"SEXIST SOCIALISING OF CHILDREN IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS OF THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA: A THEOLOGICAL ETHICAL STUDY".

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KEY TERMS

Socialisation, Sexism, Christian education, Child development, Feminist theology,
Sunday schools, Gender stereotyping, Religious language and symbols,
Biblical interpretation, Agents of Socialisation.
"SEXIST SOCIALISING OF CHILDREN IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN THE CPSA: A THEOLOGICAL ETHICAL STUDY"

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SUMMARY

Sexist socialisation in the church starts from childhood. The Sunday school, the Christian community and parents all play a role in transmitting sexist values to children. Sexism is present in the interpretation, use and teaching of scripture as well as the hierarchy, roles, structures, language, worship and symbols of the church. These subconsciously influence children. People's faith may be shaken when the sexist nature of some of these beliefs is exposed. Sexist socialisation is detrimental as the growth and witness of the church may be stunted. Hence there is a need to develop non-sexist Christian education. Insights and tools from feminist theology help in this programme. The conclusions are tentative as such a process is evolutionary, but important.
INTRODUCTION

Some Introductory Definitions

Feminist theology has become an important issue for the church. Women are searching for their identity and role in the church. This is often a difficult and painful process. From childhood certain patterns and traditions have been followed. Often a sexist understanding of Christianity, as of society, has been accepted at an early age without questioning. It is hard for adults to examine their beliefs critically and to adapt or change them in order to develop a more integrated, non-sexist faith.

South African society is predominantly patriarchal, with many sexist structures and customs. The church claims to be different from society, to have its own unique character and values. Unfortunately, however, the church often tends to reflect the dominant culture of society rather than an alternative Christian culture which espouses equality, justice and righteousness. Prejudices of racism and sexism that are present in society tend also to be present in the church. There may be some who speak out against such values of society, but by and large the church reflects society's stand-point. Society's prejudices are unlikely to be contradicted during socialisation into the church, resulting in a church that is sexist.

The sexist attitudes and structures which are present in the church are learnt and absorbed by adults, but even more so by children who tend simply to accept what happens at church. By the time children reach adolescence, they have been socialised into the sexist perspective of the church, though they are unlikely to be aware of this unconscious process. Even if they are aware of it, they do not see it as a problem, but rather as the way things should be. But for many, if they continue in the church and become more involved, they are likely to encounter sexism and to be hurt by the patriarchal nature of the church.

The assimilation of a patriarchal religion by children is a problem. As adults, one of the reasons some of the church's teachings are questioned may be because they are sexist, but these teachings are often already absorbed and ingrained, making them difficult to evaluate rationally and to change. Often a crisis of faith ensues because the childhood concepts are subconscious and very strong. To change them may pose a threat to the whole belief system. This means that many women remain in the church and passively accept sexist teachings, or else they leave the church completely. A few stay in the church and critically question what is being taught and done, which is not easy for them as such individuals may be labelled trouble makers or even heretics.

1The patriarchal nature of South African society has been well documented. One can see, for example, E.M. Lemmer 1969:31.
Before going further it is important to clarify very briefly what is meant by the terms socialisation and sexism. Socialisation is a very broad concept. It is "the process by which individuals learn the ways of a society or group so that they can function within it" (Popenoe 1977:109).

Socialisation into the church is thus the process by which people learn what Christianity is all about. They learn their roles in the church, the language and ethos of the church and the dogmas and beliefs of the church. This process of socialisation usually begins with children in Sunday school or even earlier.

Socialisation includes the formal teaching which children receive at Sunday school. This formal teaching is known as Christian education. While some definitions of Christian education are broad and cover instruction, socialisation and empowerment, this dissertation sees Christian education as confined to the more formal aspects of socialisation. Socialisation includes formal Christian education as well as the more informal and subconscious elements of the education process.

There are various definitions of sexism. It has been defined as "discrimination on the irrelevant grounds of gender" (Thatcher 1993:6), or as "gender privilege of males over females" (Ruether 1983:165). A dictionary definition of sexism is "a belief that sex determines intrinsic capacities and roles in society and that sexual differences produce an inherent superiority of one sex, usually the male" (Longman 1984:633).

Sexism and patriarchy are linked. Patriarchy is about the "patterned or institutional legitimations of male superiority" (Harrison 1985:117). It is a term that describes the "legal, economic and social system that validates and enforces the sovereignty of the male head of the family over its other members" (Ackermann et al 1991:95). In biblical times, these other members were wives, children, servants and slaves. Today patriarchy describes the male dominated world.

**The Value of this Thesis**

People who have grown up in the church, accepting and absorbing the church's teaching and culture, find it difficult to break free from gender role stereotyping and sexism, even if there is a desire to do so. Sexist socialising is so ingrained and accepted that many do not see it as a problem and have little inclination to change to a less sexist expression of faith. To make the socialisation of children into the church less sexist, there is a need firstly to educate the community of faith so that sexism is seen as a problem and secondly to provide non-

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2Some definitions of Christian education are given in Chapter 2
sexist and non-oppressive teaching and practice in the church. Ideally these must be part of the child’s upbringing in the church, and not issues that arise once beliefs are already established. The church needs to discover “ways that honour the feminine element, as well as women, in other than compensatory fashion” (Morny 1990:16). The Christian vision of “neither male nor female” (Gal 3:28) must become a reality.

Feminist theology has dealt extensively with sexism and oppression in the church, but hardly at all with Sunday school education. Sexist socialisation of children is seldom considered by feminist theologians or by Sunday school teachers. In general, Sunday school teachers are concerned with enabling the children to know God and to understand Christianity. In this process they seldom consider that some of the sexist teachings and interpretations of the bible might become stumbling blocks to the children’s faith, especially at a later age. Feminist theologians seldom refer to childhood beginnings of faith, where the first misguided and sexist notions about God, men and women and Christianity are planted.

This dissertation combines feminist theology and children’s Christian socialisation. It examines what happens at Sunday school and more generally in the life of the Christian community and shows how profound and enduring the sexist influence is.

Some of the writers of Sunday school material are aware of sexist issues, but this awareness, as it will be shown in the dissertation, is limited by a fundamentalist biblical perspective. Some teachers are also mindful of sexism, but they lack knowledge and resources to overcome sexism at Sunday school level. They are not theologians or biblical scholars and fear that changing or challenging stories and lessons to make them non-sexist might be seen as unbiblical and wrong.

This dissertation highlights the importance of the early years and makes parents and educators aware of how formative these years are in terms of religion. Children are absorbing what happens around them, the language used, the symbols, people’s roles, and patterns of worship. Much of this is not imbibed at a conscious level and is therefore all the more powerful.

This dissertation makes an important contribution to feminist theology as it is looking at sexism at Sunday school level which is a new area of concern. However, it also grows out of personal experiences and interests. My training is in pre-school education and I have two pre-school children of my own. I found I was worried, and still am worried, about my children’s religious socialisation. It appears to me that it is sexist, that they are growing up with a patriarchal concept of God, as well as other sexist attitudes concerning Christianity. The danger is that religion may become an oppressive rather than a liberating force.
Knowing the importance of the pre-school years I would like to give my children a firm basis on which to build their lives. There is the educational aspect (such as perceptual and language skills), but even more than this I want them to have a respect for all people, and to grow up as free from racism and sexism as possible.

The first five years of life are crucial to children's development. Children develop faster and learn more in these five years than at any other time of their lives. They learn to walk, to speak a whole language (some children learn more than one) and to mix with adults and children. The customs of their society, what is acceptable behaviour, the values and what is expected of them, are all learnt in these years. Their fundamental orientation in life, and the basis for all future learning, is established.

My three year old daughter calls God "He" and blithely sings "Thank you Father for our food." She sees no inconsistency in the fact that God is father and not mother. One day my son, then four years old, and I were discussing God. In response to one of my comments that God could be He or She, he replied, "I like to call God He." It struck me then how quickly children come to regard God as He, and how deeply ingrained is the concept of a masculine God. Somehow such young children had come to consider God as "He".

There was a need to investigate where these sexist beliefs and attitudes were coming from. Was it from Sunday school, which they have just started attending? Was it from the stained glass windows and pictures in the church? Or was it from the identification of God with a male priest? These are some of the questions that are considered in this dissertation. The church and Sunday school that were attended are part of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA) and fall within the Johannesburg Diocese which then became the starting point for this investigation. The CPSA is often referred to as the Anglican church and so at times this dissertation will refer to the CPSA as the Anglican church.

My own experiences of sexism in the church have also contributed to this thesis. My faith is deeply ingrained and a vital part of me, as I grew up in a Christian home, learning Christian truths at an early age. It has brought me joy, freedom, self-fulfilment and peace, besides opening my eyes to the wider social issues. But, as I delved deeper into the meaning of Christianity, I became more and more aware of, and uneasy about, the patriarchal nature of Christianity as practised by the church. Combined with this was my experience of discrimination in the church. I worked in a parish, but could not be ordained. Once a certain priest refused to celebrate communion if a woman was preaching. Christianity and the church seemed to be riddled with sexism. Such incidents caused me to search the scriptures for a liberating, non-sexist tradition in what had become an oppressive and restricting book. I started to read some feminist theology, I began to question the church and to see that things did not have to be the way they were, that other interpretations and understandings...
were possible. Feminist theology helped me through a crisis of faith as I realised that despite the pre-dominant sexist nature of Christianity, as preached and practised by the church, there was a liberating, non-sexist aspect. I found that although the bible is full of patriarchal assumptions, it also contains a minority strand which is critical of patriarchy. I found I could remain a Christian and keep my faith without compromising my belief in the equality of men and women. These new insights were liberating but they were not always easy to accept because, during my upbringing in the church, which was in no way deliberately sexist, I had imbibed the patriarchal character of Christianity. It took time to accept that either my experience as a woman reaching for equality was wrong or else the way I had been socialised within the church was at fault.

**Methodology and Presuppositions**

In this dissertation the role of the Sunday school as a socialising agent in the formation of certain attitudes and perceptions relating to God and to the Christian faith is analysed. So too are the materials used in Sunday schools and the teachers and their faith. The dissertation also looks at the church community as it influences the faith of the parents and teachers, as well as that of the children. It is an ethical study which identifies negative socialisation processes which may be eliminated or replaced by more creative and positive elements.

This investigation has been limited to the Sunday schools in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa and then more specifically to those in the Johannesburg Diocese. Such a focus is essential given the scope of the topic and diversity of views in the broader church. The specific goal is to investigate the extent to which children at Sunday schools are socialised into Christianity in a sexist fashion and so absorb sexist attitudes and images regarding their faith. This goal was then broken down into specific areas for investigation. These consist of the following:

1) The influence of the teachers and their faith.
2) The influence of church services and the Christian community including the parents who are usually part of the community.
3) Christian education which incorporates the Sunday school material and lessons.
4) Children's bibles that might be used by the Sunday school or the parents.
Research Method

Having narrowed the area of investigation, the research proceeded as follows.

The first step was a literature review of the related material. This was not as easy as it first appeared. The difficulty lay in the fact that there is very little material on sexism at the Sunday school level. Christian education hardly mentions sexism, and when it does it is looked at in terms of adults, not of children. Sexism in the church, and in the bible, is well documented. Many theologians have exposed the sexist assumptions and patriarchal aspects of Christianity, but little of what has been written relates directly to Sunday schools. There is plenty of information regarding Christian education, its aims, content, methods, influence and curriculum, but it seldom, if ever addresses the issue of sexism in Sunday schools. It seems that sexism is not considered to be an issue which concerns children, and so the fields of feminist theology and Christian education are separated. This dissertation combines the two. Literature regarding Christian education, socialisation and feminism were all relevant in certain aspects and were examined.

The feminist literature was examined to see how and where Sunday schools and sexism are related. The investigation into the socialisation process highlighted the agents of socialisation and the unconscious nature of socialisation. The agents of socialisation included the parents and teachers who themselves have been socialised into the church. Insights from feminist theology were useful here as they indicated some of the effects of gender stereotyping on adults. The unconscious nature of socialisation is important because it reveals the fact that children are not aware of absorbing certain values and norms. Teachings are generally accepted as there is no process of selection. The good and the bad aspects of faith, the sexist and the non-sexist, the growth-inducing and the growth-retarding aspects are all absorbed. At a later stage, a critical stage of religion, there may come a time of questioning and re-examining and deciding what one believes and what one does not, but because the sexist beliefs are internalised, it is difficult to challenge or change them. They are not at the conscious level where they can be examined and adapted. When contradictions arise the whole belief system may be thrown out as incompatible with the rest of one's life, rather than one's beliefs being rationally analysed and re-evaluated. It may be easier to abandon faith than to examine closely and change beliefs regarding the nature of God and Christianity.

The literature on Christian education gives the background to Sunday schools and the teaching material that is used. It provides a wider perspective on the aims of Sunday schools and the teaching methods used at Sunday schools. It looks at the development of children and gives some insights into what children are capable of understanding and doing.

3 See for example Ruether 1975:63 ff and Dowell 1987.
at the various stages of development. These developmental theories helped to show at what age abstract concepts could be introduced to children and could be understood by them, rather than being misinterpreted.

Feminist theology has documented the patriarchal nature of the church and sexist interpretations of scripture. The pain of women, many of whom grew up loving the Christian faith, and who were later disillusioned and hurt by its sexist nature, is highlighted. Feminist theology shows that there are other ways of interpreting the Christian faith which are not sexist. These alternatives help to show the possibilities of a non-sexist faith.

In addition to this literature survey, this dissertation includes practical research and investigation into particular Sunday schools because there is so little written specifically about sexism at Sunday schools. The research was carried out through observation, questionnaires (See Appendix 2) and analysing Sunday school material.

This is not a comprehensive study of all the Sunday schools in the Johannesburg Diocese. Rather, six Sunday schools were chosen (See Appendix 1). They were chosen because they were from different race groups and some were wealthy while others were poor. This helps to show the influence of class and culture as well as gender. Other parishes were visited but not analysed in any depth. However, these visits helped to confirm the findings and complete the overall picture.

The first step in the practical research was to visit the Sunday schools, to observe them and gain an overall impression of them. The visits gave a good indication of the ethos and methods of the Sunday schools. Through visiting them the atmosphere, the type of worship and the activities could be assessed. The Sunday schools' relationship with the church, the number of teachers and children, the time they spent together in worship and the time they spent in classes were noted.

The next step was to look at the materials and resources the Sunday schools had, to analyse them and to see how they were used. This analysis included children's bibles, as they contribute to the socialisation of children, although they are used more by parents at home than in the Sunday schools. They gave some useful indications as to what is happening in Sunday school teaching and thought.

The superintendents and some of the teachers were interviewed. This was important as they create the atmosphere and influence the children. How they handle the Sunday School resource material is as important as the material itself. The teachers' relationships with, and attitudes towards, the children is also crucial.
The questionnaire aimed at discovering a little of the teachers own personal faith and attitudes in terms of sexism as these influence the children. For example, it asked how they perceived God and the roles of men and women. The questionnaire also dealt with Sunday school material, what books if any were used and which bible stories were most frequently told.

Hypotheses

A number of hypotheses underpin this thesis. They are as follows:

1. Sunday schools and churches are similar in terms of sexism.  
One of the hypotheses was that Sunday schools are much like churches in terms of sexism. Sexism starts at Sunday school level rather than later. In order to prove this hypothesis the teachers' faith and background were examined. The teachers often come through the church system and have been to Sunday school themselves and to confirmation classes. This means that, at least to some extent, they have a sexist faith. They speak of God as “He” and as “father”. They make use of male images for God such as king and shepherd. They use men as examples of disciples and missionaries.

2. The Sunday school material is sexist.  
Sunday schools sometimes try to follow more or less the same themes as the church does. The Sunday school material, like that of the church, is predominantly about men. This happens particularly when the stories are taken from the bible. Children's bibles contain many more stories of men than of women. In these stories the men are portrayed as actors and as doers, listening to God and acting on God's word. Women are more often presented as mothers or wives or in roles of passive obedience to God.

Another hypothesis was that the church community influences children. The Church services and church community often follow sexist practices, for example, in language and gender roles. This has a subconscious effect on children. The literature review confirmed how influential the community of faith is. Some Christian educationalists see the community of faith as the main agent of Christian education. Through the questionnaire and personal observation, the roles of men and women in the church were examined. Church worship is very influential and can be one of the prime means of bringing people into the Christian community. Thus, the questionnaire also looked at the language and atmosphere of worship services.
These basic hypotheses were then tested through actually examining the Sunday school material, questioning the teachers and going to the Sunday schools.

The questionnaire was used to test the hypotheses. A copy of the questionnaire and the results can be found in Appendix 2. The questionnaire deals with the faith of the teachers and their understanding of Christianity and their concept of God as well as with the Sunday school material. The roles of men and women in the particular parishes are also covered in the questionnaire. The questionnaire helps to confirm the theoretical analysis of the Sunday schools, and is a verification of the observations. It is very valuable as it gives concrete evidence for the observations and theoretical analysis included in this study.

Assumptions

Socialisation takes place through the Sunday school teachers, the parents, the Sunday school material and through the worship and practice of the Christian community. The dissertation tests these hypotheses outlined above to see if they are right or wrong, and to see to what extent children are socialised into a sexist understanding of Christianity. Because there is so little literature about sexism at Sunday school, it was necessary to do research through observation of Sunday schools and Sunday school lessons and through speaking to teachers. The nature of the thesis called for practical research. Some assumptions or perceptions regarding the Sunday schools chosen for investigation had to be made. For example, it was assumed that there is a desire on the part of the teachers to communicate their faith. Their goal is to bring the children to faith and a knowledge of God. The teachers are doing their best within the limitations of their knowledge and experience. This perception was confirmed by visits to six Sunday schools and the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers observed.

As it was impossible to visit all the Sunday schools in the Johannesburg Diocese, it was assumed that the six Sunday schools chosen are fairly representative of the Diocese of Johannesburg. Naturally there are differences between the Sunday schools, but no radical ones in terms of the teachers' awareness of sexism. The Sunday Schools visited were:

- St. Peter's, Auckland Park
- St. Luke's, Bosmont
- St. Margaret's, Noordgesig
- St. Martin's, Rosebank
- St. Paul's, Jabavu
- St. Stephen's, Diepkloof

The visits to the Sunday schools confirmed this perception. There were differences in resources, some having many teachers and books and others having few teachers and no
books or crayons. But there was a similarity between these Sunday schools in the way they were unaware of sexism as an issue for Sunday schools.

Outline of Chapters

In Chapter One, the nature of socialisation is examined. Socialisation has some similarities to education, but it is less formal and often unplanned. Socialisation involves imitation and is subconscious; the culture is simply absorbed. Children learn values, attitudes and roles. Socialisation into the church and society are similar. Society is patriarchal and the church is no different. This chapter explores the nature of sexist socialisation and its links with patriarchy. Biblical society was patriarchal and this is reflected in scripture and in the church structures.

Chapter Two deals with Christian education. Some methods and aims of Christian education are given. These are assessed in terms of their influence on gender issues. The development theories and their relevance to Christian education are examined.

In Chapter Three the agents of socialisation are examined. These include the parents, the teachers, the Sunday school material, the Christian community and its worship, language and symbols. Observation, analysis of the material and the questionnaires all helped in the information gathering process.

The final chapter, Chapter Four, seeks to move forward and to develop a vision of an inclusive Christian faith, where all are truly one in Christ. It examines some of the effects and consequences of sexism at the Sunday School level and in the church. Some alternatives to existing Sunday school material are proposed. The issue goes deeper than this as sexist socialisation comes through worship as well as through Sunday school material and thus suggestions for worship and for the roles of men and women in the church are made. Finally, some conclusions are drawn.
Chapter 1
SOCIALISATION AND SEXISM

Before exploring the specific problem of sexist socialising of children at Sunday school, it is useful to look more generally at socialisation and at sexism.

1.1. Socialisation

Children are taught formally through education, but they also learn the values and norms of society through socialisation. Education is largely conscious and deliberate, though not entirely so. Socialisation is often subconscious and not deliberate, yet it has a great influence on children.

There is formal Christian education in Sunday schools. Bible stories are told, lessons are taught and songs and prayers are learnt. Children are also socialised into Christianity. Through the socialisation process they learn the character of the Christian community and its values and norms. These are not taught as such, but simply assimilated through being part of the faith community. In fact, in early childhood it is the existential dimension of religion, rather than the cognitive aspect, that is the key to the child's developing faith.

As stated in the introduction, socialisation can be defined as "the process by which individuals learn the ways of a society or group so that they can function within it" (Popenoe 1977:109). It is the learning process by which people develop into social beings, and learn the values of society and what is expected of them. It is about the world of common meaning, created over the ages through the educational process of the human family, called tradition, and embodied in its culture as well as in its social, political and economic institutions.

Through socialisation the norms of society are internalised. It is not a conscious decision to accept the norms, they simply become part of one. Child rearing, formal education, social habits, cultural values and meanings and role expectations are all part of the socialisation process. They mould people to the ways of their society and culture. Socialisation begins at birth and continues throughout life, although most socialisation takes place in the first few years.

Socialisation teaches people their roles whether as daughter, son, parent, wife, grandmother, church member etc. Children learn what is expected of them, what is acceptable behaviour. Socialisation explains how an individual becomes capable of participating in society. It also explains how society induces members to behave in ways that will enable it to function effectively. Socialisation is one of the key activities through which a society maintains itself. Society seeks to shape the behaviour of its members into patterns that will preserve and perpetuate its own existence. The values of society are passed on from one generation to the next to maintain the culture and ensure cultural continuity.
Socialisation begins the first time parents hold their baby. This is the first step in the long process of socialisation as the child learns to recognise himself or herself as an individual and to interact with others. The child goes on to develop a personality. An important part of personality is the sense of self, how one feels about one's self and one's own personal and social identity.

Children evaluate their behaviour through the responses of others. When they are rewarded for certain behaviour they learn that it is good and will repeat it. This need for social interaction and affirmation continues throughout life as people are continually learning new roles. It is often through the information and responses of others that these roles are learnt and one's self-image is developed. This interaction with others is necessary for self-identity. Often, if people are isolated or on their own they begin to lose their sense of self-identity, for example, old people who can no longer get out easily.

Early childhood is a crucial time in a person's development. The first few years are termed the formative years. By the age of five the basic patterns of personality are already formed. Freud believed the personality was almost completely shaped in early childhood, with any change after that time being extremely difficult to initiate and complete (Fisher et al. 1972:421). The old Jesuit saying that if you gave them a child until the age of seven they would have him forever confirms this perception. It is during these first years of life that the strongest impressions are formed. This means that what is taught in Sunday school and the impressions that are formed are important. The experiences of young children at Sunday school, at church and in the home, are very significant for their religious development.

Erikson includes peers and spouses as well as parents as prime influences on personality. But a marked change in values learned in childhood is not common in adults. New experiences such as military training may cause a change in perspective or what is termed re-socialisation. A new role has to be learnt. The same can happen with a religious conversion. It requires a new self-image, a re-interpretation of reality and society and new values. Similarly, it can be very difficult for those who have received a sexist socialisation into the church to change or to be 'converted' from a sexist understanding of Christianity to a more liberating non-sexist faith. It is possible as adults, but far more difficult.

Socialisation requires the co-operation of the individual. Children co-operate in the socialisation process in order to receive the love of their parents and to please them. Usually it is impossible to socialise an unwilling subject. Each person has some power to reject the teachings of society. As people grow older they may become more discerning. They may start to question many of the values that they previously took for granted. They may find discrepancies in what they have learnt, or find that for them the pattern no longer fits.
Many of the insights and characteristics regarding socialisation into society can also be applied to socialisation into the church. The content is different but the same principles apply. People have to learn their role in the church just as they learn their roles in society. Christians go through a process of socialisation when they enter the church. This is true whether it is as an infant who grows up in the church, or as a new adult convert.

Before exploring this process of socialisation in the church it is important to look at sexism, as it is argued in this dissertation that the socialisation process is sexist.

1.2. Sexism, the Bible and the Church

Sexism is the belief that persons are superior or inferior to one another on the basis of their sex. Sexism is fostered by the patriarchal traditions and nature of South African society, which is structured in such a way that men generally have greater power and privileges than women. Patriarchy can be defined as “patterned or institutional legitimations of male superiority” (Harrison 1985:117). Seeing sexism in the context of patriarchy helps to reveal the structural, as well as individual, aspects of discrimination and attitudes against women. Sexism goes deeper than individual attitudes and feelings. It is experienced on this level but it is also entrenched in the structures of society.

Patriarchy is a complex social system where certain men have power over women. Not all men are sexist or oppressors. Class, wealth, race, a profession or family connections determine men's status. Thus, some men have power, not only over women, but also over men of lesser status. Fiorenza describes patriarchy as "a male pyramid of graded subordinations and exploitations that specify women's oppression in terms of the class, race, country, or religion of the men to whom women 'belong'" (Fiorenza 1985:xiv). This helps to show the links between sexism, racism and classism. Patriarchy is about discrimination against women, but it goes deeper than this. It is also about all other forms of dehumanisation and exploitation as basic structures of women's oppression.

Sexism is a problem. It may seem unimportant compared with the larger issues of hunger, poverty and injustice, but these are all forms of oppression and dehumanisation and a lack of love and respect for people. This thesis will not go into detail about the connections between sexism and other forms of oppression, but they have been studied and well documented.¹

Patriarchy is a hierarchical system carrying certain values such as competition, achievement and status. Patriarchy has ownership as one of its fundamental values. This kind of society is reflected in the laws of the Old Testament which are addressed solely to the male heads of

¹ Rosemary R. Ruether describes some of these connections. See Ruether 1963:72-115, and Ruether 1975:115-211.
families, and not to women, children or slaves. The biblical concern for the widow and orphan (the fatherless), is a recognition by patriarchal society that the husbandless woman and the fatherless child are without power, status or resources. They are dependent on the goodwill of God and the society in which they live.

Patriarchy is the cultural background to the scriptures. The Old Testament authors assumed that patriarchy was the will of God for the social order. This presumption prevails even in the New Testament, but there are exceptions. For example, Jesus in his actions and teachings was different and actively worked against patriarchy. The records of the ministry of certain women in the early church and several prophetic flashes point towards the equality of all envisioned by the gospel.

Patriarchy is not the only cultural factor that the biblical authors took for granted. They also assumed that slavery was the will of God. Paul gives instructions to slaves and masters, just as he does to husbands and wives. He caught a glimpse of the vision that these relationships of domination were not of God, yet he could not change them or go all the way in condemning them (Gal 3:28; Eph 5). Instead he softens the relationships. Husbands were to love their wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it (Eph 5:22). Slaves' masters were reminded that they too had a master in heaven (Col 4:1).

However, these passages do not reflect the will of God, but are disturbed by the human instrument and culture. They are a reflection of these, rather than the will of God. God inspired the biblical writers, but did not violate their freedom as people and so they still had their culture and prejudices. Slavery is no longer upheld by any Christians. The biblical culture has been de-absolutised and one can be a "biblical Christian" without believing in slavery. It would be consistent then also to de-absolutise biblical culture regarding the male-female relationship. Instead of clinging to the sinful social order into which the gospel was first introduced, Christians should reach for the saving vision of a society regenerated by the power of the gospel. "We are in error to absolutise anything that denies the thrust of the entire bible toward individual wholeness and harmonious community, toward oneness in Christ" (Mollenkott 1976:23).

Considering the fact that the bible was written in a patriarchal context, by men, it is amazing that there is any record of women at all. Jesus' disciples were astonished that he should be talking to a woman, yet the story of the Samaritan woman is preserved. The stories of Mary and Martha (Lk 10:38-42), the woman who touched Jesus' cloak (Lk 8:40ff), and the women disciples (Lk 8:1-3) are also recorded. These are just a few examples of stories which overturn the patriarchal norm. Evidence of how radical Jesus' attitude to women was can be seen in the accusation that he mixed

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2 See Dowell: 1967 Jesus transgressed Jewish law (Lk 14:1-6). Talking to the Samaritan woman was breaking the rigid social barriers (Jn 4:7-26). The story of Mary and Martha affirms the ministry of women in a sphere other than the domestic (Lk 10:38-42).
with 'prostitutes' (Lk 7:39) and allowed women to sit at his feet as disciples and learn (Lk 10:38-42).

