

Trinitarian Love and Male-Female Community

Robert T. Sears, S.J.

If humans are made in the image of God, how we view God will make a difference for how we view human life. This article examines the implications for human community as male and female of seeing God as a triune community of self-giving love. It presupposes that we grow by stages into the full image of God's love, and that male-female relationships have similar patterns of growth. The fullness of God's love is revealed in Jesus and the Spirit to be freeing, other-empowering and overflowing. It reaches out to those who are outcasts to bring them into equal community as contributing members. Similarly, male-female relationships need to move through one-sided subordination to mutual empowerment and co-creativity. Principles are then worked out from this view to deal with several cases: male headship, mutual subordination, separation, celibate friendships, and growth within relationships.

In my article in this Journal on "Healing and Family Spiritual/Emotional Systems" (vol. 5, no. 1) I introduced a model of spiritual growth based on a view of Trinity as a community of self-giving love. I argued there that spiritual growth is a process of assimilation into the likeness of divine self-giving love which involves different stages: trust, law, individuating faith, individuated community, and mission. These stages are seen in Israel's history of gradually emerging understanding of Yahweh and they culminate in Jesus' understanding of the Father (I-Thou) and the Pentecostal sending of the Spirit (We). Each individual experiences these stages in his or her own life history, as does each community. It is the contention of this article that male-female relationships pass through similar stages--from trust and emphasis on roles (husband/wife, etc.) through

often disorientating individual self-discovery, to a call for recommitment and more free and creative living. I intend to draw out the implications of viewing God as a community of trinitarian love for interpreting Scripture regarding male-female relationships and for its application to the marriage relationship.

THEOLOGICAL AND SCRIPTURAL PRESUPPOSITIONS

As individuals or communities grow or regress spiritually, their views of God will change, which in turn will alter their view of Christian life. Today, people are increasingly aware of the possibility of growth in freedom and free participation in community and of our responsibility to contribute to world transformation and liberation. This has led theo-

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logians to see God as intimately involved in the process of liberation,¹ and as I have argued, as a community of liberating love.

For us to become transformed in God's image, I am convinced, the area in most need of transformation is male-female relationships. The roots of male-female relationships are all-embracing, fundamental and unconscious. Therefore, inequality in male-female relationships gives rise to oppression in every other aspect of human existence. Yet, how are we to understand God's plan for such relationships? If we are called to become community in the likeness of God's triune love then certain principles drawn from the nature of God will guide our understanding of the ultimate scriptural norms for male-female relationships.

1. *Trinitarian history is the horizon for understanding church and*

male-female community. Christian community is a mystery that can be interpreted in various ways: through psychology, sociology, Christology, the Holy Spirit. Trinity, on the other hand, has often seemed highly speculative and removed from real life. Recent theology has moved to correct this view. It sees church as ultimately grounded in God's personal self-communication and as intended to transform us into the image of God.² If Christian community is intended to embody God's self-revelation, however, it can be critiqued on the basis of how well it lives out this goal. God's love revealed in Jesus and the Spirit will be the norm for understanding the church and male-female relationships that compose it.

If fully accepted, this principle would have far-reaching effects for our understanding of what is permanent in the church and scripture (Tradition with the capital T), and what is relative to any particular age and hence reformable traditions.³ If God is seen as ultimate ground, what would be permanent is what is grounded in God's Trinitarian self-revelation. Christ as sole mediator would be final norm, and the Holy Spirit as instrument of unity in the church and world would be life-giving principle. All else could then be seen as relative to the changing circumstances in which revelation occurs. The final norm of male-female relationships would then be God's self-surrendering love. . . .

2. *The "sendings" of Christ and the Spirit are the way to understand God as triune love.* If no one knows the Father but the Son and whoever the Son reveals Him to (Mt 11:27) and the Son reveals the Father in His very life (Jn 14:9), then our only way to understand God is through the "sending" of the Son into the world (Jn 3:17, etc.) and the Son's free submission to the Father (Jn 10:18; 14:30-31). This reveals God's very being as interpersonal, an on-going relationship of sending and response. The

necessary interpersonal nature of human male-female relationships appears in this light as an analogous reflection of God. Not that sexual differences are in God for God grounds both female (see Is 49:15 etc.) and male aspects yet transcends both. Rather, as the Father is Father only in relationship to the Son and the Son is free submission, so men and women can only be who they are in free relationship to God and each other.⁴

Further, we can understand Jesus as Lord (1 Cor 12:3) and our oneness with the body of Christ only through the Spirit who is "sent" into our hearts (Gal 4:4-6) and into the church. The Spirit embodied in the gifts of the community adds a dimension of unity and creativity to the interpersonality of our understanding of God. As the Father's love empowered and freed Jesus to respond, and Jesus' submission freed Him into the universal expanse of the Father's love releasing the creative Spirit of love into the world, so each Christian is called to a similar empowering submission. Male-female relationships are intimately involved in this process. Such free mutual submission reveals and creates under God a community of self-giving love.⁵

