Evangelical asceticism as a means to achieve soundness, depth, and stringency by combining 'childish trust and manly determination to fight'. Too often, Lönegren says, physical training is accorded too much importance, while ascetic privation is seen as unwarranted constraint. Instead, in the sacrifice of social habits, other people's approval, and one's own affections Lönegren sees the privation, self-sacrificing, and endurance of a manly fight against the weaknesses of the day: moral erosion, feebleness, selfishness, spiritual convenience, pleasure-seeking, self-assertion, individualism, worldliness, and fragility. Lönegren's arguments in favour of privation, described as keen fight calling for force and a steady hand, are that it leads to realism, practical experience, and clear-sightedness.<sup>31</sup>

Certainly it is the case that the image of clerical manliness in the obituaries is conjured up by manly virtues such as strength, power, and courage, and these kinds of characteristics are more common than the expected, traditional Christian virtues such as trust and love. Yet what is the meaning of 'courage' and 'strength'? Very often they are used to depict a kind of inner strength that goes beyond common, masculine self-discipline, founded in the Christian faith rather than in a 'manly' strong character, in the fight to keep the Christian faith despite all the odds, a struggle fought with steadfast trust as the only weapon. In doing so, the traditionally Christian virtues of trust and humility, which in the middle-class discourse had been ascribed to women, were re-coded as manly characteristics, as was the case when Lönegren tries to reframe unmanly asceticism as manly toughness.

<sup>30</sup> Maurits, "Treståndsläran och den lutherske prästmannen", 71-73, 78, 81-82.

<sup>31</sup> Lönegren, "Evangelisk askes". According to Lönegren, privation is 'spiritual training' (Ibid., 19). The *Swedish Nationalencyklopedin* defines privation in the same way, as different kinds of mental training and "harsh physical restraint to win inner concentration" (<http://www.ne.se>, accessed 1 June 2006). Central to both is the idea of a connection between body and soul, where the body is an obstacle to spiritual life, but at the same time can be a means to reach a higher spiritual level.

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## CONCLUSIONS

Is there any agreement on what good clerical manliness might be to be found in the obituaries discussed here? If so, what distinguished it from other contemporary masculinities? Even if the obituaries vary according to the author, they share a characterisation of clergymen not only as priests and officials but also as individuals. Clearly it was of great importance to call attention to the fact that the clergyman had worldly interests and commitments over and above his spiritual life and duties. In the obituaries, it is not the expected Christian virtues that are the most common, but rather contemporary, general masculine ideals such as vigour, loyalty, decency, and ability. Similarly, the obituarists were eager to describe their subjects as down-to-earth, with all that means in terms of being popular, easy-going, humorous, and natural, underscoring the point that a clergyman should not shun worldly matters, but should have his feet on the ground, a man amongst other men.

The obituaries show that clerical manliness was constructed in a way that echoes contemporary, secular masculine ideals. The priest was a priest, but he was also a man, with a bushy moustache, worldly interests, the acceptance of his fellow men in homosocial comradeship, and busy about perhaps his most important manly duties: to be industrious and capable. A humble and mild clergyman could be masculine as well if he demonstrated physical strength or a hot temper, duly curbed; a passive virtue such as trust could be balanced by more active qualities such as initiative and rationality. In order to separate specifically priestly manliness from other masculinities, common manly qualities and traditional Christian values had to be carefully mixed - witness Bishop Lönegren's description of the ideal balance between the spiritual and the profane. In Lönegren's writings, we find yet another strategy to mark clerical manliness, for he re-codes supposedly manly virtues as Christian virtues so that Christian ascetics, privation, and self-sacrifice are described as manly vigour, hardiness, and fight. Elsewhere in this volume Olaf Blaschke describes the same strategy employed by the church authorities in Germany, and much used by the Jesuits in their efforts to demonstrate the masculine character of the Christian virtues; David Tjeder has come to a similar conclusion in his analysis of 'man-making crises of faith'; while Alexander Maurits shows how it was said to be brave to risk standing up for one's Christian faith. In the obituaries, crises of faith are rare, but instead we find another kind of struggle - the silent, inner fight to withstand the trials and tribulations of life, armed only with steadfastness and trust.

Taking my lead from Blaschke's findings, I identify two distinct strategies for Christian manliness. The first is to bring what are seen as manly virtues to the Christian man; to *combine* the manly with the Christian. The second is to *unite* the Christian and the manly by defining Christian virtues as truly manly one, and vice versa. The obituaries generally display the first type of strategy, for they set out to apply manliness to the clergyman and by doing so fashion a Christian manliness - 'a Christian, but what is more, a man'. Yet equally the obituaries clearly wish to decode Christian virtues as masculine ones, and hence Christian virtues such as trust and patience are accentuated in relation to physical and emotional suffering, but this quietly borne suffering is decoded as heroism, strength, and nerve. They also offer examples of another kind of manly strength of character, the somewhat paradoxical struggle to

overcome an inner, eruptive, original manliness - under the cassock is a hairy chest - epitomising the return to the first strategy, and a surrender to a contemporary, hegemonic masculinity that is, in a way, final.

To conclude, clerical manliness was characterised by a combination of contemporary, hegemonic, masculine ideals and specific Christian values and principles. In the material analysed the uniformity of the ideal of priestly manliness stretches no further than a balanced mixture of brawny powerhouse and peaceful clergyman, where manly strength and power was first and foremost demonstrated by the courage to appear as a Christian man, expressing qualities that in the eyes of many contemporaries were seen as unmanly.

# CRISES OF FAITH AND THE MAKING OF CHRISTIAN MASCULINITIES AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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DAVID TJEDER

In the 1920s, Nathan Söderblom's position as the leader of the Church of Sweden was unquestionable. Indeed, his influence reached far beyond Sweden's borders. Not only was he the Archbishop of the Church of Sweden; his struggle for peace during the First World War and his efforts to bring together the European churches in an ecumenical understanding were widely acclaimed and had already brought him international renown in the 1910s.<sup>1</sup> The gigantic international ecumenical conference in Stockholm in 1925 can be said to have been his crowning achievement.<sup>2</sup> True, some still regarded his theology as dangerously radical, and many within the Church of Sweden were critical. But there can be no doubt that he possessed an exceptionally strong Christian authority.

The year after the ecumenical conference in Stockholm, Uppsala University's Christian Student Association had cause to celebrate. Founded in 1901, the organisation had now reached its quarter-century and decided to publish an anthology celebrating its history. It is hardly surprising that the editors chose to contact the Archbishop to ask him to contribute to the volume, or that Söderblom's text was placed at the very beginning of the resultant book.

All the more startling, then, was the tenor of Söderblom's largely autobiographical text. Looking back to his days as a student of theology in the 1880s and early 1890s, Söderblom wrote of the enormous problems of faith and the religious doubts that had befallen him and other students. New scholarship, known by the somewhat misleading name of biblical criticism, changed the state of knowledge particularly about parts of the Old Testament. The German biblical scholar Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) was the most influential scholar in this field, not least with his *Prolegome-*

<sup>1</sup> Karlström, *Kristna samförståndssträvanden*.

<sup>2</sup> Sundkler, *Nathan Söderblom*, ch. 8.

*na zur Geschichte Israels* (1883).<sup>3</sup> Although Wellhausen was far from the first scholar to call the absolute truths of the Bible into question, his interpretations were more radical, and, crucially, it was with him the field of biblical criticism became known to a much wider audience.<sup>4</sup> Horrified students now learned that the Prophet Isaiah had not actually written the entire Book of Isaiah, that the Prophet Daniel had never existed, and that the Pentateuch had not been written in the same order as the books were arranged in the Old Testament. This new knowledge was not taught by the theologians at Uppsala University, but nevertheless spread among the students. It led to intellectual and emotional problems on a massive scale, as Söderblom recalled.

At the time that Söderblom wrote his memoir, biblical criticism had become an integral part of theological training. Students' crises of faith were no longer the same as they had been in the 1880s and 1890s, according to Söderblom. He contrasted his own generation of students, who had had to live through intense agonies, with the current generation:

Behind these theological and exegetical studies lay a religious passion that our times can hardly imagine. We wrestled with the fundamental problem ... Nobody gave us any clarity, answers, or guidance. We were reduced to using prayer, to the lonely prayerful struggle with God. ... for us, a holy gravity lay over these issues concerning the nature and history of the Bible. Luther speaks of *angustiae et terrores conscientiae* [the anxiety and pains of conscience], and denies credit and authority to the dreamers in the congregation, since they knew nothing of such trials and tribulations. Several of us of my generation have sensed something similar. For us, this was not some inherited or easily gained insight, but a revelation from God himself.<sup>5</sup>

There are several ways to read this passage. It can be read realistically and autobiographically as an expression of Nathan Söderblom's most deeply felt thoughts on the subject. Certainly this reading has dominated in the literature. In conjunction with other autobiographical passages, very thinly strewn across the revered archbishop's writings, his words have been read as telling the truth about how biblical criticism caused problems of faith for his young self.<sup>6</sup> I do not deny the validity of these readings. What I do wish to raise, though, are fundamental questions which earlier scholarship left unanswered. *Why* did Söderblom choose to be open about his religious doubts? And in what contexts did he choose to be open-hearted about them? What was the particular *purpose* of the passage cited above? And, not least, what happens when we consider these utterances from a gender perspective?

<sup>3</sup> For a brief presentation of Wellhausen and his work, see Momigliano, "Religious History Without Frontiers", 49-55.

<sup>4</sup> For earlier biblical criticism, see Harrisville and Sundberg, *The Bible in Modern Culture*, 33-154; Howard, *Religion and the Rise of Historicism*, 24-43, 78-102.

<sup>5</sup> Söderblom, "Minnen från ättio- och nittiotalen", 16-17. My translation here *et passim*.

<sup>6</sup> Andrae, *Nathan Söderblom*, 105-109, 113-114; Ehnmark, *Religionsproblemet hos Nathan Söderblom*, 144-150; Estborn, *Under Guds grepp*, 17-21; Holmström, "Nathan Söderbloms självbiografiska"; Karlström, *Kristna samförståndssträvanden*, 144-145; Sundkler, *Nathan Söderblom*, 29-30; Åkerberg, *Omvändelse och kamp*, ch. 3-5, and particularly 112-115, 133-137.

This is important, since it would seem to make little sense for a man of Söderblom's standing to air any problems of faith publicly. Why on earth would he choose so openly to utter things that could be used to diminish his religious authority in the eyes of others? This was not the only occasion Söderblom discussed the qualms and terrors he had felt as a young man, and, as we shall see, he was far from alone in speaking openly and plainly about his doubts. Indeed, several other men wrote in the 1926 anthology of how they had struggled with religious doubts as young men.<sup>7</sup> Men in positions of power and authority - professors of theology, bishops, religious leaders - often invoked their own youthful crises of faith in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> Their words reveal not only that many young men did indeed have a hard time keeping their Christian faith in the face of biblical criticism. They also reveal something profound and hitherto neglected about men's religious authority in the period under scrutiny.

## THE GENDER OF RELIGIOUS CRISES

It would seem, then, that men did not need to feel ashamed that they had nearly lost their faith in their youth. What is more, Söderblom's passages about his crises of faith as a young man were not covered up by those who followed in his path. In 1931, the year of Söderblom's death, a veritable plethora of biographical works was quickly produced by some of his many enthusiastic male followers. These books were laudatory and served to emphasise Söderblom's central position both in Sweden and abroad. One might expect that the men who wrote about Söderblom's life would attempt to hide the fact that his faith had been wavering and uncertain under the pressure of biblical criticism. Actually, quite the contrary is true. Söderblom's enthusiastic disciple Tor Andræ instead devoted several pages to the subject of Söderblom's intense problems in retaining his Christian faith as a theology student at Uppsala University, going into detail on the issue.<sup>9</sup> The priest Olle Nystedt did the same, and quoted the few passages Söderblom had left behind concerning his religious doubts, while noting that "studying theology in those days was not child's play".<sup>10</sup> Nystedt's choice of words serves to emphasise the gravity of Söderblom's experiences. Indeed, the theme of Söderblom's doubts was not even hidden from the officially produced and almost hagiographic volume *Nathan Söderblom in memoriam*, published in the year of Söderblom's death.<sup>11</sup> Further scholarship on Söderblom, not infrequently

<sup>7</sup> Krook, "Idéer och strömningar inom Studentförbundet", 73-74; Stave, "Några minnen från Studentförbundets", 48-50.

<sup>8</sup> See also evidence brought to light by Prestjan, *Präst och karl*, 155-158, although cf. *Ibid.*, 111 where it seems the theme was perhaps not so widespread.

<sup>9</sup> Andræ, *Nathan Söderblom*, 105-109, 113-114.

<sup>10</sup> Nystedt, *Nathan Söderblom*, 36-39, quote at 36.

<sup>11</sup> Aulén, "Den teologiska gärningen", 66.

written in similar hagiographic vein although of much higher academic value, has continued this intense interest in Söderblom's religious crises.<sup>12</sup>

Not only was Söderblom himself explicit about his youthful problems of faith; these troubles were emphasised rather than hidden by those who wanted to laud him posthumously. Yet for what reason? A possible explanation has been offered by Callum Brown, who has analysed how religious men in Britain, and clergymen in particular, were represented in texts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although Brown does not discuss the particular case of Söderblom, his arguments are still pertinent. Referring to the well-known 'feminisation' of Christianity in the nineteenth century, Brown argues that this process led to a disassociation between masculinity and piety. 'Piety' became a strictly female quality, and thus pious men had to combine their feminised piety with masculine qualities. It is in this context that Brown points to the fact that piety "never came easy to the clergy of the evangelical century".<sup>13</sup> Clerical biographies often pointed to the problems these men had had in sustaining their faith, particularly during their university years. Brown argues that: "In this way the weakness of 'holy men' was most publicly paraded. The spiritual turmoil of clergy, even of the most famous and revered, became an obsession of popular religious magazines. They became an obsession too of Victorian fiction ... it was always men, not women, who were afflicted in the Victorian novel ... The best of men, the most Christian 'manly' of men, were being shown to be weak before the Lord."<sup>14</sup> Brown's conclusion is that "Masculine strength and power was constantly being undermined in evangelical discourse".<sup>15</sup>

I would like to invert Brown's argument. The public obsession with men's inner religious turmoil does not reveal the extent to which piety had been feminised, but rather, crises of faith became one of several ways in which piety could be given particularly gendered, *masculine* connotations. During this period, women were believed to be naturally religious. It was thus believed that faith came to women without struggle or critical thought. As the British independent minister John Angell James put it mid century: "It is in the female bosom ... that piety finds a home on earth. The door of woman's heart is often thrown wide open to receive the divine guest, when men refuse an entrance."<sup>16</sup>

Given women's supposedly natural religiosity, religious crises could then be actively construed as gendered: as particular to men, and different from women's ostensibly natural faith. Men, but not women, had to struggle for their faith. And, I would argue, it was this very struggle that made them men. The discourse on men's religious troubles did *not* indicate that men were 'weak before the Lord' or that their masculinity was 'undermined'. Instead, the discourse reinforced a particular form of religious experience - the (intellectual) crisis of faith - as a masculine domain, as

<sup>12</sup> Ehnmark, *Religionsproblemet*, 144-150; Estborn, *Under Guds grepp*, 17-21; Holmström, "Nathan Söderbloms självbiografiska"; Karlström, *Kristna samförståndssträvanden*, 144-145; Sundkler, *Nathan Söderblom*, 29-30; Åkerberg, *Omvändelse och kamp*, ch. 3-5.

<sup>13</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 100; see also Brown in this volume.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.*, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 101-102.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>16</sup> John Angell James, *Female Piety* (London, 1852), quoted in McLeod, *Religion and Society in England*, 159.



something men bravely and with much suffering had to go through. The discourse points not to “feminised piety”, as Brown formulates it, but rather to *masculinised* piety. That the discourse was present in biographies of esteemed religious leaders should lead us to question why these words were set down in the first place. Did the discourse on men’s religious doubts really circumvent and downplay these particular men’s authority? I will reverse the question, and investigate instead the ways in which men’s authority was *reinforced* by the discourse on men’s religious doubts.

Let us consider Söderblom’s autobiographical text. Luther, in Söderblom’s words, “denies credit and authority to the dreamers in the congregation, since they knew not of such trials and tribulations”. Religious *authority* is at stake here. Real authority, a legitimate position of power, can apparently only be granted to those who had lived through intellectual crises of faith. Since theological studies were hermetically sealed to women - the first female student of theology began her studies in 1909 - this meant that the act of studying theology and coming to terms with the inner turmoil caused by biblical criticism was *de facto* a male homosocial arena.<sup>17</sup> It is no coincidence that Söderblom uses the expression “the lonely praying struggle”, and that he prides himself and his generation on having “fought” without any “guidance”. By emphasizing the effort which had gone into reaching a stable faith in God, Söderblom also gave masculine connotations to the act of reading theological works: struggle, independence, autonomy were all intimately connected with the male gender in this period. Apparently it took men to read perilous books. Between the lines, brave young students of theology struggling to keep their faith are set apart from women with their supposedly natural faith.

Söderblom often touched upon the theme of religious authority when he spoke of religious crises, his own and others’. In a sermon given at Uppsala University in 1905, he explained to his audience, many of whom were young male students, that “He who has not fought through a painful and dangerous struggle with traditional religious notions in his own life does not have the same right and authority to judge old or newer forms of theology.”<sup>18</sup> In this obviously autobiographical passage, Söderblom takes his own struggle of faith as the foundation for the authority to judge different schools of theology. Those who criticised Christianity or specific theological schools are denied authority on the basis of their not having lived through crises of faith.

At times, Söderblom put this argument in a more positive turn of phrase. Greeting the theology students upon being nominated professor of theology at Uppsala in 1901, Söderblom congratulated them for choosing such an important and difficult object of study. Instead of shying away from the contemporary problems facing the Church of Sweden, Söderblom described them as an excellent school for how the young men could be turned into real men - and real priests. Explicitly alluding to his own experiences, Söderblom used this opportunity to appear as a serious and conscientious Christian man who had not closed his eyes to biblical criticism or the critique of Christianity; indeed, as a man who had wandered through darkness, but

<sup>17</sup> The first female student of theology in Sweden was Emilia Fogelklou. Hammar, “Kvinnor kräver tillträde till det teologiska samtalet”, 365, 370-373.

<sup>18</sup> Söderblom, “De stackars dödlige”, 35.

had gained strength and authority - masculinity - from the experience. The same should be expected by the students in their future studies, Söderblom explained, but their experience of doubt and crises of faith would in the end give them true theological and Christian authority. The crises were thus not to be shunned. They were rather to be welcomed as a positive challenge:

To be sure, both in study and in work there are difficult crises and narrow gates to pass through, abysses to be crossed where neither experience nor the help of others, but only the wings of faith, can carry us across; and I believe, as did Luther, that he who, shackled, has himself experienced the pangs and agonies of conscience has priestly authority as the worth of his hard-earned salvation and freedom.<sup>19</sup>

The words that the celebrated Archbishop chose to include in his autobiographical text published in 1926 were not extraordinary, then. He had claimed similar things on other occasions, and especially when addressing university students, when he could appear as a mature man, a father figure, before younger men. He seems to have believed that students had something positive to gain from hearing about his crises of faith. Indeed, in more private situations he would almost boast about how he had lived through and overcome the experience of having nearly lost his faith as a young man.<sup>20</sup>

Söderblom also described how the nature of his Christian beliefs was radically transformed by his experience of a crisis of faith. This transformation was intimately connected to gender. To put it bluntly, his faith became manlier. Söderblom described his earlier childhood Christianity as “unhealthy and emotional” and as lacking in “moral power”, and he reacted against this sentimental piety with its “excess of blood and sugar”. His positive understanding of biblical criticism was intimately connected to his rebuttal of this form of piety.<sup>21</sup>

Jesus, too, became manlier, stripped of what Söderblom saw as his former “pietistic femininity”. He was no longer merely the meek suffering man on the cross, but also the harsh preacher, demanding repentance and atonement from believers. By focussing more on the Sermon on the Mount, Söderblom found “a Christ with authority and power, not the sweet Saviour”; his Christianity “was given harsh gravity and moral salinity”.<sup>22</sup> Having had his faith shaken to the core apparently rendered Jesus more masculine. And Jesus’ masculinity helped Söderblom to become manlier - graver, more ‘saline’.

The theme was not peculiar to Söderblom. The notion that religious doubts could lead young men to a useful crisis that would make them manlier was current among other church leaders at this time. To an extent hitherto neglected, the formation of Christian masculinities hinged more on notions of religious crisis than on the

<sup>19</sup> Söderblom, “Till de teologie studerande”, 63.

<sup>20</sup> Uppsala University Library (hereafter UUB), J. A. Eklunds samling (hereafter JAES): Nathan Söderblom to J. A. Eklund, 14 March 1898; quoted in Malmeström, *J. A. Eklund*, 185.

<sup>21</sup> Söderblom, “Kristi församlings väg”, 87-88.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

much-studied efforts to strengthen Christian men's bodies. Two other Swedish theological giants of the period, the bishops Einar Billing and J. A. Eklund, both spoke publicly of the problems of faith they had lived through as young men. Söderblom, Billing, and Eklund were the three single most important church leaders in Sweden at the beginning of the twentieth century. They were admired by a whole generation of younger men, students of theology first among them.

Eklund and Billing both argued that the fact that they had 'survived' periods of crisis made them better religious leaders, and especially better religious leaders of other, younger men. For Billing, the encounter with biblical criticism was a shock. One of his remarks about biblical criticism has been quoted so often as to become a byword among Swedish church historians: "I shall never forget the anguish that this study brought me. It was like an earthquake: everything seemed to cave in under one's feet."<sup>23</sup> Like Söderblom's comments, this has often been read as autobiographical. And of course it is. But there is more to it than that. Billing also described himself as a daring hero who succeeded in surviving the loss of self-control and the inner turmoil of religious doubts. And he, like Söderblom, was revered for his honesty in sharing the story of how he almost lost his faith.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that religious crises could be used discursively to bolster men's religious authority and masculinity leads us to a larger question. If crises could be described in such a way that Christian men appeared as manly, then the much-studied tradition of 'muscular Christianity' was not the only or the most important way in which Christian men pursued the quest of manlier Christianity at the turn of the twentieth century. Indeed, I believe that muscular Christianity in the English-speaking world has not only been *much* studied - it has been *over*-studied, and its importance exaggerated. To explain the supposed process of feminisation, scholars have focused too much on theologians or other men whose Christianity was explicitly adduced as a manly counterweight to feminised piety. Attention has been fixed on Christian men's movements and on men who have argued for the need for a more muscular Christ and more muscular Christian men.<sup>25</sup> It is as if all attempts to masculinise Christianity were necessarily expressed as a need to *musculinise* religious culture.

Yet there were other ways in which men strove to portray Christianity as a religion befitting men, as a religion that was indeed modern, that could indeed succeed in the momentous struggle over the souls of the young generation growing up around 1900. I have briefly discussed how religious doubt could be used as a source for masculinisation. Before we move on to consider other possibilities, we need to adopt a broader perspective on threats to male Christian identity at the time.

<sup>23</sup> Billing, *Herdabref*, 34. This passage has been much quoted, for example by Aulén, "Einar Billings teologi", 45; and Hidal, *Bibeltro och bibelkritik*, 129.

<sup>24</sup> Billing, *Herdabref*, 34; for admiring voices on this theme, see, for example, Björkquist, "Einar Billing", 89; and Id., "Två minnen", 242.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Bederman, "The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough"; Dickinson, "The Men's Christian Morality Movement in Germany"; Hall, "Muscular Christianity".

## THREATS TO CHRISTIAN MASCULINITY

Biblical criticism indeed proved problematic for the faith for many Christian men, particularly young students of theology, at the turn of the twentieth century. In order to understand the idea that men's religious crises could reinforce their masculine identity and their religious authority, we need to understand the gendered map of the time. Gendered threats to Christian masculinity must be understood intersectionally; in other words, the intersections between the various gendered problems need to be taken into account. Several scholars have asserted that it was more difficult than ever for a man to claim to be both a Christian and a real man in this period. If he was a Christian he was feminised, and was seen as a representative of a dying breed of superstitious fools; if a Christian, he was unmodern or anti-modern. In the massive critique of Christianity around the turn of the last century, notions of gender, modernity, and generation intersected.<sup>26</sup>

First, there was the feminisation of Christianity.<sup>27</sup> The process of feminisation has largely been studied as a *quantitative* problem: men fled the churches before women did, leaving clergymen facing churches filled with women.<sup>28</sup> The sheer quantitative dominance of women is then said to have influenced Christian beliefs and doctrines, for example transforming the understanding of Christ, who became milder and softer. Additionally, the new bourgeois hegemony, with its ideal of gender complementarity, meant that Christian ideals that previously had been unproblematically gender-neutral were now regarded as particularly feminine. Where the willingness to weep, to be submissive and tender, had been ideals for Christian men and women alike, these ideals were already seen as gender-specific in some bourgeois circles as early as the turn of the nineteenth century, and they soon became dominant in the middle-class elite. Piety was thus regarded as something that both came more naturally to women *and* an ideal that was extolled particularly for women.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, as already noted, in the nineteenth century even clergymen repeatedly claimed that religious inclination was more natural in women than in men.<sup>30</sup>

It was hardly a coincidence that angels changed gender at this time, for having been portrayed as strong, warrior-like men they were now painted and perceived as women, placed in domestic settings.<sup>31</sup> The theme of the feminisation of religion in

<sup>26</sup> For the useful concepts 'intersections' and 'intersectionality', see, for example, Collins, "It's All in the Family"; Lykke, "Interseksjonalitet"; McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality".

<sup>27</sup> The term comes from Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion", and was made popular by Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture*. See the introduction to this volume.

<sup>28</sup> Lawes, "Trifling with Holy Time"; Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class*, 75-83; Shiels, "The Feminization of American Congregationalism"; for a critique and suggestions for a more nuanced understanding of the process of feminisation, see Bilhartz, "Sex and the Second Great Awakening"; and Braude, "Women's History is American Religious History".

<sup>29</sup> Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 126-159; Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood", 152-154; Ralph Waldo Emerson's essay 'Woman' (1855), in *The complete writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (New York, 1929), quoted in Welter, "The Feminization of American Religion", 146.

<sup>30</sup> See Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 126, 128-130, 146-148; Johann Ludwig Ewald, *Konsten att blifva en god flicka* (Örebro, 1811), discussed in Qvist, *Konsten att blifva en god flicka*, 14; *Ladies' companion*, 13 (1840), quoted in Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood", 154.

<sup>31</sup> Auerbach, *Woman and the Demon*, 64.

Sweden has yet to be charted, but anecdotal evidence shows that religion was discursively feminised at least as early as the 1820s, and quantitative studies reveal that in the second half of the nineteenth century church attendance and communion were dominated by women.<sup>32</sup>

The quantitative as well as discursive feminisation of Christianity was hardly new when biblical criticism confronted young university students with periods of doubt and dejection. Christianity was still largely thought of as a religion particularly suited to the hearts and minds of women - and there were more problems. Not only was Christianity thought of as suited for women, it was also plainly stated that Christianity in itself was lacking in masculinity, as is shown by the fact that Christian men devoted considerable energy to explaining that Christianity was indeed, *contrary to popular belief*, a religion for men. This phenomenon was international. In the US, radical freethinkers claimed that Christianity deprived men of their manhood, a view that stemmed from their belief that masculinity was founded upon free will and the ability to use reason to decide one's ideological position. Christianity was thought both dogmatic and superstitious, and hence utterly unbecoming to a real man.<sup>33</sup> In Britain, the immensely popular Baptist preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon lamented that "There has got abroad a notion, somehow, that if you become a Christian, you must sink your manliness and turn milksop."<sup>34</sup> He argued that the notion was both widespread and totally false. In Sweden, similar clerical polemics against the notion that Christianity was unmanly were penned by important Church leaders.<sup>35</sup> Like Spurgeon, in Sweden Eklund railed against the "prejudice" that "*Christianity is for women and not for men*", and emphasised that "it is important that we also point to what is manly and strong in Christianity".<sup>36</sup>

Another gendered threat to Christian masculinity can be summed up in the sweeping phrase 'the struggle for modernity'. In the Nordic countries, a new literary style and literary ideals were forcefully expressed by a small group of young intellectual men, most of them novelists, beginning in the early 1880s. They may have been few, but they were extraordinarily influential in the debate that followed. They were violently anti-Christian and anti-Church: they claimed that religion was nothing but a superstitious delusion, and they proclaimed the ideals of science in direct opposition to traditional religious beliefs. The natural sciences, rather than the humanities, were now to answer all the questions concerning human conduct, emotions, and the mind - indeed, they were even to explain men's and women's religious beliefs.<sup>37</sup> Christianity, it was explained, was no longer relevant. Thus, it was completely logical that

<sup>32</sup> For discourse, see Wallin, *Qvinnans ädla och stilla kallelse*; for quantitative data, see Gustafsson, *Socialdemokratien och kyrkan*, 77, 88, 90.

<sup>33</sup> Kirkley, "Is it Manly to be a Christian?", 81-82.

<sup>34</sup> Spurgeon's sermon 'A young man in Christ' in the posthumous *A good start: A book for young men and women* (London, 1898), quoted in Springhall, "Building Character in the British Boy", 55 (Springhall does not record when the sermon was first delivered). For more on Spurgeon's arguments for a manlier Christianity, see Bradstock, "A Man of God is a Manly Man".

<sup>35</sup> For example, Danell, "Mera manlighet i vår kristendom!".

<sup>36</sup> Eklund, *Betydelsen af kristliga ungdomsföreningar*, 11, 12. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>37</sup> Hansson, *Humanismens kris*, 95; Nordin, *Den Boströmska skolan*, 106-107, 153-162, 200-207; for the scientific study of emotions, see Nilsson, *Själens i laboratoriet*.

women's greater propensity for religion was now explained in scientific language, and particularly by referring to women's physiology. Herbert Spencer, who popularised Charles Darwin's theories, explained that women were more religious than men because of their relative physical weakness. Evolution had therefore given women a greater inclination to marvel and wonder at phenomena that were stronger than themselves. Hence women were more religious than men.<sup>38</sup>

It is important to note that these scientific beliefs and ideals were explicitly extolled as *modern*, in line with the times, while religious beliefs were thought largely to be remnants from the past. And, what is more, the new prophets whose ideals spread like wildfire among radical students at the universities asserted their critique of Christianity not only in terms of modern versus outdated, but also as *gendered*. It is no coincidence that the radical author August Strindberg claimed that his youthful "ascetic religion had killed even the man in him" in his autobiographical novel *The Son of a Servant* (1886).<sup>39</sup> Manhood and religion were, apparently, mutually exclusive. The Danish critic Georg Brandes, without a doubt the most influential of all Nordic intellectuals in the so-called "modern breakthrough", put it in even plainer language. When discussing the spiritual difference between Greek antiquity and the appearance of Christianity in world history, he compared Christianity to a "disease" and claimed that Christianity was like "a nervous exaltation". The consequence was the loss of masculinity: "The masculine character of imagination in Greek antiquity disappeared, one dreamt, cried, kneeled, felt longing for limitless tenderness ..."<sup>40</sup>

For the radical young men busily claiming cultural hegemony over the concept of modernity, it was important to point out the incompatibility between Christianity and masculinity. A final example is given by the novelist Gustaf af Geijerstam, who specifically attacked the Faculty of Theology at Uppsala University, where "the soul became poorer, the thinking less audacious, the courage more tamed".<sup>41</sup> Poverty of the soul, lack of audacity, and courage: af Geijerstam was not only attacking theology as a discipline, he was explaining that theology turned men into weaklings. When the priest Olle Nystedt, quoted above, claimed that "studying theology in those days was not child's play", it should be read as a counter-statement, reinserting masculinity into a field of knowledge that the authors of the modern breakthrough had worked hard to feminise, or perhaps rather to unman. It comes as no surprise that the young radicals filled their novels and short stories with pathetically impotent priests, and contrasted the failures of these men with another group of men, the new heroes of the age: physicians.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Lundbergh, *Kom ihåg att du är underlägsen!*, 73-74.

<sup>39</sup> The original reads "Hans asketiska religion hade dödat till och med mannen hos honom" (Strindberg, *Tjänstekvinnans son*, 187). In Sprinchorn's unfortunate translation it becomes "His ascetic attitude had deprived him even of his manhood" (Strindberg, *The Son of a Servant*, 131).

<sup>40</sup> Georg Brandes, *Hovedstrømninger i det 19de aarhundredes litteratur*, I: *Emigrantlitteraturen* (Copenhagen, 1872), quoted in Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 164.

<sup>41</sup> Gustaf af Geijerstam, *Erik Grane* (Stockholm, 1885), quoted in Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 197.

<sup>42</sup> Ahlström, *Det moderna genombrottet*, 406-408.



Last but not least, the rise of Socialism and the creation of Sweden's Socialist Democratic Party in 1889 constituted a threat to the gendered identities of young Christian men by the end of that century. If the intellectuals who attacked Christianity were an influential minority, Socialists were extremely successful in spreading an anti-Christian and anti-Church ideology. Priests were now attacked for legitimising and even praising the poverty of the working classes even as they themselves were more than well off.<sup>43</sup> This was classical anti-capitalist rhetoric. We often fail to see the gendered content of the words. Yet consider the vices that priests were said to embody. They were said to be heavy consumers of inordinate amounts of alcohol; they were said to be lazy; and above all they were described as hypocrites.<sup>44</sup> In an age that praised men of character who worked hard and stood by their word, these critical attacks meant that priests were described as 'un-men', as something much less than men.<sup>45</sup>

So, in order to be a Christian *and* a man without undergoing some kind of gendered identity crisis demanded particular efforts around the turn of the twentieth century. Christian men had many reasons to try and stress that, contrary to what people believed, they were indeed manly men. As we have seen, the discourse on men's religious crises offered Christian men an opportunity to claim that they were indeed intellectual, modern, manly men. With this broader context in mind, we shall now turn to some of the ways in which one particular man, J. A. Eklund, set out to explain to his contemporaries that Christianity was a modern and manly religion.

## J. A. EKLUND'S MODERN, MANLY CHRISTIANITY

First a few words by way of introduction. J. A. Eklund (1863-1945) was a towering figure in the Church of Sweden, especially in the thirty-odd years between 1890 and 1920. Born into the rural peasantry, he would come to rise to the position of Bishop of Karlstad in 1907. Yet his most influential work was with the younger generation, and especially innumerable university students. Already in the 1910s he had acquired the nickname 'The Bishop of Youth' or 'The Youth Bishop', perhaps for his particular devotion to the younger generation, but even more for the devotion that many young men felt for him.<sup>46</sup> He was arguably the most visible and prominent Church official in the public debate about Christianity, modernity, nationalism, and culture.<sup>47</sup> His significance lay not in his theological work - he only produced three or four books in the field, none of which were particularly widely read - but in his constant polemics

<sup>43</sup> Gustafsson, *Socialdemokratien och kyrkan*, 11-17; Nordström, *Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti*, 526-531; Tingsten, *Den svenska socialdemokratiens idéutveckling*, II, 285-289.

<sup>44</sup> See various Swedish socialists quoted in Hessler, *Statskyrkodebatten*, 104, 127; Tingsten, *Den svenska socialdemokratiens idéutveckling*, 285.

<sup>45</sup> For the then dominant notions of character, see Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 39-63.

<sup>46</sup> UUB, JAES: Letters to Eklund from Josef Källander, 16 November 1914; Gustaf Ankar, 1 April 1915; Claës Törner, Gustaf Kyhlberg, and Manfred Björkquist, 29 June 1915; Elin Gustavsson, 5 January 1917; Nils Sandblad, 10 March 1918; and Folke Holmström, 12 March 1933. The earliest example I have found is from a foreign source (Wordsworth, *The National Church of Sweden*, 433).

<sup>47</sup> See Sundeen, *Andelivets agitator*, 24-28.



against those who criticised Christianity, as well as in his ever-popular sermons and frequent lectures on current cultural and religious problems. There can be no doubt as to his formidable influence on the young.

In the present context Eklund is important for his attempts to masculinise Christianity. Many aspects will be omitted for reasons of space, including Eklund's at times virulent nationalism and, in the 1910s, his racism; his conscious and gendered use of historical examples of Swedish, manly, Christian men; his gendered comments on other confessions, particularly the unmanly nature of Catholicism; and not least, the controversial way in which he presented his polemics, which brought stiff criticism from his peers and shock to many a listener, but also limitless admiration for what was understood as his manly candour. Instead, we turn our gaze to how Eklund actively effeminised those who attacked Christianity; how he portrayed the struggle with modernity as a manly struggle; and what I call his pessimistic optimism.

## MODERN MEN AS ENERVATED MEN

Eklund's interest in modernity and his struggle to rewrite its content is evident in one of his first published texts.<sup>48</sup> In line with the medical scholarship of the day, Eklund wrote about nervous disorders, medical men, and moral purity. Again in line with modern thinking about health, nerves, and the body, Eklund emphasised that it was man's duty to have a healthy body as well as healthy nerves. He rejected religious asceticism on the grounds that it was simply not healthy, and criticised those Christians who, instead of doing gymnastics, despised the body as being mere flesh. And yet, separating himself from at least the most masculinist promoters of muscular Christianity, he was very clear that Christians absolutely should not over-emphasise their interest in developing muscular bodies, without paying due attention to man's moral nature.<sup>49</sup>

All of these ideas are part and parcel of modernity: the concern with nerves, health, and the body, and even the medically based criticism of asceticism. Asceticism now became something amounting to a pathology. Indeed, in France the world-renowned professor of medicine Jean-Martin Charcot and his collaborators were busy pathologising many kinds of religious phenomena, both past and present, and asceticism was among them. In France, this medical research was an essential part of an explicit politics of anti-clericalism.<sup>50</sup> Eklund referred to this medical and modern framework; his arguments that "each psychological function demands a certain quantum of nervous energy" and that "it is certain that there is no sharp distinc-

<sup>48</sup> Eklund, "Några tankar om nervlifvet och det sedliga", 515-532. The text is also deeply personal, given Eklund's struggle with his nervous disorder; this will not be addressed here, however.

<sup>49</sup> Muscular Christianity was not quite so relentlessly muscular as Clifford Putney and others would have us believe (see Putney, *Muscular Christianity*). At the other extreme, the ideal has also been depicted as far more androgynous than it really was, for example Nelson, *Boys will be Girls*, 37-38, 40-44, 52-53, 67. More nuanced readings are offered by Hall, "Muscular Christianity", and Winn, "Tom Brown's Schooldays".

<sup>50</sup> Goldstein, "The Hysteria Diagnosis".



J. A. Eklund.  
[Lund University Library, Manuscript Department]

tion between what is normal and what is madness” could be taken from any medical textbook of his day.<sup>51</sup> Eklund, however, used this framework to pathologise the young modern authors who criticised Christianity. Modern materialistic fiction, he argued, could only be the product of men who had taken no care of their bodies, their health, or their nerves. No man with a healthy body could produce such a pessimistic and life-denying ideology.<sup>52</sup>

Eklund further argued that materialist ideology begat ill-health, for once one began to think that there is no God, there is no meaning to life, and when there is no meaning to life, the body suffers. Writing himself into the position of the truly modern physician of both the body and the soul, he explained that the most modern of creeds - secularism - was in fact pathological, the mere effect of nerves not kept in order. Eklund thus rendered materialists as unmanly: they are described as weak in both mind and heart; as men who have “destroyed their nervous systems through sensual excesses”; indeed, he claimed that their abnormal views on morality were *caused* by their bodily lack of health.<sup>53</sup> Eklund thus claimed that materialists were mere slaves to their nervous systems, and drew a parallel with the pathological ascetics of old.

These criticisms are all gendered. We often fail to see it, for it is a man writing about other men.<sup>54</sup> Yet Eklund’s critique of materialists is a critique of their masculinity. While truly moral, Christian men ought to take care of their bodies as well as of their spiritual lives, the modern authors are portrayed as beasts, but weak beasts pessimistically whimpering about their poor nerves, and lacking the stamina and character to withstand their passions. Eklund’s argument is at once modern and a struggle to redefine the content of modernity; it is at once a critique of materialism and an argument that Christian men are better men than the materialists.

## THE MANFUL STRUGGLE WITH MODERNITY

Eklund’s perceptions of masculinity become very clear when seen in the light of the twin concepts ‘character’ and ‘modernity’. In a speech given at a YMCA gathering in 1904 entitled “Should Christians follow their times?” Eklund made his point emphatically.<sup>55</sup> The very phrase that it is imperative to keep up with the times, Eklund asserted, was itself very modern. Yet many did not know what this meant, since societies did not move as streams in but one direction: “Rather, life is like a turbulent ocean, where the streams become swirls that constantly shift and break upon one another in massive breakers. He who just follows blindly does not know where he ends up.”<sup>56</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Eklund, “Några tankar om nervlifvet”, 521.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 519.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 522.

<sup>54</sup> Since masculinity is the dominant norm it is often less visible (in much the same way as whiteness and heterosexuality are taken for granted). See for example Brod, “Studying Masculinities”, 174; see also Connell, *Masculinities*, 212-213; Hearn, “Theorizing Men”, 786, 788 and Kimmel, “Invisible Masculinity”.

<sup>55</sup> Eklund, “Skall en kristen följa med sin tid?”.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

Not only does Eklund's description of his time reverberate with the threats that were so prominent in all his writings, he also succeeds in rendering modern men unmanly - for they are characterised by precisely that volatility, that lack of an inner core built on moral principles, which transforms them into mere flotsam caught in the currents of their times. This was precisely what 'modern' men did, according to Eklund; they read every new book, every new newspaper, and kept up with the times so closely that they lost what was most essential in a man: character. Modern men, by Eklund's standard, appeared effeminate. He described them as anxious, as lacking any form of inner strength, and as more bent on pleasing others by knowing what was right for the moment, than on letting their real selves and moral principles guide their actions.<sup>57</sup>

Yet modern, secular (and preferably urban) men were not the only types against which Eklund railed in this lecture. He heaped imprecations on the men *within* the Church of Sweden who did not have the inner strength to partake in the spiritual struggles of the day. His demand for Christian action is surpassed only by his disgust with those men in the Church of Sweden who were afraid to stand up like men and fight for Christianity:

Would it not be a peculiar sight if the divine race of God's children, which was once able to speak such mighty words of faith, were to become a race which, terrified, hid itself away from their times. Shall the kingly priesthood become a race which does not *dare* touch a thought or use a word without asking whether it is old or novel - does not dare to lift their heads to see the roar of the life of the living world for trepidation of catching a cold and being corrupted in one's weakly soul. ... the real danger lies [not the spiritual forces of the times but] in the weakness of our own Christian life, and that of the entire Church. How rarely does a young man come of age, who even dares to utter a Christian thought of the day - and is able to do it, for he grasps and understands the life of his times.<sup>58</sup>

This line of reasoning, focussed on criticism of the weakness of many Christian men, but designed to instil character and strength in the breasts of young Christian men in particular, resounds through many of Eklund's activist speeches, sermons, and articles.<sup>59</sup> If materialists and other modern men only appeared to be strong but were in fact enfeebled by their shattered nerves and sexual debauchery, then the real problem lay among the ranks of Christians, who should behave like soldiers, but did not dare to question the thinking of the times, did not dare truly to *be* of their time and fight the good fight.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, Stockholm, Kungliga biblioteket (hereafter KB), Lotten och Urban von Feilitzens samling: Eklund to Urban von Feilitzen, 17 July 1894; KB, Adrian Molins samling: Eklund to Adrian Molin, 10 April 1907.

<sup>58</sup> Eklund, "Skall en kristen följa med sin tid".

<sup>59</sup> See for example Eklund, "Några tankar om nervlivet", 201-202; Id., "Den rädsla, som illa anstår en Kristen"; Id., "Kyrkan och den sociala frågan", 407.

In Eklund's assessment, there was a third category of problematic men: those who combined Christianity with modernism, and those who joined foreign Free Churches.<sup>60</sup> He actively gendered non-Church confessions by describing other confessions as lacking in masculinity. Above all, Christians in Free Churches are given feminine characteristics. These movements not only blended different forms of Christianity so that the result was said to be a bland religious 'nothingness' which amounted to a total lack of character, they followed forms of Christianity which in Eklund's understanding were un-Swedish and hence alien to the Swedish national character. He clearly gendered the Free Churches, but did not single out the male members of their congregations. Without any explicit sexual attribution on Eklund's behalf, it seems that the entire group of Free Churches was described as vessels of effeminate forms of Christianity<sup>61</sup>; forms which, notably, did *not* struggle with modernity, but rather, to Eklund's alarm, embodied its very lack of stamina.

### EKLUND'S PESSIMISTIC OPTIMISM

Eklund's many texts can be analysed as standing for a pessimistic optimism.<sup>62</sup> For Eklund it was always imperative to act, and to act *now*, for things were always on the brink of disaster. He had faith that Christian men could turn the tide, to be sure, but this faith was conditioned by the fact that the current situation was grave indeed. This was an optimism that thrived under constantly darkening skies; it was optimism founded upon pessimism.

And yet his pessimism was not of the ontological variety. For Eklund it was merely a matter of stating the truth about the order of things. Indeed, he was very sceptical about pessimism as an ideology and as a principle. At one point, he even claimed that pessimism was 'an immoral theory'.<sup>63</sup> He also mocked modern forms of theatrical pessimism by asserting that "it is modern to be a pessimist. It is modern in the same manner that it is modern to carry a pince-nez."<sup>64</sup> In much the same manner he criticised young men's shallow, theatrical, and superficial pessimism for leaving them blasé and bereft of their capacity for true admiration of others. Pessimism rendered them unable to carry out actions worthy of men, and made them lose that precious quality, enthusiasm, which should characterise the younger generation.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Eklund, "Kyrkan och den stora bildade allmänheten", 557-558; Id., "'Evolution' och teologisk forskning", 448-449; Id., "Om församlingsdiakoni", 278-279.

<sup>61</sup> Id., "Det centrala i människans värld", 252; Id., "Kyrkan och den stora bildade allmänheten", 357-358, 362-363; Id., "Om karakterslöshet", 321, 328; Id., "Om församlingsdiakoni", 449-450.

<sup>62</sup> We should note that Eklund was wary of using the concept 'optimism', at one point claiming that "The true opposite of pessimism is not 'optimism'. Rather, the true opposite is the philosophy which lies behind the Christian admonition: 'Repent and have faith!'" (Eklund, "Om kyrklig pessimism", 458).

<sup>63</sup> Eklund, "Några tankar om nervlivet", 519.

<sup>64</sup> Id., 'En pessimist i gamla testamentet', 1; see also Id., "Det centrala i människans värld", 336.

<sup>65</sup> Id., "Det centrala i människans värld", 249-250.

Eklund argued that there was far too much of illegitimate pessimism within the Church of Sweden. He criticised the form of churchly pessimism that paralysed men and left them passive. When men within the Church complained about contemporary society, this only “makes the enemy of the Church brave”, Eklund explained, and “when pessimism infects the fighters and friends of the Church, it makes them powerless in their struggle”; he thus concluded that “One must arm oneself against pessimism with every lawful weapon.”<sup>66</sup> This pessimism was in his view wrong in its blind conservatism; it was a pessimism that sought to shut its eyes to the real world.<sup>67</sup> To Eklund, this was little more than rank, unmanly cowardice.

By contrast, true pessimism was to dare to see the truth about modern, decadent Sweden without closing one’s eyes.<sup>68</sup> Such sound pessimism was the foundation upon which young men could ground their *optimism* for Sweden’s Christian future. By discerning the depraved nature of contemporary Sweden, one also had the opportunity to change this sad state of affairs. Eklund could then claim for instance that “Pessimism is but the winter, pregnant with spring; the night, pregnant with dawn and day” - and that Luther came with the light at exactly the moment when religious darkness was at its peak.<sup>69</sup>

So, people had the right, indeed the duty, to see the future possibilities for Sweden and for Christianity, to see what little light there was to be found in for instance the Christian life of young men. In a sermon delivered in 1908, Eklund gave this its clearest expression: “You may be in your full right to claim that the Church and churches and all of us fulfil our calling of clemency poorly. But you shall not say that *nothing* is to be done. ... You may perhaps respond - So what? ... The world of men is too sick for Christ and his congregation to be able to remedy it. To that I say: it is the business of faith to believe.”<sup>70</sup>

Eklund’s stance here is unequivocally optimistic. It is sanguine on a *programmatic* level: a Christian simply had no right to be a pessimist. One *had* to believe that things could indeed be different. Yet one should not be generally optimistic about the situation at large. *Pure* optimism of this kind was as sapping as despicable, illegitimate, action-hindering pessimism. In a revealing letter to his friend Sam Clason, a conservative historian and member of parliament, in 1913 this is especially clear. Eklund counselled his friend on the choice of priest to be used in the confirmation of his son, and claimed: “I was fairly content with [Claës] Törner, even though I must admit that due to his optimistic character he perhaps tends to view everything from so light and positive a perspective that I believe there is not much room for the kind of force that enables decisive steps.”<sup>71</sup> Apparently, those decisive steps could not be

<sup>66</sup> Id., “Om kyrklig pessimism”, 455-457, quotes at 455 and 456.

<sup>67</sup> Id., “Kyrkan och den samtida kulturen”, 125-126, 128-129.

<sup>68</sup> Id., “Menniskan och kulturen”, 159-160; Id., “Modern moralsofistik”, 399-407, 409-410.

<sup>69</sup> Id., “Kyrkan och den sociala frågan”, 429.

<sup>70</sup> Id., “Betesda - barmhärtighetens hus”, 406.

<sup>71</sup> Stockholm, Riksarkivet, Sam Clasons arkiv: Eklund to Sam Clason, 5 December 1913; Törner had recently confirmed Eklund’s son Nils (UUB, JAES: Claës Törner to Eklund, 28 March, 5 June, and 10 July 1913).



taken if one's character was all optimism, but rather, as we gather from Eklund's writings, from the optimism that lived and breathed pessimism.

Eklund's ethics, such as they were, were clearly ethics of action. Systematically, he judged ideological positions by the sort of action they produced:

Modern, shallow pessimism	→ Blasé lack of action
Illegitimate pessimism	→ Lack of true force, which also strengthens the enemy (often displayed among men of the Church)
Naïve, 'pure' optimism	→ Inability to carry through decisive actions
True, manly pessimism	→ Optimism and action

The last position is Eklund's. It is, given his world view, the only truly masculine standpoint, since all other positions paralyse men and render them useless in the ongoing battle for the survival of true Christianity. Eklund's thought is thoroughly gendered, although it does not revolve around women and he only occasionally wrote about masculinity and the need for manlier men in specific terms. It is gendered because his entire rhetoric and the ways in which he diagnoses his times are infused with ideas that compare Good Men with Bad.

## CONCLUSIONS

We have seen how Christianity and the Church in particular were under several gendered forms of attack in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. The much-studied process of the feminisation of Christianity was not only a question of men leaving the churches, but also of some men's fears that the prevalence of women had made Christianity far too 'namby-pamby'. What is more, young radical authors announced that religion in general and Christianity in particular were scarcely consistent with modernity. Christian beliefs, these influential radicals claimed, were mere delusions, little according with the scientific data. Christianity was said to emasculate men. Socialists added fuel to the fire by invariably depicting priests as lazy and unmanly hypocrites. To many men it seemed difficult, perhaps impossible, to be both a Christian and a real man.

Detailing one's experience of religious doubts and how these doubts were ultimately overcome was, as I have argued, one of the most important ways in which Christian men and Christian leaders of men could lay claim to being real men. Biblical criticism was described as modern, as a difficult intellectual endeavour, and as something that demanded courage. Thus by boldly daring to study biblical criticism and by exposing oneself to the anti-Christian attacks of the radicals, Christian men were no longer anti-modern or unmodern, but part of modernity. By struggling with their own beliefs, they separated themselves from women's purportedly natural Christianity. And by overcoming religious doubts, they gained the authority to lead younger Christian men in the struggle for the survival of Christianity.



It comes as no surprise that Eklund, the most outspoken and well-known of church leaders to make a stand for manlier Christianity, often discussed the religious doubts of his own youth and how he had overcome them.<sup>72</sup> He, a leader especially of younger men, worked hard to counter the attempts to describe Christianity and Christian men as unmanly: he argued forcefully that it was the radical authors, not Christians, who were lacking in masculinity; he extolled an ideal of Christian activism replete with military metaphors. His many polemical texts, sermons, and lectures amount to a coherent and wide-ranging effort to make Christianity manlier, to make Christian men manlier, and to make instead the critics of Christianity appear less manly. He returned repeatedly to the theme of his own youthful struggles to keep his Christian faith, and how he had succeeded. Such experiences, he explained, were necessary in the formation of young men's characters. Doubts were dangerous but absolutely necessary obstacles to be overwon.<sup>73</sup> This was how real men were made.

<sup>72</sup> This is explored in greater detail in Tjeder, "Det manliggörande tvivlet", 100-112, and also in my forthcoming book, *Manlig man i en omanlig tid*.

<sup>73</sup> See, for example, Eklund, "Trons kamp för livet", 217, 222; Id., "Stå fast, när allt vacklar!"; Id., "I tvivlets tider", 2029; Id., "Kristendomen är icke bara njutning", 4; Id., "Kristendomslivets förnyring", 9, 12.