The bible contains occasional details about women in leadership roles. These come through despite the patriarchal nature of the ministry of the church, and the misinterpretations of translators of the bible. One should be surprised that in this patriarchal context any women leaders are included at all, rather than commenting on how few there are. It was not that there were so few women leaders, or that they did so little, but that their actions and stories were generally not recorded and preserved, due to the patriarchal culture of the time. The church fathers tended to resist accepting women as leaders. They had an androcentric approach, the consequences of which are still felt today. For example, Origen reduces Phoebe to Paul's assistant where she has remained ever since, rather than a leader and missionary in her own right. However, women were not simply marginalised figures in the early church; they also exercised leadership as missionaries, founders of the Christian communities, apostles, prophets and leaders of the church (Keane 1989:5).

The church fathers frequently condemned or belittled women. When they commended women it was often for the wrong reasons. This is in contrast to Jesus, for the New Testament records no negative statements made by him about women. More than that, Jesus made it clear that relationships within the Christian community were to be free from domination (Matt 23:7-12).

There is evidence that there were more stories and books about women leaders in the early church, but these were considered unacceptable and heretical and so were lost or little importance was attached to them by the early church. For example, in the "Acts of Thecla and Paul", Thecla baptised people. A woman named Drusiana is the heroine of the Apocryphal Acts. There were Perpetua who was martyred in North Africa in 203, Marcelina the famous sister of Ambrose, Marcella the Christian ascetic whose palace in Rome became a centre of Christian influence, Melania who founded a monastery in Jerusalem after the death of her husband, and Paula, a friend of Jerome who established a monastery at Bethlehem. All these women made a contribution and received recognition despite the patriarchal system. However, the fact that it is necessary to explain who these women were shows that in spite of their significance they have not generally been remembered by the church and so are relatively unknown today (Keane 1988:9).

Even those stories and details about women which are included in the bible are neglected. The church does not emphasise them. Likewise they are not emphasised in Sunday schools. If the lesson is about prophets, the examples most often given are of Elijah or Samuel, and possibly Amos, but they are never about Huldah. The questionnaire gave a limited choice of prophets but

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3 Fiorenza 1983:47 argues that Junia, not Junius is the correct translation (Rom 16:7). In Rom 16:1-3, Phoebe is described as diasnosis and prosaitis, often translated as deaconess and helper, instead of deacon and leader. There is also an androcentric selection of texts (Fiorenza: 48ff).
from these Elijah and Samuel were used by far the most frequently. After this came Amos and Deborah. Huldah was never used. Granted there is little known about her which makes it more difficult to tell a story. The stories of Elijah and fire from heaven, and of raising a dead child are far more exciting. But if no women prophets are even mentioned, it leaves the impression that the prophets of God are all men. Children will not analyse the reasons why all the stories they hear about prophets are about male prophets. They simply accept them and subconsciously conclude that prophets are men. The same can be said about the judges. Stories of Samson and Gideon are told far more frequently than stories of Deborah.4

1.3. The process of socialisation

1.3.1. The unconscious nature of socialisation

Some socialisation is deliberate such as that which happens through teaching, but much is casual or accidental. Socialisation happens whether we intend it or not. Customs, norms, roles and the values of society are absorbed almost unconsciously. Only later, when greater critical awareness develops, is one able to evaluate and see whose interests are served by what has simply been absorbed as "the way things are". Then comes a process of sifting through values and attitudes in an attempt to evaluate them, and to own them consciously rather than unconsciously.

In the church, customs, roles and values are absorbed. People seldom question why things are as they are, or the underlying interests and power structures behind them and whose interests they serve. This is encouraged by the church which tends to seek conformity, rather than creativity. People tend to be taught acquiescence rather than questioning.5

Gregory Baum calls this kind of religion that demands an unquestioning conformity “infantile religion”. Children enjoy the protection of their parents who appear to them as caring and all powerful and wise. However, as children grow up they face a complex and hostile world. They come to fear the threats and dangers of the world and so cling to childhood memories of an all powerful figure who could make things right. Thus as adults they remain passive and subconsciously project the parental figure onto God and is this way they experience parental warmth and care (Baum 1975:93). However, this parental figure becomes an obstacle to growth and freedom if it prevents believers from leaving their childhood behind them. It encourages passive trends. It makes people uncritical, gullible and immature, and nourishes their need for protection. Authority and obedience define the believers’ relationship with the divinity. Baum

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4 One of the lessons from the Scripture Union material used all male examples of prophets. It lists Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah and Jeremiah and then suggests looking at the last 13 books of the Old Testament for the names of other prophets. See Teaching Over 13’s 1980. Number 17 page 16.

5 For example teaching is done mostly through sermons, with no discussion. Doctrines are laid down and have to be accepted. Instruction is often in the form of “teacher tell” rather than genuine dialogue. The house church movement may offer some alternatives to this model as participation and discussion are encouraged.
People kept immature by a successful religious projection feel safe only in social, political and ecclesiastical institutions where few decisions are demanded of them, where they are led by strong authority figures, and where they can fit themselves into a rigid structure of law and order (Baum 1975:93).

This kind of religion has also been linked to the Oedipus complex which Freud described (Baum 1975:95). The divinity is seen as a father figure. There is dependence and veneration for this father figure but this is accompanied by revolt and a desire to remove him from his place. As in the Freudian oedipus complex, the child is in awe of the father but also competes with the father and would like at times to remove the father. This kind of religious understanding evokes strange and unaccountable feelings of anger and hatred and revolt which cannot be expressed publicly to the divinity. So they come out in a hidden form of self-hatred and/or hostility towards people who do not conform to, or do not accept, the same religion. This leads to self-punishing behaviour and to collective hatred towards outsiders and non-conformists. This helps to explain how religions that make love and mercy central to their preaching become the sources of organised and planned cruelty toward outsiders and non-conformists.

Rather than this infantile or institutional religion, the church needs to encourage people to become more inner directed. Rather than being authoritarian and isolated from human experience, the church must allow questions and people's own thought. The tendency to emphasise obedience and unquestioning acceptance of teaching authority must change to allow a critical element. People must be encouraged to examine the church's teaching and see if it fits with life experience, and analyse it and make it real for themselves. Rather than telling people exactly what and how they should believe, the church needs to make space for people to find the truth for themselves. Gerard Hughes, a Jesuit priest, describes this kind of situation thus: "A mark of true Christianity will be its intellectual vigour and its search for meaning in every aspect of life. True Christianity will always be critical, questioning and continually developing its understanding of God and of human life. The subject matter of religion is every human experience" (Hughes 1985:17). If the critical element is not fostered, Christians will remain infantile in their religious belief and practice, which will bear little or no relation to everyday experience and life.

Socialisation at its best is an education that liberates people for responsible creative participation in the world, rather than blind adherence to what society demands. Socialisation in the church should also attempt to be like this.

1.3.2. Socialisation and Sunday Schools

What children absorb in Sunday school can influence their future understanding of God. Childhood impressions are difficult to change. Young children may well be deeply influenced by what they have been taught but they cannot analyse it. Children's faith and love for God depend
greatly on their upbringing and early experiences of God and of the church. If church is solemn and children have to be quiet and do what they are told, participating only when invited to do so, then God will probably be seen as a patriarchal, authority figure. This view of God will be even stronger if God is always pictured as a man, probably an old white man, and always spoken of as "He", or "king". Then the fundamental image of God that is built up is of a masculine God.

These images may stay with people, leading them to a distorted notion of God. They may not be aware of it, but the hidden thoughts and memories and feelings from the subconscious influence them and their thinking and acting (Hughes 1985:36-37). For example, they may be going to church out of guilt or from fear of a tyrant God. There may be no real joy in their commitment to God and the church. Instead they act out of a sense of duty because they perceive God as a dictatorial, authoritarian figure who is watching them and judging them.

As children grow up they may start to question their faith because it does not relate to the rest of their lives and no longer seems believable. They often leave the church as there are too many contradictions and tensions. These tensions are sometimes caused by a rejection of the patriarchal nature of Christianity. As South Africa is a patriarchal society, these tensions are often overlooked or accepted. In a society that is more aware of feminist issues they may not be. Others may remain in the church and suppress discrepancies and refuse to question them. They become satisfied or even want an authoritarian faith.

Sometimes children are forced to go to Sunday school. As they grow older they are never integrated into the church so when the time comes to leave Sunday school, they also leave the church. For other children Sunday school is very enjoyable. They love their teacher and the lessons. It is a time of fun. They do not analyse all that is taught to them, they simply enjoy the overall atmosphere of the Sunday school. They come to accept Christianity and the church as good things to be embraced and integrated into their lives. Then comes a time when they experience sexism in the church and find that it has been there all the time buried in the Sunday school lessons and the way the scriptures were taught. This may lead to a crisis of faith. They have a positive experience of church, they have come to know and love God, but then this experience is undermined by the sexist practices and structures of the church. There is a realisation that sexism was present in the presentation and interpretation of Christianity from as early as they can remember. It is difficult to reconcile the positive memories and experiences of Sunday school with the hurt and disillusionment at the realisation of the androcentric nature of Christianity. Because of the high expectations and value placed on the church and in Christianity the disillusionment is all the more painful and difficult to accept.

The patriarchal nature of Christianity needs to be questioned. Patriarchy runs right through the Christian tradition. It is there in the scriptures, in the liturgies, in the history of the church and in the present day structures of the church. Yet it is never acknowledged or seen as anything else
but God-given. Women, even women who are aware of their own value, may blindly accept the subordinate position of women in Christianity. They do not question because to do so may lead to rejection by other Christians, and they will no longer be seen as Christian. It is easier to give way to the temptation to stop questioning. They settle for a theory of existence or a pattern of meaning that will ensure their material comfort and cause the least inconvenience. However, this limits their development. "To challenge the patriarchal nature of Christianity with all its sexist stereotypes, demands authentic self definition, and offers little short term security. It is easier to accommodate the expectations of the oppressor group than to defy that group and enter the uncharted territory of self-knowledge and free self-identification" (Russell 1987:34).

Hughes says that "If we are to develop as human beings we must find some unity of experience" (Hughes 1985:16). If the unity is not found, and our faith is not integrated into the rest of our lives, then religion comes to be seen as something private between the individual and God. It has no social implications or any other wider meaning and fails to relate to the oppression of women in the church.

There must be a coherence between church teaching and the rest of life. If the basic assumptions of the church are false (such as the inferiority of women), then there will be disharmony between the teaching of the church and everyday life. The church's teaching will be split off and become a part of our consciousness that has nothing to do with the rest of our human experience. To find harmony and meaning one must question, criticise, systematise and theorise experience.

### 1.3.3. Socialisation and the maintenance of church and society

The church, like society, is interested in maintaining itself. Some changes are permitted but none so radical that they will shake the very foundations, and challenge the power structures and the basic patterns, of the church and society. Changes made by those in power are more acceptable than changes which are made by the powerless. When the oppressed rise up and demand change it is unacceptable to those in power, whether this be in society or in the church.

The Anglican church in South Africa has shown an ambivalent response to liberation theology. Its history in this regard has been one of moderation and compromise, rather than strong support for the poor and the oppressed. At times the church has played a prophetic role. It has cried out against injustice and oppression, but it is limited in its effective prophetic role because it is trapped in its social, political and economic context. This context of the church has shaped the character of the church to give limited or token opposition to apartheid, to condemn it as evil but not to become actively involved in changing it. For example, the church condemned apartheid but would never condemn structures such as the SADF (South African Defence Force), which supported apartheid. For many years the church gave cautious and limited support to conscientious objectors, while never discouraging participation in the SADF. This ambiguous attitude can be summed up thus:
"The churches' dominant character is formed by an inheritance shaped and formed by a dominant culture of colonialism and apartheid. At the same time, their character is deeply disturbed by a residual theology of resistance, suppressed by and in contradiction to their social location. This theology is neither silenced nor destroyed by the dominant character of the churches. It is one which haunts them as a relentless and disruptive memory" (Villa Vicencio 1988:174).

When it comes to sexism there is no residual theology of equality. Fiorenza, in her book *In Memory of Her* traces the forgotten history of the early church. There she finds a community of equals rather than a male dominated hierarchy. Positions of leadership were based on charismatic gifts, not status. Only later bishops and episcopal power came into being and women were sidelined. However, this early tradition is forgotten. It has long since been buried by the church and by tradition. Scripture has been used to support the subordinate position of women and to uphold sexism. Now the scriptures have to be searched for a liberating tradition for women. It is there but it is hard to find. It can be seen in Jesus' words and actions, and glimpsed in some prophetic visions.

The values and traditions of society or the church which are internalised are not neutral. Marx deemed that it was the interests of the ruling class which were being served by them. In the Communist Manifesto he writes: "the class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production" (Villa Vicencio 1988:175). The dominant group has the resources to control the media and to propagate ideas. It is their ideology that is most frequently heard. They are the ones who have control over the economic and political resources. They also have control over the ideological sphere, and the ideas and values that are propagated in that society.

A society divided between rich and poor, haves and have nots, oppressors and oppressed is a society with differing ideological and therefore different religious values and ideals. For example, in South Africa, the apartheid ideology, which had religious backing, clearly served the interests of the ruling minority. Religion was used to legitimate its interests.

Ideas and ideologies reinforce the social structures and give them credence. Berger sees religion as an especially powerful tool of legitimation "because it relates the precarious reality constructions of empirical societies with ultimate reality" (Berger 1969:32). In the church certain practices, which serve the interests of those in power, are given divine legitimation. For example, the fact that only men could be priests, was justified, not for practical reasons, but because it was claimed it was the will of God. This gives it divine legitimation and makes it particularly hard to change as one has to show that the will of God has been wrongly interpreted.

Another example of how this kind of theological legitimation works comes from the religious sector of the New Right in America. They have developed and followed a theology or gospel known as
the "gospel of prosperity". This gospel was developed by people such as Oral Roberts and Kenneth Hagin (Gifford 1988:23). This version of the gospel justifies wealth as God's blessing and distorts the meaning of the gospel to serve the interests of the rich. A similar kind of situation might have existed in biblical times when the book of Job was written. It was written as a form of protest literature to campaign against the religious teaching that wealth was a sign of God's blessing for those who were good, and that hardship, poverty and suffering were a punishment for sin. This kind of teaching justifies wealth. There is no longer any need to help the poor, or feel guilty because they have so little while others wallow in plenty. This view says that the poor have brought their poverty on themselves because of their own sin. Similarly an androcentric theology justifies male supremacy in the church. The silencing and subjugation of females can take place with no feelings of guilt because it is seen as right and God's will, rather than as oppression.

This means that Christians need to enquire critically whose interests different religious affirmations are serving. Perhaps one should ask whether the patriarchal structures in the church really serve the interests of the whole church or whether they serve the interests of the male hierarchy.

Those in power in the church have control of the resources. This means that it is their ideas that are most frequently heard. The theological environment is generally dominated by men, despite the growth of feminist theology. The old traditions and dogmas which offer power and privilege to men are kept intact as they give security. Feminist theology has made little impact on the Anglican church in Southern Africa. The ordination of women has been achieved, and this has raised an awareness of some of the issues. But it is doubtful whether this has, as yet, significantly advanced the creation of a non-sexist church. The fundamentals have not changed. Women have been ordained into a patriarchal structure where sexism continues much as before. Alternative patterns and styles of ministry based on equality rather than hierarchy and the feminist concepts of mutuality and interdependence are generally not being integrated into the church. Ministry needs to be seen as shared ministry, evolving and developing the gifts and abilities of the entire congregation. Jesus' community was an egalitarian, not a hierarchically ordered, community, and Jesus specifically rejected values of power and domination in favour of humility, love and service (Swart-Russell 1989:40). "Ministry as leadership in the masculine sense of the word, where the priest is dominant, superior and active, and the congregation is submissive, second-class and passive, must be rejected by female priests" (Swart-Russell 1989:39).

Many churches fear conflict and shy away from it. Instead they operate within patterns of obedience and submission. Community members are taught not to question. Thus, for example, they do not ask why the minister has such complete power in the parish or why there is very little accountability or shared leadership. These things serve the power needs of the priest, but also the needs of infantile religion of parishioners who want to be passive and not take responsibility. If
something goes wrong it is the priest's fault. Conflict can be creative, and should not be eliminated if growth, deeper understanding and deeper relationships are desired.

The church spreads the gospel of Christ, but it also propagates the interests of the religious hierarchy. The church is at once a divine and a human institution. This is seen in the contradictions that exist between the churches' declared ideals and the actual consequences of what the church does. The church wants to help, heal and liberate people, but in practice it may do the opposite. The church does offer salvation; people are saved and yet sinful structures and interpretations still operate.

1.4. Socialisation and Gender Roles

Society ascribes certain roles to men and women. These roles are linked to the way men and women are viewed in a stereotypical and circumscribed manner. Men are viewed as having a certain nature and certain characteristics and women as having other characteristics. For example, the traditional or stereotyped male is expected to be aggressive and independent, competitive and dominant and to suppress his emotions. He is seen as the protector and conqueror, self-controlled and self-sufficient. On the other hand, the traditional female is expected to be passive, dependent, conforming, non-competitive, emotional and compassionate. She is seen as a nurturer and care giver, fragile, tender, receptive and beautiful. There are differences between cultures, and some of the content of these stereotypes might vary, but all societies have certain stereotypes for men and women.

An old nineteenth century verse sums up how gender roles were perceived and clearly defined.

"Man for the field and woman for the hearth:
Man for the sword and for the needle she:
Man with the head and woman with the heart:
Man to command and woman to obey;
All else confusion."7

These stereotypes of masculine and feminine are abstracted from real men and women. Male becomes a symbol for mind, power, intellect and that which is truly spirit. Female is a symbol for nature, irrational feeling, mere body and earth. Thus, male and female are split and seen in a dualistic fashion. "Patriarchy is characterised by divisions and oppositions based not on equality but subordination, not this-with-that but this-over-that: reason over emotion, soul over body, spirit over flesh, mind over matter, 'man' over nature, and men over women" (Wren 1989:32). The most valued characteristics are associated with men.

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6 There are many stories of the pain of women who feel alienated from the church and yet also love the church. See for example, Bennett 1989, or Dowell 1987,

7 From The Princess by Alfred Tennyson quoted in Popenoe 1977:128
Christian theology too has a dualistic tradition with a split between body and soul, the body being equated with woman and the soul with the man.\footnote{There is also a division between the private and public sphere in which the female is understood to be private and the male public. Moltmann Wendell in A Land flowing with Milk and Honey, sees a division between humility and power with men having power and women being humble. Because they are unconnected, humanity is brutalised - war and violence ensue. 1987:32} This stemmed from the body-spirit dichotomy in Greek philosophy and culture at the beginning of the Christian era. It was adopted by the early church fathers who had an androcentric approach. They frequently condemned and belittled women, linking them with a "lower nature". They saw women as the cause of sin. For example, Tertullian wrote: "you are the Devil's doorway" (Keane 1988:4). They seemed to doubt whether women were made equal with men in God's image. For example, Augustine wrote that woman was merely man's helpmate and did not reflect the image of God, although he conceded that with her husband the two did reflect the image. Chrysostom wrote that the image of God is one of power and dominion and therefore women were not included in it as they had neither power nor dominion (Keane 1988:7).

Perhaps the church fathers were anti-women because they feared them. Celibacy was elevated and imposed on the priests and yet they may well have been tempted and felt natural sexual urges. They had to suppress these feelings and it was more difficult to do this if they saw women. Thus, they projected their feelings of weakness and lust onto women, emphasising women's power to ensnare and seduce, and called them temptresses and worse. Augustine believed that "lust was a side effect of Eve’s sin. Without her sin children would be begotten without the malady of lust and purely at the command of the will" (Keane 1989:7).

The influence of the church fathers is still felt today. There are still stereotypes of masculine and feminine although they have changed. Gender stereotypes and social roles considered appropriate for men and women are learnt at an early age as part of the socialisation process. Little girls tend to be dressed in pink and given dolls to play with. Boys tend to wear khaki or blue and are encouraged to play with cars or guns. In rural African society girls are expected to care for younger siblings and help around the house with the cooking and the cleaning. Boys are to herd cattle. "Girls are socialised to be obedient to men, respect them and prepare food for them, for the husband is regarded as the head of the family and the wife treated as a minor" (Border Region, in Malibongwe Collection in Charman et al. 1991:46). In traditional African society, roles were very clearly defined. Fertility was important, especially in terms of having sons. Women had some economic independence and social authority in traditional African culture, but this did not mean equality. They were subordinate to men within the wider kinship system with the chief as the controlling male (Bozzoli in Lemmer 1989:32). Furthermore, it seems as if capitalist exploitation and European ideas about appropriate economic and domestic roles for women undermined what little independence women did have. Colonialism contributed to the process of land dispossession which changed social relationships. The migrant labour system exacerbated
the unequal division of labour. Young men worked in the cities while women engaged in unpaid productive and reproductive labour in the rural communities. The government policy of influx control impeded the development of black women and wreaked havoc with normal family life (Prekel in Lemmer 1989:32).

A number of factors such as urbanisation and the greater educational opportunities for women accompanied by greater economic access are changing this traditional system. It is changing more slowly for black women as they suffer triple oppression of race and gender and class. Many white women further their careers at the expense and subordination of the black domestic worker. This availability of cheap domestic labour has had the effect of retarding behavioural and attitudinal changes amongst white South Africans towards gender roles. For example, white males have not seen the need to assist in the home with household duties or child care.

The roles of women have expanded. They now include the professional woman who will work outside the home, rather than being limited to wife and mother. However, professional black women are often still expected to do the bulk of domestic work and to thank their husbands for granting them the latitude to develop their careers. So Mamphela can say that "a personal revolution in attitudes is needed within black society before women are finally emancipated" (Mamphela in Lemmer 1989:32). This may contribute to the fact that a growing number of black women are rejecting marriage and reconstructing the family as a single woman headed household (Charman et al. 1991:47).

As children grow up they fit into the expected role patterns of their society. They are drawn into the division of labour and are usually allocated tasks along lines of gender. By the time children reach school age they have definite ideas about the gender role expectations of their society.

Today these stereotypes are being questioned. Most jobs are open to women and this gives women greater influence. Women are being encouraged to take up management and leadership roles. As women participate more in the occupational world in addition to the domestic world, men should similarly add certain domestic and child craft duties to their occupational task. However, the extent to which this is happening is still limited.

There is an unresolved tension in feminist thought as to whether men and women are fundamentally the same or whether there are inherent, biological differences between them. There has been extensive debate as to whether gender stereotypes are biological givens or whether they are learned. Are gender role divisions based on biological differences in ability, motivation and interest or are they the results of socialisation? Are women naturally more maternal and emotional, and men naturally more bold, competitive and rational? Are men and woman innately different in terms of their nature and roles, or are they socialised to take up different roles and to fulfil certain expectations?
Many feminists from the social constructionist school, such as Ruether, believe that the differences between men and women are largely socially constructed rather than biologically determined. They are socially constructed because it is useful to society to have things that way. It suits the way society operates for women to be socialised into becoming mothers and homemakers while men are socialised to go into government, commerce or the military.

Others follow a Jungian approach. Rather than simply looking at gender roles, Jung developed a theory of gender typologies with the notion of the Animus and the Anima. This theory of gender typologies is a complex issue with many dimensions. One of the conclusions of this theory is that the innate differences between men and women are acknowledged. Jungians, such as Ann Ulanov, fear the obliteration of all differences between men and women (Wehr 1987:9). For them there are biological, innate and even ontological differences between men and women. There are others, such as Carol Gilligan, who also feel this way. She is a developmental psychologist who was interested in the moral development of people. She distinguishes between male and female development. She was opposed to Kolhberg and Erikson’s developmental scales because they were based on male development rather than female development and the two are not the same. She believes that there are innate differences between men and women. Men put more emphasis on justice while women emphasise care, responsibility and relationships. The developmental scales give more weight to right and wrong and the ability to make decisive choices than to relationships. Women tend to find certain decisions harder to come to than men because they are more aware of the relationships involved, rather than the issues of justice. Thus, women tend to score lower in such tests. Gilligan believes this is unfair as women are being judged by false criteria.

There have been some interesting studies, such as the one done by Margaret Mead in the 1930s of three tribes in New Guinea. In the Arapesh tribe she found that both men and women were ideally gentle, unaggressive and responsive. In the Mundugumor tribe men and women were both quite aggressive, even violent. In the Tchambuli tribe the sex roles were different but the men were passive and subordinate and the women were dominant and aggressive. These findings suggest that culture and socialisation are prime factors in the development of sex roles. Another society in which such a study was done was Sweden. Here there is a conscious effort to avoid discrimination in terms of gender. Legally men and women have the same opportunities. Many women have moved out of traditional roles, but there still seems to be a tendency for women and men to do traditional sex role jobs. This could be because of the subtle and lasting effects of socialisation which are still there even when the law and outward things have changed. Others would argue that it is due to innate biological differences.

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9 This theory can be found in Wehr 1987:1ff  
10 See Carol Gilligan 1982 which describes her research.  
11 See Mead 1935  
12 See Popenoe 1977:129-130
Whilst there may be some disagreement concerning the above, all feminists agree on the value of women. The differences between men and women, if they are innate and not just cultural, must not be defined by patriarchal culture. Women themselves should have control over the definitions of feminine. Too often women internalise patriarchal society's definition of themselves. This image is oppressive, negative and inferior, but very often exalted and romantic. For example, women are defined as weak and emotional but also enchanting. Women fall into the trap of accepting this definition and so they internalise their own oppression. "It paralyses women from within, causing them to collude in their own destruction, or accept their own lack of development" (Wehr 1988:20). These traditional gender roles limit the options and opportunities for women and for men. Due to gender stereotyping some children do not develop their potential. Anxiety and conflict are often felt by people who do not live up to the traditional ideal.

One of the reasons why women conform is out of fear of exclusion. Relationships are important for women, and they fear the disturbance of relationships. Women sense that they risk punishment by going against the prevailing ethos. The worst form of punishment is exclusion. This can be seen working in primitive societies (Wehr 1988:17). The fear of exclusion is a very powerful weapon for enforcing conformity. People have a fear of non-being or what Durkheim calls "nomos". Nomos is having no organising principle to give meaning, order and stability in life. It is the sheer terror of non-being (Wehr 1988:14). This fear of exclusion may be subconscious but women tend to accept and internalise subordination in order to be more acceptable in the church and in society and to lessen the risk of exclusion.

Insights from the sociology of knowledge show how difficult it is for people to change or challenge the inbuilt presuppositions of society. As Peter Berger says: "people are shaped by an on-going conversation between themselves and significant others in their society and that to step out of that conversation is to risk 'anomie' " (Berger 1969:26).

Much socialisation into gender roles is unconscious; it happens without one realising it. Children learn from their parents, and most parents are traditional. Even if one tries in the home to be non-sexist the child is still influenced by the outside world, which tends to be patriarchal and sexist. Peer groups and the mass media tend to reinforce traditional roles. From the media, one sees that most political leaders are men. This reinforces the idea that the leaders are men and that women follow. For example, the leaders of all the major political parties who have the most television coverage are men: N. Mandela, F. W. De Klerk, G. Buthelezi etc. The adverts in the media also generally follow role stereotypes of men and women. South African media largely present women as housewives, sex objects or masculinised career women (Laxton in Lemmer 1989:34).

Children do not like to be different from their peers. This means that in a patriarchal society, where there is a culture of rigid role stereotyping, children readily accept sexist images and
A very important aspect of socialisation which has not yet been examined is that of the agents of socialisation. Who and what contributes to the process of socialisation? Before dealing with this important area, which includes the church community, leaders, parents and Sunday school material, it is necessary to look at Christian education as it too is part of the socialisation process.
Chapter 2

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN THE CHURCH OF THE PROVINCE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA: THE DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

2.1. Definitions

There are many different philosophies of education, each with their own emphasis and priorities. Education is often seen as a very broad concept, incorporating everything from the formal, such as education in schools, to the informal such as education through life experience. A definition which sees education in this light is "the passing on of a tradition and participating in the recreation of that tradition" (Seymour & Miller 1990:8). Education in this sense is seen as fundamental to the human community. It is through education that the community sustains itself, passing on its traditions, values and commitments to new generations.

However, in this dissertation education is understood in a narrower, formal sense while socialisation covers life's learning experience, including formal education. An educational historian, Lawrence Cremin, has a useful definition of education which acknowledges the informal, broad concepts of education while at the same time defining education as a formal process which is planned. It helps to highlight the differences between education and socialisation as used in this dissertation. He defines education as "the deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, attitudes, values, skills or sensibilities as well as any outcomes of that effort" (Pazmino 1988:79). He says that education is deliberate because it is planned and intentional. It is systematic as it follows a sequence and takes learning ability seriously. It is sustained over time. It is a continuing relationship between students and teacher. The unintentional aspects of education are recognised by including "any outcomes of their effort" in the definition. Some things that are learned are at the unconscious level and are not necessarily intended. This is often the case at Sunday schools and contributes significantly to the socialisation process.

