

“Mary Kassian’s thorough look into the development of feminist thought is a sound refutation of a movement that clearly rejects the authority of the Bible. A valuable tool for today’s Christian!”

BEVERLY LAHAYE, Founder and Chairman,
Concerned Women for America

“This is an incisive, sympathetic, and well-balanced treatment of one of the most important theological and sociological phenomena of our age. The author understands the legitimate concern of feminists but, out of her deep commitment to the gospel and to the authority of the Bible, shows us where to draw the line between legitimate reinterpretation and illegitimate deformation of the biblical message.”

HAROLD O. J. BROWN, Professor Emeritus of Biblical and
Systematic Theology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“The concern with feminism’s influence within the church is generating heated interest, much of it neither thoughtful nor gracious. This book is an intelligent, balanced effort to understand feminist philosophy and theology, going beyond insightful analysis into a warmly passionate and reflectively penetrating invitation to grapple with crucial issues. An important book that strikes a much needed biblical posture on gender differences and how the implications of contemporary thinking on the subject impact the church.”

LARRY CRABB, JR., Distinguished Scholar in Residence,
Colorado Christian University

“A well-researched, excellent resource for all seeking a better understanding of the history and philosophy of the feminist movement and how it affects and influences our thinking today. I especially appreciate that Mrs. Kassian reminds us, as Christians, to go back to our only unchanging reference point—the Bible—for answers.”

GIGI GRAHAM TCHIVIDJIAN, conference speaker,
author of *Currents of the Heart*

“An important and original contribution to debates over feminist theology. One need not agree with every judgment Mary Kassian offers to see how important it is to place various strands of the movement within their cultural and ideological contexts. But Mrs. Kassian is not some mere traditionalist; she candidly exposes her own struggles and profoundly Christian commitments as she seeks to bring her life into line with God’s gracious disclosure in Christ Jesus and in Scripture. I warmly recommend this book.”

D. A. CARSON, Research Professor of New Testament,
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“Timely, fresh, succinct, and best of all, biblical. I commend to you *The Feminist Mistake*.”

ANNE ORTLUND

Author of *Disciplines of the Beautiful Woman*

“Mary Kassian is right on target in her book. Having carefully studied the feminist movement for more than fifteen years, I can attest that she understands the major questions Christian feminism is addressing and how the answers it gives lead to less than biblical perspectives of self, society, and God. As she comments in the book, ‘feminism and Christianity are antithetical.’ I wholeheartedly recommend Mrs. Kassian’s book.”

WAYNE HOUSE, Professor of Biblical Studies and Apologetics,
Faith Seminary, Tacoma, Washington

“A penetrating analysis of the impact of feminist ideology on the life of the church. The author convincingly shows how this has resulted in a new ‘gospel.’”

DONALD G. BLOESCH, Professor of Theology Emeritus,
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Mary Kassian

THE
FEMINIST
~~**MYSTIQUE**~~
mistake

The Radical Impact
of Feminism
on Church and Culture

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INTRODUCTION

THE TSUNAMI OF FEMINISM

The Japanese fishermen twenty miles out to sea didn't even notice the small wave that rippled past their boat. Though it advanced at the speed of a jet plane, the seismic wave was less than fifteen inches in height. It could scarcely be distinguished from the normal rhythmic rise and fall of the water's surface. They were totally unprepared for the devastation that awaited them when they returned to the port of Sanriku. The innocent-looking ripple was actually a deadly tsunami. It hit shore with crests of water more than a hundred feet high and a force more powerful than 25,000 Hiroshima atomic bombs. Twenty-eight thousand people were killed, and 170 miles of coastline were destroyed in that infamous 1896 disaster.

Tsunami is a Japanese word meaning "harbor wave." It's the scientific term for a seismic sea wave generated by an undersea earthquake, landslide, or volcanic eruption. A tsunami may travel hundreds of miles across the ocean at speeds of up to 550 miles per hour. In deep waters it remains virtually imperceptible. But upon encountering the shallow water of coastlines, bays, or harbors, the rapidly moving energy forces the water into giant waves that assault the shore with tremendous force. A typical tsunami consists of a dozen or more such waves, with the third to eighth crests being the largest and most destructive.

The philosophy of feminism is part of the seismic postmodern earthquake. Feminism proposes that women find happiness and meaning through the pursuit of personal authority, autonomy, and freedom. This philosophy's shake-up of society occurred roughly during the thirty-year period from 1960 to 1990. But the cataclysmic consequences will continue to crash on culture's shores like a tsunami throughout the opening decades of the new millennium. In the first version of this book, published in 1992 (*The Feminist Gospel*), I examined the cutting edge of feminist theory and theology. The book maintained that a philosophical quake in both society and church with regard to the role of women had, in fact, taken place. Readers then understood the inevitable repercus-

sions of such a radical paradigm shift. Now, more than ten years later, the book is gaining an audience among those observing the destruction and seeking to understand its cause—men and women who have been blindsided by the cultural onslaught and are asking “Where did these waves come from?” and “Why?”

