Chapter 4

Discursive mediation of the women's ordination debate

"Perhaps those who oppose women's ordination should make clearer that supporters of women's ordination are not all tarred with the same brush, and supporters of women's ordination should clearly distance themselves from arguments that they do not endorse." [1]

4.1 Discourse recognition in the women's ordination debate

The major aim of this thesis has been to identify how the press has constructed the debate over

the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Anglican Church in Australia. This goal is

facilitated by a comparison of the discourses in news reports with those in non-mass media

texts that informed and represented the synod debates.

Before outlining the views that make up the women's ordination debate, it is appropriate to

reflect on 'discourse' itself. In the Introduction I drew attention to Kress' definition:

"Discourses are organisations of meanings which are prefigured in, determined by, and existent in social and material structures and processes. Discourse represents the mode in which ideology finds its discursive expression." [2]

In discourse recognition, the press take a 'realist' view. They recognise views articulated by identifiable groups that shape 'the social'. They accept church to some degree as an institutional participant in society, in much the same way as the education system, or parliament or the law. However, findings outlined in Chapter Three suggest that there is variation between newspapers in the degree of credibility attached to church through evaluation of its clerical participants. It was argued from findings that 'women' also are deemed to be a group that comprise 'the social' and that, for some newspapers more than others, the women's ordination debate was constructed more in the field of feminism than church. It is appropriate for this chapter, therefore, to compare both feminisms and theological discourses in the women's ordination debate in their mass-mediated and 'official' forms.

Two other points need consideration. In taking a 'realist' view, the media do not raise philosophical questions or methodological issues that might cause the newspaper reader to question the defensibility of the views/discourses advanced.[3] This said, it is useful for the analyst of the newspaper debate to realise that participants did not all use the same 'hermeneutic' in arriving at their views. In the case of theological views, their methodologies varied in broad terms between a 'conventional' and a 'praxis' theology. In the case of feminisms, to use a term current in radical feminist theory, some were less 'male-stream' than others.[4] Moreover, while this chapter will consider feminisms and theological views separately, it will become evident to the reader that this is an artificial separation, though a useful vantage point from which to understand both the feminist theologies and theologically derived anti-feminisms in the debate.

In my discussion of the relationship between 'the theological' and 'the social' as constructed by the press, I will draw attention to the press' perception of the social *consequences* of particular views expressed in the ordination debate.[5] The press is concerned with outcome, not meaning origin.

The remaining task of this chapter is to outline the views that make up the press debate. The basis for identification are documents other than news texts that as far as possible are recognised as authoritative expressions of the various viewpoints. Key words and phrases that identify each point of view are given. Spokespersons for the various discourses in media texts are also identified, participants the reader will recall from previous textual analysis. It is useful to recall that news texts tend to either explicitly or implicitly encode participants as being simply 'for' or 'against' ordination to the priesthood for women: an outcome orientation. That this is an oversimplified construction of the views of participants will become evident in this chapter. A brief review of typical press evaluations of the participants and their views will follow.

I will look first at the theological views as expressed within synods of the Anglican Church, in synod reports, and at synod-related conferences. Attention will be drawn also to competing meanings in relation to 'ordination'. While I will make reference to the 'traditions' of Anglicanism, it has been my goal to avoid theological labels as much as possible, and to focus on the competing meanings advocated.

I will then present the feminisms in the ordination debate in the light of a 'traditions' approach

formulated by the sociologist Olive Banks. This grid identifies three main traditions of feminism

and provides a useful means for discerning competing and shared meanings. Within my

categorisation regard will be given also to the development of feminist theory over the past 25

years. Attention will be paid to Barbara Field's preliminary discursive analysis of the ordination

debate, which appears to reflect some characteristics of a utopian tradition of feminism. [6]

Given that the principal focus of my study is the press mediation of the debate, there is another

level of discourse to consider. Consider again Kress' definition:

"The relevant linguistic unit is the text, and the relevant sociological unit is discourse. Messages
do not arise out of or exist in a theoretical void; they are the results and expressions of specific
social and material processes. Such processes are themselves part of larger social organisations
and structures, and these find their expression in specific discourses. Discourses are
organisations of meanings which are prefigured in, determined by, and existent in social and
material structures and processes."[7]

The meanings that comprise this debate are not only theologies and feminisms. One must also

address how the social and material structures and processes of the news impact on theological

and feminist debate, given that it is the owners and producers of news who control the practices

that I have called 'modality'. My primary goal, however, will be to identify what I call 'media

discourses'; that is, the discursive 'cement' that in news texts, links reported and quoted views

of participants. I will suggest that there is a 'legislative discourse', with a 'progress' discourse

and a 'unity' discourse derived from this. Discussion of the features of news discourse

(sometimes referred to as the genre of news) will follow, being related to findings from analysis

of the visual and verbal components of news texts.

In outlining competing structures of meaning, I will use the term 'key words' when identifying words (signifiers) that have competing meanings (signifieds). I will use the word 'discourse' to refer to groups of meanings that tend to be expressed together. The term 'tradition' will be used to refer to meaning systems that have a commonly accepted historical identity. The more general terms 'view' or 'position' will be used to refer to a particular individual's point of view.

Endnotes Chapter 4.1

1. John Woodhouse, "Leadership and Authority: Response", *The Bible and Women's Ministry: An Australian Dialogue*, (Canberra, Acorn Press, 1990) p 37.

2. Kress, "Media Analysis and the Structure of Discourse", p 3.

3. Thus, perspectives that may arise from a sociological approach to religion - and particularly a sociology of knowledge - are outside the area of concern of this thesis. Equally, critiques of such sociological models will not be considered here.

For an introduction to the writings of classical sociologists (Max Weber: *The Protestant Ethic, The Spirit of Capitalism, Sociology of Religion* and Emile Durkheim: *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*) as they impinge upon the sociology-theology debate, see Robin Gill (Ed) *Theology and Sociology: A Reader* (London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1987) pp 27-65.

For an overview of the points at which sociology challenges theology, see Robin Gill, "Sociology Assessing Theology" in Gill (Ed) pp 147-8.

For the 'early view' of Peter Berger see Peter L. Berger., *The Precarious Vision* (New York, Doubleday, 1961). For his 'later view' see *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York, Anchor Books, 1969). See also Peter L. Berger, "Sociological and Theological Perspectives" in Gill (Ed) pp 99-100.

For a critique of Peter Berger's later view, see Robert N. Bellah, "Theology and Symbolic Realism" in Gill (Ed) pp 118-129, and Timothy Radcliffe, "A Theological Assessment of a Sociological Explanation" in Gill (Ed) pp 165-177, especially pp 174-5.

For an introduction to the place of values in sociological models, see David Lyon, *Sociology and the Human Image*, (Leicester, Inter-Varsity Press, 1983). See also Radcliffe in Gill (Ed) p 168.

For an assessment of the limitations of a sociology of knowledge applied to theology, see in particular Gill, reflecting upon Karl Mannheim, "Theology and the Sociology of Knowledge", in Gill (Ed) pp 79-92. Gill argues (p 6): "If ideas are to be discredited simply because they are shown to be socially conditioned then one's own ideas appear equally vulnerable: a thoroughly sociological understanding of knowledge would soon be driven into the absurd position of discrediting *all* knowledge including its own."

For a critique of sociological perspectives in the practice of biblical hermeneutics see Anthony C. Thisleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, (London, Harper Collins, 1992), Chapter XII. Thisleton distinguishes between socio-critical and socio-pragmatic hermeneutics. See also Robin Scroggs, "The Sociological Interpretation of the New Testament: The Present State of Research" in Gill (Ed) pp 254-275.

4. Liberation theology is a tradition of theological inquiry that starts with human (social) experience and draws from scripture, ethics from which to liberate from that experience. It is a 'praxis' theology in which 'the social' is given priority. See for example, Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God* (New York, Crossroad, 1990) pp 5,7,30.

Gill identifies a 'conventional' distinction between systematic theology (or biblical theology) and its application, and the liberation theology view which "precludes this distinction, since it insists that praxis and belief are mutually related and should not be treated separately" (p 18).

Thisleton regards 'praxis' as a "slippery, but also technical, term" (p 380). He notes that "traditionally biblical studies have presupposed a notion of textuality which leans heavily on a historical paradigm. We look behind the text at the situation which provided its raison d'etre" (p 57). The grammatico-historical method starts with the biblical text and seeks to place scripture within its original historical-cultural background before extracting principles for people-God relationships and church practice. Scripture is the source of theory (and thus is consciously prior) and 'the social' is the realm of practice. The 'gospel' is understood in personal terms as a call to a relationship with God. It is a message which is preached. (See, for example, Ralph P. Martin, *New Testament Foundations*, Vol 1, (Michigan, Eerdmans, 1975) p 21. It is seen, however, to have consequences for action in the social realm. In liberation theology 'the social' and 'the theological' are reversed. Perception of the 'gospel' grows out of human liberating experiences.

A further critique of hermeneutics has arisen out of the feminist movement. Thisleton distinguishes between those strands in feminist hermeneutics that draw deeply on socio-critical theory at a meta-critical level and those that promote a socio-pragmatic reading of texts that filter out from the biblical text "any signal which does anything other than affirm the hopes and aspirations of a given social group" (p 410). For discussion of 'male-stream' methodology see Chapter 4.3, below.

For an outline of the current threefold challenge to the grammatico-historical paradigm see Thisleton, p 56. For discussion of liberation and feminist theologies see Thisleton, Chapter XI, "The Hermeneutics of Socio-Critical Theory: Its Relation to Socio-Pragmatic Hermeneutics and to Liberation Theologies"; Chapter XII, "The Hermeneutics of Liberation Theologies and

Feminist Theologies: Socio-Critical and Socio-Pragmatic Strands", pp 379-470.

5. That is, as opposed to the relationship of 'the social' to their origin (as discussed in footnote 4 above) or to their expression. In relation to their expression in 'the social', I do not wish to draw upon more technical definitions of 'the social' as incorporating or excluding the domestic domain as is found between classical, Parsonian and post-parsonian sociology. I regard this debate as outside the boundaries of this thesis. For one discussion see Anna Yeatman, "Women, Domestic Life and Sociology" in Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (Eds) *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp 157-172. By 'the social' I will mean the realm of collective human experience embracing social institutions, human relationships and social and material processes.

In my use of the term 'theological' to describe a discourse I am concerned in particular with theological reasoning ('God-talk'), whether it be the application of a scriptural principle ('theological principle' as in biblical or systematic theology) or practice that appeals to what is seen as a recurring theme in scripture, such as the theme of the Exodus ('theological adjunct' as in liberation praxis theology). (For this see Thisleton, p 416.)

It is my contention that the press construct a 'mediated theological orthodoxy' (or consensus) that lies in outcomes in 'the social'. My argument is that participants are judged credible or not credible on this basis and not on the basis of their doctrinal views (Christology, for example) or hermeneutical skill.

6. Field, "Conflicting Discourses", p 53.

7. Kress, "Media Analysis and the Study of Discourse", pp 3-11.

Chapter 4

Discursive mediation: Theological discourses

4.2.1 Theological traditions in the ordination debate

The field of Christianity and church

The field of Christianity and church encompasses the beliefs, practices and accredited written sources of Christian churches. It is "God talk"[1], but it is also 'people talk' because theology also strives to understand the will of God in the realm of human relationships and in society at large.

Within this field is found a range of social practices: teaching through sermons and Christian education, the celebration of the sacraments, prayer, church government, pastoral care and social comment/action, to name a few. Each of these produces discourses realised in texts. However, the meanings connected with ministry, and how it is talked about, are not universally held within this field, or indeed, within Anglicanism. This study endorses Barbara Field's contention that:

"When people in the Church debate the issue of the ordination of women, they appear not to be 'hearing' each other. They are using the same words such as 'priest', 'ordination' and 'ministry', but they are not necessarily meaning the same things by them." [2]

Indeed, I suggest that a main focus of competing meaning is the word 'ordination'. To some in the Anglican Church, ordination elevates to an office or 'order' of priest (a discourse of symbolic status - of being - that implies elevation). To others, it is an endorsement to exercise various functions of ministry (a functionalist - a doing - discourse). For others, the meanings are mixed. The media's view of ordination will be discussed later in this chapter.

Perhaps the most celebrated feature of Anglicanism, as compared with other Christian denominations, is its 'diversity in unity'. Its variety can be observed on two related dimensions: churchmanship (the 'how') and theology (the 'why'). So great is the variety that the Anglican Church could be compared to an agglomeration of tensions left over from Roman Catholicism and the movements that led to Presbyterianism, Methodism and Pentecostalism, as well as being affected by currents of Western Liberalism.

Amid these tensions, it is generally agreed among Anglican theologians that Anglican authority is derived from scripture, tradition and reason. However, in very simple terms, while embracing the three, some Anglicans place greater emphasis on the Bible (Evangelicals), others, tradition and the sacraments (Anglo-Catholics) and others, reason, mindful of contemporary society (Liberals). Each tradition of Anglicanism places in high regard its eloquent defenders of the faith, its favoured theologians (and associated theological colleges), or as some label them, 'standard divines'. Who or what one cites to support a view will reflect one's theology and churchmanship.

The processes of synodical government are also treated as authoritative in practical matters, producing resolutions (the opinion or mind of the synod), adopted reports of committees, and canon law. Pastoral direction is taken from the bishop as president of the diocesan synod through his presidential address or synod charge, while other ecclesiastical bodies are sometimes looked to as opinion leaders. [3]

What tends to bind Anglicanism together is common practice derived from the "Anglican formularies", the *Thirty Nine Articles* (of doctrine) and the *Book of Common Prayer* and its modern adjuncts, such as *An Australian Prayer Book*. This prayer book contains, among other things, the ordinals, the services via which someone is made a deacon or ordained a priest-bishop. [4]

I will now identify three main views held by Anglicans in this debate: a Sacramental tradition against ordination to the priesthood for women, a Biblical tradition against ordination (but with dissenting - pro-ordination - views) and a Broad Church social justice tradition in favour of women's ordination. I will identify key words that together express a particular position in the ordination debate. In the process I will identify 'status' and 'function' meanings.[5] Later, I will draw attention to the two images of 'the social' that have dominated over theological meanings in the debate.[6] One is relevant to the anti-ordination 'headship' meaning, the other to the part 'equality' plays in theological meanings.[7] In outlining the views, I have tried with only partial success to avoid theological categories in highlighting meanings stressed.[8]

If media representation focuses on 'the social', then some views will be intrinsically more media-friendly, and likely to be evaluated as credible, than others. Following a review of typical press evaluations of the views and their associated participants it will become evident that the complex nature of the theological views and their competing meanings are not represented adequately in news texts. Indeed, the reader will appreciate that press construction of the various positions is a token representation of a complex theological debate.

Sacramental Tradition

Key words: Eucharist, priest, Apostolic Ministry

A dictionary definition provides a starting point:

"Anglo-Catholics emphasise the dogmatic and sacramental aspects of the Christian creed and life, and the historic continuity of the existing Church of England with the Middle Ages".[9]

Key word: Eucharist (sacrament)

Some Anglicans regard the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion, the pronouncing of absolution (forgiveness of sin) and the blessing, to be the essence of the priestly role, accessed through ordination to the priesthood. [10] The label 'Anglo-Catholic' indicates affinity with Roman Catholicism in the understanding of the meaning of the sacrament of the Eucharist. However, one may not necessarily regard oneself to be an Anglo-Catholic and yet still have a strongly sacramental view of the priesthood.

Key word: 'priest' (as icon of Christ/ordination status)

For some who oppose the ordination of women, the aspect of New Testament tradition that for them is prescriptive (as opposed to descriptive) is that all Jesus' apostles were male, suggesting that God chose, and continues to choose, to reveal himself to people through the male gender. Consequently only a male can represent Christ at the altar. [11] This view regards the priest as the icon of Christ. It is a discourse of symbolic status. It is supported by the argument that Jesus only chose male apostles. [12]

Key word: 'Apostolic ministry' (succession)

A phrase common to two separate traditions of Anglicanism on the ordination of women debate is 'apostolic ministry'. Within the Sacramental tradition, this means the continuity of leadership handed on by St Peter from the Jerusalem Church of the first century AD. Thus the social organisation of Christianity in the first century AD is received as an inherited tradition that is to be preserved. One expression of this view states:

"the three-fold order of bishops, priests and deacons is the guarantee of true guidance, authority and leadership in the Church. It is not the Apostolic 'type' of government but the 'succession' that is essential." [13]

It is a view that places emphasis on the original link between the Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox churches, arguing that one section of the church cannot by itself validly change the nature of its priesthood.[14] This meaning is expressed also through the word 'unity' and in relation to 'ecumenism'. [15]

While reasoning within the Sacramental tradition (Anglo-Catholic) and the Biblical tradition (Evangelical) opposed to the ordination of women is different, their synodical voting has coincided in a 'no' vote. Hence Mark Brolly's comment (Age 25.9.87) that theirs was a "curious alliance". [16] However, the thought of some in the Biblical tradition opposed to the ordination of women, appears to merge with that of those in the Sacramental tradition in the phrase 'apostolic (tradition)'. [17] Most within the Biblical tradition, however, stressed the separateness of their meanings.

Media participants expressing the meanings outlined above included Fr John Fleming, in the early months of 1987, Dr Ian Spry of the Association for Apostolic Ministry (mainly in relation to the 1992 Supreme Court of NSW case), and more generally the Bishop of Ballarat, Bishop John Hazlewood.

I will suggest below that this theological view undergirds the anti-feminist components of the view of Women Against the Ordination of Women (W.A.O.W.).[18]

Biblical Tradition

Evangelicalism is an eighteenth and nineteenth century movement that sought to redirect the church back to scripture as the authority both in the life of the individual Christian and the organised church. [19]

Within this broad characterisation, however, there is today, explicit and implicit debate about what an Evangelical is. [20] In the study of Australian church history, differences have been discerned between the style of Evangelicalism practised in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, and that practised in the Diocese of Sydney. Their theological differences have been expressed as "Liberal Evangelicalism" in the case of Melbourne, and "Conservative Evangelicalism" in the case of Sydney. [21] Stuart Piggin has begun to explore more complex factors, while still endorsing the 'impact of region' in relation at least to lay Evangelicalism. [22]

In the identification of key words and meanings below, I will avoid as much as possible, both a Sydney-Melbourne division and a conservative (theology) - liberal (theology) spectrum. Some meanings are shared across the Sydney-Melbourne division. [23] I do not wish to deny differences, but to suggest the possibility of a non-geographical continuum instead of a geographical dichotomy. [24]

I will outline key meanings for a "majority" and "dissenting" Evangelical view. This labelling may appear to have a Sydney diocesan bias. However, from the reference point of General Synod voting patterns, more participants within the Evangelical tradition voted against the ordination of women, than for, until 1992. The identification of meanings is based upon two sources that have a high degree of shared authority.

In May 1988 members of the Anglican General Synod who regarded themselves as Evangelicals, both for and against the ordination of women to the priesthood, met at Kurrajong, N.S.W. for dialogue. The conference papers make accessible the assumptions from which the contributors proceeded, their understanding of the biblical texts (exegesis), their application of their understanding to the present context (hermeneutics) and varying understandings at both points. [25]

A 1993 Sydney Diocesan Synod Committee report [26] outlines in another form, points of difference in Evangelical views found within the Diocese of Sydney. This report, having the shared authority of its committee, and received by the synod of the Diocese of Sydney, will be used to supplement the Kurrajong Dialogue. A conference was organised by this synod committee and convened on 27 June 1992, being publicised to all synod members, women in ministry in the diocese, and through *Southern Cross*, the diocesan magazine. While this report and conference clearly came towards the 'end' of the media debate, views dissenting from the Sydney Diocesan Evangelical position (Biblical tradition) against ordination were made public as early as 1987 through the "Men, Women and God" group convened by Gerald and Rosemary Christmas.

I will outline first, meanings shared by Evangelicals opposed to the ordination of women, a majority "headship" view, and then proceed to meanings advocated by Evangelicals in favour of ordination, a dissenting "partnership" view.

Evangelical majority "headship" discourse

Key words: minister, authority, unity, headship, equal but different, mutual submission

Key word: 'minister' (ordination function)

This view sees the ordained 'minister' as a pastor-teacher[27], rather than the mediator between people and God, as in Catholic thought, or an icon of Christ, as in the Sacramental tradition and to varying degrees owned by the Broad Church. Ordination is thought of less as elevation to 'priestly orders' a symbolic-status meaning, as in the Anglo-Catholic and Broad Church discourses, and more in terms of function: the spiritual responsibility of teaching / pastoring a parish. A meaning in competition with this is expressed by Bishop John Wilson, and identified below under the key word 'church'. [28]

Key word: 'authority' of scripture (theological method)

This meaning might more readily be understood as the 'authoritativeness' of scripture. Dr Peter Jensen, principal of Moore College, Diocese of Sydney, regards the relevant passages of scripture as not just limited to the first century A.D. but as having a universal (time and place) relevance:

"All scripture has the authority of God's word, but when Paul appeals to 'tradition' or to the custom of all the churches, he is specifically indicating that his reasons for giving a direction are not to do with social pressure or the exigencies of the moment, but with the nature of God's creation and command, inherent in the divine purposes.

"The very shape of the Apostle's argument in 1 Corinthians, therefore, indicates that we are not handling culturally bound material, but the beginning of a permanent and universal practice, founded on the authority of the Lord and his apostle." [29]

This theological method sometimes attracts the label 'reformed' or 'conservative'. Within the field of Christianity/church, 'conservative Evangelicals' are so named because of their theological method, and their attitude to scripture, and not necessarily, as might be inferred, their attitude to social change. [30]

Key word: 'unity' (of church practice)

In common with other Anglican traditions, Evangelicals talk about 'unity'. This meaning, however, is usually closer to 'shared uniformity of church order' or 'patterns of ministry'. Thus, whereas in Anglo-Catholic view, the 'succession' of apostolic tradition is stressed, in the Evangelical meaning it is the 'type' of ministry pattern that is focussed upon. [31]

This is evident, for example, in a statement issued by Archbishop Donald Robinson in 1987 in response to an Appellate Tribunal ruling that did not reject the legality of the admission of women to the Diaconate:

"... the implications of this decision are far reaching for the *unity of the church* in Australia ... especially ... applied ... to ... women priests.

"The ordaining of women in one diocese, but not another, means that we do not have a ministry that is *mutually acceptable* at all levels ...

"We must care for one another and not lose sight of the *things that do unite us*." [32] (Italics: JB)

Key word: Equal but different (gender differentiation, subordination)

Evangelical views against the ordination of women stress gender difference. One expression of this view emphasises the functional subordination of women to men in marriage and church life, but does not interpret this to mean that women are inferior. The emphasis on gender differentiation in this expression of a 'headship' view would appear to have some links with the literature of the Equal But Different group. [33] Indeed, shortly I will demonstrate that 'headship' and related meanings are the theological basis of the view expressed by Equal But Different in July and October 1992.

Key word: "headship" (authority over)

The 'headship' argument is a product of the Biblical tradition's attention to the New Testament pattern for relationships in the Christian community. It is derived from such passages as 1 Corinthians 11 and 14, 1 Timothy 2:12 ff and Genesis 2 and 3. The translation of 'God-talk' into human behaviour is seen in interpersonal, rather than social-structural terms.

'Headship' is derived from the Greek word 'kephale' meaning 'head' (1 Corinthians 11: 2-16) and in the Evangelical view opposed to the ordination of women, it is understood to mean 'authority over'. [34] It supports an hierarchical view of spiritual responsibility/ authority (God - man/husband -woman/wife) in Christian families and therefore, by extension, in congregations, viewed as agglomerations of families. [35]

Associated with the key word 'headship' is the view that men and women are equal in having "equal standing within the covenant people", a view based on Galatians 3:28, but that:

"*they are still different* and such differences may be reflected in *differing responsibilities* without compromising their unity in Christ." [36] (Italics: JB)

Thus, a Sydney Diocesan Report on ordination states:

"We do *not* believe that the Bible teaches that men and women are *identical*, but that they are *reciprocal*: the Bible does not talk about 'equality' (except in standing before God) so much as 'mutuality'." [37] (Italics: JB)

Harris explains the difference between those Evangelicals favouring ordination, and those opposed, in terms of the degree to which they seek a social expression of that equality/unity:

"Those who argue against the ordination of women to the priesthood generally hold that this statement by Paul is essentially a theological statement concerning unity within God's covenant people. This verse does *not have significant social dimensions*, because distinctions between men and women still remain, and Paul and Peter can address specific comments to both men and women for them to behave in a distinctive manner. Those who are in favour of the ordination of women to the priesthood would want to take the *social expression of unity further*." [38] (Italics: JB)

Key word: mutual submission

Another expression of the 'headship' view stresses sacrificial service, and not male authoritarianism. Moreover, the context is the mutual submission of husbands and wives to each other, but with different gender expressions of that submission.

Consider 'headship' as outlined by Dr Paul Barnett (now Bishop Barnett), a General Synod participant for the Sydney Diocese in 1987 and 1989:

"How is headship exercised? Husbands exercise it, we infer from Ephesians 5:22-23, as they love their wives as Christ loved and gave himself up for the Church ... From a husband's side it is a headship of 'agape' modelled on the caring sacrificial love of the Lord Jesus for his people (cf. 1 Peter 3:7). Men are not once directed to express headship in any other way, neither by decision-making nor leadership and least of all by any kind of oppression... For her part the wife is 'to submit to' her husband (Col 3:18), that is, to look up to (the role under God given) her husband ... she is to recognise she is under her husband's protection and care." [39]

Here, mutuality, rather than subordination, is stressed. Thus one signifier (spiritual head/head of the house) has two qualitatively different concepts as signified (sacrificial care as compared with oppressive authoritarianism).

Barnett, in his exegesis, stresses attitudes and the complementarity between husband and wife,

not authoritarianism of the male in social roles. A correlate of this view of marriage is a high

view of motherhood, but without a prescription for its social expression in marriage. Barnett

outlines his interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-15, authored by the Apostle Paul:

"As I see it Paul's negative response is not in terms of a woman's inability to occupy the office
of episkopos (priest/bishop) ... didaktikos (teacher), but rather, what effect this incumbency
would have on marriages within the church and indeed on the value of the mothering role ...
What happens in the Church must not overturn, deny or detract from the roles and relationships
of men as husbands and fathers and women as wives and mothers, which are rooted in the very
creation of God." [40]

Barnett's view assumes gender distinctiveness, and within church envisages some distinctive

ministries for women. It carries also a discourse of employment opportunity and job security

for women:

"Many (women) submit to theological training, at considerable expense, only to find there is no
work for them at all on completion, or, alternatively there is a brief term of ministry and then it
is terminated ...

"This is a situation of deep injustice in which the church can take no pride ... the career path of
many women is no longer domestic but public and professional in its orientation. Our structures
must change to meet these changed conditions."[41]

While there are slight variations in meaning emphasis within this Biblical tradition, the

'headship' principle in practice in the Diocese of Sydney allows a woman theologically trained

to be made a deacon and licensed to a parish under the authority of a male rector. In what is

often a team ministry, a woman is able to exercise her ministerial gifts, including that of

teaching. [42]

Participants advocating 'headship' and associated meanings were Bishop Paul Barnett and the Rev Drs Peter Jensen, John Woodhouse and David Petersen. The views of Drs Peter Jensen and Paul Barnett are evident in media texts for the Special General Synod in 1987. Archbishop (now retired) Donald Robinson also advocated this position but stressed the key word 'apostolic ministry' (type) more than other Biblical tradition participants (or was represented in news texts as doing so). This is perhaps consistent with his connection with Anglo-Catholics opposed to the ordination of women through the Association for Apostolic Ministry. The Rev Bruce Ballantine-Jones also advocated 'headship', but his presence in press reports in 1992 related more to the legal case before the Supreme Court.

Biblical Tradition (Evangelical) dissenting (pro-ordination) views

Key words: equal partners in leadership, church, new creation/freedom in Christ, (in)justice

Some persons within the Biblical tradition have not opposed the ordination of women:

"There are those who when they relate the text (1 Timothy 2) to other passages and themes of the New Testament, apply it directly to the exclusion of women from the role of presbyter. *Most others* regard this as a true exegesis of the text but a wrong application. This opinion may be based on grounds such as that *they do not believe ordination and priesthood as we know it in the Anglican Church was envisaged in the New Testament ...*
"*A significant minority*, mainly of Evangelicals, however, *offer a different interpretation* which arises from a dual commitment to infallibility and the ordained ministry of women ...". [43] (Italics: JB)

There are two main expressions of an Evangelical view in favour of women's ordination. While one might wish to characterise one as being Sydney-based, the other Melbourne-based, this may be to simplify their origins and the source of meanings that they draw upon separately and in common.

While the 'Equal Partners in Leadership' view did not achieve corporate public expression until the completion of the report to synod in 1993, dissenting Evangelical views contributed to this report were evident through the existence of the "Men, Women and God" group, from 1987, and through synod debates at the 1987 and 1989 General Synods. The Kurrajong Dialogue occurred in May 1988, and thus Evangelical "dissenting" views were formulated at least prior to the General Synod of 1989.

