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"To lead the People":
resignifying gender in the Uniting Church in Australia

Chapter 1: Introduction

Research Problem

Since Union in 1977 the theological statements of the Uniting Church in Australia have affirmed the role of women and recognised those women called of God to preach the Gospel, to lead the people in worship, to care for the flock, share in government and to serve those in need in the world.[1] The March 1990 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee of the Uniting Church in Australia resolved to approve the document "Why does the Uniting Church in Australia Ordain Women in the Ministry of the Word?" to express the biblical and theological reasoning which leads the Uniting Church to ordain both women and men to the Ministry of the Word. This document clearly states: "We ordain both women and men to the Ministry of the Word because we believe ordination without discrimination on grounds of gender is a fundamental implication of the gospel of God's love in Christ for all human beings, without distinction."[2] The impetus for this document was the acknowledgement that this was not the practice of the whole Church and there was a deep concern that it was not an assumed practice in the Uniting Church in Australia. As a result, the document sought to affirm a theological position, for those within the tradition and those outside, of the equal place of women and men in ministry in the Uniting Church.

In relation to this study, the document acknowledges the disparity that exists between the theological statements of the Uniting Church and institutional practice. Despite the claim of equality of women in ministry, the Church's historical practice of the systematic exclusion of women from ecclesial leadership operates as an internalised patriarchy and an entrenched organisational norm. The movement of Christian feminism during the second wave feminist movement of the 1960's, followed by a further wave of feminist activity in the 1990's contributed greatly to opening opportunities for women in positions of leadership, however, there continues to be an

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[1] "The *Basis of Union*" 1992 (ed), The Uniting Church in Australia, Para.14.
[2] "Why does the Uniting Church in Australia Ordain Women in the Ministry of the Word?" 1990, Social Responsibility and Justice Committee of the Assembly Commission in Mission, The Uniting Church in Australia.

underrepresentation of women's participation in our current times.[3] While the issue of gender in terms of the theological legitimacy of female ministers has, by and large, been resolved, women continue to be underrepresented amongst senior leadership roles in the Queensland Synod. In its forty-four years since union the Queensland Synod has had only one female Moderator. The ongoing patriarchy in the practices of the church that continue to favour men highlights the failure of the Uniting Church to achieve its egalitarian vision and allow women's knowledge, giftedness, leadership styles and wisdom to shape the church. This thesis will critique the Queensland Synod's lack of depth and insight into the continued absence of women from leadership roles and some impacts of this failed integration. It will highlight the discourse of authority within the church and its impact on gender performance and identity. By understanding the role of structures and normative behaviours in limiting opportunities for women it will begin to identify practices that can be implemented into the governance and procedures of the church.

Methodology

This thesis will apply a feminist hermeneutic of suspicion to unveil the underlying influence of patriarchy in the disparity that exists between the theological statements of the Uniting Church regarding women in ecclesial leadership and current institutional practices. In 1990, the Uniting Church Assembly adopted an official statement which established the grounds on which the Uniting Church in Australia is committed to the ordination of women[4] using a biblical hermeneutic that gives regard to the nature of biblical witness over and against tradition and traditions.[5] While this document and the *Basis of Union* uniquely located the Uniting Church as non-hierarchical and non-patriarchal, the official statements were deeply concerned that the recognition of women as equal partners was not an assumed practice in all areas of the Uniting Church. This study shares this ongoing concern and suspicion. It will be concerned with bringing to consciousness the impact of the Church's acceptance of culturally

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[3] Pitman, J 2011, "Feminist Public Theology in the Uniting Church i Australia", *International Journal of Public Theology,* vol.5, no.2, pp.143-164.

[4] "Why does the Uniting Church in Australia Ordain Women in the Ministry of the Word?" 1990, Social Responsibility and Justice Committee of the Assembly Commission for Mission, The Uniting Church in Australia.

[5] Thompson, G 2005, "'It Has Become Clear to US…': The Justification of the Ordination of Women to the Ministry of the Word in the Uniting Church in Australia.", found in Thomson, C and Pfitzner, V, *Ordination of Women: Interdenominational Perspectives*, ATF Press, Adelaide.

determined gender roles and the subsequent historical practice of the exclusion of women. It will assume that patriarchy is deeply embedded in the structures of the church and that its culture requires constant critique for on-going transformation. My methodology will seek to critically engage the discourse promoting attitudes and norms structurally embedded in the culture of the Christian tradition. It will also identify organisational practices relevant to the ethos and culture of the Uniting Church that allow women to find a more central place within the institutional structures of the church.