Up until the middle of the last century, Western culture as a whole generally embraced a Judeo-Christian perspective on gender, sexuality, and the purpose and structure of the family. Heterosexual marriage, marital fidelity, and the bearing and nurturing of children in an intact family unit were highly valued concepts and the norm of societal practice. Most agreed that the primary responsibility of the male was to lead, protect, and provide for his family, while the primary responsibility of the female was to nurture and care for her children and manage her home. Differences between male and female were accepted and seldom questioned. Furthermore, for both man and woman, the sense of duty and responsibility to family was deemed more important than the pursuit of personal fulfillment. Though they may not have been able to identify the source of their values, individuals had a sense of what it meant to be a man or a woman and the appropriate outworking of gender roles and relationships.

The speed and magnitude of force with which this understanding was deconstructed is astonishing. Consider the following facts:

Since 1960 the divorce rate has increased more than 100 percent.¹

The marriage rate has decreased. Since 1960 the marriage rate for fifteen- to forty-four-year-olds has dropped by 41 percent.²

In 1960 cohabitation was called “living in sin.” The behavior was considered shameful and culturally deviant. So few couples lived together before marriage that statistics were not even recorded. Now 41 percent of American women ages fifteen to forty-four have cohabited.³ The U.S. Census Bureau reports that cohabitation increased tenfold (1000 percent) between 1960 and 2000.⁴

Prior to 1960 North Americans valued virginity prior to marriage. By the year 2000, 79 percent of single women aged twenty to twenty-four were sexually active.⁵

From 1960 to 2000, the percentage of out-of-wedlock births increased from 5.3 to 33—an increase of 523 percent.⁶ One American child is born outside of marriage every twenty-five seconds.⁷

Only 45 percent of all teenage children (ages thirteen to eighteen) live with their married biological father and mother.⁸

In 1960 only 31.9 percent of all married women were employed outside the home. Rarely were mothers of infants and preschoolers so employed. By 1997 61.6 percent of all married women were in the workforce.⁹ By the dawning of the new millennium, 78.7 percent of mothers of six to seventeen-year-olds, 64.6 percent of women with children younger than six, and 55 percent of mothers of infants younger than one year old were working outside the home.^{10, 11}

I could cite many more statistics about dramatic increases in abortion, homosexuality, the abuse of women and children, pornography, violence, sexual perversion, and sexually transmitted diseases. Never before has mankind faced such a rapid and widespread disintegration of morality and concurrent increase in gender confusion and conflict. The philosophical shift in the middle of the twentieth century triggered an unprecedented societal tsunami. Feminism was not the sole catalyst, but it was undeniably an important part of the philosophical quake.

This book examines the historical development of feminism and explores the lineage and interrelationship of its secular and religious veins. When the movement is studied chronologically, from a historical perspective, one can observe an overarching pattern: Feminism began with the deconstruction of a Judeo-Christian view of womanhood (the right to name self); progressed to the deconstruction of manhood, gender relationships, family/societal structures, and a Judeo-Christian worldview (the right to name the world); and concluded with the concept of metaphysical pluralism, self-deification, and the rejection of the Judeo-Christian deity (the right to name God). These three stages of development can roughly be traced back to three consecutive decades:

Stage One: Naming Self (1960–1970)

Stage Two: Naming the World (1970–1980)

Stage Three: Naming God (1980–1990)

In the first part of this book, I present the progression of modern feminism from its beginning in the early 1960s, which gave women the right to name and define themselves, through its final stage of development, which endowed women with the right to name God. I have included two flow charts in the appendix to illustrate this development graphically. These charts assist the reader to integrate the information into an overall picture and to compare the religious to the secular.

Though used as a text in post-secondary institutions, this book is not intended only for students of women's studies or theology. Rather, this

narrative and critique could be read by the ordinary Christian who is interested and prepared to devote some time and thought to the subject. The analysis is by no means microscopic in scope. It presents a broad overview of the basic theories and trends in the historical development of North American feminism. The difficulty with this type of broad history lies in selecting the writers to emphasize. I have attempted to trace the development of feminist thought over a span of roughly thirty years (from 1960 to 1990), to concentrate on a small number of writers and examples rather than to gloss over many, and to draw attention to what seems to be of major significance. Feminism can be traced quite clearly and comprehensively up until the mid-1970s. The explosion of literature after that point forces a review that is at best brief and partial.