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**PART III**  
**MISSIONARY MASCULINITY**

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# PROTESTANT MISSION IN CHINA

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## A PROLETARIAN PERSPECTIVE

ERIK SIDENVALL

It is one of the overarching hypotheses of the Lund-based research project, of which some findings are given here, that a ‘masculinisation’ was an integral part of what the German historian Olaf Blaschke has termed a ‘second confessional age’. In this anthology we find examples of how the renewed Christian enthusiasm of the nineteenth century coincided with conscious attempts to make Christianity more manly, sometimes even muscular.<sup>1</sup> Yet, this was not the only trend that can be observed at this time; to create a Christian ‘hyper-masculinity’ was not always seen as necessary by those who struggled for a Christian extension amidst the manifold troubles that beset the churches during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Werner, among others, paints the contours of a Catholic manliness rooted in ideals of humility and of obedience - virtues, once of universal Christian significance, but increasingly regarded as troublesome in some circles when used as descriptions of ideal manhood towards the end of the nineteenth century. In her article Werner also mentions that there were similarities between the Catholics of her study and those men drawn to evangelical (Protestant) Christianity. She points out, that in spite of their mutual antagonism, these two groups were united in their positive appraisal of the expression of male religious emotions - a phenomenon regarded as anathema in a hegemonic, stiff-upper-lip, vision of true manhood. Though we can find many examples of how evangelicals praised, and even institutionalised the necessity of religious emotions (above all in their vision of ‘conversion’ - the experience of becoming a born-again Christian), they were radically different from monastic Catholic men in their fundamental commitment to the bourgeois ideal of ‘domestic manhood’.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the chapters of Blaschke, Prestjjan and Tjeder in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> See Olsen, “Daddy’s Come Home”; Tosh, *A Man’s Place*.

In spite of the fundamental importance of the 'home', and of the specific roles of men and women, both in the doctrine of evangelicals and in their mental universe, international evangelicalism remained highly complex and many times contradictory in nature, even when it came to questions of gender. It is today well known that within the evangelical milieu we can find early expressions of a Christian feminism, and that 'transgressions' of the ideology of 'separate spheres' were frequently to be found<sup>3</sup>; we also know that the seemingly subdued domestic man lived side-by-side with an evangelical machismo which was (and still is) built on physical prowess, patriarchy and a hard-line Protestant orthodoxy.<sup>4</sup> If we look at the evangelical world from a distinctly social perspective, it is equally filled with ambiguities. Even though many scholars have found evangelical religiosity to be the spiritual expression of the middle-class<sup>5</sup>; it is still well known that above all radical evangelical groups - associated above all with the radical phalanx of the Holiness Movement of the latter half of the nineteenth century - came to attract, and to provide a forum for, proletarian men and women. If we connect social and gender history (as I believe we should) we may therefore come to the conclusion that the evangelical milieu, and the fields of interaction it provided, became an interface where differing conceptions of manhood came to meet and intermingle at a time when Western society in general became increasingly stratified. Regrettably, this encounter, and its possible outcomes, has been given little scholarly attention.

In this essay I will examine how evangelical activism could be a road to the appropriation of a middle-class ideal of manhood.<sup>6</sup> My focus will be placed on one working-class man, Alfred Fagerholm, drawn to evangelical religion during the late 1880s and subsequently volunteered for missionary work in China, came to understand his formation of adult manhood and how this gender identity came to influence his missionary life. Themes such as social advance, the appropriation of middle-class' ideals and a fatherly domesticity can be found with this man, but hidden beneath these themes we still can find traces of values and ideals circulated in his original social setting. Masculinity as such seldom emerges in the available studies on missions. Most scholars approaching the question of the construction of masculinity among missionaries, the question of the influence of a muscular Christianity has been of paramount importance.<sup>7</sup>

The most important source to this chapter is Fagerholm's manuscript 'Autobiography'. This document was composed sometime before the commencement of

<sup>3</sup> Dayton and Dayton, "Your Daughters Shall Prophesy"; Zollinger Giele, *Two Paths to Women's Equality*; Melder, *Beginnings of Sisterhood*; Rendall, *The Origins of Modern Feminism*.

<sup>4</sup> See for example Lemberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 54-127; Kirkley, "Is it Manly to Be a Christian?"

<sup>5</sup> Phrased most provocatively in a classical Marxist way in Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*.

<sup>6</sup> For further discussion, see my recent book, *The Making of Manhood Amongst Swedish Missionaries in China and Mongolia*, ch. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Stanley, "Hunting for Souls". A different approach, however, has recently been offered by Semple, "Missionary Manhood".

the Great War (possibly in 1913), written when Fagerholm was in his early forties.<sup>8</sup> Like most other evangelical autobiographies this text was written as an account of a spiritual journey where the experience of Divine grace at conversion and a subsequent calling to become a missionary are important landmarks. As a description of missionary activities and personal life this account leaves much to be desired; yet, as a narration of the formation of a male identity it remains of much use. This document has been supplanted by a lesser number of letters and reports written by Fagerholm and his wife.

## GOING TO CHINA

Alfred Fagerholm was born in 1871 in the small town of Högsby on the Swedish mainland. In spite of its modest size, Högsby prospered by being the centre of a rich and developed agricultural region in Southern Sweden. At the time of Alfred's birth, his father worked as one of the local master blacksmiths. Since the least affluent segments of rural Swedish society hardly ever produced large batches of children at this time, it is safe to assume that the all in all ten children that were born into this family, of which Alfred was the fourth, are testimonies to a modest respectability. A series of moves, the first of which took place in 1879, seem to suggest that the family economy experienced some kind of setback in the latter half of the 1870s. Alfred later accredited this to 'speculations' done by his father.<sup>9</sup> For the Fagerholm children this meant that hopes for further education did not materialise at this time. Alfred recorded that he started working at the age of twelve at his father's workshop, "already before his confirmation"<sup>10</sup> - a rite that was generally viewed as an initiation into adulthood at this time.

When he describes the religion of his parental home he conforms to yet another evangelical pattern - whatever piety existed in the household of his birth, this was due to the influence of his angelic mother who struggled to teach her children religion and morality. His father on the other hand was an unruly character that influenced his offspring in quite another direction. His mother was described as 'devout'. She was the one who taught him "to lift his eyes to God", to say grace before every meal and to conclude each day with a prayer. In Alfred's reminiscences her pious guidance was balanced and undermined by his father. He recalled that his "father's influence in the home was of a completely worldly nature and quite frequently he sacrificed his hard-earned money on the altar of Backhoes". His father's smithy was described as a place of "drunkenness, swearing and indecent language", an environment that corrupted the young man and led him away from God. Yet, if the text is read carefully, it becomes obvious that his father should not be regarded as a completely secular figure. Obviously, there was a clash between the middle-class evangelicalism Alfred

<sup>8</sup> Since this document suddenly comes to a stop, after having gradually been transformed to resemble diary notices, in 1913, it seems reasonable to assume that it was composed about that time.

<sup>9</sup> Stockholm, Missionskyrkans arkiv, MS Alfred Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar (autobiographical notices), 3 (henceforth Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.



later came to espouse and the traditional artisan culture of his father. But this conflict had also a religious dimension. Alfred mentions that his father demanded that those children who had excused themselves from worship should instead listen to a sermon that was read aloud at home (presumably by the male head of household). At the time he composed his autobiography he still remembered how he, as a boy, had been with his father to the town church to listen to Peter Fjellstedt (1802-1881), former missionary to India and at that time the most celebrated missionary protagonist in Sweden. It is also evident that the family owned not only a hymnal and a Bible, but also religious literature of an old-fashioned pietistic flavour.<sup>11</sup> It is not unreasonable to assume that his father conformed to a 'high church' Lutheranism that did not bother so much with such niceties as teetotalism but emphasised the need to conform to the ordinations of the National Church. Together with a secular socialism, it was exactly this kind of sentiment that many Swedish evangelicals tried to combat; Alfred's evaluation of his father's religion owed at least a bit to the vitriol produced by this clash.

In the descriptions that Alfred offers of the religious conditions of his home and of the county in which he first lived there are certain features missing: from other sources we know that this was a region from which a number of both male and female evangelists and missionaries were recruited. Prominent Swedish female Holiness preacher Nelly Hall (1848-1916) had visited Högsby at least twice before Alfred left his home. This young blacksmith may not have been included among those who flocked at the local mission hall to listen to this celebrated revivalist preacher. But his exclusion may also have been due to the fact that Nelly Hall had become a rather suspicious character to Swedish revivalist in the early 1910s due to her association with Charles Taze Russell, founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses. We need therefore not be surprised that she is left out of this account. What is more startling is his failure to mention that two of his sisters, Hilda and Paulina Fagerholm, whom he mentions as born-again Christians<sup>12</sup>, had been inspired by Hall and worked themselves as lay evangelists.<sup>13</sup> Alfred's failure to mention these activities on the part of his sisters, of which he must have been aware, is intriguing. Are their activities simply seen as lacking in relevance? Or can this *lacuna* be interpreted as a conscious attempt to keep 'irregular' female activities out of sight by a man of quasi-clerical stature?

At the age of seventeen Alfred left home for the first time in search of work elsewhere. At that time his brothers had grown old enough to be able to take his place at the family workshop. He recalled that his mother tried to convince him to take a Bible with him, "but he did not find such company appropriate for a young man who wanted to taste what the world had to offer".<sup>14</sup> A suitable place of work was found at a tile-works at Eskilstuna, an expanding industrial city in Central Sweden, south of Lake Mälaren; Alfred soon exchanged this job for a new position with a local blacksmith at Hällby, a village on the outskirts of Eskilstuna.<sup>15</sup> This move may have been much more

<sup>11</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 1, 3-4, 7.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Gunner, *Nelly Hall*, 129-130, 195-209.

<sup>14</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

important for his religious development than he later were able to recall or willing to acknowledge. His new employer, August Bergman, was a Baptist and it was probably he who persuaded his apprentice to start visiting the nearby Baptist chapel. As is the case in most evangelical autobiographies, the circumstances surrounding his conversion experience is recorded in great detail. Alfred recalled that he was present at the local chapel on 4 January 1892 to hear John Walborg preach, at that time a student at the Baptist seminary in Stockholm. This sermon touched him deeply and Alfred “sank down in remorse under a flood of tears”. Assisted by the preacher, he “called upon God to forgive his sin” and found that “the peace of forgiveness was beginning to flow into the heart of the young man”.<sup>16</sup> If Alfred’s narrative is read carefully, we realise that this episode was but the final stop on a much longer religious journey. For some time he seems to have been drawn to revivalist Christianity, but this profound experience intensified and deepened his religiosity. He mentions that he now started to live a rigorous devotional life and that he paid frequent visits to several local evangelical congregations. Among these he appears to have found the Salvation Army particularly attractive: “In their testimonies and holiness meetings he found much that appealed to his tender heart. Their zeal for the salvation of others and their way to attend to the needs of those deepest fallen in sin seemed attractive to the recently converted young man, who was burning with a sanctified desire to deepen in holiness and to do something for the salvation of others.”<sup>17</sup>

Sometime during the spring of 1892, Alfred enrolled as a soldier in this organisation. His evangelising zeal and youthful enthusiasm probably made him an attentive listener when Fredrik Franson (1852-1908), Swedish-American extraordinaire who toured Scandinavia and the Continent with a revivalist message inspired by Dwight L. Moody during the 1880s and 1890s, appeared at Eskilstuna in late August or early September 1892. Franson’s aim was to convince young men and women to take part in the Bible course he was about to offer in Stockholm, and ultimately to recruit new missionaries for the north China venture recently launched by the New York-based International Missionary Alliance.<sup>18</sup>

Alfred vividly describes a burning speech on the urgent need of the Chinese and the responsibility of every Christian to listen to the missionary call. Franson summoned those “young men and women who had thought of the heathen and who had felt the call of God, to come forward for continued discussions after the congregation had been dismissed”.<sup>19</sup> Alfred remembered that he rather hesitantly stayed with this group who continued in discussion until late at night. After a few days of hesitation the decision had been made: he was to leave his work at Eskilstuna to join the other aspiring students who gathered in Stockholm hoping for a future on the mission field. The section in which Alfred describes this short, but fateful, period in his life is sadly missing. All we know is that Alfred, after a few weeks’ intense train-

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> Hereafter IMA; in 1897 this agency was re-organised as the Christian and Missionary Alliance, hereafter C&MA.

<sup>19</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 8.

ing, was included among those who were seen as fit for missionary work. With pride he recalls that out of all the candidates that he had known from his Eskilstuna days, only two remained.<sup>20</sup> Together with several others he left Sweden for Britain in January 1893. After a few weeks English-language training he was on board the steamer bound for China.

One may have guessed that Franson's heated missionary enthusiasm should have bore the brunt of the burden for the troubles that lay ahead of this company of young men and women. Instead, transformed by Alfred's imagination, this celebrated Swedish-American evangelist becomes a mere agent, sent out only to fulfil the wishes of the IMA. It was their defective ideas concerning missionary training and equipment, and not Franson's well-meaning enthusiasm, which was the source of the ultimate failure of this mission. In reality, Franson's missionary radicalism by far surpassed that of his US backers.<sup>21</sup> To be absolutely fair to the agencies brought to life by A. B. Simpson, it has to be pointed out that they too realised the need to give missionary workers at least a rudimentary training. Already in 1883, Simpson had established the New York Missionary Training Institute (now Nyack College), the first of the numerous Bible Schools that were to appear in the US during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, to equip those who were sent to preach "a complete saviour and a full Gospel".<sup>22</sup> To Alfred, however, the IMA did not care much for any kind of education but was merely on the look-out for candidates "who were not pampered, but who, in addition to being God-fearing, were in possession of physical strength so that they can endure the hardships of a missionary life".<sup>23</sup> For him such physical primitivism and mental simplicity were never sufficient qualifications, neither for a missionary, nor for a true man.

## DISAPPOINTMENT OF MISSIONS

Unlike several others enrolled in this missionary undertaking, Fagerholm produced an account in which his missionary life in China during the 1890s was seen as, at the same time, absurd, adventurous, tragic and fruitless. These men were in fact fellow travellers for more than half a decade, yet it is as if they were describing completely different experiences. In Alfred's reminiscences, after a pleasant journey on board the *Norddeutscher*, a long and arduous path to inland China takes its beginning. With a morbid attention to detail Alfred records the gruesome realities of travel in China and how they covered long distances on foot because their superintendent was an "indefatigable pedestrian" who wanted to save the mission's resources.<sup>24</sup> He also recalled that there was an outbreak of smallpox among the missionaries due to their

<sup>20</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 8-10.

<sup>21</sup> It should be noted however that Franson had issued a particular call to the educated to join this China venture. See *Trons Segrar*, August 1892, 254.

<sup>22</sup> Brereton, *Training God's Army*. Quote taken from a contemporary report on the courses given at this institution, see *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly*, 1 May 1895.

<sup>23</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 15.

being forced to live at a miserable guesthouse in Beijing. Alfred consequently arrived in Baotou, where he was about to start his language training, down-spirited and with chafed feet, still weakened from the disease he had contracted in the Chinese metropolis.<sup>25</sup> Once settled, their leader's fervent belief in the imminent return of Christ resulted in inadequate language training. The study of the written language was deemed unnecessary, they were just to learn to speak Chinese as quickly as possible in order to "teach the masses who had not heard of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus".<sup>26</sup> Alfred describes how, after only six weeks of training, the recently arrived missionaries were sent out to practise their skills as itinerant preachers. Accompanied by a little band of native 'helpers' they were to "empty all their theoretical knowledge of the language in front of a staring street crowd".<sup>27</sup>

Alfred evidently, and far from surprisingly, is critical of this method. In one of the few letters, written in the 1890s, that has survived, he mentions that without knowledge of the written language and the Chinese characters, any Christian enterprise will become "a tourist mission".<sup>28</sup> In his reminiscences he points out that such a disregard of preparations will undo the founding of a permanent Christian settlement.<sup>29</sup> What appears to have been more troublesome to Alfred, and probably an even greater source of discontent, was his failure to secure placement at a permanent missionary station from which he could operate. His autobiography mentions repeated and unsuccessful attempts to rent a house for this purpose in several villages in Shanxi province. Alfred was forced to live a peripatetic existence as an itinerant evangelist with only brief sojourns at the stations of his colleagues. He appears to have become a kind of helper who performed the duties other missionaries were unable, or unwilling, to fulfil. For example, he was commissioned to assist and guide Fredrik Franson when he visited the Chinese mission during 1895. Even though Fagerholm tried to be fair and glories in the memory of Franson as a man of prayer, one cannot escape to observe that Franson is here portrayed as a rather ridiculous character who showed a great deal of squeamishness, and lack of good sense, when encountering the realities of Chinese life.<sup>30</sup> At the time of writing it is evident that such a task appeared to Fagerholm as yet another distraction that tore him away from studies and real missionary duties.

A large part of this section of his autobiographical notes is filled with narrations of his rather adventurous journeys, most of which took him to still uncharted nearby desert areas.<sup>31</sup> Alfred was in all likelihood writing at the time the reputation of the celebrated Swedish explorer Sven (von) Hedin (1865-1952) had reached its apogee, both nationally and internationally. Fagerholm was back in China when this noted explorer was triumphantly received in Stockholm in 1909, but he cannot have

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>27</sup> Fagerholm papers: Fagerholm to Eskilstuna missionsförening n.d. [1895?] (intended to be included in Fagerholm's autobiography).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 16.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-22.

<sup>31</sup> The longest, and best, of these is the description of his spectacular escape from the Boxers in 1900, in *Ibid.*, 30-42.

been unaware of the immense interest with which Sweden received the stories of the adventures of one of its now most illustrious sons. In his autobiography, Alfred is not only targeting a religious readership that desired to come close to the life of a missionary, but also a more general public that had developed a taste for reading first hand accounts of adventurous lives. Such a move could have provided Fagerholm with an opportunity to claim the same kind of colonial hyper-masculinity others so willingly espoused at this time. Yet, he failed to do so. As we are about to see, Fagerholm's own ambitions and his ideal of true manhood drove him in a completely different direction. What to other men would have seemed like an investment in true masculinity was for Fagerholm just an unwanted obstacle. For all his willingness to write adventure stories, he cannot disguise his immense dislike of this peripatetic existence. Even worse, at hindsight he had come to regard such a missionary life as lacking in significance, not yielding the rewards that could have been harvested if he had been living under more orderly conditions. Summing up his first five years in China he came to the conclusion:

My work had hitherto been like 'throwing one's bread in the lake' and to 'sowing beside all waters'. I had crossed rather large parts of the provinces of Shiti [Hubei], Shansi [Shanxi] and Kansuh [Gansu]. I had ventured to preach, to talk to the people, to sell Bibles and other Christian books, though much of my time was spent travelling. My work had defects, but it was the Word of God that I had sown amongst the hoards of heathens whom I encountered. ... To me was not given to stay and cultivate what had been sown; others have been sent to do that. But on the Day of the Great Harvest the one who has sown and the one who has reaped shall rejoice together.<sup>32</sup>

## EMASCULATION AND ITS ANTIDOTE

In 1899, Alfred, together with several of his missionary brothers and sisters, had got tired of working in connection with the C&MA. The relationship with the New York committee and its Swedish missionaries then seems to have reached a new all-time-low. In his autobiography Alfred describes a situation that was rapidly becoming much more desperate for every month. The Swedish group, that was lacking support, turned to Hudson Taylor, founder of the highly regarded and, at this time, rapidly expanding China Inland Mission, in their need; a proposal that the China Inland Mission were to take responsibility for the C&MA's work in Shanxi and Inner Mongolia, was turned down by the New York committee. As a last resort one of the Swedish missionaries were to be sent to the US in order to plead their case face to face with the board. With much resentment Alfred describes how his colleague Emil Jacobson (1859-1904) was sent to New York for an interview with Simpson. According to Alfred's account this was a brief affair; Simpson snubbed Jacobson, and the Swedish missionary was sent back on the street again without even having been offered accommodation. What

<sup>32</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 25.

ever happened at Simpson's office, it is interesting to see how Alfred interprets this in terms of manhood. The encounter between the powerful missionary organiser and the humble on-the-field worker becomes an image of masculinity called in question. But it was not only the recollection of an incident in which one of their own had been humiliated by another man that Alfred found particularly offensive and unjust. The entire situation in which they, in reality, were forced to beg for their existence clashed with contemporary notions of male autonomy and self-support.

Alfred's riposte to such effeminising conditions was to engage in an activist strategy. During the autumn of 1899 he wrote to the chairman of the Swedish Mission Covenant in Stockholm<sup>33</sup>, E. J. Ekman (1842-1915), asking to be included in their growing body of missionaries in China. Alfred's decision to associate himself with this agency had obviously a dimension of rational calculation; as a rapidly expanding religious organisation that offered education and a fixed salary to its missionaries, the SMC was a good choice for a disheartened, but still zealous, missionary stranded on foreign soil. It could also be seen in terms of a quest for something more 'orderly' than the fragile structure provided by the C&MA (see further comments below). The SMC was not prepared to take him in their employ without an interview and without further training; he was asked to return home in order to establish a first hand contact and to demonstrate his dedication and ability.<sup>34</sup> Alfred must have been aware of the educational demands that the SMC imposed upon its missionaries, so he was probably not expecting to return in the foreseeable future when he left his field of work in early June 1900. He had planned to go to Shanghai by way of Beijing and Tianjin, but the clamour produced by the Boxer uprising forced him to retrace his steps and instead of going south, go further north and cross the border into Mongolia. At Harausa, north of Zhangjiakou, Alfred and a handful remaining Western missionaries met the convoy that Frans August Larson (1870-1957), the most adventurous of these Swedish IMA/C&MA workers, had prepared.<sup>35</sup> "So we came to realise that God, in advance, had prepared this convoy for us, without which we could not have travelled into the desert."<sup>36</sup> The passage to Ulan Bator took the company more than thirty days; in the Mongolian capital, they were assisted by the Russian consul who enabled them to continue to Kiachta in Siberia. Alfred recalled that they entered Russian territory on a Sunday at noon, at about the time the Liturgy had ended. When Alfred looked back on these events, the sight of friendly Christian faces and the awareness that they now were completely safe from the Boxers, made Siberia seem like 'Canaan'.<sup>37</sup> After a few weeks of rest, the company continued on their way to Sweden and 23 September 1900 they landed in Stockholm.<sup>38</sup> The returned C&MA missionaries were hailed as heroes

<sup>33</sup> Hereafter SMC.

<sup>34</sup> The correspondence between the SMC board and Fagerholm has been impossible to retrieve in the still unorganised archives of the SMC at the Swedish National Archives (Riksarkivet) in Stockholm.

<sup>35</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 29-33. A brief account is included in Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor and China's Open Century*, VII, 335.

<sup>36</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 33.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-43.





Swedish China missionaries in 1899.  
[Lund University Library, Manuscript Department]



in the national press.<sup>39</sup> Together with the rest of the missionaries Alfred stayed in the vicinity of Stockholm for a few days; among other events they visited the annually returning Holiness conference at Södertälje (twenty miles south of Stockholm) - an event of the magnitude of Keswick to many Swedish evangelicals.<sup>40</sup> Alfred recalled: "O, how lovely it was to sit down and listen to the word of God in the native tongue after all anxiety, a tiresome passage of the desert and a hurried journey in a foreign country. It was a foretaste of the peace and tranquillity that awaits all men after a happily ended pilgrimage."<sup>41</sup>

At this stage in the narration, Fagerholm's nationalism, always a sub-theme, becomes fully developed. His love for his native land, for speaking Swedish and for enjoying the company of compatriots is a constant theme of this section in the autobiography. To be sure, his newfound spiritual home, just as Swedish society at large during the years before the Great War, resounded with nationalism.<sup>42</sup> It is only to be expected that such popular sentiment added to Alfred's hostility towards the Simpson mission. Whatever had been the reason for his dislike of the C&MA in the first place, at the time of writing it is evident that he resented the Americans in part, at least, for not being Swedish. In Alfred's view, the lesson to be learned from the experiences he and his missionary brothers and sisters had had in China was simply that a foreign organisation should not be trusted. In spite of the international rhetoric of the Evangelical world, everyone looked to their own; foreigners were always given second rank. As a result, only national agencies could be depended upon; it was only such organisations that could be trusted not to let their missionaries suffer unnecessary hardship and to force them into becoming mere beggars at the mercy of their benefactors.

It has been noted that nationalism and patriarchy often goes hand in hand. Nationalism in general gives "supportive, symbolic, often suppressed and traditional roles" to women<sup>43</sup>, and thereby assigning a central position to men in the building of nations, empires and organisations. As an organisation influenced by early twentieth-century nationalism, the SMC certainly demonstrated the truth in such an interpretation. If the Swedish evangelical revival at large had displayed some 'irregularities' in terms of the gendered division of roles, as a national organisation the SMC represented a return to patriarchal 'normality'. At the turn of the twentieth century, women were denied lay rights, and consequently could not be elected board members; female preaching, that was quite common in other strands of Swedish evangelicalism, was prohibited by the central leadership of the SMC.<sup>44</sup> One may wonder if Alfred's choice to join the SMC, and his nationalism, also can be said to represent a desire to return to institutionalised patriarchy? His autobiography gives at best circumstantial evidence

<sup>39</sup> See for example *Dagens Nyheter*, 24 September 1900.

<sup>40</sup> For the Södertälje conferences, see Josefsson, *Liv och över nog*, 55. Regrettably little scholarly attention has been devoted to these conferences.

<sup>41</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Gustafsson, *Fred och försvar i frikyrkligt perspektiv*. Regarding Fagerholm's opinion of the English businessman who served as Swedish vice-consul in Central China, cf. Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 52.

<sup>43</sup> Nagel, "Masculinity and Nationalism", 253.

<sup>44</sup> Malmer and Sidenvall, "Christian Manliness for Women?"

in support of such an interpretation. He never mentions the need for a patriarchal organisation and a 'proper' division of roles between men and women directly, but such things do not necessarily need to be spilled out in a man's biography at this time. They were simply taken for granted as the normal state of affairs. On the other hand, he never singles out the way in which women operated in the 'Franson mission' for criticism, but, as we have seen in previous chapters, the departure from bourgeois norms were never as great as has sometimes been imagined. Yet, his quest for patriarchy was primarily aimed at securing domestic respectability and a clerical identity for himself. It was with hopes that such dreams were to be fulfilled that he had turned to the SMC.

## WRITING ADULT MANHOOD

At the time Alfred arrived in Sweden the studies at the SMC Missionary Training College had already begun. In order to earn a living before he could begin his studies, this former China missionary now returned to the vicinity of the family home and took up the position of assistant preacher at Mönsterås on the Swedish east coast. Alfred remembered this as a time of hard ministerial work, but he also recalled how his past experiences continued to haunt him. The aftermath of the dramatic terminus of his first period in China seems to have turned into something similar to what is today called post-traumatic stress disorder:

Due to my seven years of work in China and the arduous journey through the desert, I would have needed a few months of complete rest ... Throughout the winter I experienced repercussions from the escape and the nervous system was affected from time to time. Frequently, I had the most terrifying nightmares in which I was trying to escape the Boxers. I woke from such dreams in a state of anxiety and it took me a little while until I could ascertain that I was out of danger.<sup>45</sup>

Alfred ended his ministry at Mönsterås in May 1901. In September that year he finally enrolled as a student of the Missionary Training College in Stockholm. It is evident that Alfred saw this as a decisive step in his life. It seemed perhaps like a late spring to the writer, a time to live, perhaps for the first time, the life of an adolescent. Alfred recalled this as "a time of few sorrows", even though he found it strange "to be at school again at the age of thirty".<sup>46</sup> Like in most students' reminiscences, Alfred filled his account with loving and humorous depictions of what school life was like. Eccentric teachers, codes of conduct and of language are recorded in great detail, often with the covert object of illustrating his main point: 'theoretical knowledge' was needed for successful missionary work.<sup>47</sup> His attitude should not only be understood as the expression of a particular view of missionary preparation; it was simultane-

<sup>45</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 44.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 44, 46.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

ously a mild gloss over the peculiar kind of independent self-making through intellectual endeavour that we can see among some of his former co-workers. Implicit in Alfred's remarks is the belief that it was not enough to try to reach new levels through 'self-help'. What was needed were education and the habits and prestige it awarded among your fellow men if you were to attain to true manhood. Yet, they both aspired to a male clerical identity. Hidden beneath Fagerholm's middle-class dreams and aspirations we still can find the ideal that the 'clergy' (albeit, in this case, in a communion that had seceded from the ecclesiastical establishment) is the highest ambition imaginable for a young man from the countryside.

It was perhaps an unconscious literary strategy, but a central section of this autobiography thus becomes structured as a story of growth, maturation and a re-negotiated identity. If Emil Jacobson's treatment in New York becomes the most appalling expression of the childlike emasculation that the 'Franson missionaries' suffered in China, Alfred's schooldays in Stockholm represented a time of growth that prepared him for entering full manhood as a proud, and educated, missionary of the SMC. As a further confirmation that his life had now reached maturity, Alfred introduces the story of his engagement to Lydia Olsson, who eventually was to follow him to China as his wife:

Another circumstance, that for all my future life would be of indefinite significance both for myself and the missionary work, was that during this time in my native land I found that part of my own humanity which according to God's ordinances were to complete the half life that every solitary human lives. I found my God-given aid when he brought in my way that noble woman who has made my life so rich and happy. I had certainly felt the disadvantages of loneliness and the half human's unfilled longing after its divinely appointed twin-soul when I had done missionary work in China. Though my searching eye long had been looking for that person, I found her during this stay in my native land. Shortly before I went out as a missionary for a second time, I became engaged to Miss Anna Lydia Olsson from Stockholm.<sup>48</sup>

Alfred did not mention that his 'searching eye' had already found a companion in China; in the letter Alfred sent to Bingmark's sisters, he mentioned that his fiancée (possibly Miss Emelie Erikson) had also been killed by the Boxers.<sup>49</sup> For some reason, that important detail is left out when he composed his reminiscences. Maybe it seemed inappropriate to talk about lost sweet-hearts at the time of writing, but the omission may also have been produced by the narrative structure Alfred imposed on his life. To hint at the possibility of marriage and a nascent domestic life while being in China for the first time, would have gone against the image of a chaotic experience he was trying to convey. For all in all, as the quote above reveals, the ideal of married life was central, both to Alfred's idea of true manhood, and to his conception of missionary work. Even though he enjoyed the company of his fellow missionaries with which he worked upon his return to China in 1904, he regarded male homosociality as a tran-

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>49</sup> Landsarkivet i Visby, MS Bingmark papers: Fagerholm to Hilma Bingmark, 21 February 1901.

sitory, unsatisfactory phase.<sup>50</sup> Marriage even assumed spiritual connotations since Alfred regarded it as being of equal importance to “birth, conversion and calling to be a missionary”.<sup>51</sup> His union with Lydia in 1907 meant that a new page was turned for the blacksmith’s son: “Now commenced in many respects a new life for me”<sup>52</sup>, he recorded in his autobiography.

Lydia Fagerholm was to be his companion in China from 1907 until Alfred died in 1923. Her mother’s house outside Stockholm was to become their refuge in Sweden while on furloughs. It has also to be pointed out that his commitment to this woman could be seen as putting a seal on the social advance Alfred by now had reached.<sup>53</sup> Lydia’s father, who had died already in 1883, had run his own business as a private contractor. Through her mother, Lydia could even trace her pedigree back to an older bourgeois family. Like many contemporary women belonging to these social segments, she had received some education and had had a professional career both as a teacher and as a clerk at the publishing agency that was run in conjuncture with the central office of the SMC.<sup>54</sup> In China she was to assist her husband in his various assignments as language instructor and head of the congregations in, first, Wuhan, and later Hangzhou.<sup>55</sup> Five children were born into the family (of which one died at an early age); the published reports that appeared in the SMC periodical, *Missionsförbundet*, reveal that the family lived a well-organised and settled middle-class life in China.<sup>56</sup> For all his respectable leanings, he was not immune to the world of enthusiastic revivalism that had once driven him to China. When the first signs of a Pentecostal revival occurred in China a few years before 1910, he communicated his favourable impressions to the home audience.<sup>57</sup>

Mr Goforth, who has been the appointed visible means of this profound revival that has swept like a mighty wind over the Christian congregations of Manchuria, has communicated his experiences in a series of meetings that were held during one week. Heart-rendering were his portrayals and soul-searching his candid presentations. Fervent shouts of prayer and sighs of the heart have therefore risen to God that a breeze from the wing-stroke of the Holy Spirit may reach of Christians in Central China.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, the attraction of Pentecostalism never made him abandon the SMC and the life-project that he had seen fulfilled within that body. Summing up his second seven-

<sup>50</sup> Fagerholm papers: Självbiografiska anteckningar, 48-49.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>53</sup> It is profitable to compare Fagerholm’s experience with those of male missionaries in the Norwegian Missionary Society. See Nyhagen Predelli, “Marriage in Norwegian Missionary Practice”.

<sup>54</sup> Information about Lydia Olsson can be found in *Biografiskt album för Svenska Missionsförbundet*, 89; Stockholm, Missionskyrkans arkiv, Biografier: Missionärer i Kina, Vol. V, no. 36.

<sup>55</sup> Engdahl, “Missionär Alfred Fagerholm”.

<sup>56</sup> *Missionsförbundet*, 15 June 1909, 13 October 1910.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 15 November 1908.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

year period in China, which ended in 1911, it was not his missionary work nor his religious leanings but his domestic life that came to occupy the foremost place in the mind of Alfred: "I had been given a beloved wife by the hands of God, a precious treasure of eternity, who had gone before me to the heavenly home, and a little eternity creature who had stayed in our small family circle. I could not but feel my heart being filled with thankfulness to God for his mercy during the past seven-year period."<sup>59</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Among those who had once enrolled in the IMA during the 1890s, and who had managed to escape the Boxers, no less than five (Fagerholm included) entered the SMC.<sup>60</sup> The protracted conflict with the American sending agency and the miserable condition under which some of them had been forced to live during their first period in China probably made some of these men and women reluctant to once again throw themselves in the arms of organisations that seemed to be run along similar lines. Did they share Alfred's ideological views on missionary training? Did the male members of this group concur with his views on the making of the male self?

Fagerholm eagerly embraced the new template of ideal manhood he found within the evangelical environment. His evangelical creed became a safe road to social advance and with it followed the components to manufacture an appropriate gender identity. It should be noted that these ideals were not far removed from those to be found among the upward-looking working class. Within these circles the prestige afforded by an orderly marriage and proper schooling were highly rated<sup>61</sup>; we should therefore not understand his appropriation of middle-class, domestic, manhood was an act that included transgressing past ideals. Yet, it should be pointed out that his creation of an adult male identity was a conscious choice, which included, as often is the case, acts of rejection.

Fagerholm did not only leave behind working-class manhood, he also chose to refuse flirting with contemporary conceptions of a self-confident, aggressive, masculinity. Even though such concepts were to be found even among some of his fellow workers in China during the 1890s<sup>62</sup>, he remained loyal to ideals that were likely to be found within the world of his origin. We can only speculate about the reasons for this choice, but it should be noted that the habits of the social environment into which he was born came to influence his identity formation in a different way as well. In spite of his joining a free-church, anti-clerical, organisation, his male dreams did not stop at securing respectable domesticity. Like many generations of gifted countryside boys before him, it was the male persona of the clergyman that was his highest aspiration. Even though we can see clear signs of how this priestly ideal made him emphasise the need of education, and how it in all likelihood framed the duties and responsibilities of his wife, we know less of how it influenced his missionary work. Were he in

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>60</sup> Claesson, *Kinesernas vänner*, 323-343.

<sup>61</sup> Johansson, "Arbetare", 124-130.

<sup>62</sup> Sidenvall, *The Making of Manhood Amongst Swedish Missionaries in China and Mongolia*, ch. 5.

fact much closer to the, at that time increasingly unfashionable, ideal of the clerical missionary? We should at least bear in mind that the category of missionary workers to which Fagerholm belonged were in fact much more likely to be dreaming of a stodgy orderliness than an emotional 'irrationality', as is many times assumed even today.

# ALTERNATIVE MASCULINITY?

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## CATHOLIC MISSIONARIES IN SCANDINAVIA

YVONNE MARIA WERNER

In a report from July 1935, the superior of the Jesuit residence in Stockholm, Ansgar Meyer, reflected on the role of Catholic priests as leaders and counsellors of the faithful in Scandinavia. Using the terminology current at the time, he stressed the need to have *Priesterführer*, mentally strong, intelligent, and experienced men who could represent the authority and splendour of the Catholic Church in the Northern countries in a way that was worthy of the Church. This was especially important in Scandinavia, where the Church was more or less synonymous with its priesthood.<sup>1</sup> Fifty years earlier, in April 1884, another Catholic priest, the Barnabite Paolo Fumagalli, wrote in a similar tone to a fellow religious in Rome, describing missionary work as a trial of strength between Catholic and Protestant culture, and how in his view the clergy were the keepers of this culture. In his letter he draws a picture of the ideal Catholic priest, whom he describes as a man of prayer, a moral example, and a learned, cultivated, and energetic preacher of the Catholic faith. These were the priests needed to dispel the Protestants' prejudices against Catholicism and to pave the way for their conversion to the Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup>

Meyer's and Fumagalli's reports reflect the then standard view on priesthood and priestly manliness amongst Catholic missionaries in the Nordic countries. This is the main focus in this chapter, in which I present some results of my research on Catholic masculinity and mission in Scandinavia in the nineteenth and twentieth century. According to the Tridentine clerical ideals, revitalised by ultramontanism, a Catholic

<sup>1</sup> Rome, Archivum Romanum Societas Iesus (hereafter ARSI), Epistolae praepositorum generalium ad Provinciae Germaniae (hereafter Epist. Praep. Gen. Germ.) 1027: Meyer to the Jesuit general, Vlodimir Lédochowski, 17 April 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Rome, Archivio Storico dei Barnabiti (hereafter ASBR): Fumagalli to Nicola Nàsica, 19 July 1884. See Lindqvist, "Padre Paolo Fumgalli".



priest was not only a dispenser of the sacraments, a teacher, and a leader of the faithful, but was also expected to be a model of Christian virtues, piety, and asceticism. This *habitus clericalis* differed both from the ideals of the liberal-bourgeois middle class, and from the specifically male characteristics of the time. In the nineteenth century, the Catholic clerical identity assumed a markedly anti-bourgeois character.<sup>3</sup>

What then of the Catholic Church's missionary work in the Nordic countries? The breakthrough of the ultramontane revivalist movement in the 1830s led to an upswing for Catholic missionary work across the world, and Scandinavia was no exception. Catholic ecclesiology laid great emphasis on the Catholic Church's claim to be the only true church, and in consequence officially Christian but non-Catholic countries were regarded as mission fields, and stood under the authority of the Roman Congregation of Mission, the Propaganda Fide.<sup>4</sup> Catholic missionary activities were thus extended to the Nordic countries, which were organised as so-called Apostolic Prefectures or Vicariates. With the liberalisation of religious legislation in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Catholic Church could build up a network of parishes and missions, with schools, hospitals, and other social institutions. Predictably, all these Catholic missionary activities met with strong opposition, for the heritage of the Reformation, with its negative attitude towards the Catholic Church, was regarded an obvious and important part of various Nordic national identities. To many Northerners, Catholicism appeared as an outright menace to their culture and national integrity.<sup>5</sup>

Until the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, which led to a theological reorientation within the Catholic Church, Catholicism was not only a religion, it was also a worldview with clearly political aims. Catholic ideology stood in sharp contrast to the liberal ideology on which modern constitutional developments were founded. Catholicism thus evolved into a counter-culture with clearly anti-modern traits, characterised by a strict hierarchical order, a broad popular footing, and triumphalism.<sup>6</sup> The religious were very much to the fore, and regulated religious life was regarded as the most accomplished expression of Catholic piety. This was one of the reasons why the *Kulturkampf* between the Catholic Church and the state so evident in many countries chiefly affected religious orders.<sup>7</sup> In Protestant areas such as the Nordic countries, Catholicism appeared as a counter-culture in a double sense, for it not only represented an alternative worldview, but also an unfamiliar belief system that many

<sup>3</sup> Gadille and Zorn, "Der neue Missionseifer", 118-128, 188 ff. See Blaschke, "Priester als Milieumanager und die Kanäle klerikaler Kuratel".

<sup>4</sup> Rivinius, "Die Entwicklung des Missionsgedankens"; Gadille and Zorn, "Der neue Missionseifer", 133-155, 162-164. The Nordic countries remained under the Congregation of Propaganda Fide until 1977, when the Nordic Catholic dioceses were accorded full status as local churches.

<sup>5</sup> Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 7-176; Eidsvig, "Den katolske kirke vender tilbake".

<sup>6</sup> Altermatt, "Katholizismus". For an overview over this huge field, see Lönne, "Katholizismusforschung"; Altermatt and Metzger, "Religion und Kultur".

<sup>7</sup> De Maeyer, Leplace and Schmiedl, eds, *Religious Institutes in Western Europe*, especially Moulinet, "La législation relative aux congrégations religieuses en France", 218-230; Schmiedl, "The Social, Cultural and Legal Conditions", 255-261; Colombo, "The Laws of Suppression in Italy"; and Metzger, "The Legal Situation of Religious Institutes".

regarded as a threat to their Protestant-influenced national culture. Catholic religious orders and congregations were considered particularly dangerous.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the Catholic priests who worked in the Nordic area were members of religious institutes. They had thus professed to live according to the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience, which meant that they lived in a religious community, subject to a specific rule, and their relationship to their superiors was couched in the language of religious obedience.<sup>9</sup> In my chapter I will concentrate on two male religious orders: the Barnabites and the Jesuits. Italian Barnabites established themselves in Stockholm and the Norwegian capital Christiania (Oslo) in the 1860s, and were important in the initial phase of the Nordic Catholic mission in Scandinavia. Some of the Barnabite fathers were active at the University of Uppsala for a time, and for several years one of them served as court chaplain to the Swedish queen dowager Josephine, who was a Catholic.<sup>10</sup> In the wake of the ‘culture war’ in the 1870s, the Jesuits were expelled from Germany, and their seminaries and training institutes were moved to the Netherlands and Britain.<sup>11</sup> Jesuits from the North German Jesuit province settled down in Copenhagen and Stockholm, and later on also in other Swedish and Danish cities.<sup>12</sup>

The Jesuit order, or *Societas Iesu* as it is more properly known, was acknowledged to be the most fervent defender of papal authority and Catholic confessionality. They contributed to the spread and popularisation of typically ultramontane devotions such as the cult of Mary, the Eucharist, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Through their educational institutions, pastoral activities, and ministry as spiritual directors, the Jesuits exercised immense influence on the life of the Catholic Church and its general development.<sup>13</sup> In a Nordic perspective, the Jesuits were by tradition viewed as the ultimate representatives of the ‘Catholic peril’, and all the evils that were customarily associated with Catholicism.<sup>14</sup> It is therefore interesting to note that it was the self-same Jesuits who attracted most converts, and that the Jesuit boys’ school, *Sankt Andreas Kollegium (St Andrew’s College)*, in *Ordrup outside Copenhagen*, was attended by a large number of Protestant pupils.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Nilsen, *Nonner i storm og stille*; Werner, *Kvinnlig motkultur och katolsk mission*; Id., ed., *Nuns and Sisters in the Nordic Countries*.

<sup>9</sup> See Sastre Santos, *La vita religiosa*.

<sup>10</sup> The main work about the Barnabites still is the articles by Silvestro Declercq from the 1930s: *Pagina di cultura*; “La Rinascita cattolica in Norvegia”; and “Gli ultimi anni dei Barnabiti in Norvegia”. See also Lindqvist, “Från Genua till Gävle”; Carboni, “Cecare Tondini”.

<sup>11</sup> Murphy, *Der Wiederaufbau der Gesellschaft Jesu in Deutschland*, 361-375. Colleges were founded at Exaten, Blyenbeck, Wijmandrade, and Valkenburg in the Southern Netherlands, and Ditton Hall and Portico near Liverpool.

<sup>12</sup> For the Jesuits in Scandinavia, see *Jesu Hjerter Kirk 1895-1945*; Wehner, *S:ta Eugenia kyrka*; Hampton Frosell, *Omkring ‘Jesu-Hjerter’*; Werner, *Världsvid*, 128-160, 275-286; Olden-Jørgensen, *Sankt Andreas Kirke*; Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 106-110, 134-143.

<sup>13</sup> For overviews over the development of the Jesuit order in this period, see Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus*, 436-440; Fischer, *Der heilige Kampf*; and Hartmann, *Die Jesuiten*, 91-101. For ultramontane spirituality, see Busch, *Katholische Frömmigkeit und Moderne*.

<sup>14</sup> Piltz, “Åndamålet helgar medlen”, 208-212.

<sup>15</sup> Olden-Jørgensen, *Sankt Andreas Kirke*, 22-31. For anti-Jesuit currents, see Werner, *Världsvid*, 128-132.

One starting point in my research is the concept of the feminisation of religion in modern Western society, discussed in the introduction to this book. This concept is based on studies of liberal-bourgeois milieus, where a belief in science and social progress gradually replaced Christianity as a normative guideline. Religion was regarded as a private matter pertaining to women and therefore of no or little relevance to men. It should be noted that the discursive feminisation of Christianity proceeded in step with the division into the private and public spheres that characterised the emerging liberal-bourgeois society.<sup>16</sup> The concept of the feminisation of religion is also used to explain the secularisation of society. Christianity in all its shades ceased to be the foundation of society, and was replaced by political ideologies. Liberal demands that religion should be a private matter served to undermine the former political and social order, while the growing urbanisation and industrialisation of European society led to a loosening of traditional Christian culture. In many regions, not least in Protestant Scandinavia, there was a drastic reduction in church attendance, particularly amongst the men. At the same time, women's importance for church life increased, and this reinforced the image of church-going and worship as being essentially female affairs.<sup>17</sup>

This process did, however, not go unchallenged. Across Europe, religious revivals sprang up and contributed to the revitalisation of Christianity in which Christian men played an important role as preacher, organisers, and politicians. In Protestant countries, these revivals often originated in pietistic and Low Church movements, while the ultramontane revival in the Catholic world drew its inspiration from Counter-Reformation confessionalism. Although the nation-state was officially neutral on religious matters, confessional identity still was an important factor in the construction of nineteenth-century national identities. Several historians have noted that this fusion of confession and nation was characterised to a certain extent by a desire to strengthen masculine identity. This was especially evident amongst Protestants. By adhering to the nationalistic discourse of the day, they attempted to give Lutheranism a significantly manly profile, while religious observance in a more immediate sense was relegated to the female sphere.<sup>18</sup> As Michael Gross and Manuel Borutta have recently shown, a central role was given to combating Catholicism, which was depicted as unpatriotic and unmanly. From the point of view of liberal Protestants, Catholicism was a female religion.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> McLeod, "Weibliche Frömmigkeit - männlicher Unglaube"; Götz von Olenhusen, "Die Feminisierung der Religion und Kirche", 69-88; Tosh, *A Man's Place*; Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*; Schneider, "Feminisierung der Religion"; Van Osselaer and Buerman, "Feminization Thesis".

<sup>17</sup> McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 52-67, 147-158, 184-202.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 217-247; Blücker, *The Church as Nation*, 148-203, 313-320; Blaschke, "Das 19. Jahrhundert. Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?"; Altermatt and Metzger, eds, *Religion und Nation*; Van Osselaer and Buerman, "Feminization Thesis", 534-543.

<sup>19</sup> Borutta, "Antikatholizismus, Männlichkeit und Moderne", 58-70; Id., *Antikatholizismus*; Gross, *The War against Catholics*. See also Blücker, *The Church as Nation*, 180-257.

Catholicism itself took a different route. The popes' strong repudiation of liberal ideology also extended to the 'nationalistic heresy', and the prevalent Catholic social doctrine advocated the idea of a Catholic society, built on the eternal principles of God-given natural law, guarded and interpreted by the Church. Certainly, nationalistic tendencies were also current in the Catholic world, but they were not permitted to find the same open expression as they did in Protestantism.<sup>20</sup> Another important difference between the two confessions was the strong position in Catholicism of the ideals of celibacy and ascetic monasticism, whereas in the Protestant tradition it was marriage, reproduction, and family life that were regarded as the norm for a Christian life. True, marriage is a Catholic sacrament, but the celibate, regulated religious life is nonetheless thought superior. Prior to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council this superiority was even more accentuated than it is today. The religious were regarded as an 'estate of perfection', and the monastic lifestyle served as a model for lay piety. The normative position of celibate ideals within the Catholic Church was apparent also in the pre-Conciliar liturgy, with its disciplinary regulations fixated on gender and purity - in the sense of sexual abstinence.<sup>21</sup>

In studying how clerical masculinity was construed, I have analysed the correspondence between Catholic missionaries at work in Scandinavia and their local superiors and the Propaganda Fide. This correspondence deals primarily with missionary activities, problems, and strategies, but it also provides a useful account of expected virtues, patterns of behaviour, feelings, and opinions, and thus in much the same way as Fumagalli's and Meyer's letters, quoted above, reflects ideals, visions, and identities.<sup>22</sup> Crucially, it permits a focus on the ideals and anti-ideals or, to borrow from George Mosse, types and countertypes<sup>23</sup> of Catholic masculinity. What then were these 'Catholic' ideals of manliness? How were they related to ideas about Christian manliness that were evident in Nordic Protestantism? And in what way did they differ from middle-class, liberal constructions of masculinity?

<sup>20</sup> Altermatt, "Katholizismus und Nation". In his mission encyclical *Maximum illud* of 1919, Benedict XV condemned all forms of nationalism; Rivinius, "Die Entwicklung des Missionsgedankens", 256-262.

<sup>21</sup> Dortel-Claudot, "Vie consacrée"; Dander, "Berufung zum Priester und Ordensstand", 284 ff.

<sup>22</sup> The source material consists of official and private correspondence held in the archives of Propaganda Fide (ASPF), and the Roman archives of the Barnabites (ASBR) and the Jesuits (ARSI), as well as the archives of the German Jesuits in Munich (APGS).

<sup>23</sup> Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 56-76. According to Mosse, the countertypes reveal the ideals of manliness.

## THE BARNABITES' ITALIAN MASCULINITY

The Barnabite order, or *Congregatio Clericorum Regularium Sancti Pauli*, is a mission-oriented priestly fraternity founded in the 1530s and headquartered at the convent of San Barnaba, from which it took its name. In the late nineteenth century, the Barnabite order comprised around 200 members, distributed between three provinces. The motherhouse was, and is, in Rome.<sup>24</sup> In the summer of 1864, Barnabite priests began work in Christiania and Stockholm: Johan Daniel Stub, who was born in Norway, took over as Catholic vicar in Christiania; and Carlo Giovanni Moro and Cesare Tondini de Quarenghi were sent to Stockholm. For varying periods a number of other Barnabites were active in Norway and Sweden, amongst them Gregorio Almerici, who replaced the apostolic vicar, Bishop Laurentius Studach, as court chaplain to Queen Dowager Josephine, a post that Moro would also occupy. Later the Barnabites settled down in Gävle, with Moro as vicar and Fumagalli as chaplain. In the spring of 1885, Fumagalli was appointed lecturer in French and Italian at the University of Uppsala, where Moro was already lecturing, but because of opposition from the Jesuits, who had recently taken over pastoral responsibility for the Catholics in Stockholm and its environs, they were forced to give up this academic apostolate. Similarly, the plans for a Barnabite mission in southern Sweden had to be dropped. In 1887, the Barnabites abandoned what was left of their Scandinavian mission.<sup>25</sup>

The Barnabites had originally managed to gain a toehold in the Swedish-Norwegian mission largely thanks to the St Joseph Sisters, a French congregation with its motherhouse in Chambéry in Savoy that had been active in Scandinavia since 1856. The superior general, Marie-Félicité, pushed for the Barnabites to take responsibility both for the entire Swedish-Norwegian mission and the collaboration between the two congregations in the Scandinavian mission; the Barnabite general Francesco Caccia had similar aspirations.<sup>26</sup> The two congregations came into conflict with the Catholic vicar of the parish St Eugenia in Stockholm, the German Anton Bernhard, who for many years had administered the mission in all but name in place of the sickly Studach. If we are to believe the Barnabites and the St Joseph Sisters, however, the real power lay with Bernhard's housekeeper, the Spanish-born Caroline de Bogen. True, she had taken vows, and for a while had belonged to a religious congregation, but she and Bernhard lived openly together in the vicarage as if they were married, which the Barnabites and the Sisters naturally seized upon in their attacks. It was a scandal, they fumed, that a woman was allowed to exercise power in that manner, or as Tondini put it, "cosa humiliante per la dignità della nostra santa Religione", it was humiliating for their holy religion. In fact, Bogen in many respects held a position

<sup>24</sup> Gentili, *I Barnabiti*. The Barnabite order received Papal confirmation in 1579.

<sup>25</sup> For an overview of the Barnabite mission, see the articles by Declercq.

<sup>26</sup> ASBR, Epistolario Generalizio (hereafter Epist. Gen.): Marie-Félicité to Caccia, 9 March and 4 July 1864; Rome, Archivio Storico della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide' (hereafter ASPF), Svezia vol. 4: Marie-Félicité to Barnabò, 14 February and 25 July 1864. See Werner, *Kvinnlig motkultur och katolsk mission*, 63-65.

similar to that of a clergyman's wife, which Moro also alludes to in some of his reports by calling her "La Pastorinna" (pastor's wife).<sup>27</sup>

The details of these conflicts shed an interesting light on gender relations, and at first glance seem to confirm the thesis of the feminisation of religion. The women religious held a strong position in the mission, and by appealing to Rome could protect their independence from the local hierarchy. For the clergy, particularly of the older generation, this was a challenge. In a Propaganda Fide transcript regarding the prolongation of Moro's post as almoner of the St Joseph Sisters in Stockholm, Studach scribbled "Weiber-Regierung" in the margin. He was referring to the fact that the Chambéry congregation had defied him by ensuring that Moro would continue to serve as a priest in the Swedish capital.<sup>28</sup> However, if we look more closely, it transpires that the sisters did not have as independent a position as at first appears. If Caroline de Bogen wielded her influence by virtue of her position as Bernhard's trusted housekeeper, it was by exploiting their network of male contacts within the upper echelons of the church hierarchy that the Sisters of St Joseph managed to maintain their position in the Nordic mission.