My particular hermeneutic will employ a reconstructionist approach to feminist theology. There are many ways by which feminist theologians have engaged the task of employing a feminist hermeneutic, but in this thesis, I believe a reconstructionist approach correlates well with the ecclesial reforms imagined by the writers of the *Basis of Union*. I will utilise the approach as outlined by Anne Clifford[6]:

> "Reconstructionist feminist theologians seek a liberating theological core for women within the Christian tradition, while also envisioning a deeper transformation, a true reconstruction, not only of their church structures but also of civil society…reconstructionist feminists share a critical appraisal of patriarchy, but they believe that reinterpreting the traditional symbols and ideas of Christianity without abandoning the God revealed in Jesus Christ is possible and desirable."

The Uniting Church's vision for an egalitarian approach to women and men in ministry was not to simply make space for women within patriarchy but rather to aspire to a reconstruction of the structures of the church. Its inter-conciliar councils are an example of this approach. The *Basis of Union's* emphasis on the gospel vision for a new creation and the realisation of the reign of God proclaimed by Jesus, the Christ, in word and deed, is a powerful theme of reconstructionist theology in second-wave feminism.[7]

I believe a reconstructionist approach is what is needed to critique the unrealised vision of egalitarianism in the Uniting Church today. As highlighted by Clifford: "third-wave feminist theologies are doing more than revising and adjusting an already existing tradition by calling for [a] renewed vision of Christianity…They are, in a sense,

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[6] Clifford, A.M 2009, *Introducing Feminist Theology*, Orbis Books, New York, pp.33-34.
[7] Ibid, p.34.

constructing a theology from multiple bricks and fresh mortar needed for our time."[8] The church's statements on the role of women offer visionary 'bricks' to build a foundation for the equal place of women. However, what is needed is a reconstruction; a renewed vision, to address the actual lived reality of women in the church.

My reconstructionist methodology will incorporate three basic steps as outlined by Clifford:[9]

1. Attending to the experience(s) of patriarchy and androcentrism by listening attentively to one's own experience and that of other women and/or subjugated me;

2. Bringing these experiences into dialogue with a feminist reading of the bible and /or other Christian texts *(in this case ecclesial statements);*

3. Developing strategies for transformative action or praxis that are liberating.

Using these three steps I will be attentive to the experience of women whose stories are shared in both literature and research; identifying practices that have diminished and promoted opportunities for participation in leadership. Secondly, I will bring these experiences into dialogue with literature that identify ways of understanding the role of institutional structures in limiting opportunities for women in leadership positions. I will draw on organisational and gender theory to explore the nature of the church as an organisation and to detail the ways in which the church has operated as a gendered organisation. This will highlight the intersection of specific forms of institutional systems of domination, such as autocratic leadership styles and entrenched organisational norms. Finally, I will develop researched strategies for transformative action that when implemented assist the expansion of opportunities for women and accomplish the Uniting Church's liberating vision where each person's gifts, graces and callings are valued equally as the whole people of God.

Chapter 1 **The Introduction** will locate my research problem in the context of broader societal issues of inequality. While women constitute half of the workforce, they are largely underrepresented in leadership roles. In Australia, women occupy 16.3 percent

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[8] Ibid, p.35.
[9] Ibid.

of CEO/Head of Business positions.[10] While blatant forms of gender discrimination are increasingly rare due to laws and organisational awareness, this does not mean that gender discrimination has been eliminated. Organisational practitioners and researchers continue to explore the various reasons that create and perpetuate this inequality.

The evolution of gender research in management and organisational studies has centred around the key question: Should gender equality be achieved by treating women the same as men or treating women differently? This question has proved contentious with first and second waves of feminism shaping how scholars have engaged with this question in the academic arena.[11] The sameness-difference debate reached its height with the inclusion of sex discrimination in the Civil Rights Act in the United States in the 1960's securing sameness of treatment as the preferred strategy for securing women's rights in the workplace.[12] This dominant liberal feminist view of gender equality has influenced management and organisational research paths to focus on micro level theories to explain women's experiences of inequality. These theories have assumed that gender inequality in organisations is an individual problem and attributed to individual actions.[13] The book "*Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead",* written by Sheryl Sandberg, the Chief Operating Officer of Facebook, is an example of this approach, offering women a solution for their lack of positioning in the workforce. Sandberg's book outlines strategies to help women achieve success, and its title paints a picture of what Sandberg believes women need to do to move up in the business world: to press ahead, to project confidence, to "sit at the table" and physically lean in to make herself heard.[14] Individualistic based approaches assume that organisations are gender-neutral, well-functioning apparatuses that permit individuals to achieve their career goals if they are willing to develop the right skills

