

reactionary critics, who claim that he is in league with the Lutherans. Although Erasmus disavows any involvement with the reformers, he remains in favour of reforms in the Church such as allowing clergy to marry (though he prefers celibacy). He also was a staunch critic of the moral decay he saw about himself in the Church and the Academy. In many respects Erasmus was sympathetic to Luther's ecclesiastical cause, though he disagreed on fundamental theological issues. Erasmus desired and campaigned for reform, but adamantly refused to pay the price of schism. Even though Luther and his followers had been forced from the Church, Erasmus nevertheless saw them as God's instrument for reform. Writing to Duke George of Saxony, Erasmus noted that "Luther has given the world strong and bitter medicine. Whatever we may think of Luther's medicine, I hope it will bring better health to the body of Christ's people, which has been tainted by ills from every quarter" (Ep 1526: 200-203).

By Reading Erasmus' correspondence one enters his world, gaining insight into the mind of one of the most fascinating characters on the world's stage in the sixteenth century. One reads of his affections for his friends, of his requests for support from patrons and his joy at receiving every gift. One suffers with Erasmus his incessant difficulties with kidney stones, a malady that led him to expect an imminent death. (Death would not claim Erasmus for another dozen years.) One feels Erasmus' pain at every barb slung his way, and one revels in the attacks he aims at his critics. The correspondence of Erasmus is an essential resource for the historian of the sixteenth century. The present volume will prove an indispensable addition to any library. It also serves to heighten our anticipation of future volumes.

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***Who Needs Feminism? Men Respond to Sexism in the Church.* Ed. Richard Holloway. London: SPCK, 1991. ISBN 0-281-04543-7. Pp. vii+164.**

Feminism is considered by many people to be a subversive threat to the Church and a challenge to the basic beliefs and tenets of Christianity. This collection of essays evaluates these presuppositions by exploring the positive contributions feminism has to offer. Is feminism helpful only to women? Or is it true that men need feminism too? These are some of the questions addressed in this book written by distinguished churchmen and male theologians.

The impetus behind this collection is clearly the debate about the ordination of women in the Church of England. Each contributor recognizes that the

women's movement has exposed the deep faithlessness that "is rooted in a peculiarly male type of insecurity that has to keep things neat and tied down, with everything in its place, especially women" (10). However, this is not a central theme in the book: the real issue is justice, and the human struggle between moral justice and institutional inertia.

Written with vigour, theological commitment and sound scholarship, these essays provide an excellent review of many issues that have been hotly debated since the early 1970s. For readers who are new to feminism, the essays provide insights into the sexism undergirding traditional methodologies of Christian exegesis, Roman Catholicism's need for the veneration of Mary, and how feminism continues to challenge men to reassess what it means to be a pastor.

Two essays focus directly on the book's central issue. Brian Wren's "Language Change and Male Repentance" explores how language has been a subtle tool for the oppression of women and how a change of speech willingly follows a conversion of the mind. The issue of justice and its relationship to the belief that women are, by nature, incapable of receiving ordination is sharply focused in Michael Jacob's "Is Anatomy Destiny?" His insights into the new man and the subsequent unconscious sexism inherent within this phenomenon are thought-provoking.

Richard Holloway's "Postscript" returns to the point introduced earlier in his introduction, namely, males must "repent of the old, sinful attitudes and seek a more righteous society." He makes an accurate observation that the debate has shifted from the ordination of women to religious language, and argues that the debate should be "over the nature of language in its sacramental role as a conveyer of the divine majesty" (164).

Who Needs Feminism? is a refreshing read. Now that the Church of England has consented to the ordination of women, it will be interesting to see if the contributors consider this development merely "window dressing" or an honest change in the way churchmen and male theologians live and understand the Christian faith.

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