The conflicts within the Catholic parish in Stockholm largely centred on Moro and his activities. Moro soon became very popular, both as a preacher and as spiritual director, and he was a welcome guest in the elegant parlours of the capital. When in 1868 and again in 1877 he was removed from Stockholm, this gave rise to a storm of protests, both from Catholics and Protestants. On the latter occasion, a letter of protest with more than 250 signatures was sent to Propaganda Fide.<sup>29</sup> The majority of the signatories were Protestants. Even Queen Dowager Josephine weighed in. In a personal letter to Pope Pius IX she pointed out that Moro, with his brilliant sermons, high education, and good example, more than anyone else had contributed to a more positive opinion of the Catholic Church in the country.<sup>30</sup>

The secular priests, who for the most part came from Germany, argued that the Barnabites were not fit to be missionaries in the Nordic countries, as their Mediterranean mentality was too foreign there. They admitted that the Barnabites' refined and elegant manners were very much appreciated in the upper ranks of society, but in their eyes, this 'parlour apostolate' did more harm than good for the Catholic mission.<sup>31</sup> For their part, the Barnabites, proud as they were of their "solido spirito di romanità" (solid Roman piety) and intellectual refinement, considered themselves to represent a superior kind of priestly manhood. In their letters they also emphasised

<sup>27</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Tondini to Caccia, 19 May and 10 June 1864 (in the later report, Tondini calls Bogen "padrona nella parochia") and Moro to the newly elected Barnabite general Teppa, 6 March, 10 May and 18 June 1867; ASPF, Svezia vol. 4: Marie-Félicité to Barnabò, 28 July 1864.

<sup>28</sup> Barnabò to Studach, 11 May 1867. See Palmqvist, *Die Römisch-katholische Kirche in Schweden*, II, 148.

<sup>29</sup> Declercq, "La Rinascita cattolica", 40-47, 146-155; Werner, *Världsvid*, 119 ff.

<sup>30</sup> Josephine to Pius IX, 22 October 1868, quoted in Werner, "Kunglig missionär", 120-122.

<sup>31</sup> ASPF, Svezia vol. 4-5: Bernhard to Barnabò, 12 September 1867, 12 February 1868, 28 July 1869 and to Barnabò's successor, Alessandro Franchi, 12 March 1874; Studach to Barnabò, 29 June 1868 and 4 January 1868; letters to Franchi from Studach's successor, the apostolic vicar Johann Georg Huber, 11 October, and from Rudolf Kiesler, 19 October 1875.



the importance of demonstrating the high dignity and sacral status of the Catholic priesthood and the cultural superiority of Catholicism.<sup>32</sup> It was not for nothing that they were strongly influenced by the Italian philosopher and theologian Antonio Rosmini-Serbati (d. 1855), who advocated a more liberal form of ultramontane Catholicism.<sup>33</sup>

How were the good and bad kinds of clerical manliness depicted in the reports from the Barnabite mission in Scandinavia? When commending someone, both the St Joseph Sisters and the Barnabites refer to ideals such as simplicity, decency, *piété* (piety), patience, and *tendre charité* (charity). In proposing Moro as Studach's successor as apostolic vicar, his fellow religious stressed qualities such as humility and self-sacrificing obedience; they emphasised, in other words, the kinds of 'passive' virtues that in the liberal-bourgeois discourse were usually associated with women.<sup>34</sup> Studach and Bernhard, for their part, accused Moro of lax practices as a confessor, a lack of orthodoxy, and of intriguing and defamation, as well as leading a dissipated life under the cover of the mission. He was said to avoid simple pastoral tasks such as teaching children their catechism, and instead gathered a whole 'battalion' of admiring, young Catholic women around him. These women refused to accept any other priest than Moro as their spiritual director and confessor.<sup>35</sup>

For Moro these conflicts were sources of great suffering, and he several times requested to be called back to Italy. He was deeply distressed at being passed over and what he saw as the unjust attacks to which he was subjected.<sup>36</sup> In 1866, the situation was especially critical, to the degree that Moro wrote saying that he could not continue with his work to "salvare le anime altrui" (save the souls of others) when in doing so there was a risk he would "perdere la sua propria" (lose his own).<sup>37</sup> Such outbursts of feeling are very common in Moro's correspondence with his superiors, in which the general tone is one of sacrifice, prayer, and obedience. In a letter of the spring of 1867 he characterised subordination to the will of his superiors as "la mia regola"; the commands of the general superior were for him equal to God's will.

<sup>32</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Almerici to Teppa, 1 and 4 October 1868; Stub and Moro to Teppa, 1 May 1868; Fumagalli to Nicola Nàsica, 19 July 1884.

<sup>33</sup> Scalese, "Il Rosminianesimo nell' Ordine dei Barnabiti". The 'Rosminians' were later accused of being modernists, and in 1877 several statements by Rosmini were put on the Index.

<sup>34</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Letters to Caccia from Marie-Félicité, 9 March, 5 and 21 July 1864, from Anne de Jésus, 13 March and 26 September 1865, and from Tondini, 10 June 1864; ASPF, Svezia vol. 4: Marie-Félicité to Barnabò, 4 July 1864.

<sup>35</sup> ASPF, Svezia vol. 4: Bernhard to Barnabò, 12 February 1868 and 29 June 1869; Studach to Barnabò, 29 June 1868 and 4 January 1869. In a report to Teppa of 23 October 1867 Moro quotes a letter from Bernhard in which the latter had called him "diavolo incatenato" (Declercq, "La Rinascita cattolica", 146 ff).

<sup>36</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Letters from Moro to Caccia, 15 and 16 August, 8 and 24 October 1864, 30 January, 30 June, 15 and 16 August and 21 November 1865, and from Moro to Teppa, 16 January, 19 May, 7 October 1866, 14 September and 23 October 1867. Declercq, *Pagina di cultura*, 225-227; and Id., "La Rinascita cattolica", 40-42. In the letter of 19 May 1866, Moro described the conflicts as a "guerra dissimulata e accanita" (terrible war).

<sup>37</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Moro to Teppa, 8 March 1866.



Prayer was an instrument in the battle against wilfulness.<sup>38</sup> We find a similar way of thinking in Tondini's correspondence with his superiors: for him, Roman decisions were a manifestation of God's will, and obedience was "esercizio di fede", an exercise of faith.<sup>39</sup> In a letter to Moro, the Barnabite general Alessandro Teppa underscored the point that religious sent out as missionaries were exempt from bodily asceticism, and therefore had to take great pains in sacrificing their own will and patiently suffering the afflictions which God had in store for them. Life as missionary was a "vita di sacrificio", a life full of sacrifices.<sup>40</sup>

This Catholic discourse of obedience was typical of the religious at this time, but in the reports and letters from Barnabites working in Scandinavia, obedience was articulated not only as a self-evident virtue, but also as an existential problem. Moro sometimes described his situation as a "via crucis"; Tondini compared his stay in Christiania to a sojourn in purgatory. Meanwhile, Almerici was certain that the effort to subsume self-will into obedience (*le sacrifice de moi-même*) must have its limits - in his case, these limits were reached with the plan to send him to the small Norwegian town of Bergen, which, he argued, would deprive him of fraternal community life and at the same time force him to have contact with the world (*il mondo*) that he had renounced in his vows.<sup>41</sup> The picture of the ideal male religious that we see a glimpse of here in many ways opposes the contemporary bourgeois manly ideal, which emphasised the fight for independence and autonomy, whereas virtues such as humility, self-sacrifice, and subordination were associated with woman. Also in Protestantism these ideals were honoured as Christian and gender-crossing virtues. But here obedience and subordination were associated with the worldly sphere - with military life, the household, and the dutiful soldier - and, contrary to the Catholic discourse, the exercise of these virtues was not seen as a merit in a religious sense.<sup>42</sup>

Another characteristic trait is that the religious sent north as part of the Barnabites' Scandinavian mission were doubtful about their postings. Fumagalli wrote to a fellow religious that he had accepted being sent to Sweden "sans aucun enthousiasme, obéissant presque machinalement au désir des Supérieurs", only as an act of obedience. Tondini had been enthusiastic at the beginning, but this was because he saw the activities in Scandinavia as a preparation for a future apostolate in Russia. Like the others, he accepted in obedience, or as he put it "*paratus sum sine voluntate*" (I am prepared without wanting it).<sup>43</sup> One reason for their unease was the lack

<sup>38</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Moro to Teppa, 13 April 1867, with more examples in letters from Moro to Teppa, 7 October 1866, 4 and 29 August 1868; ASPF, Svezia vol. 4: Moro to Studach (copy), 2 April 1868; this kind of terminology is also present in the letters of the other Barnabites, hence ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Stub to Caccia, 18 February 1865.

<sup>39</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Tondini to Caccia, 3 October 1865; ASBR, Carte Almerici: Tondini to Almerici, 2 October and 25 November 1865. See Carboni, "Cecare Tondini", 153-156.

<sup>40</sup> ASBR, Epistolario Caccia: Caccia to Moro, 3 March 1869.

<sup>41</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Letters to Teppa from Moro, 15 and 29 June, and from Almerici, 4 November 1868. In a letter of 4 October the same year, Almerici openly criticised Teppa for having accepted Moro's move to Christiania (ASBR, Carte Almerici: Tondini to Almerici, 14 November 1864).

<sup>42</sup> Walter, "Gehorsam".

<sup>43</sup> Fumagalli to Giuseppe Granniello, 4 March 1885, in Lindqvist, "Padre Paolo Fumgalli", 407 ff.; ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Tondini to Caccia, 27 February 1864.

of success, compounded by the conflicts with the secular priests in the region, but the principal reason seems to have been the impossibility of founding real communities. The Barnabites in Scandinavia wrote with constant complaints of the lack of brotherhood and regulated religious community life. Religious life normally included lay brothers who did all the practical work. In lacking this support, the Barnabites in Scandinavia either had to ask the female congregations for help, or to employ maids. What this could lead to is revealed in a letter from Almerici when he was in Christiania: their maid was such a terrible cook that Moro was forced to take over in the kitchen. Almerici mentions this as an inconvenience, not because cooking was considered something for women, but because housekeeping in a male community should be left to lay brothers.<sup>44</sup> The Barnabites were used to living in homosocial, manly communities, in which masculinity was constructed within the framework of a hierarchical order relative to other men.

In the conflicts over the Barnabites' Scandinavian mission, which coincided with the preparations for the First Vatican Council and the end of the Papal States, the Roman Curia manifestly took the side of the Barnabites. The Barnabite general superior had close contacts with the prefect of Propaganda Fide, Cardinal Alessandro Barnabò, and the latter on many occasions inquired about the possibility of letting the Barnabites take over responsibility for the Swedish-Norwegian mission. However, at the decisive moment the Barnabite general and his staff declined this offer, arguing that the order lacked sufficient personnel and economical resources to fulfil this mission.<sup>45</sup> The fact that the Italian Barnabites evidently had difficulty acclimatising to Scandinavia may also have played a role.

The Barnabites Scandinavian missionary project was in many ways a product of women's efforts. The extensive correspondence considered here often deals with women and their role in the issues at stake, but invariably in uncomplimentary terms whenever their power and influence are mentioned. The Barnabites refer to the influence over the work of the mission wielded by Caroline de Bogen, the vicar's housekeeper, and the Daughters of Mary, a French congregation that had been active in Sweden since the 1850s, as an expression of a wider decay and disorder. These women, Moro stated in a letter of spring 1865, did not strive for wisdom or sanctity, but for power.<sup>46</sup> Feminine power is here viewed as the antithesis of sanctity. Studach and Bernhard expressed similar views. In order to belittle Catholic protests over Moro's transfer to Christiania, they described the outcry as having been organised by his female admirers. In a long report to Propaganda Fide, Bernhard expressed his indignation that Rome gave so much credit to the reports - and complaints - by women religious. It was his view that the problems in the Swedish mission were mainly due to the strong influence this female congregation had in Rome.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Almerici to Teppa, 4 November 1868.

<sup>45</sup> Declercq, "La Rinascita cattolica", 157-161; an account of these negotiations is given in ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Teppa to Stub, 17 June 1869.

<sup>46</sup> ASBR, Epist. Gen.: Moro to Caccia, 30 January 1865.

<sup>47</sup> ASPF, Svezia vol. 4: Reports to Barnabò from Studach, 4 January 1869, and from Bernhard, 28 July 1869.

This could be interpreted as contempt for women's ability and competence. Yet a closer look reveals that the issue turned on the exercise of power in the absence of formal authority. The women who were accused of exercising undue power were all women religious or, as in Bogen's case, secular women living under vows. In this period women religious were increasingly considered to be priests' assistants, belonging to the clergy in a wider sense.<sup>48</sup> This is reflected also in the correspondence that I have analysed: Bernhard considered Bogen to be his trusted collaborator; the Barnabites were prepared to work with the St Joseph Sisters as equal partners, and there is no evidence that they regarded the women religious as subordinate to male religious. The belonging to religious orders, the 'estate of perfection', transcended socially constructed gender differences. However, this did not mean that the male religious accepted women's political emancipation. In one of his articles in the newspaper *Gefle-Posten*, Moro denounced the idea of equal political rights for men and women, arguing that it would threaten the moral standards of society. To his mind, it was women's vocation to spread love and charity - it was in this sense that women could and should exercise power in society.<sup>49</sup>

## THE JESUITS' ULTRAMONTANE MASCULINITY

After 1880, the influence of the woman religious waned. The Barnabites left Scandinavia, abandoning the field to the other male orders, and the Jesuits in particular. No women religious were involved in the establishment of the German Jesuits in Denmark and Sweden in the 1870s, and there was no question of collaboration of the kind that had existed between the Barnabites and the St Joseph Sisters. The Jesuits even hesitated to engage themselves in the troublesome "Nonnen-Seelensorge" (pastoral care of the nuns), as one of them put it.<sup>50</sup> Unlike most other religious institutes, the Society of Jesus has no female branch. According to the constitutions in force in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Jesuit apostolate was particularly directed towards men, a principle that the generals constantly repeated in their instructions.<sup>51</sup> Yet in reality they were very much concerned with women. The majority of the Scandinavian converts instructed by the Jesuits were women, and women were the most fervent participants at the religious devotions and the spiritual exercises organised by the Jesuits.<sup>52</sup>

The ministry of the Jesuits in Scandinavia was concentrated in Copenhagen, Ordrup, and Århus in Denmark, and in Stockholm and Gothenburg in Sweden. Until the closure of the Jesuit college in Ordrup in 1920, as a consequence of repeal of the

<sup>48</sup> McNamara, *Sister in Arms*, 600-627; Sastre Santos, *La vita religiosa*, 860-875.

<sup>49</sup> Moro, "Gif akt", 23-25.

<sup>50</sup> Munich, Archivum Provinciae Germaniae Septentrionalis (hereafter APGS), Dania V 65.

<sup>51</sup> In a letter of 12 September 1922 to the superior in Stockholm, Wessel, the general Ledóchowski thus points out: "curam virorum feminarum curae praeferere debemus" (the pastoral care of men should be preferred to that of women) (ARSI, Provincia Germaniae Inferioris (hereafter Germ. Inf.) 1020). Koch, *Jesuiten-Lexikon*, 1020-1022.

<sup>52</sup> Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 171, 187.

anti-Jesuit legislation and the re-establishment of the order in Germany, more than 200 Jesuits had worked for varying lengths of time at the college.<sup>53</sup> The Jesuit Sacred Heart church in Copenhagen was the centre of a flourishing parish, and since it was extra territorial, the Jesuits had no administrative work and could thus concentrate on pastoral care, conversions, writing, and liturgy; it was here the most magnificent religious services were performed.<sup>54</sup> In Sweden, the Jesuits took over the pastoral care of the St Eugenia's parish in Stockholm, and later also of the Catholics in Gothenburg. According to their contract, the Jesuits in Stockholm planned to erect a college and a large church dedicated to St Bridget in the capital, but the plans were never realised because of incessant conflict with the apostolic vicar, Bishop Albert Bitter. Furthermore, in both Sweden and Denmark the Jesuits clashed with sections of the secular clergy, who were critical of the order's privileged position in the Scandinavian mission.<sup>55</sup>

The Jesuits' constitutions, with its typically military metaphors, have a decidedly manly character. At the head of the order stands a general, who serves for life. The order is characterised as a group of warriors for Jesus Christ, and the apostolate is described as a holy combat; redemption as a war goal; and the vow of obedience is depicted in military terms. Severe demands are made of each individual Jesuit. He must excel in intellectual ability, have a firm character, show self-control, and be quick in taking the initiative. The principle of hierarchy is strongly emphasised, and obedience, not humility, is regarded as the chief virtue. Except during the initial period, there is no common recitation of the divine office, and asceticism and the need to observe the vow of poverty are entirely subordinate to the demands of the apostolate. This fact, as well as the military and rational spirit that permeates the rule of the order, means that the Jesuit ideals of manhood have a great deal in common with the hegemonic masculinity discourses of the emerging bourgeois society.<sup>56</sup> The order's constitutions and regulations are intended to guarantee uniformity and discipline, and the maintenance of a mutual spirit in the provinces and communities worldwide. On a normative level we can therefore speak of a Jesuit construction of masculinity in the singular. Yet it remains to be seen what expression this Jesuit idea of manliness took in the Protestant context of the Scandinavian mission.

In practical life, the Jesuits were mainly active as teachers at the order's colleges, and as writers or as preachers and confessors at the great 'popular missions' (*Volksmissionen*) that were established one after another. The first generation of Jesuits who came to Scandinavia had all been trained for an apostolate in a German-speaking Catholic milieu, or as missionaries in a non-Christian region - not for missionary work in 'foreign' Protestant countries, and even less for the task as assistant priests or vicars in missionary parishes. Moreover, the constitutions of the order specifically prohibited Jesuits from engaging in ordinary pastoral care. The reports from the first decade of the order's Scandinavian mission illustrate the huge prob-

<sup>53</sup> Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 108 ff., 141 ff.; Olden-Jørgensen, *Sankt Andreas Kirke*, 22-30.

<sup>54</sup> Hampton Frosell, *Omkring 'Jesu-Hjerte'*, 16-75; Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 106-110, 134-143.

<sup>55</sup> Werner, *Världsvind*, 201-211; Id., *Nordisk katolicism*, 289 ff.

<sup>56</sup> For the Jesuits' constitutions, see de Chastonay, *Die Satzungen des Jesuitenordens*; Fischer, *Der heilige Kampf*, 70-98; Hartmann, *Die Jesuiten*, 19-29.

lems the Jesuits faced in the encounter between ideals and practice in this new and in many ways strange cultural environment. Certainly, in Scandinavia the Jesuits were spared the kind of harassment they had experienced at the hands of the authorities in the wake of German *Kulturkampf*. Yet interest in the Catholic activities was limited, and for several years the Jesuit fathers had to work under demanding circumstances, with their problems compounded by their primitive accommodation. During the development phase they had to live in ordinary block of flats in what one of the fathers described as unworthy conditions, with ‘noisy women’ on the staircases and in the kitchen. This was considered a danger, not least for the lay brothers. In such humble circumstances, it was not easy to maintain the discipline and hierarchical order prescribed in the rules of the order, and the reports give evidence of constant conflicts and discord in the Jesuit residences.<sup>57</sup>

In their instructions, the Jesuit generals constantly repeat the importance of following the order’s rules and regulations to the letter, with strict attention to spiritual lives and to ensuring that the “**unione fraterna**” (**brotherly unity**) in the communities never failed.<sup>58</sup> The reports to Rome from the Jesuit residences in Scandinavia usually begin with a statement saying that these demands were largely met, followed by an account of edifying examples and measures taken to cope with deviations from the order’s norms.<sup>59</sup> Failings in obedience and hierarchical subordination are a recurrent subject in the reports: hence a report from 1921, in which the headmaster of the Jesuit college in Copenhagen, Friedrich K pferle, accused two younger Jesuit scholastics recently sent there for training of following their own ideas and neglecting the obligation of obedience to their superiors (*dependentiam a superioribus suis neglexit*).<sup>60</sup>

The correspondence about disciplinary offences provides illustrations of the counter-images, or - to quote Mosse - ‘counter-types’ of the ideal Jesuit. Accounts of faults and deficiencies are at times quite detailed. This is reminiscent of the ‘lapidation’ during Jesuit training, when all scholastics were asked to write down the faults and deficiencies they observed in their peers, whereupon they all received an account of their own faults.<sup>61</sup> However, the reports also contain praise of Jesuit fathers whose good characters are described as models. By contrasting these positive examples with their negative counterparts, we can arrive at a picture of the ideal Jesuit and the corresponding ideals of masculinity. Serious offences of a sexual nature were very rare in

<sup>57</sup> There are several reports of such conflicts from Ordrup and Copenhagen to the provincial in the 1870s, and from Stockholm in the 1880s (APGS, Dania V 65 and OV 64 Suecia).

<sup>58</sup> For example, ARSI, *Epistolae praepositorum generalium ad Provinciae Germaniae* (hereafter *Epist. Praep. Gen. Germ.*) IV-VI: Letters to Hermann Zurstrassen (Ordrup), 24 April 1873 and 30 November 1874, and to Lieber (Stockholm), 25 March and 30 June 1893, 1 December 1894, and 31 May 1902.

<sup>59</sup> This is usually formulated as “*De bona nostrorum spiritu generatim et disciplinae custodia et regularum observantia constat*”, as, for example, in the reports from Thomas Br hl (Ordrup) to the general Anton Maria Anderledy, 11 July and 2 October 1887 (ARSI, *Provinciae Germaniae Particulares* (hereafter *Germ. Part.*) 1010-XX).

<sup>60</sup> ARSI, *Germ. Inf.* 1019-V: K pferle to Led chowski, 26 October 1921.

<sup>61</sup> von Hoensbroech, *14 Jahre Jesuit*, II, 163 ff. This method is mentioned by the provincial Thill in a report to L dochowski, 19 March 1918 (ARSI, *Germ. Part.* 1015-XV).

the Scandinavian Jesuit communities, but at the beginning of the twentieth century there were two notable exceptions. The first concerned a lay brother at Ordrup who was found to have molested children. This crime was naturally judged to be extremely grave, and if it had come to the knowledge of the Danish public, it would have led to the immediate closure of the Jesuit college. The lay brother was sent to Exaten to do penance, and was later expelled from the Jesuit order. The second case concerned a prominent man in the Danish Jesuit mission, the former headmaster of the Jesuit secondary grammar school in Copenhagen, Clemens Bannwart, who was discovered having an affair with a woman. He was also obliged to leave the Jesuit order, and returned to his home country Switzerland.<sup>62</sup>

A common ploy to avoid conflict was to transfer Jesuits between various districts and leading positions. This strategy was frequently used in Denmark: Johannes Lohmann was at first headmaster in Ordrup, then superior of the German province, and later a variety of posts ranging from being a priest in Århus to his reappointment as headmaster in Ordrup.<sup>63</sup> The fact that he had been superior of the German Jesuit province for a time thus gave him no particular advantage in his career; on the contrary, a great deal of inconvenience. The superior of the community in Århus, Ludwig Schmitt, was anything but happy to have the former provincial as a colleague in the parish. In his reports he accused Lohmann of trying to take command and of not respecting his own authority.<sup>64</sup> According to the rule, a Jesuit had to accept the function he was assigned by his superiors. This acquiescence was an important point in the Jesuit obedience discourse, and a central element in the Jesuit construction of masculinity. For certain Jesuits, this involved constant transfers; for others, remaining at the same post for long periods, sometimes even the main part of their lives. However, it was not always the case that Jesuit fathers accepted the posts chosen for them by their superiors, a problem that certainly exercised the provincial Ernest Thill in his report to the Jesuit general in the autumn of 1907. Sometimes it was the priest in question who raised objections, but more often it was the superior or other fathers at the residence about to receive the newcomer who opposed the decision.<sup>65</sup> It seems that this kind of resistance was often accepted, but protests from individual fathers were not.

Two cases from the Scandinavian mission may serve as examples of the Jesuit leadership's thinking. One concerns Albert Ammann, who after two years in Sweden returned to Germany at his own request in 1926; the other, August Brunner, who despite repeated, almost desperate, letters of complaint to the provincial, was only allowed to return to his homeland after having a mental breakdown. The reason why the Bavarian-born Ammann was sent to Sweden was that he had a Swedish mother,

<sup>62</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1011-XXI, 1012-XVII and Germ. Inf. 1019: Lohmann to Martin, 6 and 17 October 1898, K pferle to Bley, 17 October 1922; ASPF, Nuova Serie 1920/105: Jacob Olrik to Arnold Diepen, 9 January 1921.

<sup>63</sup> ARSI: Summarium vitae P. Ioannes Bapt. Lohmann SJ.

<sup>64</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1010-XI: Schmitt to Anderledy, 19 January 1889, in which Schmitt complains that Lohmann wants to show his superiority and govern ("suam in omnibus super nos superioritatem vult ostendere").

<sup>65</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1013-I: Thill to Wernz, 10 October 1907.



spoke fluent Swedish, and had had personal experience of Sweden from his visits to his grandmother in Stockholm in his childhood. Moreover the Ammann family was acquainted with the newly appointed Catholic bishop of Sweden, the Bavarian Johannes Müller.<sup>66</sup> Intellectually talented but weak and sensitive, Albert Ammann had barely been accepted to become a Jesuit. The decisive factors were the good will he had shown and his eagerness to obey and correct himself. Similar considerations contributed to the provincial Bernhard Bley's decision to agree to Ammann's humble request to be recalled to Germany and placed in a larger community.<sup>67</sup> In a letter to Bishop Müller, who had expressed his dissatisfaction at Ammann's relocation, Bley explained that not everyone, however well-intentioned, could cope with the hard conditions of the Swedish mission.<sup>68</sup> Judging from the correspondence between Bley and the Jesuit general, the problem in this case was not that a Jesuit was discontent with his post, but how to motivate his replacement to the bishop. The wish to respect Ammann's demand was thus given priority.

With Brunner it was quite another matter. The question of how to handle his wish to be replaced turned into involved dispute over how to interpret the spirit of the Jesuit order, and by extension the ideals of clerical manliness associated with it. Brunner, who was still a scholastic and thus had not yet taken his final vows, was considered intellectually gifted. During his training at the Jesuit College in Valkenburg he had been offered a post as Jesuit professor in exegesis once his studies were successfully complete. He declined the offer, explaining that his heart was more set on philosophy. Yet his wish to qualify as a teacher of philosophy was refused by his superiors, who judged him to be far too 'subjectively' oriented to be entrusted with a professorship in this discipline.<sup>69</sup> His request to become an editor of the prestigious Jesuit magazine *Stimmen der Zeit* was refused for the same reason. Instead he was sent to the Jesuit community in Stockholm, charged with carrying on a scientific apostolate and engaging in religious and cultural political debate. Above all, it was intended that he should begin a theological exchange with Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, whose church-political programme became highly topical following the ecumenical meeting in Stockholm in 1925. Representatives from Protestant and Orthodox churches had taken part in the meeting, but the Catholic hierarchy condemned the whole idea of ecumenism, and regarded conversion to the Catholic Church as the only way to establish church unity.<sup>70</sup> Brunner, however, was ill at ease in Stockholm,

<sup>66</sup> Albert Ammann's mother Ellen, who was a member of the Bavarian parliament and head of the Bavarian Catholic women's association, had been a moving force behind the decision that the Jesuits should stay in Stockholm and Müller's appointment as apostolic vicar after Bishop Bitter (Werner, *Världsvind*, 230 ff., 253 ff.).

<sup>67</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1014-II: N. Prümm to Wernz, 17 March 1913; ARSI, Germ. Inf. 1021: Bley to Ledóchowski, 29 October 1927.

<sup>68</sup> ARSI, Germ. Inf. 1021: Müller to Bley, 19 October 1927 (copy), Bley to Ledóchowski, 29 October 1927; ARSI: *Historia Domus Holmiensis* 1927-28. Ammann was sent to the college in Frankfurt am Main.

<sup>69</sup> ARSI, Germ. Inf. 1022: Bley to Ledóchowski, 29 October 1927. Brunner was interested in philosophy and he was strongly influenced by the ideas of Max Scheler.

<sup>70</sup> For the Stockholm conference, see Sundkler, *Nathan Söderblom*, 330-382.



especially as he considered his stationing there as a kind of demotion: his journalistic activity in Sweden was negligible, apart from some articles in the newly founded Catholic magazine *Credo*. In letters to his provincial and fellow Jesuits in Germany, which through the system of censorship came to the knowledge of the provincial leadership, he complained of his situation. In his private letters he was sharply critical of Bley, while seeking support from the provincial of the South German province, Augustin Bea.<sup>71</sup>

This obvious violation of the order's discipline made it far more difficult to let him return to Germany, especially as the Jesuits in both Stockholm and Copenhagen were strongly opposed to him being recalled. Bea, meanwhile, thought that Brunner had been treated too harshly, and that since his involuntary stay in Stockholm would lead to a mental breakdown it was thus essential to have him recalled to Germany. Bea also argued for letting him edit *Stimmen der Zeit*, where he could deal with philosophical and historical questions, naturally under the control of the censors.<sup>72</sup> Johannes Lauer, who had just replaced Bley as superior of the North German province, was of a different opinion. In a report to Rome and in his letters to Bea in spring 1928, he gives a detailed account of Brunner's case. With a swipe at Bea, who had said that Brunner's talents could not do themselves justice in Sweden, Lauer pointed out that the post in Stockholm was "eine ehrenvolle Bestimmung", an honourable assignment. If Brunner had only been more assiduous, he could have found a much more fruitful field for his activities in Sweden than he ever could in Germany. According to Lauer, Brunner's failure could in part be explained by his nervous temperament, but the main reason was his desire (Sucht) to play a leading role in the German cultural debate. Lauer interpreted this as evidence of Brunner's ambition and pride, qualities that stood in glaring contrast to the virtuous ideals of the Jesuit order. He was also critical of the way Bea and others talked of 'unused talents', which he considered to be erroneous, and evidence of a deficient understanding of the Jesuit spirit. Indeed, Lauer doubted whether Brunner had any future in the Jesuit order.<sup>73</sup>

The Jesuit general Vlodimir Ledóchowski had repeatedly stressed the need to apply harder selection criteria when choosing candidates for the order, to safeguard the obedience and the spirit of asceticism of the order. However, in this case he let mercy season justice. In the summer 1928, Brunner returned to Germany as a broken man, where he was placed at the Jesuit college in Münster. In a letter to Lauer some months before his departure, Brunner, alluding to the consequences of his sojourn in Sweden for his health, described himself as "das Opfer der übertriebenen Pläne des Kardinal van Rossums und unseres Bischofs". He thus considered himself a victim of what he felt was an unrealistic programme of re-Catholicisation pursued by the Prefect of Propaganda Fide, van Rossum, and Bishop Müller. At the same time he

<sup>71</sup> ARSI, Germ. Inf. 1023: Lauer to Ledóchowski, 17 March 1928. Brunner was called "der wissenschaftliche Kopf der Mission".

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*: Bea to Lauer (copy), 18 January 1928.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*: Lauer to Ledóchowski, 17 March and to Bea (copy), 25 January 1928; Bea to Lauer (copy), 18 January 1928. In the letter to Bea, Lauer stressed that "Christus lässt auf die Dauer seine Sache nicht benutzen zur Befriedigung des Stolzes und der Ehrsucht" (personal ambition should not be the prime mover in the battle for the Christian cause).

expressed distress at his failure in Stockholm, saying that he was willing to make a new attempt if this was considered necessary.<sup>74</sup> It was perhaps this expression of submission that gave Brunner a new chance to show that he was suitable for the order. Two years later he took the eternal vows, and he was later assigned a post as a teacher of philosophy at the College of Valkenburg, thus finally obtaining the chair in philosophy that he had hoped for so long. After the Second World War he was also appointed as editor at *Stimmen der Zeit*.<sup>75</sup>

The training period amounted to a process of ‘sifting’, and young Jesuit candidates who did not live up to expectations had to leave the order. There are several examples of this in reports from the Scandinavian Jesuit communities, and several Northerners were amongst those who had to leave the order.<sup>76</sup> The Danish convert Peter Schindler, who spent one year at the Jesuit Collegium Germanicum in Rome, recounts in his letters and autobiography some of the difficulties a young man brought up in a Protestant cultural environment faced in adapting to the Jesuit’s rigid system of ‘formation’. He admits that he had learned a great deal during his time at the college, not least self-discipline and study technique. However, all his life Schindler detested to the Jesuit ideals of perfection, and more specifically the asceticism and the intellectual uniformity that in his view characterised the ultramontane Catholicism of which they were an expression.<sup>77</sup> The same holds for the Swede Niklas Bergius, who was excluded from the Jesuit order in 1908 because of his refusal to accept the decree of Pius X against theological and philosophical modernism. After his expulsion, Bergius left the Catholic Church, although he subsequently returned ten years later.<sup>78</sup> Others fared better. Amongst them were the Dane Ludvig Günther and the Swede Carl Brandt, who both were appointed as teachers at Sankt Andreas Kollegium in Ordrup. After the closure of the college in 1920, Günther became parish priest in Ordrup.<sup>79</sup>

In reports from the Scandinavian Jesuit missions, lack of obedience and unwillingness to submit are seen as the greatest failings. Those who admitted their guilt were forgiven following their punishment. This was the case with the Icelander Jón Sveinsson or Svensson, later better known as the famous children’s author ‘Nonni’. In the 1890s, when he worked as a teacher at Sankt Andreas Kollegium he had come into conflict with his superiors and behaved in such a way that he was threatened with dismissal, and compulsorily transferred to Exaten for two years of penance. After twelve years at Exaten, where according to the provincial, Joye, he was not guilty of any new trespasses, he asked for permission to return to Ordrup, a request

<sup>74</sup> ARSI, Germ. Inf. 1023: Ledóchowski to Lauer, April 1928 and Brunner to Lauer, 7 March 1928 (copy). In a report (*litterae consultatoris*) to Ledóchowski, 30 January 1928 (ARSI, Germ. Inf. 1023), Brunner describes the bishop as ardent but imprudent (“ardens zelo pro conversione animarum ... prudentia caret”).

<sup>75</sup> “August Brunner”, 729.

<sup>76</sup> APGS, OV 64 Suecia: Lieber to Lohmann, 18 December 1887. See Hallberg, “Svenskfödda jesuiter”, 36-39.

<sup>77</sup> Schindler, *Tilbage til Rom*, II, 36-60.

<sup>78</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1013-II: Thill to Wernz, 18 and 20 February 1908; Hallberg, “Svenskfödda jesuiter”, 40.

<sup>79</sup> Hallberg, “Svenskfödda jesuiter”, 36-38; Olden-Jørgensen, *Sankt Andreas Kirke*, 31 ff., 36.

that was refused by the headmaster Joseph Droste. Yet, Svensson was allowed to devote himself to his writing, and at his own demand stationed in a Jesuit residence in Hungary. The Jesuit general gave permission for this on condition that Svensson should not be allowed to pursue any public activities and that the superior of the residence was informed of his earlier offences.<sup>80</sup>

What then are the positive qualities and patterns of behaviour to be found in the Jesuits' correspondence? Apart from obedience, above all piety and prayer - the second of the two pillars on which the Catholic religious built their lives - were accentuated as ideals of virtue, but also qualities such as creativity, organisational skills, and an ability to act. This much is evident from the generals' instructions.<sup>81</sup> It was mainly in conjunction with appointments and transfers that individuals' good qualities were mentioned. One of the Jesuit fathers working in Scandinavia who had especially good testimonials was the above mentioned K pferle, who had done his practical training as a scholastic in Ordrup. After the closing of the college in 1920, he was made director of studies and later headmaster of St Knud's school in Copenhagen. Apart from his pedagogical and intellectual capacity (*firmitate capite*), demonstrated by his excellent certificate of studies, his piety and humility were given a special emphasis. In a report from 1927, he is described as "*vir maxima meriti et eximia virtutis*", a man with the best merits and excellent virtues, who set a good example to others. His only fault was that he was occasionally too lenient towards pupils and scholastics.<sup>82</sup> In other reports the exemplary qualities of the lay brothers are mentioned: hence in 1889 the superior in  rhus praised the community's three lay brothers for their prudence, loyalty, and exemplary obedience. In the same way, Friedrich Lieber, who for many years was superior at the Jesuit residence in Stockholm, on many occasions mentions the diligence and industriousness of the lay brothers.<sup>83</sup> That said, the ideals in operation for the lay brothers differed somewhat from what was expected of the priests, and for the most part lay brothers were only brought up in reports in connection with problems of various kinds.<sup>84</sup>

Edward Wessel was a Jesuit priest who, like K pferle, was described in the reports as a model of virtue. He was for many years responsible for the church music at St Eugenia's parish in Stockholm. Lieber, otherwise so critical, praised him for his zeal and ardour, and for the fact that he never complained in front of a third party.<sup>85</sup> The provincials also noticed Wessel's good qualities. When in 1913 the question arose

<sup>80</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1014-I & II and Epist. Praep. Gen. Germ. IX: Joye to Wernz, 28 November 1912 and 9 March 1914; Wernz to Joye, 13 March 1914.

<sup>81</sup> ARSI, Epist. Praep. Gen. Germ. 1020/21: Led chowski to Bley, 6 May 1922 and 5 September 1925. In the first letter the German province is praised for its excellently organised apostolate and its ambition "*die Ordensdisziplin  ber all aufrechtzuerhalten*".

<sup>82</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1013-XI & 1015-VIII and Germ. Inf. 1018 & 1022: Hausmann to Wernz, 13 August 1909, and reports to Led chowski from Droste, 27 December 1915, from M. Back, 4 January 1920, and from Josef Wolfisberg, 5 January 1927.

<sup>83</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1010-XI & XVIII: Schmitt, the superior in  rhus, to Anderledy, 19 January 1889; APGS, OV 64 Suecia: Lieber to Lohmann, 3 April 1887.

<sup>84</sup> APGS, Dania V 65: Straeter to Meschler, 16 April 1884; ARSI, Germ. Part. 1011-XVIII & 1012-XIV: Schmid to Martin, 25 January 1897 and Lieber to Wernz, 5 March 1904.

<sup>85</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1010-XVIII: Lieber to Anderledy, 31 July 1889.

of a suitable Jesuit priest to be headmaster of the Collegium Germanicum in Rome, the order's leadership considered entrusting this important post to Wessel, who by then had been the superior in Stockholm for a year. They were impressed by his skilful management of the difficult situation in Stockholm in the wake of the conflict with Bishop Bitter and the controversial decision to abandon the Jesuit mission in Sweden, and noticed that he was in possession of "aussergewöhnliche Tugend" (exceptional virtue) and "zu jedem Opfer bereit" (ready to make any sacrifice). Even the Jesuit general, Franz Xavier Wernz, who had known Wessel since his studies in Rome, recommended his candidature. Yet the appointment did not materialise. The Jesuit order was obliged to keep on the parish of St Eugenia, and it was thus considered best that Wessel stayed at his post as superior in the Swedish capital.<sup>86</sup>

There is good reason to dwell on the idiom of the reports to the Jesuit general and the provincial. In the letters to the general, which are usually in Latin and often start by intoning that the community in question is imbued with a good religious spirit and discipline, the tone is often pious, subservient, and humble. The writer formulates his wishes in terms of a humble prayer (*humilitate precor*), expresses his confidence in God's grace and mercy (*Divini enim Salvatoris bonitati e miserationi*), and proclaims his own insignificance.<sup>87</sup> Thus in December 1890 the headmaster of Sankt Andreas Kollegium, Benedikt Fels, pointed out in a report that he had feared (*timebam*) not being able to represent the Jesuit order in a worthy manner, but the general's tender admonitions (*vota et monita caritas plena*) had given him new courage.<sup>88</sup> His predecessor, Paulus Wehrhahn, voiced even stronger doubts about his own abilities in a report just after being appointed headmaster in 1883. He emphasised his unsuitability for the task, referring to his lack of prayerfulness and devotion to God (*spiritus orationis et fidei et coniunctionis cum Deo*), and of the prudence and quick judgement prescribed in the order's rule.<sup>89</sup> In a letter to the general in October 1921, Küpferle expressed himself in similar terms when he describes his reactions to his appointment as headmaster of the Jesuit lyceum in Copenhagen, stating that he had received the news in tears (*cum lacrimis*) because of his lack of the necessary experience and virtues for the task.<sup>90</sup> Yet both Fels and Wehrhahn accepted their appointments. The order's rule strictly forbade the 'climber spirit', but at the same time the Jesuit discourse of obedience required that all religious accept the positions assigned them.

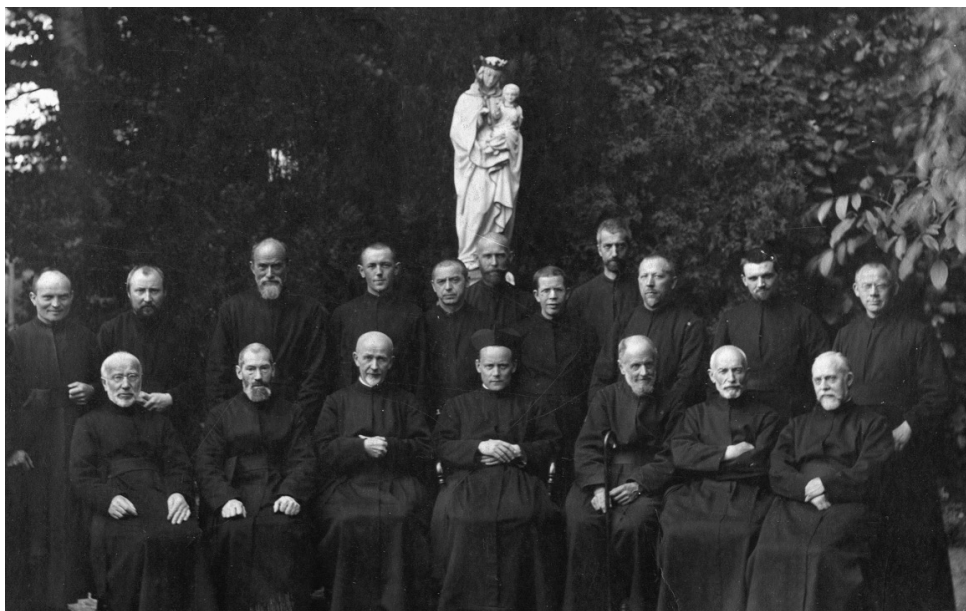
<sup>86</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1014-II & XVIII: Report to Wernz from Wessel, 22 November 1911, and from Joye, 7 August 1913; ARSI, Epist. Praep. Gen. Germ. IX: Wernz to Joye, 14 August 1913. Wernz had been Wessel's examiner both when he passed his first exam and when he took his doctoral degree in Rome.

<sup>87</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1010-XX and Germ. Inf. 1022: Brühl to Anderledy, 2 October 1887 and Wolfsberg to Ledóchowski, 4 July 1927. Brühl noted that "*spiritus Societatis et unione fraterna et observantia regularum et disciplina domestica*", whereas Wolfsberg stated that "*spiritus et disciplina religiosa in nostra collegio florent*".

<sup>88</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1010-XX: Fels to Anderledy, 21 December 1890.

<sup>89</sup> ARSI, Germ. Part. 1009-XVI: Wehrhahn to Hoevel, 3 February 1883.

<sup>90</sup> ARSI, Germ. Inf. 1019: Küpferle to Ledóchowski, 26 October 1921.



Jesuits at the college in Ordrup.  
 [Catholic Historical Archives, Copenhagen]

The tone is very different in the letters to the provincial, which are written in German. Formulaic expressions of piety or subordination are seldom found. Instead, their accounts of actual situations are matter-of-fact, and conflicts and difficulties as well as visions for the future and of strategies are described in a manner more straightforward than in the reports to the general. The style is sometimes downright familiar, not to say laddish. In one of Lieber's reports to the provincial he cheerfully mentioned that "Erzbischoflichen Gnaden Julius" (His Grace the Archbishop Julius), as he called one of the Jesuits in Gothenburg, had visited the residence in Stockholm and that it was "urgemütlich" (very cosy). Their church was "gesteckt voll" (full to bursting), he wrote in another. Anton Bernhard, vicar of the St Eugenia parish, is described as "Haudegen" (old campaigner), whose confessional fighting spirit is contrasted with Bishop Bitter's fear of offending the Swedish establishment. The superior Hermann Zurstrassen notes in his account of the Lent sermons in Copenhagen in 1879 that the Catholics had "den Protestanten auf die Hosen gegeben" (given it to the Protestants good and proper).<sup>91</sup> In discussing disciplinary problems and offences against the vows of obedience the reports come straight to the point, without invoking God's mercy and help as they would have done if addressing Rome. The reports from the provincials to Rome, as Thill's above related writings illustrate, are characterised by the same frankness as the reports from the superiors to the provincial leadership, although humorous formulations are notable by their absence.

<sup>91</sup> APGS, OV 64 Suecia: Lieber to Lohmann, 14 October 1885 and 24 November 1887, and to Rathgeb, 19 December 1890; APGS, Dania V 65: Zurstrassen to Hoevel, 14 June 1879.



In these reports the Jesuit order appears both as a homosocial male community, with latitude for humour and comradeship, and as a tightly organised, religious fighting organisation marked by strict obedience and a powerful sense of duty. Religious practice was equally subject to this ethic, which found expression not only in the prescribed spiritual exercises but also on a discursive level. The deluge of emotions that we find in the Barnabites' correspondence is hardly to be found in Jesuits' official letters and reports. Here the tone is either dry and matter-of-fact or boyishly humorous; the religious expressions used are more restrained and often seem formulaic. In the Latin yearly reports (*litterae annuae*), which were distributed to all the order's colleges, residences, and houses, the language is far more apologetic and the religious dimension more noticeable. Yet there is still no question of expressing personal religious feeling but rather carefully phrased stories of religious conversions, miraculous cures from serious illnesses, and other expressions of God's mercy.<sup>92</sup> The tone is humble, the stories designed to express a strong confidence in God's will that all will be for the best. Similar perspectives are evident in *Jesu-Hjertes-Budbringer*, the magazine edited by the Jesuits in Denmark, although admittedly the focus here was primarily on religious conversion to a purer, more pious and moral life.<sup>93</sup> In both cases, the importance of the religious virtues associated with worship, attending mass, and taking the sacraments is much emphasised. Female saints and witnesses of the faith are described as equally courageous and heroic as the male ones - and inversely the male saints are described as being as pious and eager to live up to the religious virtues as the female ones.<sup>94</sup>

In a work on the metamorphosis of Jesuit identity in the twentieth century, Peter McDonough uses examples from the American Jesuits to show the decisive role played by the idea of male superiority for the construction of Jesuit manliness and priestly identity up to the Second Vatican Council. The man represented *logos*, a higher principle of reason, whereas the woman was earthbound and in need of male leadership.<sup>95</sup> This same view is reflected in *Jesu-Hjertes-Budbringer*, in which male primacy is all, and woman's subordination is regarded as a natural obligation, and a prerequisite for man's ability to realise his full manhood. Looking to the theology of the Creation for its justification, this gender order also served as a fundament for the Catholic concept of priesthood; according to Catholic doctrine, priestly ordination is reserved to men. A catechism from 1928, edited by the previously mentioned Ansgar Meyer, underlines the connection between priesthood and masculinity. He describes the priestly ministry as oriented towards fatherhood and leadership, which by nature belonged to the man, while leadership in turn calls for manly qualities such as combativeness, courage, and firmness. Further, he compares the role of the father

<sup>92</sup> There are several accounts of this type also in the *litterae annuae* (ARSI). See Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 137 ff.

<sup>93</sup> An example is the account of the strapping farmer who when stricken by serious illness promised God to be a more fervent Catholic and receive the communion often if his health was restored (*Jesu-Hjertes-Budbringer*, 1921).

<sup>94</sup> Very illustrating in this respect are articles about two modern saints, Contardo Ferrini (1859-1902) and Gemma Galgani (1878-1903), in *Jesu-Hjertes-Budbringer*, 1923. See Maurits and Van Osselaer in this volume; Van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*, III.

<sup>95</sup> McDonough, "Metamorphoses of the Jesuits".

within the family with the role of the priest in the parish.<sup>96</sup> In *Jesu-Hjertes-Budbringer*, priestly celibacy is universally praised. It is said to be the Church's will that chaste hands administer the sacrifice of the mass, and that a chaste mouth proclaims the word of God and pronounces the absolution on his behalf.<sup>97</sup> The purpose of articles of this kind was to insist on the holiness, high dignity, and exclusively male character of Catholic priesthood.

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

The manliness that is the ideal in the correspondence analysed is humble, pious, obedient, strong-willed, and self-sacrificing. Virtues such as piety, humility, patience, self-abnegation, and obedience are to the fore, whereas characteristics such as independence, self-assertion, and fame-seeking were regarded as negative. In the Barnabites' letters these types and counter-types of ideal priestly masculinity are articulated in a very emotional way, whereas the Jesuits' reports are often more temperate and to the point. From the viewpoint of contemporary, middle-class liberals these virtues were feminine, proper for women but not for men, to which should be added the fact that Catholic priests and the religious lived in celibacy, a way of life that to Protestants appeared both unethical and unmanly. Yet by the same token, for the male religious the celibate way of life and the order's discipline were important parts in the making of manliness.

In her book *Protestant och katolik* (Protestant and Catholic) of 1919, the Swedish writer Emilia Fogelklou sharply criticises what might best be called the Protestant counterpart to the liberal gender ideology, with different ideals of virtue for men and women. For her, the active 'Protestant' virtues independence, truthfulness, and self-determination only concerned men and were considered as bad if applied to women, whereas the passive 'Catholic' virtues patience, quietness, obedience, and mildness were considered suitable for women. In Fogelklou's view, Protestantism, especially in its Lutheran form, was a typically manly religion, whereas Catholicism with its cult of Mary and its numerous woman saints emphasised the feminine side of the Christian religion.<sup>98</sup> Yet in a Catholic perspective the question was not about male and female ideals, but about Christian ideals and their opposite.

Yet it should be noted that also in Protestantism, as several articles in this book show, the ideals described by Fogelklou as Catholic and womanly were praised as virtues shared by all Christians. In sermons, pastoral letters, and obituaries these virtues are claimed as the special guiding principles for Christian life. In Evangelical circles, men as well as women confessed their sins and pronounced solemn promises to live pure and holy lives. Yet here these virtues were associated with the vocation of everyday life, and not, as was the case in Catholicism, with a consecrated life or pious exercises, neither were they ascribed any merit in a theological or religious sense. Perhaps the Catholic doctrine of grace, emphasising the importance of good deeds

<sup>96</sup> Meyer, *Troslära*, III, 84-96.

<sup>97</sup> "Palmer omkring örkenkilden", *Jesu-Hjertes-Budbringer*, 1919, 21-30, 41-50.

<sup>98</sup> Fogelklou, *Protestant och katolik*, 28-30.



to redemption, to a certain extent offered protection against the discursive feminisation of these Christian virtues. This would explain the difference between Catholic and Protestant strategies for re-masculinisation noted in this book by Olaf Blaschke, Anna Prestjan, and David Tjeder. While the Catholic promoters of re-masculinisation described piety, attendance at religious services, and taking communion as genuinely manly, Protestant men seem to have experienced a certain contradiction between traditional Christian values and modern masculinity.<sup>99</sup> Admittedly, Catholic writings display similar ambitions to re-code the Christian virtues as masculine ones, but in their case the superiority of the religious discourse is unquestioned. As Tine Van Osselaer has shown in her analysis of Catholic gender discourses in Belgium, Christian virtues and masculinity could easily be combined, and no clear-cut distinctions were made between pious femininity and irreligious masculinity.<sup>100</sup>

According to the gender theories of Pierre Bourdieu and R. W. Connell discussed in the introduction to this book, it is primarily in the relationship between men and groups of men that manhood is constructed and realised, while women play a passive role.<sup>101</sup> This seems to be contradicted by the results of my study, for in the establishment of the Barnabites in the Nordic countries, women religious played an important role. However, the question is whether the conflicts analysed here truly reflected the construction of masculinity, or whether they instead showed men's reactions to challenges of various kinds that evinced a habitus pattern developed in a completely different context. Viewed more closely, the conflicts reveal a discursive struggle between men in a patriarchal system in which, although women undoubtedly had a great influence, only men held power and were in a position to generate norms. Within this hierarchy, nuns exercised influence through men, and not by virtue of their own authority; by acting in this way, they merely bolstered the prevailing norm and its gender order.

The conflicts into which the Jesuits were drawn were ultimately a matter of demarcating competence in relation to the secular clergy. Their reports on these issues as well as their correspondence dealing with internal problems reflect the discursive struggles over clerical manhood. In the Jesuits' correspondence, pious expressions of emotion were less in evidence, and qualities such as self-discipline, organisational skills, energy, and creativity were accorded great importance. Jesuit ideals thus in broad outline conformed with prevailing secular constructions of masculinity, and the military vocabulary that characterised the Jesuit order's rule in many ways accorded with the tendencies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, in the Jesuit discourse the more 'passive' virtues of humility, piety, self-abnegation, and above all obedience were thought far superior, and thus the ideal expression of Jesuit identity and manhood.

<sup>99</sup> Kirkley, "Is it Manly to be A Christian?"; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortune*, 107-113.

<sup>100</sup> Van Osselaer, *The Pious Sex*, 277 ff.

<sup>101</sup> Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*; Connell, *Masculinities*.



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**PART IV**  
**FOSTERING CHRISTIAN MEN**

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# THE MAKING OF CHRISTIAN MEN

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## AN EVANGELICAL MISSION TO THE SWEDISH ARMY, c. 1900-1920

ELIN MALMER

Salvation industry sprang up in Northern Europe in the nineteenth century. Revivalist literature was produced in a never-ending flow, preachers accosted people in the streets and in their homes, and several new denominations and missionary organisations came into being.<sup>1</sup> In Sweden growing numbers were attracted by the evangelical battle cry of Christ's advancing Kingdom. By 1920 revivalist denominations and organisations had as many adult members as the emerging socialist trade unions.<sup>2</sup> These multi-faceted revivalist bodies were united in their belief in the necessity of religious conversion. Their aim was to lead man to salvation and to support the converts in their new lifestyle. The focus of this chapter is *Svenska Missionsförbundet* (Swedish Mission Covenant or SMC), part of the mainstream in Swedish evangelical revivalism, which included a large affiliated network of local congregations, missionary organisations, Sunday schools and youth societies. The revivalist expansion coincided with military rearmament in Europe. The period from the Crimean War to the First World War was characterised by a growing nationalism, sometimes interwoven with Christian elements, and increased international tensions. It was also the age of mandatory military conscription. Sweden declared itself neutral at the outbreak of the First World War, yet its parliamentary agenda from the 1890s on had been dominated by military defence issues, and following a

<sup>1</sup> Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, 43-57; Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 1-19; Gelfgren, *Kristendomen och den moderna världsbilden*, 120-121.

