



Women's Lib All Right... There Are Basic Differences

By GAIL P. QUINN

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The quest for self-identity does not limit itself to a deeper understanding of woman's self-identity and her role in society. To study woman's role in modern society without taking the masculine role into account would be somewhat myopic. As the life-style of women gradually undergoes change, whether the change is in more women holding responsible positions in the business world, married women joining the work force at an ever-increasing rate, or whatever practical forms these transitions take, it will of necessity somewhat alter man's role and his self-image.

For centuries, woman was

thought to be sensitive, intuitive, understanding, loving, warm, gentle, emotional, with outside interests coming to a halt at the natural boundary of her home. She made her family the all of her existence, ran the household smoothly, and left the major decisions for her husband to settle. For many women, husbands, boy friends, or fathers served as a vicarious link to the outside world.

By tradition, men were supposed to be athletic, protective, competitive, strong family bread-winner, independent, and an authority figure at home and in the community. He was to avoid "feminine" tasks and emotional outbursts.

The questioning of these characteristics has been brought to the fore mainly through the Women's Liberation Movement. The radical feminists seem to maintain that America is a nation of men, for men, and by men. They see traditional sex

roles as stemming from myth and misconception, and would opt for a "sexless" society in which men and women have equal access to all roles.

Whatever changes are wrought through their efforts to eliminate actual discrimination against women should be wholeheartedly appreciated. However the "cardinal sin" of this radical movement is that their emphasis seems to be strictly on women's rights solely for women's sake. They hammer away at their demands, chastizing society for its attitude toward women, and often convey a bitter hostility toward men. However, the characteristics they urge women to display are but wan imitations of masculine qualities.

The problem boils down to whether or not these different qualities are mere stereotypes based on different life-styles, or whether there are innate male and female qualities.

In response to the Women's Lib, Dr. Harry Harlow of the University of Wisconsin says, "I have no argument with women who would change discriminatory laws or want careers. But there are basic biological male-female differences..."

With recent history we have seen specific functions alter. We saw it in the post-World War II era, when there was a shift in attitudes concerning the male role. Men became more actively involved in the child-rearing process, they took a more personal interest in their growing children, and no longer were frowned upon if they lent a helping hand at household chores. Since then, men have entered professions formerly considered feminine, such as grade school education. The male assumed these new functions without relinquishing his authority, his right to decision-

making, or any of the qualities we associate with him.

Perhaps the time has come for woman's role to alter—without relinquishing the qualities we associate with her. While there are exceptions, few women would choose to be totally independent, relying on themselves alone, or to have all decisions dropped in their laps. Nor would most women choose to have pre-school children cared for by someone other than herself. As Dr. Abram Kardiner of Columbia University pointed out, "You can't pay anyone to love your child."

The American woman of today is a well-educated person, concerned about life's problems. She's concerned about the contribution she can make to better herself, her family and society. In the near future, we will see women working closely together with men on family and social problems, contributing their unique understanding

and solutions. I am sure you will see women who are not stupid.

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Q. and A.

By FR. RICHARD P. MCBRIEN

Q. At the last meeting of our Parish Council, just before the summer recess, our pastor asked us if we should continue as a group or if we should disband. Some of us were very disturbed by this question because it confirmed our suspicions about his attitude toward the Council. He regards it as a kind of luxury the parish can do without; at best, a parish discussion club over which he deigns to preside.

A. The existence of parish councils is not a matter of ecclesiastical politics alone. There are theological issues and principles at stake here. The Church is not, in the first instance, a mechanism of salvation presided over by certain men, who hold the key to the means of salvation. The Church is people. The Second Vatican Council calls it the very "People of God."

Although the Christian community has structure (see, for example, chapter III of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), there are no elites, on the one hand, or second class citizens, on the other. Everything which the council said about the People of God, in chapter II of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church it meant to apply equally to clergy, Religious, and laity alike (see n. 30).

Furthermore, all members of the Church share the mission which Christ gave to the whole Church. The laity do not simply assist the hierarchy or the clergy in the fulfillment of the multiple tasks of the Church. The laity participates in the very saving mission of Christ himself, and this has been communicated to the laity in the sacraments, especially in Baptism and Confirmation (n. 33).

The apostolate of the Church belongs to "absolutely every Christian. . . . Upon all the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation ever increasingly to all men of each epoch and in every land. Consequently, let every opportunity be given them so that, according to their abilities and the needs of the times, they may zealously participate in the saving work of the Church" (n. 33).

Q. I know there are people advocating a change in the way we take Holy Communion. They want us to receive the Eucharist in our hands and to place the host into our own mouths. I don't like this at all. I think that receiving Holy Communion from the hands of the priest, and preferably on one's knees, emphasizes our subjection to Christ in his Church.

A. There is no theological objection at all to the practice of one who is not a priest receiving Holy Communion in the hand. There are no biblical, doctrinal, or theological reasons why a bap-

tized lay person cannot touch the sacred Host. Indeed, lay persons have done this historically, and are doing so once again, with ecclesiastical approval (e.g., in Canada).

Receiving Holy Communion on one's knees and from the hands of another does indeed stress the idea of dependency and subordination. But that does not tell the whole story of what it means to be a Christian. If we are to take the documents of the Second Vatican Council seriously, we should realize that being a Christian means having responsibility for the coming of God's Kingdom among men. The Church is not only a place where we receive certain spiritual benefits; it is also the place from which we strive to realize the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the whole world.

The Canadian bishops have probably hit upon the best solution in this time of transition and change; they are allowing people the option of receiving Communion in the traditional manner or of taking it in the hand. It is difficult to see how any one could quarrel with this arrangement, unless, of course, they felt that there is something intrinsically wrong with receiving Communion in the hand. But there is not.

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Q. What does it mean to say that the Church is a "community of hope?"

A. Article 92, paragraph 2, of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World answers your question in a nutshell.

First, it says that not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord!" will enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but rather only those who actually do the will of the Father. Thus, the mere belonging to the Church does not give anyone of us a running headstart over nonmembers.

We do indeed hope for our own salvation and the salvation of our loved ones, but our hope does not reside in our baptismal certificates but in the kind of lives we live.

Secondly, the document states that mankind will have reason to hope in the future of the world (and the absolute future of the world is God himself) to the extent that "we share with others the mystery of the heavenly Father's love."

Briefly, the Church is a "community of hope" when it lives the Gospel to the fullest, when it shows men that it means to bear one another's burdens and to give up one's life for the sake of a friend.



Even though life can be looked at as concentric circles, when a man reaches adulthood, he can also see the inner circles which have led him to his own life around him and his people.