Key word: 'equal partners' (in leadership)

This view emphasises the gender distinctiveness of male and female, but their equal partnership in leadership over God's creation (exegesis of Genesis 2). In regard to the Galatians 3:28 passage, this view regards that the non-discrimination on the basis of gender, race or social status in terms of salvation status before God, should have a social expression:

" ... by pairing slave and free, male and female with Jew and Gentile, Paul is calling for theological unity and equal standing within the covenant, shared by all these groupings, *to be reflected in the social order within the fellowship of the church*. Paul is obviously not calling for Christians to pretend to be a type of unisex group. However, it is argued that it is not unreasonable to conclude that he is stating that Gentiles, slaves and women are not to be discriminated against within the fellowship of the church on the basis of their race, gender or social status." [44] (Ital: JB)

Key words: 'ordination' and 'church'

The contribution of John Wilson to the Kurrajong Dialogue argues against the predominant theology of church in the Diocese of Sydney as the local congregation in favour of the broader church beyond the parish. This has implications for the meanings attached to the authority of a rector in "the cure and charge of souls" as expressed in the ordinal. [45]

Questions regarding the relationship between ordination to the priesthood and the role of the rector of a parish were raised in the Sydney Diocesan Synod as early as 1981. [46] Implicit within much of the debate has been the question of what constitutes 'teaching', some participants distinguishing between 'official' and 'unofficial' teaching. [47] The relationship between the celebration of the sacraments and ordination to the priesthood has been pursued in a related debate over "lay presidency", to which I will refer, shortly.

Three other meanings are significant in identifying a continuum between the non-social realisation of equality (Galatians 3:28) and its social realisation: "new creation" and "freedom", and "justice".

Key word: 'new creation' and 'freedom in Christ'

A significant site of theological debate is over whether the subordinate status of women is a product of the Fall. That is, whether it was not part of the Creator's design for relationships. Both Giles and Wilson in 1988 advocated the 'freedom' principle:

"When the words and example of Jesus in regard to women are taken as the hermeneutical centre from which to view the whole of the biblical revelation we find that the scriptures consistently affirm, at a theological level, the equal dignity of women and men and the *freedom* and responsibility of both to exercise God-given gifts of leadership and ministry. Women's subordinate status is due to the consequences of the Fall. It is not the ideal: it is not pleasing to Christ and so we should work to enhance the position of women wherever possible." [48]

"... in arguing for the ordination of women to the priesthood, many are convinced that it involves at heart, a demonstration of the truth of the Gospel and of the reality of the *new creation* in Christ. It is part of the freedom to which we are called in Christ, a *freedom* which we can use in love to be servants of one another (Galatians 5:13)." [49] (Italics: JB)

Both views therefore advocate a social realisation of a spiritual reality.

Key word: '(in) Justice'

To see the ordination of women as a 'justice' issue is another marker of a 'dissenting view'. However, within the Biblical tradition it appears to be a secondary, rather than a primary meaning. The degree to which 'justice' is the primary meaning may indicate movement along the 'social' continuum towards what is frequently labelled 'liberal' theology.

Concerns about injustice are evident in the writings of anti-ordination participant, Paul Barnett. However, these are expressed in relation to employment opportunity for women in ministry and not with respect to ordination to the priesthood.

Bishop John Reid (an Evangelical anti-ordination participant until late in the debate) questioned the primacy of the justice issue:

"The theological issues remain unresolved, but they appear to have been engulfed by a justice issue. There is certainly evidence that the community interprets it this way, and now I think our church people are doing the same. I think the justice issue clouds the debate. Ordination is not a right, but a response to the call of God. To view the matter as breaking a barrier in an institution is to ignore the very nature of ministry." [50]

Justice meanings are more evident in the writings of Kevin Giles for whom it is one of three main issues in the debate. [51] However, it is not his sole meaning. Justice is evident again in the view of Archbishop David Penman as recorded by Alan Nichols, who refers here to the 1988 Kurrajong Conference that produced the *Bible and Women's Ministry* edited collection:

"The conference served to clear up a misconception some had of David Penman. He was now understood, not as a Liberal who used the scriptures as it pleased him, but as a biblical scholar who took the Bible seriously, applying it in a different way to modern life and ministry ...

"David Penman had not moved away from his Evangelical roots, or was anything other than a truly Conservative Evangelical in the sense of being biblically conservative ..." [52]

My point is that if 'headship' versus 'justice (incorporating equality)' can be seen as the end points of a 'socially realised equality' spectrum, then the dissenting Evangelical views could be understood to be spread along that continuum to a hypothetical mid point. After the mid point, 'justice' becomes the primary, rather than secondary meaning, advocated.

Participants advocating a dissenting view will be noted for their low profile. Gerald and Rosemary Christmas featured in the suburban *Manly Daily* in 1987, but apart from brief mention in a *Sydney Morning Herald* report on the 1987 Special General Synod, Mr Christmas did not appear as a news actor again until 1992 in relation to the "Anglicans Together" group. [53]

Like participants holding the majority view in the Biblical tradition against the ordination of women, renewed recognition was given by the press in the context of a media unity discourse in 1992. Melbourne participants received greater recognition - and notably Archbishop David Penman - but generally as pro-ordination participants with less regard to theology, and more in relation to the 'progressive' nature of the Melbourne diocese as compared with Sydney.

A related Evangelical discourse: 'lay presidency'

An alternative discourse in the Biblical tradition - that of lay presidency - failed to be recognised by the press in the 1987-1992 period. Lay presidency would allow an authorised lay/non-ordained person in a parish to celebrate, or preside over, the Lord's Supper, the sharing of bread and wine. It is a discourse that was brought to the synod of the Diocese of Sydney and debated prior to, during and after the period of the ordination issue. [54]

Some Biblical tradition (Evangelical) participants maintain that this debate should have preceded ordination of women to the priesthood, given that it would have focused the debate over whether women may preside over the Lord's Supper/ Eucharist, one half of the 'ordination' formula. To this many Sydney diocesan Evangelicals did not object. Whereas the ordination debate suggests the male-female divide, this discourse addresses the clerical-lay divide.

Summary: Biblical tradition

In the Biblical tradition, the issue of women's ordination to the priesthood is primarily a discourse of function. That is, in the light of biblical teaching, is it permissible for a woman to exercise certain functions within the church? It becomes a discourse of status, as well, in proportion to the expectation that the 'equality' meaning of Galatians 3:28 should be realised at a social level, rather than as a spiritual reality that has repercussions only for interpersonal relationships between Christians. That is, in proportion to the inclusion of justice meanings. In either form, gender distinctiveness is assumed.

Broad Church - Social Justice Tradition

Key words: unity, justice, experience, relevance, fear.

"'Liberalism' ... came into use early in the 19th century ... In theology it has been used with many different shades of meaning. If taken to mean freedom from bigotry and readiness to welcome new ideas or proposals for reform, it is a characteristic which many people will readily profess, but in itself it gives no indication of their beliefs or aspirations ... all that they have in common is a general tendency to favour freedom and progress ...". [55]

Liberal theological scholarship does not hold to a high view of scripture as divine revelation, although it may still refer to the authority of scripture in a less absolute sense. The guide is scripture subject to reason in applying critical scholarship amid the ongoing development of tradition, and with regard to contemporary circumstances.

To the moral theologian Richard Hooker could be attributed an influential and early role in defining the relationship between scripture, tradition and reason:

"In the culminating contribution to this debate, Richard Hooker's *On the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, reason is defined as not only presupposed for an accurate understanding of scripture but as competent to determine a broad range of issues not explicitly covered in scripture. Indeed, Hooker held that the Church could reasonably prescribe contrary to a biblical precept, if the purpose of the precept in its historical context could be understood and could be understood to be irrelevant in current circumstances. Hooker's unwillingness to have the Bible used as a source of ahistorical, unambiguous proof texts for dogmatic solutions to all problems is typical of later Anglican thought." [56]

This tradition's position in relation to women's ordination is the one, according to Muriel Porter, owned by the vast majority of Australian Anglicans:

"The support for women priests mostly comes from Anglicans of a more central ethos - the vast majority of Australian Anglicans - and liberal members of the anglo-catholic and evangelical wings."[57]

In the previous section I have tried to avoid labelling participants "conservative Evangelicals" or "liberal Evangelicals", and suggested, rather, a continuum from a non-social realisation of the 'salvation equality' meaning of Galatians 3:28, to a social realisation in ordination as a marker of status, expressed particularly as an issue of 'justice'. One might envisage the 'liberal' contribution as entering this spectrum when, the social justice principle is regarded as primary among biblical meanings, and/or when the biblical text, in the light of higher criticism, is evaluated as being flawed or irrelevant to contemporary society. [58]

The Broad Church could be understood as those participants who, without adhering closely either to the methodology of liberal theology or the churchmanship of Anglo-Catholicism, nevertheless, in the social practice of church, combine meanings and practices from both.

A 1989 report of the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod outlined four reasons advocated by those who support women's ordination to the priesthood. The meanings are described as "our unity in the image of God, our unity as receivers of gifts of the Holy Spirit, our unity in mission, and our unity in justice". [59] Notably, the Doctrine Commission conceptualised these meanings in terms of 'unity'. However, they could easily be read as three 'equality' meanings and a 'justice' meaning.

Key word: 'unity'(equality) in God's image

"Male and female in the humanity they share, are created in the image of God ... Both men and women are being conformed to his (Jesus') image and are being called upon to reflect it ... to confine the priesthood to males seems to state that maleness represents God more fully than femaleness. To believe this is to distort both the nature of God and the nature of the male-female relationship in God's eyes. Still others would say that women's experiences of God and ways of relating to him differ from men's, and should be allowed to enrich all the church's ministries."[60]

The dominant meaning here is of 'the feminine' as reflecting half of God's image and being qualitatively different to what is masculine. Similar meanings have been expressed with more of an emphasis on 'equality' in feminist theology. Sometimes this has been in reaction against the Anglo-Catholic concept of the male priest as the 'icon' of Christ:

"The logical outcome of the 'God is male' argument is that women not only should not be ordained, but they should not be baptised either."[61]

It will become evident in the next section of this chapter that this view might be read as very compatible with a feminist Enlightenment (equal rights) view.

Key word: 'unity' (equality) in giftedness

"God aportions gifts of ministry as he wills and it is clear from the experience of the church that these gifts of the Spirit are given to women and men alike. Many women have those gifts which are exercised by men within the ordained ministry. Some of these women believe profoundly that God is calling them to exercise these gifts within the congregation as priests. By refusing to recognise and even test such gifts and to consider the appropriateness of ordaining such women, the church is in practice denying God's gifts and inhibiting ministries being called forth by him." [62]

The main meanings combined here are the recognition of gifts (based on human experience), 'calling' (belief God wants someone to do something, as in performing a ministry function), a 'testing' (try it out in practice to see if suitability for the ministry function is evident), and an affirming publicly (with status?) or 'ordaining'.

Key word: 'unity' (equality) in calling

"We have long accepted that God has called women as labourers (in the mission of the church) and they are at work in and for the church both here and overseas. By excluding women from the priesthood and from responsibility for local congregations, in the 'home' churches, the Church is seen by many to be denying that those ministries of women already being exercised have been called forth by God; and to be treating women as second-class citizens, and this hinders and limits the church's mission by turning many women away from the church."[63]

Here a contrast is drawn between the breadth of responsibility given to women missionaries and restricted opportunity in 'home' ministry. The inequality of responsibility/authority between these two situations is constructed in status terms: "second class citizens". To this unequal status is attributed the attrition of women from membership of the Anglican Church; that is, the perception that women are leaving because of unequal status/ opportunity for authoritative ministry.

Key word: 'Unity in Justice' (equal opportunity)

"In the context of the modern world the denial to women of equal opportunity to test the call of ministerial priesthood is considered unjust and discriminatory. From the Christian point of view, discrimination is to be regarded as sinful and as an example of the all-pervading malaise of the fallen world which it was God's purpose to correct or 'put right'. The ordination of women is thus seen in the context of the revelation of the righteousness of God as an inevitable implication for the securing of his righteousness and justice in the world." [64]

'Justice' is a particularly strong theme and ethic in the Broad Church tradition. As 'social justice' it demonstrates a concern for the poor, and by extension, minorities. It applies the justice ethic to social practice, social policy and as a result, welfare issues. Theologically, the church is seen as a participant in the realisation of God's justice in the world, and thus the moulding of a better and more just world. It therefore stresses 'the social', especially when expressed using such words as "(anti) discrimination".

Having quoted the arguments identified by the Doctrine Commission of the General Synod extensively, and analysed some of the competing meanings, it is important to note that underlying them are two other meanings that reflect the theological method in use.

Key word: 'experience'

Human experience is significant, be it the negative lesson of history or the positive experience of the ministry of women as deacons. The Doctrine Commission report spoke of the felt 'calling' of women to the priesthood. Bishop Owen Dowling, in his address to the synod of the Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn on 31 August 1990 expressed an additional dimension:

"We are all called into a royal priesthood, men and women together. It is already my experience that having women involved in the publicly authorised ministry of the church has a wholesome and beneficial effect on the body of Christ and conveys a correct message to the community." [65]

One methodology within the spectrum of liberal theology is advocated by Ruth Sturmey (following Lonergan), that of 'process theology'. This method explicitly incorporates historical and sociological insights into the theological method. I will suggest later in this chapter how the media evaluate 'lessons from history', such as the drawing of parallels between the ordination and anti-slavery debates.[66] Another is 'liberation theology' which emphasises theology as 'praxis' that begins with human experience.[67]

Key word: 'relevance'

The Broad Church tradition is concerned also with how Christian attitudes and practices will be interpreted within present culture, and whether this will harm society's view of the church. Associated key-words are 'prophetic voice' and 'mission'. There is an implicit belief that the world will progress (or God's kingdom actualised) on the basis of hearing and implementing Christian justice principles. The *hearing* makes this a very media-conscious meaning.

The methodology of the Broad (liberal) Church tradition could be said to be more situational than that of the Biblical tradition, which holds to timeless universal truths and relationships, or the Sacramental tradition's commitment to the maintenance of inherited practices. In that to varying degrees, the Broad Church tradition is open to the insights of other disciplines, it can tend towards a mixed discourse. As I will explain shortly, while some feminisms have embraced

liberal theology, it would seem that liberal theology has incorporated into itself two feminist

meanings: a psycho-spiritual view and a sacramental equal baptism - equal ordination view.

Key word: 'fear' (psycho-spiritual)

Consider Muriel Porter's account of a speech delivered by Archbishop Peter Carnley at the

1987 General Synod:

"The most controversial comment, however, came from Archbishop Peter Carnley of Perth. We
may think this matter is theological, he said. But he had a 'funny feeling' that deep down the
matter was 'psycho-spiritual', because deep emotions were obviously stirred by the debate. He
suggested that fear had a large part to play, perhaps fear of dominance by women. The absence
of father figures during the Second World War may have left many men now in power in the
church with a hostility to women, a result of their mother's strong presence during early
childhood. Had too many women supervised their son's baths for too long? he asked. The
press, up till then bored and bewildered by complex theological arguments, was electrified." [68]

Note that Dr Porter herself owns this view. Indeed, she suggests that it is a primary site of

meaning struggle:

"Most people in reality accept or reject the idea of women priests because of a wide-ranging set
of psychological assumptions ... primitive fears and prejudices ... personal experiences and
traumas ... power politics ... some women are terrified of accepting a non-subordinate status ...
In many cases, the theological arguments, while sincerely held, clothe the true reasons with
respectability." [69]

This psycho-spiritual view is advocated clearly in M.O.W. material announcing the movement's

establishment, and in its discussion paper.[70] It was discussed by the M.O.W.(U.K.) as evidenced

in the collection of articles edited by Monica Furlong to which I will refer shortly. It is noted

also that the psycho-spiritual view is not mentioned in the Doctrine Commission report, 1977.

So, its ownership by the Broad Church would appear to have occurred later, but pre-1987.[71]

Key word: 'priestly orders' (ordination status)

Implicit and sometimes explicit in the Broad Church tradition is a definition of ordination as that which gives access to 'priestly orders'. Though not an 'official' definition, Muriel Porter's role as member of both the General Synod and its executive Standing Committee, could be seen to give some weight to her understanding:

"This (term, 'priest') no longer carries connotations of sacrifice, but indicates that Anglicans, unlike other Protestant denominations, still cling to *an imperfectly defined notion that the priest somehow represents God to the church in ways denied to ordinary Christians* ... As long as no woman can be ordained, then in a real sense the *status* of all Christian women remains ambiguous. Are they second class Christians, or perhaps not capable of being Christians at all? One slogan of the women's movement in the church proclaims: 'If you won't ordain us, don't baptise us.'"[72] (Italics: JB)

Clearly, ordination has been understood to be a mark of symbolic status. One notes the parallel drawn between baptism and ordination as marks of symbolic equalising status.

Summary: Broad Church tradition

In summary, the key word that distinguishes the liberal Broad Church's social justice tradition, on women's ordination, is the one word, 'unity', but with four theological meanings: unity in the image of God; unity as receivers of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, unity in mission and unity in justice. I have noted also, 'experience' and 'relevance' meanings, which reflect the theological method of the tradition. These address 'the social'. As well I have identified a view that stresses psychological factors, and especially 'fear'. Together with an 'equal baptism, equal ordination' symbolic status view, it may have been borrowed from feminist theology.

Meanings common to the three traditions

Two other meanings of 'unity' are held more in common across theological boundaries. One is a constitutional unity that relates to the 1962 Constitution of the Anglican Church in Australia; a legal rather than a theological discourse. [73]

There is another 'unity' meaning, common to the Anglo-Catholic view against the ordination of women, and the Broad Church - liberal view, considered but less significant in the Evangelical majority or dissenting views; that of ecumenism.

Key word: 'unity' (ecumenical)

This concerns the links the Anglican Communion has historically with the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches. This relationship is addressed within the Doctrine Commission of General Synod's 1977 report on the "Ministry of Women":

"There remains the *ecumenical argument* that such a step would jeopardise continuing relationships with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. Three points may be made against this. If we are convinced that it is theologically proper and pastorally urgent to ordain women, then we should not be deterred by the reluctance of others to take similar action, though we should want to consult them. Otherwise, no reform or renewal would ever occur in the churches. Secondly, recent Orthodox statements seem adamantly opposed to this step, but Roman Catholics at least are more open here, have the question under study, and are faced with pressure from some of their own members. Our experience may be of service to them. Thirdly, we are beginning to accept a *notion of unity* as more pluriform than uniform. Roman Catholics are engaged in *unity discussions with churches* that already have women ministers (Lutherans and Methodists), so that this matter along with celibacy could be regarded as one of differing internal disciplines. Thus the *ecumenical argument*, weighty as it is, cannot be finally determinative." [74] (Italics: JB)

One sees the meaning also expressed by Muriel Porter who estimates the support for the

ecumenical view as compared with that for women's ordination:

"If this is a question of obedience to the truth ... then issues of church unity will resolve
themselves. (The reality is that there are many more Anglicans who would reject reunion with
Rome than would ever reject women priests)."[75]

Ecumenism expresses an ecclesiastical relationship that has a social expression in meetings

between churches and talks about such matters as the establishment of closer links, inter-

communion and the like.

Summary

Thus far in this chapter I have identified meanings expressed in the ordination debate from three

main Anglican traditions.

First, is what I have termed the Sacramental (Anglo-Catholic) tradition opposed to women

priests. Its talks about the priesthood in terms of symbolic status and I will demonstrate shortly

that it is the theological base of the anti-feminism expressed by Women Against the Ordination

of Women.

Second is what I have termed the Biblical (Evangelical) tradition, which has produced 'majority'

and 'dissenting' views on women's ordination. It talks about the priesthood in terms of function

and I will suggest shortly that one expression of its 'majority' view is the theological basis of the

anti-feminism expressed by Equal But Different. An alternative discourse arising from within this tradition, rather than asking 'Who may be ordained?', asks 'Who may preside at Holy Communion?', part of the priestly function. This tradition stresses 'function' rather than 'status' meanings of ordination.

Third is what I have termed the Broad Church - social justice (liberal) tradition. This embraces 'justice', 'equality', 'relevance' and 'unity' meanings as well as psycho-spiritual meanings such as 'fear'. Like the Sacramental tradition it tends to stress status meanings in relation to ordination, but incorporates into its understanding of the office of priest, more social relevance meanings than within the Sacramental tradition which is concerned with symbolic-spiritual status of the office of priest.

The reader will realise therefore, that this is a complex theological debate with some shared, but a greater number of competing meanings, some having the same signifieds. Some theological meanings stress 'the social' more than others. It is not a debate that has a simple two sided 'for' and 'against' construction. Having established this, further insight is provided by reflection upon how these views have been constructed and evaluated by the press.

4.2.2 Press mediation of the theological traditions

In Chapter Two, analysis of verbal texts focussed on the press evaluation of participants in the debate in terms of 'personality credibility'. It was recognised that within the body of news texts, pro-ordination participants were more often given 'first' and 'last' word positions and in other ways evaluated as more highly credible than anti-ordination participants. At the same time, my analysis highlighted evaluations in headlines that implied that progress towards ordination to the priesthood for women was the 'positive pole' or reference point. Disunity was the other main theme present in headlines.

My outline of the theological points of view expressed by three main traditions within Anglicanism thus far in this chapter now enables the reader to link represented participants with their non-press-mediated views, and to make a comparison with the press construction/evaluation.

It will become evident that the main site of press evaluation is 'the social'. That is, theological perspectives have been evaluated on the basis of their perceived social 'faces' or social outcomes. There is evidence of some theological views, but in token form, while some are almost entirely absent. In its evaluation, the press has discerned two main social patterns: patriarchy and gender equality. I will now review typical evaluations found in news texts of the two separate theological discourses against the ordination of women and two in favour.

Sacramental (Anglo-Catholic) tradition opposed to women's ordination

In 1987, *The Age* and particularly *The Australian* evaluated advocates of this theological viewpoint as credible. Visiting bishops from overseas were evaluated as highly credible participants in *The Age*.[76] In Chapter Two I noted that Fr John Fleming was also evaluated as highly credible, not least because of his role as a media commentator.[77]

When a Sacramental tradition participant opposed to women's ordination was represented, their view was constructed as relating to 'unity': either the goal of denominational reunification or the prevention of Anglican disunity.

In 1987, following the public release of the view of the Appellate Tribunal, the highest Anglican body of legal opinion, in favour of legislation for women deacons, *The Age* evaluated the decision in relation to unity and constructed this evaluation around participant Fr John Fleming. It reported his view in 'first word' position and quoted it as 'last word' giving him high 'personality credibility':

"The unity of Anglicanism had collapsed and the church as Australians had known it, would cease to exist, *a prominent Adelaide priest* said yesterday ...

"Father John Fleming said that the Anglican Church in Australia would have to accept the consequences of the decision which would thwart proposed union with the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches and lead instead to union with the Uniting Church." ("Doom seen in verdict on women priests" Age 5.3.87.) (Figure 76)

It was noted earlier that ecumenism is a theological principle that is very compatible with 'the social' because it involves meetings, discussions and a coming together or re-unifying of persons that are expressed in a social way, as in ecumenical/ inter-denominational church services. This is a 'unity' meaning with a social expression.

However, participants advocating this view were evaluated as far less credible in 1989 across newspapers. An exception was brief credibility given to persons who left the Anglican Church in protest over the admission of women to the diaconate as was the case for Brian Best (SMH and DT 13.2.89).[78]

A public debate between Dr Janet Scarfe and Bishop John Hazlewood, reported in *The Age*, provides an example of a low credibility evaluation. Dr Scarfe is the more credible participant on the basis of headline, position in text, and textual space allocated. The following quote from the end of the text enables the reader to identify the 'priest as icon of Christ' meaning and to see it evaluated by the journalist in relation to 'the social' as 'patriarchy':

"Bishop Hazlewood said Christ had been made in the *'heavenly image of the holy father'* and was regarded as 'the archetypal image of an official priest'.

"The *patriarchal* structure of the church still had the support of about three quarters of Christians, he said.

"'Of course, this should not produce the evils of male domination. Of course it has in the past and I hope it would not be able to produce such evils again.'

"The audience at yesterday's debate voted overwhelmingly that women should be ordained." (last word) ("Church deprives women says Anglican activist" *Age* 30.8.89.) (Ital:JB) (Figure76)

The last word implicitly reduces the bishop's credibility. However, in 1992 Bishop Hazlewood gained a new credibility in the light of being evaluated as an ordination opponent who would now "support compromise" ("Ordination opponents support compromise" Aust 6.7.92).

In *The Age* ("Vicar seeks unity in 'divine discrimination'" Age 3.2.92) (Figure 77), Fr David Robarts was evaluated as highly credible as a participant committed to preventing the ordination of women and a litigant in the case before the N.S.W. Supreme Court. This did not extend to a positive evaluation, but rather a distancing of the reader from his view. [79] One must recall also, that in *The Age*, what I have termed the 'dual text' strategy enabled all participants to be evaluated as highly credible in separate news texts.

In evaluating 'unity' as a concern in the ordination debate and evaluating some Anglo-Catholic participants as credible, the press was not, however, endorsing theological views from this Sacramental tradition. More will be said in relation to the media's unity discourse shortly.

Biblical (Evangelical) Tradition opposed to women's ordination

The reader will have noted from discussion above that 'unity' is not a major theological meaning within this tradition's discourse. It was rather, 'headship' meanings that attracted press evaluation. Findings in Chapter Two indicated that 'headship' was represented seldom in news texts, especially after 1987, but that participants owning this and related meanings regained credibility in terms of 'unity' in 1992.

The view is evaluated explicitly in the following news text in terms of 'the social' and in particular the equal rights / opportunity concept of affirmative action:

"To the Evangelical stream of the church, represented by the Diocese of Sydney and its opposition to women priests, the church must act in accordance with scripture, even if that defies a *social agenda* that preaches *affirmative action*." (Age, 25.9.87.) (Italics: JB)

It will be argued shortly that even though it is not usually stated overtly, there is an implicit orientation towards this ideological perspective within news discourse.

Texts tended to evaluate the Biblical tradition's participants as less credible than pro-ordination actors, except in relation to 'unity' concerns as givers of 'warnings':

"The Anglican Church would be split if the Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, the Rt Rev Owen Dowling, went ahead with his proposal to ordain 11 women as priests, the Archbishop of Sydney told a court yesterday.
"The Most Rev Donald Robinson, a strong opponent of women's ordination, said Bishop Dowling's actions would 'greatly increase the tendency for individual dioceses to do their own thing'.
"'It will tend to lead us to fall apart as a national body,'" ("Archbishop fears split if women ordained" SMH 24.1.92.)

In representing the debate primarily in terms of the 'social' it would seem that press reporting of the 'headship' view, when it occurred, positioned the reader to evaluate it as less credible than a pro-ordination view, but with slight variations between newspapers. A comparison of texts for 25.8.87, for example, has shown that Dr Paul Barnett was evaluated most credibly in *The Australian* (last word), less so in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* (centred in text). In *The Age*, his 'headship' view was quoted but implicitly evaluated as less credible than the Broad Church - liberal view of Bishop Bruce Wilson, in last word position, and thus to a greater degree 'owned' by the journalist:

"Bishop Bruce Wilson, the assistant bishop of Canberra, told the synod that the 'headship' arguments based on St Paul were *a chauvinist reading of scripture.*" ("Fate of women priests in Anglican Church rests on one bishop" Age 25.8.87.) (Ital:JB)[80]

At times the view was represented only through a negative evaluative label. Even though attributed to a participant, this could be seen to express a perspective evaluated as highly credible on the basis of a participant's 'personality credibility', especially when placed in last word position:

"Yesterday, the Archbishop of Perth, Archbishop Peter Carnley, who unsuccessfully moved a bill for the immediate ordination of women, criticised what he called the intolerance of Sydney delegates.

"'I agree with the Archbishop of Canterbury that fundamentalism in various forms seems to lie at the heart of a lot of the world's problems,' he said.

"'If they stand on a mistaken view of scripture, as I believe, and people's lives are being screwed up by this, it is appalling.'"("Twelve apostles of protest and song"SMH 25.8.89)

It would appear that the primary image in 'the social' through which this Biblical tradition was evaluated was that of gender relations in the home. Consider the following evaluation in a news text arising from the 1987 General Synod:

"Leading the argument against women priests, the Reverend Dr Paul Barnett ... said that to ordain women as priests or presbyters was 'contrary to Holy writ'.

"Dr Barnett said that St Paul taught that husbands should be *the heads of their households.* 'Husband and wife roles are not interchangeable because sexuality is not interchangeable,' he said. The appointment of a woman as presbyter would overturn the God-given relationship in Christian *households.*

"Dr Barnett said that to ordain women would lead to structural division within the church and would usurp God's authority." (Age, 25.8.87) (Italics: JB) (Cf "Battle ahead for women's ordination SMH 25.8.87 Figure 78.)

This expression of headship has been evaluated in the realm of 'the social' through the phrase 'heads of their households'. 'Headship' has been read as 'head of the house'. It would seem likely that this phrase has been evaluated by the press in the light of a utopian feminism that decries 'patriarchy'.[81]

The assumption behind such an evaluation of the 'headship' view is that any theological/social concept necessarily has only one possible social expression. In contrast, advocates of the headship view maintain that there is a qualitative difference between 'patriarchy' and the ideal of headship, the implication being that there is another (positive) social expression of the concept. That this possibility is not allowed for by the press may suggest ideological opposition.

Only in one news text was a family relationship where a form of 'headship' appears to have functioned, evaluated as credible. In "Wendy, voice of experience" (DT 30.1.92) (Figure 79). Mrs Hall in the lead is evaluated as "as expert on being a woman in the church". This "expert" status is linked to her role as "mother of ten children and the wife of an Anglican priest". This family would appear to function within the Sacramental rather than the Biblical tradition opposed to women priests, if the title "Fr" has been correctly applied to Mr Hall. However, evaluation has not been within the field of church/theology, but family. Certainly, the caption to the photograph constructs her identity in relation to her husband: "Father Tom Hall and his wife Wendy with their 10 children yesterday".