3. *The "union" of the triune God is on-going "unification."* When we look at the unity of God from the perspective of Jesus' life, we see God as reaching out to the "other"—the oppressed, the non-Jew, women. God is revealed not so much as self-contained unity, but as overflowing, other-empowering unification with all that this implies for the church's embodying God's love. Divine unification is not just outer oriented for it opens God's own inner being to those who believe. Each human relationship deepens and broadens the heart of Christ as it reaches out to the other. One theologian views Eucharist in this light as "open invitation" for it was the way Christ lived in his own ministry.⁶ Seen in this light, male-female relationships would be called to an ever greater indwelling as well as ever greater outreach.

4. *Future glorification is guide for the church today.* Finally, if church

and community are seen in light of the "history" of God's self-revelation, it is not just rooted in the "sending" of Jesus and the -Spirit, but also looks forward to their glorification as its end. This "glory" is the-full revelation of God's self-giving love, first seen in Jesus' cross/resurrection (Jn 17: If), then calling us from beyond in the church. Since Christian community is always in process toward this glory, the norm for the church can never simply be what has been. It can only be the "new creation" when every tear will be wiped away and the "liberation" of God's children will be complete.

This principle implies that future goodness and possibility is an important criterion for theology and spirituality right now. We are now "risen" with Christ (Col 3:1, etc.) so we are to grow into that risen life. What brings spiritual joy and liberation thus appears as a criterion for what God intends. Right theology is "good news" not just "good advice." That would mean that the dreams we have for a liberated hu-

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manity have theological import as anticipations of the "glory to come," even though the cross is also an on-going part of that liberating process. Male-female relationships will be expected to bring both crucifixion and the joy of ecstatic community.

In sum, God's love has a committed beginning and an ever open future. It is faithful to roots (Tradition) while open to the new: it is not just expansion to the other but deepening interiorization of union (total self-giving love); it is not just separated groupings but a progressive deepening and widening of free fidelity and ever fuller inclusiveness of union. God's freedom implies fidelity—unconditionally committed love that is liberating for a new future.

APPLICATION TO MALE-FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS

I I have argued that we grow into

God's self-transcending love through cumulative stages of trust, socialization, and beyond these to individuating, communitarian and mission faith (see vol. 5, #1). In this view, God as triune is progressively revealed in our history through individuating spiritual experience (I), mutually freeing relationships (I-Thou) and mission oriented community (We). It is especially in moving through individuation to freeing community and mission in God's image that male-female relationships are put in a new light, and call us to move beyond one-sided subordination to mutual subordination and creative equality.⁷

But what does it mean to be male or female? This question is fraught with complexity. Are we to distinguish male from female as focused consciousness and diffuse consciousness (as Irene de Castillejo, *Knowing Woman*), or link female with nature and male with intentional reflexive consciousness (as Amaury de Rien-court, *Sex and Power in History* [Delta, 1974]), or link male with the conquest of "outer space" and "female" with "inner productive space" (as Erikson⁸)? Whatever criterion one uses (besides the biological one of bearing children) one finds exceptions—industrious women and nurturing men, etc. As Jung found there are masculine and feminine elements in both men and women. There is no clear way that I have found to theologially determine what is due to the socialization process and what to essential differences. Because of this complexity I have found only two secure principles, yet these two are adequate for my argument: (1) that male and female are different not just biologically but in every aspect of their being; and (2) that they can discover their differences (and unity) only through on-going interrelationship.⁹

My first principle affirms sexual difference. This difference is not simply the result of a fall from androgyny so that at base each individual is both masculine and feminine (as Plato and some theologians like Berdyaev thought¹⁰). It is not simply biological and limited to marriage (as

most theologians have interpreted Gen. 1 and 2). It is a transcendent difference that will remain even in heaven and affects every aspect of human existence. Scripture affirms the difference as God-created (Gen 1:27) and by putting the command to reproduce later (Gen 1:28) the writer frees God from the implications of sexual reproduction,¹¹ and he also frees male-female differences from the limits of mere biology. Two NT passages that might be thought to indicate a passing away of sexual differences in heaven—Mk 12:25 ("no marriage in heaven") and 1 Cor 7:25-35 ("marriage will pass away")—do not say "no women" but "no marriage."¹² The saints, Mary, and Jesus Christ retain their sexual distinctiveness in heaven as presumably we all will, and the divine community will be the ground of all (see 1 Cor 15:28).