I need to make several points at the outset. First, I believe that feminism has drawn attention to crucial problems that exist for women in society and in the church. In this work I am not so much debating the validity of the *questions* that feminists have posed, but rather seeking to evaluate the validity of their *answers*.

Second, in order to understand the interaction between secular feminist theory and religious feminist theology, one must be aware of the political climate in which the current wave of feminism originated. The early 1960s were years of social upheaval. Many rebelled against the political policies that they believed encouraged the domination of certain groups of people over others. Individuals participating in the civil rights, student rights, and peace movements of that era were often involved in the church as well. Martin Luther King, for example, was an American Baptist minister. He argued that the moral basis for the civil rights movement was the Word of God. Roman Catholic priests Daniel and Philip Berrigan and the Rev. William Sloane Coffin were also well-known peace activists. As time passed, the religious ties of the various movements lessened, but it is significant to note that feminist philosophy surfaced when there was close interplay between the two. Therefore, readers should understand that religious feminist theology did not develop *as a result of* secular feminist philosophy, but rather emerged and developed *concurrent* to it.

Third, the reader will note that I have traced an overarching picture of feminism and have not delineated between its specific *types* or *brands*. I do not deny that various streams of feminist philosophy exist. But I argue that in spite of their political, sociological, or theological nuances, femi-

nists all adhere to a common presupposition. This presupposition has shaped and dictated the progression of feminism's philosophical development. Moreover, in the church feminism transcends denominational distinctions. The denominational ties of Roman Catholic, Baptist, United Church, Methodist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Jew are all superseded by the common bond of feminism. Feminist theologians did not care whether women's theology was furthered by a Catholic, Jew, mainline or evangelical Protestant. The major consideration was only that women's concerns were being pursued within the context of established Judeo-Christian institutions. In discussing feminism in the church, I am therefore referring to a philosophy and theology that is not confined to denominational boundaries. The theology of religious feminism includes all those religions that use the Bible in their formulation of doctrine.

Finally, I would like to point out that the development of feminist philosophy and theology did not occur without debate or discussion. Many people offered dissenting opinions during the process. However, even though individuals contested new theories, those theories contributed significantly to feminism's overall development. Furthermore, as some radical theories were augmented by others, those early ones, with minor modifications, were integrated into mainstream thought. In tracing the development of feminism, I have therefore presented the theories that were at the most progressive cutting edge of the movement. Even though these theories were not—at any given point in time—accepted by all feminists, together they reflect a sequence of development that is both logical and progressively imminent.

From a philosophical standpoint, the cutting edge of feminist theory had advanced as far as it possibly could by the early nineties. At that time, feminism proposed a complete rejection of the Judeo-Christian paradigm for male-female roles, relationships, and societal structures as well as its concepts of God. Feminist propositions stood in direct antithesis to orthodox doctrine. Thus, its theory could progress no further. It had moved as far away from the Christian God and Bible as possible. Subsequent feminist writings have not presented any substantially new concepts. In essence, they are merely elaborations of existing ideas and the introduction and application of those ideas to other venues and arenas. In understanding the seminal concepts of feminism, the reader will be equipped to evaluate current events with a critical eye—recognizing where the ideas came from and how they fit into the overall philosophy.

The first section of this book focuses on the initial philosophical quake—the feminist ideas that shook North America between 1960 and 1990. The second section of this book examines the aftereffects of that quake—the shock waves that to this day continue to crash over religious and secular culture. In the second section of the book, I examine select events that have transpired since the 1990s, the mainstreaming of feminist thought, and the relationship of conservative evangelical feminism (egalitarianism) to the more liberal forms of religious feminism. I seek to determine how—if at all—egalitarianism relates to the overarching historical progression of feminist philosophy. Finally, I attempt to answer the question as to whether an emphasis on women’s “rights” and functional equality ought to be embraced or rejected by the evangelical church.

Over the past decade, the ideas of feminism have been popularized and integrated into societal thought. Consequently, it has become difficult to distinguish feminism as a philosophy distinct from mainstream thought. For this reason, many contemporary analysts cite the “death” of the philosophy of feminism. Most young women regard feminism as yesterday’s fashion—an antiquated philosophy that hangs neglected like the hippie beads in the back of their mothers’ closets. But the philosophy of feminism has not died. Rather, it has been thoroughly incorporated into our collective societal psyche. The radical has become commonplace. Hollywood’s image of women as “kick-butt” female tomb raiders, terminatrixes, and trash-talking-machine-gun-toting mercenaries do not raise our collective eyebrows. Virtually all of us—to one degree or another—have become feminists.