This chapter is specifically about formal Christian education. One of the differences between education and Christian education is that education is overtly mainly concerned with facts, while Christian education is explicitly concerned with values. Christian education is about doctrines, right and wrong and life styles. Education may also be concerned with values, but it often claims a scientific neutrality. These claims may not be true as no educational system can escape from the political community in which it operates. Inevitably the education system reflects the vision of a society, but this value aspect is often not formally or consciously taught, but simply absorbed through the socialisation process.
For Christians, not all education is right education. One of the goals of Christian education is about becoming a Christian person, so any education that leads away from God rather than towards God, cannot then be considered as Christian education. Christian education is intended to build faith; general education is not, although it may, in passing, have this effect.

There is no one definition of Christian education. Peatling, a Christian educator, defines it very broadly as "a process of helping creatures positively and joyfully accept, explore and discover their very considerable potential in this creation, on this planet, and within the situations that are theirs" (Moore 1989:84). This aspect of reaching one's potential is important because it affirms both men and women, black and white. It condemns any Christian education or theology which limits one from fully extending oneself in order to reach one's potential.

A definition of Christian education which has been influenced by feminist theology comes from Moore, also a Christian educator. He picks up on the meaning of the word "educare". He believes that Christian education should be leading people "out from the limitations and life-destruction of a sexist social order to the freedom and life-nurture of an inclusive social order" (Moore 1989:84). This definition shows the importance of being aware of sexist socialising. It also raises issues about how the bible is used and the way it is taught. It takes a holistic view of people, which refuses to compartmentalise them.

Another possible definition comes from Norman De Jong. He defines education as "the divinely instigated and humanly co-operative process whereby persons grow and develop in life, that is, in godly knowledge, faith, hope, and love through Christ" (Pazmino 1988:81). Christian education can be seen more narrowly as instruction where "two parties are dialogically concerned with study material and with each other" (Heyns 1989:92).

One's definition of Christian education is influenced by one's theology and understanding of Christianity. Christian education is not a given static set of theories, but a dynamic set of ideas and approaches that are continually being tested and refined. There is more than one model and a number of approaches to Christian education. There are various aims, some practical, others academic, and others which concentrate on values. These in turn influence content, methods of education and instruments of education.

2.2. Goals, Aims and Contemporary Approaches to Christian Education

Christian education is an expression of Christian experience and revelation in the world and the church. This means there is an inter-relationship and inter-action between theological and educational issues. Christian education is grounded in certain premises. The educational goals
and methods are influenced by the theological perspective. The Christian tradition, scripture and learning theories are used to help achieve one's understanding of the central task of Christian education. If one has a theology that emphasises the need for personal salvation, then conversion is likely to be the aim of Christian education. A definition such as that of De Jong might be used. However, if one concentrates on justice and the reign of God, then education may be concerned with how to critique society, identify injustice and work towards social change that will bring about greater justice and equality. A more holistic definition, nearer that of Peatling would be followed.

The Sunday schools in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa each follow their own Sunday school policy as there is no cohesive or co-ordinated Sunday school policy in the CPSA. Neither does the Johannesburg Diocese have an educational policy regarding Sunday schools. It is left to individual parishes to decide what approach to take. Anglican Sunday schools are usually run by volunteers rather than Christian educators. There may be some input from the priest in charge of the parish, who would have some training in Christian education, but this is not the case in all parishes. This means that no particular approach to Christian education is followed.

A number of approaches to Christian education have been identified by various Christian educators. These approaches or models have different theological bases, and are underpinned by certain presuppositions and biblical understandings. Although the Sunday schools in the Johannesburg Diocese do not clearly follow any of these approaches, it is useful to look at them because the approaches highlight some of the issues in Christian education and the ways in which they can help or hinder the overcoming of sexism in Sunday schools.

These approaches to Christian education will be examined below and thereafter one can see how far, and to what extent, the Anglican Sunday schools follow them. Seymour and Miller identify five such approaches. They call them: religious instruction, community of faith, development, liberation and interpretation. The models each have their own goals, ways of teaching and instruments for education (Seymour and Miller 1990:1ff). Among these models there is often a large degree of similarity and consensus, despite the differences. For example, an objective such as to help people to live in the right relationship to God, fellow human beings, themselves and the world might be generally accepted. However, how this is interpreted and put into practice varies widely. It is useful to clarify the aims as they highlight various issues in Christian education, and determine the content and method of instruction.

In his book "Religious Education for Social Transformation", Moore has similar categories but uses different names for them (Moore 1989:30f). He speaks of the "human development approach" which, much like the development approach, relies upon psychological categories and focuses upon moral and religious factors in personal growth. Slightly less radical than the
liberation approach is what he calls the "social functional approach". It looks at how religious doctrines and practices affect society. A third approach, which is similar to the community of faith approach is what he calls the "integrative approach". Like the community of faith approach, it too sees participation in the church as the main educating factor.¹

The five approaches identified by Miller and Seymour will be examined now in some detail. This will help to show the different interpretations of such a general objective as "conversion". It will also show how the educational approach is influenced by a person's theological understanding. The goals and values and the ultimate foundations of Christian education affect the results that are achieved, or at least hoped for. They also affect the way in which the bible is used. This has wider implications concerning attitudes towards class, race and gender issues.

2.2.1. Religious Instruction

Religious instruction is concerned with the content of what is to be taught. The bible and its authority are very important. The content of the bible as the word of God is central. It is hoped that as people learn about God's word they will be converted. The bible is taught in such a way that a decision regarding faith in Jesus can be made.

This model is concerned with thinking, understanding, deciding and believing. Sara Little defines it as "the process of exploring the church's tradition and self-understanding in such a way that persons can understand, assess, and therefore respond to the truth of the gospel for themselves" (Seymour & Miller 1990:11). This definition takes a less hierarchical and authoritarian approach than is often adopted in religious instruction, as it allows thinking and assessing, not just acceptance. Very often in a religious instruction approach, facts are imparted by the teacher and the students are simply expected to accept and remember them. This means that the teacher is very important as it is the teacher who provides the content in an intentional and structured way so that the pupil encounters and engages that content.

The danger in this approach is that it tends towards passive, unquestioning acceptance of religion. Religious belief may be accepted without being integrated into everyday experience. God is excluded from most of the individual's life. Church experience and individual morality are not carried over into the broader economic and political spheres of life. The kind of religious instruction that has no critical element tends to correspond to what Hughes describes as the institutional stage of religion.² The church teaches doctrines and set prayers which are to be accepted and believed. However, a critical stage of intellectual reasoning is absent and this limits the growth of a vibrant faith. It also means that sexist elements in the instruction process will not

¹ These approaches are described in Moore 1989:30ff.
² A description of the three stages of religion can be found in Hughes 1985:19ff.
be questioned. The patriarchal nature of the bible is overlooked. A narrow personal salvation message is taught at the cost of a more holistic understanding of the gospel.

2.2.2. The community of faith model

The community of faith model is concerned with the nature of the church, worship and the educative functions of church life. The faith community as the body of Christ is seen as the teacher. All believers have various gifts that assist the process of education. People learn through the customs, rituals, roles and patterns of communication of the church as the community of faith. The goal can be described as "helping people understand and embody the meaning of being a people of God and a community of faith in the world" (Seymour & Miller 1990:20). This model also aims at conversion, but as a people of God, rather than as an individual response to the bible. The community aspects are emphasised as it is through the community of faith that one is brought to faith. The content of the bible is less central. Instead, the experiences of worship, of relationships within the community, and of rituals and customs are more important. There are many values in this approach, but because the church structures and worship tend to be sexist there are problems in trying to pass on a non-sexist faith.

This model is useful because it links in with the socialisation process. People are very influential in passing on the faith, culture and traditions of the Christian community, even though it is done unconsciously. For example, no one teaches that the women of the parish should make the tea. This is simply taken for granted. No one teaches the children religious language, but they learn a certain style and way of praying to, and addressing, God. Much of this religious language is beautiful and enhances worship, but much of it reflects a patriarchal culture with the use of powerful, triumphalistic male images.

If the faith community is one of the primary ways in which children are brought into the Christian faith, one has to look at the values and norms reflected in the community. These values and norms and the unconscious learning from the community of faith are part of the process of socialisation.

2.2.3. The development model

The development model is concerned with human development. This concern was stimulated by the work and developmental theories of people such as Jean Piaget, Eric Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg and James Fowler. It is concerned with providing developmentally appropriate activities for children. It gives attention to understanding the individual, defining needs and potentials and to providing stimuli to the on-going process of development. It aims to help learners to become mature Christians.

3 Their work will be looked at in more detail in this chapter under 2.3 Developmental Theories.
Insights from this model help to show what material is appropriate for certain age groups. It reminds one of how children learn and what they are capable of understanding at a certain age. This is especially useful with pre-school children. Pre-schoolers cannot grasp or understand adult symbols and metaphorical language. They understand things literally. Thus, a chorus such as "He's got the whole world in his hands" is understood literally as a huge God who is able to hold the world in his hands. This is not a bad image as it conveys a real truth about God, but the significance of the metaphorical language goes beyond the children. Much symbolism that is used in the church is not meant to be taken literally. These symbols are attempts to portray deep hidden truths. Yet children cannot make these distinctions, and so when God is always spoken of as king, they may easily picture God as being like an earthly king or a king in a fairy tale. These images of supreme, powerful kings contrast with Jesus' words and actions, for example, when he washes his disciples' feet.

The development model also emphasises conversion, but sees it in terms of human development and maturity. The person and personal development are given a high priority, rather than the biblical content or the faith community. Of course they are still relevant, but the bible must be interpreted and taught in a manner appropriate to the child's level of development. This approach has possibilities for a non-sexist Christian education, but they are seldom explored.

2.2.4. The liberation model.

Many of the insights of the liberation model are based on the work of Paulo Freire, the Latin American educationist. It is based on class analysis and the prophetic vision. In this model people participate in action and reflection to engage the structures of their world. It looks at the activity or mission of the church in shaping the history of the world in the light of God's call for humanisation. This model includes some useful pointers for future education but at present this approach is not generally used at Sunday school level. Feminist theology is a species of liberation theology. It takes experience seriously and is contextual, which is important in trying to combat sexism. Many of the insights from feminist theology can be adapted and used in the Sunday schools. This approach has potential for Christian education at Sunday school.

2.2.5. The interpretation model

Finally there is the interpretation model which connects the faith story to the actual experiences of daily life. Many of the concerns of this approach are similar to those of the instruction model but it focuses more on the process than the content. One of the values of this approach is that it acknowledges that there is more than one way of interpreting scripture. How one interprets the scriptures influences what one believes and how one understands the Christian faith. This is a useful insight as it helps to counteract the general impression, often created by the church, that there is only one correct interpretation of scripture.
Some approaches emphasise that God speaks through the events of our lives, through our experiences as well as via scripture. Others emphasise how God speaks to people through the life and guidance of the church. Others emphasise the authority of the bible and the traditions and teaching of the church.

These theological emphases influence which approach is followed. If one is concerned about social conditions, poverty and oppression in terms of class, race and gender, then one is more likely to follow a liberation approach. God is seen as being concerned with structures. The whole of life is of concern to God, not just the traditional spiritual aspects. Liberation is seen as a pivotal theme of scripture. Salvation is understood in terms of sinful structures not just personal sin.

If one is committed to maintaining the church and its traditions then one might emphasise how God works through the church. Church tradition is given equal importance with scripture. God is seen as speaking through the church as well as through scripture. The church as the body of Christ is there to test and refine the truth so as to avoid heresy. At times this may retard growth and prevent necessary change from taking place. If something does not come from the church hierarchy, it may be regarded with suspicion. The church wants spiritual growth, but not at the cost of radical change. As an institution it is reluctant to embrace anything that may threaten its way of being. One of the consequences of this is a suspicion of feminist theology because feminist theology is seen as too radical and as a threat.

2.2.6. The importance of the models

The community of faith approach, the development approach and the instruction approach are important to focus on because they are the most frequently used, whether consciously or unconsciously by the Sunday schools. The community of faith approach influences education because of the amount of unconscious socialisation that takes place in the church. Children learn in Sunday school, but the church as the community of faith also plays an important role. The Sunday schools which meet at the same time as the church tend to have a closer relationship to the rest of the parish than those which meet at a different time, but all do interact. Children go into the church, they see the priest and the lay ministers and they absorb the church atmosphere. Some parishes have children's services in which the children participate to some extent. Many parishes rely heavily on children simply being influenced by the Christian community. Some of the parishes visited seemed to consider the Sunday school to be of little importance compared with the adult worship and activities in the parish. Theoretical value was given to the Sunday school, but in practice very few parishioners were prepared to teach Sunday school.

4 The questionnaire showed that children joined in the readings, prayers and singing. However, the participation is often adult initiated and directed, rather than truly child centred. For example, adults give children prayers to read rather than encouraging them to write their own prayers.
The development approach is important because a child's developmental level influences how they understand religion and it limits the materials that can be provided for any given age group. It is one of the main determining factors when choosing Sunday school material. There is an awareness of the importance of developmentally appropriate materials, and some of the Sunday schools use Scripture Union or SANSSA (South African National Sunday School Association) material that is carefully put together by Christian educators. These teach the bible more or less systematically. Other Sunday schools cannot afford these books and simply use the bible. They tend to use limited parts of the bible, sticking to the old favourites such as Moses and Daniel.

The religious instruction model will be looked at in terms of the kind of Sunday school material that is presented to children and the curriculum material that is chosen. Many Anglican Sunday schools use a 'teacher tell' kind of approach. This was very visible in the question and answer teaching at Noordgesig.

Of the Sunday schools chosen, three have a strong evangelical perspective. They emphasise that their Sunday school lessons are bible based. They have a fundamentalist interpretation of scripture, using certain passages which emphasise a personal relationship with Jesus, and God's love for the individual. The others were less evangelical. Their approach was nearer to that of the community of faith approach. Songs and choruses formed a large part of the programme. Correct answers and biblical knowledge were also important. The ethos of the community was absorbed through credal statements and set prayers.

The liberation theology approach emphasises praxis and the interaction between reflection and action leading to social transformation and justice and liberation for all. None, not even the poorer parishes, had a liberation approach. One Sunday school from a poorer community dealt with the Exodus story from a factual perspective. There was no attempt to relate it to today's context, and to their own situation of poverty and the effects of apartheid.5

The relationship between faith and instruction, or faith and facts, is not always clear. It is questionable whether children are taught the Christian faith or whether they are simply instructed in religious customs and habits. Some Sunday school teachers shared this concern. They felt that faith is caught, not taught. So for example, they encouraged the children, especially the young ones, to come and play and do activities and enjoy Sunday school, rather than giving them formal instruction. The Sunday schools which followed the religious instruction model more closely tended to place more emphasis on facts than those which emphasised the community of faith approach. Faith and facts cannot be clearly separated as faith is not an intellectual insight, but a lived experience. It comes as a result of an encounter with Jesus, and asking Him into one's life, rather than as a result of study. If the aim of Christian education is to bring someone to

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5 A detailed description of these parishes can be found in the Appendix 1.
faith in God then simply teaching facts is not always enough. Often children go to Sunday school but never become Christians. They may remember the facts but it has little impact on their lives. Often they do not even remember the facts, perhaps because the so-called facts do not link with the rest of their life experience. One needs to ask what the facts are. This leads to the issue of interpretation of the bible.

The bible is read from a certain perspective which is formed by one's education, background and church context. This may be done unconsciously but it is happening. Thus, one cannot simply say, "this is what the bible says", and then apply it to a situation. The bible does not interpret itself. In the very process of reading and understanding the bible, people are already interpreting it in their own way. Often certain texts are selected and applied inappropriately to situations, while other texts are ignored. The bible is approached with preconceived ideas, and then biblical justification is found for them. Rene Padilla, a Latin American theologian, and many other theologians recognise that the message of the bible is embodied within a cultural context, because of the nature of revelation. Revelation comes through the human instrument, not direct and undisturbed from God. So the "word of God does not come to us in the realm of abstract theory, but of concrete reality" (Kretzschmar 1988:7).

No theology, regardless of its claim that the bible is inspired, ever considers all parts of the bible as equally authoritative. The selection of biblical material to be taught is not neutral. Certain bits of the bible are used because they fit with a particular world view or social ideology. Therefore, one needs to look at the criteria which are used for choosing certain passages rather than others. Sunday schools may claim to choose biblical material on the basis of educational grounds or because they are developmentally suitable for a certain age group. However, if one looks deeper, one will find that the curriculum and the material are chosen to fit into a certain theological perspective.6

The various theological approaches see different things as fact. The early church fathers did the same. They considered it a fact that Eve was a temptress and caused Adam to sin (Keane 1988:4). Others accept as fact that Adam and Eve were equally to blame. Both sides claim this as fact. Sometimes Christian education is little more than enculturation, that is, simply the adoption of the dominant cultural values, with their oppressive and self-serving tendencies. People's interests determine or at least influence their understanding of what the "facts" are. Facts are twisted to suit a certain theory. For those who are against women's ordination, the fact that the twelve disciples were men (among other arguments), is used to justify an all male priesthood. They ignore, twist or misinterpret the existence of women apostles such as Junia.7

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6 There is more information on the curriculum in Chapter 3 Agents of Socialisation.
7 Fiorenza documents how Junia, in Rom 16:7 is interpreted as Junius, because Junia does not fit with the theory of male priesthood. See Fiorenza 1983:172.
At Sunday school different versions of the story of Moses and the Exodus may be taught to children. Those with a liberation approach would emphasise the oppressive structures and draw parallels with today and show how God worked to free the Israelites from oppression and unjust systems. Those with an evangelical approach emphasise how Exodus is part of salvation history and God was using the Israelites to bring salvation to the whole of humankind. No parallels are drawn between the oppressive structures of those times and of today. The resistance of the midwives (Ex 1:17) and the courageous action of Miriam, Moses' mother and Pharaoh's daughter (Ex 2:1-10) are seldom, if ever, taught. Children learn the story of Moses but there would have been no Moses without the contribution of the women. A more inclusive telling of the Exodus story needs to emphasise the faith and courage of these women as well as the actions of Moses.

A broad aim of Christian education might be conversion. However, as discussed above, this can mean different things. Among the many interpretations, it could be understood as coming to know God, having a personal relationship with Christ, or attending church.

In his exploration of the nature of conversion, Walter Conn gives us some useful insights. He does this by examining the concept of “conscience” and showing how this is connected with a normative understanding of conversion. Conscience is described by Conn as “the dynamic core of conscious subjectivity which constitutes the very being of a person, driving him or her toward the authenticity of self transcendence” (Conn 1978:25). Conversion involves faith; it is a deeply emotional issue, but it is also a rational decision. Conversion as a rational decision must be based on facts, so knowledge is important. However, it is also a matter of trust and faith.

Conn uses the concept of self-transcendence rather than self-actualisation or self-sacrifice. Self-transcendence is basic to conversion. The gospel demands of conversion call people to self-transcendence, to intelligent, responsible, loving service of neighbour and even beyond this to self-transcending love. This understanding of conversion allows for a non-sexist and liberating faith in God.

Conn considers conversion in terms of cognitive conversion, moral conversion and affective conversion. Cognitive conversion involves the imagination. Moral conversion is a shift to value as the criteria for decision making. Affective conversion is a reorientation of the whole person from self-needs to concern for the needs of others. It is the transformation of our deepest life of feeling. It requires commitment, service and action. All three kinds of conversion are linked, and one cannot have the one without the others.

Some Christian educationists, such as Goldman, question whether this kind of conversion is possible for children or only for adolescents and adults. He asks: "what are the links between

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8 See Walter Conn 1978.
conversion and the critical psychological crises or problems in life?" An analysis of the development theories may help to answer this question.

2.3. Developmental Theories

Conn's concept of self-transcendence as conversion involves personal development. God is found in and through our human development. Therefore, it is useful to examine some of the developmental theories, such as those of Eric Erikson, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and James Fowler.

These developmental theories have all identified certain stages of development. Some people never reach the higher stages, but all must start at the lowest stage. These developmental theories can be divided roughly into cognitive and emotive theories of morality and faith. The cognitive approach features perceptual processes. Adherents of this approach include, amongst others, Piaget, Goldman, Kohlberg and Fowler. The emotive approach features feelings and motivation and is advocated by Freud, Erikson and, to a certain extent, Fowler.

Jean Piaget

Piaget's research and theories have had a pervasive influence on the understanding of children's mental and moral development. Piaget contends that children's perceptions of morality develop in a sequence of stages as they mature.

The first stage is the egocentric stage from about three to six years. Before this he feels that children have no concept of morality. In the egocentric stage, moral rules are absolute and without exception. The child has difficulty understanding the difference between inward experience and outward reality. The next stage is the concrete operational stage from about seven to eleven years. Here fair procedures are very important. The child thinks literally and specifically about the immediate problem. The third stage is the formal operational stage from twelve years up. The child has the ability to think hypothetically and abstractly. It is understood that moral rules require a covenant between persons and most rules have exceptions and can be modified according to circumstances. Only at this stage do people begin to understand motives and their importance in moral judgements.

Piaget's research is valuable in that it shows that children are not little adults and do not understand things in the same way adults do. It is only from the age of twelve up (the third stage) that children develop the ability to conceptualise. Only then can they construct or understand theory or theology. A British religious educator, Ronald Goldman, built on the work of Piaget. He developed a theory about readiness for religion. He questioned children and from this concluded that pre-school children are really also pre-religious because they gave very distorted answers to
his questions. For example, when asked "Why was Moses afraid to look at God?", they replied with such things as: "He didn't like his face", "It's old and frightening", "Moses loved God and didn't like to see him burn". He found that when describing God, six year olds used physical terms, eleven to twelve year olds used superhuman categories and fourteen year olds said you cannot describe God as God can not be seen. The children at Piaget's concrete operations level gave answers that showed an awareness of causality but lacked biblical insight and meaning. Goldman concluded that it is only by the age of eleven or twelve that children begin to show genuine religious understanding (Goldman 1965). Before this children absorb religious experiences and impressions but these are stored in the subconscious. This raises the question of the importance of attitudes as well as ideas. Children's ideas of God, whether fanciful or concrete, help them to like and trust God, or dislike and mistrust God.

Lawrence Kohlberg

Kohlberg identified six stages of moral development. He was influenced by Piaget. He was more concerned with the structure or forms of the reasoning process that led to a certain solution of a moral dilemma, than with the content or action. He identified three levels and six stages of moral judgement. These levels take a person from the pursuit of self-interest to adherence to external standards and then to the affirmation of internal autonomous principles.

The pre-conventional level comprises two stages. In the first stage, from three to six years, there is a concern with obedience to avoid punishment. At stage two, which is from about six to ten years, there is a highly developed sense of fairness that requires everyone to receive the same treatment whatever the circumstances. Kohlberg calls this naive instrumental hedonism. "What is in it for me?" is the main question.

The conventional levels cover the teenage years. Moral value is seen to reside in performing right roles, in being good and in maintaining the conventional order and expectations of others. Justice is seen as avoidance of disapproval and hurting others. At this level the peer group is often very important and ideas need to be supported by the peer group. There is conformity to stereotyped images of what is nice and proper. In the second stage of the conventional level there is a concern with law and order. Justice is established by the maintenance of the values of one's own society and by doing one's duty.

The post-conventional levels start from age twenty years and older. Here justice is defined in terms of the protection of individual rights. The last stage, which only a few reach, involves universal moral principles where justice in a situation consists of equal consideration of all claims, with all persons being considered as ends and not means.

9 See the chapter by L. Kohlberg in D. Goslin (ed) 1969.
Kohlberg found that approaches to childhood moral and religious education which offered children adult patterns of moral judgement, far above their levels of reasoning, were of little use. For example, for children in stage three, appeal to general principles about love of neighbour or justice will be less effective than appeal to rules that apply to everyone.

Mary Wilcox

Mary Wilcox has taken the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg and added a social perspective about how people perceive one another. According to Wilcox, in the first stage, the egocentric stage, from birth to age two, the self is the centre of all. The next stage is from about age three to seven. Here adults are seen as being good and as having authority. Then in stage three, from eight to ten years, known as the "dyadic instrumental stage", there is a useful exchange between people, but without understanding the others' points of view. At about age eleven this moves on to the "dyadic empathetic stage", where meaningful relationships and an understanding of others' motives develop. And finally, from age sixteen and up there is the "triadic stage", which moves through three phases. Firstly one's own society is seen as right. Then there is criticism of one's society and finally societies are viewed in terms of universal principles.

James Fowler

Fowler defines faith broadly as "one's attitude toward the ultimate environment" or "a central aspect of a person's life orientation." According to Fowler, everyone has some kind of faith, even those who are not religious. His six patterns of faith are sequential, hierarchical and invariant and they parallel Kohlberg's stages of moral development.

Prior to age three faith is undifferentiated, behaviour is sensori-motor and language is rudimentary. Stage one then is from age three to about seven. It is known as the "intuitive projective stage". Behaviour is pre-operational. Authority is primarily family-oriented. Religious symbols are magical and numinous. The visible faith of primary adults gives a feeling of assurance to the child.

At the second stage, the mythic literal stage, from age seven to eleven years, the child is capable of narrative drama and simple perspective taking. Authority is still within the family and those related to it. The child takes in stories, beliefs and practices of the community. If the practices and roles are gender stereotyped the children will absorb these too. Stage three, from about twelve to eighteen years, is the "synthetic conventional stage". At this stage symbols can be used. Religious symbols are multi-dimensional, often conventional and oriented to tradition. Faith helps to offer a meaningful synthesis within the complexities of life. There is much

conformity to peer opinion. Many adults who are strongly influenced by peers are at this stage. Next comes the "individualistic reflexive faith stage", from eighteen to thirty years. Authority is pragmatic or ideological. Social class and norms are self chosen, individual values are developed. Morality tends to be law and order oriented, but coupled with a reflective relativism and critical assessment. People at this stage take responsibility for their commitments and try to deal with the tensions in life between, for example, self-fulfilment and service to others. Stage five is a mature faith stage, often never reached, which incorporates the integrity of positions other than one's own and responds to an identification beyond race, class or ideological boundaries. The final stage is the universalising stage from forty years old and up, but it is rarely reached. Faith is a universal in which the individual identifies beyond self with God as a felt reality.

In Fowler's stages, the important thing is one's attitude towards the ultimate. If this attitude is positive it is a step towards the next stage, even if the concept of the ultimate is very incomplete and limited. Hence a child can have faith even if they cannot think abstractly. Fowler emphasises that imagination is developing in the pre-school child, and imagination is essential for mature faith. Therefore, play, story and drama are basic to the later development of faith. The mythical, literal faith of school age children allows them to take on the stories, beliefs and observances of their community. This sense of belonging and of meaning are critical to the development of mature faith. By focusing on imagination and attitude Fowler avoids identifying with a correct adult concept of God.

Ruth Beechick gives an alternative to Fowler's stages, which is specifically Christian. She looks at the various roles which people assume in life, such as child, friend, mother, spouse, parent, etc and then defines key development tasks which people fulfil at the various ages.

These theories are all basically cognitive accounts of faith and moral development. Another approach is the emotive approach which is best illustrated by Erikson.

**Eric Erikson**

Erikson's approach to development is based on the concept of a healthy personality. Throughout life everyone meets a series of crises and resolves them with relative degrees of emotional loss or gain. For example, an early support is needed by the infant to develop a sense of trust. The sense of trust then becomes relatively stable in the personality and is not easily shaken by later threats. Erikson relates this psychological development to religion in the following way: "Whosoever says he has religion must derive a faith from it which is transmitted to infants in the form of basic trust; whoever claims that he does not need religion must derive such basic faith from elsewhere" (Eric Erikson 1959:64).

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12 See Pazmino 1968:194.
Erikson’s first stage of development is from birth to one year. It is at this stage that trust or mistrust develops. If the infant has a good relationship with the primary caretaker, usually the mother, then he or she will develop a sense of trust. When trust rather than mistrust predominates, then the ego strength of hope is established. From here the child is able to move from total dependency to being a person in her or his own right. This is stage two, lasting from two to three years of age, the stage of autonomy versus shame and doubt. In the relationship with the parents, the child learns to give and receive, hold and let go. When autonomy predominates over shame and doubt then the virtue of will is established.