Given my findings in Chapter Two that it was only the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* that evaluated participants in the light of marriage relationships and children, and this, only occasionally, it is

perhaps only in this newspaper that 'traditional' family relationships were evaluated explicitly as having a credible social expression. However, many children plus marriage to a priest may constitute a *Daily Telegraph Mirror* stereotype of an Anglican woman. It is therefore unlikely that a public relations strategy that sought to promote a "happy headship families" image in 'battle' of meanings would have been successful, other than in this newspaper, and here only in part, given the stereotype.

The Biblical tradition participant given greatest press attention was Archbishop Donald Robinson. It may be recalled from my outline of the meanings that comprise this tradition's discourse that Archbishop Donald Robinson was one of the few actors to express both "apostolic tradition" 'type' and 'succession' meanings. That is, he expressed a 'headship' view but also, at least in part, unity meanings usually associated only with Sacramental (Anglo-Catholic) tradition participants. This made his view relevant to both 'unity' themes and '(anti)progress' themes, and thus offered two social 'faces' for press evaluation. This may in part explain his greater press 'popularity'.

Biblical Tradition 'Dissenting' (Pro-ordination) Views

That the press did not give recognition to the dissenting view within the Biblical tradition, but rather, differentiated views only in terms of 'for' and 'against', indicates further that the realm of evaluation is 'the social'. Competing meanings and different paths of theological reasoning (methodologies) were not relevant to the press' evaluative perspective, only the participant's conclusion.

A further symptom of the press evaluation being confined to 'the social', and particularly the status of women in 'the social', is the relative lack of attention to the related debate on lay presidency. When this issue did finally receive press attention, participants advocating lay presidency were constructed as highly credible ("Anglicans back lay communion" SMH 14.3.94) (Figure 80). However, the reader is positioned more with those opposing it. Namely, Dr Stuart Piggin, evaluated as "a church historian who favours the ordination of women" with whom the reader is positioned through the introductory "but", and with the Rev Peta Sherlock, whose reaction is linked to the women's ordination debate and is constructed in terms of affective mental processes:

"... the Rev Peta Sherlock, an ordained priest in Melbourne, *felt* the creation of a lay presidency might be detrimental to the ordination of female priests in Sydney." (Ital:JB)

Consistent with my findings from previous analysis, the photograph contextualises the four participants as very 'clerical' somewhat ironic given the theme of the text and that three of the four are laypersons.[82] To this point I will return, shortly.

Broad Church - Social Justice (Liberal) tradition

The views on women's ordination that characterise the Broad Church - liberal theology end of the Anglican Church in Australia, are more atuned to 'the social', and 'progress' in the realm of 'the social', as in social justice. Participants from this church tradition tend to be portrayed very credibly in the press. Archbishop Peter Hollingworth, named Australian of the Year in 1992, is one such participant.

Analysis of verbal texts also indicated that Archbishop Peter Carnley (Perth), a liberal

theologian, Archbishop Peter Hollingworth (Brisbane), who had concurrent and probably prior

credibility on social justice / welfare issues, as well as Bishop Owen Dowling (Canberra), were

the male participants most frequently represented in media texts. That is, apart from

Archbishop Donald Robinson, who served an antagonist function, and Archbishop David

Penman who, although an Evangelical in exegetical method, expressed theological meanings in

very social terms. 'Personality credibility', therefore, is related to 'the social'.

The following example is typical of the kind of evaluation made of male pro-ordination

participants expressing views from within the Broad Church - social justice (liberal) tradition:

"Archbishop Carnley has been *a prime mover* in the Anglican Church's push for women priests,
but he has never wanted to be the first to perform the ceremony ...

"Archbishop Carnley is *determined to proceed* with the ordinations next week, but there is
every chance conservative forces within the church will seek a court injunction to stop him.

"Like many in the Anglican Church, *Archbishop Carnley has been most upset* that church
matters have been put before the civil courts ...

"Before his appointment (as Archbishop) Archbishop Carnley had already been *involved for
many years* in the issue of women priests ...("Archbishop swims through 'custard' for women
priests" Aust 29.2-1.3.92)

This evaluation constructs high credibility in the modal values of potentiality and resolve. It is

in relation to his view over a church matter having been taken to the civil courts, however, that

his credibility extends to a positive evaluation, through mention of his affective mental

processes. This evaluation reveals a strong theme in *The Australian's* news reports in 1992.

Positive evaluations in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and the *Daily Telegraph/Mirror*

were derived more from constructions of feelings of elation and hope among supporters, when for example, a male bishop announced intention to ordain women.

If 'personality credibility', then, is related to the expression of media-approved social outcomes, one might ask whether this credibility facilitates the communication of theological meanings. This is a concern implicit in part in the following comments:

"But many liberal Anglicans fear that last week's (1987) General Synod decision quashing proposals to ordain women priests may diminish *the church's voice* in other areas...
"'While the world perceives that the church is not behaving in the right way over an issue such as women's ordination, it is going to be increasingly difficult *to get our message across on matters of social justice,*' he (Bishop Peter Hollingworth) says." ("Anglicans need new Solomon" Age, 25.9.87) (Ital:JB)

A crucial text would suggest that 'personality credibility' in 'the social' does not guarantee more than a token representation of underlying theological meanings. Consider the address given by Archbishop Peter Carnley, who admitted 11 women and one man to the priesthood in March 1992. His address drew upon three images.[83] One was an image from the work of a late 19th century feminist philosopher, Charlotte Gilman Perkins whose work, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, described her struggle to be free of the stereotype to which her well meaning middle class medical husband had imprisoned her.

A second image came from the title of an exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute in New York: "Confusion after Columbus". This image carried the suggestion that while one cannot anticipate the future, few institutions can today survive without women. The third, and more exclusively Christian image was of the Sisters Perpetua and companions martyred on 7 March in Carthage in 203 AD. Just as theirs was a laying down of life, so too was priestly ordination.

It is noteworthy that only the first image - a feminist one that addressed change in the role of women (progress) - is clearly evident in reporting in the *Sydney Morning Herald / The Age*, the *Daily Telegraph Mirror*, and *The Australian*. [84] Only feminist meanings were evaluated as highly credible. Clearly, distinctively Christian meanings were excluded (low modality) in favour of meanings that addressed 'the social' and in particular, a progress discourse.

One might infer from this that no matter how far theological meanings are accompanied by, or expressed in terms of, social meanings it is likely that only the 'social face', or perceived social outcome, will be evaluated as credible (or not credible) by the press. This is a finding that will need to be tested in relation to other discourses in the field of Christianity/Church, if the Anglican Church and others are to evaluate whether in fact it is possible to communicate 'the Gospel' (understood as a series of propositions pertaining to personal salvation) 'through' the media in purely theological terms.

Indeed, the four theological 'unity' meanings in the Broad Church tradition in news texts are not represented as distinctive in terms of theological content but are absorbed within a general progress for women discourse.

What 'personality credibility' in 'the social' does appear to produce is accumulated credibility that can carry over from one discourse to another and which, once established, is likely to continue to grow. One sees this, for example, in the credibility encodings in relation to Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

"Nobel peace prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, yesterday entered a highly controversial and divisive debate within the Australian Church by giving staunch support to the ordination of women ...

"The famed anti-apartheid campaigner also attacked Australian sportsmen who have failed to boycott South Africa ..."
("Tutu gives blessing to the ordination of women" DT 6.2.87.) (Ital:JB)

To this point I will return.

Conclusion

In constructing the debate in terms of participants 'for' and 'against' ordination, news texts have

not communicated the myriad of theological meanings involved in the ordination debate, nor

the competing meanings (signifieds) attached to the same words (signifiers). In evaluating the

views through two social images - patriarchy and equality/progress for women - the press has

not pursued the divergent meanings attached to the same words or recognised the very different

theological assumptions and methods behind the points of view. Competing 'function' and

'status' meanings in relation to women's ordination to the priesthood have not been identified

and explored. Those participants most highly credible in the press were those constructed as

addressing 'the social'. This brings me to an examination of the feminist meanings in the debate.

Endnotes to Chapter 4.2

1. Field, "Conflicting discourses", p 58.

2. Ibid., p 52. See also Peta Sherlock, "The Treasure in a Field", in *Fit For This Office*, Barbara Field (Ed), p 36, who characterises participants in the debate as being like "ships in the night".

3. For example, the Lambeth Conferences of Bishops and the Anglican Consultative Council (lay and clerical leaders).

4. See *St Mark's Review*, No 41, Autumn 1990, issue on Anglicanism; also Stephen Sykes and John Booty (Eds) *The Study of Anglicanism*, (London, SPCK/ Fortress Press, 1988) Part III, "Authority and Method"; cf. Graeme Cole, "Thomas Cranmer and the Three-Legged Stool," *Southern Cross*, July, 1989, on the primacy of scripture.

5. Analysis of the meaning of ordination in terms of 'status' and 'function' meanings was first suggested to me by M. Dillwyn Bartholomeusz in 1984.

6. Philip Bell, "Drugs and the Media", *Australian Alcohol/ Drug Review*, 1985, pp 235-242, showed that drugs were evaluated in the realm of the 'social', the media systematically ignoring the historical, economic and industrial aspects of drug production. This concept of the 'social' has been found relevant to my study also.

7. The social dimension - from non-social realisation of equality to full social realisation is suggested in "10/91 Ordination of Women to the Priesthood: A Report to Synod", (T.J. Harris, Secretary) July 1993. See also Kevin Giles, *Women and Their Ministry: A Case For Equal Ministries in the Church Today*, Melbourne, Dove, 1977, p 99.

8. In my labels 'Sacramental', 'Biblical' and 'Social Justice' traditions, I do not wish to suggest that only the Biblical tradition has regard for scripture, that only the Sacramental tradition has regard for the sacraments, and so on. The labels, inadequately, merely suggest emphases.

9. F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone (Eds) *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1983) entry on "Anglo-Catholicism".

10. Note that deacons assist in the sacramental ministry of the priest but do not consecrate the bread and wine, or pronounce absolution. For an interpretation of the other sacraments, see for example, Gregory C. Jenks, *Anglican Basics: A Beginners Course in Anglicanism Course Book* (Brisbane, St Francis Theological College, 1991) pp 14-18.

11. See William Oddie, *What Will Happen to God? Feminism and the Reconstruction of Christian Belief*, (London, SPCK, 1984) p 61.

12. Ibid., p xi. William Oddie says:
"the problem has less to do with the church's understanding of ministry ... than with its understanding (at the most profound level) of the nature of man and the nature of God himself". Oddie argues against an androgenous view of gender, and at the other extreme, the feminisation of God. He views the priesting of women as introducing both concepts.

13. Reg Mills, *Anglicans*, Anglican Truth Society, 1988.

14. Ibid.

15. The 'Ecumenical argument' is argued against in the General Synod Commission on Doctrine "The Ministry of Women: A Report", August 1977 Paragraph 93.

16. See also Porter, p 6.

17. See endnote 31 directly below.

18. Kress' definition of discourse may require that theology be seen as an adjunct to a feminist view, rather than being prior to it.

19. See for example, A. Delbridge et.al. (Eds)., *Concise Macquarie Dictionary*, (Sydney, Macquarie University - Doubleday, 1982); Cross and Livingstone (Eds)., *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*.

20. See for example, Philip Jensen, "When is an Evangelical?" *The Briefing*, October 6, 1992, pp 9-10. Also review of D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730's to the 1980's*, (Unwin, Hyman) reviewed in *EFAC Bulletin* 39 Advent 1989 pp19-21.

21. Judd and Cable, *Sydney Anglicans*, p 213.

22. Stuart Piggin, "Pietism, Pluralism and Provincialism: The Divergent Paths of Melbourne and Sydney Evangelicalism 1848-1988".

A wider issue that might be raised, outside the boundaries of this thesis, is whether what I have called the Biblical tradition should be linked with what has been labelled in the U.S. context as "fundamentalism".

Stuart Piggin has noted the categories suggested by J Prince in *Out of the Tower: IVF/AFES 1936-1986*:
"The Reformed/Puritan evangelicals who stand for a confessional theology. Second are the evangelical Right, the Fundamentalists. The Pentecostal subjectives are the third group and the fourth is orthodox evangelicalism which distances itself from Fundamentalist literalism, anti-intellectualism and separatism."

See Stuart Piggin, "Towards a Bicentennial History of Australian Evangelicalism", *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol 15, No 1, June 1988, p 29.

William Lawton, writing about the character of Sydney Anglicanism has cautioned against equating theological debates from late last century and early this century with "fundamentalism". To do so, he suggests, is to draw too heavily and anachronistically on American experience after the 1920s. See William James Lawton, *The Better Time To Be: Utopian Attitudes to Society Among Sydney Anglicans 1885-1914* (Kensington, University of NSW Press, 1990) p 8.

George M.Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism 1870-1925*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1980) is the standard work on US fundamentalism.

If premillennial eschatology is a defining characteristic of fundamentalism as noted by Marsden (p 5 citing Ernest Sandeen) and also Betty De Berg, then Piggin's recognition that Australian Evangelicals (and Sydney's Moore Theological College) moved to an amillennial view by the middle of the twentieth century would seem to give reason for further caution. For Marsden's definition of fundamentalism see *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, pp 4-5. See also Piggin, "Towards a Bicentennial History", p 23. For De Berg's study on fundamentalism and gender see this thesis, Chapter 4.3 "Feminist traditions in the ordination debate".

The label 'fundamentalism' was quoted in one news text, but it was not a label explicitly owned by journalists in news texts cf. opinion texts such as editorials.

23. The preferred meaning for 'head' as 'source', as advocated by Dr Leon Morris is owned by some holding a 'dissenting' Evangelical view. It may be appropriate also to allow for mixed regional influences. The Rev Kevin Giles, one participant in the debate, moved from Armidale, NSW, to Adelaide, South Australia, although having trained for ministry at Moore Theological College, Sydney. Yet he expresses meanings similar to what might be labelled a 'Melbourne Evangelical' view.

24. Cf Ruth Sturmey's geographical model of 'Sydney', 'Melbourne' and 'Adelaide' in her PhD Thesis. My suggestion would need to be validated by analysis of other issues.

25. See Nichols (Ed) *The Bible and Women's Ministry*.

26. "10/91 Ordination of Women to the Priesthood" (T. J. Harris, Secretary, July 1993).

27. See for example, contributions by Peter Jensen and Paul Barnett, in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed).

28. See John Wilson, "Christian Equality and Liberty", in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) pp 89-98.

29. P. Jensen, "Using Scripture", in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) p.14.

30. Cf Lawton, *A Better Time To Be*, pp 17-18, for a discussion of characteristics of the theology and social involvement of those who identified as 'liberal Evangelicals' in Sydney as compared with 'conservative Evangelicals' early this century.

31. It has been noted that some Evangelicals appear to own both meanings. See D.W.B.Robinson, "Scripture, Apostolic Tradition and the Ordination of Women", *The Evangelical Catholic*, Vol 13, No 4, 1990; Canon R. E. Heslehurst, "Dissenting View Concerning Methodology" Paragraph 141 in "10/91 Ordination to the Priesthood: A Report to Synod".

32. See also SMH 7.3.87.

33. See Philip Jensen, "When is an Evangelical?" *The Briefing*, pp 9-10 and Philip Jensen and Tony Payne, "Revision Tests" *The Briefing*, No 100, October 6, 1992, pp 1-8. The latter argues against 'revisionist' views of Genesis 2 and 3, suggesting that some holding this view deny gender difference. Cf T.J. Harris, Correspondence to JB, 5.7.94, who argues that pre-Fall gender difference is not excluded. Thus, a semiotic problem in the debate would appear to be the meaning of 'equality'; whether it necessarily means androgyny or can mean the same value but with gender difference.

34. See "10/91 Ordination of Women to the Priesthood" Paragraph 52 citing Grudem. Also, John Woodhouse, "Leadership and Authority: Response", *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) pp35-48.

35. Peter Jensen, "Using Scripture", *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) p14.

36. "10/91 Ordination to the Priesthood", paragraph 49.

37. Anglican Diocese of Sydney Standing Committee, *Ordination, Its Meaning, Value and Theology*, (Sydney, AIO, 1981) p 24.

38. "10/91 Ordination of Women to the Priesthood", paragraph 44.

39. Paul Barnett, "Women in the Church", in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed), p 59. See also "Ordination, Its Meaning, Value and Theology", especially p 22.

40. Ibid., p 62.

41. Ibid., p 63. See further discussion of the employment opportunity discourse in discussion of feminisms in Chapter 4.3.

42. Ibid., pp 63-4. Suggestions for the expansion of such opportunities for employment by the church are made. See also *Ordination, Its Meaning, Value and Theology* (1981) p 24 which does not rule out a "college of presbyters" in which women presbyters/priests might be part of a team ministry of men and women.

43. Peter Jensen, "Using Scripture", in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) p 12.

44. "10/91 Ordination of Women to the Priesthood", para 46. In relation to 'headship', this view tends to prefer the 'source' meaning of 'kephale' than the 'authority over' meaning (Para 55). Also, in relation to the much debated word 'authentein' (1 Timothy 2:12ff) the 'domination over men' meaning is preferred to the more general 'teach/have authority' or 'teach with authority'

meanings (Para 84). Neither does the dissenting view distinguish between 'official' and 'unofficial' teaching (Paras 90-91).

45. John Wilson, "Christian Equality and Liberty" in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) See also Stuart Piggin, "Pietism, Pluralism and Provincialism".

46. See *Ordination, Its Meaning, Value and Theology*.

47. Ibid. See also "The nature of authority in the context of ministry within the church" in 10/91 "Ordination of Women to the Priesthood" , paragraphs 123-127; 90-91.

48. Kevin Giles, "Women in the Church: Response" in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) p 87.

49. John Wilson, "Christian Equality and Liberty" in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) p 98.

50. John R. Reid., Letter to Rectors of the Southern Region, Diocese of Sydney, 9 January 1992.

51. Kevin Giles., Letter to the Editor, *Church Scene*, 5 May, 1990

52. Alan Nichols, *David Penman: Bridge Builder, Peacemaker, Fighter for Social Justice*, (Sydney, Albatross, 1991) p 192.

53. "Husband and Wife Campaign" *Manly Daily* 22.8.87.; "New Anglican Group aims to heal ordination rift" SMH 6.2.92.

54. The following resolutions of the synod of the Diocese of Sydney are relevant to the concept of lay presidency: 25/68, 27/69, 24/78, 37/83, 18/85, 16/93, 16/94 and suggest that it was being explored by that diocese parallel to the women's ordination debate. See also *Southern Cross*, April 1994, p 16 for a summary of the history of the debate.

55. Cross and Livingstone (Eds) *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p 821.

56. A.S. McGrade., "Reason", in *The Study of Anglicanism*, Sykes and Booty (Eds), p 106.

57. Porter, p 6.

58. This is the case, for example, with the suggestion that the Apostle Paul in his New Testament writings was too much the former Pharisaic Jew who did not pursue far enough male-female equality in Christ. Such a view is recognised, for example, by Peter Adam, "Using Scripture: Response" in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed) p 22. Also Porter, p 7.

59. Anglican Church of Australia, Doctrine Commission, "Report to General Synod: The Ordination of Women", 1989, p 45.

60. Ibid.

61. Porter, p 164.

62. Doctrine Commission, "Report to General Synod", 1989.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Extract in Men, Women and God, *Meeting Place*, Oct 1990, p1.

66. See Bishop Owen Dowling, in "Tears of defeat" DTM, 3.9.92, for example.

67. See discussion in Chapter 4.1. and particularly endnote 4.

68. Porter, p 131.

69. Ibid., p 8.

70. Colleen O'Reilly and Suzanne Parks, "Women and Ordination in the Anglican Church of Australia: A Discussion Paper" M.O.W. April 1985.

71. Sturmey has pointed out that, politically, M.O.W. was dependent upon leading churchmen to take up the political aim of achieving ordination to the priesthood for women through synodical processes (Thesis p 187). It would appear reasonable to conclude, therefore, that male participants at least in part became receptive to feminist informed views through M.O.W.

72. Porter, p 2.

73. See John Davis, *Australian Anglicans and their Constitution*, (Canberra, Acorn Press, 1993).

74. General Synod Commission on Doctrine, "Report", 1977, p 26. cf. the release of a papal letter that reserved the priesthood for men alone, reported in press 2 June 1994.

75. Porter, p 8.

76. See for example, "Ordain women at your peril, US bishop warns Anglicans" Age 27.3.87; "Division is painful, US bishop warns" Age 8.6.87.

77. See "Anglican priest 'defects', Age 27.4.87 and "Anglican priest and family turn to Rome for salvation" Aust 27.4.87. See discussion in Thesis Appendix: 1987.

78. See also "Going over: priests who change sides" SMH 28.4.87.

79. See also "Opposing priest unrepentant on the eve of court appeal" (Age 30.1.92). While his view is reported first and given one third of the space in the text, it is evaluated as less credible than Bishop Owen Dowling's, which follows, introduced with "But". Fr Robart's credibility was

not parallelled by the *Sydney Morning Herald's* evaluation of Evangelical, Dr Lawrence Scandrett, while *The Australian* in negatively evaluating this legal action, evaluated the legal actors as the most highly credible.

80. See Thesis Appendix: 1987 Special General Synod, pp 4-35.

81. Nelson and Walter, *Women of Spirit: Woman's Place in Church and Society*, p 59. These authors equate 'headship' with patriarchal oppression. See further discussion, Chapter 4.3. below.

82. Ironically, a cue might have been recognised in a study guide on women's ordination prepared by the Sydney M.O.W..See Colleen O'Reilly Stewart and Suzanne Parks, "Women and Ordination in the Anglican Church of Australia: A Discussion Paper". It might also have been seen in the following news text, where an anti-clerical view is incorporated within the view of M.O.W. as expressed by Dr Patricia Brennan:
"But she (Patricia Brennan) warned that when women were finally ordained, they would have to guard against being consumed by 'patriarchal' church structures that would distance them from laywomen and laymen. Such 'clericalism' was evident in parts of the United States, where women have been ordained since 1974." (Age, 15.8.88?) See also Porter, p 176. See also *Southern Cross*, April 1994, p 16.

83. The text of Archbishop Carnley's address was accessed through a report by Greg Harvey in *Church Scene*, Vol 4, No 64, March 13, 1992, p 1.

84. See "Anglican Cowboy hailed in West" SMH/Age common source, 9.3.92; "Tears of joy at women's mass" DTM 9.3.92; "Unlikely militants celebtate liberation" Aust 9.3.92.

Chapter 4

Discursive mediation: feminisms and anti-feminisms

4.3.1 Feminisms and anti-feminisms: a 'history of ideas' approach

Feminism: "Advocacy of equal rights and opportunities for women, especially the extension of their activities in social and political life". [1]

There are more than a few ways in which to conceptualise feminist thought and activity, of which this dictionary definition is only one. However, rather than adopt only relatively vague terms such as 'feminism' and 'radical feminism' as they exist at the popular level, discourse analysis demands that one try to differentiate between any distinct, overlapping or competing feminist meanings realised in the texts studied.

Olive Banks has favoured a distinct 'traditions' approach to the history of ideas in the women's movement. The value of her study lies in its attempt to set feminism within a historical context, proceeding from the earliest stages of an organised movement through its development. Such an overview, which she recognises must be subject to refinement as knowledge of particular instances of feminist activity are expanded, provides a means for assessing the tensions and ambiguities of more short-term trends.[2]

Banks takes a broad definition of 'feminism', to include "any groups that have tried to change the position of women or the ideas about women". She saw a broad definition as more fruitful than a narrow one, "which would have left many groups and many ideas significant for feminism, outside the scope of the study".[3] In consequence she recognised a difficulty in defining "anti-feminism" in ideological terms in part because of the complexity of reasons for opposition "in which anti-feminism, in the sense of a traditional view of women's place, is only one part".[4]

Banks identifies three principal intellectual traditions: Evangelical feminism, equal rights feminism and pre-Marxist - Utopian-socialist feminism. In so doing she has compared and contrasted feminisms in the U.S.A. and Britain.[5]   Her analysis is also distinctive in its recognition of an Evangelical feminism arising out of that tradition of Christianity.[6]

The first tradition she recognises is one of *moral and social reform* arising out of Evangelical Christianity:

"Under its influence women began to emerge from domesticity and take on a public role, as they became increasingly involved in issues of moral and later, social reform. Accompanied by ideas of the moral superiority of women, it finds its most modern expression in the 'pro woman' sections of radical feminism.[7]

Banks sees the advocacy of women's moral superiority as a development within this tradition, along with a welfare orientation that paid attention to the needs of women and children, and sought to protect the family.[8]

The second tradition Banks identifies is an *equal rights reform feminism* shaped by the ideals of the Enlightenment:

"Among the principles they bequeathed to feminism is the appeal to human reason rather than tradition ... differences between men and women are seen as shaped by the environment rather than natural and its whole tendency has been to emphasise the potential similarities between the sexes, rather than the differences. Women, like slaves and other oppressed groups are seen as excluded from their natural rights and the emphasis is on an end to male privilege ... the heir to the Enlightenment tradition is equal rights feminism, the rise and fall of which is sometimes treated as the rise and fall of feminism itself." [9]

Banks develops the argument that the equal rights tradition's concern with formal equality has been both its strength and its weakness, breaking down legal and institutional barriers, but with an "overoptimistic assumption of the power of legislation to effect changes in society". [10] Clearly the *Concise Macquarie Dictionary's* definition reflects the Enlightenment tradition as recognised by Banks.

Third is a more radical *utopian feminism*, the origins of which Banks locates in pre-Marxist communitarian Socialism:

"Socialist feminism has its roots not in Marxism, but in the much earlier tradition of communitarian socialism, and derives chiefly from the Saint-Simonian movement in France ... (and its) ... attacks on the traditional family, and their advocacy of a system of communal living that would take the burden of child rearing away from the individual and place it on the community ... alongside these changes in family life went changes in the sexual relationships between men and women ... they reappear in somewhat different form in Marxism with its advocacy of state-provided child care and are strongly in evidence with much radical feminism at the present day."[11]

According to Banks, the fortunes of socialist feminism were often dominated by the wider concerns of Socialism, but she sees post-World War Two radical feminism as its heir.[12]

Radical feminism, she argues, has no single doctrine of its own, but is united against patriarchy, women's oppression by men, a concept that to varying degrees links sexual oppression with class oppression. Banks argues that concepts like "consciousness raising, sisterhood and many more were also derived fairly directly from Marxist ideology".[13] Moreover, she argues that many radical feminists still identify in part with Marxism, while other Marxist feminists are attempting to redefine Marxism through a radical feminist critique of sexism in society. Even allowing for developments in feminist ideology since the early 1980's, Banks' sees radical feminism and Marxist feminism as related types rather than clear cut divisions. [14]

Whereas Banks sees radical feminism as being derivative of socialist feminism, Chris Weedon would not appear to. Although they concur in seeing that radical feminism advocates a distinctive 'femaleness', Weedon does not recognise an Evangelical tradition and thus does not identify a compatibility of this tradition with radical feminism at this point. Politically, the radical feminist advocates separation from men and the patriarchal structures of society. [15] Banks suggests that over time there have been alliances of a temporary nature between the different traditions. Indeed, sometimes feminists have drawn on more than one tradition, unaware of their contradictory nature. Sometimes, however, the different traditions have given rise to vehement opposition between feminists. [16]

In her inquiry into feminist thought over the past 25 years, Hester Eisenstein takes a much less inclusive perspective than Banks. Her focus is "chiefly, though not exclusively, on the ideas of radical feminism". Essentially, she argues that within that period, "feminist theory has moved

from an emphasis on the elimination of gender difference to a celebration of that difference as a source of moral values". She identifies an early 1970s phase which, either implicitly or explicitly, pointed to some form of androgyny as a means of overcoming the polarisation between masculinity and femininity. In this period, socially constructed differences were judged to be the source of female oppression, and theoretical debate focussed on the difference between sex and gender. A second phase of contemporary feminist theory from the mid 1970s is identified by Eisenstein as rejecting androgyny in favour of a "woman-centred" perspective. Female differences were henceforth identified, rather than minimised, and focus was placed on defining aspects of female experience out of which to pursue a "blueprint for social change". [17]

To Eisenstein, some of the pre-Marxist communitarian movements such as Fourierism and that of the Saint-Simonians, exhibited a "proto-feminism". [18] Eisenstein approves the definition of feminism offered by Linda Gordon as "an analysis of women's subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it". [19] She draws particular attention to the body of writing that emerged in the 'second wave' of feminism, and, like Banks, evaluates an equal rights feminism as largely ineffective. She also distances herself from a belief that the feminisation of the public sphere will somehow qualitatively improve society as a whole. [20] Yet, in her definition of feminism there is "an element of visionary, futurist thought", embracing "social transformation that, as part of the eventual liberation of women, will change all human relationships for the better". [21] It would appear that Eisenstein has located herself within a utopian-socialist stream of feminism, rather than an equal rights one. Eisenstein is both analyst and practitioner.