<sup>2</sup> It is estimated that each of the two movements had about 300,000 adult members in 1920 (out of a population of about six million), after which the revivalist curve levelled out whilst trade union membership continued to rise (see Lundkvist, *Politik, nykterhet och reformer*, 26).

drawn-out political process, parliament voted yes to general conscription in 1901.<sup>3</sup> A prodigious construction project began to supply the army with suitable barracks, and troops were moved from their traditional training camps to newly built garrisons in the towns. It is estimated that a third of government expenditure was allocated to the so-called barracks programme in the decade starting in 1901. The programme was nearly accomplished in 1920.<sup>4</sup>

The costs of rearmament caused intense political conflicts in the years prior to the First World War. The debate on defence investment was closely connected to the issues of parliamentary rule and universal suffrage, and the dividing lines over defence issues cut straight through the large group of revivalist members of parliament and led to conflicts within the SMC. There were three main groups: conservative supporters of a strong national defence; liberals who advocated moderate defence expenditure; and pacifists and conscientious objectors. The strength of their interrelationships and degree of influence within the SMC varied over time.<sup>5</sup> For the revivalists, military camps were a new field, and missionary work got underway among the soldiers, often in the soldiers' homes, which initially were built with charitable funds next to the military training camps and barracks.

At the SMC's annual meeting in June 1914 the Liberal member of parliament E. A. Nilsson, a rising star in the movement and later minister for defence in the coalition government led by the Liberal politician Nils Edén, hailed the new cause.<sup>6</sup> According to an account in the SMC magazine *Missionsförbundet*, Nilsson stressed the importance of missionary work among soldiers. He argued for the erection of an extensive network of soldiers' homes and the need for devoted people engaged in this missionary activity. The word of God was to be preached, and the young men were to be given the opportunity to read, write letters, and enjoy private conversations. The soldiers' homes should be equipped with libraries and cafeterias, situated close to the training camps so that the conscripts and regular soldiers could visit them without special permission. Moreover, activities should be shaped in collaboration between different revivalist bodies.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the soldiers' homes ought to be jointly administered by SMC bodies together with the Baptists or Methodists, for example, but were not to constitute the basis for new denominations.

The account did not mention the self-evident fact that set apart the soldiers' homes from the traditional military culture, which was awash with alcohol: they were

<sup>3</sup> Johansson, *Europas krig*, 81-85, 150-152; van der Veer and Lehmann, *Nation and Religion*, 6-7; Strömberg-Back, "Stam och beväring", 116-124; Ericson, *Medborgare i vapen*, 100-109.

<sup>4</sup> Berg, *Kaserner, baracker och hyddor*, 69; Borell, *Disciplinära strategier*, 82-83.

<sup>5</sup> Gustafsson, *Fred och försvar*, 226-232; Lundkvist, *Politik, nykterhet och reformer*, 214-226; Svärd, *Väckelserörelsernas folk i Andra kammaren*, 150-151.

<sup>6</sup> Stockholm, Svenska Missionskyrkans arkiv (hereafter SMA), GK3, Generalkonferenserna 1910-1915: 'Program för Svenska Missionsförbundets 36:e årsmöte och generalkonferens i Stockholm den 2-7 juni 1914', 3-4. Nilsson was an MP for the Liberal Party 1906-1923, Minister of Defence 1917-1920, and member of the SMC board 1917-1923 (Norberg, Tjerneld and Asker, *Tvåkammardagen 1867-1970*, IV, 503).

<sup>7</sup> Nilsson's speech was published in *Missionsförbundet*, (1914), 199; and in *Ungdomsvännen*, (1914), 208.

teetotal.<sup>8</sup> The SMC's increased involvement in the missionary work among soldiers is an unexplored field of research. This work was part of the movement's home missionary work, as opposed to its overseas work. Statistics from the army itself and the *Förbundet Soldaternas Vänner* (Association of Soldiers' Friends) show that there were more than fifty soldiers' homes in 1920, which means that they were to be found at almost all military camps. In the same year the SMC and its affiliated network were an established presence in at least a third of these soldiers' homes.<sup>9</sup>

The purpose of this chapter is to study the SMC's involvement in this missionary work and the institutional framework within which the SMC operated: the soldiers' homes. A study of missionary work among soldiers necessarily leads to the larger question of the production of masculinities in the revivalist denominations and organisations. What were the arguments put forward in the SMC about taking part in this work? How did they view the young men who were called up as conscripts? I will approach these questions by studying a range of sources from different levels within in the SMC network. The records of the SMC's central organisation do not give a full account of the gender imagery that underpinned its work among soldiers; a more fruitful source in this respect is the magazine *Ungdomsvännen* (The Young Person's Friend), founded in 1897 following the centralisation of the SMC's youth work.<sup>10</sup> In its articles on military conscription and advice to the readers one finds notions of masculine lifestyles at the military training camps. To make the picture more complete, I have also analysed missionary work among soldiers at a local level: the soldiers' home in the town of Örebro in central Sweden. What were the reasons that prompted local SMC ministers to engage in this work, and how best to characterise the social practices at such soldiers' homes? However, I will begin by placing the SMC's work among soldiers in a broader Swedish and European context.

<sup>8</sup> For Swedish military culture, see Rehnberg, *Vad skall vi göra med de blanka gevär, 95-111 passim*; and Sörensen, *Det blänkande eländet, 131-139*. See also Ahlbäck, "Där pojkar blir män"; and Larsson, "Manligt och omanligt på Karlberg".

<sup>9</sup> *Svenska arméns rulla 1920*; Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1920, 100-104*; Id., *Soldatmissionens, 10-45*; Stockholm, Riksarkivet, Svenska Missionsförbundets arkiv, Huvudarkivet A, nr 13A: 'Utredning om den s k soldatmissionen vid de svenska lägerplatserna, gjord i januari 1914', 21-22 January 1914, § 39.

<sup>10</sup> Keijer, *Ungdomen för Kristus, 32-53*. In its first years, *Ungdomsvännen* was a monthly magazine, and later a bi-monthly, with a circulation in 1919 of 15,000 copies (Svenska Missionsförbundet, *Svenska Missionsförbundets årsberättelse 1910, 10*) and in 1920 of 22,800 copies (Id., *Redogörelse för Svenska Missionsförbundets ungdoms tionde verksamhetsår, 7*).



## EVANGELICAL REVIVALISM AS RE-CHRISTIANISATION

The SMC was founded in 1878 after a conflict with the established Lutheran Church of Sweden over sacramental issues. In the period studied the movement had about 100,000 members and was therefore the largest Swedish revivalist denomination. Its members usually came from the lower middle or upper working classes, and the movement's recruitment was most successful in rural areas.<sup>11</sup> Youth groups were established that put local affiliations with the SMC on a more formal basis, and in 1910 a national youth organisation, *Svenska Missionsförbundets Ungdom* (Youth of the Swedish Mission Covenant), was founded. In the same year it took over editorial control of *Ungdomsvännen* and made it their periodical. Over the following decade several local associations attached themselves to the national youth organisation, which by its own estimation had a membership surpassing 36,000 in 1912 and 56,000 in 1919.<sup>12</sup> The SMC was highly feminised in a literal sense, for the greater part of its membership were women. In many of the congregations two-thirds of members were women, and in some the proportion of women was even greater.<sup>13</sup> They were also in the majority in the youth organisation, for according to the organisation's own calculations from 1919, men accounted for 35 per cent and women 65 per cent.<sup>14</sup> Yet the SMC leadership remained predominantly male.<sup>15</sup>

The SMC and its network were part of a wider revivalist landscape.<sup>16</sup> From the mid nineteenth century Low Church revivalism was increasingly evident within the Church of Sweden, matched by a strong Anglo-American religious influence. The Baptist Union of Sweden attracted extraordinarily high numbers of adherents in the period in question.<sup>17</sup> A Methodist Church was established in Sweden in the early 1870s following the revocation of the laws that prevented freedom of worship for dissenting groups, and in the late 1870s, the Salvation Army reached the shores of Sweden and spread rapidly. From the middle of the nineteenth century Swedish revivalism was showing the influence of the Evangelical Alliance. A movement that had originated in the United Kingdom, the Alliance emphasised the revivalists' commonly held religious beliefs. Its main idea was that all born-again Christians should be united, regardless of confessional, denominational, or congregational borders. Internationally, it positioned itself on the front-line against Catholicism. It was a source of inspiration for youth organisations such as the YMCA and the YWCA as well as for the

<sup>11</sup> For statistics, see Lundkvist, *Folk rörelserna i det svenska samhället*, 106-117; for a history of the SMC, see Andreasson, *Liv och rörelse*, ch. 2-5; Nicklasson, *En kristen livsrörelse*, 9-31.

<sup>12</sup> Lundahl, *Några ord om Svenska Missionsförbundet*, 46-47; Svenska Missionsförbundet, *Redogörelse*, 366.

<sup>13</sup> Lundkvist, *Folk rörelserna i det svenska samhället*, 92-93, 107.

<sup>14</sup> Svenska Missionsförbundet, *Redogörelse*, 366. For a discussion on the effects of the feminisation process, see Malmer and Sidenvall, "Christian Manliness for Women?", 394-404.

<sup>15</sup> It was not until 1946 that the SMC had its first female *församlingsföreståndare* ('local pastor'); see Hörlén, "Låt oss i stället göra en insats", 203.

<sup>16</sup> For an overview, see Bexell, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, VII. ch. 2-6.

<sup>17</sup> The Baptist Union of Sweden, with 43,000 members in 1905, formed the largest group of Baptists in Europe, with the exception of the United Kingdom (see *Baptistmissionens årstryck: Tidskrift för utgiftning af konferenshandlingar, statistik och circular*, 12 (1905) 1, 31).

Endeavour Movement and the Salvation Army.<sup>18</sup> However, the Alliance would prove controversial in Sweden, and as early as the 1880s met fierce opposition from Archbishop Anton Niklas Sundberg.<sup>19</sup> One reason for the general resistance in Sweden might have been an unwillingness to give up on the parish, which had a strong position in the Lutheran tradition as well as within the SMC. Another reason was that some leaders of the various revivalist bodies viewed the Alliance as a threat to their denominations. Yet, as we shall see, the transconfessional ideals of the Evangelical Alliance had influential supporters, and is relevant here if only for the practical implications for the soldiers' homes when members of different denominations went about their religious devotions.

The growth of revivalism was strong, and took a variety of forms and organisations. I would argue that this expansion was an empirical example of what Hartmut Lehmann has called re-Christianisation in a period notable for its secularisation and de-Christianisation.<sup>20</sup> Equally, it can be asked in what way the soldiers' homes enterprise should be considered an act of re-Christianisation. At the military training camps, the revivalists encountered a masculine lifestyle wedded to forms of behaviour they could only regard as sinful.

## MISSIONARY WORK AMONG SOLDIERS

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, soldiers' homes were established by revivalist Christians in a number of countries, including Germany and the United Kingdom. There have been some studies of British soldiers' homes and the efforts of revivalist and evangelical groups to instil the Christian spirit in ordinary soldiers. A Soldiers' Home and Institute opened at the garrison at Aldershot in 1863 would spawn imitators across the British Empire.<sup>21</sup> The American historian Kenneth Hendrickson emphasises the evangelical and domesticating programmes of the soldiers' homes as a crucial alternative to male, military values and the army's disciplinary and control systems. The British historian Michael Snape nevertheless downplays the importance of soldiers' homes, and concludes that their missionary activities were generally speaking a failure. However, along with various army reforms they may have contributed to the drop in crime in the British armed forces in the latter half of the

<sup>18</sup> Gustafson, *D. L. Moody and Swedes*, 322, 327-328; Newman, *Evangeliska alliansen*, 245-250, 271-273; Karlström, *Kristna samförståndssträvanden*, 12-37.

<sup>19</sup> Kjölleström, "Biskoparna och den evangeliska alliansen i Sverige", 296, 319; Randall and Hilborn, *One Body in Christ*, 159-164.

<sup>20</sup> Lehmann, "Von der Erforschung der Säkularisierung zur Erforschung von Prozessen der Dechristianisierung und der Rechristianisierung", 13.

<sup>21</sup> On the development in Britain, see for example, Anderson, "The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain", 54-63; Snape, *The Redcoat and Religion*, 101-106. Soldiers' homes were set up by revivalists in Denmark from the 1870s onwards; Statens offentliga utredningar 1965:52, *Soldathemsverksamheten* (hereafter SOU 1965:52), 91-92. On Protestant soldiers' homes in Imperial Germany, see Schübel, *300 Jahre evangelische Soldatenseelsorge*, 44-45 and Westdeutscher Jünglingsbund, *Ein Gang durch die Soldatenheime*, 34-38. Catholic equivalents of soldiers' homes are known from late nineteenth-century Belgium (Segers, *Charles de Broqueville*, 33-41).

nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Unlike Snape, however, the ambition here is not to establish the extent to which missionary work among soldiers truly succeeded in recruiting them to the evangelist cause.

There has been no extensive historical study of missionary work among Swedish soldiers, despite frequent mentions of soldiers' homes in commemorative publications, regimental histories, and biographies. The most comprehensive survey of the soldiers' homes enterprise is to be found in an official report published in 1965.<sup>23</sup> In his book on the upper-class religious awakening in the wake of Granville Waldegrave third Lord Radstock's preaching tour that passed through Stockholm in the late 1870s, the Swedish church historian Lars Österlin considers early missionary work among soldiers, concluding that it was the so-called Radstock circle's particular offering to the home missionary work.<sup>24</sup> In this chapter, however, I approach the mission to soldiers from a different point of view, broadening the perspective to involve large-scale, middle-class revivalism.

Missionary work among Swedish soldiers began in the nineteenth century. Religious services were initially held in the open air or in tents near the training camps or barracks. The first proper soldiers' home was opened in Stockholm in 1876 by the wealthy Low Church couple Nathalie Meijerhelm and Carl August Andersson-Meijerhelm. Their inspiration probably came from a visit to Britain a short time before. By the 1890s, nineteen soldiers' homes had been founded across Sweden by a variety of revivalist bodies.<sup>25</sup> In 1899, a national group, the Association of Soldiers' Friends, was set up to coordinate the activities at soldiers' homes across the country. The board was made up of high-ranking officers from the Radstock circle, among them the retired Minister of War Axel Rappe and Prince Oscar Bernadotte - both of whom adhered to the ideals of the Evangelical Alliance<sup>26</sup> - and a number of civilians, among them pastors from the SMC and other denominations such as the Baptist Union of Sweden. According to the guidelines laid down by the Association of Soldiers' Friends, the purpose of the soldiers' homes was "to lead the soldier to salvation through the gospel as a force of God", and provide him with a place where he could relax in the company of pious comrades and enjoy a greater "stillness and invigoration" than was possible in barracks.<sup>27</sup> Thus individual spiritual life seems to have been prioritised over other motives such as fostering god-fearing and disciplined soldiers who would endure the hardships of war.

In this period, soldiers' homes were usually run by volunteers. The majority of homes were affiliated to the Association of Soldier's Friends, but there were also independent soldiers' homes, as well as those built by regiments where a Luther-

<sup>22</sup> Hendrickson, *Making Saints*, 82-93; Snape, *Redcoat and Religion*, 110, 116-117.

<sup>23</sup> SOU 1965:52. See also Ericson, *Medborgare i vapen*, 219.

<sup>24</sup> Österlin, *Stockholmsväckelsen kring lord Radstock*, 114-117.

<sup>25</sup> SOU 1965:52, 13-14; Jansson, *Prins Oscar Bernadotte*, 192-193.

<sup>26</sup> Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1911*, 3; Österlin, *Stockholmsväckelsen kring lord Radstock*, 64, 125; Jansson, *Prins Oscar Bernadotte*, 112-113.

<sup>27</sup> SOU 1965:52, 15.

an regimental chaplain was in charge of services.<sup>28</sup> The Church of Sweden became an increasingly important operator, and in 1928 set up a special committee for this purpose.<sup>29</sup> From this period on, religious services in the soldiers' homes became increasingly ecumenical in character and the differences between the different types of soldiers' home began to disappear. By the 1960s the greater part of the soldiers' homes were broadly ecumenical, with representatives of the Church of Sweden and different revivalist denominations represented on their boards.<sup>30</sup>

## THE DILEMMA SOLVED: EVANGELICAL FRATERNAL GROUPS

As already mentioned, there was as much disagreement over defence issues within the SMC as among revivalists in general. Several revivalist groups backed military conscription and acts of war, supporting their views with biblical references and nationalistic arguments. Others argued that the teachings of Jesus and the spirit of the New Testament spoke against war, an interpretation of the Bible that was prevalent among Baptists, but was also heard within the SMC.<sup>31</sup> Until 1920 the situation was difficult for men with conscientious scruples, as there were no statutory rights to non-combatant service. From 1902 conscientious objectors could be exempted from military training and assigned other military - albeit not civilian - duties. A number of young revivalists refused to accept this solution, and from 1902 to 1917 sentences were passed in 136 court-martials for refusal to do military service on religious grounds. Several leading Baptists and a number of activists from the SMC who found the situation insupportable took up cudgels on behalf of the conscientious objectors, and members of parliament affiliated to the SMC brought motions of support in parliament.<sup>32</sup>

The periodical *Ungdomsvännen* kept a low profile on these thorny issues. It barely mentioned military conscription as anything other than a duty to the state; loyalty to current legislation was all. The periodical had a lively column of letters to the editor, where religious and moral issues were discussed, yet conscription was only dealt with on a few occasions. Two years prior to the reform of 1901, one 'J. E-x-' drafted a cautious defence for young male believers doing military service, arguing it was a duty to defend one's country by military means. Nevertheless, the writer showed compassion for those who had genuine, scripturally justified scruples.<sup>33</sup> A few years after the introduction of general conscription the tone had sharpened. The question was put to the editor whether young believers were right to emigrate to America to

<sup>28</sup> In 1920, more than 75 per cent of the soldiers' homes were still run by revivalist organisations on a voluntary basis. The majority were affiliated to the Association of Soldiers' Friends. *Svenska arméns rulla*, 1920; Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1920*, 100-104.

<sup>29</sup> *Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses militärutskott* (military committee of the Swedish Society for Diaconal Work), see SOU 1965:52, 78.

<sup>30</sup> SOU 1965:52, 38.

<sup>31</sup> Gustafsson, *Fred och försvar*, 169, 232-236.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 75, 95, 106-108, 210, 218-219.

<sup>33</sup> Signed 'J. E-x-', "Svar till A-d J-n", *Ungdomsvännen*, (1899), 222-223.

avoid conscription. The answers came in two distinct varieties of 'No'. 'G T-m' replied that a young believer also had a duty towards his earthly fatherland, which involved defending his country in times of danger, while 'Fd beväringman' (former conscript) stated that it was both a duty and an act of self-preservation for a peaceful nation such as Sweden to defend itself if it was attacked, and went on to appeal to nationalistic sentiments. Surely a true Christian should be the first to defend those most Swedish of values, inherited liberal tradition and freedom of worship? It was wrong to refuse conscription unless genuine qualms of religious conscience made military service impossible.<sup>34</sup>

In the forty-odd texts on military conscription in *Ungdomsvännen* in the period 1897-1920, far greater consideration was given a different problem: the sin that the revivalists saw spreading across the military training camps. The periodical saw it as its main concern to guide and support its young readers in spiritual and moral matters.<sup>35</sup> With the introduction of general conscription, alarm bells began ringing. As the texts show, there was a strong fear that pious young men would apostatise when far from their homes and the protective embrace of their congregations or youth societies. Military camps were seen as literally swamped by everything the evangelical revivalists defined as immoral. As 'E. Th.' put it in 1907: "Regimental life is without doubt such that it requires a special sense of vigilance if one is to make it through without being branded for life ... Many a young man has succumbed to temptation at precisely the time he needs to be at this place! There is so much moral corruption and vice that flourishes in such places that it makes one shiver merely to think about it."<sup>36</sup>

In some texts, sinful behaviour was vividly described. 'A H' described a soldiers' home at the Fristad hed military camp, and mentions the "impious blasphemies, swear-words, obscene speech, card games and drunkenness etc." that it worked against. In an article from 1903, 'A S-n' urged all local youth societies to devote themselves to the mission to soldiers, declaring that "during their conscription [many] imbibe so much poison that sooner or later they turn into spiritual or moral wrecks".<sup>37</sup> In other texts sin is merely suggested. One writer explained how military conscription entailed certain "difficulties" and "discomforts".<sup>38</sup>

Moral indignation was not unique to the evangelical revivalists. In the parliamentary debates on conscription in the nineteenth century, the moral arguments against holding young men in barracks for long periods kept resurfacing. Members of Parliament opposed to military conscription were concerned that young men would be weaned off proper work and would show an inclination toward idleness and vice. The debate had distinct class dimensions: it was considered especially unsuitable for sons of farmers and persons of means to cohabit with the lower echelons of soci-

<sup>34</sup> "Svar på insända frågor", *Ungdomsvännen*, (1907), 245-246.

<sup>35</sup> *Ungdomsvännen*, (1897) 12, inside back cover.

<sup>36</sup> Signed 'E. Th.', "Några råd till ungdomen vid lägerplatserna", *Ungdomsvännen*, (1907), 188.

<sup>37</sup> Signed 'A. H.', "Från Fristad hed", *Ungdomsvännen*, (1906), 188; signed 'A. S-n', "Ett ord till våra kristliga ungdomsföreningar", *Ungdomsvännen*, (1903), 77. On the ethics of Swedish SMC and Baptist congregations, see for example Kennerberg, *Innanför eller utanför*, 25, 103, 253-254.

<sup>38</sup> Signed 'J. O.', "Till troende beväringar", *Ungdomsvännen*, (1903), 95.

ety.<sup>39</sup> Yet *Ungdomsvännan* also offered the antidote to all this sinfulness: evangelical fraternal groups. As 'E. Th.' continued: "It is also necessary that the few believers in these places seek each other out! Thus the one piece of coal can warm the other. It is undeniably a great blessing and benefit to have mutual, separate moments to offer prayers to the Lord! By these means strength and stability are offered to those who look inward! So much greater will the meaning of 'light' and 'salt' be."<sup>40</sup>

Socialising with other revivalists was the recipe for surviving army barracks life. The text alluded to references that would have been obvious to its readers: the British eighteenth-century Methodist John Wesley's simile that the faithful were like burning coal in a fire, which if spread out expired but if raked together would thrive, meaning that together revivalists could support each other and build on their beliefs; and Matthew 5: 13-14, where Christians are described as the salt and light of the world. 'E. Th.' reminds revivalists of their importance as virtuous role models in military training camps.

The texts abound in speaking evocations of brotherhood. 'Gunnar', who was doing his military service at Visborgsslätt on the Baltic island of Gotland, wrote that he had soon become acquainted with the other born-again Christians, and that it "gave strength" to have dear fellow brothers or allies here and there in the regiment. A senior fellow-believer invited the conscripts to his home, which was close to the barracks, where they "had meetings, delightful meetings in the evenings". Bible readings were followed by an edifying discussion of what they had read. Occasionally the conversation was interrupted by a comforting and stirring song. As a rule the meetings would be concluded with prayer. "One felt strengthened in both body and soul after such an evening gathering."<sup>41</sup> In certain instances the *Ungdomsvännan* authors emphasised that conscripts belonging to different denominations were part of the fraternal group, thus referring to the ideals of the Evangelical Alliance.<sup>42</sup>

This bald stereotype, where notions of the threat of sin were set against idealised depictions of fellowship with other 'true' Christian brothers, was typical of the texts that treated conscription in *Ungdomsvännan*. The chasm between sin on the one side and the evangelical communion on the other is characteristic of edifying meditations and is found in abundant variety in revivalist literature.<sup>43</sup> When the periodical dealt with the issues of conscription it did so along established patterns of description. This black-and-white discourse<sup>44</sup> of the military training camp lifestyle is key in

<sup>39</sup> Strömberg-Back, "Stam och beväring", 13, 46-47, 50-52, 77.

<sup>40</sup> Signed 'E. Th.', "Några råd till ungdomen vid lägerplatserna", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1907), 188, original italics.

<sup>41</sup> Signed 'Gunnar', "Ett sommarminne från Gotland", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1908), 188; further examples are signed 'K. B-n', "Minnen från beväringmötet å Visborgs slätt 1906", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1907), 108; and Bernh. Pettersson, "En hälsning från troende militärer vid Västmanlands Trängkår", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1911), 332.

<sup>42</sup> Bernh. Pettersson, *Ungdomsvännan*, (1911), 332; signed 'N-t', "Soldatmission", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1907), 10.

<sup>43</sup> For an analysis of SMC periodicals, see Kussak, *Författaren som predikant*, 136-141.

<sup>44</sup> A discourse is here defined as a particular way of representing a part of the world, and a genre as a way of acting linguistically. Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, 17.



understanding the SMC's missionary work among soldiers, as well as the evangelical male identity of the day.

A genre analysis highlights the periodical's intentions with regards to its readers' at the military training camps. One recurring genre in *Ungdomsvännan* is the evangelical conscription letter. This genre combines characteristics of the usual conscript's letter home with traits typical of edifying stories. As in the ordinary letter, the writer narrates his experiences of military life for the reader, yet in the evangelical conscription letter there is one clear solution to all difficulties. Just like the hero of an edifying story could overcome any obstacle thanks to his faith, the letter-writer declares that he has survived military camp life because of his belief in Christ.<sup>45</sup>

All texts in this genre were published prior to 1910, at a time when conscript reform was still fresh in people's minds. The ideological work of the evangelical conscription letters was the same. First, they either encouraged young men to perform their duty or they took the completion of service for granted. At least implicitly, they led the evangelical revivalists towards military conscription. Second, the texts encouraged revivalist conscripts to seek one another out. Some writers offered the advice that they make their way to the soldiers' homes; others wrote about religious devotions at the regimental camps, outdoors or in a rented room. In all instances the writers had themselves received training at these dreaded camps, and thus presented themselves as examples. The texts were written by men of much the same age as the readers and most likely from the same social strata - and bear the characteristics of advice being given by men of equal status, from one true Christian brother to another.

A second genre in *Ungdomsvännan*, this time present throughout the period in question, is the presentation of an evangelical fraternal group at a military training camp. The genre is represented by a considerable larger group of texts, often illustrated with group photographs.<sup>46</sup> It was usually formally organised evangelical societies at the various regiments that introduced themselves to *Ungdomsvännan*'s readers in this way, although at times texts report on a looser circle of evangelical conscripts gathered in a soldiers' home. Conformity and ritualism were more conspicuous than in the evangelical conscription letters, and the presentations had certain noticeable ingredients: the writers took it for granted that even revivalists would do their military service, and the texts monotonously repeated the idea that military camps were dens of iniquity and that salvation was only to be found in an evangelical fraternal

<sup>45</sup> Examples of evangelical conscription letters are signed 'J. O.', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1903), 95-97; signed 'B. A.-n', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1906), 255-256; signed 'K. B.-n.', "Minnen från beväringsmötet å Visborgs slätt 1906", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1907), 108-110; signed 'B. A.-n.', "Tankar och reflexioner av en 'beväring'", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1908), 66-68; and signed 'B. A.-n', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1908), 86-88.

<sup>46</sup> Examples of presentations of evangelical fraternal groups are signed 'Alla åtta', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1903), 219-221; signed 'A. H.', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1906), 188-190; 8-10; signed 'Titus', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1907), 205-207; unsigned, "Hessleholms Kristliga Ungdomsförening", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1911), 110; Carl Bergqvist, "Trossnäs Soldathem", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1912), 29-30, 43; signed 'A. H.', "Hälsning från Fristad hed", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1913), 255; unsigned, "Sköfde militära brödrakrets", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1915), 270; unsigned, "Från Hälsinge regemente", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1916), 46; signed 'H.-n', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1917) 17, inside front cover; and unsigned, "Hälsinge regementes kristliga ynglingaförening", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1920), 304.



group. In this way, a plan of action was presented to young readers facing military conscription.

The fact that *Ungdomsvännan* did not encourage conscientious objection should come as no surprise, but by the same token the significance of those texts that called for conscription or assumed its existence should not be underestimated. The general impression is one of young evangelical revivalists who were to be forged in the great nation-building venture of the day. In terms of masculinity, this meant that the periodical demonstrated its loyalty to the new legislation on general conscription: like other men, its adherents were to carry out their newly found duty for their country, despite the pacifist tendencies of revivalist circles. Yet at the same time the periodical propagated for a specific masculine lifestyle at the military camps. The crucial feature of true Christian manliness, according to evangelical revivalists, was to turn one's back on sinful masculine pastimes such as drinking and playing cards, and instead seek the company of an evangelical fraternal group. In sermons and worship among born-again Christian brethren, conscripts would work on the one thing needful: their spiritual and moral growth.

Instead of focusing on the reasons for undergoing military training - and the complex moral issues on which this impinged - the main issue became the supposedly sinful lifestyle at the military training camps. Revivalist activities at Sweden's military camps thus legitimised conscription and at the same time side-stepped the problem of divided opinions over conscription.

## GROWING INTEREST IN THE WORK AMONG SOLDIERS

In the records of the SMC's central board and annual meetings, the missionary work among soldiers is increasingly in evidence in the first two decades of the twentieth century. At the SMC's annual meeting in 1912, delegates from local congregations could attend lectures delivered by supervisors of voluntary soldiers' homes, and the key-note address was delivered by a board member of the Association of Soldiers' Friends.<sup>47</sup> This suggests extensive contacts between the SMC and the Association, as well as the growing interest in this branch of missionary work. The SMC annual report of 1913 stated that the missionary work among soldiers was a crucial branch of its spiritual operations<sup>48</sup>, and measures were taken accordingly at the next annual meeting, when the central SMC decided to build a soldiers' home and employ a supervisor for the soldiers' benefit in Boden in northern Sweden, where a large, costly, and politically controversial fortress was being built. The same annual meeting agreed to support missionary work and soldiers' homes in three other places.<sup>49</sup> Subsequent

<sup>47</sup> The meeting was held at Betesdakyrkan on 9 June 1912 (SMA, GK3 Generalkonferenser 1910-1915: 'Program för Svenska Missionsförbundets konferens och 34:e årsmöte i Stockholm 6-9 juni samt predikantmöte 10-12 juni 1912', 4).

<sup>48</sup> Svenska Missionsförbundet, *Svenska Missionsförbundets årsberättelse 1913*, 21.

<sup>49</sup> Missionary work among soldiers was to be supported in Sollefteå, Östersund, and Ystad. See record from SMC's annual meeting, 4 June 1914, § 20 (SMA, Missionsförbundets konferensprotokoll 1899-1920).

annual meetings from 1915 to 1920 resolved to invest financially in missionary work among soldiers, principally in Boden, but also in soldiers' homes at other military camps.<sup>50</sup>

The evangelical motive for these initiatives was clear: it was a Christian duty to do missionary work.<sup>51</sup> However, the records are generally meagre and record few of the discussions on the issue. *Ungdomsvännan* is again a better source of information on why this particular missionary field was thought so important, for one of its genres concerned the promotion of missionary work among soldiers. Texts in this genre argued the case for readers to support or participate in this missionary work.

The first such text was published in 1903 in which one 'A. S-én' encouraged local youth societies to put missionary work among soldiers on their agendas in order to counteract the lack of morals at military camps, arguing that 'thinking people' had always considered garrison life a danger: when a large number of young men were gathered together for as much as an entire year, there were ample opportunities for sin. Three main paths for the mission to Sweden's soldiers were staked out. The converts among the conscripts should be supported in their faith. Conscientious conscripts who were not yet converts should be saved from lapsing into sin 'so that they could return to their parents without lowering their gaze when meeting them'. The third, and most difficult, task was to work to convert the sinners.<sup>52</sup>

In an article in *Ungdomsvännan* in 1913 pastor David Melchersson, who had just visited a local SMC soldiers' society in southern Sweden, pleaded the case of missionary work among conscripts. His arguments differed from those put in 1903. The main issue was no longer to combat the sinful life of the military camps but to win male adherents. This shift was perhaps a consequence both of the dominance of female adherents within the SMC and of the prevailing gender order, which made it necessary to counteract the feminisation of the SMC's membership. Melchersson's case was coloured both by nationalistic sentiments and his belief in the superiority of the male: it was crucial for Sweden and its continued existence 'that its 'core and hope' grew in wisdom and compassion before God and mankind'. Strength and potential lay dormant within Sweden's young men, but they must be compelled to choose the right path in life.<sup>53</sup>

Over the next few years several texts were published in *Ungdomsvännan* that made similar points. The two main lines of argument remained the same. First, military service presented a recruitment opportunity, for at the military training camps one could reach the young men the correspondents considered to be the hope of Sweden. Second, there were assertions of the particular sinfulness of military life. There was talk of the 'detrimental consequences' of military life, and of the need to

<sup>50</sup> The camps in question were Hässleholm, Ystad, Karlskrona, Karlsborg, and Oskar-Fredriksborg, while the work managed by Ångermanlands Frikyrkliga Ungdomsförbund also received financial support: SMA, Missionsförbundets konferensprotokoll 1899-1920: 3 June 1915, § 26; 15 June 1916, § 31; 7 June 1917, § 17; 6 and 7 June 1918, § 32; 12 June 1919, § 31; and 17 June 1920, § 38.

<sup>51</sup> Svenska Missionsförbundet, *Svenska Missionsförbundets årsberättelse 1913*, 21.

<sup>52</sup> Signed 'A. S-én', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1903), 76-78. See also signed 'A. H.', *Ungdomsvännan*, (1906), 190; signed 'S. F.', "I kronans kläder", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1910) 6, 135.

<sup>53</sup> D. Melchersson, "Ögonblicksbilder", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1913), 12 ff.

preserve the spiritual life of the converted. In his 1914 speech, E. A. Nilsson used both lines of argument, speaking of the “flower of Sweden’s male youth” who could be reached by the Word of God, and the danger of “keeping bad company” at the military training camps.<sup>54</sup>

It is significant that the issue of the work among soldiers moved up the agenda in the years when the debate on military defence matters reached a peak. The SMC’s commitment was not constrained by the opposing opinions on defence issues within the leading circles of the SMC.<sup>55</sup> Apparently the missionary work among soldiers grew in importance despite these conflicts, and the work drew even greater attention during the First World War, when large numbers of men were called up for extended periods of military service.

There are only a few comments on the work among soldiers in the central records of the SMC from the first decade of the twentieth century<sup>56</sup>, possibly because this was seen as a work administered by regional and local bodies. Other parts of the home missionary work, such as the thriving network of Sunday schools and youth work were also treated in passing in these records. Another reason could have been a sense of doubt among the SMC leadership regarding the Evangelical Alliance ideals that dominated the soldiers’ home enterprise, which they felt to be a particularly disturbing element when it came to the SMC’s youth work.<sup>57</sup> After 1910, when the youth movement had been centralised as the Youth of the Swedish Mission Covenant and the risks inherent in the creation of independent local youth societies were less marked, a more open attitude was adopted.

By the end of the First World War there had been a transfer of power on the central board of the SMC. The death of the SMC’s founding father Paul Petter Waldenström in 1917 marked a watershed.<sup>58</sup> The new SMC leadership publicly supported missionary work among soldiers and appealed in *Ungdomsvännen* for help in setting up a soldiers’ home in Sollefteå. The new SMC supervisor Janne Nyrén, its new chairman Sven Bengtsson, and E. A. Nilsson all supported the appeal.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> “Soldatmissionen”, *Ungdomsvännen*, (1914), 208; *Missionsförbundet*, (1914), 199; examples of further articles in favour of the missionary work among soldiers are E. G. Pettersson, “Några tankar om soldatmissionen”, *Ungdomsvännen*, (1915), 216; signed ‘S. M. U:it 90 mil hemifrån’, “Tag vara på de unga männen!”, *Ungdomsvännen*, (1917), 288; and Josef Jansson, “Från vår soldatmission”, *Ungdomsvännen*, (1920), 219-220.

<sup>55</sup> Gustafsson, *Fred och försvar*, 132-136.

<sup>56</sup> For example, protocol from SMC’s annual meeting, 13 June 1907, § 25 (SMA, *Missionsförbundets konferensprotokoll 1899-1920*).

<sup>57</sup> Keijer, *Ungdomen för Kristus*, 32-26.

<sup>58</sup> Gustafsson, *Fred och försvar*, 204.

<sup>59</sup> Albin Karlsson, “Upprop”, *Ungdomsvännen*, (1919), 288.

## EVANGELISATION OR A TEETOTAL CAFETERIA?

On a local level, the SMC invested substantial financial and human resources in its missionary work among soldiers. As early as the 1890s, the SMC's local bodies were operating in some soldiers' homes.<sup>60</sup> When regiments moved from their traditional training camps into town garrisons, the evangelical revivalists normally followed them and continued their missionary work. One example was the soldiers' home outside the newly erected barracks for the infantrymen of *Kungl. livregementets grenadjärer* (Royal Grenadier Guards Regiment, regimental number I 3) in the industrial town of Örebro in mid-Sweden. The soldiers' home was inaugurated in September 1912<sup>61</sup>, at the behest of three organisations under the SMC umbrella<sup>62</sup> - and was run by *Föreningen Soldaternas Vänner inom Örebro län* (Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County), which was affiliated to the Association of Soldiers' Friends, and continued the missionary work done when the regiment was stationed outside Örebro.<sup>63</sup>

The Örebro soldiers' home was inaugurated with readings from the Bible, prayers, and lectures by local SMC ministers. The leaders of the other revivalist and evangelical bodies in the town gave shorter speeches. Entertainment between speeches was provided by the congregation's choral and music clubs, and sandwiches, milk, and coffee were served upstairs. As at the SMC's annual meeting held in Stockholm in June the same year, Major Fredrik von Malmborg from the Association of Soldiers' Friends was one of the preachers.<sup>64</sup> Certainly he was able to stir up enthusiasm in revivalist circles with the dramatic story of his own conversion: in his youth he had been a successful cavalryman in *Kungl. Smålands Husarregemente* (Royal Småland Hussars Regiment), but during an equestrian competition he was thrown from his horse, and in that moment of mortal danger saw his life flash before his eyes and found himself to be a sinner.<sup>65</sup>

In the early 1900s Örebro was a growing town, with an expanding industrial sector and rapidly rising work-force along with a trade-union movement that was increasing in strength. At the same time it was also one of the major strongholds of evangelical revivalism.<sup>66</sup> The prominent figures in the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County were pastors and leaders from the region's SMC bodies who all had good contacts with the town's leading circles. The organisation in Örebro followed the usual Swedish revivalist pattern: the board members were recruited from among

<sup>60</sup> In the 1890s, the SMC-affiliated network started to operate in soldiers' homes in, for example, the following camps: Kronobergshed, district of Småland; Sanna hed, district of Närke; Malma hed, district of Södermanland; and in Trossnäs, district of Värmland.

<sup>61</sup> Arkivcentrum Örebro (hereafter AÖ), Föreningen soldaternas vänners inom Örebro län arkiv (hereafter FSVÖ), FII: 'Program för invigningen av soldathemmet i Örebro'.

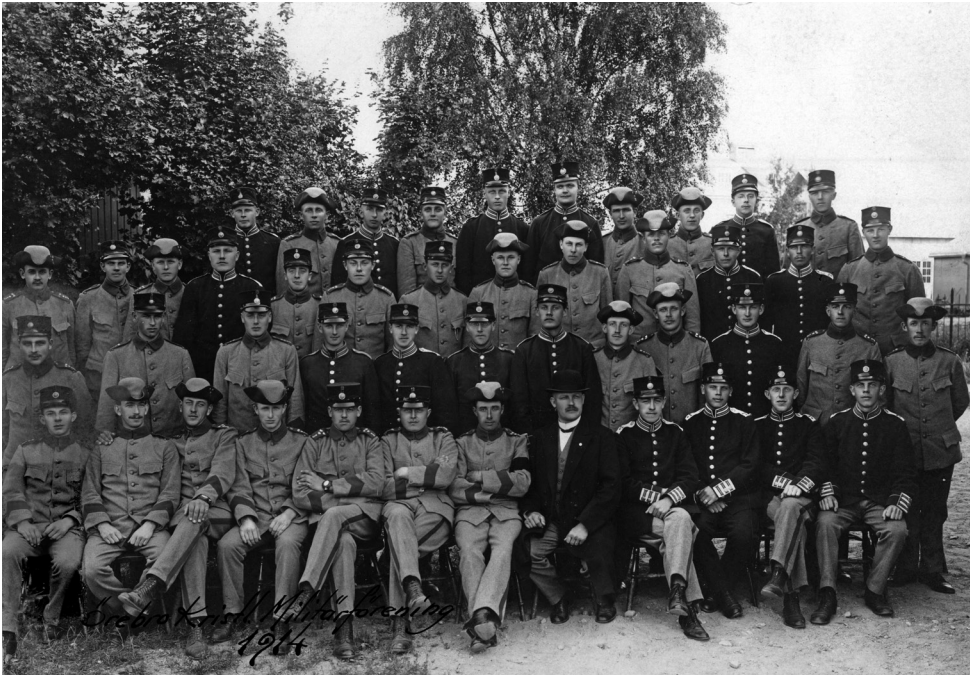
<sup>62</sup> *Örebro Brödraförsamling* (Örebro Brotherhood Congregation), which was the largest SMC congregation in the city; *Örebro läns fria missionsförening* (County of Örebro Free Missionary Society); and *Örebro läns kristliga ungdomsförbund* (County of Örebro Christian Youth Society).

<sup>63</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AI, vol. 1: 30 October 1909, § 1, 6-7; AII, vol. 1: Styrelsen 30 October 1910, § 10.

<sup>64</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, FII: 'Program för invigningen'.

<sup>65</sup> Jansson, *Prins Oscar Bernadotte*, 203; Österlin, *Stockholmsväckelsen kring lord Radstock*, 70.

<sup>66</sup> Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället*, 71-72.



Örebro kristliga militärförening (Örebro Christian Military Society), 1914.  
 [Archives Centre Örebro, Föreningen Soldaternas vänner inom Örebro län arkiv]

the congregation's economic, social, and - obviously - male elite.<sup>67</sup> The chairman of both the board and the executive committee, which had day-to-day responsibility for building the soldiers' home, was the successful building contractor Per Eriksson - who was also chairman of the Örebro Brotherhood Congregation. Among the other board members were the congregation's ministers Erik Fritiof Holmstrand and Erik Ungerth, the latter a regional SMC leader and member of the national board of the Association of Soldiers' Friends.<sup>68</sup>

The establishment of the soldiers' home was made significantly easier by board members taking out bank loans on behalf of their associations and standing surety when purchasing plots of land and signing building contracts.<sup>69</sup> However, the amortisation of the loans had to be covered by funds collected by the revivalists from I 3 regiment's conscription area. All possible methods of fund-raising were put to use. Subscriptions lists were circulated; the SMC bodies were requested to take up collections for the missionary work among soldiers; youth societies and congregations were

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>68</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AI, vol. 1: 30 October 1909, § 8; Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1911*, 3; Hermansson, *Minnesskrift med anledning av Örebro brödraförsamlings sjutiofemåriga tillvaro*, 75, 81-82, 84-88; Föreningen Soldaternas vänner inom Örebro län, *Soldatmissionen i Närke*, 17-21, 49-51.

<sup>69</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AII, vol. 1: Styrelsen 30 November 1909, § 8-9 and 30 December 1911, § 4.



asked to arrange benefits and musical evenings, preferably at times when conscripts were on their way to join their regiments; and a special travelling representative was sent out to stir up enthusiasm for the cause.<sup>70</sup> In other words, the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County pulled out all the stops to establish its missionary work among the soldiers in its region.

The purpose of the Örebro soldiers' home was to work on behalf of the soldiers' 'spiritual and moral edification' by means of 'the Word of God' and 'wholesome and Christian reading'. The Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County also served as a vanguard against socialism and trade unionism, and its regulations expressly prohibited political meetings.<sup>71</sup> The building itself looked like a cross between a chapel and a large family home. It had all the functions considered useful for a conscript far from the bosom of his family and congregation. The ground floor had a large assembly-hall, eleven by eight meters, equipped with an organ. There was also a reading-room, a kitchen where the female staff prepared food and drink, and a pantry.<sup>72</sup> According to the annual report, books were acquired by voluntary contributions and as gifts from publishers and private citizens.<sup>73</sup> The soldiers' home subscribed to a number of daily newspapers, revivalist youth magazines, and periodicals of an edifying nature. They also had a telephone installed and equipment for letter-writing.<sup>74</sup>

In their first policy statement, the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County working committee gave priority to preaching, religious devotions, and sacred music over nationalist or temperance lectures. In accordance with the regulations it was 'the Word of God' which took precedence. There were to be sermons four evenings a week. Uplifting music and singing was allotted a great deal of time; there was a rehearsal once a week along with evenings of song and music. Among the more sporadic points on the agenda the working committee indicated evenings devoted to "talks about the place where father and mother live" as well as the showing of sciopticon slides. One of the last items noted that, "if appropriate" there would be "lectures on sobriety, morality, the fatherland etc."<sup>75</sup>

Personal contact with the conscripts, reaching out to them with the spoken word, was regarded as central to the work; it also meant that the supervisor of the soldiers' home became a key figure. The instructions given on the appointment of the first supervisor show what kind of qualifications were desired. He - for the thought that a woman might hold the position did not enter their minds - was not only expected to give sermons and lead religious services, but should also be able to establish a rapport with the young conscripts. His work would be facilitated by the close contacts between the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County and the regimental command, for from 1913 the supervisor did not need special permission to get

<sup>70</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ: AI, vol. 1: Årsmötet 30 December 1911, § 5, 9 and 2 April 1910, § 8; AII, vol. 1: Styrelsen 30 November 1909, § 4, 7; 4 September 1911, § 7 and 29 December 1911, § 3.

<sup>71</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AI, vol. 1: 30 October 1909, § 3-4.

<sup>72</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AII, vol. 1: Arbetsutskottet 14 November 1910, § 4 and 9 May 1912, § 3.

<sup>73</sup> Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1913*, 49-51.

<sup>74</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AII, vol. 1: Styrelsen 30 December 1912, § 8 and arbetsutskottet 18 February 1913, § 12 and 4 April 1913, § 5.

<sup>75</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AII, vol. 1: Arbetsutskottet 4 April 1913, § 7.

in contact with soldiers at the camp, or indeed for them to visit the soldiers' home.<sup>76</sup> The vocational character of the supervisor's position was emphasised by the fact that he was to live in an apartment on the top floor of the soldiers' home.<sup>77</sup>

The first supervisor stayed barely a year on his post, but his successor, the preacher Karl Axel Öberg, stayed on for over twenty years. The seminal importance of marriage and family life in the Protestant gender discourse noted elsewhere in this volume was equally in evidence in the material regarding the Örebro soldiers' home. In accordance with the wishes of the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County, Öberg was thus a married man, and his wife took on increasing responsibility for the catering of the soldiers' home, her efforts duly acknowledged in the annual reports. However, it was only her husband who as a supervisor was on the payroll of the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County.<sup>78</sup> This was a recurring pattern at all the soldiers' homes up to the 1960s. Thus in much the same way as Sweden's deaconries, the soldiers' homes were managed by married couples, where the husband was the supervisor and his wife the matron.<sup>79</sup>

In 1917, *Ungdomsvännan* published an idyllic portrayal of life at the soldiers' home, written by 'H-n', who had been posted to the I 3 regiment:

There were a lot of people in the soldiers' home. When I visited it for the first time both the cafeteria and the reading-room were full. I entered the latter. All the seats were taken. In a corner I see someone reading the New Testament. 'Good Day! - nice to meet a brethren.' ... as often as we could we would meet at the soldiers' home where we also got to know its warm-hearted supervisor, Revd K. A. Öberg, who was willing to do anything for 'his boys'. ... in the cafeteria, which was run by Mrs Öberg, excellent coffee was served at a reasonable price, as long as there was any to be had. They also served milk and sandwiches. In other words, it was well equipped to cater to both the spiritual and bodily needs.<sup>80</sup>

The fighting did not reach Sweden during the First World War, but 1917 was a year of social unrest. The food crisis and unrest among workers and soldiers were felt in Örebro as in many other parts of the country.<sup>81</sup> However, these problems are not evident in the 'H-n' article, except for a casual reference to the lack of coffee. The article shows how evangelical revivalists wanted their soldier's homes to be perceived: a true home for the faithful, with a father-figure as its spiritual leader and a mother-figure caring for their 'boys' physical well-being.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, § 11; see also Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1913*, 50.

<sup>77</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AII, vol. 1: Arbetsutskottet 13 January 1913, § 4; 4 April 1913, § 5 and 2 December 1913.

<sup>78</sup> Föreningen Soldaternas vänner inom Örebro län, *Soldatmissionen i Närke*, 42, 65; AÖ, FSVÖ, AII, vol. 1: Arbetsutskottet 2 July 1913, § 6; 29 September 1913, § 6 and 2 December 1913, § 3; Ibid., AI, vol. I: Årsmötet 22 November 1918, § 5 and 15 January 1921, § 6.

<sup>79</sup> SOU 1965:52, 70; for the deaconess houses, see, for example, Christiansson, *Kyrklig och social reform*, 72.

<sup>80</sup> Signed 'H-n', "Intryck från soldathemmet i Örebro", *Ungdomsvännan*, (1917) 17, inside front cover.

<sup>81</sup> Johansson, "Beredskapstjänst under första världskriget", 105; Borell, *Disciplinära strategier*, 58-62.



When it came to the ideals of the Evangelical Alliance, the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County took a pragmatic approach. When the soldiers' home was being set up, Per Eriksson dismissed an offer of collaboration with the town's other congregations, among them Örebro's powerful Baptist congregations, which had more than twice as many members as the SMC congregations.<sup>82</sup> The exclusion of the Baptists gave Eriksson and the SMC bodies greater leverage in their negotiations. Erik Ungerth, who was an old adherent of the Evangelical Alliance, was nevertheless disappointed, and in April 1910 it was noted in the minutes that he had wished more co-operation with the other local congregations in accordance with the Evangelical Alliance model.<sup>83</sup> In the event, they were repeatedly asked to contribute to the activities in the soldiers' home, which was natural enough given that members of different denominations attended the meetings there. Meanwhile the *Örebro kristliga militärförening* (Örebro Christian Military Society), consisting of born-again Christians, was founded in 1913, an evangelical fraternal group of the same kind advocated in the articles in *Ungdomsvännan*. The Society was made up of a core section of the soldiers' home. According to the annual report of 1916, the fraternal group numbered 96, and had attracted members from various revivalist and evangelical denominations.<sup>84</sup> This shows that the ideals of the Evangelical Alliance mattered in practice, despite the resistance noted above. In earlier research it has been noted that British army life in the nineteenth century promoted inter-denominational co-operation between religious soldiers from different Protestant churches and denominations.<sup>85</sup> This seems to have been true for the Swedish army too at the beginning of the twentieth century. Whatever the case, the findings of the study of the soldiers' home in Örebro certainly accord with the British results.

The source material tells us little of daily life at the soldiers' home. However, group activities appear to have adhered to the working committee's guidelines: sermons and worship were on the programme each week. Preachers and choirs from the various local congregations and societies, including the Salvation Army, put in regular appearances. Evangelical revivalists as well as those with only a lukewarm interest in religion were welcome to join in. According to reports to the Association of Soldiers' Friends, the meetings were well attended.<sup>86</sup> It is difficult to draw any conclusions from such statements regarding the popularity of the sermons or devotional meetings. In any case, the Örebro soldiers' home was not of a size to gather all conscripts in its assembly-hall. In April 1914, 770 conscripts signed on to I 3 Regiment. Periodically during the First World War there were considerably larger number of conscripts assigned to I 3. In 1915 the number was in excess of 1,600. In addition

<sup>82</sup> Bergström, *Från Betelkapellet till Sörbykyrkan*, 13.

<sup>83</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AI, vol. 1: 25 August 1909, § 4; Ibid.: Årsmötet 2 April 1910, § 11.

<sup>84</sup> Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1913*, 50; Id., *Årsberättelse för 1914*, 34; Id., *Årsberättelse för 1916*, 37.

<sup>85</sup> For example, Snape, *Redcoat and Religion*, 229-235.

<sup>86</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AII, vol. 1: Arbetsutskottet 4 December 1914, § 6; Centralstyrelsen för förbundet soldaternas vänner, *Årsberättelse för 1913*, 49-51; Id., *Årsberättelse för 1914*, 34; Id., *Årsberättelse för 1916*, 37; Id., *Årsberättelse för 1917*, 46-48.

there were the regular recruits - the non-commissioned officers - who according to staffing plans came to 240 men.<sup>87</sup>

The only figures for attendance appear in a circular from February 1916, drawn up and circulated by the Association of Soldiers' Friends. In answer to a question, chairman Per Eriksson reported that the Örebro soldier's home had approximately 200 visitors every day in 1914 and 1915.<sup>88</sup> This was apparently a rough estimate, but it tallies with reports from other soldiers' homes.<sup>89</sup> However, it is uncertain how many of those visitors attended the sermons. In his portrayal of the soldier's home, 'H-n' noted that for many soldiers it just served as a handy cafeteria.<sup>90</sup>

Indeed, the financial reports of the Örebro Society of Soldiers' Friends indicate that the cafeteria attracted many customers, for the soldiers' home had substantial takings from the cafeteria business.<sup>91</sup> Soon the Society no longer needed to ask for financial contributions from other bodies in the region. During the First World War and in subsequent years the soldiers' home in fact became a net contributor to the economy of the evangelical revivalists, and contributions were made to other SMC bodies in Örebro as well as in other regions.<sup>92</sup> The Society was inclined to spread the word of God, to evangelise among conscripts, and its home was a place where born-again revivalists could gather for worship; yet it was equally important as a teetotal cafeteria.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The SMC's missionary work among Sweden's soldiery increased throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century. The introduction of compulsory military conscription and the subsequent increase in its length, combined with the general mobilisation during the First World War, meant that young men spent longer periods at military training camps. One of the main reasons why the SMC embarked on this particular mission was their belief that the threat of sin was more pressing during military service. The SMC were not alone in expressing concern over the moral standards in garrison towns and military training camps, of course, for similar notions were expressed in debates in the nineteenth century over changes to Sweden's military organisation, but the evangelical revivalists, with the demand for activism inherent in their religious beliefs, were given to putting words into deeds. With religion as a driving force, the SMC, the Association of Soldiers' Friends, and other revivalist bodies all busied themselves about the mission to soldiers.