Then comes the discovery of what one can do. This is stage three, from ages three to six, the stage of initiative versus guilt. During this time the conscience is internalised and children themselves can monitor their own behaviour. If children are not oppressed by guilty consciences then they can take initiative and the resulting virtue is purpose. This leads into the stage of industry versus inferiority, ages six to eleven. Relationships are extended beyond the family to teachers and peers. The virtue of competency is built up as the child acquires a sense of accomplishment. At adolescence comes stage five when an identity is formed or not formed. To the extent that a coherent, functional identity prevails over identity confusion, fidelity results. Stage six (age nineteen to thirty), is intimacy versus isolation. People, whether they marry or not, need to develop satisfying relationships of intimacy and so the virtue of love develops. Stage seven (age thirty to sixty-five), is the time of child-rearing, jobs and contributing to the community. Either there is a sense of generativity or stagnation and worthlessness. The resulting virtue is care. The last stage from age sixty-six and older is integrity versus despair. As people review their lives there is a sense of meaning and wholeness or of despair. To the extent that the attitude of integrity prevails the virtue of wisdom is present.

Erikson’s approach has been critiqued because he assumes the relationship between individuals and society is primarily co-operative and mutually supportive, provided there is a positive resolution of each of the successive stages. For many children in South Africa there is no such co-operation and support. Instead, they experience violence, transition and social uncertainty. One of the questions that can be asked is whether the church is helping to develop these virtues. Is it building trust and initiative? Is religion being integrated into the child’s life to help form identity?

One of the differences between the emotive stages of Erikson and the cognitive stages of Piaget and his successors is that the emotive stages are based on emotional responses to biological changes and so everyone moves through each stage. There can be emotional gains or losses at each succeeding stage. By contrast the cognitive stages represent changes in the structure of what people perceive and understand. Stages follow on one from another and no stage can be skipped and one may not move through all the stages. The cognitive approach assumes that
both faith and morality are grounded in the perceptual process. The aim is a universalised morality and faith. The emotive approach is grounded in certain emotional responses to social relationships. The aim is a healthy personality and a contribution to society.

2.3.1. Christianity and the development theories

The development theories are useful but should not be over emphasised. They make certain presuppositions, as do Christians, and these presuppositions are not always the same. Development theory presumes some pre-existent structure through which persons move. They concentrate on linear development and do not take other factors, such as the transforming power of God, seriously enough. They develop the ego through invariant stages but fail to deepen the character. This is criticised from a Christian perspective because the possibility of a radical transformation through the power of the Holy Spirit, that is not related to previous stages, is excluded.

Development theory presumes there is an integration of increasingly complex elements, followed by a crisis, and this leads on to further integration. Active interaction with the physical environment provides a sense of reality; active interaction with the social, cultural and religious environment provides a sense of self-hood, identity and responsibility. Despite the Christian presumption of the possibility of radical transformation or conversion which does not necessarily follow a set sequence, they also recognise a process of nurture or sanctification. Christians also recognise the interaction with the environment, but they go further and affirm that God is active and intrusive in the environment and so the supernatural cannot be overlooked. They recognise the place of miraculous transformation and conversion through the power of the Holy Spirit. The goal of development theories is maturity, however this is conceived. The goal of Christians is to be Christ-like and this is understood in different ways.

Some educators have tried to find an approach somewhere between the cognitive and emotive approaches. One such approach is the social interaction approach which focuses upon the interaction among people within committed communities. Individual Christians are in dialogue with one another, searching the scriptures and being led by the Holy Spirit as they seek the mind of Christ. In the grace and power of the love of God they come to care for one another. The individual and the community mutually transcend one another. The way of being and relating includes both perception and motives. Concern about stages gives way to concern about narrative and moments of transition. The social interactive approach does not discard psychosocial attitudes and cognitive judgements but places them within the interactive process. The religious educator should pay close attention to both the interaction and the narrative and to cognitive judgements and motives.
Dykstra, who follows an interactive approach, critiques Kohlberg, Erikson and Fowler because their use of hypothetical choices when questioning children and developing the stages was too narrow. The larger perspective, such as intuition, life story and on-going character, must also be considered.

The Jesuit claim, "give us a child until the age of seven and he will be ours for life", reflects the powerful effect of socialisation at an early age. Children may not be at a stage to understand fully what is taught but deep impressions are stored in the subconscious. The Jesuit claim seems to be borne out by Rizutto, a Christian educationist, who challenges Goldman's view of readiness for religion. Rizutto believes that children, even pre-school children, have a vivid image and concept of God by the time they are three years old. Three year olds are aware of the fundamental characteristics of God, but express them in anthropomorphic imagery as they do not yet think abstractly. However, this does not mean that they are not yet ready for religion.

Kohlberg views moral development in terms of fairness. However, Christian morality goes beyond fairness to self-giving love. Love binds people together into a story and a way of life. Gilligan's criticism of Kohlberg links in with this, as Gilligan found that girls place more emphasis on self-giving to maintain relationships, than on justice and fairness. All the development theories tend to overlook the unique distinctiveness of female development and the Christian virtues.

Another criticism of Kohlberg is that he places too much stress on the process of moral reasoning rather than moral content. He emphasises autonomy which may be good, but fails to recognise the place of theonomy. An evangelical educator, Donald Joy, affirms much of Kohlberg's work. For example, he agrees that justice is the core of morality, and people are morally accountable, but goes on to say that morality comes from outside of humanity. It originates with God. People must live in relation to God and the commands of God rather than simply being autonomous.

### 2.3.2. Some implications of the development theories.

There are many implications for Christian education that can be derived from these theories but the ones that have particular relevance to the sexist nature of Christian education will be emphasised. The religion of children is developmental. This means that Christian education must be suited to the developmental stage of the child. It is pointless to teach children abstract concepts if they are not at a stage of development where abstract thought is present. Thus symbols and metaphors appropriate to the stage and manner of interpretation of a child need to be used. Doctrinal formulations, which may be of high significance for some adults, are inappropriate and also irrelevant to young children. Education programmes should be designed to anticipate and overcome problems linked with the developmental stages. Programmes should
take the natural literalism of children seriously and know what is possible to comprehend at each level.

Kohlberg describes the movement from pre-moral to moral development. A child has an egocentric orientation. Decisions are based on self-interest and self-satisfaction. The child decides on the basis of what is good for herself or himself, what will benefit herself or himself. It is only later that one moves to a social orientation and can distinguish the valued from the valuable for me. Thus, children may learn values but in terms of what is good for them. A child of five does not reason morally in the same way as an adult does. This means that there are certain concepts which children cannot yet grasp because they have not reached that stage of development. It is questioned whether young children are in a position to make independent choices. At Sunday school children learn many positive and good things, but are also fed some sexist principles and ideas of God and what is good and Christian. What they are taught and exposed to is absorbed and stored in their subconscious. When they reach maturity, it may be difficult to grow and acquire self-chosen principles because they have been taught things from a young age. They may never re-examine what they learnt as children and their faith may remain at the irrational level, rather than growing and being fully accepted and integrated into their lives on a rational and logical level.

The retention of childhood teachings may affect only certain aspects of faith. For example, they may have an inordinate fear of rejecting any part of the Bible because then, they argue, they may as well discard the whole bible. However, this argument is never examined rationally. They do not see that they have already disregarded certain parts of the Bible. The ones they are now afraid to reject or reinterpret are ones that go against things they learnt, probably as children, and simply accepted and internalised. Often they are cultural things. So verses in the Bible that uphold slavery are rejected, but not those that reinforce female subordination. Veiling of women may be disregarded but not the verses that teach that women should remain silent in church.

The predominant needs and activities of each stage of development must be taken into account and nurtured. Hughes describes three stages of religion which he calls the "institutional", the "critical" and the "mystical stages". These stages are similar to the various stages of development, with the institutional stage predominating in young children, the critical stage in adolescence and the mystical stage in adulthood. The pre-school child is imaginative and impressions are very important, thus stories and dramatisation are appropriate methods of teaching. God should be presented to the children's senses as much as to their minds. The feel of a church, the atmosphere in the services or at the Sunday school, the candles and architecture and the temperature of a place of worship are important. Services need not only the beauty of words but also of music, gestures and movement. Children also need limits and to be told what

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14 The implications of this for sexist socialising are discussed in Chapter 1.
they may or may not do. The affection and protection offered by the institutional element of the
church help to meet these needs of children, and should be dominant.

At the primary school level, questions of fairness and of God's justice, creativity and love come to
the fore. Stories, expressions and opportunities to discover and discuss the wonder, holiness and
love of God are appropriate. The rituals of the church are significant for the child of this age, but
these are often male dominated. Few women are seen to play leading roles in them. As children
learn their family history so the history of the Christian family should also be learnt. Children can
be introduced to the great stories of the bible, the events of the gospel and the lives of great
Christians. However, there are problems here because these stories are understood literally and
are mostly of men. Christianity becomes the story of the fathers rather than the whole Christian
family. The contribution of the women is overlooked. These issues will be dealt with in more
detail when the Sunday school material is analysed in Chapter Three.

A critical element is needed at the time of adolescence. Young people are asking questions and
trying to make sense of their world. They are trying "to discover some unity and meaning in the
multiplicity of sense impressions, facts, teachings, beliefs and experiences" (Hughes 1985:14).
Childhood acceptance gives way to questioning. It is now that the youth need a trustworthy
congregational environment where they can test the limits of belief. They can discover levels of
commitment absent from the church or they may question cherished beliefs. They may come to a
point of accepting or rejecting beliefs. This is the case especially if children have been taught
inappropriately, that is they have been given catechetical, fact-repeating education which cannot
stretch childhood concepts to correspond to adult perceptions. The concepts are too inflexible
and so they will be discarded, with or without more mature replacements. So there must be
coherence between the teaching received from the church and with life as it is experienced. As
much as myths and inflexible concepts of childhood become a problem for the adult, so do the
sexist images and aspects of Christianity. Some feminists have difficulty synthesising their faith
with their feminist convictions because of the patriarchal presentation of Christianity in the church.
There is a disharmony between the church's teaching, which tends to stereotype women as
mothers and as submissive, and the inner belief of the self-worth of women. If this happens the
teaching may be completely rejected or else "split off and become a part of our consciousness
which has nothing to do with the rest of our human experience" (Hughes 1985:16).

For adults, religion must answer the stage of inner growth. The church must include a mystical
element. God is encountered through one's mysterious inner experiences rather than through set
prayers, rituals and teachings. "God who is experienced from within rather than being presented
from without, is loved and lived rather than theorised about, is action and power rather than any
external constraint and discipline as in the institutional stage or intellectual reasoning as in the
critical" (Hughes 1985:18).
The needs and activities of a stage do not disappear when the next stage is reached, but they cease to predominate. Religion should include all three elements if it is to be whole and to avoid certain dangers. There are dangers such as an unwillingness to move out of the institutional stage because it is protected and secure. This religious infantilism is characterised by a passive attendance of church rather than true, challenging, active faith in God. This state is sometimes labelled as "being humble, loyal, faithful, observant" but, as Hughes says, "there is no more effective way of destroying true faith in God than by misusing words like loyalty, humility, obedience and faithfulness" (Hughes 1985:19). Women often suffer from these characteristics of humility, loyalty, passivity and submissiveness. They particularly need to see the way in which these qualities can be misused.

The stage of critiquing and questioning also has dangers. Firstly, it can be risky for questioners in that they may be rejected by more fundamentalist or authoritarian Christians. Any disagreement with religious authorities may be labelled as a misinterpretation. Secondly, if the institutional stage is completely rejected and forgotten at the critical stage, people may become rationalists, and suspicious of all emotion, rather than religious people, devoted to God. "Those who cultivate the critical and neglect the other two elements will tend to be rigid and dogmatic, with little to say to children and the uneducated, out of touch, too, with the child in themselves and with the mystery of their own inner thoughts and feelings, which are far too complex to be described adequately in abstract concepts" (Hughes 1985:21). The danger of the third stage, the mystical stage, is of a rejection of all formalised religion with a growth of emotionalism and possible wild extremism and fanaticism.

Although Hughes does not go through stages of development in the same way as Erikson does, there are some similarities. In Erikson's earlier stages the child is absorbing attitudes and values and information rather than questioning and critiquing what is taught. This corresponds in many ways to Hughes' institutional stage because it is one of acceptance rather than questioning.

Erikson's stages of psychological development help the Christian educator assess the affective dimensions of people's lives at the various stages. According to Erikson's psychological stages, trust and hope develop through a positive relationship with the parent, and if this relationship is broken or faulty, mistrust grows. So parents are vital to the religious nurture of infants. If parents have faith, confidence and trust in God this can be passed on to the child. If parents' faith in God is full of anxiety, judgement and despair it may also influence the child. This means that the church's primary ministry to infants is to encourage their parent's faith through worship and fellowship. This could include helping to identify and overcome sexism in the parents' attitudes and faith. Parents and teachers may well not be aware of the patriarchal nature of their understanding of Christianity because that is what they have learnt, and how Christianity has been presented to them. This means, however, that they will teach their children in a like manner.
They will probably always refer to God in masculine terms. They may well endorse male leadership in the church, either consciously or unconsciously because it is that to which they are accustomed. In other areas of faith too, they may subtly perpetuate sexist attitudes.

In conclusion, this chapter looked at the various approaches to Christian education, as well as the developmental theories. One of the reasons for looking at various approaches to Christian education was to see if the more liberal approaches were less sexist. This was difficult to ascertain as none of the Anglican Sunday schools which were chosen followed any one approach exclusively. Rather, they used elements from a number of approaches in a rather random and unplanned manner. Many of the Sunday schools tried to follow the religious instruction approach in that they adhered to biblical content as closely as possible. This made it difficult for them to adapt their lessons so that they were non-sexist.

The development theories show that children think differently from adults. They think more literally and specifically. This has implications for the way they understand the symbols and doctrines of the church. For example, if God is addressed as father, they see God literally as a father. They also absorb the atmosphere, symbols and stories that are part of the church. These things may be absorbed subconsciously, but they are very influential in a child's life. This was recognised by the Jesuits and by many modern educationists.

Sunday school activities and stories are often selected because of their appropriateness for a certain age level. Abstract concepts and symbols are avoided where possible. However, this concern for age appropriate biblical teaching tends to overlook the inherent sexism in the bible and the predominance of men in the biblical stories.

Children are influenced by the community of faith. The development theories indicate that children are not always in a position to make independent choices. They tend to see adults as good and as having an authority that may be disobeyed but never really questioned. Children tend to accept and not to question what is told to them by teachers and leaders in the church. The priest is seen to have authority, and those most visible in the church are noticed as the leaders. The majority of these people are usually men.

The faith of adults influences the children. Therefore the parents' faith is important. Was their experience of Christianity non-sexist, or was sexism not even an issue? Most likely they came through a Sunday school experience that was similar to their children's, except that there was even less awareness of sexism. Before women were ordained in the CPSA, the visible leaders of the church were most likely to have been all male. Thus, the adults in the church have grown up unaccustomed to any visible leadership from women during worship. As those who are today parents were growing up in the church, feminist issues were hardly spoken about. The church's
teaching and authority were probably simply accepted. This means that most parents have a traditional, patriarchal faith which they pass on to their children.

Faith is absorbed even if facts are forgotten. Impressions are made and have a lasting effect. Hughes' stages of faith show that many people never question a childhood faith. They do not grow and integrate their faith into the rest of their lives. When inflexible concepts or teachings of the church conflict with people's life experience, there is little or no room in the church for them to start questioning. And so these doctrines are either rejected or separated from the rest of life, and never adapted and integrated in any meaningful way.
Chapter 3

THE AGENTS OF SOCIALISATION

So far sexism and some of the ways in which it functions have been examined. The consequences will be looked at later. The nature of socialisation, how the process occurs and whose interests it serves has been explored. The unconscious nature of socialisation was emphasised because of the important role it plays in developing attitudes and values. In this chapter the agents in this process of socialisation are examined.

In the process of socialisation two kinds of demands are made. These are demands made by significant others such as parents, and demands of a more generalised nature. The demands of significant others play a far more important role than the more generalised demands.

The family fits into the category of significant others, and is probably the most important agent for transmitting values and culture. It has a great influence on religious values, especially if the religious beliefs of the parents are agreed on and if they carry out conscious religious socialisation in the home. But the church's teaching and the use of scripture, the Sunday school material and books, worship services and sermons, and the church community itself, all play a role in the socialisation of children within the church.

Initially the parents and the family members are the primary agents. They make the deepest impression but there are other influences which become more important around the age of six, when the child moves out from the kinship groups to the wider network of friends. These include peers, teachers, employers and the mass media. However, these build on a largely established framework. It is during childhood that people learn to control and direct their emotions and to use language to formulate their notions about the nature of the world and their place in it. The attitudes of their parents are absorbed and imitated.

This means that parental attitudes are important as they have the greatest influence on the children. The church's ministry to parents is therefore vital as it enables parents to minister to their children and impart their faith. Parents have generally been socialised to accept the patriarchal nature of Christianity. The bible is read regularly in church without recognising or acknowledging that it was written largely by men and for men, and so tends to be sexist despite flashes of inspiration which speak to women's experience and rise above the patriarchal culture. The churches are largely shaped and run by men despite the fact that there are more women in the church than men. Parents who remain in the church have accepted these sexist aspects and ethos to some degree.

The teaching that parents received probably had many sexist elements. They then pass their faith, with its sexist inclinations, to their children. Many parents never recognise or question the
patriarchal nature of Christianity. Those few who may be aware of it lack the tools and the knowledge to change things and to present the bible and their faith in a less sexist manner. They refer to God as "father" or "lord" because there are so few known alternatives. These are the foundations of the parent's faith, laid when they were children. This is the manner in which people are used to addressing God and hearing God addressed, and so they are unconsciously passed on to children.

The church, that is, the community of faith, also plays a vital role in the education and socialisation of children in the faith. It passes on values and attitudes and decides what and how things are taught. For example, theologians may make suggestions about the use and meaning of scripture, but these have to be taken up by the church in its liturgical and moral forms in order for them to have any impact. This is one of the reasons feminist theology has had so little impact on the church. It has remained largely in the realm of theology rather than moving into church communities. It is removed from the life of the church, and has not been incorporated into the worship of the church.

Scripture and the way it is used forms the identity of the church and influences the church's own understanding of itself. This understanding and use of scripture give shape and body to worship. The values and commitments of the faith community are expressed through their worship, which in turn becomes a reflection of the church's self-understanding and identity. The identity of a congregation is also formed through symbols, which are internalised.

3.1. The church as an agent of socialisation

The identity of congregations is important. They need to be able to state who they are and what they believe, where they have come from, and where they are going. A clear identity gives cohesion and purpose. It attracts people and increases commitment which in turn strengthens the congregation. The identity of a congregation is formed through symbols as well as scripture and worship. Symbols, scripture and worship are all linked and overlap. They lead the community and give hints of the ultimate meaning of life. They give fullness to the community of faith and to the individual. Without scripture and significant symbols there is no community, only confusion. These meanings and symbols need to be examined, rather than simply internalised and accepted without really being understood because they have the capacity to become destructive rather than life giving. For example, the kingship symbol is rich and powerful but without counter-balancing symbols it can become despotic and tyrannical.

There are dangers in how the church's identity is formed. Individual freedom and tolerance may be sacrificed for group identity. Traditions which no longer serve any purpose may be carried on
in order to maintain identity. There is a tendency for the churches not to be critical of themselves. They are often unwilling to make any radical changes. Many Christians are threatened by any challenge, anything new. Their faith needs limits and parameters. With this kind of outlook, one tends not to educate or even nurture children but rather to try and give them a religious socialisation based on an already established church identity and culture. Often this is accompanied by an authority pattern and an ordered system in which each and all have their place, God, husband, wife, children, or God, priest and laity. Such hierarchical concepts about the order of things lead to legalism. Inflexible assertions about the right way to live lead to self-righteousness and a refusal to analyse the truth of Christian teachings and moral convictions.

Instead of this, the church needs to provide the skills of interpretation and discrimination so one can recognise the limits and potentialities of society and of the church itself. The church needs to witness to a God who embraces all truth.

The character or identity of churches varies. Some churches emphasise justice and social issues, others evangelism. Some are goal oriented, others people-oriented where human relations are central. Others are concerned with spiritual nurture and bringing people to maturity. These emphases might influence gender relations and stereotyping. Those that are more aware of social issues are often more aware of gender issues. The questionnaire, although not comprehensive, showed a tendency towards this. The more evangelical churches were often also more fundamentalist, with a literal and selective interpretation of the bible.

Churches may be a reflection of society or they may be quite distinct and different. For example, the Quakers moved away from buildings and symbols to silence as a form of culture. However, culture with its symbols and norms cannot be avoided. One of the dangers is for churches to shift the focus of commitment from God to the cultural expression. If this happens the church's culture with its symbols and traditions no longer points to its source. Belonging to a church then makes little difference to people's basic values, secular life and commitments. Whilst their faith does not conflict with their cultural values they are happy. When there is a conflict, there is a crisis of faith. Sunday schools tend to reflect the identity of the church. If the dominant socio-cultural values are present in the church, the Sunday school tends to pass them on without a concern for justice or transformation.

People are moulded or socialised to fit in with the identity of the church. If people are to participate in the life of the church, or any cultural group, there is usually a process of adjustment to conform to the patterns of behaviour of the group. In a church community this learning process is closely related to customs, traditions, habits, procedures, worship and other patterns of church life. One learns such patterns more by participation than by discussion. Usually the symbols and liturgy, the colours of the altar cloths, the pictures in the stained glass windows, the candles or the
incense are not explained, they are simply absorbed, seldom understood but accepted as what happens in church.¹

For these reasons, worship, the use of scripture and the symbols of the church need to be examined to see if they reinforce the basic gospel message or obscure it.

3.1.1. Worship and Symbols

Worship is a powerful means of socialisation. John Westerhoff, a Christian educationist, describes worship as a drama. It is the community's story acted out in ways that allow everyone to participate. "Worship unfolds a narrative or dramatic event. It recalls the original event of God's grace in Jesus Christ" (Miller 1987:242). This is true even in worship which does not make use of a formal printed liturgy.

Westerhoff believes that worship and its symbols are more powerful than teaching in the classroom. Congregations need to be more aware of the power of worship in terms of education and socialising people into the church. Worship is not just an expression of love for God, but also a means of bringing people into the Christian faith.

Worship is the acceptance of a common commitment, a covenantal renewal and a community's search for the mind of Christ. Worship is not value free. Worship can be empowering and liberating or controlling and inhibiting. Worship and celebration are among the most powerful means of nurturing congregational identity. Worship is also a reflection of identity as the values and commitments of the community are expressed through their worship.

Worship can be used deliberately to educate, but it also influences people at a subconscious level. Often this is the case with children as they do not understand the symbolism and deeper meanings of the liturgy and ritual. Because worship is such a powerful means of education and socialisation, one needs to analyse what values and norms come across in the worship of the church.

In worship, roles and relationships are developed and co-ordinated. The worship leader directs as the congregation listens and sings or answers and responds. Children subconsciously associate the most visible people who conduct the service as the leaders. If there are no women in the sanctuary children, without rationalising it, believe that men are the leaders of the church. Since the ordination of women, the opportunities for women to participate in the visible leadership of the church may increase, but this will take time. It is still the exception, rather than the norm, and so children see far more men than women leading worship. Unquestioningly and subconsciously, they come to expect that men will lead and women will follow. Men are the ones whom God uses to lead the people. The symbols of the church reinforce this perception. God is symbolised by maleness. The male symbols are active and initiating while the female ones are not. It is the

¹ Some may be explained and dealt with at confirmation.
bridegroom who loves and the bride who is loved. Christ does the redemptive work and the church is redeemed. Secular society also reinforces male leadership. In South Africa, for example, the top political, business and community positions are all filled by men.

Childhood impressions are difficult to change. If one's experience is of cold churches, where one is bored with sermons and long prayers that do not speak to one's experiences, then one is more likely to have a negative image of God. If one is always told to be quiet and sit still in church and one can not relax and have fun, then one is neither likely to turn to God nor to love God. Rather, one might fear or even resent God. If children absorb a feeling of joy and have a good experience of church, they are more likely to have a positive image of God and to continue going to church as adults. In a similar way, if God is always spoken of as "He", a child will come to see God as masculine.

The language and images used in worship are significant. In worship symbols take on meaning. Symbols are not neutral. They have a powerful influence on the understanding and way of life of believers. They operate pre-verbally and pre-rationally and find their way into the thought systems by which people live. Gender linked symbols may function in a similar way to racial symbols. Subliminal images have made many black children feel inferior and white children feel superior long before they reached the age of conceptualisation. The same may be happening with gender images. Internalised oppression in women has the power of this kind of image. Baum asks: "to what extent do the inherited symbols of Christianity initiate people into dependencies, guilt and blindness, and to what extent do the same symbols, interpreted differently (different presuppositions) deliver people from dependence, guilt and blindness?" (Baum 1975:99). The same question can be asked regarding sexism. To what extent do certain symbols lead women into submission and subservience which, if interpreted differently, would empower them and lead them to mutuality and self-affirmation.

Symbols change in each generation and therefore require new and different celebrations. Often the churches are unprepared to change their way of celebration. An example of a symbol that is no longer appropriate is the image of a soldier of Christ in the baptism service. There are certain connotations that go with the soldier image. Soldiers are usually men and so it is a very masculine and aggressive image. In South Africa, soldiers have been associated with the South African Defence Force and oppressive, apartheid structures, or labelled as terrorists or liberation fighters wielding AK 47s. Even in the New South Africa the soldier image is not without problems. On a world scale, there is nuclear warfare with its mass destruction, yet the church retains the image of a soldier. In the old Anglican baptism service a little baby, whether a boy or a girl, was asked to "fight manfully under the banner of Christ." It has since been changed to "fight valiantly". But many of the church's images have not been changed and are of war, soldiers, fighting, victorious kings and lords.
Symbols play an important role in worship. In fact, the basic Christian symbols are most easily found in worship. God is imaged as father, king, lord and almighty. These are the common ways of describing God in hymns and choruses. Children understand them literally. God is "He", God is big and powerful. They do not see these as mere metaphors for God, inadequate human attempts to describe the indescribable.

The images and symbols for God are very important because God is the source of our being, the greatest, the ultimate one to whom we give our allegiance. The way we picture God shapes our thinking and our knowledge of God. If our naming of God is distorted, our knowledge of God is also distorted. Thus, it is worth looking at language about God in some detail.

The fact that God transcends gender has generally been accepted from the time of the church fathers to modern day theologians. Athanasius, one of the church fathers, affirmed the non-sexual nature of God in the face of the fact that God has a son. He believed that although Christians speak of God begetting Jesus, they "have no human thoughts, and no material ideas concerning Him, but while we listen to these illustrations and terms, we think suitably of God, for He is not a man" (Kimel 1992:20). Hilary of Poitiers wrote: "that which is divine and eternal must be without distinction of sex" (Kimel 1992:20). A modern theologian, Hans Küng, writes that "the fatherhood symbol of God has no sexual implications and has nothing to do with religious paternalism" (Kimel 1992:21). The "Thirty-nine Articles" state that "there is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts or passions" (Kimel 1992:62). God is not a male or a female. God is spirit.

One of the reasons why the spiritual nature of God was so important for the ancient Hebrews was that they needed to distinguish Yahweh clearly from the gods of the surrounding nations. Many of the surrounding nations practised fertility religions. They worshipped male gods and female goddesses. They practised sacred prostitution. The Israelites were different. The Canaanites had mother goddesses which seemed to be a greater threat to Yahwism than Baalism was. Therefore, the Israelites were fearful that female language for God would result in confusion and distortion of the nature of God and God's relation with the creation. God was almighty and supreme having no consort in heaven.

Yet, despite this acknowledgement that God is neither male nor female, God is imaged and talked about almost exclusively in masculine terms. The foremost of these is found in the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Some Christians have claimed the Spirit as female, as the feminine part of God. However, this is not affirmed by the church. For example, in the baptism service, the Anglican prayer book asks "Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God?" The response is "I believe and trust in him."2

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The early Christians had to formulate the doctrine of the Trinity very carefully, in order to avoid the danger of polytheism, which was characteristic of many of the other religions of the time. Somehow they had to preserve the three persons of the Trinity and yet not fall into polytheism. The three were one, not a separate father god and mother goddess.