Secondly, however, sexual differences are not simply "given." They unfold through on-going interaction. Male and female are correlative realities; each is developed and understood in light of the other. Here modern psychology, especially that of Jung, has discovered the male-female aspects of every human person, but these aspects are discoverable only through actual relationships between men and women.¹³ There seems to be no reason to limit this interaction to this life (where we can ground it empirically) since heavenly existence is also communal, involving union with Christ and the saints in the communal love of God, and love itself "never ends" (1 Cor 13:13). In short, to be fully human implies the interaction of male and female in a co-creating of life, an image of our divine source where the on-going relatedness of the Son reveals the Father and releases their Spirit of love.

These two principles and my communal understanding of Trinity lead me to the following five theses concerning their interrelationship.

Thesis 1: Humanity as "male and female" is said to be "image of God" (Gen 1:27) not biologically but inter-

personally, which implies complementary equality in every aspect of human existence.

Because of the relative newness of this position I put it forth tentatively as an interpretation of Scripture, but with more assurance as theologically well-grounded. Karl Barth was first to develop it in detail.¹⁴ Human being is "being-in-fellowship." Since Christian revelation reveals God as no solitary being but triune, we now see most deeply why humans also are not meant "to be alone" but in partnership. Barth takes Gen. 1:26 "Let us" as anticipating the Trinity

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in some mysterious way. And though the plural subject likely refers to "divine beings" (the *elohim*)¹⁵ the writer includes Yahweh in that company (not alone). Further, human male and female are not interpreted from below (the sexuality of the animals) but from above (as revelation of God's being). If the Yahwist creation account (Gen 2:4b-25) is seen as complementing Gen. 1, then the fact that it is not good for man to be alone and that God made a partner "like him" gives further support for a relational understanding of male-female as involved in God's image.¹⁶

Thesis 2: The one-sided subordination of the sexes (man dominating woman, woman clinging to man—Gen 3:16) is the result of the Fall, not God's original intention, and hence is to be overcome in Christ's "new creation."

Relationship raises the question of "what sort?" Does Scripture imply a hierarchy of the sexes as God's image as both Paul and Barth thought? This thesis affirms that God's original intent was equality of the sexes and that

the *de facto* subordination of women that pervaded Jewish culture on into the NT is ultimately the effect of sin.¹⁷

In the first place, we note that subordination does not occur either in Gen 1 or in Gen 2, though Paul interprets Gen 2 in a subordinationist way (see 1 Cor 11:8-9; 14:34d; 1 Tim 2:11-15).¹⁸ The point of Genesis 2 is woman's likeness to man (as distinct from the animals) and their original open relationship (naked without shame). It is Genesis 3 that brings in subordination due to the loss of their loving and trusting relationship to God through disobedience. Not trusting God, they blame others (woman and the snake) and distort their own open relationship to one another. The dominating/clinging relationship is the natural result of this distrust and yields alienation and jealousy in children down through the generations.¹⁹ The text is not presenting an ideal but interpreting a *de facto* state that the author finds in his own day.

When Paul appeals to this text on principle in 1 Cor 11 to ground a hierarchy of the sexes, he seems to find himself on shaky ground. Now woman is made from man (v. 8), now man is through woman (v. 11), and ultimately he simply appeals to custom (v. 16), which is tradition with a small t, not permanent Tradition.²⁰ Woman's subordination is a social fact, which Paul thinks nature teaches (v. 14). His pastoral response may have been appropriate and liberating in his day in view of his culture (he shows a similar attitude toward slavery), but his weak theological grounding argues against making subordination a permanent universal principle.

Thesis 3: In His ministry Jesus treated women freely and equally in a way that was unprecedented in his culture.

Having taken Jesus' life/death/resurrection as ultimate norm for my view of God's love, I cannot simply affirm (as does Krister Stendahl²¹) that all of Jesus' statements about man-woman relationships fall within common Judaism of the first century.

As Jewett points out, Jesus never explicitly abrogated the way women were considered in Jewish custom and law, yet the way He related to women was nothing less than revolutionary.²² For instance, the Deuteronomist allowed a man to take for himself a beautiful captive of war (Dt 21:10f) whereas Jesus says whoever looks on a woman with lust has committed adultery with her (Mt 5:28). His own freedom from fear of woman's "seductions" enabled His openness with women. When Jewish leaders bring the adulterous woman (not the man!) to Jesus for judgment, he says "whoever is without sin cast the first stone" (Jn 7:53-8:11). A man as well as a woman who divorced and remarried committed adultery (Mt 19:31f). Women noticed Jesus' openness and a band of both married and single women followed Him - throughout Galilee, something Jeremias thought was "unprecedented ... in thy history of that time."²³ Quite contrary to custom, Jesus freely entered the house of two unmarried women, Mary and Martha (Lk 10:38-42), and He taught Mary despite the fact that all serious instruction in the Law was denied women. Further, this freedom with regard to the sinful woman was a scandal to Simon the Pharisee (Lk 7:36-50), and His openness with the Samaritan woman a surprise to His disciples (Jn 4:27). His openness and freedom with women was certainly extraordinary for his time.²⁴

Thesis 4: Jesus' new way of relating to women did not die with him, but affected the church's early ministry which included women.