<sup>87</sup> Guillemot, "Militären och det civila samhället", 42; Johansson, "Beredskapstjänst under första världskriget", 95, 97-99.

<sup>88</sup> Stockholm, Krigsarkivet, Svenska soldathemsförbundets arkiv, EI, vol. 2: Cirkulär från Centralförbundet soldaternas vänner 7 februari 1916, signed Per Eriksson, Örebro, 22 February 1916.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.: Cirkulär från Centralförbundet soldaternas vänner 7 februari 1916, 'Svar på frågan 1'.

<sup>90</sup> Signed 'H-n', "Intryck", *Ungdomsvännen*, (1917) 17, inside front cover.

<sup>91</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ, AI, vol. 1: Årsmöte 2 January 1915, § 4 (suppl.); 29 December 1917, § 6 (suppl.) and 28 December 1918, § 6, (suppl.)

<sup>92</sup> AÖ, FSVÖ: AII, vol. 1: Arbetsutskottet 3 November 1915, § 4; AI, vol. 1: Årsmötet 29 December 1917, § 6 (suppl.); 28 December 1918, § 10 and 27 December 1919, § 11.

There were two clear extremes to the discourse on life at the military training camps, as found in *Ungdomsvännan*. On the one hand, there was the notion of sin, which elicited calls for the abjuration of the alcohol, immorality, and swearing so abhorrent to revivalist morals. On the other hand the religious fellowship of born-again Christians was described by means of its expression in religious services and inner edification. Against this backdrop it is easy to view the SMC's involvement in the soldiers' mission as an attempt to lessen the moral perils of military service for their own believers. The evangelical fraternity groups were portrayed as safe havens for the new classes of conscripts. By investing in building soldiers' homes, the SMC offered an institutional setting for evangelical revivalists, safeguarding their lifestyle during military service with religious devotions, prayers, spiritual music, Bible reading, and edifying literature, and a cafeteria where alcohol was banned. At the soldiers' homes, evangelical male identity was preserved.

Yet it is apparent that the SMC was not content to preach to the converted. Through its missionary work it wanted to prevent conscripts from being lured into sinful behaviour. The foremost aim was conversion, of course - the winning of new adherents. The military training camps gained new topicality as a mission just prior to the outbreak of the First World War, for, as it was said in *Ungdomsvännan*, conscription lent itself to the recruitment of young men to the faith. At barracks and training camps they could easily be reached. In the *Ungdomsvännan* texts, we can observe Christian, nationalistic sentiments at work; Sweden needed young men who were born-again Evangelicals. However, this also needs to be viewed against the background of the SMC's gender structure, with a leadership that was predominantly male yet a membership that was largely female. Due to the prevailing gender order in society it became important to break with the feminisation of the SMC's membership: re-masculinisation became the desired aim. The spreading of the word of God among soldiers in evangelical sermons and meetings is best described as an act of re-Christianisation, as are the soldiers' homes as such: their erection, and the economic activities that they instigated. Nevertheless, it would be an over-simplification to describe the expansion of the soldiers' homes enterprise *solely* as a case of re-Christianisation. My study of the social practices at a soldiers' home gives a hint of what else it was.

I have used here an example from the local level, describing the founding of the SMC's soldiers' home in Örebro for the infantrymen of the 13 regiment. A driving force behind the Society of Soldiers' Friends in Örebro County was indeed religion, but the actual result of its activities can only partially be characterised as re-Christianisation, a fact that stemmed much from the discrepancy in the aspirations of the soldiers' homes there and elsewhere. Soldiers' homes offered religious services, but they were also places one could go for a cup of coffee or to write a letter. They were just as much a convenience for conscripts who were less religiously inclined or who were even out-and-out hostile when it came to religious matters, as they were a solace for the faithful. Therefore, it is more justifiable to characterise the soldiers' home in Örebro as an environment marked by the ideals of domesticity; of orderliness, respectability, and self-discipline. As John Tosh has emphasised, the relationship between domestication and masculinity has always been ambivalent, and he sees a tension between

the demands of domestication and male homosocial communities.<sup>93</sup> Yet, strikingly, the soldiers' homes were places in which a male collective was subsumed into the ideals of domestication.

<sup>93</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 70.



# DANISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOL AND THE CREATION OF A NEW DANISH MAN

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NANNA DAMSHOLT

In the middle of the nineteenth century a completely new institution, namely the Danish *folkehøjskole* or “folk high school” came into being.<sup>1</sup> The first of these schools was at Rødding, founded in 1844, and more and more folk high schools sprang up all over the country, especially in the period after 1864.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the great influence these schools had on Danish society and cultural life in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it seems self-evident to try to establish whether the form of masculinity they fostered was something new and uniquely Danish. Was a new Danish man created, in theory *and* in practice?<sup>3</sup>

The theoretical basis of my study is a perception of gender - masculinity as well as femininity - as a social and cultural construction, and thus subject to change according to time and place. Furthermore, it is taken as read that at any given moment a society can hold several masculinities, one perhaps being dominant. Masculinity is generally interpreted as a discourse, and this chapter presents a study of the emerging discourse and practice of masculinity in the Danish folk high schools, especially as it appeared in the writings of the circle around Ernst Trier (1837-1893), the founder and first principal of Vallekilde Folk High School, and one of the pioneers in the Danish

<sup>1</sup> Of the historians of the Danish folk high schools and the schools’ founding father, N. F. S. Grundtvig, the work of the American social anthropologist Steven M. Borish (*The Land of the Living*), and the British theologian A. M. Allchin (*N. F. S. Grundtvig*), and their analyses of a uniquely Danish phenomenon for an English-speaking audience, have been crucial in the preparation of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> In 1862 there were 15 schools with barely 500 students. Between 1866 and 1869, 44 new schools were established. By 1875 there were 55 schools with almost 4,000 students (Borish, *The Land of the Living*, 193).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Borish argues that “the high school man” was a new phenomenon, but he does not discuss the masculinity of this figure.

folk high school movement. He perceived himself as a man and a Christian, but how was his masculinity and Christian attitude interrelated? How did he “perform” his masculinity? And in which ways did he influence his students? These are the questions addressed in this chapter by considering Trier’s conception and performance of masculinity in the years 1863 to 1867, for not only was he among the first folk high school principals, he was also a key figure in the movement that during his lifetime resulted in the rapid spread of folk high schools in Denmark.

Trier was born into a wealthy Jewish family in Copenhagen, at a time when businessmen and members of the civil service were socially dominant. The city housed a large group of Jewish citizens, and Trier’s mother Bella was the daughter of one of the most influential Jews in town, Mendel Levin Nathanson. Nathanson was the leading figure in the efforts to gain full civil rights for the Jewish population in Denmark, which were obtained in 1814. Bella and her husband, the timber merchant Jacob Trier, had first had their children christened, and later followed by their own baptism. Ernst attended the most prestigious grammar school in Copenhagen, Metropolitanskolen, and on leaving studied theology at the university, a happy period in his life. Strongly attached to his mother, he lived at home, but took part in the student life of the city together with his many friends.

Bella wished her son to become a clergyman. He graduated in divinity in 1863 but did not enter the church. As he wrote to his fiancée, life in a vicarage would not suit him. He wanted to be where new paths would open before him. His youth was marked by his friendships with other young men from the same social stratum, academics and artists, who were extremely dear to him. In the Scandinavian students’ milieu he met with kindred spirits, especially young Norwegians, with whom he remained friends for life. Trier had a gift for friendship, and was never happier than when introducing a new acquaintance to his large, hospitable, and lively home.

Trier did not lead much of a wild life as a student, and instead enjoyed the fraternity of like-minded men. In the summer holidays he went walking with friends in the Danish countryside, and it was on one such expedition to Schleswig in 1860 that he and two friends met the young Georg Brandes, who was later to become the standard-bearer of modernism in Denmark, and one of the most outspoken critics of Christianity. In 1860 he was just a young student like Trier, and when their paths crossed he gave a vivid picture of Trier in his diary. Brandes wrote: “At Egebæk I jumped out of the carriage together with Ernst Trier, Nørregaard and Bågø. I did not regret having made the acquaintance of these three men, each of them vigorous, open and fine natures of the same race; all men of feeling, adoring each other, Ernst Trier probably being the most gifted person, full of warmth and fervour, friendly and open to strangers.”<sup>4</sup>

In 1863 Trier volunteered for the army and was appointed as clerk to an army chaplain. On his return to Copenhagen he took up teaching at a teachers’ training college. It was during the Second Schleswig War that he was seized with the thought of setting up a folk high school, and in the years to come he worked constantly on

<sup>4</sup> Copenhagen, Det kongelige Bibliotek, Manuscript Department, Digital udgivelse af Georg Brandes, arkiv III.1-11: Diaries 1860-1927, 21 July 1860. My translation here *et passim*.



the realisation of this plan, which involved a great deal of travel to advertise his school project. In 1865 Vallekilde Folk High School was opened, with Trier as its first principal, a position he held until his death in 1893. In 1863 he had become engaged to Marie Abel, the daughter of a rural dean in Funen, and during the four years of their engagement - the period studied here - they corresponded several times a week. They were married in 1867, and Marie took her place in the school as the principal's wife. She died in 1873, having born three daughters, of whom Sigrid later married Poul Hansen, Trier's successor as principal of Vallekilde. In 1876 Trier married Julie Marstrand, daughter of the industrialist Troels Marstrand.

## DANISH FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS

In the second half of the nineteenth century the Scandinavian countries became notable for their development of tertiary education, and Denmark was first in the field. The Danish folk high schools were a part of the Grundtvigian movement, so called after its leader, the famous poet, theologian, and politician N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). The work of Grundtvig and his follower Christen Kold in establishing the Danish folk high schools was encouraged by the disastrous war of 1864, in which Denmark lost the provinces of Schleswig-Holstein to Prussia and some 6,000 Danish soldiers were killed.<sup>5</sup> After the war there was a general feeling in Denmark that "What has been lost without must be won within", and that this was a call best met through education. Denmark turned to the folk high schools as national institutions that no military defeat could harm; the aim of the schools was not further military armament or to plan acts of revenge over the Germans but to strengthen the love for Denmark. The movement grew apace. The original school at Rødding, founded in 1844, was moved to the village of Askov across the newly drawn national border between Denmark and Germany, where the school flourished under its principal, Ludvig Schrøder. The impact of the schools on the psychology of the Danish people helped them recover from the dent to their national pride.

Folk high school was a new kind of educational establishment, a small residential school intended for young adults - at the beginning only young men, but soon also young women. As most of the young people came from the peasant population, the courses were adapted to the rhythms of farming, so that the young men were at school from November to April, and the young women from May to July. The schools were without examinations. Initially they were financially independent, but as time went by they began to receive government grants.

The first folk high schools prospered for a variety of reasons. The majority of the Danish population still lived in rural areas, most of them farmers, which meant the schools had a large pool of potential students. The first half of the nineteenth century had been a period of transformation in the wake of the Land Reforms (1784-99), with old village communities changed because many farmers had moved their farms out of the villages, thereby weakening the traditional solidarity between peasants. Moreover, 1848-49 saw the end of absolute monarchy and the birth of constitutional monar-

<sup>5</sup> Buk-Swienty, *Slagtebænk Dybbøl 18. april 1864*.

chy, which meant that it now became possible for most men to participate in politics and to gain influence - which left them in even greater need of education.

Most of the new schools openly avowed Lutheran Christianity as their foundation, and even if the challenges of modernism were strong from the 1880s on, the Christian view of life remained the basis of school life. Whether as a taught subject or as a school ethos, religion was always present. Even if Scandinavians generally tended to be private about their faith, the students came under steady Christian influence in their daily lives. This was evident in the singing of hymns every morning and evening, grace at meals, and the texts written by Christian authors that were read aloud to the students. Churchgoing was optional, but many students chose to attend. Of the first schools, several were more openly Christian and included religious tuition in their programme. In the present context, however, my focus will be on one of the classic Grundtvigian schools that upheld this tradition from the very outset, and which put its stamp on folk high school culture.

The two fathers of the Danish folk high school movement, Kold and Grundtvig, did not agree on the teaching of Christianity. Unlike Kold, Grundtvig thought that religious instruction should be given at home and not at school. Yet neither of the men, famous and influential in the history of Danish education, had any doubt as to the importance of the Christian faith in human life, and it was partly thanks to the Danish folk high schools that Lutheran Christianity in Denmark resisted and survived the influence of modernism. During the waves of religious revival in the first half of the nineteenth century, pietistic attitudes and practices were widespread in the country, and it was from people devoted to these ideas that the schools inspired by Grundtvig met with opposition.

## TRIER AND GRUNDTVIG

At an early age Trier met Grundtvig, heard him preach, and came to know him personally, all of which made a great impression on him. Grundtvig's encouragement was crucial for Trier's decision to establish a folk high school rather than a boys' school, as had been his plan earlier.<sup>6</sup> In the 1860s Grundtvig was a man of high standing. He was almost idolised by supporters, young and old, who gradually became known as the Grundtvigians. Since 1839 Grundtvig had been chaplain of the church in Vartov, an old alms-house in Copenhagen, where people flocked to attend Divine Service and join the vigorous singing of hymns of which Grundtvig had written a great many. He himself had established a folk high school, but was of the opinion that the schools should be dispersed across the country, and he thought north-west Zealand, where Trier wanted to begin, was a suitable place.

Trier had become fully acquainted with Grundtvig's ideas by listening to his sermons at Vartov. However, before that in the early 1860s, he and some friends, including Schrøder, had attended a series of talks on the history of the Church given by Grundtvig in his own home, arranged by Trier. Some of Grundtvig's most important new ideas had been formulated much earlier, but it was not till now, however, that

<sup>6</sup> Trier, *Ernst Trier og Marie Abel* (hereafter Trier, *Brevveksling*), 20-22.



Ernst Trier talking at Vallekilde Folk High School.  
[From a drawing by Viggo Pedersen]

they became properly recognised, while to Trier and many other young people they meant a new view on life. This was very much the case with Grundtvig's *mageløse Opdagelse* (unparalleled discovery) in 1825<sup>7</sup>, his realisation that Christianity existed before the New Testament and that the Christian Church was grounded in the apostolic confession of faith and in the sacraments. Grundtvig saw the Church as a unity in space and time, without a gulf between past and present. The Church was to him a community of faith, implying that we are all living members of a historic communion in which all who are initiated have a vital part to play, and, crucially, that the congregation is more important than the clergy. He saw Christianity as a fact of history, which created an empowering contact with all the great men and the great events of the past, and in the last resort with "the power from on high", which works in and through it all.<sup>8</sup> Another important point was that individuals do not exist in isolation, that we move within the stream of history, and arrive at the truth by way of the history of which we are part. Grundtvig pointed out that we must act not only for our own good, but for the benefit of our country, and that Christianity points beyond the ego and leads us towards our obligations to other people, and to the love that is meant to embrace us all.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Allchin, *N. F. S. Grundtvig*, 105.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>9</sup> Auken, *Dansk Litteraturs Historie*, II, 227-232.

Another of Grundtvig's central ideas was that the folk high school should centre on "enlightenment for life".<sup>10</sup> What this meant was that an understanding of the deep truth that constitutes enlightenment never comes from rote learning of set texts. Facts and theories are no substitute for true enlightenment, which can only be taught by life itself. A dialogue based on mutual respect is central to enlightenment, and should be used to develop a basis for community feeling and, from the point of view of the individual, develop self-confidence, authority, and the ability to conduct a dialogue, which is a necessary prerequisite for active participation in political life.

Grundtvig fought against the form of education that was wholly reliant on books and scholarship, and was determined that the teaching at the folk high schools should be marked by the use of the Living Word, in stories, song, and dialogue. The students should never be tested, but what was offered to them through the Living Word should be received with heart and soul. The new Denmark should not be based on people from the elite but on the peasantry.<sup>11</sup> They should be the hearts of the nation. In the decade before 1864 it had become obvious just how disastrous it was when the academic elite held political power.<sup>12</sup> The question was now whether the peasants would be strong, willing, and courageous enough to defend their mother tongue and native land. It was the folk high schools that would see to that.

Trier's second source of inspiration was Christen Kold, who hit upon the idea that school should be like home. The implication was that students would return home without having acquired a taste for a more refined way of life, with better food and more comfortable beds. Schools should instead be similar to farms, and adopt the hierarchical structure with the husband at the head of the table. For this reason, the patriarchalism of the schools did not invite a radical change of gender roles.

## TRIER'S MASCULINITY

How did Trier view his own masculinity and its interrelationship with the Christian religion? To answer this I have chosen to study his correspondence with his future wife Marie during their engagement, 1863 to 1867, supplemented by Trier's memoirs, published after his death, and various books about him written by friends and acquaintances.<sup>13</sup> In his many long and heartfelt letters to Marie, Trier gives a detailed account of his daily life and doings, his thoughts and feelings. The letters indicate how he wanted to present himself to his fiancée and how he understood himself. The two young people had not been acquainted for long when their correspondence began, and during the period of their engagement there would be months in which they did not meet. Trier presumably wished to appear to her as the man he wanted

<sup>10</sup> Bugge, *Skolen for Livet* is the most important study of basic concepts in Grundtvig's educational thinking; Borish, *The Land of the Living*, 169.

<sup>11</sup> Damsholt, "On the Concept of the 'Folk'", 7-24.

<sup>12</sup> Hvidt, *Folkestyret i tiår og tegninger*, 37.

<sup>13</sup> Trier, *Femogtyve Års Skolevirksomhed i Vallekilde*; Id., *Højskoleforstander Ernst Triers Efterladte Papirer i Udvalg* (hereafter Trier, *Efterladte*); Hansen, *Højskoleforstander Ernst Trier, hans Æt, hans Barndom og første Ungdom*; Id., *Højskoleforstander Ernst Trier*; Schrøder, *Ernst Trier*.



to be, just as she tried to appear to him in a way that accorded with her own ideas of what she should be like. Both were intelligent and observant, able to shape ideal from practice. Trier did not think of himself as a good writer<sup>14</sup>; he was a better speaker. The letters were written for their own eyes only, although they often mention in their correspondence that private letters written by family members were shown to others.

Trier was probably unaware of his own masculinity and that of others if you apply the criteria used by modern research. No doubt he had his own ideas of manliness, of true men, and also a feeling that being a man did not mean the same in all the various social strata of his day. The most exciting thing about studying Trier is the fact that - without putting the actual process into words - he formed a new masculinity for himself and his young male students through his life and work at the folk high school. He, the son of a well-off Jewish merchant in Copenhagen, moved to the country and set out to teach young peasants, and, perhaps most sensationally, dropped his bourgeois manners and found a new way of life with the peasants. He, a university-educated man, dedicated his life to the education of a very different class of young men and women in order to encourage them to serve the common good. Gender was at stake here, and in what follows I shall focus on the masculinity or masculinities of the men involved, both of Trier and of his students. How was a new masculinity envisaged and performed? What were its characteristics and its relationship to Christian faith? Let us start by looking at the various roles in which Trier performed his masculinity. We shall meet him as a friend, potential husband, and practising member of a Christian community, and soon-to-be principal of his school at Vallekilde.

The milieu of Trier's youth was marked by his relationships with fellow students and friends - a homosocial milieu. In those days, fraternity, men's relationships with men, were social phenomena just as important as marriage and men's relationships with women.<sup>15</sup> For Trier the defining fellowships were formed in connection with his studies, with his fight for spiritual values such as "Danish Christianity", history, art and culture, and also in connection with his dreams of how these values could be realised to the benefit of the Danish people. His sheer *joie de vivre* made him one of the leading lights in his circles of friends and fellow students. He and some of his fellows shared a wish to raise the tone in the students' associations<sup>16</sup>, both in *Samfundet* (The Society) and the so-called *Store Theologicum* (Large Theologicum). This resulted in the formation of *Lille Theologicum* (Little Theologicum) in 1858, a group of the very close friends, most of them theologians, well known since because so many of the young men became pioneers in the development of the folk high schools, among them Ludvig Schrøder and Johannes Nørregaard as principals of Askov and Testrup.

Trier often mixed his artist friends, such as the composers August Winding and Emil Hartmann, with his fellow students, to the delight of all. His enthusiasm for people brought out the best in people.<sup>17</sup> Trier seems to have put much of his natural cheerfulness into his own dreams about the future as well as sharing it with his young male friends, especially those with similar plans and interests. At a party for artists

<sup>14</sup> Schrøder, *Ernst Trier*, 80.

<sup>15</sup> Grundvall, "Broderskap", 96.

<sup>16</sup> Hansen, *Højskoleforstander Ernst Trier, hans æt*, 95.

<sup>17</sup> Schrøder, *Ernst Trier*, 84.

and students in 1859, Trier's enthusiasm for the Norwegian students present, especially one named Lyng, found expression in a song written for the occasion: "This is why Lyng is his bosom friend; he is just one of the real men."<sup>18</sup>

Beyond doubt, these young men influenced one another's ideas and practices as far as masculinity was concerned. They had been brought up with the old-fashioned bourgeois virtues to become active citizens, trustworthy, industrious, and determined Danish men. Trier's schoolmate, the future politician and solicitor at the Supreme Court, Octavius Hansen, son of the merchant 'English Hansen', tried to bring Trier round to his aristocratic ideals and to adopt the manners of a self-made gentleman, practising riding, dancing, and fencing<sup>19</sup>, but Trier was uninterested in acquiring this culture. He felt most at ease with his friends in *Lille Theologicum*. They were united in a common pursuit, as he put it in a letter of 4 May 1866. As a fellow countryman, democrat, and a follower of Grundtvig, his chosen purpose in life was to "tear down the partitions between all believers and build up a wall between belief and disbelief", and "to tear down partitions erected by foreign influence in Danish education to uphold class differences".

Emotionalism, the sensitivity, tears, and embraces between men, were thought very much in evidence in this period, which held as principal virtues the prevalent masculine ideals of courage, stoical calm, and self-control as well as a Romantic, eroticised sensibility.<sup>20</sup> Trier was a cheery man with a loud laugh, but the strong man was as tender as a woman.<sup>21</sup> In his letters he told Marie that there were times when he himself had been profoundly moved, and he also noted when this was the case with other men. When he took leave of his home on his departure for Vallekilde, many tears were shed.<sup>22</sup> While working as a clerk to the army chaplain in 1864, Trier became part of the military community, and later gave a detailed account of his activities in his autobiography. He never saw action, and spent most of his time on active duty on the central island of Funen, where some of the troops were stationed. Both in service and after the war he showed his feelings for the soldiery. According to his letters, the war was a heavy memory, and he was moved when he talked to injured soldiers in the camp hospital at Frederiksberg Palace.<sup>23</sup> He wanted people to respect and honour their bravery. His pain and dejection after the tragic defeat at Dybbøl were not only prompted by the horrible injuries and loss of life, but also by the loss of Southern Jutland, and above all by the loss of honour. This was the prevailing feeling in the country, "the traumatic fever of Dybbøl" - surely they should have kept fighting rather than bow to German might.

Life at the school also left room for feelings. Trier wished daily life could be a life of love. He loved his students, they loved him - and tried to love one another, with varying degrees of success. In his letters to Marie he told her frankly about his favourite student. He also gave an account of a conflict between two students, which called

<sup>18</sup> Schrøder, *Ernst Trier*, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Hansen, *Højskoleforstander Ernst Trier*, 28.

<sup>20</sup> Thrane, *Tusmørkemesteren*, II, 191.

<sup>21</sup> Viggo Pedersen's introduction to Trier, *Efterladte*, 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 95.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 41-42, 47.

forth tears on both sides, evoked by sorrow as well as joy. When, in April 1866, Trier was going to part with a group of young male students, his heart was in his mouth and there was weeping.<sup>24</sup> When he was going to part with his good friend Pastor Hoff, the latter “flung his arms round my neck and kissed me”.<sup>25</sup>

Manifestly there was no risk in a man kissing and hugging other men. The norm for masculine behaviour allowed for the display of a broad spectrum of feelings. Research on the subject has pointed out that up to about 1850 the unrestrained cultivation of romance and sentimental feelings, sobbing and declarations of love, were perfectly compatible with the dominant ideal of masculinity.<sup>26</sup> Gradually it became more important to demonstrate one’s absolute independence of others, and physical as well as mental strength became the ideal. Intimacy between men was not yet understood as homosexuality, and this attitude offered male friends a liberty that would later disappear.

From 1863 Trier began to prepare himself for his post as principal of a folk high school, and as the breadwinner in his marriage to Marie. However much he wanted to get married, he wanted to set up house for himself first so as to provide for her in a satisfactory way. The outlook might not be particularly bright, but he felt certain it could be done. Marie’s father, Dean Abel, would not countenance handing his daughter over to an insecure future.<sup>27</sup> The wedding had to wait until everything was in place. In several letters Trier referred to the work of his manhood, which has now begun.<sup>28</sup> What made him a man is his independent position, with responsibilities and command of his own personal finances.<sup>29</sup> He had at first been supported financially by his father through his education, and later with the folk high school, yet this was never a precondition. Neither his betrothal nor his marriage will make him a man, but this was a consequence of his independent position. The essential point for Trier was that the school belonged to him, and that nobody had the right to interfere.<sup>30</sup>

Did Trier then conceive of Christianity and its practices as gendered? In order to answer this question it seems relevant to return to Grundtvig to consider his attitude to gender and women, as Trier may have been inspired by his ideas.<sup>31</sup> In 1851 Grundtvig had written a review of the first feminist novel in Denmark, *Clara Raphael. 12 breve*, written by Mathilde Fibiger under pseudonym.<sup>32</sup> In the review, which appeared in Grundtvig’s own periodical, *Danskeren*, he expressed his attitude to gender very

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 172-173.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>26</sup> Karlsen, “Mannlige vennskap”, 4 ff. Karlsen uses similar primary source material to mine - private correspondence, diaries, and so on - to study male friendship in Norway in the same period amongst a similar group of upper-class men, artists, university dons, and leading businessmen.

<sup>27</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 167.

<sup>28</sup> For example, *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>29</sup> Grundvall, “Broderskap”; see Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. The public demonstration of manliness in Western societies can be seen in three arenas: the home, the work-place, and in men’s associations. To set up a household of one’s own was the essential qualification for being considered a man.

<sup>30</sup> Trier’s letter to Mr. Bezdek in Mähren, 5 January 1870, printed in Trier, *Efterladte* (2nd ed.), 40-41.

<sup>31</sup> For a detailed treatment, see Birkelund, *Frihed til fælles bedste*, 527-534, 637-652.

<sup>32</sup> Grundtvig, “Clara Raphael”.



clearly. The novel is about a young governess and her rebellious thoughts provoked by her encounter with a sleepy, and pietistic, rural milieu. Unlike its other reviewers, Grundtvig was not scared by Fibiger's emancipatory ideas, which were extremely advanced for 1850; instead he backed her up, and continued to do so even after the publication of her second novel, of which he absolutely disapproved. In his review of the first novel, he characterised it as "a small, happy book, readable, human, Danish and feminine". Grundtvig emphasised that both man and woman are human beings, "created in God's image to pursue truth and to agree about Earth in order to agree so much the better with Our Lord about Heaven". Women as well as men have their inalienable human rights. Grundtvig praised the struggle of the protagonist, the shield-maiden Clara, and through her the authoress. He found the novel Danish "in pen, voice and kindness of heart"; qualities dear to the Old Bard, as Danes loved to call him.

To Grundtvig, men and women were of a different nature, but equal. Even more important was his statement that both sexes have a male and a female part. In his view, female values such as love and mildness had been suppressed in men, just as male values such as courage and authority had been suppressed in women. That being in which the male and the female parts were united was to Grundtvig an expression of the truly human. The feminine nature was to his mind only to be esteemed. In his own words, "woman with her heartfelt understanding will secure the connection between the free spiritual flight of man and her own deep-rooted existence". The upgrading and encouraging of femininity wherever it was found, not to mention improvements to the prospects for women in society, were aspects of Grundtvig's project for freedom and reform. Grundtvig's ideas were very radical when they were launched, coming as they did *before* the translation into Danish of John Stuart Mill's work. His high opinion of femininity did not have a major impact, however, and many years would pass before women in Denmark reached the goals he had dreamt of on their behalf. The first "high school men"<sup>33</sup> perceived men and women as very different creatures in spite of their common humanity. For this reason, it was thought young men and women should be addressed in different ways<sup>34</sup>, and gender-segregated education was the norm, maintaining the proper conduct of the sexes.<sup>35</sup>

Turning to Trier, to understand his performance as man we must look to his life as an active member of a Christian community. Before leaving Copenhagen, Trier preferred to attend the church at Vartov for divine service, where he could join in the enthusiastic hymn-singing and feel himself part of Grundtvig's congregation. Belonging to Vartov was important for him. In a letter of 8 January 1865 he gave an enthusiastic account of a service there, at which the queen dowager, Caroline Amalie, was present, as was often the case. She generally went to communion in private, which was the custom at court, but "today she completely broke with this Chinese etiquette" and "all alone, without a single lady-in-waiting she knelt down among everybody else and took the body and blood of Our Lord together with them. Next to her was a

<sup>33</sup> Borish, *The Land of the Living*, 193.

<sup>34</sup> Schrøder, *Ernst Trier*, 54.

<sup>35</sup> Damsholt, "Hans og Karen på højskole", discusses the gendered model for students at the folk high school.

peasant girl and behind her some training-college students and an old tailor with his wife. So you see, people from all walks of life. A happy sight indeed!"<sup>36</sup> The tearing down of barriers between human beings in church was one of his deepest wishes. "As Christians we are not individual persons but a community sharing all the good things in life", he wrote on 18 June 1865.<sup>37</sup> At a moment when he was running out of steam because of his mounting problems with setting up the school, a vicar called Hoff, whom he met during the war, paid him a visit, a moment that gave Trier courage because he felt that in spite of their rather brief acquaintance they were bound together by their common faith.

During their engagement Marie lived at home at Dalum, but she spent one winter and a number of holidays with her future parents-in-law in Copenhagen. She wrote to Trier that she would very much like to take communion with him at Vartov when he next comes to stay.<sup>38</sup> But he refused to promise anything. Communion, he said, was a serious matter and the very act was more important to him than her company, so it would be at a time and place on his own choosing.<sup>39</sup> Trier wrote openly to Marie about his problems, even when verging on crisis. He was often overworked, reading, teaching and - after 1864 - working at Vallekilde. Showers and fresh air improved his physical well-being, but his spiritual condition was a more serious problem. It took away his cheerfulness. In his letters he told her that prayer was his only comfort and that praying restored him to strength, courage, and joy. His crises can hardly be described as religious scruples - they were entirely of an existential nature.<sup>40</sup> Yet at times he asks Marie to pray for him, and through prayer a crisis is overcome on 3 March 1865.

What does all this tell us about Trier's masculinity and Christianity? Trier never made a secret of his Christian faith, but in general he did not proselytise either. Religious life was for him a private matter. Not all his friends from his youth were Christians, and he did not refrain from trying to influence them, and sometimes he succeeded in doing so, while the Christian faith was something that was taken for granted in the local community of Trier's school at Vallekilde; but daily life was marked by conflicts with the Pietists, who were later to be organised in *Indre Mission* (Inner Mission). Under all these circumstances Trier stood firm, never faltering in his presentation of himself as an independent, confident, and dignified man. The idea of a feminisation of religion discussed in several contributions in this volume was no problem for Trier, and his Christian faith could in no way be perceived as feminine, either by himself or by others.

Neither does Trier seem to have felt it necessary to hide his Jewish descent, be it in his childhood and his youth, or during the building of the school. When teaching at Vallekilde he emphasised that the important history of his people, the Jewish people, was told in the Old Testament, and his talks to the students on this theme were very impressive, according to Viggo Petersen, who was married to Trier's niece. Petersen

<sup>36</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 29-30.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-71.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

<sup>40</sup> Tjeder maintains that a group of Swedish theologians believed that in overcoming their religious doubt, they became not only modern but also men (Tjeder, "Det manliggörande tvivlet", 116-117).

wrote of Trier that “he was a friend of the Lord like Abraham, and of the same blood”.<sup>41</sup> Trier conceived of himself as “a Hebrew”. He loved his people and its heritage, but still, proud scion of the Patriarchs though he was, he loved Denmark and was grateful to the Danish people. In a letter to Marie of 17 June 1866 he wrote: “May God protect Denmark, our peaceful country, that it can be to us what the Land of Goshen was to the children of Israel during the plagues of Egypt”.<sup>42</sup> The songbook used at the school after 1870, with its selection made by Trier, contains many of Grundtvig’s songs about major events in the Old Testament; however, the number of songs treating events in the New Testament is much larger.<sup>43</sup> Trier’s faith and Christian mind must have been so convincing that for those around him his Jewishness became an irrelevancy.

## THE PRINCIPAL

Trier started his school from scratch; the scholar was put to work. He began by hiring rooms at a farm where he could teach and have a room of his own. He soon purchased land, had the school built, and went on to purchase farmland and livestock, and had a garden laid out.<sup>44</sup> From 1865 till Marie’s arrival in 1867, he worked hard to get the school up and running. The most important part of this was to find students and maintain contact with potential supporters. Trier travelled in all weathers, either on foot or bumping along in an uncomfortable carriage drawn by tired horses; and he achieved his purpose. He obtained financial support from his father, and often received gifts from high and low, but at first he had to struggle to make ends meet. He was proud to have saved money by finding a bargain, and rejoiced in the prospect of being able to provide Marie with wool from his own sheep. He dressed modestly and wore clogs in the yard - but did not make a virtue of wearing worn and weird peasant clothes like one of his models, Christen Kold at Dalum.<sup>45</sup>

Taking home as their model, everyone at the school lived on largely equal terms. Students and teachers shared the same rooms, ate porridge out of the same bowl, and wore wooden clogs and homespun clothes. This was difficult for some of the many guests who came to the school. When the famous Norwegian author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson visited Vallekilde, he found some adjustments to the new lifestyle a problem. Faced with the prospect of eating out of the same bowl as the young peasants, Bjørnson exclaimed: “No my dear friend, this will not do!”<sup>46</sup> Trier’s old father also resented this practice, and tried in vain to win over his daughter-in-law to the idea of individual bowls by saying: “You may well run a school for peasants but all the same

<sup>41</sup> Pedersen, “Om Ernst Trier”, 8-10.

<sup>42</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 198.

<sup>43</sup> Id., *Sange for den kristelige folke-skole*.

<sup>44</sup> Trier’s work, which included physical labour, apparently did not come in for ridicule from the locals; cf. Anna Prestjan’s account of the Swedish clergyman Erik E. Hammar, “En korsfäst främling på jorden?”, 161.

<sup>45</sup> Engberg, *Historien om Christen Kold*, 282; Allchin, *Grundtvig*, 167-169, gives an account of Kold’s school.

<sup>46</sup> Hansen, *Højskoleforstander Ernst Trier* (1933), 237.

[you might] try to get closer to the rest of the civilised world.”<sup>47</sup> Marie, ever the loyal wife and demonstrating that women could be just as steadfast as men, refused to give in. That said, even she had her limits, and asked to have spittoons in the house.

Beauty was valued highly by Trier - he loved flowers and had an eye for colour - but he despised luxury and looking after one's own comfort. The home that was the model for the school was the farmhouse, not the manor with its special culture and ways of life, which the peasants had better keep away from. “We should set fire to our sophisticated manners and do without mahogany furniture, roasts, and cake”, he wrote to Marie in 24 February 1867.<sup>48</sup> He told her in a letter of his new lifestyle at Vallekilde, which meant that he did not have a sofa and hardly ever used his rocking chair.<sup>49</sup>

Was the teaching in the folk high school gendered, and if so, in what way? Through Trier's letters to Marie we get a fine insight into both the teaching and daily life at Vallekilde. The students were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, but what was more important was the instruction given as *foredrag*, talks or lectures. Trier and his teachers gave talks on themes from history and mythology in such a way that the audience of young farmers not only hung on every word, but could easily relate their message to what was happening in their own lives, then and there in Denmark. Underlying the presentations was the Grundtvigian message: throughout the history of Denmark, heroes had fought to improve the lives and conditions of their people, and now the students were placed in a direct line to inherit this good tradition.<sup>50</sup> Trier chose men from the Danish past such as Niels Ebbesen, Beowulf, King Skiold, and Offa. He adopted Grundtvig's understanding of Northern mythology as an inspiration for Danish Christians, interpreting mythology as a form through which the heathen ancestors had tried to formulate their understanding of life in a kind of Nordic Old Testament - a premonition of Christianity, an anticipation of the Christian view of life as a battlefield for the fight between life and death. The mythological figures could be used as examples of the existential choices that face humankind in the great questions of life. Trier himself had attended grammar school, and had been educated to hold his own in a world of academics who felt superior to Denmark's local history and national culture. In contrast, his aim was to prepare his students for life in a specific historical and geographical context.

Group singing was an essential part of school life. There was Morning Song and Evening Song, and group singing both at the beginning and at the end of each class as well as at meals. In their spare time students were encouraged to sing together. It was through song that major historical events and events from Scripture could be taught and learned, easily sliding into the mind, and patriotic songs, sung together, had a strengthening effect and brought joy to all. Moreover, group singing bound the young people to each other. Nobody sang solo, all sang together; unison, not part-song, was the order of the day. At times Trier would accompany them on the piano.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>48</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 280.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>50</sup> Borish, *The Land of the Living*, 195; for Christian heroes, see Alexander Maurits and Tine van Os-selaer in this volume.

A few of his composer friends, such as August Winding, contributed with settings of new poems Trier wanted to introduce to his students.

In order to get the full benefit from their stay at the school, it was imperative that the students attended voluntarily, ready to receive enlightenment. The students, Trier and the other teachers were in one another's company almost round the clock. The force of example was great, just as the example set by the community had a strong impact. Trier had a clear idea of the goals for his school, and his influence on the students worked more indirectly than directly. He taught them through stories and songs, investing his whole personality, rather than giving admonitory speeches and instructions. He wanted to lead, just as he attached great importance to the freedom of his students to find their own way. Until he married in 1867, the school constituted the home and the family he so looked forward to.

The word, the spoken word, the Living Word, was of central importance in school life, and naturally the use of the Danish language was essential. Trier was also particularly given to the pervasive use of body language and language of the heart, of expressions of emotions such as tears, hugs, and kisses. No man at Vallekilde shrank from this practice. Trier was famous for tickling and hugging his students, for letting them have the opportunity to jump and skip, dance and play with each other in the classrooms.<sup>51</sup> From January 1867 he made arrangements for gym lessons every Saturday for the young men.

Did Trier wish to inculcate his male students with his own newly created ideal of masculinity, and did he succeed? I believe so, but it was an ideal he formed himself. He and his young students broke with tradition when performing their masculinity; they, in particular, broke with the general image of peasants as being dull, slow, and sceptical of everything new.<sup>52</sup> Now, liberated in body and mind they could stand tall and hold their heads high because they had new tenets to live by and a new goal in life. They had become responsible members of the Danish populace, and more independent in relation to their homes. Trier discarded his role as a bourgeois scholar and threw himself into his new life among the peasantry. He refused to imitate them, but neither did he take with him the fashionable manners and attitudes of town life. His strength was an authority from within. It has been said of him that his power over the minds of young people was due to his wholehearted dedication.<sup>53</sup> He was a leader with great charm and a forceful personality, spell-binding, impulsive, and warm; almost always able to let go of his self-control, yet always equal to the occasion.

<sup>51</sup> Damsholt, "Hans og Karen på højskole", 128.

<sup>52</sup> Hvidt, *Folkestyret i tiår og tegninger*, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Viggo Pedersen in Trier, *Efterladte*, 13-14.

## VISIONS OF FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY

Trier never explicitly refers to his own masculinity, or that of others', so as a gloss masculinity is non-existent in his letters. One might expect to find Trier's conception of masculinity expressed in his relationship to Marie, as he may have wanted to stress his masculinity at least in that quarter, but it seems to have been taken so much for granted that it becomes invisible in his letters. His ideas of femininity, however, are explicitly stated and they may indirectly give us an impression of his ideas of masculinity. Trier and Marie are of very different temperament. According to him, "stillness is the most conspicuous aspect of her nature", and just as characteristic of her as restlessness, loud language, and gesture are of him.<sup>54</sup> He sees himself as a sanguine person, almost choleric, but this difference is not necessarily gendered.<sup>55</sup>

In his letters Trier appears to be giving guidance to his very young fiancée, but never reproof. He instructs her on Christian religion and other matters. As a theologian and as a man he feels called upon to instruct her in the Christian faith, and she expects him to do so and likes to be instructed. However, she maintains her freedom to receive his instructions at her own pace and to make her own decisions. Trier refers to a situation in which "she laid her soft hand on my mouth and said wait".<sup>56</sup> She does not shrink from stopping him when she has heard enough. In his letters to her, Trier gives way to his dreams and expectations. In 18 January 1865 he wrote:

I picture you as a lovely, sweet, earnest little lady of the house who truly crowns it all by your quietness; how the students are delighted with you and smile at you, when you, in the morning, enter the school in order to listen to the morning's talk, bringing your needlework, or in the evening invite them to come in to see you. So you shall be my loving friend, my joy, she who in deep sincerity shares everything with me and gives strength and encouragement.<sup>57</sup>

Trier respects her father's decision not to give her away just like that, but insists he will marry her and is confident that he will be able to provide for her - and he wins. He is pleased with her patience and faithfulness, but also with her self-dependence. During a stay in Copenhagen she visits Grundtvig and his wife, and when she tells Ernst about her speaking her mind in the discussion between their guests, Trier rejoices in this. She is a thoughtful and cheerful girl with a mind of her own, but deeply in love with and fascinated by her fiancé. She writes to him that she hopes to be able to live up to him, and that she wants to make him complete.<sup>58</sup> They are to share everything in their marriage but both shall rule.

In his letters to her Trier makes no secret of his feelings for other people. We may say that the letters express less of his feelings for her than for others, mostly men.

<sup>54</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 37.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>56</sup> Trier, *Femogtyve*, II, 35.

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*, *Brevveksling*, 34.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 54. Marie uses the word *fyldestgøre* (complete) in a very unusual way here. She may mean either that she hopes to make him complete, or that she hopes to satisfy him.



Sexuality is not a theme that is addressed in the correspondence. Their relationship is marked by innocence, in just the same way as the relationships between Trier and his friends. The happy cheerfulness of the folk high school and its whole way of life are full of joy, expressed through singing, reading, bunting, festivities, speeches, flowers, and cake. Trier lets Marie's portrait pass round among the young men when they hear about her after she has sent apples to the school.<sup>59</sup> They send her greetings in return. Naturally the total suppression of sexuality must have been a problem for some of the young people at the school, probably increasingly so as the century progressed. Generally, however, the students expected life at school to verge on the monastic, without close contact with the opposite sex. School was a home in which the tone was different from that in the public sphere.

Trier wanted to bring Marie into his new world, and she prepared for it by spending the summer of 1866 at Askov, the folk high school of which Trier's friend, Ludvig Schrøder, was the principal. She was a student, but at the same time she took the chance to learn the management of a rural household. This was important because as the wife of the principal, and as such "the mother of the folk high school", she had to be able to run a household. Moreover, not only was she going to be mother of her own children, but also a mother to the students, who were the children of the larger home of the school. Trier was pleased to hear that Marie had learned to milk and slaughter livestock, and that she was communicating easily with peasants and humble folk. If you want to bring up others, he commented, you must not feel too grand to take the lead in the byre and at the butcher's block.<sup>60</sup> Marie liked Schrøder and his young wife<sup>61</sup>, and hoped that in time she might be as competent as she was, and that Trier and she might be as loved as a couple as the Schrøders were.

Would Trier have tolerated an independent wife, as prominent as himself? Would it have threatened his manliness, his authority as a man? Marie never seems to have provoked him in any way, but in their plans for the future they seem to have found a model for their life as the leading couple of the school: one model for her and another for him. I suspect that finding solutions in practice and not through theoretical thinking was characteristic of their view of life, a view that no doubt had a spiritual quality, and yet while they knew of other people's practices, for the most part they lived in the present and followed their own inclinations.

In the Copenhagen circles in which Trier moved it was the custom on festive occasions to propose a toast to "Woman". Similarly at meetings at the folk high school effusive tributes were paid to "Nordic Woman", and her praises were sung in a popular song by the "high school man" Mads Hansen that declared that she should be willing to give away the best she had for the benefit of her country.<sup>62</sup> When the large Danish flag sewn by Marie for the school was hoisted for the first time, Trier, standing by the flag-pole, spoke of the importance of receiving the Dannebrog as a gift from the person you love. As he wrote, "Not until you have got your own woman,

<sup>59</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 115.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>61</sup> Nissen, "Charlotte Schrøder".

<sup>62</sup> Hansen, "Til den Nordiske Kvinde".

<sup>63</sup> Trier, *Brevveksling*, 126.



do you realise that the woman is the heart for us.”<sup>63</sup> In his letters Trier clearly set out his views on the upbringing of Danish middle-class girls. He pointed out how wrong it was for a girl to be brought up only to parade herself, and later as a married woman to be controlled by her servants - and to let a wet nurse take care of the upbringing of her children. It is a false conception “that the man only loves and favours the delicate fingers, the pure white skin, but not the heart, the deep heart of a woman, who is willing to share his grief and his joy as well as his work.”<sup>64</sup>

At Askov Folk High School Marie was presented with new ideals for men and women through tales of figures from the past and not least from Nordic mythology. On 12 June 1866 she wrote to Trier about Schrøder’s readings from Grundtvig’s work on Nordic mythology *Optrin af Nordens Kæmpeliv* (Scenes from the life of Northern Warriors).<sup>65</sup> It was not only the female figures who attracted the attention of young women. Marie gives an account of the heated discussion between her schoolmates over the manliness of the legendary figure of Hrodgar. Was he a weak man?<sup>66</sup> In his teaching, Trier used Frigga, the wife of Odin, and the Valkyries as symbols of femininity. Frigga is the ideal woman, the good and loyal wife, strong, motherly, and self-sacrificing; the Valkyries symbolise armour-clad femininity, prepared to fight. As Trier wrote to Marie, “Well then, be my Frigga!”<sup>67</sup>

A specific type of man was fashioned and held up for admiration in the folk high school milieu. The principal became an example for his students, and was by many regarded as a pioneer. He was the head of the house, he and his wife were the students’ parents, though first and foremost father-figures. Trier became one of those who shaped the figure of principal in Denmark.<sup>68</sup> Charming, outgoing, loving, caring for the weak, a confessor to the sad and oppressed. This was a period much given to the excessive admiration of leaders. In spite of efforts to develop and encourage democratic ways, the social hierarchy was obvious, and the patriarchal framework into which a man was born as the head of the household and the responsible representative of the family in all dealings with the state would last until the beginning of the twentieth century. The social order was built upon men as responsible breadwinners and bearers of the burdens of the common weal. The performance of masculinities which the students at the school were to be discouraged from adopting were those of the bourgeois men, grand and indolent, and the farm-hands at the manors, coarse, irresponsible, and shallow. Trier’s students should be proud of belonging to the peasantry, firmly rooted in Danish soil. They should hold their heads high when they were faced with other young men who chose to cling to the materialism of the old peasant culture.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>68</sup> Engberg, *Historien om Christen Kold*, 272 and 299, depicts Christen Kold as a charismatic figure with sex appeal, dangerous to young women as well as young men.

## CONCLUSIONS

The principal and his students performed their new type of masculinity in accordance with their different positions in the hierarchy. Together they became pioneers, creating new models. Both the principal and the young peasant student preferred living in the countryside to life in town with its physical and spiritual pollution. Christian faith and Danish patriotism were their hallmarks. They shared a respect for the physical labour necessary in the life of a humble farmer. While the principal was a learned man, most of the young peasant students did not aspire to attain the same heights of learning. The school did not encourage further education for all. Principal and student alike shared the Christian faith as something natural, adopted voluntarily like all other values promoted by the school. Another important lesson from the school was this. When he returned home, the student should transmit what he had learned in a modest way; the former folk high school student should be ready to take the van, but was never to draw attention to himself. From the 1870s gymnastics began to leave its mark on the folk high school curriculum, and the physical rectitude acquired at school became the delight and pride of the young students.

It is safe to say that this image was accepted as the norm for young Danes from rural areas far into the twentieth century. As the working class increased in number, the differences between the young workers and the young peasants became more obvious. The peasants were characterised by their sense of nationality, the workers by their international affiliations. Yet Lutheran Christianity did not loosen its grip on the many workers who were firmly rooted in the country, even as they became town dwellers.

Did the project of creating a new Danish man succeed? Certainly the growth and popularity of the folk high schools would indicate that it was a success. The young female students have not been included in this study. At the schools they were encouraged to be independent and active, but they were not consciously prompted to rebel against traditional gender roles or seek emancipation. Later, the Grundtvigian women were to take the lead in the campaign for full civil rights for women, ultimately obtained in 1915. Only later did women understand how dangerous it might be for femininity to be idealised, for women to be put on a pedestal, high above men and masculinity.

Lutheran Christianity, and more specifically Grundtvig's particular view of human nature, thus inspired Danish patriotism and the freedom to think and act, and all became fused in the message emerging from the Danish folk high schools. In spite of the great freedom of thought at the schools, the young students were expected to submit to the personal authority and charisma of the principal. Students arrived, supposedly willing to be shaped according to the ideals of the folk high school; it was said they returned home as new men and women, not refined, nor risen beyond their station, but spiritually elevated. Many of them joined a circle of people who had been transformed by the same experience, and some deliberately chose to live near a folk high school so that they could participate in its public meetings and thus reinforce ties and continue their personal education. Enthusiastic former students could transform a whole district, establishing new forms of social gatherings and, more importantly, new institutions such as Grundtvigian free schools for their children,

local meeting-houses and, from 1867, independent congregations with the right to choose their own minister. Likewise, many former students were instrumental in the formation of the co-operative movement that radically changed the face of Danish agriculture in the 1880s.<sup>69</sup>

Far from challenging them, the Danish folk high schools confirmed the hegemonic bourgeois gender ideals of the time, but they also contributed to the removing of walls between the old ranks and classes. Although the differences between town and country remained, the sharing of values, recovered and relaunched by the folk high school, bound Danish men and women together in a new way that transcended social class.

<sup>69</sup> Borish, *The Land of the Living*, 202-204.



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**PART V**  
**TRANSGRESSING GENDER**  
**BOUNDARIES**

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# LITERARY TRANSGRESSIONS OF MASCULINITY AND RELIGION

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INGER LITTBERGER CAISOU-ROUSSEAU

**A**n unbaptised heathen whose sex is vague, but whom critics, even those who are usually alert to gender issues, invariably call a woman; a programmatic atheist, certainly a man, but more feminine than masculine; and a clergyman from a “monumental work on the breakdown of faith and patriarchy”, to quote one critic: these are the three protagonists - drawn from classical Swedish novels - whom I wish to consider in this chapter. And while my point of departure does not seem the best given, since the task here is to highlight aspects of masculinity and religion in Swedish fiction in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I hope all will soon appear in a rather different light.

## A ‘CROSSPIECE’ NAMED AZOURAS LAZULI TINTOMARA

The unbaptised heathen in question is Azouras Lazuli Tintomara, the enigmatic key figure in a work by Carl Jonas Love Almqvist (1793-1866), *Drottningens Juvelsmycke* (*The Queen’s Diadem*) (1834). A romantic *Gesamtkunstwerk*, *The Queen’s Diadem* combines epic narrative, drama, monologues, poetry, and song. Almqvist himself hesitated to call the book a novel, preferring the word *konstverk* (artwork) or ‘romant’.<sup>2</sup> A central event in *The Queen’s Diadem* is the assassination of the Swedish King Gustav III during a masked ball at the Stockholm Opera on 16 March 1792. Ballet dancer at the Opera and half-sister of the crown prince, Tintomara first ‘steals’

<sup>1</sup> Wivel, *Snödrottningen*, 314.

<sup>2</sup> Marilyn Johns Blackwell considers this book not only the brilliant culmination of Almqvist’s literary career, but also of the entire European Romantic movement. Blackwell, “The Queen’s Diadem: A Romantic Novel”, 235.



the queen's diadem, and is then accused of being involved in the murder of the king. Amongst the conspirators are two young officers, Ferdinand and Clas Henrik, who fall in love with Tintomara, as do their fiancées, the sisters Amanda and Adolfine. The plot alternates between the aristocrats' amorous adventures and the intrigues of powerful men at the highest political level. Tintomara flees passionate love and high politics alike. Condemned to death for several offences in what was intended to be a mock execution, Tintomara dies, shot by her admirer Ferdinand. The saviour desired by everyone finally escapes their clutches.