Jesus' use of the title "Father" needs to be seen in the context of the times. Jesus wanted to teach people that God cares for them and that people, in turn, can approach God. People can call God "Abba", an intimate family word for father, symbolising God's love. Today the term father tends to illustrate a patriarchal and oppressive authority, rather than the loving concern of God. Those who insist on calling God "Father", also affirm that God's fatherhood does not make God male or literally a father. This distinction may be too difficult for children. If one continually refers to God as "Father" then God is a father.

Father is the foremost way in which God is imaged, but God is also known as king, judge, shepherd and lord. All these are masculine terms. There are some woman judges today, but they are few and far between, especially in South Africa. Moreover the attributes of omnipotence, omniscience, transcendence and immortality are attributed to God. These attributes while not being specifically male are often associated with male stereotypes in that they project the ideal of a distant, detached and omni-competent male, rather than the female attributes of relationality and engagement.

This exclusive male language and imagery for God tends to legitimate patterns of male domination and patriarchy both in the church and in society. The metaphor of father has in many ways become narrowly identified with patriarchal authority. Mary Daly goes so far as to say that "if God is male then the male is god" (Daly 1973:19). One needs to reject images that are patriarchal, triumphalist, imperialistic and monarchical, as they are oppressive. God is powerful, but the power of God is enabling rather than controlling. The images of power need to be balanced with images of God as mother, lover and friend. If imaged, God can function as an appropriate role model for Christians committed to peace and justice.

3.1.2. Language

Language is one of the prime sources of socialisation. It may not determine how we think but it does shape and slant our thoughts and behaviour. This power of language is often overlooked. Worship has a language of its own which is largely symbolic. This language is deeply informed by biblical tradition and norms of behaviour. Language in worship is powerful because it aims at opening people to God. It works at the emotional level, not simply at the cognitive level. It

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3 Some female images for God are given in Chapter 4, p.98.
encourages certain emotions such as reverence, penitence, thankfulness and giving. Examples of this can be seen in the psalms, in the silence at the time of confession and in the litanies of confession, and in joyful singing that induces a sense of thankfulness and worship. Much more could be said about the language of worship. However, despite its many virtues the language of worship is often sexist as is the biblical tradition.

Many of the hymns and choruses that are used in church or Sunday school are saturated with male generic language. They are about brothers and kings and they always use "he" as a pronoun for God. Women join in singing "Brothers all are we" or "Brother let me be your servant" and describe themselves as "sons of Abraham". This use of male generic language perpetuates the habit of androcentrism. It conveys the message of women's inferiority on a subtler, deeper level than does simply negative treatment or belittlement.

Children sit through church services which they hardly understand and yet subconsciously they absorb much of what goes on. For example, the language children use to pray and the way they pray reflects the kind of language that is used in church when prayers are said. "Dear Lord", 'father God', 'our father' are all phrases quickly picked up by children and used for addressing God. These forms of addressing God are reinforced as children are often taught the 'Our Father', and so associate God with father, whether a loving father or a harsh punishing father.

3.1.3. The church's teaching and use of scripture

Much of the church's sense of identity comes through scripture. The important events, statements, phrases, names, images, words and persons are related through the scripture. The bible provides a focus of shared meaning that is accessible to all. It is positive and affirming, giving meaning to the world. But scripture comes from a patriarchal background. It was written largely by men, translated by men and is interpreted by men.

Before seeing how the church's teaching acts as an agent of socialisation, it is useful to consider the way the bible has been used as a tool of oppression, and to look at feminist theologians' perceptions of the bible. This helps to clarify the church's use of the bible.

There is a patriarchal bias in the scriptures which poses problems when trying to find a non-sexist approach to Christianity. The problem is compounded when traditional interpretations of scripture are taught as if they are the only possible ways of understanding the bible. More radical feminist interpretations are seen as false, or as influenced by the secular world. It is said that they do not take the authority of scripture seriously. Some examples of traditional interpretations of scripture include the following: the man is head of the household; wives obey their husbands; women are to remain silent in church; God is father.

The church's teachings and doctrines are based on the bible which is the main source of authority
for Christians, although church tradition and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are also acknowledged as important. The bible, however, is not a neutral book. It has been misused to legitimate injustice and oppression. It has been used by slaves in their struggle for liberation and by slave owners to justify slavery. Both have appealed to certain texts. The bible is powerful and has inspired people in their struggle for freedom, but at other times it has been used as a tool of domination, and some of the worst atrocities in history have been perpetrated under the banner of Christianity. The bible can be used either to promote the full humanity of women or hinder it. It can help to recover the liberating experiences and visions of the people of God, or it can be used authoritarianly to silence all revivals and opposition to the status quo.

A number of factors influence whether the bible is used as a tool of liberation or domination. Firstly, the attitudes of society affect the way the bible is interpreted. In a patriarchal society, such as South African society, the bible is used to reinforce male domination. Selected texts are used to keep women in a subordinate place. Scriptures which promote the equality of women are ignored. Often this oppressive use of the bible is not recognised because it is subtle.

A second factor is the way in which the bible is understood. The bible is often seen as God’s word coming direct and undisturbed to us. Then verses are then taken literally and applied with no consideration for their original context and meaning.

Because the bible is used as the basis for teaching in the Sunday schools, whether this is in specially prepared Sunday school books or whether the lesson is taken directly from the bible itself, we need to look at how it is used. The bible cannot simply be used literally in the contemporary church community, without attempting to see the spirit behind the letter. The experiences of women and the feminist perspective in the biblical traditions need to be recovered.

"Our clear calling today is to recover a teaching office central in scripture, using tradition, reason and in particular, experience in ways that keep and tell a liberating story, a story that lends meaning to modern existence" (Johnson 1989:99). This is true of the teaching at Sunday school level as much as for teaching of adults in the church. In order for scripture to become a "liberating story" rather than as "oppressive story", one needs to follow certain guidelines when reading and interpreting scripture. These guidelines can be elucidated as follows:

1. Read the bible contextually.

We may claim to be objective, but in fact we always read and interpret scripture with interests and presuppositions that come from our particular social and cultural milieu. These presuppositions need to be acknowledged, and at the same time we need to listen to others and hear their voices too.
2. Approach the bible historically.

One needs to take the particularity of God’s actions through Israel and Christ seriously. The texts should be seen in their original context, rather than being imposed uncritically on the present modern situation. One also needs to recognise and take seriously the fact that the biblical writers were limited, fallible human beings. This is not to deny that the bible is God-inspired, but rather that, “fully human words, marked by human particularity and limitations, disclose the divine word to us” (Johnson 1989:100).

Some questions that this approach raises are: what does this recall? and even more, what future does this open up? What is our specific calling as the faith community in this time, at this place? These opens the need to look at feminist issues, liberation and Christian witness.

3. Read the bible with a hermeneutics of suspicion

There is a need to read scripture with a hermeneutics of suspicion, recalling that scripture has been used to justify slavery, sexual oppression, nationalism and the like. There is a pervasive sexism within biblical materials. "The bible is a male book, written by men in their language and thought forms, reflecting the male -- the central biblical cultural milieu" (Johnson 1989:101). This hermeneutics uncovers as much as possible of this oppressive male bias. However, it also, affirms the liberating, inspiring power of the bible as the Word of God. For example, one needs to be suspicious when there is a theoretical belief that all people are equal in the eyes of God and both men and women are made in the image of God, while in practice there is discrimination in the church on the basis of sex. Moreover, this discrimination is often claimed to be biblically based. God is theoretically neither male nor female, but in practice God is spoken of and treated as a male.

4. Read with a hermeneutics of remembrance

The scriptures need to be read with a hermeneutics of remembrance. The terrible incidents and mistakenly sinful religious understandings should not be denied and overlooked. We can enter imaginatively into biblical history and recreate the scenes, the rituals and the stories and so experience the pain and joy of our foresisters. In this way we may be able to see some of what the texts do not say. "We must remember with no whitewashing the struggles and suffering of our foremothers whose stories are hidden behind the texts" (Johnson 1989:102). In this way, the God who worked through love, and not the God who rules through patriarchal power and domination, can be found.
5. Read the bible theocentrically.

Finally we need to read the scriptures theocentrically. God is at the centre, actively doing. God is not imprisoned in the pages of a book or the walls of a church. God is not static and unchanging and the word must continue to be relevant in new circumstances. The bible is not a rule book, but a story. Ultimately the word of God is not something that is written, but something that is experienced as good news. Moreover, it is good news for the poor and those on the underside of society (Lk 4:18-19). It is a person, Jesus, who is at the centre of Christianity, not a principle.

Despite the limitations of the bible, despite the fact that it is patriarchal, it can be used by women as an instrument of liberation rather than oppression. If one does not read the bible in this kind of light, one might simply accept the bible as it is, as the church teaches it and as it has been used down the centuries. This is what many women do because it is hard to fight against the church and against tradition and to be made to feel like a rebel and a heretic. If one questions too much, one is accused of denying the authority of scripture, and distorting the Christian message. However, Jesus' actions questioned patriarchy. Therefore, however tempting it is to abandon the bible, there is value in remaining within the Christian tradition, and struggling to reinterpret and question the bible rather than to reject Christianity.4

The bible is used extensively in the Sunday school material. These guidelines for reading the bible can be applied to the use of scripture in the Sunday school material. Before looking at the Sunday school material and children's bibles, it is interesting to look briefly at secular story books for children, as they influence children and reinforce certain role models and stereotypes.

### 3.2. Books as agents of socialisation

#### 3.2.1 Children's Books

Books are sources of cultural values and give information about society and the way it functions and its customs and norms. Books influence role and gender stereotyping, as young children identify with particular characters in the books. These characters function as role models and show children both what to expect, and what is expected of them, when they grow up. In this way girls and boys begin to learn their roles through books.

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4 More information on the use of scripture can be found in chapter 4 p 85-88.
Gender roles are portrayed in children's books. Some time ago, a research project on children's books was done. The researchers looked at the ways in which male and female gender roles were portrayed in several hundred prize-winning children's books.

Firstly, they found that women were often simply invisible. They were under-represented in the titles, central roles, pictures and stories. Most children's books were about boys, men and male animals and most dealt exclusively with male adventures.

It was not just in the stories that women were under-represented. In a sample of eighteen winning books 261 pictures were of males compared to 23 of females. Others, such as the "Little Golden Books", which included Cinderella, Snow White, Hansel and Gretel and Little Red Riding Hood had a ratio of three to one pictures of male to females. From the list of titles of the books, girls might have received the impression that they are not very important, as most of the titles did not include females.

Female characters in the books were usually insignificant and inconspicuous. Often there was a theme of a man winning the princess' hand in marriage. The princess had nothing to say throughout the adventure and was not consulted in the choice of her husband. These books could give girls the impression that females are lacking initiatives and brains, and can not make their own decisions, are less worthy and do less exciting things than males.

Furthermore, the activities of boys tended to be active and adventurous, while those of girls were passive. The heroes rescued themselves; the heroines waited for the heroes. Men made things happen and women were their reward for achieving. For example, in The Fool of the World the princess remains peering out of the window, waiting and watching while others act on her behalf (Ronsome 1968). It also seemed that girls tended to serve, while boys tended to lead. An example cited here was of The Emperor and the Kite. The emperor's daughters bring food to the emperor's table but their brothers rule the kingdom (Yoken 1967).

Lastly, the authors noted that camaraderie was encouraged among boys. For example, in Goggles, two boys outwit a gang of older boys (Keats 1969). Rarely did one find girls working or playing without boys. This implied that the role of most girls is defined in relation to that of the boys and men in their lives.

Adult role models are a crucial component of gender role socialisation. By observing adult men and women, children learn what will be expected of them as adults, and this gives them future images of themselves, and influences their aspirations and goals. The images of adults in children's books were often stereotyped and limited. Women were almost always portrayed in the

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home. For example, in the Caldercott sample, not one woman had a job or profession; they were all wives and mothers. Motherhood was presented in picture books as a full-time, life-time job. Fathers were presented as working outside the home, seldom helping in the home or with child care.

Children's books have changed since this study was done, and authors and illustrators are generally more aware of feminist issues. Some books deliberately deal with sexism, just as others deal with racism. For example, the pictures in a little ladybird book entitled My Day are of both black and white people. Another example is of a book called the Piggy Book (Browne 1986). It explores the myth of a nice family living in a nice house with a nice mother who does all the housework. The men do nothing and, when the mother leaves, the place becomes a pigsty and they turn into pigs. Eventually the mother returns and the work load is rearranged. It ends thus: "They all helped with the cooking. They even enjoyed it. Mother was happy too. She fixed the car." This book sets out deliberately to expose and break the stereotypes, and so cannot be considered representative of children's books.

Another very popular series of children's books is the Doctor Seus Books. Twenty seven of these books were analysed. Eight of them were either about boys and girls, or it was difficult to tell if they were male or female. Of these eight, one was a delightful book called He Bear, She Bear showing that he and she could both be anything they wanted to be (Berenstain 1974). However, the other nineteen books were all about boys or male animals.

Then there is the Puddle Lane series by Sheila McCullagh. Here, there are an equal number of girls and boys doing activities together. There are some stereotypes, but these give reality to the books rather than being rigid. More often the books are non-sexist. There are some about a sandalwood girl and an iron boy. On their adventures both take turns as the leader and the rescuer. "The sandalwood girl seized the iron boy as they fell. (She remembered what he had said about sinking)... She pushed her head up out of the water. She pulled the iron boy's head out too. She began to swim" (Book 3:34). Later, as they climb a cliff, she looks down and the rock comes away in her hand. "The iron boy caught her dress and pulled her back against the rock" (Book 5:21).

Children's books are still more often about boys than girls, but the trend is not as stark as it was. There is a greater awareness of gender roles and stereotyping. Both girls and boys are included as leaders and followers, heroines and heroes. However, the bible stories are almost all about men. Generally men are the actors, the heroes and the doers. Women are the followers, the wives and the mothers.

Caldecott is a prize given for children's books. See Popencoe:1977:133.
3.2.2. Children's Bibles

Children's bibles are used at the Sunday school by the teachers to help them tell bible stories in a way that will be more easily understood by the children. They are also used by parents with their own children.

In *Dean's Gift Book of Bible Stories* there is a fairly good balance of stories about men and women. It includes the birth stories of Jesus, the lame man, the sower, the centurion and his servant, the woman hunting for the lost coin, the widow's mite and Jarius' daughter. Here there are two stories directly about women and, moreover women are portrayed in a good light, not simply stereotyped as mothers or wives or those in need.

*My First Bible in Pictures*, by Kenneth Taylor has a very short story on each page with a picture opposite it. It goes through the bible selecting certain stories. It does not retell them but simply recalls one or two main points about the story and a truth that can be learnt by the child. There are 120 stories altogether, out of which eighteen are about women or have an illustration of a woman. Considering the small number of women in the bible this may not seem too bad until one looks more closely at the way these women are portrayed and what roles they fulfil. Sarah is seen primarily as Abraham's wife. The story of Ruth and Naomi is told thus: "The lady in blue is Naomi. She is sad because her husband and sons have died. Ruth is trying to help Naomi feel better. She will stay with Naomi. God wants us to be helpers too. What can you do to help someone?" Compare this with the story of Samson. "Samson was a very very strong man. See how easily he broke tight ropes! Once he killed a lion with his bare hands. Another time he knocked down a palace to punish God's enemies. God made him strong so he could help God's people." Among other things, these stories portray women as helpers on a personal level, and men as helping God's people on a national level.

Women are often portrayed as mothers. For example, Moses, as a baby, is found by the princess, and there is a picture of a mother and child when the plagues are described. Mary and Elizabeth are shown in the traditional female roles of mothering. There is a picture of two women fighting over a baby, but this story is about the wisdom of Solomon not about the women. The story of Timothy's grandmother shows the faithfulness of women, but focuses primarily on what Timothy will do when he grows up and how he will tell many about Jesus. Perhaps the only stories that show women as actively fulfilling God's plan and working out their faith are those of the woman at the well, the widow's mite, Mary and Martha, and the women in the Easter story. These alone are about women as actors, as part of God's work, showing faith over and above their traditional roles.

This children's bible gives the overall impression that it is men who act or are called by God. Even
the illustrations bear this out: it is a man's world. The women, when they are seen at all, occupy secondary roles or traditional roles of mothers, helpers and home makers.

*My First Book of Bible Stories* picks out a few bible stories and does not attempt to go through the whole bible. It starts with the creation. In the creation stories "man" is given "a wife". Man is the actor, the main character and the wife is somehow a possession. Eve is the one who eats and gives the fruit and so causes the Fall. The next story is about the fall of Jericho where the role of Rahab is emphasised. Rahab is dealt with sympathetically as some one who acts, as someone through whom God works. In the story of Ruth and Naomi, many of the pictures are of men, which reinforces the fact that men made the decisions. It shows the relative powerlessness of women in biblical times. Then there are the stories of Daniel and Jonah. In the New Testament, there is the sermon on the mount and the stories that are retold are all about men. There is the story of Jesus as the shepherd and the story of the lost son. The miracles of Jesus that are included are the turning of water into wine and the feeding of the five thousand.

Another children's bible is *The Beginner's Bible: Timeless Children's Stories*, by Karen Henley. It is a large bible with bright illustrations. There were 46 stories from the Old Testament. These included creation; God's special helper, Adam; Noah; Abraham; A wife for Isaac; Joseph; Moses; Samson; Ruth; Samuel; Daniel; Elijah and Josiah. The New Testament stories are about Jesus and cover a fair variety of his doings and stories which involve both men and women. However, out of 46 stories in the Old Testament there is only one named after a woman. The index of characters, topics and stories includes 68 characters of which thirteen are women.

The creation story tells children that "God made man" (Henley 1989:15). Adam, as God's special helper, names the animals. When the angels visit Abraham and Sarah, God makes promises to Abraham and Sarah "made a good dinner for them" (Henley 1989:51). The Moses stories do deal with the women in his life but they fit neatly into the category of caring for a child, rather than being seen as rebels defying unjust and cruel orders. Although Ruth has a story to herself she is seen in traditional female roles. Caring and self-sacrificing are both good attributes but are all too often reinforced only for girls and not for boys. This story ends thus: "Boaz fell in love with Ruth. He married her. They had a baby named Obed. And they were happy together" (Henley 1989:159). Boaz, rather than Ruth, is the doer.

The New Testament stories are less obviously male oriented. The stories of the lost sheep and the lost coin depict God as being "like that shepherd" and "like that woman" (Henley 1989:417-421).

Another bible is *My Very Own Bible*, by Betty Fletcher. The Old Testament stories covered: creation, Noah, Joseph, Moses, Jericho, Samson, Ruth, Samuel, David and Goliath, Naaman,
Esther, Daniel and Jonah. Generally the stories followed the bible fairly closely with little overt sexism. Again, women were simply ignored or portrayed in traditional roles.

The *Bedtime Bible Story Book*, by Jesse Hurlbut, is for older children. It has no pictures to accompany the text, just a few black and white sketches. It deals with creation in the following way: "The world was all ready for men and women to enjoy, and so God said: 'I will make man different from all other animals. He shall stand up and have a soul, and shall be like God. He shall be the master of the earth and all that is on it.' So God took dust and out of it He made man. Then woman was made to "...be with you Adam and help you. Adam called her Eve." (Hurlbut 1989:2). The story of the Fall ends thus: "So Adam and his wife lost their garden and no man has ever been able to go back to it since then" (Hurlbut 1989:4). These stories reflect a sexist attitude in that men are seen as the main actors who are given control, and women are regarded as helpers rather than individuals in their own right. There is also an attitude of domination and conquest as the use of the word "master" of the earth, rather than "care for" the earth seems to give men divine legitimation for their abuse of the natural resources of the world.

In the foreword of *A Child's First Bible*, by Sandol Stoddard, a concern to be sensitive to Protestant, Catholic and Jewish religious traditions is expressed. There are 23 stories from the Old Testament, including the usual favourites of Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joseph, David, Jonah and Elijah and also Ruth and Naomi. There are seventeen New Testament stories mostly of Jesus, but also of John the Baptist, Martha and Mary, the fishermen and St. Paul. Despite the fact that most stories are of men, this bible is refreshingly non-sexist. God is "God", not "He" or "She". For example, in the creation story it says, "Now God was pleased, seeing that all of this work was very, very good. But there were no people yet, and so God made man and woman, giving them both a likeness to the Being and the Spirit of their Maker" (Stoddard 1991:15). The first man made by God was Adam, and the first woman was Eve. There is even a simile comparing the love of God with a mother's love, "Let us give thanks above all for God's love, in which each of us is safe as a child at it's mother's breast" (Stoddard 1991:56). Jesus calls his disciples to follow him as he will make them "fishers of human beings" (Stoddard 1991:75). Jesus does, however, still speak of his father's house and God's kingdom, although God is never called He.

The bible stories, as retold by David Kossoff, are delightful and full of human love and caring. They come alive as few other stories do. However God is referred to as "he". "Now when God decided to make a man to live in the brand new world he'd just created, he hadn't thought much about it other than that he would use himself as model and do the work with his own hands" (Kossoff 1968:14). When Eve is created God says, "It's called a woman. A companion for you. You are a male, she is female. All I told you about your garden you can tell her" (Kossoff 1968:15). The story called "Midian and Marriage" gives a good picture of the kind of patriarchal society of the time. "Jethro shooed his daughters off to bed and he and Moses went out and sat in
the garden.... Jethro made up his mind. Be my son - then he remembered how Zippora had looked at Moses - son-in-law, he said" (Kossoff 1968:83).

The Children's Bible in 365 Stories, by Mary Batchelor, follows the bible closely, and so, not surprisingly, the stories are predominantly about men. It goes through Genesis and moves to Exodus including the story of Abraham, the story of Noah, the story of Isaac, the story of Jacob, the story of Moses, Joshua and so on. The women after whom books were named are also included and so there is the story of Ruth and the story of Esther. The section about the time of the judges also follows the bible very closely and so Deborah is included. It says "the leader of Israel at this time was a woman called Deborah. She used to sit under one particular palm-tree so that everyone knew where to come for help or advice. One day Deborah sent for a man called Barak". She tells him that he is to lead an army against Sisera. He replies, "I'm not going unless you go with me." "Very well," Deborah agreed, 'but women will win this battle, not men." (Batchelor 1988:103). It then recounts the story of Jael and the tent peg. These stories certainly recount the role played by women in a very positive light. Yet equally, Delilah is portrayed as a vile seductress and traitor (Samson also comes across as a bit stupid). The stories about the women in the bible are well told, but there is an overwhelming number of stories that are about men.

Then there is My Read and Do Bible Story Book, by Debbie Trafton. It has an activity to do after each story and looks interesting and is stimulating for parents and children. The creation story is called "God made people". God makes Adam and then Eve, and Adam names Eve, and they love each other. Within the limitations of the bible itself there seems to be a fair treatment of men and women. Of course there are far more stories about men. In fact out of the fifteen characters dealt with, only two are women, that is, Ruth and Naomi. The New Testament section has the stories of the birth of Jesus and of John. It deals with the disciples, who are described as Jesus' special friends. None of Jesus' female friends, such as Joanna and Susanna, are included as special friends (Luke 8:1-3). In fact, it appears as if all Jesus' special friends were men. With a topic such as special friends it would have been easy to include some of the women who were special to Jesus. The stories of the lost sheep (Lk 15:1-7) and the lost coin (Lk 15:8-10) are both included. There is a lovely story entitled "A woman who loved God" about the widow's mite. The woman is, however the more stereotyped picture of a woman loving God rather than the more unusual example of a woman's holiness and closeness to God (Trafton 1989:111). The illustration for the story of "The rushing wind" is disappointing as it shows only men being given the Holy Spirit (Trafton 1989:124). The bible itself says that all the believers were gathered, and these must have included the women (Acts 1:14; 2:1).

A short book of bible stories by Wanda Hayes included 5 stories of women out of the 15 stories in the book. Two that were of particular interest were those of "A servant girl who helped Naaman"
and "Dorcas who helped many people". This gives a glimpse of the number of stories about women that can be included if one tries.

Finally, a story about Lydia, in a small bible reader, not very attractive and easily overlooked drew my attention. It was the first time I had seen any stories about Lydia. This story was included in a section entitled "The followers of Jesus". The story is disappointing in that it emphasises Lydia asking Paul and Silas to come and stay in her house, rather than her leadership role in the house church. However, it does say that "her house was beautiful inside and outside. But most important of all . . . it had become a church where friends of Jesus met together".

3.3. The Sunday School as an agent of socialisation

Before analysing the Sunday school material and books themselves, a brief description of the six Sunday schools follows. (There is a more detailed description of the Sunday schools in the Appendix 1.) There were differences among the various Sunday schools. Their economic position influenced what they could do, where they met and the equipment and resources that they had. These kinds of considerations influenced their decisions about resource books and Sunday school material as much as their theological outlook and background. Hence the wealthier parishes could use Scripture Union material with individual handouts for each child, while the poorer parishes made do with no books whatsoever. The teachers simply used their bibles and told the children the stories from them.

St Martin's is a wealthy parish, with a separate senior and junior Sunday school. There is plenty of space for the Sunday school to meet and no lack of resources in terms of Sunday school books and equipment. The children were divided into fairly small groups, each with a teacher. St. Peter's is a poorer parish than St Martins, but still relatively wealthy. Both are traditionally white parishes though now they are fairly well mixed. St Peter's also has plenty of space and resources.

St. Luke's and St Margaret's, Noordgesig are traditionally so called coloured parishes with St. Luke's being a wealthy parish and Noordgesig being a poor parish. St. Luke's Sunday school meets after the morning church service, and so there is plenty of space as they can use the church. Noordgesig had to meet outside in the church grounds, sitting on wooden benches, of which there was a shortage. They had no resources such as Sunday school books or crayons. There was also a shortage of teachers in that the classes were large, with between 30 and 35 children in a class.

St Stephen's, Diepkloof and St. Paul's, Jabavu are the two black parishes, with Jabavu being the wealthier one. St Stephen's Sunday school meets in a garage and is very crowded. They also
have very few resources in terms of books and are short of teachers. There are only two teachers for about sixty children.

It seemed as if all the children enjoyed going to Sunday school. In the larger Sunday schools this was more difficult to assess. In the smaller Sunday schools, such as St. Peter's, the children were greeted individually as they arrived, and there was a feeling that they were happy to be there and to greet their teachers and see the other children.

Most Sunday schools met at the same time as the church. Some, however, met after the church service. Those who met at the same time started off on their own and then joined the rest of the congregation for a blessing at communion.

Children's services were held occasionally by most of the churches. During these services, the children participate by reading the lessons, saying the prayers, taking up the collection, leading the singing, and sometimes even participating in the sharing of the word, whether this involved short testimonies, drama or simply answering questions during the sermon.

3.3.1. The Teachers

The supervisor sets the tone and has an influence over the whole Sunday school. Often the supervisors attracted teachers who had similar outlooks and backgrounds to themselves. To a large extent, the supervisor's theological outlook determined the way in which the Sunday school was run.

Most of the supervisors themselves had been members of the churches for quite some time. So they were influenced by the worship and teaching of the church. This formed their background and understanding. Some had even attended the Sunday school when they were children.

The amount of training the teachers had received varied. Some had been on SANSSA (South African National Sunday school Association) courses, others had been trained by the Diocese some time ago when they had an Education Department that did Sunday school teacher training. Other teachers simply learnt as they went along, drawing from their own experiences.

3.3.2. Worship

Most Sunday schools started with a time of song and worship before splitting into classes. This was an important part of their time together. They would sing some choruses, perhaps have a short time of teaching by the supervisor, and then a time of prayer and the collection would be
taken. Some choruses were more popular than others. Their popularity seemed to lie, at least to a certain extent, in their liveliness. *Heads and shoulders*, a secular song with no mention of God, was popular. Other active songs which were enjoyed were *Father Abraham* and *Stand up and shout it, My God is so big* and *King of the jungle*.

Sometimes the children were encouraged to pray their own prayers. At other times, a child was chosen to read a specific prayer either from the prayer book or a children's book of prayers. It seemed as if leadership roles were assigned equally to boys or girls. They seemed to participate fairly evenly in the more visible tasks. The prayers often addressed God as "Father" or "King". These were the main titles that were used. However, at other times, God was addressed as "Lord".

### 3.4. Sunday School Books

A wide range of Sunday school books and resources is available. For example, there is the South African National Sunday School Association material (SANSSA), Scripture Union, Gospel Light and Daily Bread. The kinds of reasons for choosing certain Sunday school material were that it made lesson preparation easier for the teachers, the parish could not afford anything else, the priest had given it to them, they were bible based, and they were geared for the developmental level of each age group. Some also said they were chosen because they helped to make the children more aware of social issues.