If the Spirit in the church is also part of the ultimate norm of God's love, it is not, enough simply to show Jesus' openness to women. If permanent Tradition involves openness and equality in male-female relations, then there must be some sign of this openness in the foundational event of the early church, even though the limits of the culture of that time and the possible sinfulness of its members could prevent this initial breakthrough from being fully developed.

In fact, we do find in Paul, and more clearly in John, an initial openness to women in ministry reflecting Jesus' own. Thus Paul's insight that "in Christ there is no male and female" (Gal 3:28) began to have its effect even on that trained rabbi himself.²⁵ He greets women by name (unlike the rabbinic custom of referring to "the wife of...") (Rom 16:3,6,12,15). He addresses a group of women without men at Philippi (Acts 16:13) and stays at Lydia's house (16:15). He calls two other women at Philippi, Euodia and Syntyche, "fellow workers... in the spreading of the gospel" (Phil 4:2), and in Thessalonica and Berea

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"chief women" are among his converts (Acts 17:4, 12).

Even the strong position on 'headship' of men over women put forth in Eph 5:21-33 (see Col 3:18-4:1), which is clearly subordinationist, shows a move toward mutual submission that would ultimately imply equality.²⁶ In the first place, the writer, whether Paul or someone from his school, relates husband to wife as Christ to the church. That would make man savior of woman, which would be idolatry were it not grounded beyond man in Christ's universal headship. But if God's love, which alone saves, comes to woman through man, the reverse is also true. God's love through woman opens man to foundational trust and faith, and this foundation begun in childhood remains the foundation throughout life for community. What is common in both cases is kenotic, self-emptying love, the universal Christian principle revealed in Christ's "revolutionary subordination."²⁷ Thus, if women are to submit to their husbands, husbands are also to "sacrifice themselves" for their wives in imitation of, Christ (Eph 5:25).

The Fourth Gospel is particularly

relevant to the issue of women's equality. It relates Christian love to the revelation of God's love and includes women in carrying out this call. Thus, the disciples' love for one another is to be the sign of Jesus' love (Jn 13:35) just as his love sprang from the Father (Jn 15:9). They are "sent" even as Jesus is (Jn 20:21-23) and so their meaning (as we saw from the notion of Jesus' "sending") rests in God's love. And further, "through their word" they are to lead others to faith and love (Jn 17:20-21). Now this ministry to reveal God's love is given to all disciples in John including women.²⁸ The Samaritan woman brings others to Jesus "through her word" (Jn 4:42), Martha, not Peter as in the Synoptics, testifies that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of God" (Jn 11:27). Mary is first witness of the resurrection and is to tell the disciples, who presumably are to listen to her (Jn 20:17). And His mother is "woman" who gives birth to the new people under the cross (Jn 19:25-7). The love that Jesus gives is to be revealed in His disciples' love for and listening to one another—a continuing revelation of God's love.

Thesis 5: The de facto subordination of women found in the early church was conditioned by the culture of the time and the historical results of sin (tradition with a small t), and must be changed given our new historical circumstances.

This thesis simply draws out the implications of what has been said. If one-sided subordination is not grounded in God's self-revelation (Tradition as permanent) then how is it to be explained theologically? That the whole Judaeo-Graeco-Roman world of that day was overridingly patriarchal is by now abundantly clear.²⁹ That there was a larger role for women in ministry in the initial stages of the church than in later first century is also indicated.³⁰ There also seems to have been a tendency toward independent freedom in Paul's communities that needed the restraint of order.³¹ Revelation always interrelates with culture and the central message is affected by the readi-

ness of the recipients to respond. In a predominantly patriarchal culture, equal leadership by women and men would not have been prepared for and would be unacceptable in the long run. In affirming subordination of women (as of slaves to their masters!) Paul was affirming a kenotic love as he learned from Christ, but within the limitations of his cultural vision. He seems concerned to avoid anarchy or the misinterpretation of the gospel of freedom in an individualistic sense.³²

But if revelation is always for some particular age, then just as we no longer see slavery as a proper social order, so we are seeing our one-sided patriarchal culture—religious and secular—as an inadequate expression of the mutually respectful love revealed in Christ. What may have been allowable in Paul's time, and even have been liberating within the stage of development of his day, no longer reflects our awareness of each person's freedom and co-responsibility for the social order. If true Tradition is to be maintained, traditions must be purified of limits and sin.