Some may think that an intellectual foray into past philosophy is an exercise in futility. But it is the student of history who understands current culture and is equipped to envision a path for the future. During a time of national turmoil, the nation of Israel was served by the men of Issachar, men who “understood the times and knew what Israel should do” (1 Chron. 12:32). It is my hope that this book may stimulate the development of such people. I pray that God may use it to raise up holy “Issachar” men and women to speak to the next generation—men and women who hold the knowledge of our times in one hand and the truth, clarity, and charity of the Word of God in the other, men and women whose hearts are broken over the gender confusion and spiritual/emotional/relational carnage of our day and who (like those men of old) *know* what the church should do.

THE PROBLEM WITHOUT A NAME

It has barely begun, the search of women for themselves. But the time is at hand when the voices of the feminine mystique can no longer drown out the inner voice that is driving women on to become complete.

BETTY FRIEDAN, 1963

The women's movement reemerged in North America in the early 1960s. Its aim was the pursuit of meaning, wholeness, and equality for women. Many refer to its appearance as the "second wave" of feminism, for it was not the first time such a quest was undertaken. The feminist tradition of pursuing wholeness has spanned many generations.

The "first wave" of feminism began in the late 1700s when an Englishwoman, Mary Wollstonecraft, penned *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Within a year of its publication, Olympe de Gouges issued a street pamphlet in Paris entitled *Les Droits de la Femme* (*The Rights of Woman*) and an American, Judith Sargent Murray, published *On the Equality of the Sexes* in Massachusetts.¹ Other powerful feminist thinkers soon emerged: Frances Wright, Sarah Grimke, Sojourner Truth, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Taylor, and John Stuart Mill. Together, these nineteenth-century feminists began a tide of revolutionary fervor that swept over the Western world.

In 1848 a hundred American women gathered at a convention in Seneca Falls, New York, to ratify a "Declaration of Sentiments" regarding the basic natural rights of women. In the Declaration of Sentiments, drafted primarily by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, fifteen grievances were catalogued. The first two concerned the denial of suffrage and the right of the governed to consent in their laws. The next several concerned the injustice of *couverture*: the legal ordinances that eviscerated a married woman's right to property and wages, and gave to her husband the right

to her obedience.² The final several grievances dealt with societal prejudices rather than political rights. The authors of the Declaration of Sentiments complained that women were barred from “profitable employment” and did not receive equitable pay. They noted that women were excluded from the professions of theology, medicine, and law, and claimed that all universities were closed to females. In addition, a double standard of morality condemned women to public obloquy while exonerating men for the same (sexual) misdeeds.³

The women’s movement gained momentum over the next few decades as women witnessed doors opening to higher education and many professions.⁴ Divorce laws were liberalized, and drastic changes in the legal status of married women evolved. By mid-century nearly all states had adopted legislation protecting married women’s property, giving a married woman considerable leverage to establish her own economic base, and improving her legal position in child custody cases.⁵ In 1920 women in the United States finally obtained the right to vote. By 1930 they were attaining higher education and entering the workforce. Many of the legal, political, economic, and educational barriers that had restricted women were removed, and women stepped out into man’s world with passion and zeal.

No one quite knows why—perhaps it was because of the war, or perhaps it was because the dream attained did not bring the satisfaction it promised—but within one generation, some women ceased to pursue the professional ends they had previously sought. They, and then their daughters, laid aside careers and returned home to take up the profession of homemaker and wife. The fervor of the 1920s and ’30s was lost, and the public cry for women’s equality became dormant.

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir broke the long silence about women’s issues. Her book *Le Deuxieme Sexe* (*The Second Sex*) appeared in two successive volumes in 1949, and then was translated into English and introduced to America in 1953. The book was not an immediate success, but by the mid-1960s de Beauvoir’s work was heralded as a manifesto for women’s liberation. The first phase of the construction of *modern* feminist thought thus began.

In order to understand de Beauvoir’s work, it is helpful to know something of her training in academic philosophy and also to notice her

association with a certain philosophic ideal. De Beauvoir was an extraordinarily gifted student who studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, receiving first a degree in philosophy and then, by age twenty-two, the coveted *aggregation*.⁶ The *aggregation* is the French qualification that allows its recipients to teach a particular subject in either a lycee or a university. It is more difficult and of far higher status than the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of a postgraduate teaching certificate or diploma.

During her studies de Beauvoir met the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre and de Beauvoir engaged in a fully consummated love affair, and although they encountered many trials and problems in their interpersonal relationship, their association continued throughout their lifetimes. Together, de Beauvoir and Sartre championed many causes, and together they embraced a common philosophy. Sartre had developed his philosophical ideals into a coherent conceptual system commonly described as existentialism: the term for various philosophical doctrines based on the concept that *the individual is entirely free, and must therefore accept commitment and full responsibility for his acts and decisions* in an uncertain and purposeless world. De Beauvoir's education and her close association with Sartre shaped her analysis of the male-female relationship. In *The Second Sex*, she proposed a model for male-female interaction based upon existential philosophy.