The materials that were being used in these six Sunday schools were the Scripture Union books, the SANSSA teaching packs and the bible. These were the main resources. There were some other resources such as children's bibles, books of children's prayers and a few other Sunday school teaching books.

The following analysis of these materials concentrates on gender issues, but their context and awareness of culture, class and race are also examined.

### 3.4.1. Context

These materials are not local. The Scripture Union material is from Britain. One of the problems with this is that the seasons are not the same. In South Africa, Christmas is in summer, not winter, and spring is September, not May. The examples they give of problems in the community are not always relevant to South African children, especially township children. The SANSSA material is from Scripture Press and is North American, and so suffers from the same problems as the Scripture Union material.
3.4.2. Culture, class and race

The Scripture Union and the SANSSA materials are aware of the issues of race, culture and gender. For instance, the cover picture on one of the Scripture Union books is of a racially mixed group of people. However, the fact that it is a British publication is apparent as the majority of people in the picture are white, not black. This ratio of black to white is found in Britain, not South Africa. Much of the culture is English. However, there is an awareness of other situations. For example, in one story about Jesus, *A king with no home*, there is a picture of some squatters who also had no home.\(^7\) Issues of poverty and homelessness are raised, even if they are not dealt with in any depth. For the four to five year old group, Scripture Press has a mission emphasis about a girl from India which helps to raise an awareness of other cultures. In the lesson about family life there is a sensitivity to the fact that not all families have a mother and father and two or three children. There are also, for example, extended families and single parent families.

Both series are basically geared towards middle class families. The stories presuppose middle class families with gardens, swings, books, comfortable homes and enough to eat. The fathers have jobs. In a number of the stories the children go to meet father as he comes home from work. They never go to meet the mother, so one could infer that the mother stays at home. The teachers and children who use these books can identify with the families and homes described. The books are fairly expensive and this means that it is the more wealthy Sunday schools who use them. For example, Noordgesig could not afford them.

3.4.3. Gender

At first glance the Scripture Union material is not sexist. The modern stories used to illustrate certain principles from the bible are about both girls and boys. There seems to be more or less the same number of stories about girls as there is about boys. There is some stereotyping of roles, but this is probably because it is what the children will identify with most readily. In this sense they conform with a patriarchal culture, rather than challenging it. For example, there is a story taken from the childhood of Jesus. Jesus is at home helping mother and father. He helps mother with the dishes and father with the garden.

There is less gender equality in the bible stories. One of the reasons for this goes back to the analysis of the bible. The bible is a largely androcentric book, written from a male perspective and recording the experiences of men. It follows, and is not surprising, that when turning to the scriptural stories there are an overwhelming number of stories about men. For example, the January-March 1993 issue for five to seven year olds covers: *God the giver of Life*, *Jeremiah* and *A King with a difference*.

\(^7\) Scripture Union 5-7 Jan/March 1993: Unit 3 Week 9.
The July-September issue for five to seven year olds starts off with leadership. The example it uses of a godly leader is Samuel. He is a servant of God, a messenger of God and he reveals God's intentions and authority. The New Testament examples of people with the marks of leadership are Paul and Titus. The first lesson in this section on leadership perhaps sets the tone regarding men and women in leadership. The bible passage is 1 Samuel 1:27-2:21. It is about Hannah and her desperate prayer for a child and how her request is miraculously answered. But, the lesson focuses on Elkanah as a good leader. He is the caring good leader of his household. He trusts Hannah and helps her fulfil her vow.

The next section is about 'A Growing Church'. It covers witnessing, praying, giving, healing and suffering. The bible stories used to illustrate these aspects are all taken from Acts. There is the story of Peter and John as they witness before the Sanhedrin. Peter is thrown into gaol but he escapes from prison, and rejoins the believers (Acts 4). Peter is held up as the example of a missionary. The early church in Acts 4 is used to discuss prayer and giving, with the well known passage about the believers having all things in common. The lessons on healing and suffering are both taken from Acts 5 and are about the apostles.

In the October-December issue the theme is 'A God we can Trust'. The stories about Abraham are used to illustrate these lessons. Abraham trusted God, and so did his wife Sarah. There are also more general topics about enjoying life, music and dance, food and drink, and each other. The other age groups deal with the same topics but in more detail and in a way appropriate for their levels of learning.

To sum up, one can say the modern stories which accompany the biblical stories are generally not sexist and are about girls and boys, while the biblical stories that are chosen are almost all about men.

The SANSSA, Scripture Press material is also aware of gender. The bible stories are mostly about men, but the other stories have a good balance between boys and girls. In the two to three year olds' teaching guide there are stories about two children, Dan and Debbie. One particularly seemed to move beyond stereotyped roles. "Father helped Debbie to look into mother Robin's nest. Dan looked too when mother lifted him up. These little birds look hungry said Debbie. Who is going to feed them? Father Robin will feed them answered mother. Who will help to keep them warm when night-time comes asked Debbie? Mrs Robin will keep them warm and safe all night long answered father and God cares for us too."8

The biblical stories for the two to three year olds are mostly about men with a definite male emphasis. For example, there is the story of the lame man, and stories of Jesus making sick men well. In the picture of the Ascension there are only men. Another picture is captioned Jesus and

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8 March - May 2-3's 1993:8
his friends were climbing up a high mountain. This picture is also of Jesus and a group of men. These pictures seem to imply that Jesus had only male friends. The lesson that teaches how God gives us food uses Elijah as an illustration (1 Kings 17:1-7). The lesson entitled "God gives us families" is illustrated from Acts 16:1, 2 and 2 Tim 1:5; 3:15. It is about mothers' training their children, as Timothy's mother and grandmother trained him. Because Lois and Eunice have given Timothy a sound background, Paul is able to lead him to the lord. (Paul claims him as his own son in the faith).

For the four to five year olds, Unit Two has the following three lessons: Moses is given the law, Josiah finds God's word, Timothy learns God's word. These are typical of the lessons. Unit Three follows with We thank God for his Gifts which includes stories of Nehemiah, Ezra and a man with leprosy. Under the heading "Many people showed gratitude to God", the following comes: "Ezra and other men thanked God in prayer. Ezra and other men read them God's word."

The same conclusion can be drawn about the Scripture Press material as the Scripture Union material. They both attempt to be non-sexist. Their modern stories are mostly gender inclusive, but the biblical ones are predominantly about men.

3.4.4. Ecclesiastical Doctrine

All the materials have an evangelical perspective. They emphasise personal salvation and having a personal relationship with Jesus. Where issues are raised they focus on what individual children can do to help alleviate the immediate hardship, rather than looking at any possible structural changes. Sin is seen in terms of the individual, not in terms of structures or society. One can argue that this is what is more appropriate for children, which may be true, but it also reflects a definite theological and class perspective.

The Scripture Press claims strongly that their material is bible based. They say that their Sunday school curriculum is true to the word of God and teaches the word of God. It has a very basic evangelical message emphasising the need for a personal relationship with Jesus and to bring others to Jesus. There is little concern for social issues, as these are seen as subordinate to bringing people to faith.

3.4.5. Images of God.

The prayers which were said at Sunday school reflected masculine images of God, as did the Sunday school material. God the giver of Life is one of the few titles in the Sunday school books which is not gender specific. The predominant images of God are as father, king and lord, although at times impersonal terms are used such as creator and sustainer. For example, in the

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9 Sept - Nov 4-5's 1993:77
Scripture Union material, Jesus is described as a king. The king Jesus talked to his father God when he was sad.\(^{10}\)

Scripture Union has an inclusive definition for the Holy Trinity. This is "a communion of persons in relationships of love, freedom and communication." It goes on to say: "It is in the image of the Holy Trinity that we human beings are made. We are invited and intended to reflect something of him." The main definition of the Holy Trinity is inclusive, but in the end the Trinity is still "him". When it comes to pronouns for God, "he" is always used. This reflects the absolute and unquestioning assumption that God is to be imaged in masculine terms, and referred to as he.

Scripture Press pushes the father image for God. "Jesus addressed the sermon on the mount to his disciples and to those children of God who could say 'our Father'; a relationship made possible only through faith in His son." Another example of the way the father image is emphasised is found in the discussion on God caring for us. "Will God be less mindful of their physical needs than an earthly father would be?" "If we place first our concern for our eternal souls and the work of God, then our Heavenly Father will be sure to see that our physical needs are all met." These images of God follow the images of God found in the church, in the worship of the church and in the language of the church.\(^{11}\)

### 3.4.6 Topics covered

The more popular topics that were covered in the Sunday schools were similar to those in the children's bibles. These topics included the following:

- Creation
- Moses
- David
- The birth of Jesus
- The parables
- The miracles of Jesus

The most popular topics are mostly about men. But again, this is not surprising as the bible is mostly about men and their doings, and in the bible God is mostly portrayed in masculine terms despite the fact that God is beyond gender. What follows is a brief examination of how some of these topics are dealt with in the Sunday schools.

\(^{10}\) Jan/March 5-7's 1993 : 40  
\(^{11}\) SANSSA 4-5's 1993 : 18, 19
3.4.6.1 Creation

In dealing with creation the six Sunday schools emphasised the fact that we are all created as special people, loved by God. One of the activities at St Peter's Sunday school was to make a crown to show that each child is special. The children enjoyed the activity and seemed to understand at least some of the message. They also enjoyed this emphasis on doing, rather than listening. This was a young group of children, between three and six years old. This informal kind of lesson, not taken from any Sunday school book as such, relies greatly on the quality and dedication of the teacher, and the teacher's awareness of issues, including the gender issue.

The Scripture Union Sunday school books tended to follow the Genesis accounts of creation. Some emphasised Genesis 1, where male and female are created in God's image. However, others concentrated on the more pictorial image of God creating Adam out of the soil. This emphasis on Adam reinforces the primacy of men rather than the equality between men and women.

The Scripture Union material's heading for the series of lessons about the creation is "God the giver of life", but they also use the term "The Lord of life". This is a quote from the Nicene creed that refers to the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture Union notes start off by teaching that man and woman are in a true partnership. That is how God created them. However, as the bible concentrates on Adam, so does the Scripture Union. God forms Adam. God breathes into Adam's nostrils. God makes Eve for Adam. No one can doubt that Adam not Eve is the central figure in the creation story. 12

Scripture Press has a lesson entitled "God makes People". Adam is made first. Then God creates a helper for Adam. Adam calls her Eve. This reinforces passive and active roles. In the English translation of the creation stories, Eve is described as "helper". However the word helper does not do justice to the Hebrew word "ezër" which in the bible is used to describe God as the helper of people. Population explosion is a controversial topic but easy encouragement and sanction to large families is given in the following: "One time God was talking to Adam and the woman. He said you will have babies so there will be plenty of people on the earth". At least both Adam and Eve are told to have babies, not as another story where Adam alone is given this command. 13

3.4.6.2. David

There is an interesting story in the Scripture Union material for the theme 'peacemakers'. It is about Abigail. She convinces David that he should not seek revenge (1 Sam 25:1-35). This is a refreshing contrast to stories of David as an example of trusting God, of friendship between David and Jonathan, and of the story of David and Goliath for "standing up for God". The next unit,

12 Scripture Union Jan/ March 1993
13 SANSNA 1993: 22-23
however, goes back to the pattern of using men as examples in the lessons. There are five stories in this unit. Four are about David and one is about Solomon.

If one considers the modern stories and overlooks the fact that all the biblical stories are about men, the Sunday school books show a fair degree of gender equality. However, even if the lessons are trying to follow a bible book, there could still be more of an effort to seek out stories about women as well as men. It is possible to do this as shown by the story of Abigail, who is not a well known biblical character. It may be difficult to find stories of women, but often even those that are there are not used.

There is the question of whether it is more important to cover all the best known bible stories or whether one should search for the lesser known stories in order to avoid sexism. If the aim is simply to know the biblical material then perhaps it is enough to teach the stories. If the aim is to develop a relationship with God that is freeing rather than restrictive, then it is not. If Sunday school lessons are subtly giving the message that God acts through boys rather than girls, there is a problem. If lessons are saying that God chooses and works through men far more often than women, subtle sexist messages may be absorbed by the children. Years later, if women feel that men are more favoured by God and chosen more often by God, this may be because of the predominance of stories concerning men. The male imagery for God may reinforce this, as God is always referred to as he and described as father or lord. The picture that comes across is of a male God who chooses mostly men to do his work. It is hardly surprising that girls regard themselves primarily as helpers, supporters and carers in the church. The roles of leading and initiating are left to the men.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this chapter. The first of these is that the Scripture Union material is basically non-sexist when it comes to stories in modern day settings or when using modern stories to illustrate a point. Stories of boys and girls are used with the same kind of frequency to teach the same kind of truths. However, when it comes to the biblical material it follows a literalist, non-contextual approach to the bible. Stories are chosen to fit in with the conservative evangelical perspective. It generally chooses the most popular stories in the bible rather than seeking out the overlooked stories about women in the bible. In some of these stories the women are mentioned almost in passing. For example, in Romans 16, Paul simply greets some women who were fellow workers. Paul is used as an example of a missionary, but if we are to teach that God calls both girls and boys as missionaries, then the example of Paul should be balanced with an example such as Priscilla. We need to talk about women as well as men. But too often just Peter, John, Paul, Timothy and Titus are mentioned. Prisca (Rom 16:3), Phoebe (Rom 16:1) and Junia (Rom 16:7) are forgotten.
Samuel was a man of God, called by God, but there are also women such as Huldah (2 Kings 22; 2 Chron 34:14-28), who were called by God, who were women of God. They are hardly mentioned and seldom remembered but perhaps their stories should be included.

Secondly, the Sunday school material is limited by the way in which the bible is interpreted. Often the bible is understood literally as the word of God which one must accept at face value. One is not encouraged to seek for deeper meanings and new and different interpretations. Certain passages are more valued than others and are used frequently. These are the passages that fit with the evangelical perspective. Moreover they are the passages that reinforce our cultural norms. For example, they teach that husbands are the head of households, and that the government should be obeyed. This has been done through the ages with other issues such as slavery.

A third conclusion is that God is always portrayed in masculine terms. There is no attempt to try and balance these images with feminine ones. A few impersonal images such as creator and comforter are used, but are immediately followed by a masculine pronoun that indicates that, in fact, God is male. Father is the most popular image for God. When discussing the children's home backgrounds there is an awareness that there may be unhappy situations, and that there is a need to be sensitive to these, but God is still depicted as Father, even if there are unhappy experiences with earthly fathers.

There is a personal approach to Christianity. One's faith is a personal commitment to Christ and to caring for people on an individual level. Generally no attempt is made to analyse the ills of society from a broader perspective. Instead issues are dealt with on a personal level. Children are encouraged, for example, to care for the poor and prevent pollution but on a personal not a structural level. In many ways this is the level that is easiest for children to understand, the level on which they can do something. But it is wrong to let them think that this is the whole picture.

Lastly, the children enjoyed Sunday school, and certainly many of the lessons would give them a sense that they were special, and loved by God. These good feelings may make the hidden sexism in the lessons and in the bible difficult to detect. God loves us all; we are all called to listen to God and to work for God in the world. But God is 'he' and God called men as his disciples, to do his work in the world, to write his book and to be his priests. There is some kind of inconsistency here that may never be fully analysed because the stories are functioning at two levels. One is that all are equal. The other is that boys are the more active, the more prominent, the ones that God really works through in big ways. The girls take secondary roles and help and support the boys. The girls serve God at home while the boys go out on journeys. The boys have adventures while women show their faith in a quiet way, praying and giving and sacrificing.
Chapter 4

THE WAY FORWARD - SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Before looking at the way forward and making some suggestions, it is useful to summarise some of the effects of gender stereotyping and sexism in the church. These will give an indication of the areas that need to be addressed and of the negative effects that need to be overcome.

4.1. The effects of gender stereotyping in the church

Sexist socialisation has negative effects most immediately and profoundly on women, but also on men, children and on the church itself and ultimately on society. The psychological and emotional costs may be less obvious than the structural ones, but often they are far more detrimental.

One of the costs for women is the tendency toward psychological paralysis and lowered self-esteem. Women internalise false images of themselves and an identity which is "other-than-the-norm". This self-image is often gained in childhood. It is a negative one which limits women's consciousness of their own self-worth. It means that women are less likely to reach their potential or to aspire too high. They limit their goals and aspirations to fit in with what is "feminine" or "women's role". For example, they may see themselves as being good at pastoral visiting, but not at leading a home church or being a parish priest.

Related to this false image is the phenomenon of women being "anti-feminist". Women have internalised their submissive roles and identify with the male power structure. They see women who challenge the male power structure as threats to their marriages and their comfort. One reason for this is because it makes them realise that women do not have to fill subordinate positions. It shakes them from their comfortable complacency and challenges them to get up and make the effort to fulfil their own potential. But, it also raises the fear of criticism, of being different and of being excluded.

As all the commonly used images for God are male, women tend to see the masculine as somehow more powerful and holy than the feminine. Masculine God language causes conscious and unconscious damage to the worth and dignity of women. According to Wren, the use of almost exclusive male terms for God reinforces the concept that women are unfit or less fit to represent the beauty and grandeur of God (Wren 1989:3). This leads to a subtle feeling of inferiority for women and superiority for men. Subconsciously or consciously it can limit women in their vision and their potential. A woman is unlikely to aspire to be a bishop, because although

1This is an expression quoted from Ackermann et al.: 1961:93. It is taken by Ackermann from Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (1961: xvi-xvii) It is a term used to explain how males define women as the other. Ackermann says "we are present as the silent other as our reality finds no expression in the accepted discourse".
ordination is now open to women, to reach the pinnacle and become a bishop is still restricted to men, in practice if not in theory.

The problems of lowered self-esteem, emotional dependence on males, false humility and role stereotyping are worse if women are unaware of the problem of sexism. If they have been thoroughly socialised, they cannot start to question and analyse things or to admit that they feel an undefined dissatisfaction with their lives. They have internalised the expectations and social roles. Coupled with the profound psychic and emotional costs are the pervasive institutional ones. These are present in society and also in the church structures themselves. For example, there is discrimination in educational opportunities, ecclesiastical positions and remuneration.

Sexist socialisation also has consequences for men. They tend to try to live up to a "macho" image. Male identity and self-worth are seen in terms of achievement or being better than others. Value is placed on success rather than on intrinsic human worth and dignity. This emphasis on achievement makes it more difficult for men to accept the gospel of grace.

Sexism reinforces power and competitive relations. Men tend to develop a need to dominate and control. Talking is valued over listening, competition over mutuality, and an aggressive stance over a persuasive one. Men tend to try to be hyper-rational. The development of their affective life is truncated as they neglect their senses and emotions. One of the reasons for this is that women are associated with emotions and feelings. The combination of a fear of emotion and a desire for dominance and control makes interpersonal intimacy difficult for many men. Competition and status are injected into many situations which do not call for them (Nelson 1978:65ff.).

Taken to an extreme, these authoritarian, patriarchal attitudes contribute to family conflict and to violence. "A certain code of masculinity is purchased at the price of suppressing tenderness and self-acceptance" (Nelson 1978:66). The patriarchal system gives men a sense of superiority and power over women. In families, fathers become dictatorial; they expect obedience because of their position, rather than because they have earned it. In a right relationship between men and women this need not happen. Male authority and fathers can be very good; it is the distortion of these that is a problem.

For the church, sexist socialisation reinforces hierarchy and domination. The church has adopted a model of dominace rather than service. Leadership is one of hierarchy not mutuality. Often the hierarchical model of leadership is used because there is a lack of alternative, more inclusive models and roles on which to build. This hierarchical authority model may lead to the pyramid syndrome. In this syndrome, the bishop remains at the pinnacle of the pyramid and he is the overseer. Below him are the priests and after that, at the base of the pyramid, come the laity. This pyramid model of ministry deprives the church of many of the gifts and talents of the people
and especially of women. Instead of mutuality and shared leadership and responsibility, the laity sit back and do not grow and do not take responsibility. Hence, the whole church suffers.

The anachronistic understanding of clerical ordination that exists in the church, in practice if not in theory, means that the churches are male dominated. Recently women's ordination was accepted in the CPSA, but power tends to be in the hands of men. In the modern world, with the more democratic structures of society, the hierarchical, status-based structure of ministry seems dysfunctional. The church theorises about servant-hood but in practice ministry is authoritarian.

Many women have a joyful, liberating experience of Christianity. Their self worth is affirmed as persons beloved by God and created in God's image. However, due to the patriarchal nature of Christianity and gender stereotyping in the church, women's growth may be encouraged to a certain point and then restricted. Women's growth is hampered because they tend to be given secondary roles in the church. One of the reasons for this is that these roles are seen as biblically and divinely ordained. Women are socialised to accept things this way. An example of this comes from the Namibian church, but the same could be said of the Johannesburg Diocese. Kathindi, a church worker, describes how "women are programmed into submissiveness and are not assertive enough to serve even on important committees and commissions in the church. Women attend church services and functions in large numbers but their contribution to decision-making is minimal" (Kathindi in Ackermann et al 1991:255). Canon Luke Pato says the following about the roles and responsibilities for church women: "They continue to play supportive roles of providing teas, raising funds and leading women's organisations, notwithstanding the fact that they constitute the majority of active members in the church and therefore are the backbone of the church... the ministry allowed to women in the church does little more than reinforce images and structures of inferiority and servitude" (Pato, in Ackermann, et al. 1991:116). Hence, the full benefits of their gifts and ministry are lost to the church.

The questionnaire showed that women often fulfilled secondary roles in the church, but not always. All the churches had a male priest in charge, but in some churches there was a fair mix in the roles. For example, men were involved in helping with the tea and women were involved in preaching. This was the case in two of the churches that were studied. It may be because some of the women in the church are trained in theology and the priests in charge are fairly aware of sexist issues. In other churches, however, the roles were more stereotyped. In all the answers to the questionnaire it was felt that women should have the opportunity to serve both as priests and pastors. There should not be a restriction in their roles.

In terms of the broader community, the church is providing no alternative to society. The church shows no new way of being in the world. This seems to contrast sharply with the early church which was radically different from the surrounding society. In the early church, men had to consider their wives, to love them and to give themselves for their wives. This pattern and
teaching was present despite the radically different and sexist culture surrounding them. In the early church there were female as well as male leaders. Women had other options besides those of wife and mother. They could become missionaries and leaders of the church if they chose to, or combine a variety of roles. The early Christian community was of such a nature that Paul could write "there is neither male nor female" (Gal 3:28). He could affirm this basic equality between men and women despite the shortcomings and failings of the church and the influence of society. Unfortunately, this radical Christian vision did not last very long. The church fathers, with their patriarchal world view, undermined it and destroyed something very beautiful and holy. Today the vision of Galatians 3:28 tends to be understood in terms of salvation and future hope rather than in relation to ordination, ecclesiastical structures and the like.

When women's positive experience of Christianity is undermined and negated by the attitudes and practices of the church, they may simply give up and move out of the church. They recognise its patriarchal nature and see no way of changing it. Often they do not want to leave the church but they see no alternative. The following quote typifies much of these women's experience: "In contrast to Jesus' attitudes and actions women have until recently been excluded from theological colleges and ordination, they have been ignored, insulted and rejected. They have further been patronised, laughed at and exploited. They have been driven to ask the question: 'Is this the church of Jesus Christ or is it a men's club?' " When this happens the church is impoverished as it no longer benefits from the unique contribution of all its members. But those women who leave the church also lose out as they are deprived of the traditions and roots of their faith, and the benefits of the ministry of the church, which are there despite the sexist nature of the church.

Other women move so far from the church that they no longer call themselves Christian but rather post-Christian. They may still be religious or spiritual but no longer specifically Christian. They see Christianity as inherently sexist. Thus, it cannot be redeemed and is best for them to move outside Christianity. Others, instead of leaving the church when their experience as feminists conflicts with their church experience, remain in the church but split their church life and their religion from the rest of their life. If this split occurs their religion becomes an empty shell that has no real relevance to life's situations.

An alternative to this is to remain in the church, and to try to reinterpret Christianity. This involves identifying where it is sexist and how it can be redeemed. This can be very difficult to do because sexism is so deeply ingrained, both in the believers and in the church's traditions and day to day existence. Sexist teachings have been learnt as a child and are buried at the subconscious level. Intellectually these women may assent to God as mother, but it is difficult really to internalise this new image along with the father image. They may move from calling God "lord" and "father" to

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2 See Longenecker to support this view.
4 Daphne Hemp is an example of this position.
5 The nature of this phenomenon and its consequences are explored in Hughes 1985.
addressing God as "mother", but to make this mother image of God as real as a father image is more complicated.

4.2. Mutuality in the church - - Ways of counter-acting sexism

4.2.1. The contribution of Feminist theology

Feminist theory encourages women to name their oppression and to ponder its sources. Feminist theology has its roots in feminist theory, although it also has areas of difference. It seeks to reveal the systematic oppression of women in society and the church. It does this by a critique of traditional theology.

A number of Christian feminists have remained within the Christian tradition, despite their criticisms of it. They do not all agree with one another and their methodology differs, but there are large areas of consensus and a sense of sisterhood among them. They all work from a premise that traditional theology is patriarchal. It is written as if maleness were the normative form of humanity. Women are seldom the subject or the audience of theology. Theology usually deals with men's experience, and speaks to them. Very few women are seen as important in the Christian tradition. Those who were included tended to be portrayed either as dangerous and evil, or idealised as pure and holy. Women were caricatured, seen as deviant or described in negative ways. For example, Mary Magdalene is known as a prostitute rather than the first among the apostles.  

Theological thinking has been done almost entirely by men. Due to this exclusion of women, feminist theologians have found it necessary to develop various norms or sets of criteria to critique traditional theology. They have explored the use of scripture and are able to give some pointers to new ways of evaluating theological sources and formulations. For example, for Fiorenza, women's experience of oppression functions as a central focus and norm of evaluation. She believes that one must question whether the biblical text is liberating or not. This can be done by what she names "women church".

Ruether follows a feminist eclecticism. She sees that there is a usable and an unusable tradition. Women need to search for a usable past. Part of discovering a usable past is to find inclusive and usable language. This involves a search for the forgotten names of God. This is important because language is not just a tool but it also has power over us.

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6 For example see the dispute as to whether the "sinful woman" was the same as Mary Magdalene. The latter is described as having demons cast out of her, not as a prostitute. See Fiorenza 1983:xii.
Ruether looks for the prophetic-messianic tradition. For her the criteria is whether the full humanity of women is promoted or not. Anything that hinders women's full acceptance as equals needs to be challenged. It is not that incidents of scripture are denied, but that they are not allowed to oppress. This is important because the feelings of love and affirmation experienced when first reading the scriptures may turn to depression and betrayal as their sexist nature unfolds. These criteria can help to overcome such feelings.

Feminist theology attempts the reconstruction of various doctrines. For instance, it examines what effect the male images for God have on women. It then develops the doctrine of God and makes it more inclusive. God is no longer an all-male god as was often portrayed in the traditional doctrine of God. There are other ways of addressing God and other images that can be used. For example, Sallie McFague suggests that one could also address God as "Creator, Friend and Lover."

Feminist theology has a new understanding of ministry that sees it as broader than just ordination, and which questions hierarchical power. It is not trying to fit a handful of women into the male-created and male-dominated structure of priesthood. Rather it posits a new vision of ministry which is inclusive. It also requires new symbolism, incorporating an egalitarian relationship between men and women.

Another sphere in which feminist theology is very helpful, is in the construction of new liturgies and worship experiences. In these alternative liturgies God is addressed as neither male nor female, or alternately as both male and female. If these were used more widely in the church they would be very helpful in making people more aware of sexism. They can give children an alternative experience of worship which is not sexist.

Theology should ultimately be saying to women that they are important and that their experiences in life are important. Yet the bible either ignores or denigrates women's bodily experiences. Menstruation is labelled as unclean (Lev 15:13; 33:12). Jesus changed this when he acknowledged the woman who touched his cloak and was healed (Luke 8:43-48), yet the stigma of uncleanness remains. In the Old Testament there were mixed beliefs and cultic practices regarding birth. A new baby was a great blessing, but the process of birth defiled a woman who

7 Russell explains how the entrance of women into the priesthood throws into question the entire set of religious symbolism based on sexual polarities. She says "The 'male' God's relationship to the 'female' church and the 'male' priests relationship to the 'female' laity, are threatened. God is now imaged and represented by women. Exclusively masculine imagery of God in theology and liturgy is thus clearly not adequate. Exclusively feminine imagery of the church, for instance, as the bride of Christ, can equally no longer be perceived as an adequate representation of the relationship between God and the church. The understanding of the patriarchal God, relating to the dependent, obedient church is irretrievably undermined by women priests. The need for new symbolism, founded not on male domination and female submission, but on egalitarian mutuality between the sexes, is exposed by the ordination of women." In Ackermann, et al. 1991:305.
then needed purification rites. A sacrifice had to be brought to the temple. Part of it was for thanksgiving and part was for uncleanness.  