APPLICATIONS

I have argued that one's view of God as triune self-giving love implies a corresponding view of Christian life and church. But Christian life and church progress through stages to arrive at the fullness of God's love. It may well be that the early church needed to solidify the stage of familial, institutional faith, with its strong need for law and authority, to avoid the disintegrating effect of individual freedom without community commitment. Only discernment can tell how much we need this emphasis today. However, our growing awareness of individual freedom within relationship (the communitarian stage) is beckoning many beyond individualism to committed love and mission. Male-female relationships are deeply involved in this process of growth and need to be freed from latent vestiges of domination, inequality and disrespect if they are to reveal the freedom and equality of God's self-giving love. Several cases will help to

clarify the principle involved in determining such growth decisions.

Male Headship?

Several recent works have emphasized the headship role of husbands in the family and of males in the Christian community.³³ They rely on the Pauline teaching in 1 Corinthians and the Pastorals, and on the three household rules texts.³⁴ Steven Clark's book, *Man and Woman in*

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Christ (Servant Books, 1980) is the most thorough of these, and my view will be clarified by positioning it in light of his. In his own summary of the scriptural position he espouses, Clark makes the following points:

1. Within the redeemed community, relationships have an order based on the structure of the roles of men and women.
2. Within the family, the man is the head of the woman and has the primary governmental authority over the family.
3. Within the Christian people as a whole, the elders or those with governmental authority are men, and the order for the people as a whole is based upon and supports the family order.
4. Women have positions of authority subordinate to men for children and other women, but men are responsible for other men. Men are providers and mainly responsible for connections with the outer world, whereas women care for the more immediate needs of family and community.
5. The unity of the redeemed community as revealing God's purposes for the human race is the fundamental reason for the subordination of women to men. This unity is achieved by ordering each member under another and all to Christ. Thus, the feminist quest for individual freedom over functional differences and communal unity is opposed to God's order.³⁵

How would the position I am espousing respond to Clark's view?

First, I agree that the Christian view opposes a leveling of all differences and an idealization of individual freedom. The triune God is a community of totally different persons united in committed self-giving love. Their differences are not erased but rather heightened by united giving. Individual freedom is not the goal, but rather it is the precondition of committed pluralistic love.

Secondly, I agree that to have unity one must have subordination and that subordination does not necessarily imply inequality of dignity. Jesus obeyed his parents and Israel's and Rome's authority and they were certainly not above him in dignity. A true authority comes from God (Jn 19:11) and subordination to it unites us with God and one another.

Thirdly, however, I disagree that sexual differences are an ultimate basis for determining roles of authority for Christian unity. It is not sexual differences but the gifts of the Spirit that structure Christian community. For example, if women prophesy, as Paul admits (1 Cor 11:5), they mediate God's word and men and women must submit to it. Authority rests with the gift. Paul does not allow women to act as teachers (1 Tim 2:12) yet today women seem as capable as men of receiving a teaching gift for the whole community.³⁶ If full human truth requires both a male and a female perspective, should authority not be collegial? Evidence indicates that historically men have been the leaders in the emergence of focused consciousness,³⁷ and it seems true psychologically that women must learn from their fathers and men to develop their autonomous consciousness. But must not men learn from their mothers and women to develop their sensitivity for people and community without which institutions would be without heart? Men and women are different, each with a different authority, but both are needed for full Christian community.³⁸ I would argue that the monarchical view of God in the early church and its strong view of "headship" was needed to unify the early church. Authority is not lost in further

spiritual development. Rather, it is transformed in Jesus to become empowerment. The Father's-authority empowers Christ, Christ's authority empowers us, and the Spirit in all God's people grounds all authority. All must listen to each other. The goal is a common discovery of God's Spirit, and that would imply women as well as men in positions of leadership in order to gain a total perspective. As church and family become more individuated they need to become more collegial in their use of authority.

Mutual Subordination

In a workshop on authority I argued for "mutual submission" as implied in the "household rules" texts, for the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and sacrificed himself for her (Eph 5:25). A woman in the audience asked what she should do if her husband were not as open to God's Spirit as she was. I answered that it seemed to me the one who was most in God's Spirit should submit to the other in every way reconcilable with God's call. Christ submitted to church authority in his day in his final hour even though he was in the right and its judgment unjust. It seems that unity under God was more important to him than being right (see Jn 19:11 "you would have no authority were it not given you from above"). This makes sense if true authority gives life and true life is self-giving love and reconciliation. For reconciliation is gained by "listening" to the other in love and supporting their choices wherever possible, One Pt 3:1 suggests that the husband might be won to the faith through such conduct.

