

Die Bybelse aksent val seer beslis op die *eenheid* waarin ons almal as skepsels van God en as sondaars voor Sy aangesig deel; en daarom glo ek dat ons géén reg het om in ons politiek die teenoorgestelde aksent te hanteer nie - altans nie solank ons onself as Christene wil uitgee nie. En 'n teologie wat aanhoudend hierdie omBybelse aksent hanteer ten einde daarmee 'n bepaalde beleid te regverdig, vergryp hom aan die duidelike boodskap van die Skrif.

Dus: universele stemreg vir almal, sonder aansien des persoons? Nee, want nie almal is bevoegd om 'n verstandige stem uit te bring nie. Universele stemreg moet daar wees, sodat elkeen, ook die eenvoudigste dagloner, kan weet en voel dat hy *deel* het aan die regering wat wette oor hom maak; maar dit sou verregaand onverantwoordelik wees om aan die onkundige dieselfde seggenskap in die politieke bestel van die land te gee as aan diegene wat wel enige (sy dit ook geringe) kennis van sake het. Die stemreg *moet* gekwalifiseer wees; maar dan nie op grond van *kleur*, soos tans die geval is nie, maar op grond van *beskawing*. Arbitrêre toetse? Ongetwyfeld; maar dit is beter as géén toetse nie. 'n Oplossing

wat die moontlikheid van ernstige spanninge in 'n veelrassige Parlement inhou? Ongetwyfeld; maar dit is beter as om spanninge te laat oplaai waarvoor géén sodanige uitlaatklep voorsien word nie. 'n Groot politieke waagstuk? Ongetwyfeld; maar vergeet nie, ons is reeds in elk geval met 'n groot waagstuk besig! Die verskil is slegs dat die waagstuk van die apartheid-beleid géén antwoord bied op die kardinale vrae i.v.m. die stedelike Bantoe en die Kleurlingbevolking nie, terwyl hiêrdie waagstuk juis hiermee rekening wil hou en op die logika van ons werklike situasie gegrond is. Die vraag is nie of ons moet waag nie. Die vraag is slegs: wát sal ons waag? Watter keuse bied, menslikerwys gesproke, die beste kans op sukses?

Ek weet nie of die finale oplossing vir ons groot vraagstuk hierin geleë is nie. Wellig is daar geen finale oplossing nie, en sal ons moet leer om stapsgewys ons pad te voel. Maar één ding weet ek, en dit is dat die 'n uitgangspunt soos hierdie die enig juiste is vir 'n land soos hierdie ... Miskien kom daar eersdaags iemand na vore wat 'n beter oplossing het. Maar die kans lyk my nie groot nie.

## **WOMEN'S LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**Shirley Moore Sheila Morton**

Women's liberation is 'catching on' fairly fast in South Africa - but not nearly fast enough. It is a widespread movement throughout the United States and other parts of the world, where women on the whole tend to be very much more aware of their oppression.

### **WOMEN IN THE HOME**

One big reason for the lack of awareness in white South African women is, surely, the availability of 'cheap', unskilled labour in the domestic set-up, which will be dealt with at a later stage.

Indoctrination which boxes us quite clearly into male/female roles starts very early in life. From the moment a little girl is born, society begins to mould her, her future is clearly mapped out for her, WIFE, MOTHER, HOUSEKEEPER. She learns to make herself beautiful to catch her man, thereby entering the female competitive rat race. Any extra classes she might take are generally cooking, dress-making, etc. What happens to her in the interim between school and marriage is fundamentally of very little consequence. The capitalistic society which depends on economic incentive provides her with little. Her place in the economy is taken to be temporary, e.g. lower wages for women and little money 'wasted' on education for girls. Of course there are always the few who go against the 'norms'

of society and instead of conforming take on a 'male-type' career. But these are just the few 'oddies' who have managed to creep through the few chinks in the male armoury. These 'chinks' are limited, in the main, to some of the professions.