[10] Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2016, Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard: Key Findings from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's 2015–16 Reporting Data, found in Schlamp, S, Fabiola, H & Voelpel, S.C 2019, "The steep way to the top: barriers to female leadership in tall hierarchical organisations", found in Stamatios, A, Cooper, C & Gatrell C (eds), *Women, Business and Leadership,* Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
[11] Nkomo, S.M & Rodriguez, J.K 2014, "Joan Acker's influence on Management and Organization Studies: Review, analysis and directions for the future", *Gender, Work, and Organization,* vol.21, no.2.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Sandberg, S 2013, *Lean in: Women, Work and the will to Lead*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York.

and attitudes toward leadership. However, this equality strategy has failed to address structural inequality, or the way institutions are fundamentally engendered.

Alternatively, a number of feminist scholars have been drawn to organisational culture as a place for the study of discriminatory practices in the workplace. Researchers are now focusing on gender bias, studying barriers arising from cultural beliefs about gender as well as workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favour men. It is argued that a holistic approach to organisational realities, focused on the norms, values, beliefs and ways of behaving will recognise and understand the embedded gender bias.

Despite the intent of the *Basis of Union*, The Uniting Church, and for particular focus, the Queensland Synod, continues to reflect societal trends of women in organisational leadership positions instead of its claimed theological stance. I contend that while this may not be the intention of the Queensland Synod, its failed consciousness around this issue and its lack of attention to disrupting these trends enables gendered processes to continue within the structure and culture of the church. Without intentional critique it is difficult to identify particular gendering processes. Much of what women experience is unrecognisable as intentional discrimination and easily dismissed as hearsay and inuendo. These experiences on their own are easily dismissed, yet when critiqued as gendering processes, offer insight into the ongoing patriarchy and hierarchical tendencies of leadership within the church.

In Chapter 2 **Engendered Organisations**, I will demonstrate the gendered nature of organisational culture and challenge the gender-neutral approach embedded within the organisational culture of the church, particularly the Uniting Church in its formation and at its union. I will draw attention to the ways gender is embedded through gendering processes.

In 1990 Joan Acker published, *"Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations"*[15] to challenge the notion that organisations are gender neutral. She

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[15] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol.4, no.2, pp.139-158.

identified four dimensions by which gender differences and hierarchies are constantly produced and reproduced to demonstrate how gender inequality is located in the context of institutional structural processes and dynamics. Acker's work helps explain the persistence of gender inequality in organisations, determining that all aspects of organisations, including rules, procedures and hierarchies, while seemingly free of gender, actually reflect longstanding distinctions between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and power and domination in ways that aid the reproduction and maintenance of gender inequality. According to Martin and Collinson,[16] Acker's 1990 publication marked the birth of the 'gendered organization' field.[17]

The development of a gendered organisations field of study has produced a multitude of articles and books revealing the breadth and depth of interest in this area including the establishment of the Journal *Gender, Work and Organisations*. A number of feminist explorations of the gendered processes of organisations have highlighted the deeply rooted and complex dynamic of discourse and gendered practices that exclude women.[18] These studies have contributed to an understanding of the social processes involved in the production and reproduction of gender in economic organisations but there has been limited research on the way gender is performed in religious organisations. This chapter will utilise Acker's framework to explore the nature of the church as an organisation and to detail the ways in which the church has operated as a gendered organisation.

In chapter 3, **Gendered Authority**, I will consider the methodological implications of considering gender as practice. Acker's work helped explain the persistence of gender inequality in organisations, but it does not explain how change is possible. Identifying approaches and conditions that assist in undoing the gendered organisation remains important in understanding how institutionalised inequality is dissolved. In the early 1990s philosopher Judith Butler[19] showed the performative nature of gender as a

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[16] Martin, P. Y & Collinson, D 2002, "'Over the pond and across the water': Developing the field of 'gendered organizations. *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol.9, no.3, pp.244–265.
[17] In her second most influential work, Acker (2006) extended her work on gender inequality to incorporate race and class to introduce the concept of inequality regimes. While this work is concerned with organisational inequalities, I do not have scope in this essay to discuss race and class.
[18] Mills, A.J 2002, "Studying the Gendering of Organizational Culture Over Time: Concerns, Issues and Strategies", *Gender, Work and Organization,* vol.9, no.3, pp.286-307.
[19] Butler, J. 1990, *Gender Trouble*, Routledge, New York and London.

doing that constitutes a being; an activity that creates what it describes, effectively undermining the essentialist distinction between male and female. Butler's construct of gender performativity has inspired a body of research to engage theoretically with rethinking gender as a lived experience and explore gender undoing in organisational work and practices.