On the other hand, if the partner is unbelieving and chooses not to remain with their believing spouse, the believer is not bound (1 Cor 7:15-16). Who knows whether one will save one's spouse, and one is ultimately called to peace (1 Cor 7:15). The issue is clearly complex, and each relationship needs experienced counselling to determine where God calls for fidelity and submission or for the

inner freedom to let go of a relationship that is not in God.³⁹ If a married couple is called to relationship, however, the principle of the believer submitting where possible to the other would seem to apply to men as well as women, for it is the relationship of serving love itself that reveals God's love. "Headship" understood in this mutually listening way would be equivalent to working things out together with respect for God working in each other. Neither husband nor wife would give in to mere whims of the other, but both would seek God in their unity.

Separation?

Is unity always the predominant principle? Does Jesus' saying "What God has joined together let no one separate" (Mt 19:6) always apply in a sense of physical presence? If individuation is essential for growing into God's love, physical separation may at times be called for since only distinct responsibility brings freeing love. Yet it is also true that people may be tempted to leave difficult relationships rather than accept the suffering needed for new growth. How can one decide whether separation is an escape (regression) or an act of courageous love (growth)? The following principles may be of help: 1) God's love never ends (1 Cor 13:13) and our cooperation with it must be unconditional so that separation, if called for, must be the most loving thing one can do for oneself and the other in the situation. 2) Stages of growth are cumulative so that true individuation builds on relationships not apart from them. Whatever blocked growth in the relationship has roots in both parties and will be repeated in another relationship till it is worked through. Hence preference should be given to remaining in the relationship if there is any hope of making progress in it. 3) Children are affected by both parents and their relationship, and they need reconciling love between their parents for their own full development. Does separation serve this reconciliation best? 4) Love is a mystery rooted in God. De-spite one's best efforts one may feel

called by God to remain or separate. Prayer and counselling will be needed to confirm one's discernment.

Celibate Friendships

By "celibate friendships" I mean not just unmarried relationships between men and women, but all male-female "individuated relationships." They may occur between married people and those not their spouses or between consecrated religious men and women. To be celibate or single in a whole way one must be grounded in God's Spirit. However, on the way to this wholeness we may find ourselves "in love" or deeply attached to persons not our spouses or not from our religious community. Jung considered such fascinations "projections" of inner femininity (anuna in men) or masculinity (animus in women) onto the opposite sex. What is really unconsciously in ourselves we see in the other and become fascinated by the new possibility. Such projections serve the discovery of our unique selves, but they also break conventional patterns and often cause deep tensions. What is one to do should they occur?

As with all our "cases" there are no pat solutions, but I have found the following principles helpful in discerning whether such relationships are furthering growth in the Spirit or are traps. First, are we willing to sacrifice this relationship as Abraham sacrificed Isaac should God lead us to that? Sacrifice means letting the person go free, and only with that attitude can the relationship be freely given by God. Second, as the relationship deepens is our relationship to God and others also deepening and growing? "Projection" means to find what is really oneself in the other, and hence a relationship built on projection narrows us into ourselves, whereas a Spirit-led relationship opens us out to others. Each could ask: does this friendship help my marriage or my community life by bringing more of myself to life? Does it deepen my prayer? Third, do we each share what we are going through with a spiritual guide or discerning companion? It is very easy to fall into a "private

world" and miss objective truth. However, since conventional ideas may be upset, one's guide needs experience in individuated growth processes. Fourth, are we trusting God and not just our ego control? Since such friendships are a work of our deeper self, our ego will be threatened and disoriented and we may be tempted to "cut off" the relationship or "push it" in a particular direction. We need to let the unknown surface, to stand in the tension till a deeper integration emerges, for individuation always involves balancing opposite tensions—conventional and individual, heaven and earth, male and female.

Individuating friendships are a way to communitarian faith and a bridge to mission. They deepen and open us to greater healing power. Unless we work through such relationships I doubt if individuated community is possible, and many groups seem to flounder in the process of coming to terms with them. Yet where there is danger there is also opportunity, and just as Jesus had to confront conventional attitudes while discerning his Father's call, so will his followers.

Change Within Relationships

Growth toward individuated community or marriage will likely not be without tension. With growth each may become aware of new calls or may want to try new ministries or vocations. If a wife or husband wants to become more involved in ministry or in a prayer community or to get further education, how does he or she decide? Traditional wisdom says "charity begins at home." If we translate this still valid principle into our developmental frame of reference it might read: each stage builds on the previous and brings it to greater completion. Thus, the law and order stage builds on trust and increases trust. Without trust, law and order is simply legalism—an empty shell. Similarly, true individuation builds on and completes familial patterns. This principle raises such questions as: Is one's family (2nd stage) stable and growing? Would further ministry or education be a