WOMAN'S ROLE—"SECOND SEX"

De Beauvoir's primary thesis, as the title of her book suggests, was that women as a group were assigned to second-class status in the world. Woman was "defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her."⁷ De Beauvoir believed that the male sex comprised the prime measure by which the whole world—including women—were named and judged. Therefore, the world belonged to men. Women were the nonessential "other." De Beauvoir argued: ". . . she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other."⁸

De Beauvoir noted this inequity in every area of society, including economics, industry, politics, education, and even language:

Woman has always been man's dependent, if not his slave; the two sexes have never shared the world in equality . . . almost nowhere is her legal status the same as man's, and frequently it is much to her disadvantage. Even when her rights are legally recognized in the abstract,

long-standing custom prevents their full expression in the mores. In the economic sphere men and women can almost be said to make up two castes; other things being equal, the former have the better jobs, get higher wages and have more opportunity for success. . . . In industry and politics men have a great many more positions and they monopolize the most important posts. In addition to all this, they enjoy a traditional prestige that the education of children tends in every way to support, for the present enshrines the past—and in the past all history has been made by men. . . . In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity.⁹

De Beauvoir argued that it was a “man’s world.” Women were forced by men to conform to a mold that men had created for their own benefit and pleasure. This mold she named “the eternal feminine.” According to de Beauvoir, it was a mold that caused women to be “frivolous, infantile, irresponsible and submissive.”¹⁰ She maintained that *the eternal feminine* corresponded to “the black soul” and to “the Jewish character”; women were shaped to occupy the lower, and men the higher of a master-slave/superior-inferior hierarchy. De Beauvoir argued that the women of her day were not allowed or encouraged to do or become anything other than that which *the eternal feminine* dictated; they were trapped into a restrictive role of “*Küche, Kirche, und Kinder*”: “Kitchen, church, and children” (Nazi Germany’s official statement regarding the place of women). In de Beauvoir’s view, women existed solely for the convenience and pleasure of men.

WOMAN’S DILEMMA—THE NEED TO TRANSCEND

De Beauvoir viewed the dilemma of women in existential terms. Women, she pointed out, were autonomous beings with the need to “transcend” self, but this need was being suppressed by men. According to de Beauvoir, men had named and defined the world, and in doing so had identified all humanity as male, thus robbing women of autonomy.¹¹

Now what peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman is that she—a free and autonomous being like all human creatures—nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the

status of the Other. They propose to stabilize her as object and to doom her to immanence since her transcendence is to be overshadowed and forever transcended by another ego (conscience) which is essential and sovereign. The drama of woman lies in this conflict between the fundamental aspirations of every subject (ego)—who always regards the self as the essential—and the compulsions of a situation in which she is the inessential.¹²

According to de Beauvoir, the dilemma for women was in being denied the right to autonomy, and therefore the right to transcend and develop. She viewed this right as the essence of human existence.

There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future. . . . Every individual concerned to justify his existence feels that his existence involves an undefined need to transcend himself, to engage in freely chosen projects.¹³

According to de Beauvoir, women's lack of autonomy condemned them to stagnation. She maintained that the women of her day were extremely unhappy in this situation, even though they were pronounced "happy" because they did not complain. De Beauvoir argued that happiness did not consist in being at rest; rather individuals only achieved fulfillment through a continual reaching out toward other liberties. According to de Beauvoir, women were being denied this right.

WOMAN'S SOLUTION—COLLECTIVE ASSERTION

The philosophy of existentialism assigned responsibility for one's own destiny to oneself. Therefore, in formulating her theory, de Beauvoir blamed women for allowing the second sex status to be forced upon them: "If woman seems to be the inessential which never becomes the essential, it is because she herself fails to bring about this change."¹⁴

De Beauvoir determined that the reason for woman's silence and apparent unwillingness to change was a lack of means of communication among women and a corresponding lack of organized corporate resistance.