The understanding of doing gender in organisational theory is situated in two dominant theoretical traditions on doing gender in gender research. One approach is based on the concept of ethnomethodology developed by West and Zimmerman.[20] The central aim of ethnomethodology is to analyse situational conduct to understand how objective properties of social life achieve their status.[21] Doing gender is defined by West and Zimmerman as "a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine 'natures'".[22] This assumes a constructionist approach by which individuals organise their behaviour to express gender by drawing on a range of learned gender activities to appear as women or men. The other approach is based on poststructuralism and discourse theory inspired by Foucault. One of the central proponents of the post-structural and discursive doing gender approach is Judith Butler[23] who shifts the focus of doing gender from interactions to the inclusion of the discourses through which gender is performed. Butler draws on Foucault in arguing that discourses provide positions which subjects can adopt and the power of the discourse lies in its ability to determine which subjects are produced.[24]

This chapter will discuss the gendering processes of the church by means of an analysis of the discourse of authority. It will explore the ways the discourse is legitimised theologically, organisationally and performatively as male. In discussing the conception and reiteration of authority in the church I will draw on Hannah Arendt's work to explain how authority as a discourse has produced the entrenched dichotomous and hierarchical symbolic order of hegemonic masculinity. I will

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[20] West, C & Zimmerman, D 1987, "Doing gender", *Gender & Society*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp.125-151.
[21] West, C & Fenstermaker, S (ed) 1995, *Doing Gender, Doing Difference: Inequality, Power, and Institutional Change,* Taylor & Francis Group, ProQuest ebook central, p.19.
[22] Ibid. p.125.
[23] Butler, J 1988, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory", *Theatre Journal,* vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 519–531.
[24] Ibid.

demonstrate how gender normative performances in the church continue to underpin notions of how women and men are perceived as church authorities by demonstrating the operation of this discourse in the Church of England and the Church of Sweden. By viewing gender as something organisations do and not as an authorial attribute, I will reflect on the experience of how women in these churches have, and are seeking, to disrupt this discourse as a means of challenging the ontology of gendered authority.

Chapter 4: **Transformative Action**

In Judith Butler's construct of gender performativity[25] the practice of doing gender implies that gender is constructed in pervasive social interactions, but it can also be deconstructed and undone. Her conception of gender is twofold: doing - an acting which considers the heterosexual conventions into the possible play - which she names as gender reiterations; and undoing - a transformative position towards the presupposed legitimate classification which she calls gender resignifying practices.[26] Butler destabilises gender by offering new ways of enacting gender, placing the traditional expectations of gender under scrutiny and introducing multiplicity to broaden the parameters of how gender is enacted.[27]

Scholarship on gender and organisations has demonstrated that both in definition and practice, leadership is intricately connected to the construction and enactment of hegemonic masculinity.[28] Knights and McCabe[29] concluded that masculinity is central to organisational studies since management discourse and practices are steeped in the assumptions that it generates and sustains. Literature has shown that while there is compatibility and coherence between constructions of masculinity and leadership, there is no such corresponding congruence between constructions of femininity and leadership.[30] Martin and Collinson's research[31] cite one significant cause for this lack

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[25] Butler, J 1988, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory", *Theatre Journal,* vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 519–531.

[26] Butler, J 2004, *Undoing Gender*, Routledge, New York.

[27] Ibid, p.190.

[28] Pini, B 2005, "The Third Sex: Women Leaders in Australian Agriculture", *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol.12, no.1.

[29] Knights, D & McCabe, D 2001, "A different world: shifting masculinities in the transition to call centres", *Organization*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 619–45.

[30] Pini, B 2005, "The Third Sex: Women Leaders in Australian Agriculture", *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol.12, no.1.