contribution to one's family or community and bring it to further growth? A wife I know is sometimes called out to minister and feels guilty about leaving her husband and small children. Her husband was initially resistant but when he prayed he felt she should go and said yes. What they found was that the children were more cooperative with her away on ministry than when she stayed. Things could have been otherwise. Her husband could have objected and her children gotten worse, and then the developmental principle would be applied differently. Instead of judging that her call was helping her family grow, she might then have judged it an escape and hence not from God. Or she might have judged her family relationships needed further work and the call needed to be postponed. God can give a vision of a future call before actually empowering us to pursue it so that both vision and fulfillment will be received as gift from God.⁴⁰ Thus, many factors come into play—the perceived call, discernment of one's spouse, the effect on one's life as a whole and other responsibilities, one's own inner peace and growth, timing. The model of stages of growth can only provide general principles which will need discernment in each case.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that growth into God's love is a process, and that each stage has its own requirements and views Christian life from a different perspective. In this article I have argued mainly from the perspective of individuated community opening out into mission as the most developed image of God's love. God as a pluralistic community of triune love grounds the fundamental human community of male and female and leads that partnership to freeing and creative self-transcending love. As the Son is equal partner with the Father in sending the Spirit, so women are called to become equal partners with men in God's work of extending love to the unloved. God transcends sexual differences yet

grounds both male and female qualities and calls both men and women to unity in differences and co-creation. Respect for God at work in every person, male and female, opens us to this stage and leads us to transform one-sided subordination to mutual listening. Unity is still the goal, but not a one-sided unity. This unity is pluralistic and other-empowering; it respects differences and reaches out to others. Others may come to different conclusions from the scriptural evidence since each person views reality from their own perception of the good. But I am convinced that my view respects scripture and tradition and gives joy—the joy that comes from our self-giving God.

Reference Notes

¹ See, for example, J. L. Segundo, *Our Idea of God* (Maryknoll, N.Y., 1974)

² See Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, trans. by Margaret Kohl (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 50-65, where he develops this principle regarding the church. I am adapting his principles for this section which I originally presented in *The Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America*, vol. 35 (1980), pp. 185-195.

³ For this distinction I am indebted to Vladimir Lossky, "Tradition and Traditions," in his *The Image and Likeness of God* (St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), pp. 141-68. The particular interpretation of Trinity and its application is my own.

⁴ That the fatherhood of God transcends a one-sided patriarchal view is clearly shown by Robert Hamerton-Kelly's study: *God the Father: Theology and Patriarchy in the Teaching of Jesus* (Fortress, 1979). The feminine is also grounded in God's nature as is clear from Is 49:15, etc. (See Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* [Portress, 1978]). If the feminine is to be personalized in God the Holy Spirit's qualities of union, mediation with Christ, nurturing faith, and releasing giftedness (which qualities are emphasized in the traditional theology of Mary) would point to the Spirit as feminine. Yet, since male and female qualities are in all the divine persons, my focus is on interpersonality as the more fundamental similarity between God and us.

⁵ For a fine study of the freeing power of such obedience and submission see Joseph Thomas Culliton, *Obedience: Gateway to Freedom* (N.J.: Logos International, 1978).

⁶ See Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, p. 245.

⁷ The Greek word used in the household rules texts is *hypotassesthai*, To order or constitute under. Translations such as subject, submit or subordinate have been used. With J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Eerdmans, 1972), p. 175, I have preferred subordination but sometimes use submission of the same thought. Yoder writes: "the center of the imperative is a call to willing subordination to one's fellow man. The term *hypotassesthai* is not best rendered by *subjection*, which carries a connotation of being thrown down or run over, nor by *submission*, with its connotation of passivity. Subordination means the acceptance of an order, as it exists, but with the new meaning given to it by the fact that one's acceptance of it is willing and meaningfully motivated.

⁸ See P. M. Doyle, "Women and Religion: Psychological and Cultural Implications," in *Religion and Sexism*, ed. by R. R. Ruether (N.Y.: 1974), pp. 24-29, for Erikson's view.

⁹ In developing these principles and my later theses I rely heavily on Paul K. Jewett, *Man as Male and Female* (W. B. Eerdmans, 1975). He builds on Karl Barth's work while denying Barth's subordinationist conclusions. See Nicolas Berdyacv, *The Destiny of Man* (Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 61-67.

¹⁰ See Nicolas Berdyacv, *The Destiny of Man* (Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 61-67. See G. von Rad, *Genesis*, rev. ed. (Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 60-61.

¹¹ See G. von Rad, *Genesis*, rev. ed. (Westminster Press, 1972), pp. 60-61. Jewett discusses this on pp. 33-34.

¹² Jewett discusses this on pp. 33-34.

¹³ Esther Harding quotes Jung as saying in this connection, "And just as it is impossible to individuate without relatedness, so it is impossible to have real relationships without individuation. For otherwise illusion comes in continually, and you don't know where you are from." *C. G. Jung Speaking*, ed. by W. McGuire and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 31.