Eisenstein judges the categorisation of feminisms into Liberal, Socialist, and Radical to be inadequate.[22] Curiously, though, she goes on to characterise feminism as essentially a political theory which has grown out of liberalism, drawing on three streams of thought: the 'rights of man', utopian and scientific or Marxist socialist theory, and late nineteenth and early twentieth century social theory - deriving from Havelock Ellis and Freud - that examined the relationship of sexuality to society.[23] Thus, while concurring in broad terms, in effect, with Banks over the liberal and utopian-communitarian influences in feminist thought, Eisenstein has proceeded from a more narrow definition of feminism, excluded the influence of Evangelicalism and offered an additional gender/sexuality category.[24] She sees contemporary feminist theory as having led to an impasse which has resulted in the emergence of a "potentially reactionary concept" of the intrinsic moral superiority of women. She attributes this to some theoretical weaknesses:

"... a divorce from Marxism and the political left; a consistent emphasis on psychology at the expense of economic factors; and a false universalism that addresses itself to all women, with insufficient regard for differences of race, class and culture."[25]

As a way forward, Eisenstein argued for a realignment of feminism with the liberating traditions of Western thought, yet transformed by "woman-centred values.[26] Ironically, if her assessment of the future direction of feminist theory and practice is apt, feminism, at least in the U.S.A., may have come full-circle, returning to a liberal political agenda, but with a revised utopian (and socialist-informed) vision. If so, Banks' broad categorisation of radical feminism as related to socialist feminism, may not be inappropriate.

The strength of Banks' framework as a tool of analysis for the student of feminisms in Australia - a society that was influenced by British Evangelicalism from the outset[27] - lies in its more inclusive definition and consequent recognition of an Evangelical type. This is not to deny the overall conservative influence of the Evangelical tradition on feminism as a whole, as noted by Banks. However, that she identified the influence of Evangelical feminism in the U.S., along with the influence of the labour movement in Britain, as the most important factors in the different experiences of feminism in the two countries, surely merits the attention of the student of Australian feminism.

The more limited definition of feminism taken by Eisenstein, arguably may narrow the focus to the point that it does not allow for adequate assessment of the range of responses evident in the women's ordination debate and the variety even within Australian Anglican Evangelicalism.[28] That the Diocese of Sydney is the largest Evangelical diocese in the Anglican Communion, would surely demand that one pose the question as to whether a distinctive Evangelical feminism is evident in the ordination debate.

However, that said, there are some specific insights offered by other analysts of feminism which help to illuminate some of the discourses in the ordination debate. These will be discussed in the course of outlining the corporate views expressed by women, below.

Working definitions of feminisms

I consider it most productive to reflect upon the views expressed in the ordination debate in terms of a broad definition of feminism utilising a traditions approach that recognises a *moral reform* (Evangelical) feminism, an *equal rights* (Enlightenment) feminism and a *utopian* (Communitarian-Socialist) feminism. Banks' and Eisenstein's analyses derive from study of the U.K. and U.S.A., and require validation in the Australian context. Therefore the anticipation that trends will be common across western societies is recognised as a starting point, rather than a foregone conclusion. The women's ordination debate in the 1987-1992 period does offer one focus and, as will be suggested below, perhaps raises questions for future research.

It will be suggested that the women's ordination debate offers, in part, a site for the analysis of some of the conflicting trends in feminist practice. It will be demonstrated that some female participants emphasised the equal capacity of women to perform priestly functions as exercised by males, thus emphasising a functional equivalence, sameness, or in feminist theoretical terms, androgenous equality.[29] For some this was articulated as an equal rights issue.[30]

It will be seen that other female advocates of the ordination of women to the priesthood, whether for themselves or others, specifically saw ordination as setting them apart for ministry to other women. That is, they saw ordination as affirming gender distinctiveness or femaleness in ministry. Some participants envisaged a qualitative transformation of power structures enlightened by the 'feminine', a goal that may reflect a 'woman- centredness' evident in utopian feminism[31] and advocacy of 'the feminine' evident in moral reform (evangelical) feminism.

Other female evangelical participants will be shown, on the other hand, to have rejected ordination to the priesthood because of gender distinctiveness. It will be suggested that this points, in one case, to an instance of a limited anti-feminism arising from Evangelicalism. In the other it indicates another limited anti-feminism not apparently connected with Evangelicalism at all. It will be noted that both groups of participants proceeded from a 'conventional' hermeneutic and consciously held these views as theological views, first and foremost.[32]

Still other female participants will be recognised for their advocacy of a feminist theology with a distinctive femaleness that took some to the point of separatism. It will be suggested that this may reflect the influence of a stream of radical utopian feminism that rejected 'male-stream' practices and methodologies. [33]

Barbara Field, in her preliminary analysis of the women's ordination debate, conceptualised the various viewpoints from the vantage point of a feminist-informed sociological model:

"There is an overarching patriarchal discourse which subsumes the discourses of power and authority, theology and liturgy. There is also the discourse of subordination which subsumes the discourses of domesticity, equality, sex and gender."[34]

Field admits that her separation of the discourses is an "artificial one". While I agree that "the different discourses are not wholly independent of one another", analysis of the debate is assisted by not only identifying the characteristic words and phrases in a discourse, but also the 'hermeneutical method' of the participants. My analysis below will allow the identification of biblically/theologically-derived feminisms and anti-feminisms.

I will now outline the views corporately held and expressed by women in the women's ordination debate, 1987-1992. They will be described in the form in which they were presented in official sources, through attention to key words.[35] Main media participants will be linked with the discourses. The views will be categorised in relation to theological bases/adjuncts, and in the light of the moral reform, equal rights and utopian feminist traditions. Analysis of the feminisms and anti-feminisms should not be regarded as complete, but as suggesting emphases and raising questions for future research.

The feminisms and anti-feminisms will then be discussed in terms of how they are mediated in the press. While the Sydney public relations office of the Anglican Church aimed to educate journalists beyond a 'women for' versus 'men against' stereotype of the debate this was resisted.[36] It will be asked whether some participants and their meanings have been evaluated as more credible than others in news reports, and whether social affinity encodings are apparent.

Feminisms and anti-feminisms in the ordination debate

Equal But Different

Equal But Different is a group located theologically within Sydney Anglican Evangelicalism. The group's feminist 'pedigree' is less readily defined. To be considered is whether one should locate Equal But Different within a tradition of Evangelical feminism, or rather, given its opposition to ordination to the priesthood for women, label it as 'anti-feminism', perhaps equating it with the gender attitudes found within what is termed 'fundamentalism'.[37] I will proceed by providing some brief background on women in Australian Evangelicalism, and particularly Anglican Evangelicalism, and then outline the Equal But Different view.

Evangelical feminism in the U.K. and U.S.A., as identified by Banks, went through its activist stages, but was essentially a conservative influence on feminism as a whole. Evans recognised the Women's Christian Temperance Union as having a monopoly over feminist activity in Australia, signifying "the overriding predominance of the moral imperative in the development of a feminist movement".[38] Stuart Piggin, following Patricia Grimshaw, has argued that in Australia, Evangelicalism rescued middle-class women from lives of frivolity, and utilised their abilities and energies in philanthropic and social works. [39]

Elements of this tradition may be seen in Anglicanism in the establishment of Deaconess Institutions. Sydney was the first to provide an avenue of Christian work for women as deaconesses. Training was provided from 1891, and in Melbourne from 1924 under the

guidance of a woman trained in Sydney. An advertisement seeking women to train characterised their work as "parish, evangelistic, rescue and reformatory work, nursing and teaching ...". [40] Margaret Rodgers and Erica Mathieson have argued that while early deaconesses in Sydney did not demonstrate the same feminist consciousness evident in the English church:

"underneath their conservative social and theological attitudes they carried a radical understanding of the possibilities of creative and innovative ministries for women". [41]

Indeed, one could ask whether the Evangelical tradition of feminism achieved fulfilment in the deaconess movement, which in a sense 'professionalised' moral and social reform in the publicly recognised role of the deaconess (lay order) and more recently in the woman deacon (clerical order).

It is likely that women trained through Deaconess House and employed in the Diocese of Sydney identified with the anti-ordination (Evangelical) view, or the pro-ordination (Evangelical dissenting) view rather than the breadth of theology embraced by M.O.W..[42] However, this was not uniformly the case. [43]

Just prior to the 1992 General Synod, a group of women was organised by Patricia Judge and Marion Gabbott to lobby synod members not to vote in favour of women's ordination to the priesthood. [44] An open letter from "Sydney women to members of synod", and adopting the identifying phrase "Equal But Different", listed the names of over 200 women from across the geographical area of the Diocese of Sydney.[45] It would appear to have been published in association with St Matthias Press, given that the typographical style was the same as that used

by the St Matthias publication, *The Briefing*. [46] Consider the letter's statement of theological

position and purpose:

"We are Christian women from all over the Diocese of Sydney, speaking on behalf of the many
women in Anglican Churches who oppose the ordination of women to the priesthood."

This is an expression by women, for women, of a view about women's role "in the family and in

the Church". It is perhaps more 'womanist' than feminist in that it sought to preserve rather

than to change the situation of women in relation to ordination. It thus testifies to a socially

conservative influence derived from Evangelicalism. [47] Its advocacy of the 'difference' between

men and women was consciously theologically based, and 'confirmed' by a recognition of

biologically based differences and a perception of related psychological traits. [48]

This group only had a transient public 'activist' face - at the October 1992 Sydney Diocesan

Synod - though it was anticipated in the views of individual women and continues with a low

profile. [49] It was consciously a theological view, linked, as has been noted above, with the St

Matthias Press expression of the Evangelical 'headship' discourse opposed to the ordination of

women. It is a female face of one expression of the headship discourse, the group having been

constituted with the press in mind.

In as much as a utopian element of the M.O.W. discourse talks about a renovated concept of

power/hierarchy, as will be outlined below, this discourse could be seen to have a utopian-like

feature in its renovated concept of (male) authority. Advocates maintain that the nature of the

authority/responsibility vested in the husband-father or rector of the parish is qualitatively

different to any notion of domineering patriarchy. [50] Similarly 'submission' in this discourse is

conceptualised as qualitatively different to female subordination or oppression. It is chosen, rather than imposed.[51] In news texts, however, as will be demonstrated below, 'headship' and associated meanings are evaluated in the light of a 'bad news' social realisation; a 'head of the house' or 'traditional' relationship which functions on the basis of oppression.

More than the Women Against the Ordination of Women view discussed below, this group affirmed the equality and opportunities available to women in secular social, political and economic life. [52] In a sense, then, Equal But Different has feminist sympathies. It arose out of a tradition of Evangelical (moral reform) feminism and accepted the reforms of the Enlightenment tradition, but to the exclusion of the application of equal rights in the context of church. The group's 'anti-feminist' features were held as conscientious theological objections.

Expressions by women deacons of a desire for opportunities for team ministry and more paid ministry positions were not clearly advocated by Equal But Different in its literature.[53] This should be regarded as a separate and companion discourse of employment opportunity for women in ministry, not overtly inspired by equal rights feminism. It is at this point that it may be possible to identify a distinctive Evangelical feminism, in activist mode, in the women's ordination debate.[54] Sometimes this is linked with advocacy of 'team ministry' of male and female clergy within a parish, a concept that, like calls for the extension of public ministry opportunities for women, did not capture press attention.[55] I will turn now to the discourse of another lobby group that has some points in common with the anti-ordination Evangelical Equal But Different discourse, but which is associated with a different theological tradition.

Women Against the Ordination of Women

The group 'Women Against the Ordination of Women', formed in Melbourne, is located

theologically within the Sacramental (Anglo-Catholic) tradition. This group also perceived itself

to be advocating a theological view first and foremost, responding to feminism in consequence

of this. [56]

Pro-woman and also gender distinctive, it incorporated other meanings, biological and

anthropological.[57] It also consciously reacted against the Enlightenment and utopian traditions

of feminism in its response to Betty Friedan's, *The Feminine Mystique*, Germaine Greer's, *The*

Female Eunuch, and the equal rights activities of M.O.W..[58]

This group, in common with Equal But Different, placed emphasis on the status of women in

relation to the family and affirms mothering. However, it explicitly, rather than implicitly,

defended the 'private' sphere of women as of equal value with work in the 'public' sphere. This

contrasts with Evangelical feminism in the 19th century, which advocated the movement of

women into the 'public sphere', and approval of 'public sphere' activity for women articulated by

Equal But Different.[59]

Indeed, in W.A.O.W.'s advocacy of the 'private sphere' it appears to have overtones of the

perspective of the Swedish feminist Ellen Key for whom, in Banks' words, "feminism had

nothing to do with taking over men's tasks, but everything to do with the social recognition of

motherhood". [60] Consider extracts of this view in non-media text form:

"Liberation for women should start with a recognition of the work of women as wives and mothers. Women need self-esteem. They need to be recognised in their full humanness before the law and in society. They are entitled to economic rewards for the contribution their work makes to society ...

"To achieve true equality between men and women our society has to try to achieve a balance between fathering and mothering. Over-emphasising the differences between men and women can be dangerous; but over-emphasising the sameness of men and women can be even more dangerous." [61]

The emphasis here is on economic reward for parenting, more equal parenting, gender distinctiveness and role complementarity. The view might be read also as reflecting strains of a "maternal mystique" or "cult of true womanhood", anti-feminisms partly rejected by evangelical feminists last century, partly incorporated in Banks' view, but rejected by the utopian and equal rights traditions. However, the value placed on 'womanhood' is seen to have a theological basis in the Incarnation. A romanticising of womanhood is explicitly rejected by W.A.O.W. [62]

Like the discourse of Equal But Different, that of Women Against the Ordination of Women can thus be seen to contain anti-feminist meanings in upholding private sphere activity for women and in rejecting ordination for women as an expression of an equal rights feminism. Both views consciously proceeded from a theological foundation, but within different traditions, the former from Evangelicalism, the latter from Anglo-Catholicism. [63] Both discourses approved other, though different, feminisms.

The other feminisms evident in the women's ordination debate are more 'mixed' in their presentation. Whereas members of Equal But Different and W.A.O.W. utilised 'conventional' hermeneutics in arriving at their theological views (which consciously determined their feminisms and anti-feminisms), some participants in the Movement for the Ordination of Women proceeded in the same way, but arrived at a pro-ordination view. Still others in M.O.W. addressed the issue from the perspective of a 'praxis theology' that mixed the 'doing' of feminism and theology. That is, feminist presuppositions were explicitly incorporated into their theological method, or theology was explicitly drawn into doing feminism.

It is evident, however, that just as for the anti-feminisms of Equal But Different and Women Against the Ordination of Women, the feminisms of the Movement for the Ordination of Women have tended to lose their theological adjuncts/bases in media texts. Media texts focussed on selected perceived social outcomes ('the social'), not method or theoretical principle ('the theological').

Before exploring the feminist inclusiveness of M.O.W., I will address an exception to this, a press-recognised secular equal rights feminist pro-ordination discourse.

Secular equal rights (Enlightenment) feminism

The focus of equal rights feminism is status and access, achieved through legislative change. I have noted earlier that this is the emphasis of the definition of 'feminism' found in the *Concise Macquarie Dictionary*, bearing out Bank's view that the fortunes of equal rights feminism are sometimes treated as "the rise and fall of feminism itself". [64]

Justice Elizabeth Evatt's advocacy of equality for women through the Anglican priesthood could be seen to reflect a secular feminist equal rights contribution. One finds evidence of her view in the journal of the (Australian) Law Reform Commission. There, Kirsty Magarey argues against exemptions for the church from anti-discrimination legislation, and in doing so cites a speech by Justice Evatt to a conference on "Women Authoring Theology". [65]

Justice Evatt's view was recognised by the press, albeit in only one news text:

"'Religion is the last bastion totally controlled by men,' Justice Elizabeth Evatt said.

"'Until women get into it we won't get anywhere.'

"Justice Evatt, chairperson of the UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, said Churches should be covered by sexual discrimination legislation - already binding on the rest of the community ...

"Justice Evatt said Australia had yet to meet its obligations under the UN Convention to achieve sexual equality." ("Outlaw sex bias in the church call" DTM 2.11.90.)

Clearly, and not unexpectedly, her view is set very much within an enlightenment equal rights tradition linked with anti-discrimination legislation and United Nations conventions. This

'equality' meaning is different in character and origin to the equality meanings listed under the

Biblical tradition's (pro-ordination) "dissenting views" and the Broad Church tradition's

unity/equality meanings. It is based in 'the social' and is to be achieved through legislation. It is

clearly a 'secular' feminist view.

Some female participants in the ordination debate addressed themselves to the meaning of

equality, either explicitly or implicitly. Beatrice Pate, for example, sought to differentiate

between secular feminist and Christian contributions, while seeing a compatibility between the

traditions over 'equality'. That is, she saw the co-equal creation status of male and female as

having a social realisation:

"Feminism in the sense of recognising the co-equal creation of male and female in the image of
God, is fundamental to the Christian Gospel. However, much of the modern radical feminist
debate has its roots not in this Christian tradition, but in the secular and atheistic materialism
that underlies much modern thought."[66]

However, she questioned the 'rights' ethic in terms of access to ordination for women:

"Anyone has the right to pursue a legal career given enough marks to gain entry. How do
secular rights relate to our lives in the Church of God, where we are called to defer to each
other? Is a human criterion of justice adequate as a basis for a call to the ordination of
women?"[67]

When female participants 'talked' about social realisations of theological concepts of equality,

there was quite a breadth of meaning, from same tenure of employment [68], to full participation

in Holy Orders [69], to equal capacity to perform priestly functions[70] , to equal giftedness [71] , to

the same status but different function according to gender [72], to equal baptismal-sacramental

status [73], to equal reflection of the nature of God [74].

To these theological meanings one can compare secular meanings in the enlightenment tradition, with its emphasis on natural rights enshrined in law, which further define the social realisation of 'equality':

Equal employment conditions (sameness)
Equal legislative status (sameness)
Equal right of access/opportunity (sameness)

It is not difficult to See the potential for what may primarily be for some, theological discourses, to be constructed and evaluated in news texts in terms of equal rights in the sense of 'natural rights' developed in enlightenment thought, and worked out through political democracy. In other words, that theological meanings were, or could be expressed in terms of 'equality' - a social meaning - by female participants meant that the theological meanings were 'news discourse friendly'. That 'equality' status meanings are not identical between feminist and Christian traditions (or indeed, within those traditions), but may be compatible at some points, is not usually evident in the mass-mediated debate.

Movement for the Ordination of Women

The Movement for the Ordination of Women, established in Australia in September 1983, would appear to have attracted members and embraced meanings from a number of theological and feminist traditions, including Evangelical feminism, equal rights feminism and a broadly conceptualised utopian feminism. Christianity and feminism were "inextricably interwoven".[75]

In collections of writings edited by M.O.W. members and 'founding mothers', the feminisms and theologies ranged wide. There are accounts of the experiences of Evangelical women, one of whom felt her gifts unaffirmed.[76] Scholarship from within the Evangelical and Liberal Broad Church traditions is embraced, while 'biblical fundamentalism' is attacked. [77]

Equalitarian meanings, too, are represented, from the experience of affirmative action policies in the Uniting Church, to discussion of a concept of "androgenous spirituality" which emphasises people as "children of God" as well as having mascuine and feminine attributes.[78]

In a discussion paper prepared by Suzanne Parks and Colleen O'Reilly, access to ordination is placed within the historical context of women having moved out from the private sphere and into the public sphere of life and into professions and positions of responsibility. The discussion paper mixes theological meanings (not quoted below) with profession-status-equal-opportunity-anti-sexism talk:

"What is your reaction to the idea of women priests? Is it the same as to women executives, bus drivers, doctors, churchwardens or teachers? ... At a time when women are entering every profession and sphere in secular society with dignity and success, and are being admitted to the highest councils and decision making bodies of the churches, the clergy of the Anglican Church of Australia remains exclusively male." [79]

The following extract from the writings of Janet Nelson and Linda Walter, both convenors, office holders or founding members of M.O.W., points to a rejection of gender stereotyping, consistent with the concern of the equal rights tradition with sexism. It is advocated, however, on the basis of a theological concept, the 'New Creation', which connotes an equality of status before God:

"Knowing ourselves made in the image of God, we are challenging traditional authority, casting off the restrictions that have bound us, and claiming our just inheritance as 'daughters of God'. In this we have had the support of many men in the church who also recognise that Christ's New Creation brings women and men together to a full realisation of their potential which is not restricted by gender." [80]

It is notable that the biblical concept of the New Creation - a distinctively Christian meaning - rarely appears in news texts, even in token form.

Radical feminist meanings with utopian-like characteristics are evident also, in combination with theological meanings. There is a denunciation of 'patriarchy' and the oppression of women and of church teachings which have condoned or facilitated this. The Biblical tradition's teaching on husband-wife relationships is understood in negative social terms, examples of oppressive attitudes to women being cited from throughout history. Janet Nelson's assessment may be seen as representative:

"... they contributed to a theology that defined women as inferior to men, responsible for the entry of sin into the world, useful to men only for reproduction, and that such attitudes remain deeply embedded in the unconscious long after they may appear to have been rejected ...

"While not overtly classing woman as inferior to man, the 'equal but different' view has resulted in a sexual apartheid ... The traditional roles of woman as mother and man as breadwinner have been so enshrined by some members of the church as 'God-given' that they appear to have the weight of unchallengeable authority behind them ...

"Other forms of oppression in marriage have been less blatant. Women have been victims, often willingly, of a benevolent but constricting patriarchy where husbands 'love' and protect their wives, but do not treat seriously their talents and insights, nor allow women the right to the freedom to explore and discover their own identity ...

"A further, but perhaps less obvious, form of oppression in the church has been the suppression of women's experience in the formulation of theology."[81]

The experience of women is offered as the new, and empowering, reference point. [82] This can extend to advocacy of spirituality/conversion oriented to the 'feminine' or the feminisation of church structures which carries a utopian hope of social improvement. [83] There is an embracing of liberation theology (Liberal tradition) in terms of gender implications, to a linking of the oppression of women with the oppression of homosexuals. Male and female images of the divine are considered along with the place of women's experience in the methodology of feminist theology. [84] In Women-Church, one sees the clearest expression of a separatism that rejects male-stream thought in its quest for 'the feminine'.[85]

These are patterns of utopian thought and practice informed by particular strands of theology and particular strands of feminist theory. In Eisenstein's terms, the views suggest a movement away from an androgenous solution in feminist theory towards 'woman-centredness'. They also suggest deconstructionist trends in feminist theology and the development of what might be termed 'metaphysical' feminism.[86] Indeed, Eisenstein identifies an overemphasis on psychology

at the expense of economics as a point of continuity through the radical feminist phase. It is a feature well evidenced within theoretical discussion embraced by M.O.W.. Psychological perspectives on objections to ordination for women appear along with psycho-spiritual discourse incorporating Catholic religiosity. [87] A discourse of emotion and rejection is evident also, often binding other perspectives together. [88]

In essence, in M.O.W. one sees a theological inclusiveness that embraced both 'conventional' and 'praxis' hermeneutics, and hence feminist theologies, that differs from the Biblical and Sacramental traditions.

While Ruth Sturmey maintained in 1989 that "M.O.W. is in the tradition of reform feminism as distinct from radical feminism", this would appear to apply to its political activity rather than to the range of meanings it embraced.[89] Sturmey noted that there were dilemmas for the theologically more radical members who aligned themselves with the thought of writers like Rosemary Radford Reuther. While they would have preferred to attack theological conservatism, they were mindful of the risk of losing short-term political influence. One may infer that M.O.W. publicly and politically chose to pursue goals compatible with equal rights feminism - which the ordination of women to the priesthood thus became constructed as - while incorporating a diversity of feminisms under the umbrella of Reuther's inclusive term, "wholeness". [90] Indeed, M.O.W. Australia could be seen as having embraced pro-ordination - compatible views from within the entire discursive field of Christianity - church - theology as well as that of feminism. [91]

Incorporated from the equal rights tradition, are such key words as 'equality', 'right (to ordination)' and 'sexism'. Of these, I have already indicated that 'equality' also has distinctively Christian meanings related to the 'New Creation'.

Consistent with a broadly conceptualised utopian tradition, including radical feminism, come the key words 'patriarchy', 'oppression', 'the feminine', 'sisters', and 'misogyny'. As with the feminist equal rights discourse, there are key words (but different meanings) shared by utopian feminism and the field of Christianity-church. 'Sister', for example, is common to the monastic church tradition evident in Catholicism and Anglo-Catholicism and is used (with 'brother', 'mother', 'father') more generally across Christian traditions to signify the familial-like relationship between believers. Outside that field it can express shared lesbian identity, "the final symbol of sisterhood" in radical feminism, [92] or be an expression of female solidarity with the oppressed, as among abused women. 'Oppression' similarly suggests peculiarly Marxist meanings, but also has Old Testament justice meanings.

Some female participants cautioned against the ordination debate being informed by radical or Socialist feminism while recognising that feminism in a more subtle way influenced the debate.[93] However, one cannot help but see tensions and ambiguities derived from the coexistence of equal rights and utopian feminisms, androgenous and woman-centred thought, as in secular feminism, present in the debate over women's ordination. Because 'the social' and 'personality credibility' and not ideas - principle and method - have been the main realm of evaluation, as will be seen below, attention has not been drawn to these ambiguities in the press.

4.3.2 Press mediation of feminisms and anti-feminisms in the ordination debate

Media evaluation of Equal But Different

The news texts recording an Equal But Different view expressed by women arose out of three events. First, the July 1992 General Synod at which legislation for the priesting of women was passed provisionally. The represented participant at this time was Marion Gabbott. Although this event predates the Equal But Different letter (14.10.92), because Marion Gabbott, with Patricia Judge, appear as signatories at the head of the list, the views expressed by her in July are arguably compatible with that evangelical view.

Two news items represent her. Both are from the *Sydney Morning Herald.* "Synod vote clears the way for women priests" (SMH 8.7.92) constructs high credibility for anti-ordination participants. However, polarity favours change in favour of women priests, evaluating non-compliant decisions as a "failure". Evaluation of positive change dominates spatially over attention to unity/disunity meanings. The only references to 'unity' and a "crisis brought about by the ordination debate" are centred in the text, which encodes lower credibility.

The view of Mrs Gabbott is taken up in another *Sydney Morning Herald* news text on the same day. Focus here is upon unity meanings, and a number of features position the reader with her. She is given first word and a high credibility construction (modal value of capacity) and equivalent-to-clerical status:

"Mrs Marion Gabbott (52) is a member of the synod's House of Laity who topped Moore Theological College as a student. She would qualify for ordination - if only she agreed with it."

She is given last word, and her view is allocated more space than that of the Rev Val Grayden:

"I am a woman. God created me as a woman. He gave me gifts and abilities and I want to use those to his glory for the sake of the Gospel, and I want to do it in co-operation with men, not in competition with them in priest's garb ..."

"I don't See that ordaining women as priests enables women to have freedom to operate as women and to express their God-given gift to divinity," she said.

"As a woman, I don't want to be in priests' orders, particularly as those priests' orders are found set out for us in our Anglican ordinal. I don't want to be bound in a dog collar." ("United in faith women remain divided in views" SMH 8.7.92) (Figure 81)

Ms Grayden's view in favour of women's ordination is centred in the text, a position of lower credibility. There is some potential ambiguity as to the credibility accorded her utterance due to the use of the word "believes":

"But the assistant curate of the Parish of Maryborough, Queensland, the Rev Val Grayden, 45, believes her vocation is to serve God in the Anglican priesthood."

However, the use of the conjunction 'but', which I have argued positions the reader more favourably towards what follows, provides a context that inclines one towards the positively evaluated 'conviction' meaning, as opposed to the negatively evaluated 'scepticism' meaning.[94]

These features provide some balance in evaluation consistent with the "two staunch Anglicans" labelling in the lead. Spatially, however, Mrs Gabbott has the higher credibility. While this text appears to recognise favourably, a social (feminist) face of an Evangelical view opposed to the

ordination of women, it is the evidence that this view provides of disunity, that is arguably the source of Mrs Gabbott's high credibility, justifying the 'bad news' headline. Mrs Gabbott has illustrated 'disunity'.[95]

The second appearance of the Equal But Different view came at the time of the Sydney Diocesan Synod in October 1992. This is evidenced in "Priesthood not for women, say their 'sisters'" (DTM 12.10.92) (Figure 82). This text, not least through the scepticism conveyed in the scare quotes around 'sisters', invoking a pun perhaps both on the utopian-Socialist feminist meaning of solidarity and the Christian love between brothers and sisters in Christ, more clearly evaluates this view negatively. Note also the definition of 'ordination' in equal rights terms:

"*Anglican women* fighting for the *right to be ordained* must overcome not only male stereotypes but have to convince their sister parishioners." (Italics: JB)

These "women members of the Anglican Church" are thus constructed as something of an anachronism. In the caption they are evaluated also as "protesters", usually a marker of deviance from an assumed social consensus.[96] Visually, three women, who constitute a feminist group construction, are placed in a superiority relation to the reader, with the background of a church building, contextualising them with equivalent-to-clerical credibility. However, read with the tokens of negative social affinity in headline and the lead, it is likely that this superiority is meant to be evaluated negatively by the reader.[97]

While represented participant Patricia Judge is evaluated as credible on the basis of years of church membership, the view of the 200 Equal But Different signatories are not is not constructed as credible by the journalist, but only through Mrs Judge's assertion. It is a 'social

face' of the 'headship' view that is reported, labelled and evaluated as "traditional roles", which implies an anti-feminist, and probably 'patriarchal' meaning. One notes also a lack of clarity, both within the quoted view, and the words of the journalist, as to where "traditional roles" and the "overall weight of responsibility" begins and ends in social terms "within church and family". It is clear, however, that this view has been evaluated in its entirety as anti-feminist.