Moulding of our little boys also begins in early years - DON'T for God's sake, allow him to play with dolls - he's sure to become a homo-sexual. Teasetts and prams are out for boys. He's destined for bigger things - he must be the breadwinner - the professional, the he-man in our competitive capitalistic society.

We in South Africa who are aware of oppression tend to be far more aware of the need for black/white liberation rather than male/female liberation and are hardly aware of the links between. American women have stated quite categorically that until they (the women) become identified with the Blacks there shall be no liberation!!

In South Africa, if white women are becoming aware of a male oppressive society, how much more aware must the Black woman become to bring about her liberation? Far be it from us to speak of the Black woman's plight - it is part of her liberation to speak for herself.

Male domination is clearly evidenced in the marriage scene. The male partner goes out to work in an

8 - 5 job or a profession with different hours, but away from home. The female partner stays at home doing household chores and minding one or several offspring. Most S.A. women who do go out to work to supplement the monthly income still come home to put children to bed, cook dinner and at least once a week do the *family's* weekly wash, whilst hubby sits back and has a quick game of chess or reads the newspaper.

Very often, strangely enough, when the wife is confronted on women's liberation, her retort will be - "Oh, but I love my husband and I enjoy waiting on him; I simply can't bear him to soil his hands in nappy changing and besides he can't bear the smell!" Poor dear! ... who can anyway? He had a share in making that baby, didn't he? And in the case of adoption, he had freedom of choice, didn't he?

As far as waiting on your man is concerned, we simply cannot believe that a woman who has been coping with babies and household chores from early morning can think of nothing more exciting to do than spend her evenings waiting on her male counterpart, who, granted, has worked a full 8-9 hours, and is understandably tired - but here the myth collapses - because both sexes tire, and let's face it, the woman's day starts long before 8 a.m. and does not end at 5 p.m. - unless she has an unliberated Black substitute! If you love your man don't become his doormat!

Helen Robertson in an article entitled "What type of woman are you?" says: "You believe in love and believe it can only live where there is equality and self-respect; where there is no manipulation nor people-just-with-a-function (neither male nor female, slave or free). The unequal, inferior, passive and submissive person cannot love. She is using other people to give her life security and meaning, but has nothing to give in return. Passivity is the mark of the underling, the comical Negro, the well-brought-up child (almost always a girl-child), the charming, vacuous young woman who loses herself in her husband. Somehow we know that it is the civil-rights-demanding Negro who is honestly loving, the child given freedom to develop who is honestly loving; yet we suspect that the woman who will not be repressed is cold and hard and inhuman. However psychological tests of suppressed attitudes bear out the conclusion that women who accept the superiority of their man feel the greatest resentment.

"The liberated woman loves her neighbour as herself and works for the human dignity of man, woman and child. The 'feminine' woman can only serve those whom she believes to be her superiors and extends the hostile attitude she bears towards herself to her equals - her sisters.

"The most dangerous division of labour is into personal and non-personal, domestic and political, female and male. This is a necessary by-product of the industrial revolution. We must take women into

the home if we want whole people. The de-personalization of our society dates from the time when women took over all responsibility for personal relationships to free their men for building the industrial revolution. Half-people are the result - little boys growing up impersonal, like their absentee fathers, and little girls growing up narrow and irresponsible like their domesticated mothers".

It has been most revealing in talking to white women in S.A. to discover how few feel the need to be liberated. When delving a bit deeper one finds that the S.A. woman who is left fairly free to do her 'thing' simply has another woman back home, coping with children and chores, etc. NOT HUSBAND SHARING CHORES AND CHILDREN. The white woman rides the back of her black sister. Surely all the mundane household tasks plus the caring for children can be *shared* by all members of a household, including a black woman if she is being employed at a non-exploitative level and has her set hours for which she is justly paid - not to be at the beck and call of a white household 24 hours a day. All the men in the household will also need to accept this as part of their lot in living together. Sharing household chores should not be seen as doing the women a favour.