Where critics used to be reasonably certain that Tintomara was a woman, their more recent colleagues have leapt to apply all the available theoretical tools to the matter of the figure's problematic sex. Yet even they have a conspicuous tendency to use 'she' as the proper pronoun for this character. Inspired by Jacques Derrida's concept *entre*, a Danish professor of Scandinavian, Karin Sanders, now employs the term 'crosspiece' to indicate the many vague and indefinite characters favoured by Almqvist.<sup>3</sup> This vagueness is multifaceted, but especially prominent when it comes to sex. Sanders maintains that the characters reveal how complicated ascriptions of sex can be. Many scholars have followed suit, and Tintomara has become a convenient object in reflecting on the prerequisites of the ideas of gender and sex dichotomies. Tintomara seems to be an all-too appropriate illustration of Judith Butler's theories of gender as a masquerade. "With Tintomara, Almqvist created a queer theory 150 years before the very concept was invented", to quote a striking formulation by the Swedish journalist and scholar of literary criticism, Magnus Jacobson.<sup>4</sup>

A fresh and radical approach has been suggested by the Swedish director Björn Melander, who is convinced that Tintomara is a man. His production of a stage adaptation of *The Queen's Diadem* was given its first performance on 16 February 2008 in Gävle in Sweden. "To me, Tintomara has always been a man", he said in an interview at the time.<sup>5</sup> It was even a precondition to his working on the play that the figure was given a male identity. "What is female, what is male?" Melander asked, continuing, "We have different sexes and sometimes sex cannot even determine our sex-identity ... So who am I? What does it mean to be androgynous? Such models can get it completely wrong, pigeon-holing us. I can convey so much more by making this androgynous creature a boy." Like many others, Melander finds Tintomara magical, and he is certainly right that a wealth of complex gender matters is actualised by Almqvist's character. At the same time he has declared that he is not interested in queer theories, and perhaps that is the reason why he preferred to cast "a boy as dangerous as could be" as Tintomara. As Melander remarked, it is not easy to find a beautiful boy who can be a girl without being an embarrassment. The newspaper article compares the actor Niklas Riesbeck's Tintomara to the artists David Bowie and Boy George, both of whom have cultivated an androgynous image. The same was true of Michael Jackson, who also comes to mind in this connection as something of a modern Tintomara, a perfect, almost angelically androgynous figure, attractive to women as well as men. Melander's reflections may not be overly specific, but his

<sup>3</sup> Sanders, *Konturer*, 205.

<sup>4</sup> Jacobson, *Almqvist*, 155 (my translation).

<sup>5</sup> Sundin, "Tintomara i Gävle" (my translation).

attempts to come to terms with Tintomara is interesting in itself. Although Tintomara alternates between playing the role of a woman and a man in the narrative, I have never encountered anyone proclaiming Tintomara's male identity as peremptorily as Melander does. On the contrary, the male potential of the figure has been largely invisible in the literature.

## THE CREATION OF A NEW MAN

In 1816, Carl Jonas Love Almqvist joined *Manhemsförbundet* (literally, Men's Home Association), a male club devoted to the study of the Nordic past, with its membership of Romantic-minded men with a strongly nationalist, Christian, and pedagogical agenda. Almqvist, whose task it was to frame the club's programme, had far-reaching utopian ambitions to remould the Swedish nation by ensuring its citizens had a Christian upbringing. His was a more radical brand of mysticism than most, and his insistence on an idealised agrarian lifestyle - in 1824 briefly put into practice by himself and some of his fellows in the county of Värmland - had a democratic accent that went generally unnoticed by his fellow intellectuals. In 1817 Almqvist started another, more esoteric fraternity, *MannaSamfund* (literally, Men's Society) (1817-1824), provoking official ire by providing a group of young men from the rapidly expanding middle classes the opportunity to construct an alternative to established society, searching for a new way of life. The aim was to develop their inner spiritual life by reading. For the closed circle of initiated, the activities of MannaSamfund were part of a network of homosocial relationships and institutions such as the Swedish Academy of Military Science at Karlberg (where Almqvist worked as a teacher between 1826 and 1828), putting into practice the educational principles of medical gymnastics advanced by Per Henrik Ling (1776-1839).<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the notion of manliness had strong idealistic implications. Man was supposed to do his utmost to realise his potential as an image of God. He should be trained in warfare, but at the same time he was expected to be mannerly and poised. Courage and physical strength were considered signs of manliness, but so were friendliness, humbleness, and peacefulness. Ling's gymnastics were intended to recreate a lost manliness by making the best use of man's ability to be 'a man', though adapted to modern society, and thus acknowledging not only strength and discipline but also spirituality and a passion for nature.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, the main purpose of MannaSamfund was to fashion a new male subject, to "create a new man" as the Swedish literary historian Jakob Staberg puts it. By disciplining the body as well as the soul, a new individual would emerge. Yet while this new male subjectivity was formed in middle-class institutions and practices such as the bourgeois family, the new pedagogy, and the exercises of the military academy, at the same time there was a readiness to defy the established order. Eager to transcend boundaries, the future military commanders and senior politicians that made up

<sup>6</sup> Ljunggren, *Kroppens bildning*, 253, concludes that Per Henrik Ling "expressed a masculine ideal that contained both primitivism, idealism, and values for modern soldiers and citizens".

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, *passim*.

MannaSamfund for a short time pursued activities that bid fair to end in revolutionary upheaval. Despite their declared intention to be a wholly spiritual organisation that rejected the exterior world and not only politics, both political and social motives were very much at work. The revolutionary power inherent in MannaSamfund should not be overlooked.<sup>8</sup>

Being the site of the formation of a new Swedish individual that was hoped would be one and the same time universal and male, broadly human and specifically middle-class, the Romantic era fraternities were thought important components in the construction of a new society. According to Almqvist's proposal for *Manhemsförbundet*, its members were to progress through nine stages, their education remoulding each individual into a 'new' man, a new creation, 'a different human being'.<sup>9</sup> The crusader was held the ideal of manliness; the woman was considered the means by which man could realise his inherent potential, and approach eternity. Yet to overcome the dependence on woman, man's desire must be sublimated. No longer an object of man's desire, woman disappears, and sexual dualism is overcome in a Romantic unity; and where woman's disappearance becomes the prerequisite for a godlike life, man must reconcile himself to being an autonomous individual.<sup>10</sup>

As the grandson of a dean and professor of theology, and the nephew of a bishop and another professor of theology, Carl Jonas Love Almqvist was already destined to take a religious path, and this was compounded by the fact that his maternal grandfather, the pious and learned publisher Carl Christoffer Gjörwell, who had considerable influence over the young Almqvist's upbringing, was a Moravian. At an early age Almqvist's religious mind was thus shaped by a Moravian spirit, and later he was drawn to Emanuel Swedenborg's theology. These influences were to be combined in the ideology of MannaSamfund, described by the Swedish literary historian Henry Olsson as an inextricable unity of Swedenborgian metaphysical speculation, Moravian emotional religiosity, and a Rousseau-inspired idealisation of nature.<sup>11</sup>

Christ had a prominent position in MannaSamfund. The second paragraph of its statutes or 'law' states that Jesus Christ, the God of Heaven and Earth, is the one and only Lord, whose orders the members of MannaSamfund must obey.<sup>12</sup> Almqvist's ideal of manliness consisted of a radical obedience of God's commandments, ignoring conventions and worldly concerns. A man should thus have the courage to be Christ's holy fool, uniting goodness and strength; a lamb as well as a lion. Condemning all kinds of exterior authorities, Almqvist became an advocate of a radical religious subjectivity, an ideal of *imitatio Christi*, where inner religious experience would guide a man's spiritual life.<sup>13</sup> Certainly these ideas shared little with the doctrines of the Church of Sweden, and although Almqvist was ordained in 1837, the only appointment available for him was as a low-paid regimental pastor.

<sup>8</sup> Staberg, *Att skapa en ny man, passim*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

<sup>11</sup> Olsson, *C. J. L. Almqvist före Tömrösens bok*, 77.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 82-83.

## A UTOPIAN CREATION

It is my contention that in his construction of the literary character Tintomara, Almqvist was attempting to grasp a vision of an alternate Christian society, in accordance with the utopian ideals unfolding in the fraternities in which the author was so active. An unsolved conundrum, Tintomara appears in chiaroscuro, bringing death and illness to those unprepared for this epitome of the utopian vision. As an empty reflection, or pure look, desired by both men and women, Tintomara exposes society; the masked ball becomes the very emblem of artificiality, at the same time exposing sex roles as a masquerade.<sup>14</sup> A sexual ambivalent crusader, like Joan of Arc, Tintomara eludes all social inscriptions, taking the shape of a dissident, constantly moving between sexes, social classes, and settings. Transgressing the dichotomy male-female, Tintomara is the exemplification of the genealogy of sex and gender as social constructions. A transitional object as well as a prototype for the new creation of man produced by the inner development of the mind, Tintomara's outward sexual attributes become unimportant. This utopian creation has a divine dimension as well, and like Christ, according to certain interpretations, is thus beyond gender.

Just as the Platonic myth held that man and woman were created out of an androgyne, so the unified whole that is androgynous Tintomara represents a dialectically higher unity that surpasses gender dichotomies. Yet regardless of whether the young Almqvist believed woman was the disappearing sex in the ideal formation of man, his creation Tintomara evokes female associations. Certainly an ironic paradox, worthy this most ironic and capricious work, that the very symbol of a utopian world beyond gender turns out to be an illustration of our inability to imagine humanity in any other terms than sex dichotomies.

As several scholars have noted, the cross is a recurrent theme as well as a structuring principle in *The Queen's Diadem*, with Tintomara at its heart. A symbolic crusader, Tintomara's path is lined with social obstacles and opponents in the guise of desire. Christ, the main authority in *MannaSamfund*, has an equivalent in Tintomara, who has not once heard about him and is only informed of his existence in the course of the story. An *animal coeleste*, a participant in both heaven and earth, a lion as well as a lamb, Tintomara harbours two realms at once: the pure, ethereal and ideal, and the cruel and brutal. Tintomara the ultimate hero is disguise and crime

<sup>14</sup> See Joan Riviere's classic 1929 article, "Womanliness as a Masquerade"; cf. Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 11, who contends that "even normative masculinity is typically asserted as an unending performance", and that the masculine "is as much a spectacle as the feminine". Though Adams concentrates on middle-class Victorian male writers' representations of masculinity, he refers to anthropologist David Gilmore's cross-cultural survey of norms of masculinity, concluding that manhood "almost universally assumes the form of 'a pose that is deeply conflicted, pressured, and forced, a mask of omnicompetence and almost obsessive independence'." The theatrical tropes speak for themselves. For Adams the "challenge is to move beyond the deconstruction of gender".

personified, but at the same time pure as pure can be.<sup>15</sup> It does not seem unwarranted to read into Tintomara's arrival a prefiguring of the second coming of Christ.

Attaining unity of self was one of the goals for the young men of MannaSamfund. Representing the realisation of this ideal in a most unexpected way, Tintomara, devoid of specific sex, can be read as a utopia, a consolation for the brethren striving to cultivate idealistic friendships in their own 'androgynous' ways. Being just a teenager (seventeen years old), called both 'girl' and 'young man', the pubertal androgynous Tintomara's conjectural death is symbol of the entrance into the same society the young men of MannaSamfund were about to enter.

### THE THIRD THING, OR CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES

Tintomara is cruelly punished for transgressing the rules of gender. Duke Carl, the voice of society, is not as taken by cross-dressing as the late Gustav III, the 'theatre king':

Even though you are a woman, you have assumed a man's dress and in this guise committed the crime for which you are being punished. In death, therefore, you will stand in a dress which does not mark your sex but which, by its indistinctness, will constitute a sign of your own ambiguity in this respect. It's a thin, ankle-length cloak with big sleeves ...! - It reaches all the way to her feet. That's right. Now pull it tight around her waist with the buckle, and then it will resemble a man's coat and a woman's skirt at the same time.<sup>16</sup>

The duke is categorical. Tintomara's identity as a woman is unquestionable to him. On more than one occasion he exhibits male desire for this figure. If 'she' were a man, this would imply that he himself had homosexual tendencies. And if Tintomara is not a man, 'she' must be a woman! *Tertiur non datur!* The authoritarian Reuterholm seconds this: "Consider this ambiguity in your dress as a great and public disgrace". As a complement to the prisoner's shaming attire, a wreath of briar roses is put on Tintomara's head. The associations are with Christ, who was punished by death for transgression - just like Tintomara.<sup>17</sup> In an article on representations of Christ in Victorian art, the British theologian Sean Gill concludes that "if women as well as men were to be able to identify with representations of the human Christ, these would have to embody the highest attributes of both femininity and of masculinity as they were understood in a society in which gender identities were sharply polarised".<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Interpretations of Tintomara abound, ranging from Goethean *schöne Seele* (beautiful soul), the image of a Kantian *freie Schönheit* (free beauty) that is pure form, a Rilkean angel, to inexpressible secret and dread Beauty itself, while comparisons have been drawn with as varied a crew as Balzac's *Séraphita*, Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, Goethe's *Mignon*, Kaspar Hauser, and Fenella in Scott's *Peperil of the Peak*.

<sup>16</sup> Almqvist, *The Queen's Diadem*, 221.

<sup>17</sup> Tintomara's Christ-like quality is the theme of a chapter in Anders Persson's study "*Försonam vid sitt bröst, en stjärnkrönt Qvinna*", 82-130.

<sup>18</sup> Gill, "Ecce Homo", 166.

There was a delicate balancing act in endeavouring to represent Christ as the model of all humanity, amply illustrated by artist William Holman Hunt, who used both female and male sitters for one of his portrayals of Christ.<sup>19</sup>

In his interpretation of *The Queen's Diadem*, the Swedish literary historian Johan Svedjedal concludes that the crux of the work is not gender trouble but the relationship between man and God. Tintomara's task is to challenge the idea of what it means to be a human being, and the greatness as well as the tragedy of the figure lies in its fate as a link between man and God.<sup>20</sup> Yet does the one really exclude the other? "Not man, not woman, but simply [a] *human being*", the second surgeon says of the androgyne.<sup>21</sup> Applied to Tintomara, this would mean that while the other characters are men or women, Tintomara alone is a human being in a qualified sense, as a unity of earthly and heavenly, of human and divine.<sup>22</sup>

Judith Butler has argued that "the matrix of gender relations is prior to the emergence of the 'human'"; the 'activity' of gendering is the matrix that enables the cultural condition. The "construction of gender operates through *exclusionary* means, such that the human is not only produced over and against the inhuman, but through a set of foreclosures, radical erasures, that are, strictly speaking, refused the possibility of cultural articulation." Those who do not appear properly gendered, "abjected beings" in Butler's Kristeva-inspired vocabulary, are thus excluded, and it is "their very humanness that comes into question". The construction of the human, according to Butler, is thus "a differential operation that produces the more and the less 'human', the inhuman, the humanly unthinkable. These excluded sites come to bound the 'human' as its constitutive outside, and to haunt those boundaries as the persistent possibility of their disruption and re-articulation."<sup>23</sup> Almqvist makes the outsider and 'humanly unthinkable' Tintomara a human being whose very existence implies a questioning of boundaries, religious as well as human.

Inspired by Butler, the Norwegian theologian Halvor Moxnes, who has focused on Jesus' puzzling words on eunuchs (Matt. 19: 12), suggests queer - "a term that breaks with definite binary oppositions and clear definitions, and that questions established identities" - as now the most adequate way to translate eunuch. Although not proposing that Christ was actually a eunuch, Moxnes concludes that if the eunuch passage "identifies Jesus with the image of the eunuch it destabilises all male images of Jesus Christ". Referring to eunuchs, Christ's intention, according to Moxnes, was to evoke gender trouble by "opening up possibilities that fixed gender divisions had closed".<sup>24</sup> In creating Tintomara, Almqvist exhibited the same courage.

"This 'transvestite' Jesus makes a human space where no one is out of place because the notion of place and gender has been transformed", writes the cleric

<sup>19</sup> Gill, "Ecce Homo", 168-169; cf. Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, 146, who maintains "Victorian religious painters such as Holman Hunt and apologists of Christian manliness such as S. S. Pugh stressed both the masculine strength and the womanly tenderness of the Christ".

<sup>20</sup> Svedjedal, "Något alltför djuriskt?".

<sup>21</sup> Almqvist, *The Queen's Diadem*, 42.

<sup>22</sup> See Almer, "Korset och medskapandet".

<sup>23</sup> Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 7-8.

<sup>24</sup> Moxnes, "Jesus in Gender Trouble", 32-33.



Eleanor McLaughlin in discussing the non-fixed, non-definable characteristics of Christ using the hermeneutics of cross-dressing.<sup>25</sup> For McLaughlin, “God who is incarnate must be seen as neither essentially male, nor essentially female, but as both, and therefore as a Third One, who opens the eyes of the beholder to something more than the expected: a torn and dying fanatic named Jesus or Blandina.”<sup>26</sup> The gender-bending transvestite is ‘a Third Thing’ who makes people aware of society’s permanent crisis of category, according to Marjorie Garber. This expression ‘Third Thing’ is reminiscent of the Swedish critic and author Horace Engdahl’s characterisation of the non-definable Tintomara as ‘a third’, beyond all categories.<sup>27</sup> For McLaughlin, the ‘Third Thing’ is “a conundrum through which to re-vision the Jesus of orthodox Christology, Child of God, a scandal and a stumbling block”. Destroyer of dualities, boundaries, and categories, breaking the wall between heaven and earth, “the Trickster who peels us open to new depths of humanity, divinity, femaleness, maleness” - this is Christ revised. Simultaneously it is a Christ who embodies “the scandal and transgression which is the Gospel”.<sup>28</sup> It is no coincidence that the description fits Tintomara well.

## A LITERARY DILEMMA

Turning to the programmatic atheist, undoubtedly a man, but more feminine than masculine, the character in question is Axel Borg, the main protagonist in the novel *I havsbandet (By the Open Sea)* (1890) by August Strindberg (1849-1912). Although inner complications abound, the storyline of Strindberg’s novel is simple enough, as the cover description of the Mary Sandbach’s English translation makes clear:

Axel Borg is sent to one of the outermost islands of the Stockholm archipelago to help the inhabitants safeguard their dwindling fishing industry. But the highly strung inspector soon discovers himself at odds with the local people with their primitive and sometimes brutal ways. Not even the woman he loves - a newcomer like himself - is untainted by the animal cunning of the islanders and eventually adds her animosity to the general oppression he feels. Set against the background of the islands themselves and the constantly changing sea ... this is a deeply moving story of one man’s confrontation with nature and his fellow men and, ultimately, with the contradictions of his own soul.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> McLaughlin, “Feminist Christologies”, 144. Inspired by Marjorie Garber’s study *Vested Interests*, McLaughlin (138) concludes that a transvestite is “a revealer of the cultural construction of gender categories”. Hence Jesus acts as a transvestite when he kneels like a slave girl to wash his disciples’ feet.

<sup>26</sup> McLaughlin, “Feminist Christologies”, 136-137. Blandina was a female martyr.

<sup>27</sup> Engdahl, *Den romantiska texten*, 207.

<sup>28</sup> McLaughlin, “Feminist Christologies”, 142.

<sup>29</sup> Strindberg, *By the Open Sea*.



If Almqvist was associated with his figure Tintomara, the same has been said to be true of Strindberg and Borg. Perhaps Axel Borg should be considered Strindberg's putative male response to Almqvist's supposed female, Tintomara? A comparison between Tintomara and Axel Borg seems off-beat to say the least. However, they both represent the isolated hero's romantic role, being 'titans' caught oscillating between their positions as superman and naïf. Borg and Tintomara represent the unruly condition of the savage, though Borg furiously rejects this position. The passion of Christ is actualised in both narratives, and there are parallels between both Tintomara's and Borg's deaths and Christ's. The fourteen chapters of Strindberg's novel have been compared to the fourteen scenes of the author's drama *Till Damaskus (To Damascus)* (1898-1904), itself constructed to echo the fourteen stations of Christ's *Via Dolorosa*. It has even been proposed that Christ functions as Borg's lodestar, his object of identification, in his quest for a new identity, when his old and worn-out universe begins to fall apart and something new is anticipated. Both Tintomara and Borg find their true identity in a fusion with nature, and they are both associated with whiteness and nothingness. If Tintomara is positioned 'before' religion, Borg's position is 'after' religion, but paradoxically this is also their meeting place.

Both Almqvist's and Strindberg's works focus on boundaries and how they are transcended, their androgynous protagonists illustrating the collapse of sex categories. Yet Almqvist's playful attitude and cheerful questioning of those boundaries stands in sharp contrast to Strindberg's plagued approach. For Strindberg, boundaries constitute a burning problem - a fact that can be attributed to personal reasons as well as the historical context. Clearly, masculinity, or rather the supposed lack of it, was to Strindberg's mind the most central complex. His was a high-strung ideal of masculinity, and he had an inferiority complex because of he sensed he was not a 'real' man.<sup>30</sup> *By the Open Sea* appeared in 1890, during the much-acclaimed crisis of masculinity of the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>31</sup> The liberation of woman struck panic in Strindberg, who recruited all available arguments as to the urgency of demarcating the lines between the male and female sex. Yet equally it was vital for Strindberg to be in the literary front line, which was why decadent attitudes were to have such an impact on him.

Sensitive, nervous, artificial, and aesthetic as the decadent hero was, his counterpart, the sexually provocative woman, was considered a femme fatale, evoking fascination as well as condemnation. With Axel Borg, Strindberg created one such decadent hero, thereby inviting a conflict between his own strong masculine ideal and the effeminate decadent one. A male hero as preoccupied as Borg when it comes

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Eklund, *Tjänstekvinnans son*, 109. Other critics have confirmed this view, reflecting on the female weakness and nearly abnormal delicacy of Strindberg's nature. His contemporaries' accusations of effeminacy had a deep impact on Strindberg, and in a letter to his publisher, Albert Bonnier, on 17 December 1883, he declares his love for the conspicuously manly Norwegian author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the man Strindberg has been searching for a long time probably because he is so unmanly himself (Strindberg, *Brev*, III, 379).

<sup>31</sup> Tjeder, "Konsten att bilfva herre öfver hvarje lidelse", 178-179, argues that masculinity has always been problematic, and that the theory of different crises of masculinity should be substituted for a more complex picture that takes masculinity's permanent redefinitions into account.

to his appearance could best be described as an androgynous creature, a counter-type of masculinity.<sup>32</sup> At the same time, he looks upon himself as a superman. Complications and ambiguities reign.

## THE EFFEMINATE SUPERMAN AXEL BORG

The new ideal man of Renaissance Humanism, engaged in restless action, his life characterised by repeated ruptures, breaking with his home, established knowledge, and God - this characterisation of Faustus is equally applicable to Strindberg's Axel Borg.<sup>33</sup> When the reader first meets him, he is in the midst of a fresh upheaval. He has just left mainland, intent on conquering new knowledge, leaving God behind as an old, rejected fabrication. The scene is the far reaches of the archipelago, indicating that the narrative will continue to oscillate on the border between land and sea, known and unknown, nature and civilisation, heaven and earth, male and female, great and small, humour and tragedy. Axel himself is described as "the little gentleman sitting crouched by the mast, who seemed both frightened and cold, and who, from time to time, drew his shawl closer about his stomach and lower body".<sup>34</sup> He seems cold, but this coldness has little to do with a cool male attitude. On the contrary, the narrator concludes that the customs officer must have found him ridiculous. The description of his clothing is designed to confirm this image:

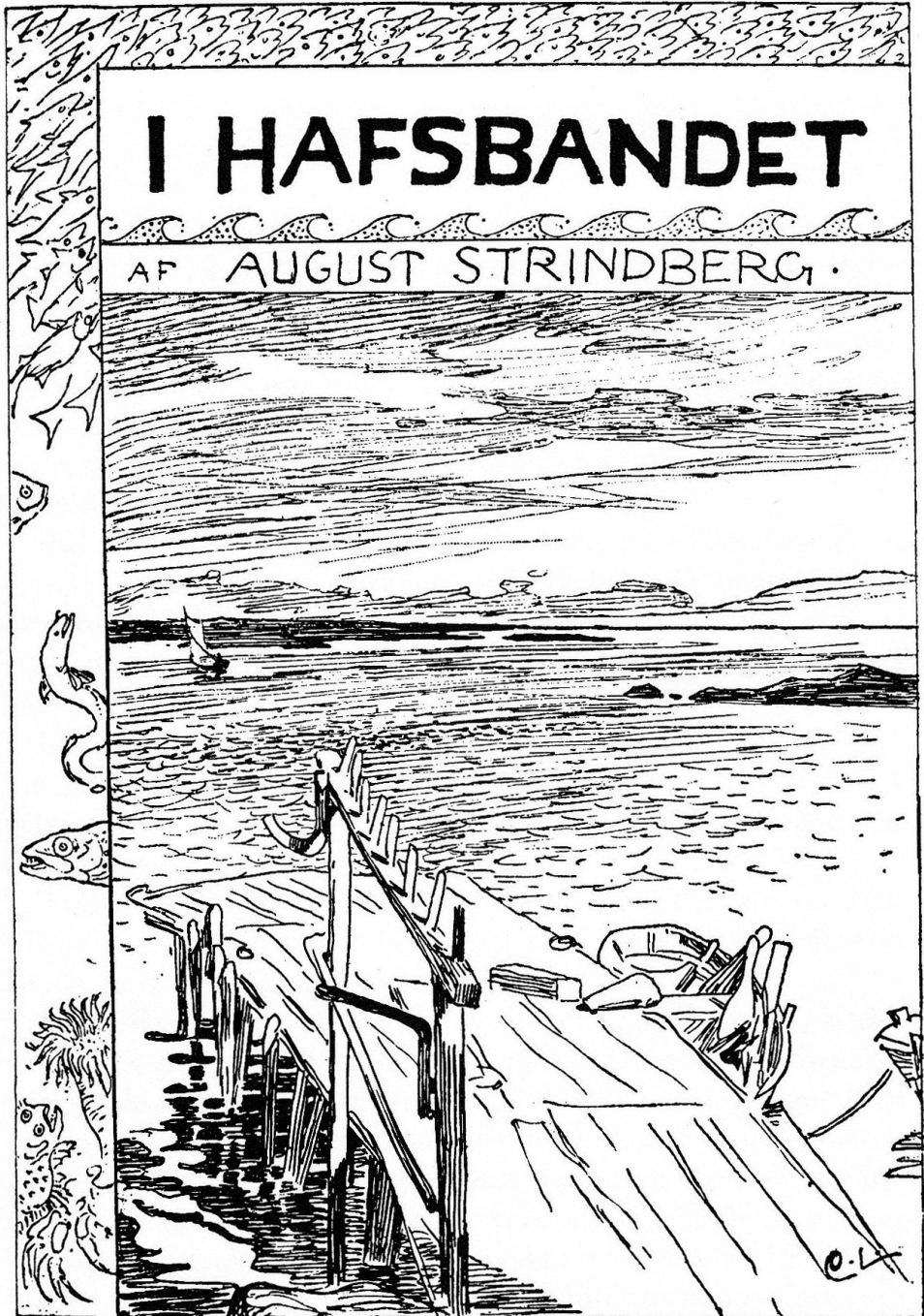
The little gentleman was wearing a beaver-coloured spring coat beneath which protruded a pair of wide trousers made of moss-green tricot, and below them a pair of crocodile shagreen boots with rows of black buttons on the uppers of a brown material. You could see almost nothing of what he was wearing underneath, but round his neck he had wound a cream-coloured foulard handkerchief, and his hands were protected by a pair of salmon-coloured *glacé* gloves with three buttons.

Furthermore we are told that Axel is wearing "a thick gold bracelet in the form of a serpent biting its tail" and that under his gloves "there were lumps on his fingers that seemed to be made by rings" (p. 2). His face is described as "lean and deathly

<sup>32</sup> An effeminate preoccupation with one's appearance made a couple of moralists at the end of the eighteenth century conclude that masculinity was experiencing a crisis (see Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 173); Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 9, maintains that the word 'effeminate' came into general usage in the eighteenth century "indicating an unmanly softness and delicacy". Mosse's well-known thesis is that the construction of modern masculinity defined itself against a counter-type of despised unmanliness as well as in conjunction with the differences between the sexes.

<sup>33</sup> For the characterisation of Faustus, see Ambjörnsson, *Mansmyter*, 155.

<sup>34</sup> Strindberg, *By the Open Sea*, 1. Henceforth references to this volume appear in the text.



Cover for *By the Open Sea* by August Strindberg.

pale” and he has a pair of small thin black moustaches giving him “an exotic appearance”.<sup>35</sup> No wonder the helmsman finds him strange.

By now the reader is certain that Axel Borg is a weakling, badly equipped to cope with life at sea. But Strindberg is in a playful mood, eager to prove that intellectual strength outdoes bodily strength. When the dark, wrathful water threatens to overwhelm the crew, it is the ludicrous little man with the effeminate attire who takes the command of the herring boat. With great reluctance the seamen, all built like giants, have to admit his skilfulness in rescuing them all from death. When Borg takes command of the boat his right glove is split down to the base of the thumb, which may be read as the bursting of the pupa enabling the birth of the man, his female attire giving way in this manly tour de force. Yet at the same time, the argument can be reversed, for while Borg certainly overcomes the forces of nature using his supreme intelligence, he has to pay for it with a breakdown. After the risky journey, he subsides into a helpless “little bundle” dependent on the customs officer’s benevolence to be carried ashore as a “wet burden” (p. 8). One is reminded of a baby in need of a new nappy. “The inspector cut an absurd and miserable figure” (p. 9), the text confirms, and his exclusive attire is wrecked: “His white stand-up shirt collar was twisted round his neck like a dirty rag” and “his sodden cuffs hung down, stuck together by dissolving starch”. The sexual connotations imply impotence, and Borg’s masculinity certainly has been wrecked. The strongman Hercules his ideal, his true identity is as a pigmy - a “Tom Thumb” (p. 8) in a realm of giants. Borg’s ambiguous position thus manifested, he will retain it until the last scene of the novel.

It remains remarkable, contradictory even, that Strindberg, the strident advocate of the masculine principle, makes an effeminate Axel Borg the hero of his narrative. Certainly Borg adheres to the decadent ideal of the dandy and the ambivalence seems to be built into the character. He is a Hercules whose task it is to bitterly defend a principle of masculinity, but by the same token is effeminate and weak. The question remains whether this narrative should be read as an apotheosis of masculinity or as a parody of masculinity. The ironical tone of the book is unmistakable, yet it is indisputable that the androgynous Borg is described as a hero and an ideal. Paradoxically, Borg’s well-articulated pretension to be a superman seems to presuppose his androgynous appearance, since the very completeness of the superman postulates both male and female components.

In his investigation of the androgynous ideas in the formation of the German elite before, during, and after the First World War, Swedish historian Jens Ljunggren concludes that an integration of male and female aspects was considered to be of vital importance for a man’s wholeness.<sup>36</sup> One of the ideologists behind this was Friedrich Nietzsche, whose philosophy had also had an impact on Strindberg by the

<sup>35</sup> The references to France, the supposed home of decadence, have a variety of overtones. Even in the eighteenth century - another period characterised by crisis of masculinity according to some scholars - French influences were considered injurious, resulting in emasculation, sensuality, and the dominance of women. See Lilliequist, “Från niding till sprätt”, 85; Ekenstam, “Manlighetens kriser & kransar”, 58.

<sup>36</sup> Ljunggren, *Känslornas krig*, 51 *passim*. Of equal account for this class of men was the formation of a special male character.



time he wrote *By the Open Sea*. Experimentally, Ljunggren applies the concept 'androgynous masculinist' to Nietzsche.<sup>37</sup> Nietzsche's seminal importance is explained by Ljunggren by the fact that he formulated a concept of masculinity characterised by its concurrent strengthening and transgression of sexual boundaries. Strindberg's aporia in creating Axel Borg - another androgynous masculinist - shows important similarities with how Nietzsche grappled with the ideal of a man who was man and woman in one, yet totally manly.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, Strindberg's modern pretensions and determination to prove he was an author on the literary frontline made his creation of a modern, decadent, androgynous hero quite logical. Yet at the same time this inevitably leaves Borg transgressing the boundary between the sexes, whose existence, self-created as it was, he so stubbornly defends. The problem inherent in Strindberg's construction of Borg develops into a venture, for masculinity is just as much at stake as the very perfection implied by the ideal of superman. Is it even possible to create a character who is simultaneously manly and perfect? Or will such a figure inevitably oscillate between the superhuman and the effeminate or childlike?

### 'WHAT ARE YOU? A MAN?'

In one episode in the novel Axel Borg's fiancée Miss Maria, acting as a true femme fatale, turns things upside down by taking what was ostensibly a male initiative in a sexual invitation. Borg's confusion is marked; momentous gender issues are at stake:

He imagined that what he experienced under her burning gaze and from the pressure of her hands must be something like what a young girl feels when attacked by a fiery seducer. He became confused, and there arose in him a feeling of insulted modesty and wounded masculinity. He disengaged his hands, drew back, and said in a calm voice, sharp with an assumed coldness: 'Control yourself'. 'Stay, or I shall come to you in your room', was the girl's impassioned answer, which seemed to signify a threat against which there was no appeal. 'In that case I shall lock my door.' 'What are you? A man?' came her ringing challenge, with a hard laugh. (p. 107)

Maria's bold accusation that Axel Borg is not a man obviously strikes him down, his wounded masculinity spelled out in the preceding lines. To reveal his true reaction though would be an utter humiliation. Therefore Borg - his surname meaning stronghold in Swedish - maintains his cold and seemingly controlled distance, exerting himself to prove his utter masculinity. His answer to what in his eyes is Maria's impudent accusation amounts to: "Yes, and in such high measure that I must be both the chooser and the attacker. I do not like being seduced."

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 87.

For Borg and the majority of his middle-class contemporaries, that is what a man is: someone who chooses and attacks, while the woman waits passively for his activities to be completed. Borg's masculinity challenged, his response is a reinforced masculine attitude. To begin with Maria is portrayed as a young, plain, and lovable woman, a *femme fragile*; in the scene in question she turns *femme fatale*: two conflicting though united notions of women characteristic of both the period in general and Strindberg's conception of women in particular, for his misogynistic attacks on emancipated women are notorious in Sweden. Soon Maria's fragility is reinforced. Her hysterical reaction is immediate - she collapses, striking the furniture as she falls to the ground, another frail woman fainting from pure shock. Finally the gender order seems to have been restored, the man proving his strength and the once rebellious woman pushed back into her position of subordination.

Yet there is more to it than that. Immediately after he has left the scene, Borg hesitates, about to turn back. The narrator explains that as "a result of his mental exertions he was in a weak condition, which made him very susceptible to the sufferings of others" (p. 108). Some seconds of solitude though are enough for Borg to recollect himself: "his strength returned, and he felt determined to break off a relationship which threatened to encroach upon the whole of his intellectual life", concludes the narrator. This is not the end of their relationship, for Maria's allure is not easily overcome, yet she eventually contributes to his breakdown.

### *HORROR VACUI*, OR THE INELUCTABLE RELIGION

There is nothing wanting in Axel Borg's claim to be a man, though. After all, self-restraint is one of the most recurrent themes in the construction of masculinity, irrespective of time and place. Referring to Norbert Elias, the German sociologist Klaus Theweleit tracks the development of middle-class man back to "the outbreak of self-dissociation" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, implying a break in the emotional connection between man and his surroundings. Key words in this context are self-control - that is, the mastering of the passions - and armour.<sup>39</sup> The outer world is considered an object, and man's attitude is one of penetration and a desire to dominate the world of objects.<sup>40</sup> What scholars have called the new human being is properly speaking the new man, Theweleit maintains, and the self-same activity of setting boundaries is what characterises man.<sup>41</sup> This is a perfect delineation of Strindberg's character, the self-distanced Axel Borg, ever eager to retain borders, a systematic organiser of the objects around him.<sup>42</sup> Ironically, in his armour and his stubborn

<sup>39</sup> Self-discipline with its manifold implications is a recurrent theme in surveys of Victorian masculinities. An elaborate study in this respect is James Eli Adams' *Dandies and Desert Saints*, in which the author illustrates how a number of models of masculine identity - the gentleman, the prophet, the dandy, the priest, and the soldier - are "typically understood as the incarnation of an ascetic regimen, an elaborately articulated program of self-discipline" (p. 2).

<sup>40</sup> Theweleit, *Mansfantasier*, I, 324-325.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 297-298.

<sup>42</sup> 'Control yourself' was Borg's typical reply as he retreated in the face of Maria's bold sexual behaviour.

insistence on what Theweleit calls the central perspective, ordering the world from Europe's point of view, are the germs of his final breakdown.<sup>43</sup>

However, the last scene of the novel is ambiguous in the extreme. Borg desperately clings to Hercules, the masculine emblem, to the very end, even as "the sea, the mother of all, in whose womb the first spark of life was lit, the inexhaustible well of fertility and love, life's source, and life's enemy" (p. 185) is invoked. Is Borg a feminised lunatic prepared for death at sea, or has he recovered to a new and strengthened masculinity, characterised by an integration of masculine and feminine values? One thing is certain: manhood is not a stable entity, and the formation of masculinity is both rigid and fragile.

As an atheist, Borg's predicament closely resembles that of the American Free-thinkers (prominent between 1880 and 1920) who rejected Christian belief as incompatible with strong, vital manhood. Like them, he opposes Christian superstition, and believes that irrational, unscientific beliefs must be repudiated, and that atheism is a more manly option than Christian belief.<sup>44</sup> Like them, he also finds himself at the head of nature, making everything yield to him.<sup>45</sup> Axel Borg wants to be his own centre. He is the celestial axis - *axis mundi* - that disintegrates in Strindberg's experimental creation of a world without central values. Yet in this breakdown Borg's escape to old, religious ways of thinking is a seemingly inevitable consequence, despite the ambiguity of this escape as he rejects religion at the very moment as he affirms it. His deeply rooted *horror vacui* reveals itself as the underlying motivation for all his deeds. In his dialogue with the preacher, Borg describes God as,

the fixed point outside ourselves, desired by Archimedes, with which he would have been able to lift the world. He is the imaginary magnet inside the earth, without which the movements of the magnetic needle would remain unexplained. He is the ether that must be discovered so that the vacuum may be filled. He is the molecule, without which the laws of chemistry would be miracles. Give me a few more hypotheses, above all the fixed point outside myself, for I am quite adrift. (pp. 180-181)

Borg's deep-rooted identity as a scientist is quite evident in his attempt to delineate the function of God in terms of magnets, vacuum-filling ether, and molecules. As the narrative approaches its end, Borg is fully aware that he is 'quite adrift', in need of a fixed point outside himself. Ironically, Borg's scornful remark that Christ is "the invention of revengeful slaves and wicked women. He is the God of the molluscs as opposed to the vertebrate" (p. 181) can hardly conceal the fact that Borg's predicament, being desperately in need of a prayer addressed to a patriarchal heavenly 'Our Father' (p. 180), resembles Christ's own.<sup>46</sup> Axel Borg cannot escape Western history's

<sup>43</sup> Theweleit, *Mansfantasier*, 297-298.

<sup>44</sup> For Borg, Christ is "a virgin boy, whose birth was celebrated by milk-drinking shepherds and braying asses". Strindberg, *By the Open Sea*, 185.

<sup>45</sup> Kirkley, "Is It Manly to Be Christian?", 80-82.

<sup>46</sup> Though his blasphemous intention is obvious, his talk of Christ mixing with customs officers and whores like Borg himself is on the mark.



idea of God as an infinite and absolute centre - *logos* - the origin of all creation, all meaning, and all values. His is a need for absolute truth, for a holy *logo*-centre; his search doomed to be everlasting, even at the risk of his own destruction.

In *The Sacred and the Profane* (1957), Mircea Eliade maintains that the transcendent dimensions of existence are not obliterated whenever modern secularised man wants to get rid of them. Instead they take on another guise, and obsess their repudiator in different ways. Axel Borg should also perhaps be seen in the light of Lucien Goldmann's idea of tragic man unwilling to accept either human weakness or the world's ambiguity and confusion, because it would imply giving up the endeavour to provide life with meaning.<sup>47</sup> Borg's rejection of a life devoid of meaning accounts for his readiness to countenance frequent new departures.

### KARL-ARTUR EKENSTEDT: A CHRISTIAN MAN'S DILEMMA

"The dilemma of Western masculinity effectively begins with Christianity", concludes the American historian Peter Stearns.<sup>48</sup> He maintains that Christianity's prescribed self-restraint opened an important avenue of expression for the men who rejected more popular Western definitions of masculinity as an aggressively warlike mentality. Yet Christianity also influenced common man by leading him to consider whether his own expressions of masculinity were totally wrong, and if the clerical attitude characterised true male heroism after all. When the Reformation reduced the seclusion of the clerical function even further, men started to wonder if domination over one's self was not the true expression of masculinity. Stearns maintains that Western men still wrestle with this problem. As noted above, a disciplinary principle governed Almqvist's *MannaSamfund*, involving both body and soul, whereas Strindberg's protagonist made his own stab at self-control. One who definitely wrestles with the task of controlling his self and his passions is my third protagonist, the clergyman Karl-Artur Ekenstedt, from the novels *Charlotte Löwensköld* (1925) and *Anna Svärd* (1928) by Selma Lagerlöf (1858-1940). In one perspective Ekenstedt's crisis is generated by the fact that Christianity, in his pietistic interpretation, amounts to an attitude of disavowal and control of the self and its obscure desires.

Selma Lagerlöf's trilogy *The Ring of the Löwenskölds* is made up of *The General's Ring* (1925), *Charlotte Löwensköld* (1925), and *Anna Svärd* (1928). The plot of the two later novels, mostly set in the 1830s in the Swedish province of Värmland, is propelled by the death in *The General's Ring* of major general Bengt Löwensköld in 1741. The clergyman Karl-Artur Ekenstedt is a young man noted for his high seriousness and severity. His is a strong vocation, and he wants to be a strict Imitator of Christ. After a breach with his fiancée Charlotte Löwensköld, caused by Karl-Artur's complete misunderstanding, he decides to wed the first unmarried woman he meets on the road, letting God select a wife for him. The woman he meets is a poor woman from the county of Dalarna, the peddler Anna Svärd, whom he duly marries.

<sup>47</sup> Goldmann, *The Hidden God*, 60.

<sup>48</sup> Stearns, *Be a Man!*, 18.

His high-minded religious zeal and idealism notwithstanding, Karl-Artur is ruled by egotism, and his deeds tend to turn out badly, though his talent for rhetorically effective sermons initially brings him many adherents. Under the influence of the hypocritical Thea Sundler, an organist's wife who is secretly in love with Karl-Artur, he leaves Anna, and his successive degradation culminates in having to make a living entertaining at fairs together with Thea. Eventually Charlotte, his former fiancée, rescues him by dispatching him to Africa as a missionary. Eight years on, Karl-Artur returns to his former parish church to deliver a lecture on his missionary experiences. The reader is left with the question of whether Anna will take him back as her husband: will 'the masculine plot' converge with 'the marriage plot'?

It has been suggested by Herbert Sussman that Thomas Carlyle, one of the young Selma Lagerlöf's favourite authors, in wrestling with 'the condition of manliness question' sets out to show that the

heroism of the modern Man of Letters ... is to confront the essential disorder of the male psyche: 'You do walk hand in hand with sheer Madness, all the way, - who is by no means pleasant company!' Ideally, then, the heroic, the mythic task of the male writer is to return from that '*Inferno*' ... of the male self and transform the hellish chaos of the male interior to the psychic regulation that defines manliness.<sup>49</sup>

A 'Man of Letters' in the same vein, the preacher Karl-Artur Ekenstedt has his own adventurous path to beat, his own inner demons to confront, before he is regenerated as a reformed man. Though the reader is not allowed to follow him there, the regeneration takes place during his time as a missionary. If the sexually indeterminable Tintomara and Axel Borg are a heathen and an atheist respectively, Karl-Artur Ekenstedt is unquestionably both a man and a Christian. In one of the key scenes he talks about "the path of duty and renunciation which it behooves a servant of Christ to tread".<sup>50</sup> As Karl-Artur's religious passion reaches its climax, his masculinity is explicitly stressed:

It could not be denied that the young clergyman by this bold stand - even though, for obvious reasons, it was inexpedient - gained general sympathy. His courageous recognition of the lowly bride he had chosen, like his impassioned words, won favour with many. His pale, fine-featured, sensitive face was stamped on this occasion by a manly strength one would not have attributed to him, and some of the men present had to concede that he was now treading a path which they would have resisted to take.

<sup>49</sup> Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities*, 68, quoting Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (Boston, 1965; the book first appeared in 1843). Talking about "her undiscovered, boundless, bottomless Night-empire", Carlyle denotes 'Madness' as a feminine entity. In Lagerlöf's narrative the personification of madness is the undoubtedly female Thea Sundler, who systematically guides Karl-Artur towards his own chaotic inner self. The subtext is that if man projects his inner anxieties onto a woman, she will tend to be the catalyst of his own inner development through his encounter with the turmoil of the deeply repressed masculine energies underlying his controlled persona.

<sup>50</sup> Lagerlöf, *The Ring of the Löwenskölds ... Charlotte Löwensköld*, 252. Hereafter page references to this volume appear in the text.

There is something remarkable about this statement, though. In the Swedish original it is even more salient, for the formulation runs “unusual masculinity and strength”. Why is it essential to drive home the point about the clergyman’s masculinity? Masculinity is obviously an uncommon quality in Ekenstedt, which is why his action in this scene seems the bolder and more daring. Therefore his apparently older colleagues have to admit that they would hesitate to marry a lowly woman and so follow the way of Christ.

“Exposed to a mid-Victorian hermeneutic of gender, the figures of gentleman, dandy, and priest begin to circulate amongst one another, as each incites suspicion of ‘effeminacy’”, writes James Eli Adams.<sup>51</sup> The priest Karl-Artur Ekenstedt has the same paleness as Strindberg’s ‘deathly pale’ hero; another link between them is their fine-featured features. Yet while Strindberg exalts in Borg’s masculinity at the same time as he impugns it by ridiculing the dandy-like hero’s effeminate characteristics, Lagerlöf attributes all beautiful outward appearances to her romantic hero, simultaneously utilising all opportunities to fool the priest.

If there is a clear discrepancy between Axel Borg’s superhuman ideology and his failures in real life, it is matched by the divergence between words and deeds discernable in Karl-Artur Ekenstedt, who is described as a man utterly unable to keep his many promises. Strong as his rhetorical power is, he has tremendous problems transforming his beautiful and idealistic sermons into reality. He is a man who speaks eloquently of love and the Imitation of Christ, yet is afflicted with a fatal inability to love his fellow beings. Thus from a Christian perspective his is the worst sin of all. If there is a touch of the black angel about Tintomara, and of the Faustian devil about Axel Borg, Karl-Artur Ekenstedt’s evil takes on superhuman dimensions. Although there are certain aspects of genius evident in them all, at least Strindberg and Lagerlöf endeavour to problematise these aspects in interesting ways.

## THE BIRTH OF A CHRISTIAN MAN

The narrator in Lagerlöf’s novels takes a downright critical view of the pietistic-influenced worship practiced by Karl-Artur Ekenstedt. Yet we should ask ourselves what is the true target of the sarcasm and irony. Is it the revivalist movement itself, or its self-appointed representatives? Or perhaps it is Karl-Artur Ekenstedt himself, this hypocrite of a man? When it comes to the actual content of his sermons the reader is left in the dark. On one occasion it is said that he preaches an excellent sermon on a troublesome parable - but what does he actually say? Lagerlöf restricts herself to references to the contents of one single sermon. Here Ekenstedt in his emotional way gives an account of his own radical ideal of an Imitation of Christ. Although this achievement is characterised as “an extraordinary sermon” (p. 214) it is obviously considered a representative example of his style. Evidently it is not the content of Ekenstedt’s preaching, but the discrepancy between his words and deeds that is the basis for Lagerlöf’s disapproval.

<sup>51</sup> Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 208.

Even the missionary lecture delivered by the 'reformed' Karl-Artur after eight years in heathen Africa is passed over almost in silence. To Anna's mind "there was too little of the Word of God in it" (*Anna Svärd*, 365). Yet perhaps that is the point: "He spoke only of how the people lived out there in the land of the heathen", reflects Anna. Though these people - whose poverty and privation are much worse than the conditions experienced by people in Anna's poor home district - "had neither window nor floor in their huts", Karl-Artur loves them and wants to go back to them. Distrustful as she is, Anna cannot avoid noticing that he is talking "straight from the heart" (pp. 365-366). Social engagement and love are obviously decisive, theological subtleties aside. Above all, the crucial thing is the fact that Ekenstedt for the first time has attained a condition of total accord between words and deeds. His is a solid character.

"A self-regulating will seems absolutely normative in Victorian rhetoric of masculinity. Yet when the discipline it enforces crosses an elusive boundary that demarcates a realm of ostentation, or theatricality, or calculated social role - when, that is, discipline is manifested as public ritual - contemporary observers typically attack it as a form of effeminacy", maintains James Eli Adams.<sup>52</sup> In Selma Lagerlöf's narrative, the genuineness of Karl-Artur's vocation in its inextricable interconnection with his masculinity is a burning problem. Certainly his ascetic regimen is dependent on the approval of the 'world' - like Tennyson and Carlyle, in Adams' description his "professed fidelity to a transcendent, divinely authorised selfhood is exposed as a vain, calculated appeal to an earthly audience"<sup>53</sup> - but does this really preclude an earnest and authentic intention? And does it necessarily imply "an emasculating moment of self-conscious theatricality", as Adams puts it?

The Swedish historian David Tjeder, investigating middle-class masculinities in the nineteenth century, maintains that character is the key word in this context. Only when man had chiselled out his inner potentiality for character, making it an actuality, could man become himself - that is, a man of character.<sup>54</sup> In contrast to the supposedly superficial aristocracy, the middle-class man's ideal was one of intrinsic value, of correspondence between inner and outer qualities.<sup>55</sup> Ekenstedt's predicament could be seen in this perspective, his development characterised by a transformation from a hypocritical stance to a genuine one.

From a Christian point of view, his humiliation leaves him a par with Christ himself. The underlying line is clear: the clergyman Karl-Artur's preaching may have been sound enough in itself, but his thoroughly self-centred mind - his approving of self-denial notwithstanding - is worthy of blame. One of the narrative's more ironical dimensions is the fact that the supposed paragon of virtue finally sinks deeper than anyone else, because there is no genuine correspondence between his words and his deeds. In all its tragedy, Karl-Artur's state of utter deprivation - physical as well as spiritual - can be read as a mockery of the "model of the prophet, with its attendant rhetoric of 'wild' and 'savage' integrity", described by James Eli Adams. Like the

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>54</sup> Tjeder, "Borgerlighetens sköra manlighet", 54. This theme is expanded upon in Tjeder's dissertation *The Power of Character*.

<sup>55</sup> Tjeder, "Borgerlighetens sköra manlighet", 57-58.

Carlylean prophet Karl-Artur “can only manifest his inspired selfhood by presenting himself as a spectacle to an uncomprehending world”.<sup>56</sup> Not until he has reached the bottom, and built his new personality as a man and as a Christian from decidedly new premises, are his sermons worth listening to.

Paradoxically, Karl-Artur seems almost Christ-like at the very moment he ceases explicitly to preach Christ. “His head had grown quite bald, and his face was furrowed by much suffering. He came so quietly and humbly. She felt such a strange desire to weep when she saw him. Yet he did not appear at all sad. There was a smile of serenity on his countenance that seemed to light up the whole church” (p. 365), notes Anna. The description of this new Karl-Artur is telling. He is marked by suffering like Christ, behaving quietly and humbly like a sacrificial lamb. His serenity has the power to light up the church.

## MAN AND COUNTERTYPE, DOMINATED BY WOMEN

Woman’s role in the construction of masculinity is especially prominent in the case of Ekenstedt, for besides the fact that he is the creation of a woman author, several female characters are active in shaping his identity as a man. The narrator’s ironical attitude towards Karl-Artur seems too flagrant to be questioned. His constant misunderstandings of the amiable Charlotte’s and the skilled and reliable Anna’s good intentions are as comical as they are tragic. His shortcomings are several - witness only his rhetorical benevolence that leads him take a poor family under his wing, leaving all the practical work to Anna. His rigid personality and the discrepancy between his words and deeds are a convenient target for ridicule. His evil genius, the hypocritical caricature Thea Sundler, stands out as being but a few degrees worse than he is himself. Yet Lagerlöf is a treacherous author who leaves the reader constantly uncertain of the inner meaning of the narrative; a healthy suspicion is vital for any interpreter of the narrative.

This is evident when it comes to Karl-Artur’s mother, the charming, amiable, and socially minded colonel’s wife Beate Ekenstedt, who is uncommon for the depth of her love for her son - and is yet another woman to leave her imprint on him. She is strongly against his pietistic sympathies and even views his decision to become a clergyman with concern. True, Karl-Artur accuses his supposedly worldly mother of being a hypocrite, yet his own hypocrisy - exacerbated by Thea Sundler - far outdoes hers.<sup>57</sup> Yet how is the reader to interpret Beate’s character? Is she a loving emblem of motherhood, or a deadly threat to the young clergyman’s independence? Expressed differently, should Karl-Artur’s pietistic lifestyle be considered an act of independence directed at his dominant mother?

Charlotte, defending Beate Ekenstedt after Karl-Artur has broken off with his mother, applies Christ as a point of reference: “He would have seen that such a mother could have followed Him to the foot of the Cross, aye, and let herself be crucified in

<sup>56</sup> Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 34.

<sup>57</sup> Beate Ekenstedt née Löwensköld is of aristocratic origin. As David Tjeder has pointed out, the aristocracy were the target of choice for middle-class men’s accusations of hypocrisy.

His stead" (p. 276). Like Mary, Beate is imagined following Christ - Karl-Artur to the cross. The next moment she is identified with Christ himself, crucified in her son's stead. Karl-Artur admits that Charlotte may be right: "I dare say my mother would die for me, but she would never let me live my own life. Charlotte, my mother would not allow me to serve God; she would expect me to serve her and her world; therefore she and I must part." An explosive claim, indeed. The implication is that the mother in her authorial love will not die in her son's stead, but instead will kill Karl-Artur's genuine personality, thereby killing him. It must be borne in mind that the young clergyman's vocation and piety are genuine, his unfortunate misunderstandings and aberrations notwithstanding. In Charlotte's opinion, it is not Christ but Thea Sundler who commands him to break with his mother. In any case it is evident that a fatal and controversial insight into the loving mother's innermost aspirations and motives has been touched upon.