The Equal But Different view received attention again at the time of the special sitting of the General Synod in November 1992. In "Vote on women priests near" (SMH 21.11.92) and "Ordination 'disobeying word of God'" (SMH 23.11.92), the reader is not positioned to evaluate the participant positively. Karen Shaw is distanced from the reader through the formal label "Miss", echoing the distance encoded in the verbs "claims" and "maintains":

"Miss Karen Shaw, of Kingsford, *claims* ordaining women is the same as disobeying the Word of God.
And Miss Shaw *maintains* that hundreds of Anglicans from all over Australia agree with her."

Like the previous expressions of this Equal But Different view, evaluation is in relation to church disunity. Only 'unity' meanings are reported with the neutral "said" as opposed to the more sceptical "claims":

"She *said* that the decision made by the General Synod to allow women ministers had already caused a split in the church ...

"She is a member of the Equal But Different group that *claims* men and women are equal but have different responsibilities in family and church life, irrespective of changing times."

A text in *The Australian* on the same day stresses a disunity discourse to a far greater degree, occupying half the space of the verbal text. Disunity as a theme is established in the lead and also in the subheading: "Vote divides Anglicans". However, in the photograph, greater social affinity is encouraged between the reader and Di Selden, the represented participant, than for Karen Shaw in the *Sydney Morning Herald* text. There is direct gaze (mood: offer), the photograph is more salient, and in the 'ideal' location. Within the verbal text, by implication she is given elite actor status, equivalent to Archbishops Robinson and Rayner and Dr Janet Scarfe. There are fewer markers of scepticism or negative evaluation in this text. The verbs are neutral. Even so, 'unity' is the theme pursued, not Ms Selden's meanings, even though they have a social face in the use of analogy, and address the theme of 'change' (progress):

"An Anglican from Sydney, Ms Di Selden, said yesterday that the opponents of ordination - rather than the innovators who were changing the established order - had been unfairly cast as wreckers of the church.

"'It's like when you join a tennis club and somebody comes along who wants to play squash, and they turn it into a squash club,' Ms Selden said. 'It's not the church we joined.'"

Di Selden would appear to have been quoted second to Archbishop Robinson to illustrate "one side of the theological fence". Notably, though, the view of Dr Janet Scarfe (M.O.W.), "on the other side of the theological fence" is given minimal recognition, though also having neutral verbs.

Summary: Equal but Different

This group advocated one expression of an Evangelical 'headship' view, combined with limited anti-feminisms. Its opposition to the ordination of women is distinguished by the phrase 'Equal But Different' or references to the uniqueness of femaleness and its complementarity with maleness, and "responsibility" given to males and not females in family and church life. Represented participants in the period 1987-92 were Patricia Judge, Marion Gabbott, Di Selden and Karen Shaw. The recognition that the Equal But Different group brought to their view may be seen to support Kress and Hodge's analysis that meanings do not survive unless a group is prepared to lobby them constantly in the public domain.

However, findings from the analysis of verbal texts suggest also that the view of this group would appear to have been reduced to a media 'unity' discourse, with only token attention given to underlying theological meanings. The view was evaluated in the light of a 'bad news' social expression of 'headship' - oppressive patriarchy - and the female participants advocating this view generally were evaluated as less highly credible than pro-ordination participants. Where they are evaluated as more credible, this related to 'unity', rather than 'progress for women'.

The Evangelical (pro-ordination) dissenting discourse did not have a corporate feminist face separate from the activity of the Movement for the Ordination of Women. Rather, women deacons, regardless of their theology, were simply evaluated as being 'for' the ordination of women and constructed as highly credible on this basis.[98]

Media evaluation of Women Against the Ordination of Women

Very few newspaper texts represented this view, even in Melbourne, the base of the group. [99]

W.A.O.W's view appears most extensively in two articles, one a news item, the other a feature.

In "Feminist leads the crusade against women" (Aust 13.2.90) (Figure 83) Mrs Boyd is

constructed with high credibility. In a style comparable to that used to describe Patricia

Brennan in relation to M.O.W., Mrs Boyd is described thus:

"Those who dismiss Phyllis Boyd - feminist, environmentalist, grandmother and now Christian crusader - as just another crank, may need to think again. Mrs Lindy Chamberlain might still be in jail but for Mrs Boyd ... widow of sculptor Guy, and now National Secretary of the Women Against the Ordination of Women movement."

Such labelling clearly constructs 'the social' with the order suggesting a higher credibility for

the 'public sphere' (feminism and environmentalism) that the 'private sphere'.

Phyllis Boyd's entry into the ordination debate is constructed as potentially "pivotal" (discourse

of change/progress) and of equal credibility with that of M.O.W.. Significantly, it implies that

W.A.O.W. has a new presence, when in fact, it was established in Australia in October 1987:

"The emergence of her organisation should counter the influence of the hitherto successful Movement for the Ordination of Women, and ensure the debate will be less one-sided."

However, the 'feminist' (in an activist sense) labelling is somewhat undermined by a later

quotation that reflects on her vulnerability since the death of her husband:

"'This is the first thing I've really been involved in on my own. Guy, who was much better with the media than me, was always with me before.'"

While this may invoke social affinity between reader and represented participant (sympathy), this is undermined by the rhetorical question put by the journalist later in the text:

"But realistically, does she stand a chance in the current battle of words?"

There is thus an ambiguity in the evaluation. Phyllis Boyd is labelled as a crusader, but explicit and implicit markers contradict this. Interestingly, the photograph in the 'given' location (perhaps consistent with her established media presence) depicts her next to a statue, presumably a work by her late husband, and perhaps evoking the marriage relationship, and/or the couple's prior media credibility. It is not an activist image of confident strength and determination, as in the most salient depictions of Patricia Brennan, or the group 'Avengers' style feminist constructions of women deacons. While explicitly evaluating Mrs Boyd as a feminist crusader, other visual and verbal constructions provide intra-textual conflict which detract from that evaluation.

The Age feature (19.2.92) typifies the renewed attention by the press to unity/disunity in 1992. It provides an edited text of a discussion between Dr Janet Scarfe and Phyllis Boyd. Dr Scarfe is given first and last word, encoding higher credibility. Dr Scarfe's photograph is positioned in the 'given' relation. There is also a difference in the construction of captions (verb plus adverb with affective component, as compared with verb only) that inclines the reader more towards Dr Scarfe:

"Janet Scarfe *believes passionately* that everybody should be able to follow God's call"

"Phyllis Boyd *believes* there are theological objections to the ordinations" (Ital: JB)

The former 'believes' is more clearly a 'conviction' meaning, while the latter could encode an evaluation of lesser conviction, or even carry an evaluation of 'scepticism'. Mrs Boyd, implicitly, is the less credible actor.

W.A.O.W. participants appear very occasionally in other texts for the period. Sandra McColl is given last voice in the text "Women in new bid for priesthood" (ST 13.8.89) (Figure 34). Her view appears to function as an antagonist to that of Suzanne Glover (M.O.W.) in relation to progress on the ordination issue, illustrating that "the tide is turning against the reform supporters". Ms McColl as represented participant helps to construct the theme of division within the church, established in the lead.

In "UK bishop wages war on women priests" (Aust 7.4.89) there was a passing reference to Bishop Hughes (U.K.) having come to Australia at the invitation of W.A.O.W.. The bishop, rather than the sponsoring organisation, is evaluated as credible.

In 1992 W.A.O.W. was described as one of two "groups", which arguably facilitates a non-consensual identification, the other being the Association for Apostolic Ministry, seeking to restrain Bishop Dowling from proceeding to ordain (SMH 11.1.92). The previous day in *The Australian* ("Groups seek ban over women priests" Aust 10.1.92) (Figure 84), Phyllis Boyd was given first word, her view being reported briefly later in the text:

"Mrs Boyd said she opposed the ordination of women because it pretended to give women power and equality.

"'If women were recognised for their work at home then they would never have to be priests or find a job and could concentrate on childbearing and nurturing.

"'It's really paying them to distort their functions of motherhood,' she said."

The quotation clearly addresses social roles rather than theological meanings. The discourse that dominates the text is a legislative one. It is noteworthy that Mrs Boyd is followed by a spokeswoman for the Primate, who evaluates women's ordination as being opposed by a "minority" and as "inevitable", implicitly reducing Mrs Boyd's credibility.

Thus, in general Mrs Boyd's W.A.O.W. view appears to have been given low credibility, either through its textual absence, or in the light of the attributed modality of another participant. The exceptions were one text from *The Australian*, in which there was some ambiguity, and press attention in 1992 in the context of heightened unity concerns, when W.A.O.W. was linked to the legal case in the N.S.W. Supreme Court.

Summary: W.A.O.W.

Women Against the Ordination of Women verbal identifiers are "traditional work/ career", "authority of tradition", "motherhood", "true equality". Its main represented participant was Phyllis Boyd.

This view coincides with that of the Evangelical Equal But Different group in its rejection of ordination to the priesthood for women on the basis of a 'high view' of the mothering role derived from scripture, but emphasising different doctrines. They appear to share anti-feminisms at this point. While both opposed to the priesting of women, and the discourse of 'equality' for women through the priesthood, I have located them in different theological traditions and noted their separateness in political activity.

Both achieve their highest credibility in the press in relation to 'unity' issues. The views of these two groups, consciously conceived as theological views first and foremost, generally have low credibility by virtue of their textual absence. The anti-feminist 'faces' of their discourses possibly were enhanced by the media focus on 'the social', and in particular on 'progress (for women)'. They are evaluated in the press as being either opposed to progress for women or illustrative of disunity. The 'personality credibility' of participants in relation to these selected aspects of 'the social' have been the site of media evaluation.

Media evaluation of the Movement for the Ordination of Women

I will turn now to the identification of M.O.W. spokespersons in media texts. The major spokesperson during the period, and sought by journalists even after her resignation as National President, was Dr Patricia Brennan. Her successor, Dr Janet Scarfe also spoke for the national organisation. In Sydney, Suzanne Glover and Colleen O'Reilly provided media comment at times. Others featuring in media texts were Eileen Diesendorf and late in the debate, Patricia Heyward.

Visually, female advocates of ordination for women (not always M.O.W. spokespersons) were given a solidarity - as in the group photograph - that encoded the field of feminism. However, this solidarity is not borne out when one reads various perceptions of ordination or what the ministry of women means for women deacons, personally. Female participants in ministry expressed a range of views as to what ordination meant to them theologically and in job description terms. [100]

The mixed character of the discourse of the Movement for the Ordination of Women, and potential for conflict between some of the traditions it combines, would not seem to have been recognised and evaluated as such by journalists. Again, represented participants have been evaluated on the basis of 'personality credibility' and their meanings evaluated in the realm of 'the social'. To the degree that M.O.W. members adhered to a 'praxis' theology, this may not have been unwelcome to them.

In the following news text, the amalgamation of a number of theological and feminist meanings

can be seen in the rhetoric of Dr Patricia Brennan, foundation president of M.O.W. Australia.

The news item reports on a joint conference of Anglican M.O.W., the para-church

Women-Church group and like minded Catholic women:

"'Our *sisters* know the *oppression* that comes from oppression through sex, class and race'
(said Dr Patricia Brennan)
"'Women have rediscovered the message,' she said. 'If the Anglican Church fails *to recognise*
the women in its midst, it will be impoverished.'" ("Show of unity as Anglican and Catholic
women meet" SMH 21.8.89) (Ital: JB)

Here one sees key words suggestive of the utopian-Socialist tradition of feminism, in

'oppression', 'class', and 'sisters'. There is also a symbolic-status meaning ("recognise")

consistent with equal rights discourse. While the news item reports that the conference was

titled "Towards a Feminist Theology", apart from quoting some liturgy, it does not report

theological meanings, only those that can be read in purely social (and feminist), non-

theological terms.. A prediction of social change for the church was given 'last word'.

Consider the words of Dr Janet Scarfe, second president of M.O.W., in the following report:

"Dr Scarfe told the Melbourne University Debating Society that the Anglican Church had
promoted 'rigid, crippling *stereotypes* of women.

"'People arguing against the ordination of women are perpetuating thousands of years of blind
misogyny. They don't have the excuses of their predecessors ...'

"'*Women* will bring *a different view* to the church and to society at large - that's why it's
imperative they be ordained.'"
("Church deprives women says Anglican activist" Age 30.8.89 Ital: JB)

Here there seems to be a juxtaposition of ideas consistent with two feminist traditions, equal rights and utopian-Socialist feminism, or a mixing of androgenous and woman-centred thought. On the one hand it is argued that women are (corporately) different (to men), implying the existence of a distinctive 'femaleness'. On the other hand there is criticism that women have been rigidly stereotyped, most likely in terms of denying equal rights of access to the public sphere, or perhaps in terms of denying individual difference. What 'femaleness' constitutes was not explored by the press.

Consider a news report that followed the 1987 synod. One sees the inclusive nature of the M.O.W. view implicitly in a text in which the ordination issue has been personalised through the experience of Ms Colleen O'Reilly. High credibility is accorded to her through the high degree of editorialising, the paraphrasing and thus the 'ownership' of her view, the recording of emotion and the absence of other participants, while in the photograph, the upward camera perspective encodes 'superiority'. The journalist evaluates her view from within the enlightenment tradition of equal rights ("sexual discrimination"), but distances the reader from Ms O'Reilly ("she says"):

"It's the kind of *sexual discrimination she says* she has been battling since she decided more than ten years ago to devote her life to God." (Ital: JB)

The concept of gender-specificity, common to the Evangelical and utopian-Socialist traditions of feminism, was not recognised as such by the press until late in the debate as will be demonstrated shortly:

"Ms O'Reilly-Stewart said *women were better able to minister to a woman* who had lost a child or was going through menopause - and male ministers acknowledged it." ("The pain of almost being a priest" DT 27.8.87) (Figure 85) (Ital: JB)

An equal rights feminism is more explicit in the media evaluation of the ordination issue in the question of maternity leave for women deacons. [101] That there is also implicit evaluation from within the Enlightenment equal rights tradition of feminism will be argued shortly in discussion of 'media discourses'.

In 1987, as was noted in earlier analysis, M.O.W. participants were evaluated as highly credible in the *Daily Telegraph*. Sometimes, social affinity was encoded as well through the construction of emotion. Usually, however, there was some distance encoded between reader and represented participant. In the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1987, M.O.W. leaders were highly credible, church less so. It was in *The Age* that Dr Brennan and thus M.O.W. was evaluated as most highly credible. In "A fighter intent on women being priests" (Age 19.8.87) (Figure 30) a crucial theme was established: 'women and their supporters versus men'.

Again in 1989, M.O.W. leaders were constructed as highly credible as in "Twelve apostles of protest in song" (25.8.89). While their action is given heightened credibility and a token of social affinity in the journalist's evaluation that "many synod delegates joined in the singing and applauded them as they marched out", M.O.W. retains some of its 'radical' persona.

From late 1989, women deacons, rather than M.O.W. participants were the preferred news actors, and constructed with high credibility and often social affinity, especially as victims. An 'angry' construction on occasion distanced them from the reader. The availability of women deacons as elite actors may explain why Dr Janet Scarfe was less frequently a represented participant than her predecessor, Dr Patricia Brennan. By late in 1992 at least one M.O.W. participant was evaluated visually as a source of disunity ("Patricia couldn't wait so she switched" SMH 23.11.92) (Figure 86). [102] However, M.O.W. views on occasion were more highly credible than M.O.W. spokespersons as participants.

A feminist 'consensus' was belatedly recognised and somewhat tritely constructed, disguising the likelihood of different ideological 'pedigrees' of notions of difference:

"The Movement for the Ordination of Women agrees with its female opponents in the Church that women are different.

"'We could talk about all this over cups of tea,' said Dr Janet Scarfe of the Melbourne Diocese." ("Patricia couldn't wait so she switched" SMH 23.11.92)

Theology was not the primary field of analysis of media texts for the women's ordination debate. Evaluation was in the realm of 'the social': social change (progress) and social conflict (unity/disunity).

The theme established in *The Age* text "A fighter intent on women being priests" (19.8.87) in general terms characterised press evaluation of the debate as a whole. It was along the lines of "women and their supporters" that social affinity was created between reader and represented

participants. Previous analysis has shown that the construction of emotion in relation to female participants occurred following synod voting, and particularly surrounding the aborted Canberra-Goulburn ordination in 1992. It was over that incident that the affective mental processes of "the women and their (male episcopal) supporters" most consistently positioned the reader with male and female advocates of ordination. Affective mental processes were not just constructed along gender lines.

Significantly, 'first ordination' texts did not construct the events as a triumph for M.O.W.. While M.O.W. meanings were credible, its leaders were not represented with the social affinity encodings associated with women deacons and priests. [103]

Whereas *The Age* gave least recognition to M.O.W. in relation to synod reporting (field of church cf. progress of ordination debate as feminism), the *Daily Telegraph/Mirror* was the newspaper to construct their views with high credibility unchallenged by other sources, but within the field of feminism, rather than church. Most saliently on occasion, the *Sydney Morning Herald* employed visual devices typical of advertisements to construct high credibility for M.O.W. leaders. Here, ideological commitment to women's ordination to the priesthood may have been at its most transparent. [104] What that ideology was will be addressed shortly.

Conclusion

Barbara Field's preliminary semiotic analysis of the discourses in the women's ordination debate appears to attribute a clear theoretical base (which would imply a similarly clear discourse identity) to Christian feminism, as "struggling to transform the patriarchy of the Church".[105] The label "Christian feminist" for the purposes of semiotic analysis, however, denies that there are a number of feminisms and related theological meanings in the ordination debate, as this chapter argues. Similarly, the simple 'for' and 'against' press construction of the debate denies the complexity of the non-press debate.

First is the Evangelical Equal But Different discourse which stresses gender distinctiveness and the complementarity of men and women. It appears appropriate to place the group broadly within a tradition of Evangelical moral and social reform feminism. The group did not oppose equal rights feminism in spheres other than church, but in its opposition to women's ordination to the priesthood, took a limited 'anti-feminist' stance. It is the media perceived anti-feminist face of one expression of the Evangelical 'headship' discourse in the Biblical tradition. It primarily 'talks' about ordination in functional terms: spiritual authority in a parish.

More 'activist' expressions of an Evangelical feminism, as by some women deacons, are found in a separate discourse of increased opportunities for public ministry for women, transcending pro-ordination and anti-ordination positions. It is a discourse not recognised by the press until after the first ordinations to the priesthood. It has been recognised that some female

participants holding Evangelical dissenting (pro-ordination) views identified with M.O.W.. The press, however, focussed on 'for' and 'against' outcome positions - not theology - and so did not construct this.

Second is Enlightenment equal rights feminism. Meanings consistent with this were owned and advocated publicly by M.O.W. in association with theological meanings, as in demands for ordination for women as a social and symbolic expression of the equal status of men with women.. It will be argued shortly, that the nature of news discourse and the news values on which it is based, have predisposed journalists to evaluate equal rights meanings (or theological 'equality' meanings) as the most highly credible in this debate. Indeed, a secular equal rights contribution to the debate was recognised by the press. This discourse talks about ordination in status terms: equal status in priestly orders (achieved through enacting of church law), symbolic representation of Christ to the people and consequent access to celebration of the Eucharist.

Third is utopian feminism. It's influence is identifiable in the discourse of M.O.W. through such concepts as 'oppression', 'patriarchy' and 'misogyny', and advocacy of 'the feminine'. One notes a coincidence of some signifiers such as 'sisters' and 'oppression' in feminist theology and utopian-Socialist feminism. Key words evident in news texts tend to be those that can be read within the field of feminism only. It will be suggested shortly that, like the Equal But Different view, its advocacy of 'the feminine' makes it superficially compatible with the gender stereotyping basis of advertising; the economic 'bottom line' of the newspaper industry. This discourse talks about ordination in power terms: articulated in particular as opposition to 'patriarchy' in the church.

Fourth, an 'anti-feminism' arising from the Anglo-Catholic Sacramental tradition has also been identified. This opposes, at least in part, the utopian-Socialist and Enlightenment traditions of feminism. It 'talks' about ordination in symbolic-status terms and links the status of women with the 'private' sphere of motherhood. This view shares with the Equal But Different discourse, opposition to the ordination of women to the priesthood, and limited media credibility in the light of 'unity' in the church. Unlike that group, it does not express a companion discourse of employment opportunity for women in public ministry.

This chapter has also argued that the press evaluation of these feminisms and anti-feminisms has been in the realm of 'the social' rather than theology. Analysis in Chapter Two revealed also that evaluation has been in terms of 'personality credibility', rather than ideas. This may help to explain why potentially conflicting meanings within the range of feminisms embraced by M.O.W. have not been highlighted in journalists' evaluations, but in part, also why M.O.W. views were evaluated as newsworthy. Dr Patricia Brennan was highly credible at least from 1987-1989, while women deacons were highly credible from 1989, frequently carrying social affinity encodings as well, especially in early 1992. Equal But Different and W.A.O.W. participants, on the other hand, were not highly credible, as evidenced by their minimal press coverage, while their discourses were usually negatively evaluated in the light of 'bad news' social realisations or served to illustrate disunity.

Endnotes to Chapter 4:3

1. A. Delbridge (et al).(Eds)., *The Concise Macquarie Dictionary*, (Sydney, Doubleday, 1982). See also Richard J. Evans, *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia 1840-1920*, (London, Croon Helm, 1977), p 39, n 1. Evans himself adopts an equal rights definition of feminism, but I draw the reader's attention in particular to his summary of the history of the usage of the term 'feminism'. He concludes that the word is used anachronistically prior to the 1890's when it replaced "womanism", but that it is the more preferable on the basis of common usage. I am not here adopting the *Concise Macquarie Dictionary* definition, but using it as a point of departure for further discussion, below.

2. Olive Banks, *Faces of Feminism: A Study of Feminism as a Social Movement*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp 1-3. Banks was conscious that "the gaps in our knowledge are still formidable, and that it is indeed all to possible that the attempt is still premature". However, she regarded that "only by trying to take the longer and broader view, is it possible for the researcher, whether historian or sociologist, even to ask the right questions". She thus regarded the study as "tentative, and as suggesting questions, rather than providing answers".

3. Ibid., p 3. Banks acknowledged that this meant including some activities that might not, by a narrower definition, be considered as feminist at all.

4. Ibid., p 4. The present issue points to two 'anti-feminisms'. These are consciously held as theological views first and foremost by their advocates. See further discussion of Equal But Different and Women Against the Ordination of Women, below.

5. Ibid., p 3. Banks suggests that "both the similarities, which are indeed striking, and their differences reveal aspects of feminism that are concealed by attending only to its manifestation in a single country".

6. See Elaine Storkey, *What's Right With Feminism?* (London, S.P.C.K., 1985), cited by Thisleton, pp 437-8, For a U.K. version of an evangelical tradition of feminism. See Nancy A. Hardesty, *Women Called to Witness: Evangelical Feminism in the Nineteenth Century*, (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1984) for an evaluation of the U.S. tradition by a current participant.

7. Banks, p 7. See further discussion of this observation, below.

8. Ibid., p 254.

9. Ibid., p 8.

10. Ibid., p 243. The enlightenment tradition is labelled "liberal feminism" by Chris Weedon., *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987) and is defined as that which seeks to achieve "full equality of opportunity ... without radically transforming the present social and political system" (p 4).

11. Ibid., p 8.

12. Ibid., p 244.

13. Ibid., p 228. Hester Eisenstein is more specific, identifying CR as being developed by "radical feminists in the late 1960's and modelled on a practice used by the revolutionary Chinese called 'speaking bitterness'" as a means of getting of "learning to see and to feel the previously invisible effects of patriarchy". See footnote 17, below.

14. Ibid., p 229. In Weedon's definition of socialist feminism a "natural femaleness" is not envisaged. Rather, gender is "socially produced and historically changing" (Weedon, p4, citing Jaggar 1983).

15. Weedon, p 4, cf Banks, p 232.

16. Banks, p 8.

17. Hester Eisenstein, *Contemporary Feminist Thought* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1984), pp xi-xii, xviii. Note that Eisenstein charts developments in feminist theory in the United States, since 1970, with a focus "chiefly, although not exclusively on the ideas of radical feminism" as expressed in the work of Millett and Firestone, and elaborated particularly by Rich, Chodorow and Daly. Given that her study is not comparative across two countries' experience as is Banks', then it may be a less nuanced tool of analysis for the student of Australian feminism who may benefit from the comparative insights.

18. From the perspective of radical feminism as the reference point, evangelical feminism might similarly be given the label of "proto-feminism". Note that Evans in his comparative study of feminism in the U.S., Britain, Australasia and Germany, while judging that feminism never really took hold in Australia, is speaking of an equal-rights style feminism. Note that he argues in addition, that "the Australasian case provides a good illustration of the way in which moral reform could lead to demand for the vote". In this he recognises that the Women's Christian Temperance Union monopolised feminism, signifying the "overriding predominance of the moral imperative" in feminism in New Zealand and Australia. See Evans, *The Feminists*, pp 62-3. See further discussion, below.

19. Eisenstein, pp xi-xii.

20. Ibid., p xiv.

21. Ibid., p xiv.

22. Ibid., pp xix-xx. Eisenstein suggests that an additional category - cultural feminism - would be necessary to represent the rejection of an "explicit political or economic program" in favour of the development of "a separate women's culture". At this point, Eisenstein's analysis is less satisfying for she does not give this 'cultural feminism' any ideological links. Eisenstein maintains: "In recent years ... the lines between these definitions have begun to blur somewhat, as feminist practice outstrips feminist theory: in the current women's movement, there are

probably more subcategories and variations than these definitions can encompass." (p xx.) She does, however, acknowledge the usefulness of some of the categories, and in particular the differentiation between radical feminism and socialist feminism. (pp xix-xx.) C.f. Banks who sees radical feminism as related to socialist-communitarian feminism, especially in Britain, though not always consistent with that tradition (pp 228-9, 238).

23. Ibid., p xv.

24. Banks argues that "the socialist feminists in the late nineteenth century embraced the birth control movement with whole-hearted enthusiasm, and these women in both Britain and the United States looked for their allies to the new writers on female sexuality, like Havelock Ellis, and to socialist or anarchist movements of the extreme left" (p 249). She thus links this category to socialist feminism.

25. Eisenstein, p xii. C.f. Banks' analysis in its suggestion that the 'doctrine' of the superiority of women may derive from a evangelical feminism's glorification of the maternal role and the potential of "specifically feminine attributes to reform the world" (p 243).

26. Ibid., p 145.

27. See for example, Judd and Cable, *Sydney Anglicans*, pp 2-3; notes 3,4, p 15.

28. The collection of writings edited by Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Gross would further constrict one's breadth of analysis to theoretical feminism. Many of the contributors point to the necessity for a deconstruction of 'male-stream' methodologies - sociological, philosophical, historical - and implicitly define feminism in terms of the development of distinctively feminist thought forms and methodology. See Pateman and Gross, *Feminist Challenges*, p 4. In terms of the direction of this collection, only some of the M.O.W.-embraced views would really qualify as theoretically feminist.

29. See for example, Elvie Fraser, "A Call to the Island" in *Fit For This Office: Women and Ordination*, Field (Ed) (Blackburn, Collins Dove, 1989) pp 51-58.

30. See Porter, p 8: "It is not merely a matter of women's rights, although there is of obvious matter of justice that cannot be ignored".

31. See Field, "Conflicting Discourses" pp 61-62 for one expression of this. Cf Margaret Ann Franklin (Ed) *The Force of the Feminine: Women, Men and the Church*, (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986), pp xvi-xvii.

32. See footnote ... chapter 4.1. above.

33. See 'Women-Church', referred to in Field, "Conflicting Discourses", p 61.

34. Ibid., p 53. Field appears to write from within a utopian feminism applied to the field of Christianity: "Feminist theory is struggling to transform patriarchy. Christian feminist theory is struggling to transform the patriarchy of the church ... Christian feminism is a politics directed at transforming the existing power structures ... the model is one of mutuality, connectedness,

co-operation and inclusiveness." However, reference to 'mutuality' may indicate as well, the influence of an evangelical feminism. See reference to 'mutuality' in discussion of 'headship' and 'mutual submission', Chapter 4.2.1.

35. I have kept as much as possible to Australian sources for the identification of the discourses of the identified groups, recognising, though, that the groups were most likely influenced (some more directly than others) by 'overseas' discourses.

36. Marion Gabbott, for example, was offered as a spokesperson during the 1989 General Synod, and while interviewed, did not appear in press items. In Chapter 2 it was noted that female spokespersons against the ordination of women at the 1987 synod - Janis Donohoo and Narelle Jarrett - did not appear in news texts.

37. See for example, Betty De Berg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism,* cf Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture,* and discussion in Chap 4.1.. De Berg argues: "Neither type of interpretation - the theological or the cultural - has been adequate to explain fully the origins and nature of American fundamentalism. The intellectual and theological interpretation does not account for the popularity of the movement among a general public that knew little about the fine points of Christian doctrine or scientific theory (p 5) ... Gender and family issues were not only a major theme independent in themselves, but they also formed part of the rhetorical substructure of fundamentalist writing ... an analysis of fundamentalism as a popular movement must look beyond the scholar's study to the popular religious press (p 7)." De Berg takes the popular religious press as her source material and maintains that only a gender analysis can explain the popularity of fundamentalism as a social phenomenon. As an alternative avenue of inquiry it would be interesting to See what media discourses were evident in both the popular secular and popular religious press (along the lines of the methodology in this thesis).