[31] Martin, P.Y & Collinson, D 2002, 'Over the pond and across the water': developing the field of 'gendered organizations', *Gender, Work & Organization*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp.244-65

of integration is gender itself. Most organisational theories were developed by men and most organisational scholars are men whereas gender scholarship was developed by feminist women who focus on women's lives and experiences. In contrast to gender studies, organisational theories have generally ignored gender and claim to be gender neutral. In reviewing literature on leadership and gender Michele Bowring[32] highlights the way in which discourses of management and hegemonic masculinity intersect. A great majority of leadership research is constrained by its own fundamental dualism; the assumption that people are divided into leaders and followers. Underlying that literature, another dualism located in the understanding that the male is the universal, neutral, subject, creating the female Other as a crucial partner to the universalist claims that it makes about leadership. Thus, leaders are separate from followers (non-leaders), and males are leaders, separate from females (non-leaders).[33] It is in this research that the knowledge/power nexus is demonstrated and must therefore be exposed and undone.

In this chapter I will explore the negotiations and accommodations that are inherent for women to position themselves as both "woman" and "leader" when normative notions of leadership and femininity are radically conflicting. I will particularly highlight the contested gendered practices and negotiations of women in ecclesial leadership and the work women do to construct and negotiate identities within an enduring male dominated discourse. I will begin to develop researched strategies for transformative action relevant to the Uniting Church that will attend to women's experiences in developing leadership identities.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Every organisational culture comprises of discourses, practices and norms which reflect the socially constructed images of maleness and femaleness and define specific power relations among the members according to their gender. Women who enter traditional male organisational cultures like the church are faced with established roles which define the explicit and implicit gender definitions and express a symbolic order of gender in which maleness is dominant. The nature of the Uniting Church's

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[32] Bowring, M.A 2004 "Resistance Is *Not* Futile: Liberating Captain Janeway from the Masculine-Feminine Dualism of Leadership", *Gender, Work and Organisation*, vol.11, no. 4., pp.381-405.
[33] Ibid.

vision for equality however offers a clear challenge to ensure equality is mandated, instituted, implemented and rehearsed as a guiding value and practice of the church. While it is clear that the church is impacted by what is evident in society, there is an imperative, given our formative statements, that the church will be different from the world. In this chapter I will conclude that our perceptions of who we are, what we are capable of and required of, and called to, need to be expanded and reconstructed.

Chapter 2: **Engendered Organisations**

In 1990 Joan Acker's work *"Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations"*[34] developed an approach to challenge the notion that organisations are gender neutral by identifying the gender inequality located in the context of institutional structural processes and dynamics. This work was ground-breaking for gender and organisational theorists seeking to understand the lack of women in executive leadership positions despite legislative measures to ensure equality of women in the workplace. It has produced a body of research on the deep structure of organisations that include the collection of values, history, culture and practices that form the normal unquestioned ways of working within organisations.[35] The premise of Acker's work established that organisations are not gender equitable in their own functioning and as a result are less likely to effectively address gender equality within itself.

> "To say that an organisation, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of those processes, which cannot be properly understood without an analysis of gender."[36]

Acker demonstrated what it means for concepts and categories to be gendered and how gendering obscures women. She stressed four interacting processes that need to be considered as part of a systematic theory of gender and organisations: firstly the construction of divisions along the lines of gender, secondly the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose those divisions, thirdly the interactions between men and women, women and women, men and men, including all those patterns that enact dominance and submission and fourthly, the way these processes help to produce gendered components of individual identity.[37] Acker completes her work by suggesting that a gender-neutral view of organisations is in itself a part of the gendering processes of the organisation.

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[34] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol.4, no.2, pp.139-158.
[35] Rao, A, Sandler, J, Kelleher, D & Miller, C 2015, *Gender at Work: Theory and Practice of 21st Century Organizations*, Taylor & Francis Group, ProQuest Ebook Central, accessed 3.10.2020.
[36] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol.4, no.2, p.146.
[37] Ibid.