Karl-Artur Ekenstedt's crisis and decay are literally a man's crisis and decay. The masculinity associated with Christian ideals generates his problems, driving him to the very bottom of existence, a counter-type of masculinity. Unlike those who tend to neglect the genuine spark of humane Christian faith that suffuses the final scene of the narrative, I wish to highlight this aspect. Lagerlöf here delineates the contours of a positively perceived counter-type of masculinity. The reader finds a Karl-Artur transformed, deprived of his rhetorical magnificence; an ugly and aged Karl-Artur who has learnt the Christian lesson to love thy neighbour. He has lost his self in order to gain it; lost his virility in order to find it.<sup>58</sup> In the face of Lagerlöf's endeavour to highlight the birth of a new faith, true and genuine, the statement that the narrative is about the breakdown of faith and male-governed society seems somewhat lacking.

## ENVOI

That masculinity is a changing (social) construction, best described in the plural, is nowadays more or less a truism amongst its scholars.<sup>59</sup> Naturally, the element of construction in all this is even more salient when it comes to fictional characters, invented by an author. It is equally well-established that gender is a relational category, which is why the pattern of masculinity should be defined in relation to one or other models of femininity, or indeed of unmanliness. The examples of Tintomara, Axel Borg, and Karl-Artur Ekenstedt are illustrative in this respect. Where Tintomara's very existence is a symbol of the transience of gender constructions, Borg and Ekenstedt in their own particular ways illustrate the fragility and elusiveness of masculinity.

Scholars have been eager to identify periods of crisis for masculinity, of which one of the most discussed is that which occurred of around 1900. Strindberg's novel was certainly affected by this crisis; Lagerlöf wrote her novels at a time when gender

<sup>58</sup> Herbert Sussman arrives at the same conclusion apropos Teufelsdröckh in Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* (1833-1834). Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities*, 52-53.

<sup>59</sup> Anthropologists even argue that an absolutely assured masculinity is a contradiction in terms (Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, 24).

issues were still dynamite, and the liberation of women was firmly on the political agenda. Although the novels are mainly set in the 1830s, Lagerlöf's contemporary context left its mark on the narrative. Not a feminist herself, Lagerlöf's sympathies frequently lay with the feminist cause. The strong and self-sufficient Anna Svärd has been put forward as a positive role model of the so-called 'new woman', making her own living in Lagerlöf's time. On the other hand, man's much-needed reformation could according to Lagerlöf be seen in the light of her own age as well as the 1830s of the narrative. His reformation complete, the narrative leaves Karl-Artur Ekenstedt. Why? Is he uninteresting once he is deprived of his partly demonic appearance, or is he impossible to depict, being utopian like Tintomara or the contradictory Borg, simultaneously regressing or sailing off towards new unfamiliar stars in the final scene?

If women as well as men surround Tintomara - causing chaos and uncertainty amongst them all - Borg's ambivalent relationship with women is the beginning of the end for him (or perhaps rather the beginning of a new stage). Similarly, Ekenstedt's life is determined by the women who surround him, his masculinity largely constructed by these women and what they represent. If the depiction of masculinity is complex and multi-faceted, the same is true of the portrayal of religion in Almqvist's, Strindberg's, and Lagerlöf's narratives. The heathen Tintomara appears as a proper Christian, the atheist Axel Borg is a tragic man bitterly searching for the meaning of life, while the clergyman Karl-Artur Ekenstedt becomes a true Christian only when he ceases talking about Christ. There is little doubt that literary texts can illustrate the full complexity of both masculinity and (Christian) religion.



# A MANLY QUEEN WITH FEMININE CHARM

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## INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER

ANDERS JARLERT

Many have said that she is the manliest man in the Royal family.” This description of Queen Victoria of Sweden (1862-1930), noted down in 1912 by Bishop Gottfrid Billing of Lund (1841-1925) and subsequently published in his memoirs in 1975, has often been taken as the bishop’s own and complete opinion of the queen. However, on the very same page Billing writes that “no one can exceed her in feminine charm”.<sup>1</sup> Here ‘manliness’ is not primarily defined by biological sex or sexuality, nor does it exclude feminine charm, while both manliness and femininity are used as positive labels.

Queen Victoria of Sweden was not described as ‘masculine’. For a woman to be ‘manly’ did not mean that she was manlike in terms of physical build or sexuality, and instead ‘manliness’ implied maturity, reliability, courage, and spiritual strength, all of which were qualities that could be combined with feminine charm. Bishop Billing’s memoirs in their entirety reveal that he thought the same was true of men. Of Carl David af Wirsén (1842-1912), the secretary of the Swedish Academy, Billing writes that he showed his manly sense of independence by refusing to yield, regardless how many his opponents were. Billing thought this ‘manly’ firmness remarkable since Wirsén otherwise showed a ‘womanly’ sensitivity to kindness or ill-will.<sup>2</sup> Here, manly independence is combined with womanly sensitivity - though without ‘femininity’.

Similar descriptions are common in upper-class correspondence from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A mix of womanly and manly qualities in the same person was often appreciated, as when the Swedish author Ann Charlotte Leffler (1849-1892) wrote in a letter 1887 that Dr Axel Munthe combined “manly inde-

<sup>1</sup> Billing, *Levnadsminnen*, 26. My translation here *et passim*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

pendence” with the “softness and delicacy of a woman” in a “very rare variant of man”.<sup>3</sup> This confirms the observations of John Tosh, who has emphasised the difference between manliness and masculinity: “Certainly, if we take nineteenth-century discourses of manliness at face value there is no scope for exploring the meanings given to sexual identity and sexual desire which are fundamental to masculinity.” Further, Tosh notes that “the distinction that exercised them ... was that between men and boys: worries about immaturity counted, for much more than the fear of effeminacy, at least until the 1880s.”<sup>4</sup> Before Tosh, Norman Vance stated that manliness was “the opposite of childishness and sometimes of beastliness, counter not so much to womanliness as to effeminacy”.<sup>5</sup> It has been argued that this was more the case in Northern Europe, whereas for men in the Mediterranean countries, manliness existed in opposition to women more than to boys.<sup>6</sup> Be that as it may, the rhetoric of a positive combination of womanly and manly qualities both in men and in women forms an important horizon in interpreting the correspondence between Victoria and Bishop Billing.

## A GENDER CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

An individual’s spirituality is not formed by personal spiritual experience alone, but by a variety of factors such as class, ethnicity, religious tradition, and gender. Rather than identifying which of these might be decisive, the crucial step is to recognise that it is their intersectional character that is important. That said, although at first glance ethnicity might be thought the factor least relevant to Victoria’s spirituality, on closer examination her German origins appear to have been of the utmost importance. She was the daughter of Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden (1826-1907) and his wife Princess Luise of Prussia (1838-1923), the daughter of Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany. As Olaf Blaschke has explained, the German historian Heinrich von Treitschke viewed Luther and the German Reformation as manly, while Catholicism, France, and the ‘galant’ eighteenth century were described as *weibisch* (effeminate). Manliness was an important mark of identity in German Protestantism and anti-Catholicism.<sup>7</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by the English clergyman and writer Charles Kingsley (1819-1875), to whom Roman Catholicism was an effeminising religion and dangerous for both men and women.<sup>8</sup> The British historian Francis Knight has pointed out that Catholicism, in its Roman and Anglican forms, was thought particularly insidious in “encouraging men to adopt effeminate, unmanly attitudes”.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Jangfeldt, *En osalig ande*, 195; see Ljunggren, *Känslornas krig*.

<sup>4</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, 8.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Lorentzen and Ekenstam, eds., *Män i Norden*, 35 ff.

<sup>7</sup> See Olaf Blaschke’s chapter in this volume; and Blaschke, “Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus”, 36. Similar reactions were seen in Britain as well.

<sup>8</sup> Fasick, “Christian Manliness and Fatherhood in Charles Kingsley’s Writings”, 1-3.

<sup>9</sup> Knight, “Male and Female He Created Them”, 34. It was widely believed “that Anglo-Catholicism was the seed-bed of homosexuality” (see further Hilliard, “Un-English and Unmanly”).

In religious language, both ‘manly’ and ‘womanly’ virtues are re-coded as Christian virtues, open to both men and women, and desirable in both sexes. This implies that no one is a manly Christian by birth, whereas both men and women may receive and develop a manly, Christian faith. As John Tosh puts it, “the subsuming of manliness in the Christian virtues clearly had androgynous implications”.<sup>10</sup> Norman Vance singles out St Paul as the inaugurator of this tradition of ‘moral manliness’, since “athletic and military imagery enliven his account of the Christian life”,<sup>11</sup> although this apostolic imagery is not unusual in other classical texts. In early Lutheran literature, biblical references dominate the religious language. In books with a mystical tendency, spiritually reborn men might very well be ‘daughters’; witness Johann Arndt (1555-1621) in his commentary on Psalm 45: 11. The Christian as a new, spiritual creation is not devoid of gender, but lacks the limitations of gender. Men can thus be addressed as daughters, and women as manly.

According to the songs of Philipp Friedrich Hiller (1699-1769), often combined with the daily meditations of Magnus Friedrich Roos (1727-1803), men weep “aus zartem Triebe auch in Bruderliebe, wie Maria tat” - in brotherly love, as Mary did.<sup>12</sup> This cross-gendering in religious language, where both godly men and women are regarded as examples to women and men alike, is much in evidence in early religious literature. Then something changes. Not suddenly, and never totally, but change nevertheless. It was a slow process that ran throughout the second half of the ‘long’ nineteenth century, in parallel with the continued use of the old rhetoric in conservative or traditional religious circles.

The prerequisite for this change was the shift from a ‘one-sex’ to a ‘two-sex’ model of the human body, as postulated by Thomas Laqueur.<sup>13</sup> Laqueur’s views have been criticised, but, as John Tosh puts it, “there is little dispute that early nineteenth-century medicine emphasised the biological differences between men and women to a greater extent than ever before. With this came an exaggeration of secondary differences, particularly as regards sexual character. Manly independence was dramatised by feminine dependence, manly action by feminine passivity, and so on. Both body and mind were now sexed.” Tosh quotes a contemporary educational reformer who sadly noted that “whatever is manly must be unwomanly, and vice versa”.<sup>14</sup> The obvious fact that this sexualisation of gender also had an enormous impact on religious language has been overlooked by both historians and theologians alike.

<sup>10</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 92.

<sup>11</sup> Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*, 26.

<sup>12</sup> Roos, “Morgen-Andacht am 1. November”.

<sup>13</sup> Laqueur, *Making Sex*.

<sup>14</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 91.

As manliness became masculinised, the semantic consequence was that only a man could be a manly or brotherly Christian, and, similarly, as womanly qualities were feminised, only a woman could be a womanly or motherly Christian. When Christian concepts of manly virtues were united with the contemporary, dominant ideal of masculinity, they not only remained manly, but were masculinised in a new way.<sup>15</sup> The crucial point is that formerly ‘womanly’ virtues were renamed, and thus accepted and interpreted as ‘manly’. In reacting against ‘feminisation’, church leaders did not return to the old, cross-gendered reading of Christian spiritual texts, but fell into a new way of reading, where the same virtues could be attributed to both sexes, but now labelled as different virtues for men and women, respectively. This often had strong class overtones, for as Frances Knight puts it, “The Victorian ideal of femininity had little relevance to a female coal miner or a female docker”.<sup>16</sup> The same is evident in Erik Sidenvall’s study of male Swedish missionaries from working-class backgrounds<sup>17</sup>, and in David Tjeder’s chapter in the present volume, where he considers Bishop Eklund’s experience of masculinising doubt in a context where similar doubts were felt by women, but were silenced by the feminine ideal.

To Frances Knight’s emphasis on the importance of denominational affiliation for gender in religion, we must add an observation of the attitude, conservative or modern, to tradition within the denominations. When Knight writes that “a female Quaker was likely to find it easier to communicate something of the essence of her religious life to a male Quaker than to a female Catholic, and vice versa”,<sup>18</sup> we can add that a female traditionalist of any denomination would find it easier to communicate her religious thoughts to a male traditionalist within that denomination than to a female modernist. This does not contradict the obvious fact that “there were distinctive patterns of men’s spiritual experience”,<sup>19</sup> but confirms that these patterns were to some extent formed by the change in religious language.

In his religious writings, Charles Kingsley, an author who meant a great deal to Victoria, described ‘wickedness’ as “unmanliness, in being unlike a man, in becoming like an evil spirit or a beast. Holiness consists in becoming a true man, in becoming more and more like the likeness of Jesus Christ.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Blaschke, “Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus”, 44.

<sup>16</sup> Knight, “Male and Female He Created Them”, 55.

<sup>17</sup> Sidenvall, *The Making of Manhood among Swedish Missionaries*.

<sup>18</sup> Knight, “Male and Female He Created Them”, 55.

<sup>19</sup> Bradstock et al., “Introduction”, 2.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Kingsley, *Village Sermons; and, Town and Country Sermons* (London, 1884), quoted in Klaver, *The Apostle of the Flesh*, 183.

## A NURSING FATHER, A MANLY MOTHER, AND OTHER EARLY INFLUENCES

Queen Victoria (1862-1930) was born Princess Victoria of Baden to parents who broke with the conventions of social gender. Whereas Grand Duchess Luise was a demanding and authoritative princess towards her subjects, her husband, and her children, Grand Duke Friedrich in all these relationships is perhaps best described as a 'nursing father'.<sup>21</sup> For a German prince, he was a man of relatively liberal opinions. His standing amongst the German princes was described as unique, for everyone looked up to him.<sup>22</sup> He was an authoritative and imposing figure, while an important element in his understanding of himself as a sovereign seems to have been his effort to be a father to his people. His daughter, who was very much his favourite<sup>23</sup>, described him as a man who gave his life and all his strength for others, with an unusual unselfishness and humility<sup>24</sup>, and his great-grandson found something of Santa Claus in his good-natured appearance.<sup>25</sup> The Grand Duchess in turn was described as an untiring woman with inexhaustible energy. She gave the impression of being a very dutiful person, who never compromised over her conscience - or her opinions.<sup>26</sup>

Among the books of her youth, Victoria was to keep A. F. Huhn's *Samenkörner. Meditationen* (1872) and *Licht auf dem täglichen Pfad* (1877), with a dedication from a friend. She also kept *Aus der Heimat für die Heimat* (1888) as well as *Festflammen. Gedanken und Bilder zu den hohen Festen der Kirche* (5th ed., 1891), both by Emil Frommel (1828-1896), Court preacher in Berlin and Emperor Wilhelm I's confidant, who had prepared her for her confirmation. Her copy of *Festflammen* has a dedication from the author to "seiner theueren Schülerin". There were no Pietistic books, with the exception of Carl Heinrich von Bogatzky's *Des Güldenens Schatz-Kästlens Erster und Zweyter Theil in Eins gebracht* (9th ed., 1889).<sup>27</sup>

Her mother herself edited a couple of devotional books, of which the most famous, *Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt! Glaubensworte für Tage der Prüfung* (I know that my Redeemer liveth. Words of faith for days of trial), ran to fifteen German editions between 1900 and 1936, as well as in three editions in Swedish and two in French.<sup>28</sup> A copy addressed to "mein geliebtes Kind!" is in the Bernadotte Library in the Royal Palace in Stockholm. Naturally, the Swedish edition was dedicated to the then Crown Princess Victoria. It contains chosen words from the Bible and numerous

<sup>21</sup> The sympathetic concept of nursing fathers, noted in books such as Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, has been met with great surprise among non-specialist readers.

<sup>22</sup> Lunds universitetsbibliotek, A.G.L. Billings samling (Lund University Library, Gottfrid Billing's archives, hereafter LUB): Victoria to Billing, 20 April 1902. The full correspondence is edited in Jarlert, ed., "*Bäste biskop!*".

<sup>23</sup> Jansson, *Drottning Victoria*, 29.

<sup>24</sup> LUB: Victoria to Billing, 11 February 1902.

<sup>25</sup> Bernadotte, '*Käre prins, godnatt!*', 29.

<sup>26</sup> Trolle, *De voro ett lysande följe*, II, 104 ff.

<sup>27</sup> There is also a copy in the royal collection (Bernadottebiblioteket, Royal Palace, Stockholm).

<sup>28</sup> Grand Duchess Luise of Baden, *Jag vet att min förlossare lefver*; Id., *Paroles de foi pour les jours de l'épreuve*.

extracts from Christian authors such as St Augustine, Thomas à Kempis, Emil Frommel, Gerok, Macduff, Monod, Perreyve, 'Sous La Croix', and Vinet.<sup>29</sup> The book ends with Luise's own thoughts on the road from death to life in the shape of twenty-five short meditations on the grief and comfort of Christians at the graves of their relatives, all very much one with the 'death cult' for which she has long been remembered: her bedroom was crammed with drawings and pictures of her deceased relatives, sometimes on their deathbeds, while she kept special chapels and chambers in memory of her late husband and son.<sup>30</sup> Her meditations are characterised by a clear Christian creed that centres both on the Father and on the Saviour as crucified and risen, and her lingering on the graves of the deceased is balanced by a faith in eternal life through Christ. Special emphasis is put on *work*: God's 'work on us', 'inner work', 'work in God', 'resignation as work', works of love, social work, and so on. She writes that for mourning hearts the return to life is a heavy burden, and if Providence invokes a determination to continue by creating a 'must', this is to be met with thankfulness.

## KINGSLEY AND MANLY FAITH

Especially interesting is the inclusion in *Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt!* of several quotations from the Broad Churchman and Social Christian author Charles Kingsley, who emphasised the intermediate state as a key Catholic doctrine.<sup>31</sup> In her library, Victoria kept the 1900 edition of his *Daily Thoughts*, with a dedication "für Mein Kleines", probably from her intimate, Lita zu Putlitz; and *Out of the Deep*<sup>32</sup>, in which Victoria kept an envelope with a lock of hair from her sick son, Prince Erik (1889-1918)<sup>33</sup>, a sign of her close relationship to the book, which in 1887 was published in Swedish (*Ut ur djupen. Ord till de bedrövade*). The birth of Prince Erik was crucial to her spiritual and physical development. During her pregnancy, she took morphine on her doctors' advice, and her child was born an epileptic and probably with developmental disabilities. This traumatic situation seems to have caused a permanent rift in the royal marriage and established Victoria's state of continuing physical and mental frailty.<sup>34</sup> If, as seems possible, it was at this point she read Kingsley's *Out of the Deep*, which had been given to her the year before Prince Erik's birth, it must have meant much for her future spiritual development and personal conduct. Her copy is well-worn, and is marked in six places: one dried flower, four slips of paper, and Edward Henry Bickersteth's hymn 'Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?'<sup>35</sup> - a hymn said to have been a favourite of Queen Victoria of England.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Dahlström, *Drottningarnas böcker*, 154. The quotation from Victor Hugo in the French edition was not included by Grand Duchess Luise, but by M. Ernest Naville in the preface.

<sup>30</sup> Bernadotte, *Käre prins, godnatt!*, 77 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Kingsley, *Charles Kingsley*, 321-323.

<sup>32</sup> The 1887 MacMillan edition, a present from her best friend, Thérèse Duchess d'Otrante on 24 February 1888.

<sup>33</sup> Dahlström, *Drottningarnas böcker*, 138.

<sup>34</sup> Jansson, *Drottning Victoria*, 86 ff.

<sup>35</sup> Bickersteth (1825-1906) was bishop of Exeter.

<sup>36</sup> Aglionby, *The Life of Edward Henry Bickersteth*, 118.

Kingsley is strongly associated with ‘muscular Christianity’. However, recent research has found that he was also ‘intensely emotional’, often even described as ‘feminine’ in this regard. ‘Muscular’ would then be the opposite not of ‘feminine’ so much as ‘ascetic’ Christianity.<sup>37</sup> Kingsley also seems to “repudiate the ideal of heroic male toughness” implied by the muscular label, which he himself did not enjoy.<sup>38</sup> His “healthy and manful Christianity, one which does not exalt the feminine virtues to the exclusion of the masculine”, as Sean Gill suggests, implies “a clear sense of gender boundaries and an anxiety lest they be subverted”.<sup>39</sup> A mystical tendency has also been suggested.<sup>40</sup> Kingsley’s *Out of the Deep* confirms this, with its emphasis on personal resignation and its references to the German mystic Jakob Boehme (1575-1624). Sometimes Kingsley repeats a mystical saying but adds distance, as for example, “And ‘till thou art emptied of thyself, God cannot fill thee’, though it be a law of the old Mystics, is true and practical common sense.”<sup>41</sup> Kingsley also wrote a preface to the 1858 English edition of the fourteenth-century German mystic Johannes Tauler’s life and sermons.<sup>42</sup>

Further, the very fact that Kingsley features in the present context makes it relevant to ask whether his ‘muscular Christianity’ has not been overemphasised in books on masculinity that have paid no regard to his devotional books. He was not only the author of several fictional books, but also a famous preacher, and chaplain to Queen Victoria of England. The problem is much in evidence when reading *Out of the Deep*, for we cannot know for certain how reading women, such as Victoria, understood him. In my opinion, his Christianity in this book is not ‘muscular’, but rather a ‘manly’ faith in the Pauline sense of the word, and was thus reading matter for men and women alike. His emphasis on a ‘manly’ faith was obviously essential to both Victoria’s and her mother’s spirituality. That a woman could have a ‘manly’ faith was an important part of the spiritual environment in which Victoria was brought up as a princess, and served as a personal model for her development that was later strengthened by her own reading of Kingsley amongst others.

Kingsley’s views, often labelled as ‘liberal’ and ‘Broad Church’, seem to have been surprisingly compatible to Old Lutheran teachings, the latter, for example, being “strongly opposed to all attempts to divide the world into sacred and secular spheres, which saw the pursuit of truth in all its different forms as a God-given task”<sup>43</sup>, or, as Kingsley put it: “May God keep you from the same snare, of fancying, as all ‘Orders’, Societies and Sects do, that they invent a better system of society than the old one, wherein God created man in His own image, viz., of father and son, husband and wife, brother and sister, master and servant, king and subject.”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Engelhardt, “Victorian Masculinity and the Virgin Mary”, 45.

<sup>38</sup> Wee, “Christian Manliness and National Identity”, 86.

<sup>39</sup> Gill, “Representations of Christ in Victorian Art”, 170 ff; see also Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*.

<sup>40</sup> Bloomfield, “Muscular Christian or Mystic?”. Bloomfield suggests that Kingsley was influenced by the Swedish mystical philosopher Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772); see Klaver, *The Apostle of the Flesh*.

<sup>41</sup> Kingsley, *Out of the Deep*, 101.

<sup>42</sup> Tauler, *History and Life of the Reverend Doctor John Tauler*.

<sup>43</sup> McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 114.

<sup>44</sup> Kingsley, *Charles Kingsley*, 160.



In his younger days, Kingsley had had difficulties with the Athanasian Creed<sup>45</sup>, but later he became prominent in its defence, not least because of its inclusion of the belief in an intermediate state.<sup>46</sup> He attacked David Friedrich Strauß, the German theologian and rationalist biographer of Jesus, by using a combination of Christian Socialism and conservative theology: “Christ reigns, as Luther used to say, Christ reigns - and therefore I will not fear, ... Who will answer Strauss? Who will denounce Strauss as a vile aristocrat, robbing the poor man of his Saviour - of the ground of all democracy, all freedom, all association - of the Charter itself.”<sup>47</sup> The contents of *Out of the Deep* cannot be labelled ‘liberal’ in any advanced theological meaning. Although Kingsley seems to limit eternal punishment to thoughts, words, and deeds<sup>48</sup>, excluding the human individual, he writes in a fairly orthodox way about Christ: “He is a man still, though He is very God of very God, He rose from the dead as a man”.<sup>49</sup> Neither is Kingsley’s description of God ‘muscular’, but rather traditional, when he writes that God “can be more strong than man, more tender than woman likewise; and when the strong arm of man supports thee no longer, yet under thee are the Everlasting Arms.”<sup>50</sup> Thus, it is not unexpected to find that extracts from Kingsley’s sermons and novels were edited in a German series on eternal matters addressed by great thinkers, that at least five of his religious books were translated into German (some in several editions), and that his acquaintances with Germany were studied even on an academic level.<sup>51</sup>

In *Out of the Deep*, Kingsley places great stress on resignation. In the very first chapter, he emphasises the need to distinguish between false and true, holy resignation, and says that he is beginning to find that continual resignation is “the secret of continual strength”, or, as Boehme interprets it, “the path of daily living”. It should not be thought this excluded activity, and indeed on the very next page Kingsley writes that it was “simply by not struggling, doing my work vigorously where God had put me, and believing firmly that His promises had a real, not a mere metaphorical meaning, and that Psalms X., XXVII., XXXVII., CVII., CXII., CXXIII., CXXVI., CXLVI., are as practically true for us as they were for the Jews of old.”<sup>52</sup> Resignation in the spirit of the Psalms permeates the whole book. It is an equally important concept in Kingsley’s non-theological works, such as *Madam How and Lady Why* (1889), where in the first chapter true resignation is distinguished from the ‘stupid’ saying “What can’t be cured Must be endured”, acting “like a donkey when he turns his tail to a hail-storm”, which “is no resignation at all”: “but the true resignation, the resignation which is fit for grown people and children alike, the resignation which is the beginning and the end of all wisdom and all religion, is to believe that Lady Why knows best, because

<sup>45</sup> Colloms, *Charles Kingsley*, 50.

<sup>46</sup> Kingsley, *Charles Kingsley*, 321 ff.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 94 ff.

<sup>48</sup> Kingsley explicitly repudiated ‘Puritan Eschatology’, “that the fate of every man is revocably fixed at the moment of death” (Kingsley, *Charles Kingsley*, 322).

<sup>49</sup> Kingsley, *Out of the Deep*, 132 ff., 142. The Swedish edition gives ‘Hades’ for ‘hell’, which might be understood as a spiritualisation.

<sup>50</sup> Kingsley, *Out of the Deep*, 100.

<sup>51</sup> Samtleben, ed., *Charles Kingsley*; Jacobson, *Charles Kingsleys Beziehungen zu Deutschland*.

<sup>52</sup> Kingsley, *Out of the Deep*, 11-13.

she herself is perfectly good; and that as she is mistress over Madam How, so she has a Master over her, whose name - I say again - I leave you to guess."<sup>53</sup>

## WAGNER AND MANLY FEMININITY

Music played an important part in Victoria's life. She was given music lessons by Felix Mottl, one of the leading conductors of the day and a key figure in the Bayreuth festival, and she was probably once Franz Liszt's page turner.<sup>54</sup> She was a passionate Wagnerian who learnt to play the piano score of the operas, and played them well and often. The strong, passionate, adventurous, and redeeming women of Wagner's operas and music dramas - Senta, Elisabeth, Isolde, Brünnhilde - are simultaneously manly in their courage and rage, and feminine in their sacrificing love and care. Through music Victoria could experience sentiments and adventures otherwise strictly limited by her strong sense of duty. It is not hard to imagine that Wagner's operas, to which she was especially attached, offered the prospect of another world and other views on human feelings than the strict ethics to which she adhered in her daily life. Such a combination was not unusual in the later nineteenth century, though in Victoria it probably served as a mental lifeline when she felt herself under pressure. In Wagner's world, princesses and queens were first and foremost human beings, who could put aside their royal duties and responsibilities in order to meet other duties: love, passion, and sacrifice. Here she could forget her control and her pretensions. The bridge between these two worlds was mysticism, religious and philosophical.

## THE QUEEN'S HUSBAND, HIS ADJUTANT, AND HER DOCTOR

In 1881, Victoria married Crown Prince Gustaf of Sweden (1858-1950). In 1907 he succeeded his father as King Gustaf V, and she duly became Queen Victoria of Sweden. In 1900 she had begun to correspond with Bishop Billing, prompted largely by her loneliness; there is a strong impression that she always felt very lonely when in Sweden, and her husband, though neither a nursing father nor a brutal father, was very much an absent father. As Crown Prince he was often away on state business, which since Norway was part of Sweden until 1905 meant a great deal of travel. He found relaxation in fishing, hunting, tennis, and activities outside the home, such as playing cards, and he did not share his wife's cultural interests.

The royal couple travelled to Egypt in 1890-1891 where Victoria pursued her passion for photography. During their stay she grew very close to her husband's adjutant, Captain Gustaf von Blixen-Finecke, who, of royal descent himself, resembled her husband in looks, but has been described as a more muscular and charming man.<sup>55</sup> What really happened far out in the Egyptian desert in the tent that served as

<sup>53</sup> Id., *Madam How and Lady Why*, 8 ff.

<sup>54</sup> Jansson, *Drottning Victoria*, 38 ff.

<sup>55</sup> Hadenius, *Gustaf V*, 41-47.

Victoria's darkroom is immaterial, but the whole setting, if not the plot, could have been taken from the second act of Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*: the queen meets her beloved in the dark, while her husband, the king, is away hunting. The end of the adventure was not as tragic as in the opera, and the royal couple remained together, but all the twists and turns were reported assiduously in letters to the royal families in both Sweden and Baden.

Later, Victoria fell in love with her doctor, Axel Munthe, a very different sort of man with whom she could share something of the philosophical mysticism that informed many of her cultural ambitions. Wagner's world was also his. On a medical and mystical level, their relationship continued even after Munthe's second marriage in 1907.<sup>56</sup> His biographer, Bengt Jangfeldt, has observed that they always spoke English to each other because of the servants, their secret correspondence was written in English, and, according to Munthe's own relation, her last words on her death-bed to Munthe were "Come soon".<sup>57</sup> As we have seen, this was not unique. English was also the language of Victoria's most private religious thoughts. It was a language independent of her royal duties.

In his memoirs, Bishop Billing describes how Victoria, in organising her sons' confirmations, acted in a manner becoming a pious, sensible, and modest mother of any standing.<sup>58</sup> According to her lady-in-waiting Baroness Cecilia Falkenberg's description, she lived in the belief that royalty were predestined by God to fulfil their high vocation.<sup>59</sup> Yet Victoria's own self-image was more complicated. In a letter to Billing in 1911 she wrote that her patriotic heart and her soldier's heart suffered more than she could say.<sup>60</sup> In addition to the duties of her position as the mother of the kingdom, she also had a special care for the armed services, especially the Swedish navy; something born out by her deep commitment to the navy's spiritual guidance. In several letters to Billing she mentions church services and sermons in a way that shows her sense of special responsibility for others, for she was involved in the production of a short manual and hymnal to be used in the navy, while she wrote exclaiming over the appointment of boring preachers to the court, for example.

Her views on the navy manual throw some light on her understanding of the Christian faith, especially in the discussions over addition to the book of short sermons on the occasion of the King's birthday and after serious accidents. Her wishes were based on personal experience. At the celebration of the King's birthday aboard the royal ship *Drott*, the Queen noticed the men lacked the appropriate words, so she had let them sing a verse of a hymn that included a prayer for the King's good fortune. When a sailor was seriously wounded aboard the cruiser *Fylgia* during a meeting between the Russian and the Swedish sovereigns in the Finnish archipelago

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-47; Jangfeldt, *En osalig ande*, 285.

<sup>57</sup> Jangfeldt, *En osalig ande*, 286, 522.

<sup>58</sup> Billing, *Levnadsminnen*, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Cecilia af Klercker, *Förgången glans*, 312.

<sup>60</sup> LUB: Victoria to Billing, 12 October 1911.



Queen Victoria of Sweden.  
[Lund University Library, Manuscript Department]

in 1912, Victoria cared for the wounded man and was at his side when he died. On the following Sunday she felt the service wanted for the right words to say to the men.<sup>61</sup>

Within her historical limits, Victoria's perspectives may be regarded as almost post-modern, since she emphasised the special task of the Church at times of national celebration or catastrophe, two roles that are especially relevant - and indeed expected - today. The most striking element, perhaps not unusual in its day, is the way in which the Church, the people, and the Queen's own duties were united. Moreover, her 'soldier's heart' should perhaps be interpreted as a 'manly' compensation for the 'feminine' fragility caused by her lasting infirmity. From 1889 she was severely afflicted in both her lungs and her nerves year in, year out, which led her to stay in Baden or Italy most winters until her death in 1930.

### A RESIGNED FAITH IN PROVIDENCE IS A 'MANLY' FAITH?

Was Victoria equally 'manly' in personal, religious matters? Had the 'feminine' Queen a 'manly' faith? Certainly, Victoria's letters to Bishop Billing are full of expressions of faith in God's providence and the need to resign to God's will. Nations, peoples, and individuals are all subject to the actions of God, but also to his providence. God does not instigate all that happens, but his purpose lies behind everything that happens, and the individual has to accept this, in the knowledge that he or she is an object of godly education, grace, and mercy. As Kingsley put it: "If I did not believe in a special Providence, in a perpetual education of men by evil as well as good, by small things as well as great - if I did not believe that - I could believe nothing."<sup>62</sup>

It has been overlooked that in Victoria this attitude was founded on the Psalms. They were of great importance to her, both singly, such as Psalms 90 and 91<sup>63</sup>, and as the general foundation of her spirituality. Her reading of Kingsley's *Out of the Deep*, with its emphasis on the Psalms and resignation, probably strengthened this. After the German Revolution of 1918 she wrote: "God's will be done, but it is difficult to understand! Nevertheless I am convinced that He would not have permitted all these horrible, incomprehensible [things] without a thought of love, and He surely has a plan of wisdom that we cannot fathom, but He shall one day reveal, and on that day we will *understand* what he meant, if only we could abide and believe."<sup>64</sup>

After her mother's death, she wrote of "the infinitely hard blow that has stricken me". Even so, she was thankful that God had taken her to Him so quietly and peacefully, since "her life was complete and she might return home to the Father's heart, on which her longing was bent".<sup>65</sup> In the last years of Billing's life their roles were

<sup>61</sup> LUB: Victoria to Billing, 19 August 1912. No such words were included in *Gudstjänstordning jämte korta betraktelser till användning å svenska flottans fartyg* (Stockholm, 1912), but the enlarged edition 1917 contains special prayers for the King's birthday, the gravely ill, and accidents and funerals at sea (*Gudstjänstordning jämte korta predikningar för alla sön- och helgdagar i kyrkoåret till användning å svenska flottans fartyg* (Stockholm, 1917)).

<sup>62</sup> Kingsley, *Out of the Deep*, 15.

<sup>63</sup> LUB: Victoria to Billing, 27 April 1921 and 13 October 1918.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 August 1919.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 May 1923.



reversed, and it became Victoria's part to comfort him: "Oh, that one cannot put a softening hand on this poor worried heart and tell it to be in good spirits! *One* only can do it, and I pray to Him [for] help, so there will be calm and peace again. He is so much greater than our poor hearts, and mighty in help and comfort."<sup>66</sup>

In her letters to Billing she was often personal, but still somewhat controlled, writing as her mother would have written a devotional book. On only three occasions was this rhetorical mask torn away. The first is in her comment on the Russian-Japanese war in 1904 as "more appalling as words can describe. This slaughtering of thousands of people is too horrible; and why??"<sup>67</sup> Her outcry is interesting not least because such a strong, general critique of the cruelty of war is wholly absent from her many comments on the First World War, when her belief in a just German victory remained strong to the bitter end. The second occasion conventional rhetoric failed her was when her daughter-in-law, Princess Margaret of Connaught (1882-1920), died suddenly, leaving her husband and five children. Victoria wrote: "The ways of the Lord really are impenetrable and one can only keep quite still and not leave hold of His hand and believe, even if one understands and grasps nothing. May God help the poor Crown Prince and his motherless children!"<sup>68</sup> The third time was when her mother died, and she wrote that "my whole life seems at a blow to be totally changed".<sup>69</sup> It might be possible to argue that even these outbursts follow a rhetorical pattern of a kind, but be that as it may it is still different, and the interesting point is that Victoria adopts it only in these cases - and that she does so in the first place.

Victoria's faith in Providence has been regarded by her biographers as very traditional in a Lutheran way. Heribert Jansson even describes her upbringing as having been "in a strict Old Lutheran spirit", and portrays her religiosity as "a conservative Lutheran faith".<sup>70</sup> By this he means that she was "strongly convinced that nothing happens without the will of God and that God has a distinct intention in all that happens", and that she resigned herself to God's will in even extremities of sickness and misfortune.<sup>71</sup> Her great-grandson Count Lennart Bernadotte, whom she brought up, has described her faith as one founded on the heritage from her mother. In his view, Victoria's religious practice was an ethical construct. She had the deepest confidence in the grace of God and the wisdom of his decisions, and was familiar with his loving righteousness and infinite good will. This formed "the structure of the emotional part of her conviction". God was her source and her support, and "only with Him she was capable of liberating herself from her pressing burden". Personal duty was to the fore, but her "religious system" contained a "slave-driver's paragraph": sins of omission. In her striving for perfection, she was well aware that God alone is infallible, while humans had to constrain themselves as far as possible.<sup>72</sup>

The weight Victoria accorded self-discipline, emotional restraint, tolerance, and the common good was also inspired by her philosophical reading, for example of the

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 December 1924.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 August 1904.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 May 1920.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 May 1923.

<sup>70</sup> Jansson, *Drottning Victoria*, 65, 244.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 244.

<sup>72</sup> Bernadotte, *Käre prins, godnatt!*, 50-53.

Stoic emperor Marc Aurel, whose *Meditations* she read in Swedish (*Själfbetraktelser*). Her copy of this book has been much underlined.<sup>73</sup> Victoria put her religious ideals, and perhaps her picture of her own upbringing, into words when in 1924 she described Heinrich XXXIV, Prince Reuss-Köstritz, in a letter to Archbishop Nathan Söderblom as “grown up in the old tradition, and a serious, god-fearing young man”.<sup>74</sup>

My impression is that Victoria’s reading of the Lutheran tradition was somewhat selective. She was open also to other religious influences, with the exception of the Pietistic Evangelical religiosity, which at the Swedish court was represented in particular by her mother-in-law Queen Sophia, brother-in-law Prince Oscar Bernadotte, and his wife Princess Ebba Bernadotte, although she read the Moravian Brethren’s annual *Losungen* (Daily Watchwords).<sup>75</sup> In theology, she was more conservative than her father-in-law King Oscar II, who united the gospel of Christ with a liberal Christology and idealistic philosophy.<sup>76</sup> Victoria would have had little difficulty in applying Kingsley’s words to her own experience, for example: “For it is certain that the harder a man fights against evil the harder evil will fight against him in return; but it is certain too that the harder a man fights against evil, the more is he like his Saviour Christ, and the more glorious will be his reward in heaven.”<sup>77</sup>

Her emphasis on resignation was far from passive or sentimental. On this specific point, she probably found Kingsley’s words offered a solution to her needs:

Never let us get into the common trick of calling unbelief Resignation; of asking, and then because we have not faith to believe, putting in a ‘Thy will be done’ at the end. Let us make God’s will our will, and so say, ‘Thy will be done.’ There is a false as well as a true and holy resignation. When the sorrow is come or coming, or necessary apparently for others’ good, let us say with our Master in the Agony, ‘Not what we will, but what Thou wilt!’ But up to that point, let us pray boldly.<sup>78</sup>

This bold prayer sat well with a ‘manly’ faith in its Pauline sense. As the bookmarks in her copy of Kingsley’s *Out of the Deep* indicate, Victoria set great store by the book. If she wrote the following lines in Italy with regard to her sons, or in Sweden with regard to her parents, we do not know: “Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away? In Jesus’ keeping we are safe, and they.” But the word ‘soon’ she used not only on her deathbed when calling for Munthe, but also in the religious context: “It is enough: earth’s struggles soon shall cease, and Jesus call us to heaven’s perfect peace.”

<sup>73</sup> Dahlström, *Drottningarnas böcker*, 136.

<sup>74</sup> Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek (Uppsala University Library), Nathan Söderbloms samling: Victoria to Söderblom, 23 September 1924.

<sup>75</sup> Bernadotte, *Käre prins, godnatt!*, 50. In the Bernadotte Library these books are catalogued under King Gustaf V rather than Queen Victoria, but sequence ends in 1930, the year of her death.

<sup>76</sup> Åhfeldt, *Kung Gustaf*, 162 ff.

<sup>77</sup> Kingsley, *Out of the Deep*, 106 ff.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 ff.



The Queen was personally interested in the choice of hymns to be sung in the Royal Chapel. Beside an emphasis on old Lutheran hymns and hymns for special occasions, including the prayer for the King, she was also attached to Sarah Adams's 'Nearer my God, to thee', included in the 1921 supplement to the Swedish Hymnal. Other hymns she held dear were Julia von Hausmann's 'So nimm denn meine Hände' and Friedrich Räder's 'Harre, meine Seele',<sup>79</sup> of which the former was sung at her funeral. However, the persistent rumour that she herself translated Räder's hymn for the 1921 Hymnal supplement is false.<sup>80</sup>

## MONARCHICAL PRINCIPLES

The foundation of Victoria's views on the monarchy was divine calling. Every effort to limit the king's responsibilities and power was thus interpreted as a blow against the God-given order. The king was responsible to the whole people to fulfil his duty as a *Landesvater*.<sup>81</sup> It is my contention that Victoria combined the ideals of her 'nursing' father and her dominant mother in a manner facilitated by her husband's natural and educated interest in mediating from a sovereign position. While the Queen could intervene in politics and display a distinct Conservative party view, the King - as Conservative in his mind as his consort - in accordance with Swedish dynastic tradition kept his independence of all parties. For him, personal confidence ought to be the foundation for the relationship between the sovereign and his prime ministers, with due respect for parliamentary circumstances.<sup>82</sup>

In her letters to Bishop Billing, Victoria explains her political interests and actions using the important defence of the monarchical principle: "My worries are not so much of moment, but for the future and for the maintenance of the monarchical principle here in the country." This implied that the momentous struggle of the Swedish general strike in August-September 1909 was in her view not between employers and workers, but between Conservatives and Liberals.<sup>83</sup>

It was because of her emphasis on monarchical ideas that political and personal ethics were united in her view. Her ecclesiastical opinions were definitely High Church in its nineteenth-century Swedish sense, with its emphasis on the precedence of clerical office over lay preaching (although not to the extent of Episcopalianism), on the sacraments in the liturgy (mostly without sacrificial interpretations), and on a strong belief in the efficiency of the Word of God (without fundamentalism or sentimentality). To this extent her views coincided with Bishop Billing's beliefs. On Sundays, she attended services in the Royal Chapel in Stockholm or at Drottningholm. At Tullgarn Palace, in the summers of the 1890s, she arranged a short service in the dining-room for her household and neighbours. During her Egyptian journey, 1890-1891, her

<sup>79</sup> Åhfeldt, *Kung Gustaf*, 171 ff.; Fjellman, *Victoria*, 211 ff.

<sup>80</sup> Jansson, *Drottning Victoria*, 248; Fjellman, *Victoria*, 211, following *Minnesalbum. Drottning Victoria*, 7. The translation of this hymn by Anna Ölander was first published in 1896.

<sup>81</sup> Jansson, *Drottning Victoria*, 155.

<sup>82</sup> Nyman, *Högern och kungamakten*, 267.

<sup>83</sup> LUB: Victoria to Billing, 20 August 1909.

husband read a sermon for the travelling court each Sunday, and during her long foreign journeys in later years, it was the task of the chamberlain on duty to read. She kept strictly to the tradition of Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday, even when abroad.<sup>84</sup>

It was a self-evident part of her upbringing for Victoria to regard Roman Catholics in Baden and Sweden as her subjects. A Catholic bishop had been present at her christening. She often visited Pope Leo XIII, and her relative, Cardinal Hohenlohe, is said to have been influential in her spiritual development.<sup>85</sup> Meanwhile, Victoria was often accused by her contemporaries of being more German than Swedish. If that were indeed true, then it would have been the lesser problem. Instead she regarded German principles as Swedish, and took for granted that close cultural and political ties between Sweden and Germany were both self-evident and necessary.

In this context, we are reminded of the question of the ‘monarchic instrumentalisation’ of religion. Christian ideals were frequently adduced in the defence of the monarchy, yet it is impossible to determine whether this sprang from the Christian religion and faith or from a struggle for political position. They are so intertwined that one can speak of a union between the throne and the altar rather than an alliance. What seems to have been an instrumentalisation of religion for the purposes of personal political power might also be understood as a self-evident consequence of Victoria’s religious faith.

## GENDER LIMITATIONS IN POLITICS

In a letter from Rome on 24 February 1906, Victoria wrote in a bitter tone that she had long tried to make others understand the dangers inherent in the way the Norwegian question was being handled, but what would her weak voice count for when everyone knew everything so much better. “And since I am of the opinion that women should not interfere into politics, I did not see myself entitled to say more than a word of warning.”<sup>86</sup> Indeed, Victoria’s impressions of women and emancipation are partly revealed through her reading, for her library contains several books on women, for example Angelika von Lagerström’s *Deutsche Frauen* (1873), which portrayed a series of famous men’s wives who spent their lives in the shadow of their spouses, and Leonore Kühn’s *Wir Frauen*, with its attempt to unite old and new ideals of women.<sup>87</sup> The question remains whether she paid more than lip-service to the idea of women’s political inferiority, since she was very active in her correspondence with Conservative politicians such as Bishop Billing, and sometimes even played an important role in political events.

In 1912 she wrote from Anacapri about the happy continuation of the national subscription being taken up for a coastal battleship, which had started as a reaction against the then Liberal government’s defence politics: “However, I find it terri-

<sup>84</sup> Åhfeldt, *Kung Gustaf*, 70 ff.

<sup>85</sup> Jansson, *Drottning Victoria*, 26, 104.

<sup>86</sup> LUB: Victoria to Billing, 24 February 1906.

<sup>87</sup> Dahlström, *Drottningarnas böcker*, 130 ff.

bly hard not being allowed to show my intense, warm interest for this enterprise by making a contribution of my own. But this is regarded as impossible, and of course I adhere to this.”<sup>88</sup>

The Queen had to act behind the scenes, and her efforts to take public political steps were limited by her Conservative advisors and by parliamentary tradition. Her activities reached a peak shortly before *bondetåget*, a Conservative manifestation by more than 30,000 farmers in Stockholm on 6 February 1914 to protest at the Liberal government’s cuts in military defence and to demonstrate their sympathy with the King. The speech delivered by King Gustaf V was written by Sven Hedin and Carl Bennedich. Several members of the royal family and their advisors had tried to moderate some of the more expressive sentences, but the Queen insisted that the King should give the speech as written.<sup>89</sup> Without doubt the royal speech ran roughshod over parliamentary principle. The Social Democrats even announced that the Constitution of 1809 had been flouted in favour of a ‘Prussian’ order.<sup>90</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Existential biography does not so much search for a logical development in a person’s life as for the opportunities to shape and choose between different paths. Instead of using identities, which are often ambiguous in the extreme, I follow the Swedish historian Henrik Rosengren in his use of different cultural identifications that together form an identity. Identifications are changeable and manifold, but they are also communicable.<sup>91</sup>

Victoria’s cultural identifications may be understood as three different fields, replete with intersections. They are dependent on her fundamental yet unformulated identifications as a woman and as a frail and suffering person. In the first field, *citizenships*, we find her identifications as German, Swedish, and Christian. In the second field, *social functions*, we recognise the positions of the Lutheran *Haustafel*: Crown Princess or Queen, listener, and matron. In the third field, *inner models*, we encounter both the praying self of the Psalms, the suffering Christ, and the women of Wagner’s operas, all displaying both resignation and passion in a setting of either Christian mysticism or romantic philosophy, and sometimes in combination.

In studying ‘the manly Queen with feminine charm’ the differentiation between manliness and masculinity is thrown into relief, for ‘manliness’ in a positive sense has also been open to women. In older devotional literature, the Christian person as a new, spiritual creation is not devoid of gender characteristics, but certainly lacks gender limitations. Godly men and women were regarded as examples for women and men alike. In the nineteenth century this changed, and gender categories became sexed. This change had an enormous impact in turn on religious language. Religion was feminised and masculinised.

<sup>88</sup> LUB: Victoria to Billing, 24 February 1912.

<sup>89</sup> Nyman, *Högern och kungamakten*, 242-257, 266 ff., 269.

<sup>90</sup> Palmstierna, *Orostid*, 14 ff.

<sup>91</sup> Rosengren, ‘*Judarnas Wagner*’, 38, 43-45.

This concept permits of a greater understanding of the gender positions of both sexes than R. W. Connell's hegemonic masculinity, by which women are reduced to passive positions.<sup>92</sup> This chapter emphasises the need for gender studies to focus on both women and men, especially where positive results on manliness and masculinity can be obtained from the study of women in history.

Victoria has been described as a manly queen with feminine charm. Her faith may also with reason be described as manly. In her personal life, her strong sense of duty was balanced by the impression made by Wagner's passionate and forceful women characters as models of a manly femininity. She was clearly influenced by Charles Kingsley's devotional books and his emphasis on active 'true resignation'. As a queen, she regarded herself in the light of old Lutheran social teaching as the mother of the nation. The importance of monarchical ideas to Victoria meant that in her view political and personal ethics were as one. Her position was in many ways unique, which magnifies similar observations that could be made in other women as well. 'A manly queen with feminine charm' was one of several manly women with feminine charm.

<sup>92</sup> For Connell, see Yvonne Maria Werner's introduction to this volume.

# THE NEW CATHOLIC FEMINISM

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## TRADITION AND RENEWAL IN CATHOLIC GENDER THEOLOGY

GÖSTA HALLONSTEN

**T***he Male Woman - A Feminine Ideal in the Early Church* is the title of a posthumous study by the late Kerstin Aspegren.<sup>1</sup> The title conveys accurately the main device used by patristic authors to solve the problem of how women, being inferior in the social sphere, yet are able to attain equal dignity with men in spiritual life. Research on this so-called androcentric anthropology of the Church Fathers and its impact upon women has flourished during the past few decades. Amongst the pioneers of this type of patristic women's studies, the Norwegian scholar Kari Elisabeth Børresen stands out as the most important. In a large number of publications she has argued that the Church Fathers managed to overcome the assumed inferiority of women in the order of creation by applying the principle of the non-gendered soul to women in the order of salvation/spirituality.<sup>2</sup> Yet the non-gendered spiritual realm was still conceived according to the assumption that manliness equalled humanness. Even if women were equal to men within the spiritual realm, this very equality was conceived as 'spiritual manliness'.

This 'spiritual manliness' was both out-weighted and preserved, however, in the Christian tradition by the continuous application of the biblical symbolism of Groom and Bride to the relationship between Christ and the Church or Soul. Mystical writings centred upon the Song of Songs tended to emphasise that both men and women in their relationship to Christ take on a 'feminine' role. Against this background, the construction of Christian manliness in modernity might be seen as a final flowering of a longstanding Christian pattern of interpretation, combining an 'androcentric' anthropology with the 'feminisation' of spiritual life through the symbolism of Groom and Bride.

<sup>1</sup> Aspegren, *The Male Woman*.

<sup>2</sup> Børresen, *From Patristics to Matristics*.

My main purpose here is to discuss the so-called 'new feminism', a predominantly Catholic philosophy that emphasises the complementarities of men and women in the Roman Catholic Church. The term was originally used in Great Britain in the 1920s to distinguish new feminists, who stressed the importance of motherhood and traditionally female qualities, from suffragist feminism. Since the 1990s, the term has been used by Catholic feminist theologians responding to Pope John Paul II's call for a 'new feminism', loyal to the teachings of the Catholic Church.<sup>3</sup> An analysis of these texts can help shed light on the problematic relationship between traditional theological anthropology and modern thinking, which constitutes the basis of the idea of a 'feminisation' of religion in modern times, and also, although indirectly, the strivings for a re-masculinisation at issue in many of the contributions in this volume.

Until recently, the Roman Catholic Church defended a traditional view on gender. Motherhood was seen as the primary vocation of woman, and hence the domestic sphere the place to fulfil her task. The subordination of women was grounded in the order of creation, in accordance with the fact that Adam was created first and Eve only to be his 'helpmate'. Thus the creation narrative of Genesis 2 took precedence over that of Genesis 1, with its rather complementary perspective on man and woman (1: 26-28). This line was corroborated by the narrative of the fall in Genesis 3, in which Eve plays the decisive role. In the first letter to the apostle Timothy (2: 11-15), this early and enduringly important tradition is summarised in the following way: "Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing provided she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty."<sup>4</sup>

This was reinforced by the influence of Aristotle on Christian anthropology, and especially his theory of human conception, which emphasised the passive role of woman. The view of gender was hierarchic and androcentric, man being the norm - the human being as such - and woman the deviation, a *mas occasionatum*, 'a misbegotten male' according to Thomas Aquinas.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Beattie, *New Catholic Feminism*, Preface.

<sup>4</sup> *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (hereafter NRSV). All biblical quotations in this chapter are taken from this translation.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Ia Q 92, a 1, ad 1. This notorious statement, however, is dictated by Aristotle's theory of conception, and refers exclusively to the conception and birth of a concrete female being: "Only as regards nature in the individual is the female something defective and *manqué*, For the active power in the seed of the male tends to produce something like itself, perfect in masculinity" (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, XIII, Ia. 90-102).

## TRADITIONAL CATHOLIC TEACHING ON GENDER

To some extent, though, the Christian tradition was able to relativise this strict gender hierarchy. In relation to God, men and women were assumed to be equal. Salvation, and hence baptism, Eucharist, and other sacraments, were open to all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or social standing. This is the place where the famous words of St Paul in the letter to the Galatians (3: 28) belong: “For there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”. Yet, this speaks of the order of salvation, not the order of creation. Without taking this distinction into account, it is impossible to understand the traditional Christian combination of equality and subordination between women and men. Christian marriage was also seen as based in principle on the free choice of a partner, while mutual fidelity in marriage tended to a sort of equality between the spouses.<sup>6</sup> In addition to their equal standing before God in salvation, the emphasis on celibacy or virginity offered an important possibility for women to overcome subordination.