There is a raging controversy whether it is morally just or unjust to employ a black women in a domestic capacity. As we see it and in consultation with several black women involved in women's liberation, with so many black women the sole breadwinners of a large family, one can do little else but employ, particularly with the evils of influx control and job reservation. Here again politicisation is important so that all women be made aware of their rights and that a black women in a domestic situation be given complete freedom to opt out of any given situation where exploitation occurs.

\* \* \* \* \*

## WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

The Church professes equality between all men - and this may be so - but notably this does not include women. Here one finds unbelievable prejudice against women.

Women must "remain silent in church" - Paul in the Epistle to the Corinthians. Very few men "like" hearing a woman preach - if they will condescend to attend her services at all. They must "be in subjection to their husbands" - anti-feminist Paul again. They belong to Women's *Auxiliaries* (subtly excluding them from the "real" work of the Church) and, if allowed on the local Church body at all, must always occupy less important positions.

Although over 50% of churchgoers are women, ALL churches are male-dominated, i.e. have a majority of men in the ruling positions in local church bodies, as well as virtually men only in the controlling national Conference, Assembly, etc.

The so-called 'natural' place for a woman to participate in the life of the church is in the Women's Auxiliary/Fellowship/Association. Presumably this does still fill a need in some women's lives, but by no stretch of the imagination could the normal women's church meeting be called thought-provoking, politically awakening or intellectually stimulating. This is mainly because women themselves have been educated and brought up to believe that they are inferior in so many ways to men, that they themselves often believe it, and so are unable to free themselves of their oppressions.

We must break away from believing that our greatest talents necessarily lie in the directions of housework, cookery and mothercraft. Given the opportunities and education normally reserved for men, we too can make the most of our intellect, personality and ambitions, and take our rightful, active place in the community.

The Church's complete disregard for women's feelings is seen most clearly in those churches (e.g. Methodist) which cling to the system of the itinerant ministry. It is true that the man often does not have much choice in where he will work, but it is totally unheard of for the wife to be consulted in the matter. It is just accepted that she will follow her husband blindly around - remaining, of course, sweet-tempered, agreeable and compliant - fulfilling all that is expected of her in her role of minister's wife.

The fact that she may have developed close and meaningful friendships, which have to be broken each time she moves (resulting in feelings of insecurity

and deep unhappiness), or (understandably less often) a job which she finds fulfilling, is simply not taken into account.

All this is secondary to the great 'God-ordained' job which her husband is doing. It is just presumed that the wife will uncomplainingly give this all up to go where her husband is sent. All this in a church which claims to believe with Paul that in Christ there is "neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, SLAVE nor free..."

I know many women believe that they have been "called" to be ministers' wives, but this means being an understudy to your husband for the rest of HIS ministry. Very little of yourself is left after playing out this role for a number of years and having become more and more submerged in his personality and his "thing". Few wives are able to break away from this role definition and become persons in their own right and creative in their own spheres - because of the years of prejudice, and society's and the church's expectations.

But the time is NOW, no-one else can do it for you. It is an exciting experience to discover **YOURSELF**.

\* \* \* \*

This article is not just meant as an abstract negativism against all males, but rather a genuine argument for opportunity, equality and recognition of ourselves as persons, in all spheres and no longer women in stereotyped roles.

## Charter for Women

*The rights enumerated in this Charter might appear to be so fundamental as not to need stating at all. All women should have them, but in South Africa the majority of women do not. In fact, African women do not enjoy any of them, because the whole policy of apartheid, which entrenches discrimination on the basis of colour, has caused the denial of these rights to be written into the laws of the land.*

- Every woman has the right to choose her marriage partner.
- Every woman has the right to live with her husband throughout her married life.
- Every woman has the right to live with her children, to protect them and to care for them.
- Every woman has the right to free education for her children.
- Every woman has the right to own or to rent property in her own name.
- Every woman has the right to freedom of movement and residence.
- Every woman has the right to work, to free choice of employment and to just and favourable conditions of work.
- Every woman has the right to live out her declining years with those who wish to care for her.
- Every woman has the right to these fundamental rights and freedoms which shall not be violated by any law or administrative action.

See Mrs. J. Sinclair's letter on page 14