¹⁴ Jewett gives a succinct presentation of Barth on pp. 35-40.

¹⁵ See G. von Rad, *Genesis*, pp. 57-61.

¹⁶ Barth hesitates to affirm actual interpersonality in God, and the OT text does not support such interpersonality, but in view of the NT evidence and my communal view of Trinity, we could conclude to a closer analogy than Barth (or Rabner) would countenance.

¹⁷ Some feminists have found in the Genesis text a deliberate putting down of women due to the advances of patriarchalism over an underlying mother goddess culture. See, for example, Merlin Stone, *When God was a Woman* (Harvest Book, 1976), pp. 198-223.

This is indeed a later rabbinic interpretation of Genesis, but I am arguing that it is not the intent of the original author.

¹⁸ Steven B. Clark (*Man and Woman in Christ* [Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1980], pp. 23-28) argues that there is subordination in Gen 2 in that woman is made from man and brought to him. Human unity is rooted in man as one source, and hence he has authority over woman. I discuss Clark's position later in this article. He needs this argument since Jesus used "the beginning" as ground for disallowing the Mosaic law of divorce (Mt 19:2-12) as a temporary tradition due to the "hardness of your hearts." However, Jesus did not argue for subordination but for permanent unity. Subordination may have been presupposed in Israel, as in the surrounding nations, but the author's point in Gen 2 is equality and partnership.

¹⁹ I have treated this question of inherited sinful patterns in my previous *Journal of Christian Healing* article, p. 17f.

²⁰ See Jewett's discussion, pp. 111-19.

²¹ See his *The Bible and the Role of Women* (Fortress Press, 1966), p. 26.

²² For a discussion, see Jewett, p. 94-103.

²³ See Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 376, cited in Jewett, p. 97.

²⁴ It has been argued that Jesus' freedom with women is something of an empirical justification for affirming his mother's freedom from sin. See Jack Dominian, "The Relationship between Christ and Mary," *The Way, Supp* 25 (1975), pp. 58-68. A man's relationship with women is rooted in his relation to his mother, and Mary's trust in God (her special grace, Lk 1:28) could be seen as a new beginning such as was intended with Adam and Eve. If so, her fidelity despite corrections and trials would indicate the type of new relationship made possible through Jesus' inaugurating the age of the Spirit.

²⁵ See Jewett, pp. 142-47 for a discussion of this point.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 137-41.

²⁷ J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (W. B. Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 163-92 argues this point at some length.

²⁸ See Raymond Brown, "Roles of Women in the Fourth Gospel," *Theological Studies* 36 (1975), 688-99.

²⁹ See Elizabeth M. Tetlow, *Women and Ministry in the New Testament* (N.Y.: Paulist, 1960) for a recent survey with further bibliography.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 92-131. The author indicates a change of emphasis even between Mark and Luke/Matthew in the direction of less active roles for women.

³¹ Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*, p. 268 and note 13 gives various suggestions about the background of Paul's teaching.

³² Gnostic spirituality had just this tendency toward individualism, and it was an ever increasing threat from I Corinthians to the later Pauline writings. See Constance F. Parvey, "The Theology and Leadership of Women in the New Testament," in *Religion and Sexism*, pp. 117-49.

³³ Larry Christensen's *The Christian Family* (Bethany Fellowship, 1970) exemplifies this position.

³⁴ The key community texts are 1 Cor 11:2-16; 14:33-36 and 1 Tim 2:8-15. The family texts are Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-4:1 and 1 Pt 3:1-7. They have been briefly considered in this article.

³⁵ See Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ*, pp. 212-214.

³⁶ Clark makes a helpful observation that teaching in the early church involved authority over the student and hence the restriction to men in 1 Tim 2:12. Today it is not connected to personal guidance. Yet is not truth the ultimate authority behind teaching adults? And women seem as capable as men to discover it. See Clark, pp. 195f.

³⁷ See Amaury de Riencourt, *Sex and Power in History* (Delta, 1974) for a survey of the evidence of a more or less universal "patriarchal revolution." Also, Ken Wilber, *UpFromEden* (Doubleday, 1981).

³⁸ See Richard Rohr, "The Church Without Mary," in *Mary, the Spirit and the Church*, ed. by V. P. Branick (Paulist, 1980), pp. 7-27 for a strong argument in favor of greater feminine influence in the church.

³⁹ The ground of obedience is always God's will and one's conscience has final responsibility for seeking God. If one's conscience frequently stands in opposition to the authority of the community one belongs to (whether family or church or religious order) one should ask whether God is calling one to that community. The Jesuit 31st General Congregation puts it this way: "a man who, time after time, is unable to obey with a good conscience, should take thought regarding some other path of life in which he can serve God with greater tranquility." (#279).

⁴⁰ See Bob Mumford, *The Purpose of Temptation* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1973).