


\* Some: not all have noticeable sexual Tendenz.

Hymns<sup>\*</sup> are hormonal, some "feminine" and some "masculine." The current in-thing to do is to geld (castrate) masculine hymns. (I can remember a time when it was the feminine hymns that were under attack.) The CHRISTIAN CENTURY (24Feb82) published my whole letter except the title, "On Hymn-Gelding." The hymn-revision I'm attacking robs Jesus and Jewish/Christian relations in order to pay fanatical feminists. That revision eliminates one of the two God-titles bridging Judaism and Christianity, viz., "King." Since both God-titles are pervasive in OT/NT (in NT, chiefly as our Lord's "the Kingdom of God"), eliminating them increases folks' alienation from Scripture and from Jesus. The logic of this process is Scripture revisionism: take "King" and "Lord" out of the Bible, or at least out of lections (Bible portions to be used in liturgy)--at the cost of alienating the "new" Bible from the "old" one. Here we are facing heresy compounded with an insane hatred for history.

As for that other God-title, "Lord," it stands alone as (1) bridging Judaism and Christianity and (2) having the dual force of pointing both to YHWH and to Jesus, a dynamic essential to (a) understanding the early-Christian shaping of Christology and (b) worshipping as a Christian. See, e.g., how important this word is for Ann Landers (28Feb82) and millions of her readers:



**Dear Ann Landers:** I read something that came to me in the mail several days ago and was moved by it. I hope you will share it with your readers. It made a difference in my life at a time when I needed the spiritual support and strength to believe. Sorry, I don't know where it came from. It was signed, "Author and Origin Unknown." Thank you so much for your consideration. — Davenport, Iowa

**Dear Dav:** Although the author is unknown, it came from my column and was subsequently reprinted in Reader's Digest. I have had a large number of requests to run it again and do so now, with pleasure.

**FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND**

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. In each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand — one belonging to him and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints and noticed that many times along the path there was only one set of foot-

prints in the sand. He also noticed that this happened during the lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him, so he questioned the Lord: "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you would walk with me all the way, but I noticed that during times of my life there was only one set of footprints. I don't understand why, when I needed you most, you deserted me."

The Lord replied, "My precious child, I would never desert you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

For a dozen years I desexicized the commencement hymns for New York Theological Seminary, and the Consultation on Church Union gathering, which was brightly written up by Jean Caffey Lyles, knew the troubles I've seen. One of the realities is the occasional need to rob Peter to pay Paul — a more pious metaphor than making curbs worse for the blind by making them better for wheelchairs.

Yes, I've been bumping into "Lead On, O Cloud of Yahweh" as replacement for "Lead On, O King Eternal." And it makes me cringe. Its anti-Judaism, though unconscious, saddens me. All Jews, even left-wing Reform, feel a gut turn-off when they hear "Yahweh" or "Jahweh" or "Jehovah" or any other vocalization of YHWH — not chiefly because the vocalization is ersatz, the original pronunciation unknown, but mainly because any sounding of the tetragrammaton is taboo to Jews.

The principle here is that across the lines of human communities there should be sensitivity to holy sounds and customs wherever practicable. It is practicable for Christians to use (as do Jews) "Adonai" in place of the holy Name, or just continue "Lord," the English translation of "Adonai." If "Lord" is objected to as masculine, must not the same objection be lodged against "Yahweh"-"Adonai," a masculine god, and even against "God," the masculine antonym of "Goddess"?

In addition to the offense against the Jews in this particular revision of a grand old hymn, note the positive loss to Jewish-Christian relations in the sacrifice of a title that bridges our faiths — viz., "King."

This letter will be comforting to all Jews and some women (including all Jewish women), and offensive to some women. The number of women it will be offensive to approximates the number of Jews in the United States. So, in prophetic terms, I come out even.

Willis Elliot.

Craigville, Mass.

Now we come to the core of this thinksheet's burden: fanatical feminism's current threat in the proposed revision of the UCC State-

OVER

ment of Faith. I deplore it for the following VIOLATIONS:

1. TRUTH is violated by the substitution of deceptive language for the straight-forward language of the Christian Tradition:

(1) "God," the antonym of "Goddess," is substituted for "Father." When I accosted a pastor for forcing this substitution on his congregation in the liturgical use of the Lord's Prayer, he said "What they don't know won't hurt them." This Menckenesque disdain for the booboisie is unworthy of our Christian faith and of our UCC heritages. (And see the revival of "Goddess" in undergd. religion.)

(2) "Realm," a synonym for "Kingdom," slyly, deceptively, substitutes French for our plain old Anglo-Saxon. This attempted escape into French obscures--again, for the booboisie!--the masculinity of the conception. (Queens in English-speaking lands preferred, in referring to their domains, to use A-S "kingdom" rather than Fr. "realm.") Here we face a virulent though ultimately feeble and doomed uprising against nature, as if testosterone [whether in male or female skinbag] were not the leadership hormone. (For radically different charges of testosterone in female skinbags, contrast the two Queens Elizabeth of Britain.)

2. LOVE is violated:

(1) Love for Jesus, in moving farther away from his lexicon (his chosen words).

(2) Love for Jews, in eliminating "King" (in "Kingdom"), the Jews' favorite title for God (though some Reform now sometimes use "Sovereign" or "Ruler").

(3) Love for the Church through history and across the world, in abandoning the traditional expressions which serve, when we let and encourage them, to bridge among all Christians.\*

(4) Love for the Christian language, continuous from Scripture.

(5) Love for the world, in depriving mission and evangelism of key words that keep open the gates of access to Church and Tradition. The proposed changes increase the strangeness of Scripture language and so the world's alienation from the Bible.

3. The Christian THEOLOGY is violated:

(1) The mainstream is a reality, and the metaphor accounts for minor tributaries (e.g., gnosticism, unitarianism, humanism): there is such a thing, comprehending the many Christian theologies adapted to specific times and places, as "the Christian Theology."

(2) The Christian Theology, on the verbal side, is a *three-legged stool*:

(a) "Father," because it was our Lord's favorite address for God (and also his most distinctive contribution to theology). Ask any Jewish scholar! The logic of eliminating "Father"--the dismal deadend to which it leads--is that Christians should teach their children to feel sorry for Jesus' ignorance or that he was vicious in using sexist language. Accomodationistic hermeneutics (i.e., he reluctantly and sadly but necessarily had to adapt himself to the sexist historical context) is a specious and super-sophisticated and illegitimately "modernizing" escape-effort.

(b) "Lord" is the Church's favorite address for God, and one of the only two words (the other being "Jesus") in the earliest Baptismal Formula, the kernel of all Christian creeds and confessions of faith.

(c) "Kingdom of God" is our Lord's favorite designation for reality (the cosmic-historic situation) and goal (personal-societal-historical).

\* I hear said that "Sooner or later the ecumenical Church will give up sexist language." Vain hope! How far from that eventuality the ecumenical Church is can be guaged by the document of WCC F&O, Lima, 1982. Does it concede parity for the order of nonepiscopal churches? It does not: it advises us benightededs to consider adopting the episcopal structure. Does it grant equality to anabaptists (rebaptizers, including all baptists of the world)? It does not: it says to "avoid" rebaptism (which I had at age 17). IF we nonepiscopals and baptists are offensive to the-ecumenical-Church-as-of-this-statement, how much more would be the butchering of the Church's Language in the name of a fanatic movement!

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