For other gender analyses See Gail Malmgreen, "Domestic Discords: Women and Family in East Cheshire Methodism, 1750-1830" and Henry Abelove, "The Sexual Politics of Early Wesleyan Methodism" in Jim Obelkevich, Lyndal Roper and Raphael Samuel (eds) *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), pp 55-70, 86-98, on Methodism in the U.K. and Ann-Janine Morey, "The Reverend Idol and Other Parsonage Secrets: Women Write Romances About Ministers, 1880-1950", *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion,* 6,1,1990, pp 87-103, for an analysis of U.S. "parsonage romances" treated as evidence of "religio-sexual dynamics" that serve to "reinforce patriarchal structures of religion and culture". See also previous discussion of 'headship' discourse in Chapter 4.1..

Note also the issue raised by Robin Gill, following Weber. That is, the question of how far theologians can be held responsible for the social effects of their notions. See Robin Gill, "Sociology Assessing Theology" and Max Weber, "Luther's Conception of the Calling" in *Theology and Sociology,* Gill (Ed) pp 34, 162.

38. Evans, p 62. See also endnote 1, this chapter.

39. Piggin, Perry Memorial Lecture, p 3 citing Patricia Grimshaw, "Women, Christianity and the Australian Colonies: Frances Perry and the Relationship of Christianity, Women and Social Reform in the Nineteenth Century", Perry Memorial Lecture, 1988, p4.

40. See Margaret Rodgers and Erica Mathieson, "Affirming the Feminine", *Southern Cross*, May 1991, p13.

41. Ibid., p 13.

42. Deaconess Mary Andrews, former principal of Deaconess House, appears to have supported the goal of ordination to the priesthood for women. For discussion of the work of deaconesses in the Diocese of Sydney See "What a difference a deaconess makes" *Southern Cross*, July 1986 pp 8-9. See also Porter, Chapter Two.

43. Cf Sturmey, Thesis, pp 183 and 221 which refer/allude to the contributions of such women as Rosemary Christmas and Marlene Cohen. Sturmey notes also that some women who joined M.O.W. had "liberalised their Evangelicalism through studying theology through the more liberal divinity courses offered at Sydney University". See Sturmey Thesis p 181. Note that M.O.W. participant Suzanne Glover studied at Moore Theological College.

44. See "How We Began", *Equal But Different: The Beauty of Right Relationships*, (newsletter) August 1994. Note that Patricia Judge evaluated M.O.W. as having received sympathetic media coverage and hence her belief that "women opposed to the ordination of women within the Anglican Church needed to have a public face and voice".

45. Patricia Judge and Marion Gabbott's names are listed at the top of the otherwise alphabetical listing of signatories. The latter acquired theological-ministry training through Deaconess House, as did some other Equal But Different participants. Signatories to the list include some clergy wives and some lay (non-ordained) church workers, apart from female parishioners. Some women deacons may have identified with Equal But Different, but women deacons are not prominent in the list.

46. The typographical style matches that of the St Matthias publication, *The Briefing*, and its subject matter follows closely, "Revision Tests", an article in a then recent issue. Indeed, copies of *The Briefing*, No 100, were made available to synod members at the same time. This connection was suggested by T.J Harris in correspondence to J.B. 5.7.94. That 'only' 200 names were listed may not have satisfied the news value of 'threshold' or 'superlativeness' to justify greater coverage. See this thesis Chapter 5. However, it is noted that in relation to the marches that followed the aborted ordination in the Diocese of Canberra-Goulburn in February 1992, 200 appears to have been sufficiently large.

47. See footnote 1, this chapter, in relation to the definitions of feminism surveyed by Evans, and note Banks' evaluation of evangelical feminism.

48. See "Surprise, surprise - we *are* different", *Equal But Different*, August 1994.

49. Note the programme of seminars listed in *Equal But Different*, August 1994, November 1994. Note also a debate held at Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University in 1988 between Patricia Brennan and Marion Gabbott. See Sturmey, Thesis, p 222, n 90.

50. Whether this is a 'utopian' element of thought that could be linked to other utopian attitudes in Sydney Anglicanism, as identified by Lawton, will not be explored here. See Lawton, *The Better Time To Be*, Chapter 5, which looks at teaching on marriage and its social defense at the turn of the 20th century. I am not, however, equating this ideal with the utopian tradition of feminism discussed below.

51. "We all firmly accept that the different responsibilities given to women from those given to men, are not demeaning or to be resented." Editorial, Patricia Judge, *Equal But Different*, August 1994, p 1; "Biblical concepts of service to others, denial of self-interests ..." Patricia Judge, Editorial, *Equal But Different*, November, 1994, p 1. Note that Elaine Storkey (evangelical feminist U.K.) characterises evangelical feminism as embodying "a commitment to others" that looks beyond rights. If this definition is accepted then Equal But Different is not at odds with evangelical feminism on the latter point. See Storkey, *What's Right With Feminism*, p 138 quoted in Thisleton, p 438. For an analysis of the role of women within early U.K. Methodism (another expression of Evangelicalism), See Malmgreen, "Domestic Discords" in *Disciplines of Faith*, pp 55-70, esp p 67.

52. *Equal But Different*, November 1994, contained an edited version of a *Christianity Today* article. The article is implicitly evaluated with approval by *EBD* writer, Lesley Hicks, in the light of the author's advocacy of giving priority to the raising of children, regardless of whether or not women as mothers, work (presumably in paid employment). The article itself approves reform feminism, including equal rights and equal opportunities ("classical feminism") even in the context of fighting discriminatory practices in churches. It differentiates between this and feminism "as a religion", which is disapproved.

53. Some women deacons opposed ordination to the priesthood. See Janis Donohoo, "Letter to Kimberley", *Southern Cross*, June 1988, pp 20-21.

54. See Dianne Nicolios, Address, "Women's Ministry: A Centenary Celebration and Vision for the Future," 8 June 1991 (advocacy of development of ministry opportunities for women); Janis Donohoo, Letter to Kimberley, *Southern Cross*, June 1988, pp 20-21 (opposition to ordination to the priesthood for women but desire for extension and acceptance of women's public ministries); Rodgers and Mathieson, pp 13-14, (writing within the evangelical tradition, but not explicitly excluding ordination to the priesthood for women). A discourse of employment opportunity (paid ministry positions) for women as a distinctive expression of an evangelical feminism could thus be seen to transcend 'anti' and 'pro-ordination' categories. See also breadth of participation in *Women's Ministry: A Centenary Celebration and a Vision for the Future*, (booklet) Saturday 8 June 1991.

55. For an account of male-female team ministry See Jacinth Myles, "Almost a rector" in Margaret Ann Franklin and Ruth Sturmey Jones, (Eds)., *Opening the Cage: Stories of Church and Gender*, (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1987). The launch of the publication was covered in a news report; "Watching women in the Diaconate" (Age 27.6.89). However, her fairly positive

evaluation of a team ministry and the encouragement and support given to her from within a 'headship' diocese did not attract press attention. This is not to deny other experiences for female parish workers. See for example, Marlene Cohen, "A Clergy wife's story" in Margaret Ann Franklin (Ed), *The Force of the Feminine: Women, Men and the Church*, (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986) pp 100-112. The only press recognition of an employment opportunity discourse for women in ministry came outside the 1987-1992 period. See "Women's role in the church central to Archdeacon's mission" (SMH, 2.4.94) which focussed on the role of Dianne Nicolios, as an archdeacon in the Diocese of Sydney.

56. Sandra McColl was the first National Co-ordinator (1987-89). The secretary and main media represented participant of the group, Phyllis Boyd, addressed feminism in part to facilitate her cause at a media level. Although Phyllis Boyd spoke on radio and appeared on television in Sydney, there was no press reporting of her view there. See correspondence Phyllis Boyd to J.B. 4.8.93.

57. See Phyllis Boyd, "Feminism and Ordination: A Personal View" in David Wetherell (Ed)., *Women Priests in Australia? The Anglican Crisis*, (Melbourne, Spectrum, 1987), pp 61-62.

58. Ibid., p 68.

59. I recognise, however, that the aims of the Anglican Mothers' Union could be seen to represent a 'private sphere' perception of the role of women. See Ruth Teale, "Matron, maid and missionary: the work of Anglican women in Australia" in *Women, Faith and Fetes*, Sabine Willis (Ed) (Melbourne, Dove, 1977) pp 117-129. Also, Sturmey, Thesis, Chapter Three; Lawton, *Better Time To Be*, pp 174-7.

60. Banks, pp 101-2; p 190.

61. Phyllis Boyd, "Feminism and Ordination: A Personal View" in Wetherell (Ed), pp 61-62.

62. Margaret Hood, "What are little girls made of?" W.A.O.W. pamphlet No 1, Oxford, London. n.d.

63. This perhaps begs the question as to whether one can speak of a distinctive evangelical feminism, at least in the Australian context. One could ask to what degree the evangelical origins of the Anglican Church in Australia have been formative of attitudes regarding women's role across theological traditions. This line of inquiry, which lies outside the immediate concerns of this thesis, would not however, explain the existence of W.A.O.W. in the U.K.. Cf. a sociological critique in the style of the later Berger that would see these groups as expressing anti-feminisms in theological language. A news text that quoted Bishop Bruce Wilson accusing opponents of ordination of a "'chauvinist' reading of scripture" is the closest that news texts typically come to addressing such a critique. See "Battle ahead for women's ordination" SMH 25.8.87..

64. See footnote 9, above.

65. Kirsty Magarey, "Discrimination and the Church", *Reform*, Winter 1991, No 62.

66. Beatrice Pate., "Rights or Reconciliation", in Field (Ed)., *Fit For This Office*, p 118.

67. Ibid., p 122.

68. See Rodgers and Mathieson, "Affirming the Feminine", pp 13-14.

69. See Porter, p 2.

70. See Fraser, "A Call to the Island", in Field (Ed)., pp 51-58.

71. See Barbara Darling, "In Between Times", in Field (Ed)., pp 87-100.

72. See for example, Jennifer Hall, "A Ministry, a Mediation, a Statement", in Field (Ed)., pp 124-139.

73. Noted by Porter, p 2.

74. Ibid, p 3.

75. M.O.W. really could be the focus of an entire thesis. Issues such as changes in feminisms over time, possible differences in emphasis between national and more local groups, regional differences and the contribution of Anglican and non-Anglican viewpoints, as well as changes under different national presidents are all matters that necessarily must be overlooked in this context.

Janet Nelson and Linda Walter, for example, see feminism and Christianity as "inextricably interwoven" in their thought, and "write out of a conviction that our own experience provides for each one of us ground for deep theological reflection and spiritual insight." See Nelson and Walter, *Women of Spirit*, p 10. For their connection with M.O.W. see below.

76. Marlene Cohen, "A Clergy Wife's Story" in *The Force of the Feminine*, Franklin (Ed) pp 100-112.

77. For one example of the contribution of Dr Leon Morris to the debate, see Leon Morris, "Leadership and Authority" in *The Bible and Women's Ministry*, Nichols (Ed), pp 23-34. Similarly, Kevin Giles (Biblical tradition) is embraced. See "The Ordination of Women: On whose side is the Bible?" in *The Force of the Feminine*, Franklin (Ed), pp 38-49.

The theology of Dr John Gaden (Liberal-Broad Church) was also embraced within the discourse of M.O.W.; his support much appreciated. See John R. Gaden, "Adding My Piece" in *Changing Women, Changing Church*, Marie Loiuse Uhr (Ed) (Newtown, Millennium Books, 1992) pp 47-52. (This collection is presented for M.O.W. in honour of Dr Patricia Brennan.); "Vale John Gaden", *Balaam's Ass: Movement for the Ordination of Women Sydney Newsletter*, February 1990, p 12.

For an attack on fundamentalism see Barbara Thiering, "Sexism and fundamentalism" in *The Force of the Feminine*, Franklin (Ed), pp 25-37. See also, for example, Patricia Brennan,

"Down the yellow brick road with the Anglican hierarchy", *Movement for the Ordination of Women Magazine*, September 1990, pp 17-18.

78. See Margaret Ann Franklin, "Introduction"., Marie Tulip, "Affirmative Action in the Uniting Church 1977-83"., and Edward Morgan, "Implications of the Feminine and Masculine in Pastoral Ministry" in *The Force of the Feminine*, Franklin (Ed) pp xii-xiii; 120-140; 164-174.

79. Suzanne Parks and Colleen O'Reilly, Discussion Paper, p 1. See also Suzanne Glover, "Reforming Caveman Theology" in *Balaam's Ass*, Newsletter of the Movement for the Ordination of Women (Sydney), February 1990.

80. Nelson and Walter, *Women of Spirit*, p 59. See also Suzanne Glover, "M.O.W.'s Twelve Founding Theses" , September 1983, for mention of the doctrine of the 'new creation'.

81. Janet Nelson, in Nelson and Walter, pp 57 - 59.

82. Ibid., p 54. Sturmey stresses a need for a recognition of different 'locations' of men and women. See Thesis, p 275. See also contributions in *Opening the Cage: Stories of Church and Gender*, Margaret Ann Franklin and Ruth Sturmey Jones (Eds), (Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1987).

83. See contributions in Franklin (Ed), *The Force of the Feminine*. See also Barbara Field's reference to "integrative feminism" which has utopian overtones, in "Conflicting discourses", in Black (Ed) p 62.

84. See Marie Louise Uhr (Ed) *Changing Women, Changing Church*. See also Sturmey, p 184. Note the "Women Authoring Theology" Conference, co-organised by M.O.W., Uniting Church women, Women and the Australian Church (WATAC, Catholic) and Women-Church, 24-26 May 1991, advertised in *Movement for the Ordination of Women*, May 1991, p 12. Some feminist theologians discussed within the pages of M.O.W. publications include Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Rosemary Radford Reuther, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel and Dr Janet Martin Soskice.

For oppression/liberation theology perspectives See Nelson and Walter, Chapter Three: "I am come to proclaim liberty (Luke 4:18) Woman's Place in the Twentieth Century" pp 46-63. See also Alison M. Cheek, "A Theological Seminary's Bold Venture: Teaching Feminist Liberation Theology" in *Changing Women, Changing Church*, Uhr (Ed), pp 123-134. For a critique of what he calls 'socio-critical' and 'socio-pragmatic' hermeneutics in feminist theologies, See Thisleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*, especially Chapter 12. Note his analysis of the theologies of Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Letty Russell and Rosemary Radford Reuther.

On acceptance of homosexuality see Ali Wurm, "Voices" in *Changing Women, Changing Church*, Uhr (Ed), pp 141-3.

85.Field in "Conflicting discourses", p 61, notes the female gender exclusivity of 'Women-Church' and conceptualises this as a "rage" stage of feminist consciousness, following Letty Russell (1974).

For the establishment and purpose of Women-Church, both the collective and its journal, see Kate Scholl, "What is Women-Church?" and Jean Gledhill, "Launching *Women-Church*" in *Women-Church: An Australian Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 2, 1987. For evidence of rejection of 'male-stream' thought see Colleen O'Reilly Stewart and Erin White, Editor's Introduction, *Women-Church*, 4, 1988. Apart from publication of the journal, the collective meets monthly "to tell the stories of the tension of trying to live religiously as feminists, to involve ourselves in the church and to make sense of our lives as women committed to spiritual values". The group takes its lead from the writings of feminist theologian Rosemary Radford Reuther, while its activity has characteristics similar to the consciousness-raising central to radical feminism as outlined by writers such as Eisenstein.

86. For analysis of movement away from androgyny and identification of a 'metaphysical' feminism, See Eisenstein, *Contemporary Feminist Thought.*, especially Chapters 6 and 13. For deconstructionist trends in feminist theory See Pateman and Gross, *Feminist Challenges.*

87. For the discursive emphases of M.O.W. See pamphlet, "Towards a Whole Ministry: Movement for the Ordination of Women" Interim Organisation, which states: "M.O.W. identifies three main areas of work: THEOLOGY, HISTORY, PSYCHOLOGY". For a specific example of psychological inquiry see Maggie Kirkman and Norma Grieve, "The Ordination of Women: A psychological interpretation of the objections" in The Force of The Feminine, Franklin (Ed), pp 55-67.

88. See for example, Nelson and Walter., "Woman, why are you weeping? John 20:15, Women's Place in the Ordained Ministry" pp 146-167.

89. Sturmey, Thesis, pp 184, 187.

90. Sturmey, p 7. See Rosemary Radford Reuther., *Sexism and God-Talk: Towards a Feminist Theology*, (London, SCM, 1983).

91. A similar inclusiveness is found in M.O.W. (U.K.) from which came some initial motivation for the Australian movement. See Monica Furlong (Ed)., *Feminine in the Church*, (London, 1984) pp 1, 10. Articles ranged from liturgical language to psychological insights on gender stereotyping, to power relations, to baptismal-sacramental views regarding women's ordination, to Jesus as social non-conformist regarding women, to feminist insights into Christian history. Indeed, moderator Monica Furlong noted in the beginning "some quite severe disagreements on policy", not surprising given "a wide range of views and varieties of churchmanship" (p 5).

92. Banks, p 230.

93. See for example, Beatrice Pate., "Rights or Reconciliation?" in Field (Ed) pp 118-9.

94. See discussion in Chapter Two and Appendices for further examples.

95. Note that in the photograph, Val Grayden, who holds a 'pro-ordination' view is to the left, the site of 'the given'.

96. See 'News discourse', Chapter Five.

97. Compare this visual construction with that in "Women miss out on ordination by one vote" Aust 7-8.12.89.

98. See for example, "Women to be priests" DTM 23.8.89, which includes a photograph of Erica Mathieson, who favoured women's ordination to the priesthood, but probably from within an Evangelical dissenting view. Note that lay presidency (an alternative dissenting view in the Biblical tradition) did not have a feminist 'face' in the debate.

99. Phyllis Boyd perceived resistance to her view in the secular and church press. Her view addresses zero population control, that arises in part from a reading of Germaine Greer's *Sex and Destiny: the Politics of Human Fertility* and includes a theological position in relation to authority in the Church. See Phyllis Boyd, "Feminism and Ordination" in Wetherell (Ed), p 66.

100. See for example, accounts in Franklin and Sturmey Jones, (Eds) and Field (Ed). These are personal accounts rather than Christian feminist theory.

101. See "Maternity leave for clergy" Age, 24.4.90.

102. See more detailed analysis in Appendix: 1992.

103. See "Across newspaper comparison, 9 March, 1992 and related texts", Chapter 2.2. For an M.O.W. account of the event, See Janet Scarfe, "Australian Summer, 1992" in *Movement for the Ordination of Women Incorporating Ebb and Flow*, November 1992, pp 12-13.

104. See Chapters 3:2 and 3:5.

105. Field, "Conflicting Discourses" p 61.

Chapter 4

Media discourses

4.4 Press construction of 'the social'

Earlier in this chapter I outlined theological discourses on the ordination of women in the form

in which they informed discussion in the General Synod of the Anglican Church, and more

generally amongst clergy and lay people. I have shown also that while there is evidence of key

words and phrases from theological discourses in the media debate, their presence is a token

one. A participant may be quoted or a point of view labelled, but in news texts, theological

views are rarely evaluated in detail.

I have outlined also a variety of feminist meanings in the debate, using the paradigm offered by

Olive Banks. One can compare and contrast these feminisms, which appear to arise from

different theological and/or historical traditions. Their existence is at odds with the consensus

view of "women" which the newspapers have constructed in verbal texts, and affirmed by the

group construction in photographs.

The press in general would appear to have rated as credible, participants seeking the political

goal of the ordination of women to the priesthood, but not pursued the reasons given by the

various participants for seeking the priesthood. The press did not therefore identify in a

significant way (at least until mid 1992) a lack of consensus within feminist views but implicitly and sometimes explicitly constructed a 'women and their supporters' versus 'men' theme in media texts. Can one then speak of 'ordination by media'?

To answer this, alongside the textual analysis above, of the modal-like components and other strategies that encode degrees of credibility for participants, one needs to look at the discursive 'cement' that links the reporting of participants and their views. In other words, it is necessary to look at what the writer says in reporting selected participants, and what themes are established in the lead paragraphs. During the course of verbal analysis, these features were often pointed out.[1] In this chapter, therefore, I will offer an overall analysis and illustrate it with reference to particular texts.

Stated simply, I found that events and participants were mainly evaluated in the light of 'unity' meanings and 'progress' meanings, in relation to legislation. Thus, a unity discourse and a progress-historical discourse were derived by the press from a discourse on legislative change. Each of these three media discourses will now be examined. Reference will then be made to a less frequently apparent 'functional discourse' in relation to ordination. Finally, I will introduce the reader to the way in which the press generally has incorporated attitudes on women's ordination into its evaluative system in its construction of what I will term 'mediated theological orthodoxy' in 'the social'.

4.4.1 Legislative-democratic discourse in the press

Press interest in legislation incorporated such things as submissions to, and opinions of, the Appellate Tribunal; the intention of bishops to proceed without enabling legislation from General Synod; the action within the Supreme Court of N.S.W. to restrain Bishop Owen Dowling from proceeding to ordain women to the priesthood, and to test the constitution of the General Synod in relation to secular law and voting patterns within synods. Related to this was an interest in the 'mind' of the synod, as evident in resolutions, but also in other measures of church opinion.

In the course of verbal analysis at first I thought that my sampling may have been biased; that the overwhelming interest in legislation, expressed in the voice of the journalist, may have been because I was analysing 'synod samples'. However, the same finding was made in relation to non-synod samples. The voice of the journalist invariably returned to the state of the issue in relation to legislation: what the most recent voting pattern in the synod had been and when the next synod would occur, or the next decision of the Appellate Tribunal would be released.

Consider the following three examples, which have been chosen at random from across the period. [2] The first is a text arising from the decision of the Appellate Tribunal in March 1987 that a General Synod canon permitting the ordination of women as deacons was valid. The context therefore justifies reference to legislation. However, it is of interest to note the degree to which the media's interest in legislation overrides other meanings, especially the theological, and even feminist (or feminist theological) ones:

"Reverend Heather Marten, who was ordained to the diaconate last year, *welcomed the Appellate Tribunal decision* and also *rejected the view it would harm ecumenism.*

"'We are never going to see a church or a ministry that is whole unless we have women, for without women it could not be whole,' she said.

"'To say that one group of individuals has no place in that particular section of the life of the church because they are female, is going right against any sort of theology and God's spirit given to his people.'

"Dr Penman said he believed the 'great bulk of Anglicanism' supported the moves and 12 months ago the Victorian Synod had voted 92 per cent in favour of women as deacons.

The *possibility of a split* had to be taken seriously nonetheless." ("Women in the priesthood by 1992, says Archbishop" Aust 7.3.87.)(Figure 87)(Ital: JB)

Ms Marten's quote is introduced as though it backs up the writer's interpretation that she welcomed the Appellate Tribunal opinion and rejected the idea that ordination would harm ecumenism (a Christian 'unity' meaning). While this may well have been her view, Ms Marten's words have little to do with this. They reflect a feminist theological meaning owned by M.O.W., identified as such by the concern for a "whole" ministry ('wholeness' meaning). This quote merely 'illustrates' the media discourse (inadequately) and the feminist theological meaning is not engaged by the writer. The voice of the journalist simply goes on to pursue another preferred discourse, that of unity/disunity.

One sees this again in a text from the 1989 debate: "Closer to consecration" (SMH 5.1.89). This text focuses on progress towards the consecration of the first woman priest as an assistant bishop. Absent are Christian jargon words such as 'calling', 'testing', 'prayer', the 'Spirit's leading' and so on. The basis of the evaluation of progress is a democratic discourse on voting patterns:

"The first woman nominated to become a bishop of the Episcopal Church came a step nearer to consecration yesterday when she *won the necessary votes* from church committees ...

"Ms Harris, an episcopal priest in Philadelphia, passed the key milestone yesterday when an envelope containing the 60th vote of support for her arrived from one of the 118 eight-member standing committees.

"He said the only controversy had been within the standing committees and the bishops were now expected *to vote quickly and affirmatively.*"

A third example comes from the 1992 debate: "Bishop Dowling to marry" (DTM 31.7.92). In this text, after brief mention of his fiancé, and prior to brief mention of his first wife, at least one third of the space is devoted to the state of legislation in relation to women's ordination:

"Bishop Dowling plans to retire after ordaining the twelve women he was going to ordain on February 2 before a Supreme Court injunction prevented him.

"That decision has since been overturned and the Anglican Church's General Synod has considered changing church legislation preventing the ordination of women.

"A final decision which is expected to be positive will be made in Sydney on November 21 and should open the way for Bishop Dowling to achieve his wish."

Bishop Dowling's marriage plans are made 'relevant'; that is, newsworthy, by reference to the women's ordination debate, but in particular, to legislative progress.

This attention to legislative change and democratic opinion may be facilitated by the organisation of the Anglican Church in Australia in terms of its synodical government. [3] This is also a 'social' face of Christianity that is understandable through a 'compatible' secular discourse; that of political reporting based on the workings of parliament. One journalist in the course of reporting the General Synod of 1992 could not resist a comparison with the parliament of Victoria.

"Politics and religion meld in synod debate" (Age 8.7.92) (Figure 88) is notable for its negative

evaluation of the "Spring Street" (Victorian State parliament-like) proceedings of the synod, a

theme established in the lead. Archbishop Keith Rayner is described as the "Leo McLeay" of

the synod, while Mr Robert Fordham emerges as the most credible actor on the basis of his

"considerable parliamentary experience". The synod is by comparison, negatively evaluated.

This is not always the case, however, as discussion below in relation to the 'unity' discourse will

suggest. I will turn first, though, to the 'progress' discourse.

4.4.2 Progress-historical discourse in the press

The voice of the journalist also interpreted events and participant's views in the light of what I

have termed a 'progress-historical' discourse.

Consider first, though, what may be a contributing factor, the 'pseudo-historical' (precedent

style) methodology of journalism. The journalist new to a story or round is able to gain

background information from the library of the newspaper. He or she researches an issue and in

doing so accesses the prevailing interpretation. The current story thus has the potential to

become an 'episode' within the ongoing 'historical' discourse/ interpretation. Let us turn to the

characteristics of this progress-historical discourse, evident in the voice of the journalist.

First, there is the realisation of history being made. In previous chapters I have drawn attention

to the text "A seemly silence is broken and history made" (Age 2.6.86). The same emphasis on

this event as a 'first' is evident in a companion text from the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

"Anglican women priests were officially recognised *for the first time* in Australia yesterday, when a New Zealander, the Rev Susan Adams, conducted Holy Communion at All Soul's Church, Sandringham."("Church first for the Rev Susan Adams" SMH 2.6.86.) (Ital: JB)

The emphasis on 'firsts' is seen again at the consecration of the Rev Barbara Harris as assistant

bishop in the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A.:

"... the Rev Barbara Clementine Harris, 55, a black priest, yesterday became *the first woman bishop of the Episcopal Church* ... service in Boston broke a barrier for all the main branches of Christianity ... (SMH 13.2.89, "First woman bishop breaks hallowed ground".) (Ital: JB)

The same emphasis was placed on the admission of women to the diaconate in the Diocese of

Sydney in 1989:

"*Sydney's first women deacons* were ordained yesterday, but unlike their sisters and brothers in Melbourne, and their brothers in Sydney, they may not proceed to the priesthood under diocesan law.
        ("Father and daughter of the cloth share common moment", Age, 13.2.89.) (Ital:JB)

Indeed, since 1986, the Australian press has identified no less than 14 "firsts" in the chronicle of

the women's ordination debate:

* First women deaconed (Melbourne) eg. "Deacon Kate even swears a tiny bit", SMH 12.2.86.

* First clergy couple (priest and deacon, Roger and Kate Prowd) *Woman's Day*, 14.4.86.

* First woman priest to celebrate Holy Communion "An injustice to keep women out of the ordained ministry says a woman priest from New Zealand" Age 30.5.86.

* First female archdeacon "The deacon who disarms doubters" Aust 22.10.87 (James Murray's column).

* First Anglican woman deacon to have a baby "Deacon's Prowd to be a mum" DT 22.11.88.

* First woman elected and consecrated an assistant bishop (US) "Bishop's election a first for women" SMH 26.9.88 and "First woman Episcopal bishop is ordained" Age, 13.2.89.

* First woman deacon in NSW to be appointed leader of an Anglican parish "Julia has a job to do for God" DT 7.2.89.

* First female deacons in Sydney ordained "Our first female deacons ordained" SMH 13.2.89.

* First Anglican nun to become a deacon "First nun to be a deacon" DT 13.11.89.

* First woman priest to be elected and enthroned as a diocesan bishop Age 28.11.89 and 29.6.90.

* First women priested in UK (and Europe) "UK ordains its first women priests" (Belfast) DT 26.6.90.

* First woman rector "The sermon today is preached by a mother" DT 12.1.92 (NZ ordained priest Dawn Kenyon licensed as rector of parish of Westonia-Southern Cross in WA).

* First female (deaconed) chaplain appointed to a school in the Diocese of Sydney "Rev Kim to guide the girls" DTM 21.2.92.

* Australia's first women priests (and their first celebrations of Holy Communion the following day) SH 8.3.92., DTM 9.3.92. [4]

Indeed, there is a race to record the new "first", although this is more pressing for radio journalists than for those working in the print media. Many a print journalist on the women's ordination trail, however, placed a holding story announcing the synod's endorsement of a canon for the ordination of women each time it was defeated narrowly.

