

1. Nothing on this thinksheet should be construed as qualifying my commitment to these principles: (1) The relativization, if indeed not trivialization, of sexual-difference powers by the sovereignty of God; (2) The mutual servanthood of the sexes within both the lordship and the servanthood of God; and (3) The relative responsibility of human beings in general, and of the sexes in particular, to garden each other, i.e. by one behalf of each other's potential within the power and honor and praise of God.
2. Our guest preacher this morning [21Aug77] suggested we sing "Rise up, O YE [instead of "men"] of God," and we did, though the effect on me--and presumably also the others--was to heighten the masculinity of the remainder of this four-stanza hymn of rousements to Christian action: the reversal effect! All such efforts to demasculinize this hymn must fail, for the hymn itself is addressed to males [as one can easily ascertain in any hymn-story book or hymnal companion]--in which light, further, demasculinization is bastardization. The prior question is whether any hymnal should have hymns written just for girls, or just for boys: must every hymn in the hymnal be androgenous? My view is that each group--females, males, youth, the elderly, black, white, whatever--is enriched by singing hymns specifically written for other groups, thus also identifying, expressing solidarity, with the other groups. But this leaves many hymns easy to "clean up" of sexism, as I've often done when the hymn is to be printed in the bulletin --e.g., for a number of school commencements.
3. In mind the hymnist had 1Cor.16.13, an appeal to be "male" [Gk.], "virile" [Lat.]--natural enough, as he wrote it for a men's movement [not a people movement, but a male "brotherhood" movement], when pastor of Brick Church, which has a long tradition of masculinity, and where not long ago I addressed a men's breakfast. [The church I long pastored was at its zenith when both its men's and its women's associations were vigorous; growth stopped when the men stopped meeting without women.] [I'm reminded also of the vigor of the Southern Baptists, and that I was taught in Southern Baptist Seminary at the end of the 1930s that if you preach to everybody you'll have the women and children and if you preach to the men you'll have everybody. Well, the SBs and Jimmy Carter have practically everybody, yes? And oh how they like to sing "Rise up, O MEN of God!"]
4. This is a city hymn, written by a social-action graduate of UTS. On 349f, H. Aug. Smith [LYRIC RELIGION (D.A-C/31)] lists many city hymns and cities in which hymns were written; NYC has been highly productive of the masculine-type social-action city hymn. Is it an effete church that seeks to wash out the masculine element into mere individuality [the high-testosterone individual, m. or f., being what was formerly generically called "masculine"]?
5. Now notice other masculine elements in this hymn, and imagine the butchering it'd take to eliminate them all: "'serve the King of kings"; "His kingdom...brotherhood"; "The Church...Her* strength...her* task"; "Christ...his feet...brothers...Som of man...men of God!".....*These feminine references reinforce the hymn's masculinity. In no human tradition is earth masculine and heaven feminine; the reverse, rather, is universal. Not to argue *e silentio*, one may observe that even in matriarchal-Amazonian traditions the control element is not fixated on the feminine, as in 99.99% of human traditions the control element is fixated on the masculine: earth and church and ship are "she" because in charge are Dyaus Pitra the Sky-Heaven Father-God, Jesus Christ the Lord, and the ship's captain --respectively.
6. June 77 JBL has a fascinating structuralist interpretation of Gen.2.4b-3.24. While the later account of creation, with which the Bible begins, subordinates female to male only in mentioning the male first, this earlier account uses gynarchy [woman-in-control] as the sin symbol at the center of the garden--reversing the divine order [God, male, female, animal] which temporarily yields to the chaotic anti-order [animal (snake), female, male, God]. So it goes!