Women lack concrete means for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit. They have no past, no history, no religion of their own; and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat. . . . They live dis-

persed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men—fathers or husbands—more firmly than they are to other women.¹⁵

De Beauvoir declared that women needed to identify themselves as a group and collectively declare war on the second sex structure of their lives.¹⁶ She believed that equality and liberation would be achieved only by destroying the male's superiority and refusing to succumb to a traditional role.¹⁷ According to de Beauvoir, women were "imprisoned" by the roles of mother, wife, and sweetheart;¹⁸ therefore, she maintained that "all forms of socialism, wresting woman away from the family, favor her liberation."¹⁹ Her utopian ideal was one in which the collective state assumed responsibility for the maternal functions that burdened women and restricted their participation in the workforce:

A world where men and women would be equal is easy to visualize, for that precisely is what the Soviet Revolution promised: women raised and trained exactly like men were to work under the same conditions and for the same wages. Erotic liberty was to be recognized by custom, but the sexual act was not to be considered a "service" to be paid for; woman was to be *obliged* to provide for herself other ways of earning a living; marriage was to be based on a free agreement that the spouses could break at will; maternity was to be voluntary, which meant that contraception and abortion be authorized and that, on the other hand, all mothers and their children were to have exactly the same rights, in or out of marriage; pregnancy leaves paid for by the state, which would assume charge of the children. . . .²⁰

De Beauvoir viewed departure from the role of wife and mother and the establishment of economic and professional independence as the key to women's equality with men. Her model was socialist. It demanded the revolt of the "bourgeoisie" of women and encouraged state-regulated laws to overcome social mores and patterns of behavior.

Although containing some practical application, de Beauvoir's work was largely theoretical, dealing with the inequities of women's position and comparing the male-female relationship to that of the bourgeoisie versus the proletariat. Her existential and philosophical terminology did not appeal to the average North American woman. *The Second Sex* was therefore not widely noted in North America until after the appearance of a second manifesto, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*.

BETTY FRIEDAN

In the early 1960s, an American journalist, Betty Friedan, transformed deBeauvoir's philosophical concepts into something more understandable for the average American woman. In 1957 Friedan had compiled a questionnaire for the female alumnae at her fifteen-year college reunion. She was determined to disprove the common notion that a college education ill prepared women for the role of wife and mother. The results of her questionnaire surprised her. She found that her classmates were frustrated in their roles as wives and mothers. Friedan went on to ask whether the frustration was a result of education or of women's role itself.²¹ *McCall's* turned down Friedan's article on the question, *Ladies' Home Journal* would not edit it to her satisfaction, and *Redbook* claimed the article would only appeal to the most neurotic housewife.²² So Friedan decided to research and write a book that would thoroughly examine the role of the North American woman.

Friedan interviewed editors of women's magazines; surveyed articles and books; spoke with psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and family-life experts, and finally interviewed eighty women in depth. She concluded that a discrepancy existed between the reality of women's lives and the image to which they were trying to conform. Friedan named this image "the feminine mystique," and the phrase became the title of her book. *The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963, and it, together with deBeauvoir's *The Second Sex*, formed the base for the development of the modern feminist movement.

WOMAN'S ROLE—"THE MYSTIQUE"

To support her case for a feminine "mystique," Betty Friedan pointed to a number of articles appearing in women's magazines in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These articles reported a "syndrome" that some women experienced. Its symptoms included feelings of "dissatisfaction," of "yearning," and of "emptiness." It became known as the "trapped housewife syndrome."²³ Friedan maintained that the feelings these women reported were not abnormal, but were in fact common to many women. Furthermore, she argued, their feelings arose as a result of society's expectations of women's role and behavior. Friedan argued:

Fulfillment as a woman had only one definition for American women after 1949—the housewife-mother. As swiftly as in a dream, the image

of the American woman as a changing, growing individual in a changing world was shattered. Her solo flight to find her own identity was forgotten in the rush for the security of togetherness. Her limitless world shrunk to the cozy walls of home.²⁴

Friedan echoed de Beauvoir's dismal assessment of women as limited to "*Küche, Kirche, Kinder*." She said that women had been convinced that in order to be "truly feminine," they should not want the careers, higher education, or political rights fought for by old-fashioned feminists.²⁵ According to Friedan, women of her day were taught to seek fulfillment only as wives and mothers. She argued that this mystique of feminine fulfillment left women acting "young and frivolous, almost child-like, fluffy and feminine; passive; gaily content in a world of bedroom and kitchen, sex, babies and home." They were "excluded from the world of thought and ideas," "denying their minds," and "ignoring questions of their own identity."²⁶ Friedan identified this mystique of feminine fulfillment as the "cherished and self-perpetuating core of contemporary American culture":

Millions of women lived their lives in the image of those pretty pictures of the American suburban housewife, kissing their husbands goodbye in front of the picture window, depositing their station wagonsful of children at school, and smiling as they ran the new electric waxer over the spotless kitchen floor. They baked their own bread, sewed their own and their children's clothes, kept their new washing machines and dryers running all day. They changed the sheets on the beds twice a week instead of once, took the rug-hooking class in adult education, and pitied their poor frustrated mothers, who had dreamed of having a career. Their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition to have five children and a beautiful house, their only fight to get and keep their husbands. They had no thought for the unfeminine problems of the world outside the home; they wanted the men to make the major decisions. They gloried in their role as women, and wrote proudly on the census blank: "Occupation: housewife."²⁷