Sometimes the proclamation of a 'first' is accompanied by even more grandiose claims of a 'new era', and thus the event is elevated to the status of a turning point in history. The evaluation may come via the voice of the journalist or through a selected quote (attributed modality):

"The first time women priests in the United Kingdom were ordained in St Andrew's Cathedral, Belfast, yesterday ....Dr Poyntz said that the ordinations heralded *a new era* for the church." (DT 26.6.90) (Ital: JB)

A second feature of the historical-progress discourse is the chronicle of background information given, within which to interpret the latest 'watershed' event. The following text indicates when women were first ordained and identifies 'provinces' (regions or countries) where women's ordination is permitted, in terms which suggest that ordination will come to other areas in time. In this way the historical (progress) discourse takes on a somewhat prophetic function:

"In April 1974 Alison Cheek was ordained as one of the 'Philadelphia Eleven' ... This was followed a year later by the ordination of the 'Washington Four'...

"The Anglican Provinces of Canada, New Zealand, and some parts of Africa also permit the ordination of women. In Britain itself there are women deacons, but *not yet* women priests." ("Anglicans, women and ordination" in "Feminist priest faces battle again", SMH, 8.7.87).(Ital:JB)

In the course of analysis of verbal texts I drew attention to 'prediction' as a non-modal evaluative strategy that serves to heighten the credibility of persons and their views. Predictions were not infrequently the subject matter of headlines. These were either the evaluation of the newspaper or may have been attributed to a participant. Either way, high credibility was attached to them. Another 'face' of prediction was the suggestion that ordination to the priesthood for women was 'inevitable'. [5]

At times the historical-progress discourse is evident in the declaration of the "end" of a tradition:

"Sydney's oldest Anglican girls' school has *broken with tradition* by appointing a new female chaplain to watch over the religious education of its 850 pupils." (DTM 21.1.92.)

"*Breaking 200 years of church tradition*, the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr David Penman, ordained eight women as deacons in St Paul's Cathedral." ("Archbishop ordains first women deacons in Australia" 10.2.86.) (Ital: JB)

While this may be no more than a different way to say that something new has happened, it may also reflect an egalitarian sensitivity. This may support my suggestion that Australian news discourse is egalitarian in the viewer - represented participant relation.

Another variation on the historical-progress discourse is the detailing of blockages to expected progress. In December 1991 the Appellate Tribunal, the Anglican Church's body of legal opinion, did not give a clear and affirmative opinion (as had been hoped by some dioceses). The questions before it included whether it was constitutionally permissible for a bishop to ordain without General Synod legislation, or whether some individual dioceses could proceed to legislate without a prior General Synod canon. Apart from the expected legal discourse, two of the participants quoted interpreted the ruling in the light of progress/history. Significantly, they are located in the second last and 'last word' position in the verbal text, the latter being a layout position encoding high credibility:

"The Bishop of Newcastle, the Rt Rev Alfred Holland, said 'I believe the church will once again be held up to ridicule, and that it won't be seen to reflect the mood or spirit of the times, let alone the Spirit of God."

"One of the 150 female deacons affected by the ruling, Beatrice Pate from the Newcastle Parish of Merewether, said, 'I feel as though we've gone back 20 years today.'" ("Anglican refusal on women priests" SMH 7.12.91.)

The labelling of participants as anything from "cowboy" to "liberator" or "crusader" could also be seen to contribute to a 'great man' (or woman) character to this media historical discourse. [6] Thus one sees again a link between the modal values in the judgment system (modal value of capacity) that I outlined in Chapter Two, and the theme/media discourse.

A third feature of the historical-progress discourse is the making of historical comparisons. In this way the discourse tends to have a didactic function. 'Firsts' are evaluated, in the voice of the journalist, on a comparative basis across *western* nations:

"New Zealand, Canada and the United States have women priests. According to Ms Gaden, *Australia is even behind the traditionally conservative English* who recently allowed the ordination of women deacons." ("Church told to decide on women priests soon" Age, 31.7.85)(Ital: JB)

The reader is thereby positioned with the point of view of Ms Gaden, and therefore encouraged to see the Australian church as being ultra-conservative. Taken together with the historical observation that other countries have women deacons, the reader is positioned to agree with the logic of, and need for, the change. Historical detail has facilitated the progress discourse.

This didacticism may occur in as simple a form as saying something is "old fashioned":

"The head of Sydney's Anglican church has been criticised for his 'old fashioned' views on the role of women in society." ("Support for women old fashioned" DM 4.9.90.)

These characteristics of the media's historical discourse bring to mind a particular historiographic tradition. The organisation of history into "an unfolding principle of progress" is how the nineteenth century historian Sir Herbert Butterfield described the "Whig" view of history. [7] The idea of progress has its origins in the eighteenth century Enlightenment. It was powerfully reinforced in the nineteenth century by social thought associated with the theory of evolution.[8] In a society that eschews religious faith, the historian Bury noted the irony that "to believe in progress is an 'act of faith'". Bebbington implies that is more a case perhaps of having too readily or naively believed. [9]

David Wetherell has already recognised the characteristics of the Whig interpretation of history

within the ordination debate. [10] However, his observations appear to be made in relation to the

debate in general, rather than being restricted to the press debate. In 1987 he wrote:

"In Australia as elsewhere, a great deal of debate in favour of women priests in the past five years has been underpinned by historical analogies and by implicit assumptions about history."[11]

With others, he believes that the strongest impetus behind the movement for women's

ordination comes from the assumption of a steady march of social progress. He suggests that

this view of history has been used as a substitute for theological and anthropological arguments

in the debate.[12]

Ruth Sturmey rejected this perspective, arguing for a contextualised, process model of theology

that explicitly incorporates historical and other insights including that of gender. She maintains

that differing world views generally enter the theological tradition following a period of stress

and breakdown, anyway. [13]

However, that the media have their own progress-historical discourse may predispose them to

evaluate (and encode) as credible, arguments based on social history. Consider a further

example:

"Bishop Owen Dowling, of Canberra and Goulburn, proposing the bill to ordain women, said that *in the early centuries of the Christian Church*, a variety of ministries and charisms flourished ...

"In a lighter moment, Mr Gerald Christmas, Registrar of the Sydney diocese, *drew a parallel between the ordination debate and slavery.*

"*He said the same argument* currently used to oppose the ordination of women *had been used a century ago* in support of 'that wretched institution'.

"He quoted Bishop John Henry Hopkins as saying: 'The Bible's defence of slavery is very plain - who are we in our modern day (1864) to set aside the word of God?" ("Battle ahead for women's ordination", SMH 25.8.87).

In the case of this text, Bishop Dowling's view was placed in 'first word' position, and Mr Christmas' view in the 'last word' layout position, both having high credibility. Perhaps is should be asked whether such credibility encodings, over time, might subtly encourage the refashioning of the theological tradition. Perhaps it is possible that the press facilitates (as in Wetherell's view) the substitution of social history arguments for theology, or has an inbuilt 'process theology' function, (as in Sturmey's view). Considered either way this is a powerful role, especially in the light of Muriel Porter's observation that (by 1988):

"more cynical supporters (of women's ordination to the priesthood) counselled taking a deliberately positive attitude as a means of ensuring that the decision (of Archbishop Penman's, to proceed) became a self-fulfilling prophecy." [14]

A related point of interest is Bebbington's view on the relationship between the development of the mass (print) media and Enlightenment philosophy:

"The values of the Enlightenment spread down to lower social groups with the development of the popular press." [15]

This present study could then be seen to focus on one example of the continuing impact of Enlightenment philosophy on Christianity and church practice, through news discourse at a popular level. While the media's historical discourse may have features typical of an Enlightenment historical tradition, it also has more culturally specific characteristics. One sees events evaluated at times in the light of established themes in Australian social history.

Consider the reporting in the *Canberra Times* at the time of the 1989 General Synod. One needs to turn to this newspaper for a coverage of the debate on an 'attached' or 'unattached primacy', because the metropolitan newspapers focused almost solely upon the women's ordination debate. News reporting gave the impression that women's ordination was the focus of the debate for the whole week. [16]

The debate in 1989 was over whether the primacy should be geographically attached to any one location, Canberra being one option because this was the site of the national political capital, or remain 'floating', as it is currently. [17] Debate involved financial matters such as the cost of providing the primate with additional administrative assistance given the demands on his time which distract him from his diocesan role.

In the *Canberra Times* text, while it is reported that financial considerations were aired, the macro theme appears to be Sydney-Melbourne social rivalry between which is sandwiched Canberra. Hence the lead introduces the theme of Canberra "bashing" and the text goes on to detail the view of one Sydney spokesperson. It continues:

"Sydney and Melbourne, which agree on little in general, even less in the Anglican Church, appeared united in their determination that their church headquarters should not be in Canberra. The church was equally determined that neither should its Primate ...

"The bishop of Canberra and Goulburn, the Rt Rev Owen Dowling, did have the temerity to suggest that the office might become the prisoner of Sydney. Even this was not sufficient to convince Melbourne." ("Anglican leaders throw stones at Canberra" *Canberra Times* 23.8.89)

The *Canberra Times* would appear to have constructed this debate in the light of the Sydney-Melbourne social rivalry theme in Australian history, bringing to mind in particular, the

debate very early this century over the location of a national capital, and the rivalry that occurred between Sydney and Melbourne. While this may have partial relevance, to interpret the debate primarily in this light mediates out (low modality) other non-socially realised meanings such as "the mission of the church" and constitutional issues. [18]

The effect is to provide one major window on the event, one that highlights social meanings that are, in this case, geographically 'relevant', rather than the pastoral or ecclesiastical meanings. [19] One sees other social history themes introduced in news discourse as well. In relation to Professor Fred Hollows, a *Sydney Morning Herald* obituary evaluated him as "a genuine Anzac hero" ("'Don't worry about not being here, Dad, because you still are'", SMH 16.2.93).

My suggestion of course raises the question as to the relationship between church and society, which cannot be dealt with in this study. However, that the 'social faces' of theological discourses are constructed in media texts in the light of 'compatible' secular social discourses - that is 'mediated' - possibly through those providing maximum dramatic impact, is important for persons researching church history to be aware of. Indeed, it may be possible to envisage the media as 'recycling' social history themes in such a way as to, by circular argument, validate them. Discussion in the next section of this chapter on news values may cause one to go so far as to ask whether newspapers can validly be used as secondary sources (let alone primary sources) for church history, without a knowledge of the structuring function of news discourse and the news values it embraces.

At the very least, this particular 'primacy' example, and the more general treatment of the women's ordination issue as outlined in the previous sections of this chapter, indicate that the media construction and evaluation of Christian discourses involves an editing process. This process generally gives token attention to theological-ecclesiastical meanings, leaving the social face of the discourse to be translated to readers through available social paradigms, of which the historical is an option. At a deeper level, the media representation of the debate might be seen to have facilitated the influence of Enlightenment philosophy on Christianity and church practice.

4.4.3 Unity and its threatened destruction

The third type of discursive 'cement' that links participants and their views in media texts is a discourse of 'unity'.

The concept of unity as mentioned by writers of news texts is not part of a theological discourse, even though theological concerns about unity are compatible with it. Rather, it would appear to be a discourse focussed on social outcomes, a discourse of social stability. This social stability is seen to derive from people acting lawfully and constitutionally, and in institutions not splitting and creating social chaos. In this sense it is dependent upon the media legislative discourse but may be in competition with the media progress discourse. I will return to this point presently.

Conventions used in the construction of news discourse are paradoxical at this point. On the one hand heightened vocabulary may be used in the reporting of disagreements and conflicts. On the other hand texts will negatively evaluate disunity. The dichotomy, however, provides dramatic interest and presumably sells newspapers. More will be said about news values in the next chapter. At this point I will suggest that the media unity discourse is the means via which public opinion is managed. It helps to construct a 'consensus band' within which opinion is seen as legitimate. Consider three illustrative examples. [20]

In "Show of unity as Anglican and Catholic women meet" (SMH 21.8.89), a text arising out of an M.O.W. conference that occurred just prior to the 1989 General Synod, it is noted by the journalist that this was the first time that three groups, M.O.W., Women-Church, and Women and the Australian Church (W.A.T.A.C.) (Catholic), had met. It is reported that:

"Organisers said there had been a real show of unity between Anglican and Catholic women. "Some wore T shirts saying 'God is an equal opportunity employer'."

The "show of unity" evaluation in the headline is not elaborated further in the text. The 'unity' would seem again to be a simple social 'togetherness' meaning suggested by a source, and adopted as a main theme, though perhaps with some scepticism.

At a couple of points in the debate, as evident from my verbal text analysis, the media unity discourse does appear to focus upon ecumenical meaning in relation to Anglican relationships with the Roman Catholic Church. In "Anglicans open the door to women priests" (SMH 28.2.87) a vote in the Church of England (U.K.) in favour of a call for draft legislation to enable the ordination of women to the priesthood, was evaluated in the 'last word' position as

placing "fresh impediment in the way of reuniting the Church of England with the Roman Catholic Church". However, this is the extent of the pursuit of the theological 'unity' meaning. Within the text there would seem to have been greater interest in the "deep divisions" and whether "traditionalists" would lead a "breakaway" movement. This evaluation of course constructs the pro-ordination voters as the mainstream group; the "traditionalists" as potentially divisive or deviant. The unity meaning is still a social (face of the church) one.

In the course of analysis of verbal texts I indicated that 1992 was the year in which 'unity' meanings appear to have overtaken 'progress' meanings in media discourse. There is a greater presence of Sydney diocesan participants, apart from Archbishop Donald Robinson, than for 1989. [21] In my discussion of feminist discourses I indicated that it was not until the General Synod in July 1992 that the press gave recognition to the existence of women church participants opposed to the ordination of women, apart from the Melbourne group, Women Against the Ordination of Women. I suggest this recognition is secondary to the media discourse on unity. That there were a significant number of women opposed to the ordination of women served to illustrate potential disunity, and thus perhaps to caution the reader in relation to support for any way forward, other than a constitutional one. [22]

Other texts from *The Australian* for this 1992 General Synod period tend to construct persons advocating the need to find a constitutional way forward (unity) for the priesting of women as the actors with the highest credibility. [23]

In "Bishops delay ordinations" (Aust 9.7.92) (Figure 89), the bishops are given high credibility as actors in the first position, with verb in active voice in the headline. A minority of four bishops are encoded with greater credibility than the remaining twelve:

"At least four of the key bishops from the 16 who support ordination agreed yesterday that to proceed with ordination at this stage would be an act of bad faith."

The construction of women's ordination as more a unity issue than a progress in gender equality issue in 1992 is suggested by the text "New Anglican group aims to heal ordination rift" (SMH 25.7.92). Anglicans Together is evaluated as highly credible, in the lead being described as the initiative of "more than one hundred prominent Sydney Anglicans":

"a new group aimed at trying to heal the deep divisions in the diocese and to stop it drifting into a 'narrow sect' divorced from the rest of the church ... a group which aims to restore tolerance and diversity of opinions."

The journalist does not address a theological unity meaning, in the sense of the 'body of Christ' or an ecumenical concern. It is a more simple, and social, 'staying together' perspective, given implicit credibility. [24] The journalist would appear to have positioned the reader to evaluate as positive, the idea of a broad and tolerant consensus within the church. It is a large unit, a diocese, rather than a small 'group', that is here constructed as being deviant of the consensus of the "rest of the church". In some other texts, 'groups' are identified but evaluated negatively as being at odds with mainstream thinking. [25]

Bishops in particular (or those constructed with equivalent status) and synods seem to have been the main actors in news texts, apart from 'victims'. In the course of analysis of verbal texts I interpreted the attention to unity meanings as an emphasis upon constitutionality of action.

High credibility was constructed for the synod as actor particularly in the July and November 1992 sittings which gave final assent to legislation enabling the priesting of women. At those times two photographs constructed the synod in the 'ideal' layout position. A consensus way forward had been achieved constitutionally, and the synod thus received an exceptionally high credibility evaluation in a photograph which constructed an 'otherworldly' quality drawing on special effects (sensory coding orientation), and created social affinity between the reader and a woman deacon through the construction of emotion (Figure 37). [26]

The unity discourse and the progress discourse could thus be seen to be the means by which the press in the debate over the ordination of women, sought to manage social opinion. It was receptive to 'progress' for women, but sought to keep it consistent with the assumed values of a parliamentary democracy, that is, constitutional. With this constraint, legitimacy was endorsed.

4.4.4 Ordination as constructed in 'the social'

Notable for its low profile in press construction of the debate is discussion on exactly what ordination means and gives access to. At times a shared understanding of ordination is assumed, and referred to only through the view of a participant, as through the words of The Rev Erica Mathieson: "Ordination is a recognition of our gifts." ("Women to be priests" ST 23.8.89). Recognition of charismatic authority, is thus implied. [27]

Mention of the three orders of ministry - deacons, priests, bishops - is seen as a hierarchy in some texts. [28] This implies that ordination grants ecclesiastical authority. [29]

Another text draws attention to the first woman in N.S.W. to be made deacon-in-charge of a parish ("Julia has a job to do for God" DT 7.2.89). It does not however, recognise that spiritual oversight of a parish is a significant site of debate in itself. [30]

In one feature article, very atypically, attention is drawn to the job description of an Anglican minister ("Ministers at work: why it's never done" SMH 31.1.91), but this does not pursue the difference between ordination to the priesthood and the diaconate in terms of functions performed. Occasionally there is a simple statement in relation to what women deacons are unable to do liturgically:

"She (the Rev Sue Watson) can perform all the functions of a priest except pronouncing absolution, blessing and consecrating the communion bread and wine." ("Women priests a step closer" SMH 23.8.89) [31]

Occasionally, ordination is seen to combine status and function, but from a legislative 'rights' perspective:

"The conservative position adopted by Sydney denies female priests *the right to preach in churches* whether the ordination bill is passed or defeated."("Vote on women priests near" SMH 21.11.92)[32] (Ital: JB)

Another understanding sees the priesthood as a profession to which one 'graduates', perhaps making ordination a kind of graduation ceremony. Arguably, this carries an implicit 'status' meaning:

"Male deacons usually *graduate to the priesthood* within a year but women have never been allowed to do so." ("Fresh vote on women priests" DM 14.8.89.)(Ital: JB)

A variation on this is to see admission to the diaconate as a 'promotion' for women in the church ("First nun to be a deacon" DT 13.11.89).

On those occasions when women were ordained as deacons for the first time, there is brief mention of their job description. [33] When women were first ordained in Perth in March 1992, however, there was no significant attention to their functions as priests. Rather, their function was implied by the photographic emphasis on the celebration of the sacraments, as I have argued in a previous chapter.

The text that does give some attention to the functional meaning of ordination to the diaconate is "Touched by the spirit of equality" (Aust 13.2.89) (Figure 56). This reports the view of a female deacon which indicates that there is little if no difference between the functions they performed before ordination (to the diaconate), and those performed afterwards. Yet the functional discourse is not evaluated as the most credible. Rather, it is progress in status that is emphasised in headline and last word, but with some attention to function in part two of the lead:

"A group of Sydney women yesterday *joined their pacesetting Melbourne sisters* to become deacons of the Anglican Church.

"But the 14 women admitted to the Order of Deacons in the Diocese of Sydney by the Archbishop, the Most Reverend Donald Robinson, say the move will have *little effect on their roles in the church* ... (body of text follows)

"Speaking in Sydney, the Reverend Janis Donohoo said that although it was a happy day, women as "deaconesses" or "sisters of the parish" had already been *doing the work of deacons*.

"'It (ordination) is *a recognition of the value of women's ministry and for some it is a sign of better things to come,*' she said." ...

(Last word) "She (The Rev Narelle Jarrett) said she hoped the move could smooth the way for women to become priests in the Anglican Church." (Ital:JB)

Ordination is understood to be an act of endowing status in another text, "Anglicans fear differences will turn into split" (SMH 6.7.92). In the voice of the journalist:

"There have already been indications that the synod ... is likely to decide that individual dioceses should choose whether women can be ordained as Anglican priests and can have *equal status in the ministry with men.*"(Ital: JB)

One may recall from analysis of headlines that an ordination event was almost always constructed with a passive verb. This served to deflect attention from the episcopal actors who were the agents of the ordination. The resulting emphasis was on the state of being ordained. This could be understood to be compatible with a 'status' evaluative perspective. It would appear, therefore, from these examples and previous analysis, that the 'status' meaning of ordination to the priesthood stands alongside the media-preferred sacramental - presidency at Communion - visual definition of the priesthood.

On a very few occasions, texts drew attention to the situation of a woman priest returned from the U.S.A., but unable to find employment ("Woman priest angry at church indifference", feature, SH 31.12.89). However, little emphasis was given to the fact that some women deacons were working as voluntary, unpaid church workers. [34] It was not until after ordination for women became a possibility through General Synod legislation, that the media demonstrated any interest in an employment opportunity discourse. [35]

My point in raising this is simply that the press has been selective in its focus on the ordination

issue. The meaning of ordination is assumed, rather than recognised as having a number of

meanings within the field of church, some preferred by some participants and not others. Even

when, during the 1987 Special General Synod debate, Bishop Owen Dowling questioned the

biblical basis for the practice of ordination, this was reported, but not pursued by journalists. [36]

It has been accepted as a social 'given'. A 'status' meaning for ordination would appear

implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, to have been the preferred understanding in media

discourse.

Previous analysis has indicated texts in which the women have been constructed linguistically as

the passive receivers of ordination, perhaps encoding a media-preferred constitutional

resolution to the issue.[37] What is more, given that the passive construction deletes the role of

episcopal actors, it is the press that has recognised the status of the women at the time of their

ordination, and thus in a sense become the de-facto ordaining agent.

Visually, previous analysis has shown that the function of presiding over the celebration of the

sacraments has been the most common visual construction. Constructions of women advocates

of ordination typically in the 'ideal' layout position with significant ordination events

constructed in the 'given' position were noted. It was suggested that apart from encoding

historical order in the latter case, this points to women as priests as the 'ideal' core of the

message, perhaps in process of becoming more a social 'given'. In layout, composite texts have

at times been positioned next to others that address women's progress in the professions or

'non-standard' occupations. A parallel visual construction has been noted between women in the

law and women seeking to be priests. [38] That the priesthood is a profession - of the ministry of the Christian sacraments - seems assumed.

Press evaluation of the debate also demonstrates an orientation towards legislation as the yardstick and facilitator of social equality. The journalist rarely spells out the issue as being a matter of equal rights or 'sexual equality' for women.[39] However, the combination of a progress and a legislative discourse, as the media's evaluative framework in relation to the women's ordination debate (but moderated by a unity discourse), arguably demonstrates a predisposition towards an equal rights feminism evaluative outlook. [40]

4.4.5 'Mediated theological orthodoxy'

A product of the media discourses in the women's ordination debate is what I will term 'mediated theological orthodoxy'. It is a litmus test of a press-mediated consensus on theological issues, constructed in the realm of the 'social'.

By 1990, the media had begun to evaluate Anglican actors in terms of their position on women's ordination. This was evident in press evaluations of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey. In the course of analysis of photographs I drew attention to the text "Carey, the people's archbishop" SMH 27.7.90) (Figure 40) in which Dr Carey is evaluated on the basis of environmentalism ('green'), view on women's ordination (in favour), social background (London's East End) and leisure pursuits ("likes a pint and supports Arsenal").

The 'obituary' texts that commemorated the passing of Archbishop David Penman, Anglican Archbishop of Melbourne, characterised him as a leader, if not *the* leader, of the pro-women's-ordination view(s). The obituaries are of interest at this point because more than any other texts, one would expect them to assemble all that is considered most commendable about a person; characteristics which attract high credibility with positive evaluation.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* text ("Dr David Penman, leading churchman" SMH 2.10.89) indicates that his archbishopric was the "shortest of any of the 10 men who have led the 142 year old diocese". It continues:

"But he helped change the image of the Anglican Church from one of a bastion of Anglo Saxon culture and raised from remote to real the possibility that women would one day be counted among his successors."

The journalist has stressed the degree of change (progress discourse) in spite of the short time, thus accentuating it. The "but" (conjunction) positions the reader with that which follows, his support for multiculturalism and women's ordination. *The Age's* obituary ("Champion of multiculturalism and women" Age 2.10.89) obviously shared with the *Sydney Morning Herald* a common author.

The Australian's comment by Gerard Henderson ("Archbishop Penman, witness to the gospel and social commentator" Aust 2.10.89) (Figure 66), carried more warmth in the form of a personal reflection, and demonstrated a similar evaluation (modal values of inclination-resolve, probability-truth and obligation-ethics). It is likely, however, that for *The Australian* in mid 1989, Dr Penman's stance on women's ordination was the characteristic most positively

evaluated, given the intensified vocabulary promoting encoding tokens of social affinity between reader and represented participant:

"Dr Penman wrote little about theology. Yet he was profoundly religious. He obtained a high profile due to his laudable and courageous support for the ordination of women to the priesthood. But on many issues - for example, abortion and homosexuality - he was a social conservative."

Mention of his love of cricket and Australian Rules football implies also, something of media 'orthodoxy' on being an Australian. The text also speaks of Dr Penman's Christian ministry, his theological position, his deference to scripture. Apart from his views on ordination, only one aspect of church practice and its relationship to society, the other obituaries tended to sideline or ignore the distinctively Christian motivation behind the Archbishop's life and work. This text then, could be said to outline components of mediated theological orthodoxy: social involvement, and specifically, support for multiculturalism and women's ordination (rather than orthodox views on doctrines such as the Trinity, Incarnation and Resurrection, for example). It is theology/Christianity measured in social outcome terms.

One sees the same phenomenon in relation to the evaluation of the new Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev Harry Goodhew, who succeeded Archbishop Donald Robinson, and the Dean of Sydney, the Very Rev Boak Jobbins.[41]

An across-newspapers comparison is provided in the reports on the installation of Bishop Goodhew as Archbishop of Sydney. *The Australian* incorporated a photograph that was twice the size of the verbal component and was located in the 'ideal' position. Archbishop Goodhew was photographed with an upwards camera angle, encoding superiority ("Protest greets

archbishop's first sermon" Aust 30.4.93). The *Daily Telegraph Mirror* text, on the other hand, was smaller, and occupied two fifths of the composite text space ("Bishop inherits a restless flock" DTM 30.4.93). Along with the *Sydney Morning Herald* photograph ("Protest greets new archbishop" SMH 30.4.93) it had a level camera angle. However, the *Sydney Morning Herald* photograph was equal in size to the verbal text, and gave more visual space to the protesters than did that in the *Daily Telegraph Mirror*.

The Australian begins with the protest, but half of the verbal text is taken up with the views of Archbishop Goodhew. In the *Daily Telegraph Mirror*, the view reported is primarily that of M.O.W. supporters, although some is that of Archbishop Goodhew. In the *Sydney Morning Herald*, the only quoted view is that of M.O.W. supporters.

Levels of positive evaluation in descending order from *The Australian*, to the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* to the *Sydney Morning Herald* are seen also in texts that record the earlier election of Bishop Goodhew as Archbishop of Sydney. These texts are of particular interest for their clear enunciation of 'mediated theological orthodoxy'.

In verbal evaluation the degrees of positive assessment follow the same pattern. *The Australian* text ("Nice guy wins archbishop vote" Aust 2.4.93) (Figure 89) simply says that "Bishop Goodhew is known to oppose the ordination of women" and does not occupy a salient position in the text. This could be read as a positive or negative evaluation by the reader and so caters for both reading positions. The *Daily Telegraph Mirror* text "Anglicans choose new archbishop" (DTM 2.4.93) (Figure 90) interprets his election as meaning that women priests

would still be "barred" from the Sydney church. However, it includes the archbishop's assurances to the effect that he believes women have a place and a valued position in the church. It is noteworthy that this matter is raised almost straight away in the text, and in the last word. Similarly, the *Sydney Morning Herald* text ("Goodhew elected new archbishop" SMH 2.4.93) (Figure 91) stated:

"In common with the three other main contenders for the position, the archbishop elect is opposed to the ordination of women to the priesthood."

Like the *Daily Telegraph Mirror* text, this evaluation is given 'last word' status. It is an evaluative criterion of high credibility.

My point is that, rather than an evaluation in terms of the doctrinal beliefs of the archbishop, the evaluation is in the site of 'the social'. Will he ordain (give status to) women? More self interestedly in another text, will he be a good source of media comment on social issues? [42]

Women's ordination to the priesthood, I suggest, has become the primary mark of 'orthodoxy' in press evaluation of church actors. The realm of church and Christianity has been evaluated in terms of 'the social' (and 'feminist' as a sub-set of the 'social') through this debate. Women's ordination to the priesthood has become the criterion of 'mediated theological orthodoxy'. This is evidenced in the carry-over credibility and social affinity encodings that represented participants take to other issues. [43] Thus, I conclude that the field of media evaluation is 'the social', and not 'the theological', and that given a theological or other Christian discourse, it will be evaluated in terms of an available social approximation or perceived social outcome, while a church actor will be evaluated in the light of mediated theological orthodoxy.

Before answering the question I raised at the beginning of this section - 'Can the press be said to have been ideologically committed to women's ordination to the priesthood?' - the apparent inclinations towards 'progress' for women in relation to legislation, even given the moderating 'unity' discourse, strongest in 1992, need to be seen in the light of news values and the nature of news discourse. To this I will now turn.

Endnotes to Chapter 4:4

1. See Chapter Two and Appendix.

2. I simply took three texts from my corpus of newspaper articles; one each from 1987, 1989 and 1992, without regard as to whether it was a 'good' example.