Feminist theology has helped women to question the meaning of "being created in the image of God". If the full truth of this is to become a reality for women, God should not be referred to in exclusively masculine terms, as it makes it more difficult for women to see themselves in their bodily existence as being in the image of God. Women might well ask, "in what sense are their bodies a reflection of God?" Too often being created in the image of God is understood in a vague, other-worldly sense. It is used to promote justice and human dignity in situations of oppression. But this condemnation of injustice is seldom applied to situations of oppression in which women may find themselves. The fact that women are created in the image of God is not concretised and made a reality in terms of the way women are regarded. Another aspect of being created in the image of God that is emphasised by feminist theologians, such as Carter Heyward, is the relational aspect.

Feminist theology seeks to recover the lost histories of women, seeing their presence in places where it has gone unnoticed. This involves delving into the scriptures and discovering the women who are mentioned in them. It means finding out about them and the significant role women have played within the church. These early Christian women were liberated to lead churches to break out of traditional roles, to sit and listen at Jesus' feet, to be equal in the worship community and to have responsibilities in the churches alongside men. We need to rediscover these women and so draw on the past experience of women, but this can not be done if we do not know it. These early women still had to contend with patriarchy. As Judith Plaskow says, "women's experience means the experience of women in the course of a history never free from cultural role definition" (Young 1990:56). But it is also the experience of how women can overcome prejudice and fulfil their God-given potential.

In developing feminist theology both today's situation and the received Christian witness must be taken seriously. Credibility rests on coherence and non-contradiction. If theology contradicts itself and women's experience, it needs to be questioned. Women are right to question traditional theology if it undermines and goes against women's experience. Also, if church practice and teaching go against Jesus' actions, attitudes and teachings, then women must question them. Furthermore, the exclusive use of masculine language for God contradicts the understanding that God is above gender.

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8 Lev 12:6-7 a woman who gives birth must sacrifice a lamb or two turtledoves if she cannot afford a lamb - one turtledove is for the burnt offering and one is for the sacrifice of sin.
9 Genesis 1:26.
10 This discussion goes beyond the scope of this thesis. But it is interesting to note that if the God whom people image is not a simple, single individual with certain internal attributes, but is more like a community of persons, then it would seem more adequate to conceive of the image in relational terms. This picks up on many of the themes in feminist theology such as mutuality and living in a relational matrix with one another in the world. For further discussion see Thatcher 1993: 58.
Theology is unfinished. Feminist theology critiques traditional theology and contributes to this unfinished dimension of theology. It is opposed to sexism whether practised by men or women. It seeks to develop more inclusive Christian doctrines and to uncover the "herstory" of Christian women in order to reveal their important role in the church. Feminist theology also seeks to identify and expose the interrelationship that exists between political, economic, cultural, racial and gender exploitation.

4.2.2. Feminist theology and the interpretation of scripture

Christian feminists recognise that the bible is used as a tool of oppression and so approach it with a hermeneutic of suspicion. This means that they assume that the text is androcentric. The bible was written by men, canonised by men, translated by men and mostly interpreted by men. It is written from a male perspective about the experiences of men. It is written for men as the primary audience of readers and thinkers. Androcentrism is basic and inherent in the biblical narratives. Thus, texts are approached warily and seen in their social contexts. Fiorenza writes: "insofar as androcentric biblical texts lend themselves to the perpetuation and legitimisation of such patriarchal oppression and forgetfulness of, silence about, or eradication of the memory of women's suffering, they must be demythologised as androcentric codifications of God" (Fiorenza 1983:32).

Feminist theologians believe that God did not deliberately choose to inspire men and not women. Rather, it was due to the patriarchal nature of the culture of the time. It is not the divine intention that the bible should reflect the experience of only half the human race. Feminist interpretation seeks to allow the biblical message to be heard as God's word despite the patriarchal historical context in which the stories were shaped. This is helpful for developing a more inclusive Sunday school curriculum.

Fiorenza believes that one must question whether the biblical text is liberating or not. The bible cannot simply be accepted as it is so frequently used as a tool of oppression. She believes it is a resource rather than the norm of theology. She writes: "feminist theology must denounce all texts and traditions that perpetuate and legitimate oppressive patriarchal structures and ideologies. We no longer should proclaim them as the 'word of God' for contemporary communities and people if we do not want to turn God into a God of oppression" (Russell 1987:68). Other theologians feel that it is important to let the texts speak and ask what they mean, instead of just denying or ignoring them. However, one has to beware that they do not become oppressive, perhaps at an unconscious level.11

If one looks at the Old Testament one finds that discrimination against women was inherent in the religious and socio-political organisation of Israel. The legal codes of the Pentateuch set a double

standard, one for men another for women. The man was the head of the extended family. Many of the laws are about men's rights in relation to other members of their household, for example, Exodus 21:20f which deals with punishment for slaves. The penalty for adultery was death for both men and women, but only if the woman was the partner of another Israelite. Otherwise, infidelity was no problem for men (Leviticus 20:10). The laws regarding wives seem to be concerned with protecting men's authority, honour and property (Numbers 5:11-13). Women were legally dependent first on their fathers and then their husbands. There was also the Levirate marriage system. Their importance was seen in terms of childbearing and the law made sure that the men were certain of whose children their wives bore. Women were severely restricted in the public cult. Due to the laws on uncleanness, they were frequently not allowed to be present. Susan Dowell and Linda Hurcombe conclude: "female life, it seems, was cheap and stones handy" (Dowell & Hurcombe 1987:29).

In such a cultural climate as found in the Old Testament it is surprising that any women come to the fore at all. The stories of the Old Testament need to be read in this cultural context of submission and domination. There may have been many strong women who had all the potential to be leaders of the faith, but who due to circumstances, were consigned to silence. These stories need to be recovered. There are Deborah (Judges 4:4-16), a prophet and leader; and Huldah, a prophet under king Josiah. (2 Kings 22:14-20). There are the stories of the midwives who opposed the Egyptians, and of Miriam, a leader during the Exodus. There are many women's stories that can be remembered and which help to put women in a more equal light with men, as players and actors in history rather than simply passive beings. Beside these there are the well-known women of the Old Testament such as Esther and Ruth whose stories are told at length. There are also the Eves, Jezebels and Delilahs, the bad women. The Old Testament has tended either to idealise women or vilify them as temptresses, seductresses, deceivers and betrayers in a plot whose story revolves around the deeds of men. Their stories can be reinterpreted in a more realistic perspective.

There are various approaches to Christian education, and each approach emphasises certain aspects of the bible. Everyone selects certain texts, but not everyone is aware that they are doing so. If Sunday school teachers were to select stories about the women in the Old Testament, they should be recognised as having specific emphases and having been chosen for a specific reason. It is not saying that the other stories are unimportant, but rather that they are not the only important ones. Moreover, if children are to have a non-sexist faith it is essential to emphasise stories about women and not just to tell stories of men. To help affirm and encourage women, the stories of women in the bible should be remembered, even those stories of women which are very brief. The fact that they are recorded at all is significant, when one considers the patriarchal nature of

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12 In this system, when a man died without a child, his brother or nearest relative was expected to marry the widow.
biblical times. If the Christian story is to be relevant and liberating, these feminist aspects should be included.

The New Testament offers more hope for women but it is also ambivalent. Jesus' actions questioned patriarchy and affirmed women. Mary Magdalene is the first to witness the resurrection (Lk 24:1f). A woman is the first to recognise Jesus as Messiah (Mk 14:3-9). Women such as the Samaritan woman, are entrusted to go and tell others the good news (Jn 4:7-26). Women are freed from the domestic sphere to partake in learning and religion (Lk 10:38-42), and they are freed from cultic taboos as shown in the story of the woman with the flow of blood (Lk 8:43ff). Women can live out the story of Jesus in ever new circumstances.

Acts hardly mentions women, who must have been active because Paul mentions them in his letters. In its presentation of the Christian missionary movement, Acts tends to stress Paul and Peter while the other apostles are hardly mentioned. So it is not surprising that the missionary women were not included either. When Acts mentions women, it tends to stress them as prominent and wealthy, rather than recalling their contribution as missionaries and leaders. But early Christian women such as Phoebe (Rom 16:1), Junia (Rom 16:7), Lydia (Acts 16:14) and Priscilla (Rom 16:3) were leaders in their own right.

Paul affirms these women and the work they do, and yet he is possessed by the need for order so that the young churches will not be discredited and their growth slowed. Out of a concern for order, as he understands it with his rabbinical training, he restricts women's ministry in certain churches. He upholds the conventional behavioural codes of society for households, although he does soften them and expect slave masters and husbands to show love and fairness to a degree that the surrounding culture never expected. Thus, the household codes and various restrictions are placed on women. Love and order are seen as male provinces, while obedience and submission are the province of women, children and slaves (Dowell 1987:33). But, Galatians 3:26-28 stands out as a light promising hope and a recovery of the early Christian vision of a community of equals. It was a kind of creed for the early church, which embodied an alternative world view of equality in Jesus. Equality of women and men is fundamental, and affirmed despite the fact that it would produce conflict with the surrounding society. The early church struggled with these concepts, as can be seen from the Council in Jerusalem described in Acts 15, and in the household codes in Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9 and 1 Peter 2:13 - 3:7. However, there was an affirmation that they were a community of equals and that this was very important. There were no first and second class Christians.

As time passed and conflict grew, the vision of equality was abandoned or seen to have eschatological implications rather than practical, historical ones. All three areas of racism,

13 Draper, in Ackermann et al 1991:42, gives some more details on the way equality within the community alienated it from the Graeco-Roman world and the status quo.
classism and sexism crept into the history of the church. Christians have been known for their intolerance, brutality and complicity with, and legitimization of, evil and oppressive systems. Although some Christians opposed slavery and apartheid, others supported and justified them on biblical grounds. Such justifications are very far from the credal affirmation of Galatians 3:26-28. Whilst very few would justify slavery or cultural imperialism today, female subordination is still justified and propagated by Christians. The texts on female submission and on wives' obedience to their husbands are emphasised, while the passages on mutual submission are overlooked.

An interesting trend regarding women can be detected in the bible. Few women were mentioned in the Old Testament. In the New Testament more women are included. This trend could be a progressive revelation about the position of women. Much the same could be said of the Holy Spirit, as little is mentioned about the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, and far more in the New. However, the Holy Spirit has always been a central person of the Trinity and today is given even more prominence. However, with regard to women, many interpreters remain tied to the cultural conditions of the first century.

In today's context the spirit behind the letter of the bible should be discerned. The feminist perspective in the biblical tradition needs to be recovered and the experiences of biblical women remembered.

4.3. What can be done at Sunday school?

4.3.1. The curriculum

There are a number of valuable insights from Christian feminists that could be helpful in the Sunday school curriculum. These, as well as the development theories and the various stages of religion, need to be taken seriously when choosing material for developing a curriculum for the Sunday school. There also needs to be a balance between a curriculum that is consistent with the intellectual capabilities of children but also allows for God's creative power and which evokes the imaginative character of the gospel.

The word curriculum can be defined in a number of ways. These definitions stretch between a very broad to a very narrow definition of curriculum. The broad definitions include all the experiences that happen, which are connected to the learning experience, while the narrow definitions focus exclusively on the actual material that is being taught and disregard other factors that may easily influence the learning situation.

A broad definition of curriculum is "the total set of activities, relationships, and resources that give shape to a community's educative structure" (Miller 1987:294). This is often dismissed as too
impractical. A narrow definition would be "the printed material being used as a guide and aid to study" (Miller 1987:294).

Other definitions include: "the content made available to students" (Pazmino 1988:205), or a broader one: "curriculum is the actual experiences of a student or participant" (Pazmino 1988:205) or "generally curriculum includes both the materials and the experiences for learning. Specifically curriculum is the written courses for study used for Christian education" (Pazmino 1988:206).

These definitions highlight the issue as to whether curriculum includes only the material that is intended to be learnt or whether it includes all the participants' experiences, some of which may be unintentional and unplanned. Few, if any, Sunday schools would deliberately teach male superiority, yet it may come across unconsciously in the lessons.

A broad conception of curriculum is useful in that it unites symbolic content, social processes, individual commitment, personal experience and particular circumstances. These all influence the way faith is taught, and link up with the aims of Christian education. There are various components that go to make up the curriculum. These are generally considered as the objective, the scope, the context, the learning task and the organizing principle. The objective is the overall aim. The scope is the arena of knowledge and experience to be explored. Context is the place and the relationships in which the learning experience takes place. The learning tasks are the activities and procedures for teaching and learning. The organizing principle is the design by which everything is held together.

4.3.2. Curriculum and values

Curriculum embodies certain values that are held by a faith community. Those things which the community considers to be of worth become part of the curriculum. The traditions, convictions and practices of a faith community influence the choice of curriculum. In a community where faith is seen in personal terms, rather than in the wider perspective of social and justice issues, the personal aspect will dominate in the curriculum. The patriarchal bias of the church is likely to be reflected in the Sunday school curriculum, unless a conscious effort is made to be inclusive and non-sexist. If male leadership and male headship are accepted principles in the church, they are likely to be reflected in the curriculum material.

Sometimes the values that are meant to be taught in the curriculum are contradicted by what is actually taught. There are certain side effects of education that cannot be adequately accounted for by the curriculum. This is known as the "hidden curriculum" and it involves the socialisation process. The unconscious nature of socialisation was discussed earlier. This is important because it can have a very powerful influence over students. In fact, Lawrence Richards, a

14 See chapter 2 of this thesis.
Christian educationist, says that "the hidden curriculum is the most powerful educational force with which Christian education deals" (Pazmino 1988:217). This is the case at all levels from the Sunday school to the seminary.

The term "hidden curriculum" can refer to any of the contexts of education. It can be the teacher-student interaction, the classroom structure, or the whole organisational pattern of the education establishment as a microcosm of the social value system. It can influence values acquisition, socialisation and the maintenance of a social structure. It can range from being a quite unintentional by-product of the educational process to outcomes more deeply embedded in the historical, social function of education within the community. For example, an evangelical community may have the following in its hidden curriculum: each person must have a personal relationship with Jesus as Lord and Saviour; service, discipline and piety are the highest ideals in Christian ministry; liberals are to be viewed with suspicion; and finally, if Jesus were alive today, he would be an evangelical.

The curriculum might teach that all are loved by God and equal in God's sight. Yet the hidden curriculum is that men are somehow more holy and will be the leaders of the church. Most Sunday school teachers indicated that they treat girls and boys the same, and that there is no discrimination. Yet in the socialisation process, the children see men in the leadership positions in the church. They hear God referred to in exclusively masculine terms and they sing many choruses that refer to men and brothers and sons of God. This is all part of the hidden curriculum.

There is also the concept of the "null curriculum". This is what is not taught. This also has an influence on the students. For example, the fact that bibles and Sunday school material include very few stories about women and their achievements teaches something about the value of women and their roles in biblical times.

To sum up, with regard to the curriculum one must consider the context and experience, the formal and the informal, the explicit and the hidden. One must consider the number of stories of women and men, and what the men and women do in the stories, their roles, actions and attitudes.

### 4.3.3. Possible Changes to Sunday School Material

Strides have been made in making Sunday school material non-sexist. All the modern stories are inclusive of both boys and girls. The material is continually being updated. This can be seen in one of the most recent lessons from Scripture Union where there is an illustration of a woman priest as some one through whom God speaks. The older material seems to be less aware of sexist issues, though not entirely so. In a unit titled *What shall I choose?* all the examples are...

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male ones. In a story on relationships—Abraham's and Ours—the following appears: "Abraham and Sarah have much to teach us—he with his faith and obedience to God, she with her obedience to Abraham." Later in the same lesson it says: "so he abandoned his God-given authority in his home to his quite irrational wife."17

Some practical suggestions need to be made in terms of new choruses, bible stories and Sunday school materials. Many of the Scripture Union and SANSSA resources are very good and perhaps they just need to be supplemented. The problems come with the biblical stories. Sunday schools tend to follow the main characters in the bible. For example, they deal with Noah, Moses, Samuel, David, Jesus and Paul. They never analyse why there are only men who are the actors in the biblical drama, and the patriarchal nature of society is ignored. If a woman is included she fulfils stereotyped roles for women, such as Miriam being the nurse for Moses, not the co-leader with Moses through the desert. Ruth is portrayed as strong in her faith and dedication and this helps her to achieve happiness and security in a good marriage, a typical image of how women are supposed to reach fulfillment.

But authors like Fiorenza have researched the forgotten women of the bible. She shows how the work of many New Testament women is overlooked because of the way the bible has been translated. One needs to question the translations that interpret titles such as "prostatis" and "diakonos" as helpers or servants when used for women and as deacons, apostles and leaders when applied to men. For example, in Romans 16:1-2 Phoebe is described as "diakonos". This is often translated as helper, servant or deaconess rather than deacon, missionary leader or minister.18

The women in the Old Testament are often overlooked. Stories of the matriarchs as well as the patriarchs can be told. Abraham was promised a son, but so was Sarah. Abraham already had a son with Hagar, but it was important that Sarah had a son.

The lessons on the prophets could be dealt with in a far more inclusive manner. In a lesson on the prophets, one of the Scripture Union books asks "Can you recall the name of any Old Testament prophets?" It then gives some suggestions namely Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and others such as can be found in the last thirteen books of the Old Testament. It then asks, "what did they do?" The answer is given thus: "God's spokesmen are reminding the people of their duties to God and their fellow men."19 This lesson could be made far more inclusive by mentioning some female prophets such as Deborah and Huldah. Otherwise there is no acknowledgement that there were some women prophets.

16 Scripture Union No.2 Over 13's 1976: 11.
17 Scripture Union Teaching Over 13's Jan/March 1983: 12.
19 Scripture Union - Teaching over 13's Number 17:16.
Besides Huldah there are a number of Old Testament and New Testament women who follow the tradition of Hebrew prophets and canticle singers. There is the Song of Miriam after the Exodus (Ex 15:21). There is the Magnificat, the Song of Mary which is particularly interesting because of its theme of social reversal (Luke 1:46-55). There is also the Song of Hannah, although this is a more traditional thanksgiving for the birth of her son.

Women play leadership roles especially in times of crisis in Israel. Many of these are traditional roles but they are carried out with great bravery and obedience to God. There is the mother of Moses who saves her son (Ex 2:1-6). There are the midwives, Shipriah and Puah (Ex 1:15), Rahab the prostitute (Judges 2:1-21) and the well known story of Esther. Then there are the judges of the Old Testament and here the story of Deborah can be included. There is also the blessing that is pronounced on Jael, the wife of Heber, who slew Sisera, the Canaanite commander (Judges 5:24-26).

Stories of men which reveal some of the traditionally feminine virtues should be told. The story of Ruth demonstrates loyal support. There should also be stories of men who show loyal support and compassion. These should not come to be seen as exclusively feminine values. The story of Jonathan can be told in the light of loyalty and compassion and not just of friendship. Stories of the caring mother could be balanced with stories of caring fathers such as Eli (1 Sam 2) or David's sorrow at the death of Absalom (2 Sam 18). This is important as the questionnaire showed that the teachers felt that Sunday school material did not portray man as helpers, husbands or brothers.

There are women in the Psalms and Proverbs; for example, the woman who is described in Proverbs 31. She is certainly involved in many activities that today are traditionally not seen as part of a woman's role. There is also the woman in the Song of Solomon. This song reflects a wonderful degree of equality in the relationship between the lovers. It overcomes the predominant patterns of dominance and subservience.

The gospels lend themselves to inclusive stories because Jesus was so radical and non sexist in his actions and attitudes. There are stories in the gospels where God is portrayed as male and other stories where God is portrayed as female. For example, God is compared to the shepherd in the story of the lost sheep (Lk 15:1-7), and to the woman in the story of the lost coin (Luke 15:1-10). Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed and to yeast. The mustard seed belongs to the male world of the farmer, but the yeast belongs to the female world of the woman making bread (Lk 13:18-21; Mt 13:31-33). For a lesson on holiness the story of the woman who gives sacrificially out of the little she has, could be told (Mk 12:4ff).

The many healing stories are good ones to use in the Sunday school as they are inclusive of both men, women and children. Jesus heals the woman with the flow of blood, thus overturning the

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cultic stigma (Mk 5:25-34; Lk 8:43-49). Jesus reveals that the power of the traditional laws that had governed women's lives for centuries was broken as Jesus set them free, healed them and gave them wholeness. This aspect of the story would not be taught with the younger children, but might well come up with the teenagers. Jesus heals the crippled woman on a Sabbath (Lk 13:10-17) and calls her a "daughter of Abraham" thus emphasising her equal status with the "sons of Abraham" who up till then had derived their superior status from the fact that only men could be circumcised as a sign of the covenant. This may give the needed introduction for changing the popular Sunday school chorus of "Father Abraham had many sons" to "Father Abraham had many daughters" or even "Mother Sarah".

In stories about the disciples or the friends of Jesus both men and women should be included. There were female disciples who followed Jesus. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and learnt as any other disciple would (Luke 10:39-42). Susanna and Joanna can be mentioned alongside Peter, James and John (Luke 8:3). The female friends of Jesus may be less well known, but they are the ones who at the time of his death, did not desert him, but stayed close and remained faithful until the end (Mk 15:40). It was a woman who was the first to see Jesus alive after the resurrection and to be told by Jesus to go and tell the others (Jn 20). All these women and their stories should be included with lessons on discipleship. Often the story of Pentecost and the receiving of the Holy Spirit is told as if only the men were present and received the Holy Spirit. It needs to be emphasised that all the followers of Jesus were gathered together, and this definitely included women as well as men (Acts 1:4).

There are many other stories of women in the gospels that are significant in terms of their affirmation of women. There is the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mk 7:20-30), the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:5-41), and the woman caught in adultery (Jn 8:1-11), to mention just a few. These stories can be used as well as the stories of men which are frequently told, such as those of the lame man (Lk 5:17-25), the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-31), Zaccheus (Lk 19:1-10) and the Roman centurion (Matt 8:5-13).

When teaching or talking about Acts and the missionary activity of the early church, stories of both men and women need to be included. The additional information from the Pauline literature shows that women mentioned in Acts were not exceptional, but representative of early Christian women. Acts concentrates on Peter and even more on Paul. The church tends to do the same and forget that there were others who were active and working to spread the gospel. There is Phoebe a fellow worker with Paul, whom he mentions in Romans 16:1. Very little is known about her but the children could use their imaginations. What are the things she did? Where did she evangelise? Did she do similar things to Paul and have similar experiences? A lesson around Phoebe as well as Paul helps to balance the impression that men do the real work of mission and women are assistants. Prisca worked in a missionary team with Aquila (1 Cor 16:19). Her name is
mentioned first which would indicate that she is the more prominent of the two. There was also Junia who is described as an apostle by Paul (Romans 16:7). Again, little is known about her but it is still important to mention her as an apostle. Damaris is one of the few in Athens who is converted and yet she remains true and presumably tells others about the gospel of Jesus (Acts 17:34). Euodia and Syntyche worked side by side with Paul. Paul considers the authority of these women so great that he fears their dissension could endanger the Christian community in Philippi (Phil 4:2-3). Churches met in the houses of certain women such as Lydia (Acts 16:14), and Nympha (Col 4:15). Mary (Rom 16:6), and Tryphaena (Rom 16:12) are commended for having "laboured hard" in the Lord. There were the four daughters of Philip who prophesied and proclaimed God's message (Acts 21:9). Besides these, there is the elect lady (2 John 1), Lois and Eunice (2 Tim 1:5) and Tabitha (Acts 9:36). Women as well as men were persecuted (Acts 8:3; 9:1-2; 22:4-5). These early workers in the church are often overlooked because the church has grown accustomed to male leadership. However this was not always the case. The Council of Nicea in 325 saw deacons, including the female deacons, as clergy and the Synod of Trullo in 692 ordained woman deacons.21

These are just some examples of how the biblical material and stories that are taught in Sunday school can be made more inclusive. The results of the questionnaire showed that many teachers thought women should be portrayed as leaders, missionaries and disciples. They felt that Sunday school lessons about Christian leadership should include both male and female examples. The desire to include examples of both men and women was there, but the questionnaire also indicated that many of the teachers did not know of any examples of women from the bible who were disciples, missionaries, church leaders or prophets. This means that the contribution of feminist theology in rediscovering the forgotten women in the bible is very important. The stereotypes and the mistranslations and bad interpretations which relegate women in the bible to secondary positions need to be corrected. Sunday school teachers need to be made aware of this contribution of feminist theology so that they can make the lessons and the Sunday school material more inclusive.

4.4. Worship

The worship of the church influences the teachers and in a more subtle way the children as well. Liturgy must enrich the whole people of God and not exclude some. This means one has to look at the language and symbols that are used in the church. Worship is important and progress has been made in making the language less sexist. The prayers and liturgy generally use inclusive language, rather than speaking only of men and brothers. However, the language for God is all masculine.

In Sunday schools God can be spoken of as "God" rather than as "He". If God is spoken of as "Father", there should also be times when God is described as "Mother". This would be biblical. The exclusive use of masculine language for God is, in fact, unbiblical. In the bible God is described among other ways as lord, king, almighty, judge but God is also described as the mother eagle (Deut 32:11), the mother giving birth (Isa 42:14; Deut 32:18), the mother conceiving (Num 11:12), the mother suckling (Isa 49:15), and the mother quieting (Ps 131:2) (M. Walker 1989:11). Moreover, Jesus describes himself as a hen drawing her chicks under her wings (Mt 23:27; Lk 13:34). Some female imagery for the divine would be a way of enhancing women's self-respect and give them a sense of empowerment. "She" can stand for all that is meant by the word God, just as adequately as "He". "She" should be used for neutral attributes of God as well as the feminine ones, otherwise there is a danger of identifying God's otherness with masculinity and God's immanence and tender love with femininity. Jesus' use of Father was intended to lead people to a greater intimacy with God. When it ceases to do this or is used to oppress women, it is contradictory and should be complemented by other images.

The hymns and choruses that are sung in church are not inclusive in their language. God is again depicted in almost exclusively masculine terms. Many of the hymns and choruses are about brothers or men. Singing is an important part of the church worship and needs to be more inclusive.

The way church is organised and the roles of men and women in the church also need to be examined and changed where there is inequality and discrimination. The early church was characterised by charismatic, Spirit-led leadership in which sacramental power was located in the church rather than the personal possession of a male cleric. The church could move nearer this kind of pattern with a recognition of the gifts of all people in the community. There should be greater mutuality of ministry with shared decision making and responsibility for the life of the church.

The visible leaders in the church should not always be men. This is one of the values of women's ordination, that they become more visible. Both men and women should be tea makers and servers and helpers. These things will take time as the church has a very long patriarchal tradition to overcome. However, a start needs to be made. Hierarchy that excludes some people permanently is a problem. It is based on status not experience. The tone of the church structures should be set by the nature of the Christian call of salvation for all. This means that they should be egalitarian rather than hierarchical.

Many of the same issues need to be addressed in the worship of the Sunday school. The choruses, the ways of addressing God, the prayers and the lessons all need to be inclusive.
These are a few suggestions for changes in Sunday school teaching and worship. It is important to make changes because gender stereotyping and sexist socialisation have a negative influence on children. In the beginning of the chapter it was noted that sexism has detrimental effects on women, both psychologically and structurally. Women may have lowered self-esteem, and internalise submissive roles. For men, sexism reinforces power and competitive relations. Besides the costs to individuals, the Christian community is impoverished as the gifts and ministries of all the members are not fully recognised or utilised, and the churches' witness to society is hampered.

Feminist theology encourages women to recognise their oppression and find alternatives to traditional sexist interpretations of scripture. An awareness of the patriarchal bias in the scriptures and the church is helpful in confronting and overcoming sexism. The stories and experiences of the women in the bible can be recalled and used to affirm and liberate women. These interpretations and stories of women can help to make the Sunday school materials less sexist. Many examples of the less well known women in the bible, such as Phoebe and Huldah, are given in this chapter. Mentioning these women as missionaries and leaders in the church can help to dispel the impression that all Christian leaders are men.