Friedan claimed that women had a "problem of identity—a stunting or evasion of growth."²⁸ Women, Friedan claimed, had lost "the capacity to transcend the present and to act in light of the possible, the mysterious capacity to shape the future."²⁹ Friedan's ideas mirrored the

existential philosophy proposed by de Beauvoir. Like de Beauvoir, she maintained that the only way for a woman to find herself and to know herself as a person was through creative work of her own.³⁰

WOMAN'S DILEMMA—A PROBLEM WITHOUT A NAME

Betty Friedan believed that self-fulfillment came from having a defined purpose and from shaping and contributing to the world in tangible and creative ways. Men could seek self-fulfillment, but women—curtailed by conformity to the role of wife and mother and *the feminine mystique*—could not. This created a dilemma. On the one hand, women who devoted themselves fully to the feminine mystique were, according to Friedan, *unhappy* and *unfulfilled*. On the other hand, society expected women to *be* happy and fulfilled in this particular role. Friedan argued that the inner frustration of women was seldom, if ever, discussed or open to debate. Women felt too ashamed to admit their dissatisfaction and were thus unaware of how many other women shared it.³¹ Friedan called this dilemma “*a problem with no name*.”³² It was caused by women trying to adjust to an image that did not permit them to become what they could be. It was the growing despair of those who had forfeited their own existence.³³

Betty Friedan, together with Simone de Beauvoir, blamed women's frustration and purposelessness on society's stereotyped expectation of the role of women. According to these early feminists, society had wrongly named and defined women. Woman's role, not women, was responsible for their unhappiness.

WOMAN'S SOLUTION—EDUCATION AND SERIOUS PROFESSIONAL COMMITMENT

Friedan saw education as a means to escape the impasse of *the feminine mystique*. But education was the key to changing the problem only when it was part of a new life plan and meant for serious use in society. Friedan maintained that educators at every college, university, junior college, and community college should see to it that women make a lifetime commitment to a field of thought and to a work of serious importance to society. According to Friedan, each woman would need to name herself by developing a vision for her own future. Furthermore, she pointed out, the fulfillment of a woman's vision necessitated the restruc-

turing of her responsibilities. It was not possible for women to fulfill traditional roles as mother and wife and concurrently pursue their own visions; so society would have to adjust its basic ideas about employment and the family.

There is only one way for women to reach full human potential—by participating in the mainstream of society, by exercising their own voice in all the decisions shaping that society. For women to have full identity and freedom, they must have economic independence. Breaking through the barriers that had kept them from the jobs and professions rewarded by society was the first step, but it wasn't sufficient. It would be necessary to change the rules of the game to restructure professions, marriage, the family, the home.³⁴

Friedan agreed with de Beauvoir that the liberation of women would require sweeping changes in society. Although her utopian vision was far less defined than de Beauvoir's socialist framework, her thoughts led in essentially the same direction.

SEARCHING FOR “SOMETHING MORE”

De Beauvoir and Friedan determined that the unfulfilled, unchallenged women of their generation were searching for “something more.” The two women pointed to male-female role interaction as the root of women's discontent. These second-wave pioneers believed that inner wholeness could only be found through women leaving their traditional role in order to emulate men. They argued that women would only be fulfilled by joining the ranks of the professional and educated, contributing something more concrete to society than motherhood and wifehood. In order to transcend—to attain “something more”—women needed to take control of their own lives, name themselves, and set their own destiny.

NAMING THE PROBLEM—PATRIARCHY

Simone de Beauvoir's and Betty Friedan's writings began to gain popularity among North American women. Evidently many women were experiencing inner feelings of frustration and discontentment, and many eagerly yearned for the “something more” proffered by these feminist pioneers. A problem had been exposed, and feminists were convinced that it was *the* problem. Although they had not yet found a word to ade-

quately describe it, they were confident that it was the cause of women's malaise.