3. Synodical government was established in N.S.W. during the 1860s. The Australian Anglican Church, in its present form, was established in the constitution of the General Synod in 1962. See John Davis, *Australian Anglicans and their Constitution*, (Canberra, Acorn Press, 1993); also Judd and Cable, *Sydney Anglicans*, pp 91ff.

4. The same preoccupation with 'firsts' may be found in the suburban or regional press, if the *Gosford Star* (Central Coast of N.S.W.), is any indication. This newspaper was quick to predict "Our first lady priest" at the time of the appointment of Jenny Wilsher (then a deacon) to Gosford Anglican Church in January 1992 (30.1.92).

5. See "First female deacon aiming for the priesthood", SMH 13.11.89.

6. See for example, SMH 10.11.89, 11.1.92. 9.3.92.

7. David Bebbington, *Patterns in History*, (Leicester, Intervarsity Press, 1989) p. 86 quoting Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History*, (London, 1931).

8. Ibid., p 84.

9. J.B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress*, (London, MacMillan, 1920). p.4 quoted in Bebbington, p.90.

10. David Wetherell, "The Uses of History in the Women's Ordination Debate" in David Wetherell (Ed) *Women Priests in Australia?* pp75-6).

11. Ibid., p 74.

12. Ibid.

13. Sturmey, Thesis, pp 265, 268, 281.

14. Porter, p 139.

15. Bebbington, p 84.

16. Cf brief mention in "Anglican head backs ordination of women" Age 22.8.89. See also SMH 22.8.89 which focuses on the discussion paper on sexuality received on the Friday by the synod. (See further discussion of news values in Chapter Five.) The agenda of the synod, however, allocated the primacy debate to the first day. Women's ordination was debated on Tuesday and Wednesday. Thursday saw debate over updating anachronistic church laws while Friday saw debate leading to the adoption of resolutions on apartheid, Palestine-Israel and AIDS, and discussion papers received and commended on Filipino marriages, sole parent families, remarriage, and sexuality. See *Southern Cross*, October 1989, pp 23-27 for comparison.

17. The Primate is elected by bishops from among themselves to be a focus for unity. The role does not carry additional authority, but is more akin to a 'first among equals' relation. The Primate acts as chairman of the General Synod. The former Primate of Australia was the Archbishop of Brisbane, Sir John Grindrod. The present Primate is the Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Keith Rayner.

18. For comparison see "General Synod '89" *Southern Cross*, October 1989 p23.

19. The Sydney/Melbourne theme is raised in other texts. See Interview with Patricia Brennan, *Bulletin*, 12.7.88 p 136; "Archbishop says no women priests" (feature) Sunday T 3.9.89. A Sydney/Melbourne paradigm could be seen to be implied by the juxtaposition of two texts, framed as one composite, in "Women priests 'only a matter of timing'" and "Robinson firm on women priests" SMH 13.10.87. The former focussed on Dr David Penman, Archbishop of Melbourne, the latter on Archbishop Donald Robinson of Sydney. See also "Battle over women priests looming" SMH 7.3.87 in which Dr Penman is the subject of the main text and Archbishop Robinson is the inset.

20. These texts were chosen at random.

21. The Rev Bruce Ballantine-Jones, the Rev Robert Forsyth, female participants of the group "Equal but Different".

22. See for example, "Church to ordain 82 women" Aust 23.11.92.

23. See for example "Women priests debate harms church: Primate" Aust 7.7.92.

24. It is interesting that Mr Christmas' initiative was evaluated as being credible in relation to 'unity'. It has been noted already that a previous group established by him and Mrs Rosemary Christmas to promote discussion of theological issues from an evangelical perspective did not receive recognition in the metropolitan press, only the suburban press. See Chapter 4.2, endnote 53.

25. See for example, "Rebel priest plans to open new church" DT 15.2.89.

26. See further discussion of this text in Chapter 3.2. See also "Critical for Church to accept differences, warns Primate" SMH 7.9.92.

27. See Harris et.al., 10/91 Ordination to the Priesthood, Paragraph 124.

28. See "Penman 'appalled' at synod decision" Age 27.8.87.

29. See Harris et.al., 10/91 Ordination of Women to the Priesthood, paragraph 124.

30. Ibid., Paragraph 146. See also D.W.B. Robinson, *Ordination, Its Meaning, Value and Theology: A Report to the Sydney Diocesan Synod*, 1981, pp 11-12. Cf. John Wilson, "Christian Equality and Liberty"in Nichols (Ed) *The Bible and Women's Ministry*. See also "Anglican woman parish priest" Aust 1.1.92.

31. See also "Women to be priests" DT 23.8.89.

32. This is inaccurate. A significant number of theologically trained women, whether ordained as deacons or not, are licensed to preach within their parish or throughout the diocese.

33. For example, "Our first female deacons ordained" SMH 13.2.89.

34. See Janne Whitehead, "On wings of peace" in Field (ed), *Fit For This Office*, pp 38-50.

35. See "Women's role in the church central to Archdeacon's mission" SMH 2.4.94. Dianne Nicolios was the first woman to be made an archdeacon in the Diocese of Sydney. In this text it was so positively evaluated that in the headline, "women's role in the church" became the core of the new "Archdeacon's mission". Thus, Archdeacon Nicolios' mediated ministry, the promotion of women's ministry and employment for them - the social face of her ministry - is given a position of high salience. The 'spiritual' is mentioned briefly and far less saliently in the middle of the text.

36. See Age 25.8.87; SMH 25.8.87; note absence from DT and Aust. The absence could be interpreted as a protection of 'clericalism'.

37. See "Applause and objection as 12 women ordained" Aust 14.12.92; "Our first women deacons ordained" SMH 13.2.89; "Touched by the spirit of equality" Aust 13.2.89;

38. See Chapter 3.2 and 3.3's evaluation of photographs depicting women. See also "The invisible bar: how women lawyers are kept out in the cold" SMH 28.11.92. Note "Victory in church row" DTM 29.1.92 framed with "Women to fight in front line" and "Unlikely militants celebrate liberation" Aust 9.3.92 for links with the secular women's movement/advancement into male areas of work.

39. But see "Women lose vote on the priesthood" DT 26.8.87. Also "Touched by the spirit of equality", Aust 13.2.89 and "Husband and wife team make religion a family affair" Aust 23.5.89. The latter text gives high credibility to the hope of the Milne's of having a joint ministry and evaluates this hope in the lead as a discourse of equality:

"Equality begins at home for the Milnes, but they want to take it a step further and spread it to the church - by sharing a joint ministry."

40. If this is the case, then it will be interesting to look back in years to come to consider whether, as Olive Banks suggests of the equal rights tradition itself (p 243):
"(its) emphasis on formal (legislative) equality is based on an overoptimistic assumption about the power of legislation to effect changes in society."

41. In the "Ravenswood debate", during October-November 1992 a major reference point in the evaluation of church actors in one text appears to have been their view on women's ordination to the priesthood. Consider the description of the Rev Boak Jobbins:
"But businessmen were not Miss Dixon's only problem. By this time another group were coalescing around St Swithun's Pymble whose rector, until he is installed as Dean of Sydney in December, is the Rev Boak Jobbins ...
"He (Neil Cameron) like Mr Jobbins, is a strong opponent of women's ordination as is his wife, Mrs Marcia Cameron, a Ravenswood mother and the leader of the Ravenswood Mothers' Prayer Group ..." ("The head that rolled" SMH 31.10.92)
In this *Sydney Morning Herald* feature article, opposition to women's ordination to the priesthood has been evaluated as one characteristic of persons who constituted a 'problem'; an evaluation that discourages social affinity.

42. Whether the propositional content of the Christian gospel and related doctrines have always been absent from media evaluation in Australian news discourse would be an interesting question for research.

43. The extent to which it has also become a mark of 'orthodoxy' (minus theological reasoning) amongst church attenders may suggest the degree to which they have become dependent upon the press and the media generally - rather than the pulpit - for their perceptions of what is central to their beliefs and Christian mission.

Peter Horsfield suggests that the media provide alternative rituals such as consumption patterns, social identifications and shared myths, adding: "While the mass media or most people would not see themselves as providing such a religious substitute, in the syncretistic way in which people today put together their own religious beliefs and lifestyle, the use of mass media and the ideology of mass media is becoming a major component of people's belief systems, even for committed Christians." Peter Horsfield, "Days of Our Lives: Media and Families", Occasional Paper No 5, p 14.

Chapter 5

News structuring discourse

In Chapters Two and Three I identified trends in the evaluation of represented participants in the women's ordination debate. There it was noted that persons in favour of ordination to the priesthood for women were generally evaluated in news texts as more highly credible than those opposed. Verbal constructions of social behaviour were recognised as reflecting modal-like categories: 'uniqueness', 'ability' and 'inclination' and thus of evaluations of 'truth' and 'ethics'. However, it was recognised that some of these evaluations may relate more to criteria of newsworthiness than to ideological evaluations. Similarly, it was recognised that some of the evaluations in photographs may not be identical with an ideological commitment to women's ordination.

In Chapter Four I identified the discourses constructed in news texts for the period 1987-92. In this section I will point to the characteristics of news discourse itself, as opposed to the particular issues within the women's ordination debate. I will suggest that before it is possible to determine whether one can speak of 'ordination by media' one must take account of the degree to which all news is selected and structured by a common set of values. I will now address these issues.

News journalists tend to perceive themselves as impartially reporting 'the facts'. They see as their goal, a fair telling of 'each side' of 'the story'. However, unconscious ideas and beliefs shape the selection and transformation of news. [1] The Glasgow Media group and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies have both challenged the 'impartiality' claim. [2] News itself is a discourse, intervening in the "social construction of reality". [3] What events are reported does not reflect their intrinsic importance, but rather, the existence of a "complex and artificial set of criteria" shaping choice. This is referred to as 'selection'.

The events are then subject to a process of 'transformation' as they are encoded using the "technical properties" of the medium. In the case of the press, this includes photography and the writing of news according to various stylistic requirements or conventions. The outcome, according to Berger and Luckmann is the "social construction of reality" which is far from neutral and carries assumptions about how society functions and reflects the commercial self-interest of the news industry. [4]

News is then a representation, not a value-free reflection of 'facts'. Because it is a representation, it is important to analyse the language resources used, seeing them as a product of choice. The subtleties of the linguistic features reveal something of the ideology behind the news texts and the practices that produce the texts. [5] As Fowler points out, real events are not intrinsically newsworthy. They only become so in the light of selection according to news values, and selection by its nature produces only a partial view of reality. All representation of news proceeds from a news value base, part of a larger ideological base that underlies the writer's thinking, says Fowler. [6]

Let us consider the features of the artificial set of criteria that shape news selection : news values. These news values serve a gatekeeping function, filtering and restricting what is selected.[7] The more criteria an event satisfies, the greater its chance of becoming news.

Johann Galtung and Mari Ruge identified a list of these criteria, which will now be outlined and related to features of the field of Christianity-church-theology. [8]

The first is "frequency", or 'recency' as Bell prefers. [9] This suggests that an event is more likely to be reported if its period of occurrence matches the publication frequency of the news medium. Thus, one would expect a single church event, such as a book launch or a visit by an overseas priest, to rate as more newsworthy on this factor for the daily metropolitan press, than a long process, such as the debate over women's ordination. It is not surprising therefore, that single events such as these are the hooks on which the extended ordination debate is hung in the press. This may also help to explain the interest in synods, because they rarely extend for more than a week. Conferences of the Movement for the Ordination of Women were of shorter duration, still.

Second is "threshold", or 'superlativeness' in Bell's terminology.[10] This refers to numbers: the scale of an event or the numbers of persons affected. In the women's ordination debate, the attention to numbers in the reporting of the march that occurred in Goulburn in February 1992, in protest at the legal action that prevented Bishop Owen Dowling from ordaining 11 women, may have qualified as newsworthy in part in terms of this criterion. In contrast, some of the distance encoded towards Equal But Different's view may relate to the '200' signatures gathered when 1000 may have been more newsworthy.

Third is "unambiguity". It is important to note that what may be constructed as unambiguous may

disguise a complex discursive reality. This has been my finding in relation to the reporting of the

ordination debate. Not only has the 'for' and 'against' paradigm displaced a complex theological

debate across three traditions of Anglicanism, but it has also disguised in the phrase 'the women

and their supporters' at least three traditions of feminism that have competing meanings.

Fourth is "meaningfulness". This embraces "cultural proximity" and "relevance". Regarding

"cultural proximity" one notes that Church of England (UK) news was constructed as meaningful

to the Australian debate. However, it has been noted that this meaningfulness may have been

overstated given that the Anglican Church in Australia and the Church of England (UK) are

independent members of the Anglican Communion.

"Relevance" relates to existing paradigms or meanings. In the case of women's ordination it could

be asked whether the Sydney/Melbourne theme in Australian social history facilitated its

'relevance', at least up until the end of 1989, when, with the death of Archbishop David Penman,

and thus the loss of a media actor, it was a less compatible social paradigm. Bell prefers 'proximity'

in geographical terms, to Galtung and Ruge's cultural perspective. One certainly sees geographical

closeness implicit in selection of news participants, particularly in *The Age's* coverage of the

ordination issue. This is notably less the case for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which, as analysis

indicated, preferred non-Sydney participants in its 1989 coverage in particular.

Fifth is "consonance". This encompasses people's expectation that something will happen and their

desire that it should happen. Schank and Abelson developed the concept of 'script' to explain this.[11]

They suggest that people have a mental script for how certain kinds of events proceed. The events then continue to be interpreted in terms of the script, even when they deviate from it.

This was evident on a number of occasions in the ordination debate. Consider one text that recorded the ordination of women to the diaconate in the Diocese of Sydney in February 1989. This text "Touched by the spirit of equality" (Aust 13.2.89) is one to which I have drawn attention already in relation to visual construction. At this point I draw attention to the 'last word' in the voice of the journalist which by implication constructs the Rev Narelle Jarrett as favouring the ordination of women to the priesthood. In that press interview, Ms Jarrett did not indicate that view. Her view was made consonant with a media progress discourse. The power of the script may have been a factor that contributed to the non-coverage of the collation of the Rev Dianne Nicolios as the first female Archdeacon in the Diocese of Sydney, and only the second in Australia. This was the case in spite of the issuing of a press release. [12] Seemingly, once an actor, the Diocese of Sydney, was scripted as an antagonist of 'progress for women', it was incomprehensible that it could then become a protagonist.

Sixth is "unexpectedness". The combination of 'unusuality' and 'without warning' shapes the meeting of this criterion. This may explain, for example, the inordinate interest of the press in the massacre of missionaries, as compared with their relative absence from press reporting otherwise.[13] The death of significant players in the women's ordination debate, such as Archbishop Penman and the Rev Dr John Gaden (evaluated as a contender as Dr Penman's replacement in the Diocese of Melbourne) undoubtedly qualified on this news value.

Seventh is 'continuity'. Once defined as news then something continues as news for a long time. Regarding the press reporting of the General Synod 1989 I drew attention to the press' focus on the ordination of women, rather than the full agenda of the synod. The debate occurred on the Tuesday and Wednesday, but seemingly extended into the Thursday because of the protest march of M.O.W. supporters into the synod chamber at the beginning of that day's session. Thus, with the 'preliminary' press articles that notified that the synod would meet in the week beginning 21 August 1989, and the reporting of the M.O.W. "invasion" as the *Sydney Morning Herald* put it, the mediated debate implied that the synod was concerned with the women's ordination issue from the Sunday until the Thursday, inclusively. The Sydney based newspapers gave little or no recognition to the primacy debate in news texts. Time sequence was also different. [14] While these might be deemed minor points, the implied emphasis of the synod on women's ordination may have served to add credibility to the issue.

'Composition', the eighth criterion, notes that something may not rate as newsworthy because of an imbalance in news for that day. This may be relevant to a suggestion made by Sturmey, and noted earlier, that the women's ordination issue filled a gap in feminist role modelling and therefore in the field of feminism in press reporting.

Ninth is "reference to elite (western) nations". One might ask whether part of the attraction of the ecumenical-unity discourse is its international character. The discourse stresses the historical connection - and seeks a renewal of closer links - between the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches, and the Anglican Church, and in mediated form draws attention in particular to the Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury. It is interesting that this discourse has been

expressed in terms of 'reunification' of the churches.[15] One might ask whether this is a case of a social history paradigm (as in political reunification amongst European nations) being recycled as a means of interpreting the social face of a theological discourse.

"Reference to elite persons" is tenth. The quality of attribution, says Bell, can be critical to the fate of a story. The prominence of bishops and the seemingly equivalent recognition given to spokespersons of the Movement for the Ordination of Women, especially until 1989, and then to selected women deacons, could be seen to demonstrate this news value. So too, the visual contextualisation of these actors as clerical or equivalent-to-clerical. The impact of this elite/clerical equivalence, arguably, if my suggestion of the recycling function of the media is accepted, is the affirmation of the assumption that 'church' equals 'clergy'.

Analysis of texts revealed also a paradox in the treatment of bishops and clergy as news actors. I have argued that it is their clerical status that qualifies them as elite and thus gains coverage. Yet, in the construction of headlines, clergy are infrequently in active voice. Moreover, it has been shown that they were deleted as agents of ordination in headlines and in photographs in a number of texts. They are 'elite' yet marginalised in the social construction of reality in the press.

"Reference to persons", the eleventh criterion, is noted by Fowler as being most strikingly evident in the popular press. Fowler says of personalisation: "the obsession with persons, and the media's use of them as symbols, avoids serious discussion and explanation of underlying social and economic factors".[16]

To this, on the basis of my findings, one could add, "and theological factors". Particularly noteworthy is the finding that pro-ordination participants (male or female) were more frequently selected as participants in verbal texts, and depicted more frequently in photographs. The existence of women opposed to the ordination of women was neglected in verbal text and photographs until 1992. Focus on the social face of theological views negated any need to discuss underlying theological issues to do with biblical exegesis or hermeneutics.

Finally, there is negativity. Bad news is more newsworthy than good news, as the Glasgow University Media Group have noted through their research. [17] Regarding women's ordination to the priesthood, the 'bad news' was often disunity, strongest in the samples studied in 1987, and especially 1992 (media unity discourse). The most extreme 'bad news' construction was the prospect of a breakaway 'sect' - a failure to act constitutionally - a 'deviance' construction. However, the 'failure' of legislation to be passed in the synod, and the prevention of Bishop Owen Dowling from proceeding with the intended ordinations, was also 'bad news', as compared with the prospect of a 'priestess' (progress for women discourse) as a bad news construction in 1987. Both media discourses had their 'bad news' faces. However, greater prominence in headlines of the disunity theme implies the existence of an ideological perspective committed to unified change.

Bell links 'continuity' and 'composition' with four other factors involved in news gathering and processing. 'Competition' is the flip side of 'composition'. Together they point to the very relative nature of 'newsworthiness'. Today's headline may tomorrow be consigned to the circular file.

'Co-option', results in a tangentially related story being drawn into the saga of a high profile story. Thus, Bishop Dowling's marriage to Ms Gloria Goodman became 'news' in the light of the women's ordination issue.

Bell's notion of the 'predictability' of an event, I suggest, is related to 'frequency'. If the timing of an event is mindful of news deadlines then it has a greater chance of coverage, and vice versa, as may have been the case in relation to the evening collation ceremony of Dianne Nicolios as Archdeacon.

Finally, one comes to Bell's concept of 'prefabrication', the existence of ready-made news. This may be evident in the seemingly uncritical reporting by the *Daily Telegraph* of M.O.W. perspectives. However, this hypothesis would require a comparison of M.O.W. news releases with news articles, before such a conclusion could be drawn with confidence.

Fowler argues that behind a number of the Galtung and Ruge identified values is an ideology of "homocentrism", a preoccupation with countries, societies, persons like oneself. This presupposes a consensual model of society and assumes that society has shared interests without variation:

"In the press, this ideology is the source of the consensual 'we' pronoun which is used often in editorials that claim to speak for 'the people'. How 'we' are supposed to behave is exemplified by the regular news reports of stories which illustrate such qualities as fortitude, patriotism, sentiment, industry. But although consensus sounds like a liberal, humane and generous theory of social action and attitudes, in practice it breeds divisive and alienating attitudes, a dichotomous version of 'us' and 'them'".[18]

More recently, however, the dominant media discourses have been identified as constructing 'the social' (as compared with 'the political'), emphasising the personal, consumerist dimensions of public life.[19]

In the course of analysis I noted the occasional overt use of the personal pronoun "our" in relation to women deacons. However, a consensus on women's ordination to the priesthood is constructed by a range of other more subtle strategies that position the reader towards protagonists and against antagonists as defined in relation to the prevailing media discourse, be it progress or unity.

Fowler notes other conventions that affect the content and presentation of news which are compatible with the additional categories assessed by Bell. Production schedules and procedures for accessing sources determine when and where a journalist goes to 'find' news. These tend to favour official sources or persons with public relations resources. Fowler, referring to the research of the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies and the Glasgow University Media Group, analyses this in terms of "official authority and/or financial power".[20]

However, it may be important to see power more in terms of the creative pre-packaging of meanings to meet the demands of news discourse, which may be welcomed, or cynically resisted, by the news 'gatherers'. Official authority and financial power do not ensure coverage. [21]

Hartley conceptualises who or what is a source for news in terms of "access". Thus there are "accessed voices" and "unaccessed voices" in which access is a "reciprocal relationship between such people and the media". [22] Fowler interprets this as a confirmation of imbalance between the privileged (accessed voice) and the underprivileged (unaccessed voice) with the "views of the powerful and the rich being constantly invoked to legitimate the status quo".[23]

The women's ordination debate suggests, however, that access is not always congruent with institutional recognition or status, and indeed, that the media have a role in creating/affirming new elite voices and marginalising old ones. Indeed, it can be argued that coverage does confer status, for as Bell argued, "exposure as a news source reinforces the source's authority as well as reflecting it".[24] The virtual absence of Diocese of Sydney clerical actors from 1989 texts, apart from Archbishop Donald Robinson, may suggest a marginalisation process. However, from a public relations perspective, low credibility (absence of viewpoint) on a particular issue may be preferable to constant high credibility but with negative evaluation.

One very practical factor in access, may be whether a viewpoint is able to provide interesting visuals to enhance the prospect of a story reaching 'front page'. The degree to which a participant holds to a sacramental view of the priesthood, endorses the wearing of robes, and is prepared to be photographed in a liturgical context, may influence the newsworthiness of that person's viewpoint. Indeed, that the priesthood was 'defined' in sacramental terms time and time again in photographs, may at least in part be because the Sacramental and Broad Church traditions provided better 'photo opportunities' and perhaps enhance newspaper saleability.

Indeed, another perspective is brought by Fowler to the understanding of the structuring qualities of news discourse. He draws attention to newspaper publication as an industry which, like any other, operates with regard for the profit motive, relationships with employees and other industries, and in terms of government regulations, to mention a few of the more obvious relationships.[25] Fowler argues, therefore, that newspapers have an industrial outlook. Consequently, it is important to note that a readership can be viewed as a saleable product to advertising agencies:

"There is the question of course of what exactly is the product: arguably the product is not news or newspapers (though both are clearly made), but rather readers - the profit, if any, coming from advertising revenue - or even votes, if the aim of the owners of newspapers is to maintain a government which will favour their other commercial ventures."[26]

Hence the consumerist, lifestyle emphasis of news and the preoccupation with 'the social'.

While the criteria via which journalists select participants and construct news stories are mostly

unconsciously employed, this does not negate the reality of the readership as a market, the impact

of which, even implicitly or perhaps in the form of occasional self-censorship, must interact with

the editorial side of the industry at some point:

"We (also) know that different newspapers report differently in both content and presentation ... selection is accompanied by transformation, differential treatment in presentation according to numerous political, economic and social factors."[27]

The result is that, whether intentionally or unconsciously on the part of the journalist, readers are

positioned by the text to respond to its content in particular ways.

Thus, if on the one hand, features of the media coverage of this debate, particularly in the case of

the *Sydney Morning Herald* during 1989, suggest a commitment to the cause of women's

ordination, at least part of this 'commitment' may simply be a commitment to news values which

produce a saleable product (both the newspaper and its readers). The advocacy of women's

ordination may then be just one issue that satisfied a number of news values and 'made good copy'.

Yet ultimately, one must ask who is responsible for the values promulgated by the media, even if

they are pragmatic, rather than idealistic in derivation.

I will next endeavour to draw together the threads of my analysis and answer the question as to

whether one can speak of 'ordination by media'.

Endnotes to Chapter 5

1. See for example Allan Bell, *The Language of the News Media*.

2. Fowler, p 2.

3. Ibid., quoting P Berger and T Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1976).

4. Fowler, p 2.

5. Ibid., pp 4-5.

6. Ibid., pp 1-2; 11-12.

7. Ibid., p 13.

8. See Johann Galtung and Mari Ruge, "Structuring and Selecting News" in S Cohen and J Young (eds), *The Manufacture of News: Social Problems, Deviance and the Mass Media* (London, Constable, 1973), pp62-72, referred to in Fowler, pp13-17.

9. Allan Bell, p 155.

10. Ibid., p 157.

11. Roger C. Schank and Robert A Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding*, (Hillsdale, New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum 1977) cited in Bell, p 157.

12. See Anglican Media, Diocese of Sydney, media release, "First female archdeacon welcomed", 13 December 1993.

13. See for example, the death of Jackie Hammill, of the Westside Christian City Church, Sydney, in the Philippines in August 1989. Note "A martyr shows the way" *New Idea*, 2.12.89, a follow up to press reporting.

14. Cf *The Age* and *The Canberra Times*. See also "Call to accept gays splits Anglicans" SMH 22.8.89. which mentioned issues other than women's ordination that would have the attention of the synod. However this previewed, rather than reported on a synod report to be considered four days later.

15. See for example, "Pope and archbishop differ on reunification of churches" Age 2.10.89.

16. Fowler, p 16.

17. Glasgow University Media Group., *Bad News*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976); *More Bad News*, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).

18. Fowler p 16 citing S Hall, "A World at One with Itself", *New Society*, 18 June 1970, pp 1056-8; S Hall, "The Social Production of News", pp 55-7; J Hartley, *Understanding News*, pp 81-6).

19. See Philip Bell, "Drugs and the Media", *Australian Alcohol/Drug Review* 1985, 4, pp 235-242.

20. Fowler, p 22.

21. Cf "*Show* of unity as Anglican and Catholic women meet" (SMH 21.8.89) which may encode some resistance to a pre-packaged 'media friendly' evaluation, even though conference participants were otherwise evaluated as credible.

22. Hartley, referred to in Fowler p 22.

23. Fowler, p 22.

24. Allan Bell, p 192.

25. Fowler p 20.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., p 11.

Conclusion

Ordination by media?

Do the findings from my analysis of the verbal and visual components of texts - both the 'personality credibility' and 'social affinity' encodings and the evaluation of the meanings in the debate - support the concept of 'ordination by media'? In answer to this question a number of points must be made.

Newspaper editors control modality in the press debate, and it is in the light of the values of their craft that the 'personality credibility' evaluations outlined in Chapter Two must primarily be understood. Those represented participants evaluated as most highly credible were those generally in favour of women's ordination. Elected M.O.W. leaders, visiting female priests and female deacons, and their male episcopal-clerical supporters satisfied the demand for 'the new' (modal value of uniqueness), for conflict (modal value of resolve) and for 'elite actors' (modal value of ability). Women's ordination satisfied news values and made for 'good story' material.

It is in the light of the characteristics of news discourse that the credibility of participants advocating what I have called 'unity' meanings must also be seen. In 'the social' their meanings were compatible, but not identical in essence or motivation, with the economic self interest of the newspaper industry. Thus, the consensus band within which debate is constructed as

legitimate has as much or as little to do with the theological, and even feminist meanings, involved and as much to do with the promotion of a unified stable society, and thus industrial stability, and an inclusiveness oriented to market expansion, and thus economic prosperity. That is, an ideologically narrow social consensus, but with market appeal in the breadth of issues it addresses.

In Chapter Four it was argued that one of the 'media discourses' in the press debate is that of 'progress', another being legislative-democratic discourse, by which the former is measured. It was also pointed out in discussion of the mediation of theological discourses that the site of press evaluation of meaning is 'the social'. Because women's ordination to the priesthood satisfies the criterion of progress, achieved through (canon) law, and worked out in 'the social' (women's role in society), the meanings involved are predisposed to be constructed as credible in the press.

My analysis has shown that the ideological 'consensus band' in relation to theological-ecclesiastical news is one that is inclusive of theologies that stress 'the social' and progress within 'the social', and of feminisms that stress the achievement of equality through legislative means but with different gender expressions of that equal status (the latter perhaps coinciding with a gender specificity in advertising). 'Social affinity' encodings need to be understood as evaluations of 'like-mindedness' between represented participants and this underlying ideology projected onto the readers whom the newspapers assume will read their pages.

The complexities of meanings within the theological traditions involved in this debate, and the competing nature of some of those meanings between traditions, have not been recognised in press evaluation. Similarly, the complexities of the contributing feminist traditions, with both competing and similar meanings between those traditions in relation to gender and equality, have gone largely unrecognised in the press.

Meanings have been instead, refracted through a 'social progress - equal rights' lens. This is one that reflects basic values of the Enlightenment, which constructs 'mediated theological orthodoxy', and which is itself largely orthodox within the contemporary media, but with some individual differences between newspapers.

It is in this sense that one can speak of an implicit ideological predisposition, rather than a conscious commitment to women's ordination, and thus of 'ordination by media'.

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