The worship of the church and in Sunday school is very influential and needs to be made inclusive by the use of non-sexist language and by using both masculine and feminine images for God. These suggestions move away from traditional church practice, but they remain scriptural, and, in fact, even more faithful to the biblical message than the traditional interpretations.
CONCLUSION

Sexist attitudes are apparent in children as young as two or three years. These sexist attitudes limit the child's potential development. The limits for girls are often more visible and more damaging, but such attitudes are also detrimental for boys. As they grow up, women may see themselves as followers rather than as spiritual leaders. They fail to develop their God-given potential, remaining in secondary, supportive roles, delegating responsibility to men. This passive, submissive behaviour leads to lowered self-esteem. Men, on the other hand, take on added responsibility and feel pressure to achieve and produce. This emphasis on achievement might lead to men missing out on the full experience of God's grace, which is free and cannot be earned. Sexism leads to alienation between men and women and to broken relationships. Sexist attitudes within families can lead to patterns of domination and submission and to family members struggling, maybe unconsciously, against one another.

Chapter One showed that sexist socialisation and gender stereotyping are also detrimental for the church and society. The church is impoverished as the gifts of all its members are not used to their full potential. The church's witness to society is weakened as it fails to provide an alternative to the patriarchal nature of society.

There are a number of reasons why children develop sexist attitudes so quickly and at such a young age. Firstly, in a patriarchal society such as South Africa, sexist attitudes and values are ingrained. These are then easily passed on because they are accepted as the norm. In many ways the church is a reflection of society. Sexist attitudes in society are present and often, though not always, reinforced by the church. Secondly, the socialisation process is largely subconscious. Values, attitudes and norms are internalised. This means that children simply accept them and are not consciously aware of holding them. Another reason is that sexism in the church, may be softened and concealed by love, although it remains sexist. A double message is given in that children learn they are precious and created equal and in the image of God, and yet a second message also comes across which says that boys are more valuable than girls. This double message is confusing. It means that sexist attitudes are difficult to detect and change.

Sexist conditioning begins as children start coming to church and going to Sunday school. It does not just start with adults in the church. Children's faith and love for God depends greatly on their early experiences of church and Sunday school. Childhood learning and impressions are difficult to change. The atmosphere in the church and the customs, norms, roles and values of the church, are absorbed by children. They are influenced by things such as the vestments that priests wear which visibly set them apart as leaders of the church. The fact that almost all priests are men means that it is men who are seen as the leaders. Women are seldom seen in this light. Instead,
women may be considered as good and holy but in a supportive, helping way rather than as leaders of the congregation. Thus the traditional roles of men and women are accepted by children without them realising what they are accepting.

A crucial aspect of the socialisation of children in the church is that of their concept of God. Children's understanding of God may be positive and liberating, or negative and controlling, depending on the way their experiences and the way that God has been presented to them. Children are likely to have a distorted notion of God, if God is referred to in exclusively male terms. Among others, children's image of God is likely to be that of an old man who is always watching them, or of a loving father who is always there to help them. These images do not include the feminine attributes of God. Children are probably unaware of the feminine images of God as, in most cases, neither the Sunday school nor the church teaches people about the feminine dimension of God.

Once children have internalised a sexist understanding of God and of the world, it is hard to alter it because it is mostly subconscious and so is difficult to analyse rationally. By adulthood, many attitudes and beliefs are present subconsciously, limiting and directing people from within. Many people accept the church's teaching and the way the church is organised because they have grown up within it and have internalised these values. Hence, people who claim that they believe in the equality of men and women can simultaneously reject women's ordination and support exclusive male headship of the family. This kind of inconsistency was apparent in the questionnaire. The teachers all thought that God should be referred to as "She" and "He", but only one teacher out of the 13 felt unhappy in church services where God is always referred to as "He". It appears as if the rest are so used to God being described in masculine terms that they accept it without question.

The CPSA has a long tradition of sexism although there are glimpses of an egalitarian vision. Patriarchy is present in the history of the church and in the present day structures of the church. Until recently, the church structures and hierarchy were exclusively male. Recently a few women have been ordained, but none as yet is a bishop or in charge of a parish.

A sexist interpretation of scripture is generally accepted by the church. It is not questioned why there are so few stories of women in the bible. The almost invisible and secondary position of women is simply accepted as God-ordained. The church's theology and the interpretation of scripture seems to be influenced by the patriarchal nature of South African society. Often those things which are accepted in society are accepted by the church, while those things that are rejected by society are also rejected by the church. For example, male leadership, which is seen as the norm in society, is inherent in the theology of the church, while slavery, which is rejected by society, is not accepted by the church. The church condemns slavery as oppressive and unchristian, despite the fact that Paul gives instructions to slaves and slave masters. Patriarchy,
on the other hand, which is accepted by society, is not condemned by the church. The church continues to preach obedience of wives to husbands rather than mutual submission which is also scriptural. It would be consistent for the church to reject sexism, as well as class and racial oppression, as part of the sinful social order into which the gospel was introduced. Instead the church tends to cling to sexist, first century practices that deny the thrust of the entire bible toward personal and social wholeness and unity in Christ.

There are various approaches to Christian education. The aims and priorities of the individual church or the particular teacher influences which approach is followed. The six Sunday schools which were visited tended to combine elements from the religious instruction, the community of faith and the development approaches, rather than adhering strictly to any one particular approach. These were chosen because they fitted most closely with the aims of the church and the Sunday school teachers. The aim of most of the Sunday schools was described as being to teach the children the content of the bible in such a way that the children come to personal faith in God.

The development theories used in the development approach give useful insights into the way in which children learn. Children are not little adults and do not think like adults. They think literally and concretely, so abstract expressions are not understood by young children. The Scripture Union and SANSSA Sunday school books and many of the Sunday school activities are chosen for specific age groups. They are appropriate and are enjoyed and understood by the children. However, there are some problems with the biblical material which is sometimes too abstract and theoretical for the children to understand.

The Sunday school curriculum and choice of scripture passages embody certain values that are held by the faith community. The traditions, convictions, theological perspectives and practices of the faith community influence the choice of the curriculum. Faith is seen in personal terms rather than in the wider perspective of social and justice issues, and so the personal aspect dominates in the curriculum. The patriarchal bias of the church is often reflected in the Sunday school curriculum, unless a conscious effort is made to be inclusive and non-sexist. It is important to recognise this bias, as scripture is not neutral but has a powerful influence. The bible is used, consciously or unconsciously, to justify a certain world view. One needs to be aware of this and to acknowledge that certain texts are being used to support a particular perspective.

Feminist theology is helpful here because it acknowledges that scripture is used selectively to support certain beliefs and it exposes the sexist interpretations of scripture. Feminist theology develops guidelines for reading and interpreting scripture. The androcentric nature of scripture is recognised, but so too is its power as the word of God. The important point is that whilst the bible is authoritative for believers, the cultural context within which the bible was written is not itself normative.
The sexist attitudes and practices of the church are mostly subconscious, although at times sexist practices are deliberately propagated. Many Christians are unaware of sexist attitudes and practices. The Sunday school teachers do not consciously pass on sexist teaching. They try to do their best for the children, but many of the teachers have grown up in the church, and so accept the patriarchal nature of the church without question. They themselves are part of the church ethos and have been socialised in the church in a sexist manner. This means that the teachers may not notice sexist attitudes which are present in the Sunday school material and worship, because the sexist teachings are subtle rather than blatant. For example, it is only when one looks at the overall pattern that one realises how few stories about women are included in the Sunday school books. Sometimes the teachers may be aware of the sexist teachings, but they accept them and do not see them as a problem.

The Sunday school materials such as the Scripture Union books are of a high standard and very good. The analysis of the Sunday school material showed that the stories set in a modern context are generally not sexist. Both girls and boys are included in the stories and are involved in the same kind of activities. There is some gender stereotyping of men as working outside the home and women in the home, but this is not frequent. The more recent Sunday school books are less sexist than the older ones. In terms of the biblical stories the analysis showed that there is a problem as they contain a much greater emphasis on males rather than females. The Sunday schools that did not follow prescribed books also told far more stories about men than about women. From the analysis of the questionnaire it can be seen that the most popular Old Testament stories are: the creation, Noah, Moses and Samuel, with David and Jonah the next most popular. In the New Testament the stories that are the most frequently told are: the birth of Jesus, the calling of the twelve disciples, some of the healing miracles and the story of the loaves and fishes.

If the socialisation of children in the church is to be non-sexist more stories about women need to be included in the Sunday school teaching programme. Moreover, these stories need to be of women who are active people of God, leading God's people, speaking God's message and doing God's work. Women need to be seen in roles other than the traditional ones of mother and comforter. Often it is difficult for parents and teachers to find stories about women in the bible. There are the stories of Esther, Ruth and Mary but they tend to be depicted in traditional female roles. Stories of Huldah, Deborah and Phoebe, who overcame the patriarchal stereotypes of women, should also be told. In order to present a more balanced account of the early church, stories of female leaders as well as those of the well known male leaders need to be included.

Feminist theology makes a very useful contribution as it has researched and documented the forgotten women of the bible whose stories are often overlooked. There are many examples of women whose stories could be included in the Sunday school material, or who could at least be
mentioned, so that not only male examples are used. In Chapter Four it was pointed out that feminist theologians such as Schüssler Fiorenza have documented how women, such as Junia, Phoebe, Eoudia and Syntyche, were active in the early church and the spread of the gospel.

It is going to demand a new way of looking at biblical material if the stories of women such as Junia and Phoebe are to be included as examples of apostles and missionaries in the Sunday school programme. For those who have a very literal understanding of the bible this is difficult to do. It is hard for many evangelicals as they value a bible-based education. They want to stay with the traditional stories from the bible that have been told over and over again. There is value in this, but it needs to be balanced by including or mentioning the fact that there were also female judges, or prophets or leaders. By including some stories about women whose names are mentioned in the bible one is not moving away from the bible. In fact, it is being more faithful to the bible, as more of the bible is used, rather than just the favourite passages. In children's bibles and Sunday school books, the bible stories are rewritten for the children to make it easier for them to follow. This allows for a certain poetic freedom and use of the imagination. This freedom could simply be extended. Biblical extrapolation can be used, for example, with the story of Huldah as a prophet. There is so little told about her and yet she could be used as an example of a prophet of God. One could also include a story about Junia, one of the founders of the church. This task is one of rediscovering the women in the bible and enlarging upon their stories. It is not abandoning the bible.

This dissertation has shown that children's bibles vary in terms of their awareness of sexist issues. Some are good and include stories of both women and men; others have very few stories of women. One is not aware of how few stories of women are included, unless one analyses the children's bibles. Some of the bibles use sexist language, especially, for example, in the creation stories. All the children's bibles except one always refer to God in masculine terms.

Another problem area in the Sunday schools as well as in the churches is the large number of choruses that use the terms "brothers and sons" generically to include "sisters and daughters". These choruses and hymns also refer to God as "father" or "he". The worship, symbols and language of the church all need to be reviewed and made more inclusive. For example, the choruses could be about Jesus or could refer to God as "God" rather than as "He" or use both feminine and masculine pronouns to refer to God. Feminist theology helps with the construction of new liturgies, worship experiences, symbols, language and with rediscovering the forgotten names for God.

An awareness of sexism while developing faith in children is important. Stories about women which are included in the bible are neglected by Sunday schools. Examples of female leaders, prophets and missionaries are seldom, if ever, given. This means that children grow up subconsciously thinking of men as prophets, leaders and missionaries.
The results of the questionnaire indicated that the visible faith of the teacher has a greater effect on the children than the Sunday school material does. The parents of the children are even more influential than the Sunday school teachers. If they are part of the Christian community they will have been socialised into the church, and have accepted (consciously or unconsciously), the patriarchal nature of the church's teaching and practice. This is also true of the Sunday school teachers. This means that unless the parents and teachers are made aware of sexism in the interpretation of scripture, sexist socialisation will continue. Hence, the teachers who are adult and mature enough to look at the issue of sexism need to become more aware of it. If the teachers are aware of sexism, they can use the material in such a way that it becomes less sexist. They can remind the children that, despite the fact that all the stories are about male disciples, Jesus also had female disciples. They were also very close to Jesus and, in fact, when all the male disciples deserted Jesus, they stayed with Jesus when he was crucified.

Socialisation within the church is not deliberately sexist. The teachers are committed to the children and to imparting the Christian faith to them. Sometimes the values that are meant to be taught in the curriculum are contradicted by what is actually taught. There are certain side effects in the Christian education programme that are known as the "hidden curriculum". Sexism could be one such effect. Sexist attitudes and a patriarchal religion are not consciously part of the curriculum, but come across in the Sunday school material and programme. Sexism is subtly propagated by the way God is always referred to in masculine terms and through the fact that far more stories are of men than of women.

The children enjoy Sunday school and benefit from attending classes. They do not think of the Sunday school as sexist because they are unaware of sexism and they accept what they are told. Socialisation is largely a subconscious process and this is true of what happens at Sunday school. For the older children who may be more aware of issues such as sexism, there can be a critical element in all that they do. They are at a stage of questioning and this should be encouraged so that they can think through their faith and relate their growing experience of the world to their Christian faith. God does not fear being questioned. It is a false and narrow interpretation of Christianity that is threatened by criticism and questions.

Feminist theology can play a very helpful role in making parents and teachers more aware of sexism. Feminist theology exposes sexism and oppression in the church and helps to make people more aware of the issues. Feminist theology also provides ways of evaluating theological formulations and reconstructing various doctrines to make them more inclusive and more biblical.

The challenge that is left to parents and teachers as well as to the whole church is to be faithful to the liberating gospel of Christ and to eradicate sexism from the Sunday schools and churches. There needs to be a reassessment and acknowledgement of feminist issues both within the CPSA and the church as a whole. These issues of sexism need to be taken seriously in childhood, not
just as adults who are angry and disillusioned with the church. This thesis brings feminist theology and Christian education together. The truths which feminist theology expounds are applied and shown to be relevant to Sunday schools. It is hoped that this will help to develop non-sexist Christian education so that children can be brought up in a non-sexist tradition and thus be less likely to face frustration and disenchantment with Christianity with reference to gender issues. In this way society may become less patriarchal, the church may become more balanced in its theology, more caring in its practice and more affirming and empowering for women. Such a church will more closely reflect what it truly means to be the female and male body of Christ.
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The bibliography is divided into three sections. The first section includes books and journals, the second section children's bibles and books and the last section lists the Sunday school materials.

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Appendix 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

St Peter's, Auckland Park

This is a fairly small Sunday school, as it is a small congregation. There are about fifteen children who come regularly to the Sunday school. There are four teachers who are all women. The Sunday school starts with a time of worship with all the children together before splitting into classes. The classes are divided according to age. They use the Scripture Union material as a base for the lessons, but the teachers tend to be creative and use their own resources and ideas as well.

The Sunday School meets in the hall and they have chairs and tables and equipment, such as crayons, paints and glue. This means that they are able to do activities and hand work which they enjoy. Sometimes the lesson material seems peripheral to the activity as far as the children are concerned, but they enjoy Sunday school. There is a good feeling and the children seem to experience Sunday school as fun.

Sunday school ends with the children coming into church for a blessing at the time of communion. The children can come and go in the church, as long as they are not too disruptive, because there are many children and babies in the church, and they are well accepted. After communion the children are meant to stay in the church till the end of the service, but this has little success as the ending of the service is not child-oriented.

There is a children's service approximately every two months, when the children participate in the readings and prayers, and the sermon is child-oriented to a greater or lesser extent. In this way they have some contact with the church and the liturgy and the roles of men and women during the service.

St Luke's, Bosmont

There are about forty to sixty children in this Sunday school. They have seven teachers, one of them a teenage boy, the others all girls or young women.
The Sunday school starts with a time of worship together, and special happenings such as birthdays are mentioned, and new-comers are welcomed. They then split into classes with about seven or eight children in each. Some meet in the church and others in the vestry and entrance.

They follow the SANSSA programme as far as possible, but they do not all have books, which makes it difficult. Other resource books are used, such as children's bibles and books of prayers. They have some resources, such as crayons and glue and the children enjoy the activities.

The Sunday school participates in the family service and also goes on outings and fund-raising events, such as big walks, which are very popular. There is a sense of caring for one another in the Sunday school and the children are happy and seem to enjoy Sunday school.

**St. Paul's Jabavu**

This is a very large Sunday school with children from other denominations and children whose parents do not attend the church. At times they have up to four hundred children. The children start in the church and then after the sermon they go to Sunday school, returning to church at the end for a blessing. They have a time of worship together before splitting into classes. With so many children the classes are inevitably large, with between twenty and thirty children in a class. There are seven teachers, some of them men and some women. At one time the classes were split into girls and boys, but then they were combined. It was felt by the supervisor that the boys needed to be made to feel special because at times they were left out as the girls would always start the singing first.

At Sunday school the children are mostly involved in praying and in singing. This may be because there is not much time for lessons as the children leave the church only after the sermon, which in a sense is already a lesson, even if they do not listen to, or understand, it. Their favourite songs are mostly about Jesus and are mostly non-sexist. They use a mixture of English and Zulu songs. For example they like Jesus I love you more and more, Building up the temple and uJesu wam uyathanda. The children are taught to pray, to visit the sick, and to read the bible. Certificates and prizes are given to those who do well.

The Sunday school goes on outings whenever it is possible. These outings are greatly enjoyed by all and help to give a sense of belonging to the Sunday school. The importance of building a close relationship with the children is stressed. Some of the children have come to regard the teacher almost as a second mother.
One of the activities which the children do is to write down what they do in terms of Christian duties at home, at school, in the community and in the church.

They have occasional Sunday school services and then the children participate with readings, songs and prayers. In the regular Sunday service the children sometimes read the lessons.

St Martin's, Rosebank

St Martins is a large parish with approximately 1500 families on the parish roll. There are about forty children that come regularly to the senior Sunday school and another twenty to twenty-five come to the pre-school Sunday school.

The senior Sunday School
The children start off together with a time of worship. This is a lively and enjoyable time and the children join in with enthusiasm. The action songs are the favourites. Examples of these are King of the jungle and Lift Jesus Higher. They then split into classes. They had hoped to have two teachers to each class but were unable to recruit that number of teachers. There is just one teacher with each class. There are seven classes with about six children in each. Some of the classes are all girls while others are all boys.

The pre-school section
There are fifty children on the roll at the pre-school section but the average attendance is between twenty and twenty-five. The children stay in one large group the whole time. There are two teachers with the group, but one is there mainly to help if there are any problems, for example a child who needs to be taken to the toilet. There are three teachers altogether, but they take turns in doing Sunday school, rather than all being there every Sunday. The Sunday I visited them, the children sat in a large circle and listened to a story that was from the Scripture Union books. The teacher used a number of lovely, appropriate activities with them. The children understood what was going on and joined in enthusiastically, answering questions and making their own contributions. The songs they sang were mostly about Jesus. There was no sexist language or stereotyping in most of these songs. In one or two God was referred to as “He”.

At the end of Sunday school, at the time of communion, the children go into church for a blessing. Otherwise, they do not go to church very often. Children's services are occasional, occurring or taking place three or four times a year.
St Stephen's, Diepkloof

Sunday school is held in a garage at the back of the church. There are about 50 to 60 children who come to Sunday school. There are two teachers. They spend a great deal of time singing and are very enthusiastic about singing. After they have sung for a while, they have a time of prayer. Here there is a mixture of spontaneous prayer and set prayers which they have learnt. They are then taught a bible story. This is done mostly by the method of question and answer. As all the children are together, with various age groups, this seems to work well as the older ones can answer if the younger ones do not know the answer. When the story is over there is some more singing and then the children go into the yard where they play games. This they greatly enjoy. The church service is lengthy and so there is plenty of time for song, prayer, bible stories and games. They then go into church for a blessing.

St Margaret's, Noordgesig

This Sunday school meets outside as they have no building. They bring chairs and benches for the children to sit on, but they are very crowded. There are about fifty children and two teachers. They start with a time of worship all together. The children are then divided into two groups, the older and the younger children. If the weather is bad they go into church and do not have Sunday school as they cannot remain outside. Once a month they join the church for the service.

They have no specific Sunday school material but use the bible and tell stories from it. The time I visited, the story of Moses was being taught. A question and answer approach was used. The children were well-disciplined and mostly listened intently and enjoyed answering. They seemed to remember the stories pretty well.
A QUESTIONNAIRE ON SUNDAY SCHOOLS IN THE
DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG

Some explanatory comments regarding the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was given to the supervisor and some of the teachers at the Sunday school's which I visited. I sat with the people as they filled them in. This meant that at times they could clarify what they meant and make extra comments. Some of these were helpful, like one that was made by the supervisor at Jabavu regarding the stories about the women disciples. She said, "They are difficult to tell even if one wanted to do so."

Thirteen questionnaires were answered in all. This is a small number when one considers there are 77 parishes in the Johannesburg Diocese, but they can be taken as fairly representative. Not all the parishes have Sunday schools and those that do, are similar to the six that were visited. The questions and answers are included together in this appendix. The questions are not all given in full as the answers contain the necessary information. Where it is helpful, the questions are given in full.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS

The relationship between the Sunday schools and the church

1 & 2. Five Sunday Schools met at the same time as the church and one met after the church service. Except for the one that met at a separate time, all the others joined the church for part of the regular Sunday service.

3. In five churches there were children's services, some of these held them more frequently than others. One never had children's services.

4. At the children's services the children joined in with prayers, reading and songs. A few added that the children would take part in the sermon.

The Sunday School Classes and Programme

5. Average number of children attending Sunday school:
   One Sunday school had between 20 - 30
One Sunday school had between 30 - 40
Two Sunday schools had between 40 - 50
Two Sunday schools had over 50.

6. The number of children in each class:
   Three Sunday schools had between 5 and 10
   Three Sunday schools had between 20 and 30.

7. All the Sunday schools had a time of worship together first.

8. Which choruses/songs are the children's favourites:
   Choose THREE
   10 Father Abraham
   4 King of the Jungle
   4 He made the stars to shine
   1 Uthando lwakhe

   Other choruses chosen were: My God is so big
   Jesus loves me; uJesu uthanda warn
   The Messiah is the king of kings

   The teachers

9. Three Sunday schools had some men teachers as well as women. Three did not.

10. Most teachers in all the Sunday schools were between 20 and 30.

11. In your opinion the thing that has the greatest influence over the children is...

     8 the visible faith of the teachers.
     3 the material.
     2 the practices of the church community.

12. Which of these images would you use to describe the teacher?

     3 a shepherd - guiding and directing
     2 a gardener - helping the children to grow
     6 a fellow traveller - on a journey with the children
2 did not answer.

B. SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS AND MATERIAL

13 Books used in the Sunday school:

2 Scripture Union Books
1 SANSSA
5 The Bible
7 Prayer Books
6 Children's bibles

14 These resources were chose for the following reasons:

6 They were bible based
4 They were easily available
8 They were easy for lesson preparation
4 They were age appropriate
2 They were relevant to South Africa

15. Children's bibles and books of prayers were used as other resource books.

16 Which of these, do you think, best describes the main aim of your Sunday school? Choose ONE.

9 to teach the children the content of the bible so that they come to a personal faith in God.
4 to teach the children social awareness and to work for social justice, as an expression of their faith in God.

17. Conversion is often seen as the aim of Sunday school, but conversion can be understood in different ways. Which of these definitions of conversion most clearly resembles your definition?

2 to accept Jesus as Saviour
1 to accept Jesus as Saviour and to be involved in the church.
7 to accept Jesus as Saviour and to be involved in the church and to change the oppressive structures of society so that they are more in line with God's justice and peace.

18 The teaching methods which you use most frequently are:

- Question and answer (5)
- Stories (6)
- Pictures (3)
- Drawing and Painting (4)
- Singing (2)
- Lecture (2)

19. The Old Testament stories most often told at Sunday school are:
Choose FIVE.

- Creation stories (13)
- Noah (9)
- Abraham and Sarah (2)
- Moses (15)
- Samuel (11)
- David (7)
- Ruth and Naomi (5)
- Jonath (6)
- Esther (2)

20. The stories most often told from the New Testament are:
Choose FIVE.

- The birth of Jesus (15)
- The calling of the 12 disciples (15)
- The loaves and fishes (12)
- Jesus' healing miracles (15)
- Jesus raising Lazarus (5)
- The early church (2)
- Paul's missionary journeys (6)

21. All said that if they had the choice, they would teach the same stories as listed. One added the resurrection.

C. CONCEPT OF GOD

22 Which of these images would you use to describe God?
Tick the FIVE you feel are most important.

- creator (13)
23 & 24. All felt that God should be referred to as SHE and HE., but that the bible presents God as masculine.

25. FIVE people's concept of God had changed in the last five years. EIGHT people's concept of God had remained the same for as long as they could remember.

26. Do you believe God is most like.... Choose ONE

   10 a personal friend
   2  a king
   1  a helper

27. Only ONE person felt unhappy that God is always referred to as HE. The rest felt neither happy or unhappy.

D. THE BIBLE AND WOMEN

28. Which of the following is closest to your view of the bible? Tick ONE.

   The bible is God inspired....
   1  and all of it should be accepted literally as the truth.
   1  but it is also culture bound, as it comes through the medium of people,
   2  and so it must be interpreted and adapted for today

29. Which of the following statements about the family is closest to your own view. Tick ONE.

   the father is head of the family, and the wife should submit to him.
   3  the husband and wife have equal authority and submit to one another
   10 the husband and wife should both submit to one another out of love, but the husband is still head of the family.

30. In Sunday school lessons women are most frequently portrayed as:

   Tick THREE of the following

   14 mothers/wives
   13 comforters
   11 helpers
5 daughters
2 leaders
2 disciples
0 apostles
0 prophets

31. Sunday school lessons, in your opinion, should portray women as:

  Tick THREE of the following.

  10 leaders
  8 missionaries
  7 disciples
  4 priests
  3 teachers
  2 followers
  1 prophets
  1 mothers

32. Sunday school lessons most often portray men as: Tick THREE of the following.

  9 missionaries
  9 priests
  9 leaders
  8 apostles
  8 prophets
  4 fathers

The other options of helpers, husbands and brothers were not chosen.

33. Bearing in mind the bible was written in a patriarchal (male ruled) society, which of the following views is closest to your view?

  1 Patriarchy is the will of God for all people at all times and in all places. Jesus affirmed women but this does not mean that women can now claim equality with men.
  12 Patriarchy should be seen as simply part of the culture and not as the will of God for all people at all times and in all places. Jesus affirmed women and overturned the double standards for men and women, bringing about equality for men and women.

34. All felt that Sunday school lessons about Christian leadership should include both male and female examples.

35. Which TWO of the following would you use most often as examples of prophets?

  12 Elijah
36. If the Sunday school lesson was on leadership which of the following biblical characters would you use as examples? Number them in order of preference.

37 Moses
35 Paul and Samuel
26 Deborah
13 Nehemiah
9 Priscilla and Phoebe which meant that they were not chosen at all by some

37. If the Sunday school lesson was on obedience to God which of the following characters would you use as examples? Number them in order of preference.

31 Abraham
30 Mary
19 Jonah
15 Samuel
14 Esther
11 James and John

38. Can you name a man and a woman from the bible in each of the following categories?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disciples</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missionary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Leader</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prophet</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother/Father</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforter/Helper</td>
<td>5*</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Jesus was included as an example in 4 of these
** Deborah was given as one of these

H. THE CHURCH AND WOMEN

39. With which of the following would you say your church is most concerned?
Choose TWO.
40. Why do children who are too old for Sunday school stop coming to church? Of the following choose ONE.

8. Their friends no longer come
2. The stories are no longer believable
3. Bible stories and church experiences no longer correspond with life experiences

41. All felt that church women should have opportunities to serve as both priests and pastoral counsellors.

42. In your church women....(Tick all the applicable options)

4. lead the youth group
4. welcome people at the door
3. preach the sermon
5. lead the prayers
6. read the lesson
5. make tea
2. run the crèche
6. arrange flowers

43. In your church men....(Tick all the applicable options)

6. lead the youth group
6. welcome people at the door
6. preach the sermon
6. lead the prayers
6. read the lesson
2. make tea
0. run the crèche
0. arrange flowers

44. All agreed that women should be involved in preaching, lay ministry, teaching and singing.

45. Men and women do different things in the church because...

7. of tradition, that is the way things are always done
their abilities
the bible says they must

Thank you very much for taking the time to answer this questionnaire.

God bless