In the late 1960s, feminist author Kate Millett used the term *patriarchy* to describe the "problem without a name." *Patriarchy* derives its origin from two Greek words: *pater*, meaning "father," and *arche*, meaning "rule." It was to be understood as "rule of the father," and was used to describe the societal dominance of the male, and the inferiority and subservience of the female. Feminists saw patriarchy as the ultimate cause of women's discontent. Adrienne Rich explained:

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor—determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.³⁵

Patriarchy was the word for which de Beauvoir and Friedan had been looking. According to feminists, patriarchy was the power of men that oppressed women and was responsible for their unhappiness. Feminists reasoned that the demise of patriarchy would bring about women's fulfillment and allow them to become whole.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION: THE TSUNAMI OF FEMINISM

1. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.
2. "Youth Indicators," U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/yiy/9603c.asp>
3. "Statistics: Cohabitation," U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, <http://www.unmarried.org/statistics.html>
4. Ibid.
5. Robert Rector, "Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing and Paternal Absence: Trends and Social Effects," from *Familia et Vita*, Pontifical Council for the Family, 1999, No. 2-3 issue. (Source: Vital and Health Statistics, 1999) http://www.catholicculture.org/doc_view.cfm?recnum=1446, pp. 2-3.
6. "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators 2001," National Center for Health Statistics, <http://www.empower.org/family.pdf>, 11/12/ 2003, pp. 43-44.
7. Rector, "Out-of-Wedlock Childbearing and Paternal Absence," p. 1.
8. "The Positive Effects of Marriage: A Book of Charts," Data from Federal Reserve Board, survey of Consumer Finance, 1998. www.heritage.org/research/features/marriage p. 3
9. "Attitudes Toward Marriage," U.S. Bureau of the Census, <http://www.poppolitics.com/articles/printerfriendly/200-06-19-stats.shtml>
10. "Women in the Labor Force" <http://www.angelfire.com/weird2/tessa/stats.html>
11. "Facts About Working Women," U.S. Department of Labor, <http://www.aflcio.org/your-jobeconomy/women/factsaboutworkingwomen.cfm>

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM WITHOUT A NAME

1. Josephine Donovan, *Feminist Theory—The Intellectual Traditions of American Feminism* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1985), p. 1.
2. Donovan noted that *couverture* also gave the husband power to deprive his wife of liberty and to administer chastisement as he saw fit. Ibid., p. 7.
3. Ibid.
4. Women's educational opportunities gradually expanded throughout the 1800s. In 1821 Emma Willard, an American teacher, founded the Troy Female Seminary (now the Emma Willard School) in Troy, N.Y. Her school was one of the first institutions to offer girls a high school education. In 1833 Oberlin Collegiate Institute, now known as Oberlin College, opened as the first coeducational college in the United States. By 1900 some major European and American universities began to follow suit and accepted women for advanced study and professional training.
5. Donovan, *Feminist Theory*, p. 27.
6. Mary Evans, in *Feminist Theorists: Three Centuries of Key Women Thinkers*, ed. Dale Spender (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 349.
7. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Random House, 1952), p. xix.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid., pp. xxiv, xviii.
10. Ibid., p. xxvii.

11. Ibid., p. xviii.
12. Ibid., p. xxxiv.
13. Ibid., p. xxxiii.
14. Ibid., p. xxii.
15. Ibid., pp. xxii-xxiii.
16. Ibid., p. 797.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 126.
20. Ibid., p. 806.
21. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1963), p. 6.
22. Ibid., p. 7.
23. Ibid., p. 22.
24. Ibid., p. 44.
25. Ibid., p. 16.
26. Ibid., pp. 36, 66.
27. Ibid., p. 18.
28. Ibid., p. 77.
29. Ibid., p. 312.
30. Ibid., p. 344.
31. Ibid., p. 19.
32. Ibid., p. 311.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid., pp. 384-385.
35. Adrienne Rich, *Of Women Born* (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), pp. 57, 58.

CHAPTER 2: A PROBLEM IN THE CHURCH

1. Gertrud Heinzlmann, "The Priesthood and Women," *Commonweal*, Vol. 81, No. 16 (January 15, 1965), p. 504.
2. Katherine Bliss, *The Service and Status of Women in the Church* (London: SCM Press, 1952).
3. Ibid., p. 10.
4. Ibid.
5. I believe that the major contributing factor to the presence of feminism in the church is a wrong enactment of biblical leadership and a wrong concept of church structure. I agree with feminists that the church abuses and oppresses its women. I cannot, however, support the course religious feminists have chosen for correcting the problem. For further discussion, please refer to my first book, *Women, Creation and the Fall* (Crossway, 1990).
6. Mary Daly, "A Built-In Bias," *Commonweal*, Vol. 81, No. 16 (January 15, 1965), p. 511.
7. William Douglas, "Women in the Church," *Pastoral Psychology* (1961), p. 15.
8. Ibid., p. 14.
9. F. S. Smith, "Fairness for the Fair Sex," *Christianity and Crisis* (September 17, 1962), pp. 146-147.
10. Polly Allen Robinson, "Women in Christ," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, Vol. 19 (March, 1964), p. 193.