Typically, though, writings on holy women frequently emphasise the ‘male’ character of their ascetic achievements. Through abstaining from marriage and childbirth, choosing celibacy ‘for the sake of heaven’ (Matt. 19: 12), female ascetics spiritually ‘became men’.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, however, the androcentric norm here was balanced by the common conviction that the soul is not gendered. “*Sexus non est in anima*”, writes Thomas Aquinas.<sup>8</sup> The sexual difference is bound to corporeal life and primarily motivated by the need for reproduction. Followed by Latin tradition and in contradistinction to Greek theology, Augustine assumed that gender difference had existed in paradise, and will remain for all eternity. However, there will be no concupiscence in heaven and no sexual intercourse. Human beings will become “like the angels” (Matt. 22: 30). And so sex is bound up with death and the need for reproduction, a fact that is even more obvious in the Greek tradition. This Platonising theology frequently had recourse to a spiritualised view of paradise. Originally, human beings were created with a sort of spiritual body, while God added biological corporeality in anticipation of the Fall. The entrance of death necessitates reproduction, and hence biological sex difference is introduced.<sup>9</sup>

This is the background to the reappraisal of the Christian tradition regarding the theology of gender undertaken by the Catholic Church in recent decades. Although prepared by the development of Catholic social doctrine in the first half of the twentieth century, clear statements on gender equality are not to be found until the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Pope John XXIII in his 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in terris* writes (41): “The part that women are now playing in political life is everywhere evident. ... Women are gaining an increasing awareness of their natural dignity. Far from being content with a purely passive role or allowing themselves to be

<sup>6</sup> Angenendt, *Toleranz und Gewalt*, 165-178.

<sup>7</sup> Aspegren, *The Male Woman*; Vogt, “Becoming Male”.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *Suppl.* 39 a.1.

<sup>9</sup> See especially Brown, *The Body and Society*. See Børresen, *From Patristics to Matristics*, esp. 3-92.



regarded as a kind of instrument, they are demanding both in domestic and in public life the rights and duties which belong to them as human persons.”<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, women like men have equal rights in social and cultural life, and are called to contribute to the apostolate of all the baptised.<sup>11</sup> During the twentieth century, Catholic social doctrine has turned increasingly to a human rights discourse that also encompasses women’s rights. The place of women is no longer defined by the static roles of a patriarchal society, but rather by their being acting subjects, together with men, in a changing society.<sup>12</sup> However, while fully acknowledging gender equality in everyday life, the Catholic Church does not ordain women to the priesthood. This is motivated by ‘the unbroken tradition’ of male priesthood from apostolic times, but also with a metaphorical, sacramental theology of the priesthood. According to Catholic teaching, the priest represents Christ, he acts *in persona Christi*, as the traditional formulation goes, meaning that he acts in Christ’s place. In accordance with the letter to Ephesians (5: 21-33) Christ is seen as the bridegroom, the Church as the bride. Therefore the priest ought to be male in order to be able to represent Christ. This line of argument was developed by a document from the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith in 1976, *Inter Insigniores*. It was further reaffirmed by John Paul II in his apostolic letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* of 1993.<sup>13</sup>

Hence, in the area of sacramental theology and church order, a patriarchal-hierarchic point of view could be said to have retained its influence and validity in Catholic teaching. My primary interest in this chapter, however, is not this fact per se. Rather, my aim is to focus on the manner in which the combination of gender equality in everyday life with the application of the bridal metaphor in the theology of the priesthood engenders a new type of reflection within theological anthropology. Additionally, facing a militant feminism even inside the Church, and especially in view of the radical constructionism of contemporary gender theory, the Catholic Church has had to develop a positive approach to gender questions. The need not only to repeat statements of the magisterium and reject demands for the ordination of women, but rather to envision a constructive theological anthropology, is increasingly keenly felt by theologians loyal to the teaching of the Church.

<sup>10</sup> John XIII, *Pacem in Terris*.

<sup>11</sup> “Gaudium et Spes”, 8, 9 and 60; “Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People”, 9; “II. Vatikanisches Konzil, Botschaft an die Frauen”.

<sup>12</sup> Heimbach-Steins, “Mann und Frau besitzen dieselbe Würde und sind gleichwertig”, 33; for the actual teaching of the Catholic Church on women’s rights, see *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 147, 295; and Beinert, ed., *Frauenbefreiung und Kirche*.

<sup>13</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *From ‘Inter Insigniores’ to ‘Ordinatio Sacerdotalis’*; see also Müller, ed., *Frauen in der Kirche*; and Id., *Der Empfänger des Weihesakraments*.

## THE ROMAN MAGISTERIUM AND THE GENDER QUESTION

These discussions paved the way for the new feminism. Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, writes: “In transforming culture so that it supports life, *women* occupy a place, in thought and action, which is unique and decisive. It depends on them to promote a ‘new feminism’ which rejects the temptation of imitating models of ‘male domination’, in order to acknowledge and affirm the true genius of women in every aspect of the life of society, and overcome all discrimination, violence and exploitation.”<sup>14</sup>

Proponents of this ‘new feminism’ frequently refer to this passage, yet in itself the movement originated earlier than 1995, the year of the publication of the encyclical.<sup>15</sup> As a matter of fact, John Paul II/Karol Wojtyła was one of the main instigators of this kind of thought. Newly elected pope, he delivered at the general audiences a series of meditations on the human body, sexuality, and marriage, published in English as *The Theology of the Body. Human Love in the Divine Plan*.<sup>16</sup> His apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women) of 1988 is also important in this regard, as are several other writings both when he was pope and as Karol Wojtyła, the young professor and bishop. John Paul II’s engagement in those issues was grounded in his interest in philosophical anthropology in combination with pastoral work.<sup>17</sup>

Together with John Paul II/Karol Wojtyła, the prominent Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) and Edith Stein, the Jewish philosopher and later Carmelite nun, are of special importance when dealing with the new feminism. While von Balthasar’s theology of gender draws heavily upon the bridegroom-bride metaphor and is clearly inspired by Romanticism, the starting point for Edith Stein is the philosopher Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology, which after her conversion to the Catholic Church was combined with Thomistic philosophy. In this sense, there is a clear affinity between Wojtyła and Stein, to which we will return later.<sup>18</sup>

The *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and the World* of 2004 gives a good introduction to the basic traits of this new feminism. The document was issued by the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, the Vatican’s department for questions of doctrine and theology.<sup>19</sup> Normally, this congregation only acts defensively, reacting to what is considered false teaching. To some extent this letter follows the traditional pattern, reacting to an alleged antagonism between men and women, promoted by radical feminism.

<sup>14</sup> *Evangelium Vitae* 99, quoted from John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 570.

<sup>15</sup> The passage from *Evangelium Vitae* is the express point of departure for the important book edited by Michele M. Schumacher, *Women in Christ*, orig. pub. as *Femmes dans le Christ*.

<sup>16</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*.

<sup>17</sup> See especially Wojtyła, *The Acting Person* and Id., *Love and Responsibility*.

<sup>18</sup> Edith Stein was executed in Auschwitz in 1942 and beatified by John Paul II in 1987. For her philosophy and reflections on gender, see von Streng, “Woman’s Threefold Vocation” and Stein, *Keine Frau ist ja nur Frau*.

<sup>19</sup> The document is the result of a drafting process that involved a large number of theologians, bishops, and cardinals. By approving the publication of the text, the Pope acknowledges its content without being the author of the text.

The letter is also critical of the idea of a dichotomy between sex and gender, which is meant to have negative consequences on a variety of levels. Instead, it calls for active collaboration and dialogue in order to develop a more authentic relationship between men and women.

The document has three main parts, in addition to its preamble and conclusion. First, and most extended, is the treatment of 'Basic Elements of the Biblical Vision of the Human Person' (II). There follow two chapters on the importance of feminine values in society (III) as well as in the Church (IV). The biblical section testifies clearly to the reinterpretation of Genesis 1-3 undertaken within recent theology in regard to the traditional understanding.<sup>20</sup> The main focus is on the statement in Genesis regarding the male-female relationship: "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them" (Gen. 1: 27). Complementarities, not subordination, are the order of the day, as can be seen in the reinterpretation of the second creation narrative (Gen. 2: 4-25). 'Helpmate' is interpreted as partner, and it is underlined that the woman is of the same 'flesh', meaning on equal footing with the man, ontologically.<sup>21</sup> Unity and communion is emphasised, through which Adam's 'original solitude' is overcome. This is a prominent theme in John Paul II's meditations - the meaning of gender difference is to be seen in overcoming the solitude of human beings.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, the traditional bridal metaphors are a basic element in this line of thought. Epithets such as 'nuptial' and 'spousal' occur frequently. Nakedness, as mentioned in Genesis 2: 25, is an indication of the communal function of gender difference. In this way, the human body, marked with the sign of masculinity or femininity, includes *the capacity of expressing love, that love in which the person becomes a gift* and - by means of this gift - fulfils the meaning of his being and his existence. Continuing his commentary on these verses of Genesis, the Pope stresses that the body is "the expression of the spirit and is called, in the mystery of creation, to exist in the communion of persons in the image of God" (6).

Biological sex differentiation, then, is the basis for Catholic anthropology. Sexuality is fulfilled in the mystery of marriage (nuptial mystery). Every human being is meant as a gift to the other.<sup>23</sup> In this way, human beings mirror God's Trinitarian community. Although the Fall upsets the relationship between man and woman, as a consequence of their changed relationship to God, it does not subtract anything from the anthropology based on Genesis 1-2. The biblical vision of the human being contained in Genesis 1-3 is summarised in the following words: "Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of

<sup>20</sup> The first three chapters of Genesis are seen as "the immutable *basis of all Christian anthropology*". *Letter to the Bishops*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> "He needs a *helpmate* who will be his partner. The term here does not refer to an inferior, but to a vital helper." *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>22</sup> See John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 35-37 (The Meaning of Man's Original Solitude), 42-45 (The Original Unity of Man and Woman), and 45-48 (By the Communion of Persons Man Becomes the Image of God).

<sup>23</sup> See *Ibid.*, 60-63, 69-72. John Paul II's important formulation, the 'gift of self', has a prehistory in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World "Gaudium et Spes", 49 on married love: "A love that, bringing together the human and the divine, leads the partners to a free and mutual giving of self".

the personal God.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore it is noted that sexuality is fundamental for understanding the human being, and that the capacity to love is a reflection of God’s love, and is disclosed in the spousal character of the body in which the masculinity or femininity of the person is expressed. The Fall has disturbed the balance between God and man, without changing its fundament: accordingly, the relationship is good, but wounded and in need of healing (8).

The interpretation of biblical anthropology is connected to the healing work of God throughout the history of salvation. Genesis 3: 15 marks the first point of reference. According to Christian tradition, the verse promises a saviour (Christ) who is going to be the offspring or ‘seed’ of woman.<sup>25</sup> Complementarity between man and woman is not an exclusive trait of creation theology, but leads further into salvation history:

Among the many ways in which God reveals himself to his people (cf. Heb 1: 1), in keeping with a long and patient pedagogy, there is the recurring theme of the covenant between man and woman. This is paradoxical if we consider the drama recounted in Genesis and its concrete repetition in the time of the prophets, as well as the mixing of the sacred and the sexual found in the religions, which surrounded Israel. And yet this symbolism is indispensable for understanding the way in which God loves his people: God makes himself known as the Bridegroom who loves Israel his Bride (9).

Of Old Testament texts, the prophet Hosea and the Song of Songs are the most important; the latter applied to the relationship of Christ and the Church throughout the Christian tradition. Here the letter contends that the terms bridegroom and bride are much more than simple metaphors, and that this spousal language touches on the very nature of the relationship between God and his people which comes to its fulfilment in the New Testament (9). Here the document points to the importance of Mary: “On the one hand, Mary, the chosen daughter of Zion, in her femininity, sums up and transfigures the condition of Israel/Bride waiting for the day of her salvation. On the other hand, the masculinity of the Son shows how Jesus assumes in his person all that the Old Testament symbolism had applied to the love of God for his people, described as the love of a bridegroom for his bride (10).”

Amongst the many New Testament texts referred to, the letter to the Ephesians 5: 21-33 holds the primary place. The Christ-Church relationship makes marriage a sacrament that shows the extent to which the man-woman relationship is healed and sanctified through Christ and the Church (11). Yet at the same time the distinction between man and woman is reaffirmed, and, as the document concludes, “revealed as belonging ontologically to creation and destined therefore to outlast the present time” in a transfigured form (12). In this way, salvation is said to overcome the antagonism between men and women without abolishing the difference.

<sup>24</sup> This is a direct quote from *Mulieris dignitatem* 6.

<sup>25</sup> While the NRSV has “offspring”, the Vulgate has “semen”, which facilitates the traditional interpretation of the verse as prophesying Christ.

The aim of the letter is to pave the way for a collaboration between men and women. Yet, it turns out in the two subsequent sections of the letter that the emphasis is more on the role of women than on the collaboration as such. For the treatment of “feminine values in the life of society”, the expression “capacity for the other” is pivotal. It is stated that “women preserve the deep intuition of the goodness in their lives of those actions which elicit life, and contribute to the growth and protection of the other” (13). The notion of motherhood is introduced as a key concept here. Yet women’s identity is not determined by biological reproduction, the letter states. The emphasis on virginity works in the opposite direction:

The existence of the Christian vocation of virginity, radical with regard to both the Old Testament tradition and the demands made by many societies, is of the greatest importance in this regard. Virginity refutes any attempt to enclose women in mere biological destiny. Just as virginity receives from physical motherhood the insight that there is no Christian vocation except in the concrete gift of oneself to the other, so physical motherhood receives from virginity an insight into its fundamentally spiritual dimension: it is in not being content only to give physical life that the other truly comes into existence. This means that motherhood can find forms of full realisation also where there is no physical procreation (13).

It should be mentioned in this connection that even if this letter does not address the meaning of fatherhood, John Paul II does treat this theme elsewhere.<sup>26</sup> Yet, like the letter, the Pope does not really overcome the concentration on women and motherhood. The complementary biblical anthropology conceived of in the first section of the letter gives way to an emphasis on motherhood in the second section. Woman, it is said, has a unique role to play in all aspects of family and life concerning relationships and care. Yet, having thus endorsed a sort of ‘separate spheres ideology’, the letter interestingly makes an important reservation. Female values, it states, are basically human values:

It is only because women are more immediately attuned to these values that they are the reminder and the privileged sign of such values. But, in the final analysis, every human being, man or woman, is destined to be ‘for the other’. In this perspective, that which is called ‘femininity’ is more than simply an attribute of the female sex. The word designates indeed the fundamental human capacity to live for the other and because of the other (14).

The document thus aims to underscore the shared humanity of men and women, overcoming the antagonism between them. Promoting the rights of women in society amounts to promoting human values, which in turn are being rediscovered by the agency of women (14). Coming to ‘feminine values in the life of the Church’ (IV), the letter underlines even more the specific role of women: “In the Church, woman as

<sup>26</sup> See Delaney, *A Theology of Fatherhood in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła*.

‘sign’ is more than ever central and fruitful, following as it does from the very identity of the Church, as received from God and accepted in faith. It is this ‘mystical’ identity, profound and essential, which needs to be kept in mind when reflecting on the respective roles of men and women in the Church (15).” In this section of the document a metaphorical, mystical, and sacramental language is used. Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church his Bride, and hence Mary’s role as the model for the Church is underlined. Women are called on to be unique examples and witnesses for all Christians of how the Bride is to respond in love to the love of the Bridegroom (16).

According to this letter, and to Catholic teaching generally, while women have the same rights as men in everyday life, their special contribution stems from their capacity to give life. This natural capacity, which translates into human and spiritual values, is expressly connected to an anthropology of complementarities, entailing the equality of women and men in an order characterised by relationality. Women, though, in a certain sense represent human values more than men do. The bridal metaphors taken from Scripture are developed, without emphasising the traditional subordination of the bride in human relationships. Subordination, however, is naturally implied in the relationship between God/Christ the Bridegroom and human beings/the Church-Bride. In the order of creation, traditional gender hierarchy is abolished. The use of bridal metaphors in this general anthropology instead aims at underscoring sex difference as a fundamental fact. Echoing John Paul II, sexuality is interpreted as a mutual ‘gift of self’. Gender complementarity further, is preserved in salvation and church life, and the difference between the two sexes is affirmed and exalted through marriage as a sacrament. Virginity, on the other hand, points to the spiritualisation of gender relations that starts here and will only be fulfilled in heaven. Femininity and female values are emphasised in the traditional metaphor of the Church as a woman, and by pointing to Mary as the (female) model for both women and men. In a spiritual sense, every Christian is called on to ‘become a woman’. In *Mulieris dignitatem* John Paul II writes “that as members of the Church, men too are included in the concept of ‘Bride’”.<sup>27</sup> Yet to be consistently applied, the analogy of spousal love, according to this teaching, requires male priests. The connection between priesthood and the central position of the Eucharist in Catholic understanding is seen in this perspective:

Since Christ, in instituting the Eucharist, linked it in such an explicit way to the priestly service of the Apostles, it is legitimate to conclude that he thereby wished to express the relationship between man and woman, between what is ‘feminine’ and what is ‘masculine’. It is a relationship willed by God both in the mystery of creation and in the mystery of Redemption. It is *the Eucharist* above all that expresses *the redemptive act of Christ the Bridegroom towards the Church the Bride*. This is clear and unambiguous when the sacramental ministry of the Eucharist, in which the priest acts ‘in *persona Christi*’, is performed by a man.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 480.

<sup>28</sup> *Mulieris dignitatem* 26.



The sacrificial nature of the Eucharist and the nuptial character of the church are thus connected with a view of priesthood as essentially masculine, which seems to make female ordination impossible.

## THE NEW CATHOLIC FEMINISM SOME THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

It is against the background of this magisterial teaching that any discussion and analysis of works representing the 'new Catholic feminism' must be set. Thus far there have been only a few attempts to engage with this new trend from a critical perspective. The most ambitious is the book *New Catholic Feminism. Theology and Theory*, in which the theologian Tina Beattie undertakes a thorough analysis of the gender theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Otherwise, established feminist theology almost completely ignores the Catholic renewal with regard to gender issues, while naturally the new Catholic feminists have a certain interest in criticising secular feminism and established feminist theology in order to set out the characteristics of their own position.<sup>29</sup> Understandably enough, the latter perceive secular feminism and its theological followers as antagonists in the battle over the 'right' interpretation of gender. At the same time, the new feminists clearly acknowledge the relevance of the feminist critique of patriarchy.<sup>30</sup> Parallel to this awakening on gender issues in conservative Catholic circles, there has been a renewal underway in Anglo-Saxon feminist theology, with theological criticism of secular feminism and a return to the Christian tradition as a resource for feminist theology.<sup>31</sup> In this situation, I think it is worthwhile introducing at least some of the theses and insights of new Catholic feminism into the discussion.

First of all, it is important to underscore the extent to which new Catholic feminism, and hence the present teaching of the Catholic Church, takes gender issues seriously. In less than fifty years, Church teaching has shifted focus from the exclusive emphasis on women's subordination as spouses and mothers to women's equality with men in all parts of life. Such polemics against feminism as exist have softened in tone. The reactive attitude towards gender issues is little by little being substituted by a proactive one. Interestingly, Tina Beattie, herself a Catholic and a feminist, contends that secular feminists should not reject 'Vatican-style feminism' outright. Commenting on the *Letter to the Bishops* summarised above, she writes: "There is much here that resonates with feminist thinking, particularly the excellent section on work and family."<sup>32</sup> Further, she suspects that the majority of feminists agree that women are more relational than men, and that this relationality is "a better model of humanity than the masculine individualism of modern society".

<sup>29</sup> See Schumacher, ed., *Women in Christ*; and especially Martin, *The Feminist Question*.

<sup>30</sup> See Schumacher, "The Nature of Nature in Feminism".

<sup>31</sup> Most important is Coakley, *Powers and Submissions*.

<sup>32</sup> Beattie, "Feminism, Vatican-style".



Tina Beattie further contends that the feminist theological vision stands in need of revitalisation since “Western feminist theologians to a large extent have remained captive to a highly politicised and often agnostic theology”.<sup>33</sup> Beattie argues that this new Catholic interest in gender issues, although basically bound to a traditional androcentric perspective and hence focused mostly on the role of women, unavoidably leads to attentiveness to the conceptual constructs that are masculinity and femininity.<sup>34</sup> The ‘gender fluidity’ that Tina Beattie observes in the Catholic tradition is not expressly acknowledged by official Church teaching or the new Catholic feminists.<sup>35</sup> It seems rather to be suppressed, at least on the surface, by an affirmation of the order of creation and natural law as normative for sex and gender in a Catholic understanding. Pope Benedict XVI in his Christmas speech to members of the Roman Curia in 2008 stated that “What is often expressed and understood by the term ‘gender’ ultimately ends up being man’s attempt at self-emancipation from creation and the Creator.”<sup>36</sup> Obviously, the Pope here aimed at confirming a theology of creation that entails a clear assumption of gender difference in an essentialist sense.<sup>37</sup> ‘Essentialism’ is an equally prominent feature of the new catholic feminism. Yet on closer examination, the metaphorical theological language used in reflecting on the role of men and women in Church and salvation yields to a highly fluid understanding of gender. As will become clear, there are conflicting tendencies in this way of thinking. The move to reflect constructively on gender issues has its ramifications.

As already noted, the traditional metaphor on Christ as bridegroom and the Church as bride plays an important role in the new feminism, and not only as an argument against the ordination of women. Rather, the covenant between God and Israel, and hence the relationship between God and Creation or Christ and the soul, is exclusively characterised as a ‘nuptial/spousal’ relationship. This seems to underscore a sort of gender essentialism as the necessary basis for this metaphorical language. This gender essentialism supposedly should be preserved throughout the process, because it mirrors God’s relation to Creation and Christ’s to the Church. Yet in Christian tradition the fatherhood of God should not be taken literally. God has no gender, and the maleness of Christ was never emphasised at the expense of his full humanity. The extent to which these traditional metaphors are bound to gender essentialism is therefore an open question. The contention of Tina Beattie, amongst others, is that they are not, and that the stress should be on the gendering of language and symbols, not on the biological sex of the body.<sup>38</sup> In her book *New Catholic Feminism*, Beattie severely criticises Hans Urs von Balthasar for emphasising this gendered language to the extent of making God masculine, or rather ‘super masculine’. The metaphors are frozen into gender stereotypes that tend to preserve the subordination of women, notwithstanding the emphasis on the equal dignity between the sexes emanating

<sup>33</sup> Id., *New Catholic Feminism*, 3. This critique is shared by Sarah Coakley, who in her *Powers and Submissions* engages critically with prominent feminists such as Judith Butler.

<sup>34</sup> Beattie, *New Catholic Feminism*, 11.

<sup>35</sup> For ‘gender fluidity’ in the Christian tradition, see Coakley, *Powers and Submissions*.

<sup>36</sup> *Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Members of the Roman Curia*.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Beattie, “Insight beyond Sight”.

from their creation in the image of God.<sup>39</sup> Although one can argue about the extent to which von Balthasar's theology in this regard has had a general influence on the new feminists, there is clearly a problem here.

What does it mean exactly that the metaphors bridegroom and bride as used in Christian tradition 'are much more than simple metaphors'? Certainly, their dominance as metaphors in Christian tradition cannot be questioned, and to contend they have been undeniably compromised by their patriarchal use might be an option for liberal feminists, but this is not an option in a gender theology that aims at a constructive repossession of Christian tradition. The language of dependence on God/Christ by Creation/soul/Church that those metaphors once used to express is not negotiable.<sup>40</sup> Yet, the question remains of the extent to which the 'much more than simple metaphors' imply a specific definition of gender, and hence of the relationships of sex and gender. Before listening to the new feminists on this point, we must turn to the 'gender fluidity' in their use of those metaphors.

The 'nuptial' relationship of the Church to Christ its bridegroom finds its purest expression in Mary. Like Mary, the Church should be the listening and receptive party in the relationship. Even if this attitude is characterised as specifically feminine, both men and women are called on to share in it. Men and women together make up the bride of Christ, which means that men in this regard are called to 'femininity' no less than women. What is regarded as specifically feminine turns out to be a general characteristic of humankind. Further, while male priests acting *in persona Christi* in a sense represent the 'maleness of Christ', his being the bridegroom, all other men in the Church play the role of woman in relation to Christ, including the priest when acting *in persona ecclesiae*, the representative of the Church. All this testifies to a certain fluidity in the use of gender metaphors in traditional language.<sup>41</sup> The emphasis on virginity as a vocation for women *and* men further promotes this fluidity. In answering the call to be celibate 'for the sake of heaven', men in a radical sense become what all the baptised are called to be - brides of Christ. The crossing of gender boundaries is obvious here. What is more, the interpretation of virginity as spiritual motherhood both confirms and relativises the importance of physical motherhood, and thus overcomes a certain type of gender stereotype. Those traits of traditional metaphorical language, as used and confirmed by the new feminists, clearly balance the essentialism of this new trend. Taken together, the gender essentialism of the new feminists and the simultaneous affirmation of the fluid bridegroom-bride metaphors, according to Tina Beattie, constitute "a highly ambiguous understanding of the relationship between biological sex and spiritual gender".<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Beattie, *New Catholic Feminism*, esp. ch. 6; cf. Coakley, "In Persona Christi". Indeed, von Balthasar seems to overstate the meaning of those traditional metaphors, and to make the description of the relationship between God and Creation dependent on certain gender concepts. The most characteristic parts of von Balthasar's writings in this connection are *Theodramatik*. II: *Die Personen des Spiels, Teil 1: Der Mensch in Gott*, 334-350 ("Mann und Frau"); *Teil 2: Die Personen in Christus*, 260-268 ("Die Frau als Antwort"); and "Frauenpriestertum"; see also Crammer, "One sex or two?".

<sup>40</sup> Coakley, *Powers and Submissions*, 55-68 ("Creaturehood Before God: Male and Female").

<sup>41</sup> Id., "In Persona Christi".

<sup>42</sup> Beattie, "Feminism, Vatican-style".

How then do the new Catholic feminists conceive the relationship between sex and gender? Although there is no fully worked out answer to this question, in responding to mainstream feminism the new feminists are addressing the distinction between sex and gender in a new way. Starting with the critique of the sharp dichotomy between sex and gender in secular feminism, Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkowitz contends that secular feminists are trapped in the very dualism between nature and culture (nature and nurture) or body and soul (reason and spirit) that the feminist critique of patriarchy aimed at overcoming. By denying that there is any basis in nature for women being women, the possibility of an ontology or phenomenology is rejected outright.<sup>43</sup> She further criticises the disengagement from the body, which “takes place not only in the male-dominated history of philosophy, but also within contemporary deconstructionalism and the philosophical feminism that employs the postmodern framework”.<sup>44</sup> Hence the critique of secular feminism is as much a philosophical as a theological task.<sup>45</sup>

Michele Schumacher argues along the same lines. In its criticism of the dualistic concept of nature as being characteristic of ‘androcentric logics’, feminism falls prey to the same mentality, she contends. It has, she writes, “accepted the ‘patriarchal’ division of nature and culture which denies nature of its traditional metaphysical dimension”.<sup>46</sup> Understanding gender as based almost exclusively on history and culture results in “a radical questioning of the relation between biology and gender, of course, but even of biology as such”.<sup>47</sup> The concept of nature is changed, according to Schumacher. The argumentation has “thus evolved from the social construction of *gender* to the social construction of *nature*. ... The delicate balance between nature and nurture ... is further threatened ... by feminism’s insistence upon the overbearing power of culture.”<sup>48</sup> This severe criticism of gender constructivism does not imply its total rejection, although Schumacher emphasises that the assumption that there is no ‘real’ relationship between nature and gender implies the same dualistic trap that many contemporary Western feminists purport to deny, namely that “the social is at odds with the natural, the human with the animal”.<sup>49</sup>

Here I would like to draw attention to the concessions to gender constructivism implied in the argumentation propounded by Schumacher and other proponents of the new feminism. Yet it is important to realise that the thrust of the argument is to defend nature as created by God, not by human beings. Whatever human beings

<sup>43</sup> “Most scholarship concerning gender does not ask ‘What is a woman?’ but ‘How does one become a woman?’ From such a standpoint, ontological expressions or phenomenological analyses of essence appear to be excluded or relegated to normative futility.” (Gerl-Falkowitz, “Gender Difference”, 4.)

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 13-14.

<sup>46</sup> Schumacher, “The Nature of Nature in Feminism”, 19, but cf. 21.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 24; see also “Toward a New Feminism. Interview with Author Michele Schumacher”. In this interview Schumacher states that “I do not regard male and female ‘natures’ as absolutes”, and, “The very metaphysical anthropology that the Catholic tradition has espoused, and that I emphatically hold as true, present nature as being both given and achieved.”

contribute to the fashioning of gender through history and culture, the firm conviction behind the new Catholic feminism is that there is still an order of Creation to be respected, or as it might be a 'message' to be listened to.

While sharing to some extent this concern of the new feminists, Beattie carefully avoids an appeal to the order of Creation. Steering a course between gender essentialism and the other extreme, she emphasises the revelational character of the human body and its sacramental importance. She further concurs in some measure with Schumacher's critique of feminism as dismissive of nature, although she criticises her selective engagement with feminist thinkers and her uncritical allegiance to neo-orthodox Catholicism. Referring to the Catholic theologian Nancy Dallavalle, Beattie concludes that the official Catholic interpretation of the significance of the sexual body invites feminist reflection. She further "insists that the development of a critical essentialism is a task of Catholic theology".<sup>50</sup> Beattie and Dallavalle share the concern of the new feminists with discovering the meaning of the (sexual) body for anthropology. The body is not simply something to be constructed and 'performed' linguistically; it has a reality of its own that is a source of revelation, albeit inaccessible except through "an interpretative act by creation on creation".<sup>51</sup>

In this connection Beattie addresses the theology of John Paul II - in which the significance of the body is to be a 'gift of self' - and characterises it as both "promising and problematic for feminist theology".<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, Beattie affirms the value of John Paul II's theology of the body with its recovery of the dignity of the self as the gift of God, made in the image of God, which could offer feminist theology "a new model of relationality that is not parasitic upon the autonomous subjectivities of modernity, nor prey to the many forms of subordinationism and subjugation which haunt the Christian theology of woman".<sup>53</sup> Setting aside Beattie's critique of the Church's highly conservative understanding of marriage, procreation, and motherhood, which clearly distinguishes her from the new Catholic feminists, they otherwise have much in common. Beattie aims at overcoming 'modernity's literalisms', and she seeks a refiguration of knowledge, "through a reopening of the theological horizons beyond metaphysics and beyond modernism".<sup>54</sup> As is obvious, the new Catholic feminism does not entail a simple reaffirmation of traditional gender theology, and is perhaps better seen as a refiguration of knowledge with special regard to gender. In this sense it is also an attempt to overcome modernism, yet in a different sense from Beattie, and definitely not by going beyond metaphysics.<sup>55</sup>

In sum, the changes brought about in the teaching of the Catholic Church with regard to women oblige the new feminists to develop a theological and philosophical anthropology that accords with those changes. By abandoning the subordination

<sup>50</sup> Beattie, *New Catholic Feminism*, 32, 40-42.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34, 43. See further Dallavalle, "Toward a Theology that is Catholic and Feminist".

<sup>52</sup> Beattie, *New Catholic Feminism*, 46.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>55</sup> Beattie herself might be unprepared to go beyond metaphysics. She clearly appeals both to Heidegger and Thomas Aquinas, which brings her closer to the new feminists than she seems willing to concede.

of women and turning to an anthropology of complementarities between men and women, the new feminists address the issue of gender in a new way. Pre-modern Christian tradition understood the sexual difference as almost exclusively motivated by reproduction: the soul was generally assumed to be 'non-gendered'; the statement in Galatians 3: 28 was interpreted as meaning that gender has no implications for salvation. In a sense, this is still the teaching of the Catholic Church, meaning that salvation is open to all human beings without regard to gender, ethnicity, class, or the like. Yet the traditional conclusion that gender difference thus does not impact on spiritual life is now on the wane. Human beings are created as images of God, and this image is gendered. Man and woman complement each other as image of God, in accordance with Genesis 1: 28. An individual human being - male or female - is not regarded as incomplete, though, even if the foil of the other gender more fully reveals the meaning of being created in the image of God. The *imago Dei* is a relational concept that mirrors the Triune communion in God. However, this necessarily makes gender more important to spiritual life. The gendered image of God acquires a certain importance for salvation.

What does this really mean? Should we turn around Thomas Aquinas' formulation and state "sexus est etiam in anima"?<sup>56</sup> As we will see, the new feminists are working in this direction. Yet even if sex and gender depend exclusively on the body, gender derives increased importance from the positive statement that gender difference is preserved in eternal life. There will be a discernible bodily difference between the sexes in heaven, albeit a spiritualised difference. By affirming this, Church teaching and the new feminists emphatically follow the Latin rather than the Platonising Greek tradition. Generally speaking, the body and corporeality are accorded greater importance by the new feminists than by the earlier tradition. Body, sex, and gender are here exalted to such an extent that it insists on a new philosophical and theological anthropology.

The problem to be solved by this new anthropology can be formulated thus. While sharing with contemporary feminism and philosophy the emphasis on relationships and relationality, the new feminists are unwilling to separate relationality from a realistic epistemology, contending that relationality is grounded in nature. More concretely, the sexed body is the foundation of relationality, in showing that man and woman are 'gifts of self' to each other. That this gift of self should transcend sexual relationships is equally obvious, and not only within a specific relationship between a man and a woman. Celibacy just as much as marriage may be seen as a gift of self. The sexed body is clearly the foundation, but gender is something to be configured on a higher level.

<sup>56</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, *Suppl.* 39 a.1.

## KAROL WOJTYLA AND EDITH STEIN TWO TREND-SETTERS

To justify this close connection between sex and gender, the Romantic gender stereotypes of Hans Urs von Balthasar are of less importance than the philosophical approach of thinkers such as Edith Stein and Karol Wojtyła.<sup>57</sup> That Stein was a disciple of Edmund Husserl and that Wojtyła's philosophy was heavily influenced by Max Scheler are well known. Yet both thinkers consciously linked up with Thomist philosophy in their efforts to develop an adequate anthropology.

In her essay "Woman's Threefold Vocation according to Edith Stein", Sibylle von Streng characterises Stein as 'strongly essentialist', pointing to the strong Thomistic influence in her anthropology. Body, soul, and spirit are "real, concrete components of the human person", according to Stein. However, experience in the form of phenomenological intuition makes up a second important source of her thinking.<sup>58</sup> For Stein, it is experience that brings to light the existence of a corporeal and personal 'I', and presents us with a very particular distinction between sexes. Stein's answer to the question of the region of being in which the apparent type difference between man and woman originates goes beyond classical Christian anthropology. According to her, the sex difference cannot be thought of as confined to the bodily sphere, for it also affects the spiritual; she contends that the "relationship of soul and body is different in man and woman", and that the soul-body relationship is lived more intimately in a woman than in a man.<sup>59</sup>

To understand this very pronounced separate spheres ideology, one should keep in mind that Stein was writing in the 1920s and 1930s. The heavy emphasis on the typically female experience should be viewed in the context of an emerging attention to women's role in everyday life by Catholic thinkers. Moreover, the innovative idea of a 'feminine soul' paradoxically has much to do with Stein's use of Thomist philosophy. Given that the soul is the form of the body, in combination with the abandonment of androcentric anthropology in favour of complementarities, this might be a consistent development of the assumed relationship between body and soul.<sup>60</sup> Yet Stein's anthropology does not require that we should now reckon with two species of human beings. Human nature is still considered one, but has both a specific masculine-feminine and an individual-personal expression. Typically, Edith Stein tries to hold together what she intuitively felt was being rent asunder: nature and culture, sex and gender. This still leaves Stein an author of importance for the new Catholic feminists, although the reception of her thought has not been without its reservations.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> This conclusion can be drawn from the volume Schumacher, ed., *Women in Christ*.

<sup>58</sup> On Stein's phenomenological method, see in particular von Streng, "Woman's Threefold Vocation", 106.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 107-109, quoting Stein, "Problems of Women's Education".

<sup>60</sup> See further von Streng, "Woman's Threefold Vocation", 111-113 on Stein's use of the Thomistic term 'substantial form'.

<sup>61</sup> See *Ibid.*, 137-138.



More influential, however, is the thought of John Paul II. Here also one has to face the fundamental differences between John Paul II's Thomistic personalism and the philosophical assumptions of mainstream gender studies in Western academia. Although clearly inspired by twentieth-century phenomenology, John Paul II grounds his philosophy in Thomism.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, his philosophical anthropology does not take consciousness as its point of departure, but rather builds upon a hylomorphic view of human beings. Body and soul belong closely together, the soul being the (substantial) form of the body. This accords high importance to the corporeal aspect of the human condition, excluding the possibility that the body is understood and treated as an external instrument of the soul. Rather, the soul as form makes bodily characteristics important for the entire human being; hence also the sexed body has an impact on the soul. Since this is the form of the body, gender must be manifested in the soul one way or the other. A gendered soul in the ontological sense would threaten the unity of the human species, however, and thus the general salvific importance of Christ's human nature.

Like Stein, though, John Paul II not only distinguishes body and soul-spirit in human beings, but also focuses on the concept of person.<sup>63</sup> This enables him to state that "sex ... is in a sense, 'a constituent part of the person' (not just 'an attribute of the person')".<sup>64</sup> Thus one could conclude that according to John Paul II, gender is essential to personhood while remaining accidental to human nature.<sup>65</sup> In all cases, John Paul II is firm in his belief that the sexual characteristics of the body are not accidental or peripheral to the identity of human beings. His *Theology of the Body* is an extended and eloquent argument, based on his earlier philosophical writings, in favour of a view that firmly grounds gender in the fact of being created as male and female. To dichotomise sex and gender or to relativise the male-female duality or complementarities is clearly not an option for him. Yet the distinction between sex and gender does not seem foreign to his thought - otherwise sex would determine everything in his anthropology, which is clearly not the case. Rather, while gender is inextricably bound to male-female sex as a point of departure, it transcends sex without abolishing it. The relation between sex and gender should be understood here as dynamic in the same sense as the relationship between body and (spiritual) soul.

## CONCLUSIONS

By way of conclusion, I would like to underscore the central points in this preliminary discussion of the new Catholic feminism. First of all, with the exception of the non-ordination of women, the Catholic Church has fully acknowledged the equality of men and women in society, culture, and Church. Secondly, this has led to a renewal of theological anthropology or gender theology from a Catholic perspective. Thirdly, this gender theology does not reject gender constructionism out of hand. Admittedly,

<sup>62</sup> Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła*.

<sup>63</sup> See Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, esp. 165-176.

<sup>64</sup> John Paul II, *The Theology of the Body*, 49.

<sup>65</sup> For this distinction, see Grabowski, "The Status of the Sexual Good".



the new feminists do not share the philosophical presuppositions of mainstream gender studies, and instead a realistic epistemology and a Thomistic, phenomenological philosophy are proving pivotal. The Catholic Church does not compromise its beliefs in an order of Creation and natural law. The new feminists base their arguments on a form of philosophy that is widely taught at Catholic philosophical and theological schools around the world. In my understanding, the (im)possibility of a dialogue between Catholic feminism and secular gender studies therefore comes to grief in the chasm dividing two different philosophies and world-views rather than in the assumed preservation of certain gender stereotypes by the Catholic Church.<sup>66</sup>

As a fourth point, however, I would like to refer to the existence of feminist theologians who differ from 'traditional' feminist theology and to some extent bridge the gap between secular feminism and the new Catholic feminists. The latter would certainly profit from a dialogue with Tina Beattie, Sarah Coakley, and Nancy Dalla-valle, amongst others.<sup>67</sup> In terms of the retrieval of the Christian mystical tradition for feminist theology, and the emphasis on gender fluidity in traditional mystical and nuptial language, there might be more in common than appears in a superficial comparison. Yet the crucial issue, of course, is the different philosophical assumptions that may divide the new Catholic feminists from this new trend in feminist theology.

Last but not least, the gender stereotypes basic to modernity in the period on which this project on 'Christian Manliness' focuses do not seem to be important to new Catholic feminism. Rather, while taking the bodily-grounded sex difference as its given and non-negotiable point of departure, these feminists easily transcend the gender stereotypes that flow from the very same assumption into bourgeois modernity. In linking up with traditional bridegroom-bride metaphors and emphasising the 'genius of woman' there is no ambition to work out what characterises 'manliness' in contradistinction to the female. Even if one could find a lingering androcentrism in this focus on women, the result is rather an emphasis on female virtues as being potentially human. Still, the association of the male with Christ and God in the use of the traditional metaphors seems to limit this gender fluidity, restricting the application of the mutuality and complementarities of the sexes that are basic to this anthropology. Yet given that 'manliness' or male gender in the Christian tradition does not characterise God in any ontological sense, it might be possible to overcome this tension without doing away with traditional metaphors.

<sup>66</sup> "Towards a New Feminism".

<sup>67</sup> See also Soskice, *The Kindness of God*, esp. ch. 2.

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APGS: Archivum Provinciae Germaniae Septentrionalis  
ARSI: Archivum Romanum Societas Iesus  
ASBR: Archivio Storico dei Barnabiti  
ASPF: Archivio Storico della Congregazione per l'Evangelizzazione dei Popoli o 'de Propaganda Fide'  
*BHH: De Bode van het Heilig Hart*  
C&MA: Christian and Missionary Alliance  
DDAMz: Dom- und Diözesanarchiv Mainz  
Epist. Gen.: Epistolario Generalizio  
Epist. Praep. Gen. Germ.: **Epistolae praepositorum generalium ad Provinciae Germaniae**  
FSVÖ: Föreningen Soldaternas vänners i Örebro arkiv  
GAOP: Archivum Generale Ordinis Predicatorum  
Germ. Inf.: Provincia Germaniae Inferioris  
Germ. Part.: Provincia Germaniae Particulares  
IMA: International Missionary Alliance  
JAES: J. A. Eklund's samling  
KB: Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm  
LUB: Lunds universitetsbibliotek  
*MA: Monatsblätter für die katholische Männerwelt*  
*MSC: Messenger du Sacré Coeur de Jésus*  
*NRSV: New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*  
PAOD: Archief van de Nederlandse Provincie van de Orde der Dominicanen (Provincial Archives of the Dutch Province of the Order of the Dominicans)  
RA: Svenska Riksarkivet  
*RGACS: Reports to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*  
*SK: Svensk Kyrkotidning*  
SMA: Svenska Missionskyrkans arkiv  
SMC: Swedish Mission Covenant  
SOU: Statens offentliga utredningar  
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# INDEX

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- Abel, Marie 215, 218, 220-221, 223-225, 227-229  
Adams, James Eli 252-253  
Adams, Sarah 271  
Almerici, Gregorio 170, 173  
Almqvist, Carl Jonas Love 16, 235-239, 241, 243, 250, 256  
Ammann, Albert 178-179  
Andersson-Meijerhelm, Carl August 196  
Andræ, Tor 129  
Ariëns, Alfons 102  
Arndt, Johann 259  
Arts, Lode 76  
Aspegren, Kerstin 275  
Assmann, Aleida 97-99, 102  
Augustine 277
- Balthasar, Hans Urs von 279, 284-286  
Bannwart, Clemens 178  
Barnabò, Alessandro 174  
Baur, Nina 22  
Bea, Augustin 180  
Beattie, Tina 284-286, 288, 292  
Bederüa, Gail 11  
Benedict XVI 285  
Bengtsson, Sven 203  
Benedich, Carl 273  
Berchmans, Joannes 67, 73, 76  
Bergius, Niklas 181  
Bergman, August 153  
Bernadotte, Ebba 270  
Bernadotte, Oscar 196, 270  
Bernanos, Georges 105  
Bernhard, Anton 170-171, 174-175, 184  
Beyschlag, Franz 21  
Beyschlag, Willibald 21  
Bickersteth, Edward Henry 262  
Billing, Einar 133  
Billing, Gottfrid 257-258, 266, 268-269, 271  
Bitter, Albert 176, 183-184  
Bjørnson, Bjørnstjerne 224  
Blaschke, Olaf 77, 97, 117, 125, 160, 187, 258  
Bley, Bernhard 179-180
- Blixen-Finecke, Gustaf von 265  
Blückert, Kjell 87, 91  
Boehme, Jakob 263-264  
Bogatzky, Carl Heinrich von 261  
Bogen, Caroline de 170-171, 174-175  
Børresen, Kari Elisabeth 275  
Borutta, Manuel 168  
Bourdieu, Pierre 12, 187  
Brandes, Georg 136  
Brandt, Carl 181  
Bring, Ebbe Gustaf 78-79, 86-87, 90-92  
Brown, Callum 130-131  
Bruineman, Remigius 109  
Brunner, August 178-181  
Bunsen, C.C.J. 81  
Busch, Norbert 40, 77  
Butler, Judith 236, 241
- Caccia, Francesco 170  
Callewaert L.J. 101, 107  
Canisius, Petrus 71  
Caroline Amalie of Denmark 222  
Charcot, Jean-Martin 138  
Charles V 34  
Coakley, Sarah 292  
Connell, R.W. 12, 187, 274  
Crémieux, Adolphe 37  
Cubitt, Geoffrey 88-91
- Dallavalle, Nancy 288, 292  
Darwin, Charles 136  
Davidson, Harold 56  
de Groot, Vincentius 102  
De Pauw, A. 64  
Derrida, Jacques 236  
De Sonis, Louis-Gaston 73, 76  
de Winter, Pius 95-96, 101, 104-106, 109, 112  
Diephuis, Arnold 107-109  
Dietz, Johannes Baptist 45  
Dominic 99, 103  
Droste, Joseph 182  
Dunnett, A.H. 54

- Edén, Nils 192  
Edward VIII 56  
Eklöf, Motzi 119  
Eklund, J.A. 133, 135, 137-145, 260  
Ekman, E.J. 157  
Eliade, Mircea 250  
Elias, Norbert 248  
Engdahl, Horace 242  
Erikson, Emelie 161  
Eriksson, Per 205, 208-209
- Fagerholm, Alfred 150-164  
Fagerholm, Hilda 152  
Fagerholm, Paulina 152  
Falkenberg, Cecilia 266  
Fels, Benedikt 183  
Fibiger, Mathilde 221-222  
Fjellstedt, Peter 152  
Flensburg, Wilhelm 78, 80-83, 88, 91-92, 123  
Fogelklou, Emilia 186  
Francis, Martin 68  
Franson, Fredrik 153-155  
Frijhoff, Wilhelm 66-67  
Frommel, Emil 261-262  
Fumagalli, Paolo 165, 169-171, 173-174
- Garber, Marjorie 242  
Geijerstam, Gustaf af 136  
Gerl-Falkowitz, Hanna-Barbara 287  
Gill, Sean 240, 263  
Gjörwell, Carl Christoffer 238  
Goldmann, Lucien 240  
Gregory, Jeremy 89, 115  
Grollenberg, Lucas 95-96, 101, 104, 106, 109, 112  
Gross, Michael 168  
Grundtvig, N.F.S. 215-218, 221-222, 225, 227, 229  
Günther, Ludvig 181  
Gustaf V of Sweden 265, 273  
Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden 79, 84-86, 88-91, 93
- Hagenbach, Karl Rudolph 81-82  
Hall, Donald E. 11  
Hall, Nelly 152  
Hammar, Erik E:son 118-119  
Hannay, James 50-51  
Hansen, Mads 228  
Hansen, Octavius 220  
Hansen, Poul 215  
Hardeman, Renatus 68  
Hartmann, Emil 219  
Hausmann, Julia von 271  
Haydn, Joseph 34  
Hedin, Sven 155, 273  
Hegel, Friedrich 79  
Hellmich, Anton 37
- Hendrickson, Kenneth 195  
Henry IV 36  
Hilborn, Anna 123  
Hiller, Philipp Friedrich 259  
Hohenlohe, Gustav Adolf 272  
Holmstrand, Erik Fritiof 205  
Hölscher, Lucian 25  
Huhn, A.F. 261  
Hunt, William Holman 241  
Husserl, Edmund 279, 290
- Jackson, Michael 236  
Jacobson, Emil 156  
Jacobson, Magnus 236  
James, John Angell 130  
Jandel, Vincent 98-99  
Jangfeldt, Bengt 266  
Jansson, Heribert 269  
John XXIII 277  
John Paul II 276, 279-280, 282-283, 288, 290-291  
Johnsen, Helmuth 42  
Josephine of Sweden 167, 170-171  
Jowett, John Henry 51
- Keeler, Christine 57  
Kessel, Martina 73  
Kingsley, Charles 16-17, 24, 258, 260, 262-264, 268, 270, 274  
Kirkley, Evelyn 11, 116  
Knight, Francis 258, 260  
Kold, Christen 215-216, 218, 224  
Kors, Jan Benedict 101  
Kramer, Heinrich 24  
Kühn, Leonore 272  
Küpferle, Friedrich 177, 182-183
- Lagerlöf, Selma 16, 250-256  
Lagerström, Angelika von 272  
Laqueur, Thomas 259  
Larkin, Philip 57  
Larson, Frans August 157  
Lauer, Johannes 180  
Ledóchowski, Vlodimir 180  
Leffler, Ann Charlotte 257  
Lehmann, Hartmut 11  
Leo XIII 34, 272  
Lieber, Friedrich 182, 185  
Ling, Per Henrik 237  
Liszt, Franz 265  
Ljunggren, Jens 246  
Lohmann, Johannes 178  
Lönegren, Ernst 122-125  
Löwenstein, Prince 31  
Luedtke, Jens 22  
Luther, Martin 79-80, 83, 86-87, 89-91, 93, 131, 258

- Mallinckrodt, Hermann von 34  
 Malmborg, Fredrik von 204  
 Maltha, Andreas 109  
 Margaret of Connaught 269  
 Marstrand, Julie 215  
 Mauriac, François 105  
 Maurits, Alexander 123, 125  
 McDonough, Peter 185  
 McEwan, Ian 57  
 McLaughlin, Eleanor 242  
 McLeod, Hugh 56  
 Meijer, Gerrit 102  
 Meijerhelm, Nathalie 196  
 Melander, Björn 236-237  
 Melchersson, David 202  
 Meyer, Ansgar 165, 169, 185  
 Moody, Dwight L. 153  
 Moro, Carlo Giovanni 170-175  
 Mosse, George 91, 169, 177  
 Mottl, Felix 265  
 Moxnes, Halvor 241  
 Müller, Johannes 179-180  
 Munthe, Axel 257, 266
- Nathanson, Mendel Levin 214  
 Newman, John Henry 24  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich 246-247  
 Nilsson, E.A. 192, 203  
 Nørregaard, Johannes 219  
 Nyrén, Janne 203  
 Nystedt, Olle 129, 136
- Öberg, Karl Axel 207  
 O'Brien, Anne 11, 116  
 Olsson, Anna Lydia 161-162  
 Olsson, Henry 238  
 Oscar II of Sweden 270  
 Österlin, Lars 196  
 Ouwendijk, Dick 105
- Petersen, Viggo 223  
 Pius IX 24, 171  
 Pius X 181  
 Prestjan, Anna 187  
 Profumo, John 57  
 Putney, Clifford 11
- Räder, Friedrich 271  
 Radstock, Lord 196  
 Ramière, Henri 75  
 Rappe, Axel 196  
 Riesbeck, Niklas 236  
 Rijken, Alfons 102  
 Rogier, L.J. 105  
 Roos, Magnus Friedrich 259
- Rosengren, Henrik 273  
 Rosmini-Serbati, Antonio 172  
 Royden, Maude 52  
 Russell, Charles Taze 152
- Sanders, Karin 236  
 Schaab, Basil 106-108  
 Scheler, Max 290  
 Schindler, Peter 181  
 Schleiermacher, Friedrich 25  
 Schlich, Johannes 36  
 Schmale, Wolfgang 12  
 Schmitt, Ludwig 178  
 Schneider, Bernard 28  
 Schröder, Ludvig 219, 228-229  
 Schumacher, Michele 287-288  
 Sidenvall, Erik 260  
 Simpson, A.B. 154, 156-157  
 Smith, Anthony 87, 89-90, 92  
 Snape, Michael (Mike) 55, 195-196  
 Söderblom, Nathan 127-133, 179, 270  
 Sophia of Sweden 270  
 Soutar, D.H. 55  
 Spencer, Herbert 136  
 Spongberg, Mary 91  
 Spurgeon, Charles Haddon 135  
 Staberg, Jakob 237  
 Stearns, Peter 250  
 Stein, Edith 279, 290-291  
 Sträter, Hermann 36, 41  
 Strauß, David Friedrich 264  
 Streng, Sibylle von 290  
 Strindberg, August 16, 136, 242-250, 252, 255-256  
 Struik, Piet 109  
 Stub, Johan Daniel 170  
 Studach, Laurentius 170-172, 174  
 Sundberg, Anton Niklas 78-79, 81, 84-87, 89-92, 195  
 Suson, Henri 72  
 Svedjedal, Johan 241  
 Svenssón, Jon 181-182  
 Swedenborg, Emanuel 238
- Talbot, Matt 76  
 Tauler, Johannes 263  
 Taylor, Hudson 156  
 Teeuwen, Laurentius 108-109  
 Teppa, Alessandro 173  
 Theweleit, Klaus 248  
 Thill, Ernest 178, 184  
 Thomas Aquinas 99-100, 110-111, 276-277, 289  
 Thomson, David 53  
 Tilly, Johan 34  
 Tjeder, David 117, 123, 125, 187, 253, 260  
 Tondini de Quarenghi, Cesare 170, 173  
 Tosh, John 210, 258-259

Treitschke, Heinrich von 29, 258  
Trier, Ernst 16, 213-229  
Trier, Jacob 214  
Trottet, Jean Pierre 82

Ungerth, Erik 205, 208

Vance, Norman 11, 116, 258  
Van Osselaer, Tine 187  
van Rossum, Willem Marinus 180  
van Sante, Raymund 100-101, 103, 108-109, 112  
Victoria of England 262-263  
Victoria of Sweden 16, 257-258, 260-263, 265-274

Wagner, Richard 265-266, 274  
Walborg, John 153  
Waldenström, Paul Petter 203  
Wallgren, Erik 79-80  
Warren, Allen 11  
Wehrhahn, Paulus 183  
Wellhausen, Julius 127-128  
Wernz, Franz Xavier 183  
Wesley, John 199  
Wessel, Edward 182-183  
Wetzel, Franz Xaver 21-22, 29, 34  
Wilhelm II, Emperor 31  
Winding, August 219, 226  
Wirsén, Carl David af 257

Zurstrassen, Hermann 184

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