In 1977 church union represented the start of an unfolding journey to establish the egalitarian vision of the new church. Julia Pitman notes the aspirations of the first President (1977-1979) of the Uniting Church in Australia, Reverend Dr J. Davis McCaughey's for church leadership: "Any understanding of the proper working of authority within the church would be the work of the next generation of leaders, who would preserve the distinctively Reformed witness to the freedom of Christian conscience."[38] Leadership at union, like many other aspects of church life, was intended to be redefined by this new vision of ecclesial life. Since then The Uniting Church has actively sought to employ ecclesiology, Christology and biblical hermeneutics to engage with current societal issues that affect women and present an alternative view to conservative social stances particularly those present in other churches. Despite these views and aspirations, however, the Uniting Church like most aspects of society, has struggled to achieve its desired ambition. Current research has revealed that organisations, including the church, maintain subtle and often invisible gendering processes that resist change. Consequently, reformers have either failed to recognise or have underestimated the dominance of the inherent nature of instituted power and gender dichotomies. In this chapter I will identify the masculinities that have defined the church's governing and formation processes and acknowledge the ways in which organisational practices have performed and produced gender. Using Joan Acker's analytical framework, I will interrupt the assumption that the Uniting Church is a gender-neutral organisation. I will demonstrate how these complex processes of gendering were evident in the formation of the Uniting Church by pointing to historical events and women's experiences.

Gendered ideologies and theologies

The first of the ways in which Acker suggested organisations may be gendered is through the construction of divisions along the lines of gender.[39] Acker maintained that organisations are hierarchical and segregated and that these hierarchies and segregations are based on gender. Historically, the Christian church has maintained and reinforced very clear distinctions between the roles of men as decision-makers

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[38] Pitman, J 2016, *'Our Principle of Sex Equality': The ordination of women in the Congregational Church in Australia 1927-1977*, Australian Scholarly, Melbourne, Victoria, p.148.

[39] Acker, J. 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp.139-158.

and leaders and of women as nurturers, servers, and carers, despite evidence of women participating in the leadership of the early church.[40] Paul's letters can certainly be read as constituting historical evidence for gender balanced leadership. This equality is reflected in the Galatian baptismal hymn: "There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus."[41] Yet women's experience in the church has not been founded in Paul's vision but traced to an Aristotelian, hierarchical, patriarchal, functionalist view of the world in which the lesser exists to serve the greater. This stance is reflected in a quote from Thomas Aquinas: "Woman is something deficient and accidental. For the active power of the male intends to produce a perfect likeness of itself in the male sex. If, however, a female is conceived, that is due to a lack of strength in the active power or to wrongly disposed matter or to some external influence like that of a humid wind from the South." [42] While Christianity has expressed an intrinsic value of personhood, in practice women have historically been perceived and treated as inferiors and defined by her reproductive function and passive submissive role. These expectations placed on women by ecclesiastical authorities have ensured the historical construction of divisions along lines of gender.

The *Basis of Union*'s aspiration and conviction for equality emerged from a history of gendered practice. Prior to union the organisational leadership of the church had been dominated by men as decision makers and policy makers and this practice, reflected in the patriarchal nature of society at the time of union, guaranteed a gendered process for how the church's aspirations for equality were cultivated. At the last General Conference of the Methodist Church there were 180 men and 12 women and at the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church there were 538 men and 8 women.[43] At the time of Church Union there were 36 women in ordained ministry.[44] The editor of the New Times, the monthly paper of the Synod of South Australia, reflecting on gender equality at the time of union, observed that the "Uniting Church

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[40] Clifford, A.M 2002, *Introducing Feminist Theology*, Orbis Books, New York, p.76.
[41] Bible Gateway, New Revised Standard Version, Galatians 3:28, viewed 2nd October 2020, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+3%3A28-29&version=NRSV>
[42] Tony Kelly, 1986, "Christian conversion and the feminine" found in Franklin, M.A, *The Force of the Feminine*, Allen & Unwin, Australia.
[43] Wood Ellem, E (ed) 1990, *The Church Made Whole*, National Conference on Women in the Uniting Church in Australia, David Lovell Publishing, Melbourne, Australia, p.13.
[44] Ibid, p.122.

will need to be careful not to create a set of demarcation lines which suggest that Gods' work is divisible by gender."[45] At the first Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977, women were present alongside men as elected members and a quota system for the election of women to church councils became part of the practice of the church.[46] It was hoped that the quota system, which until 1983 required church leaders to identify women who were willing and able to serve in the councils of the church, would eventually become unnecessary.[47] The New Times explained that at first "'It was a problem' to find women to serve on Uniting Church committees, but now all councils of the church were 'sufficiently conscious of the need to include the contributions of women that they will continue to do this as a matter of course'."[48] The hope that a quota system would no longer be of use was based on the assumption that gender equality would become assumed in the life and practice of the church. However, this assumption failed to recognise the embedded cultural and structural gender biases. Dorothy McMahon at the National Conference on Women in the Uniting Church in Australia in 1990, reflected on the experience of women in the formation of the Uniting Church:

> "It is interesting to recognise that as we formed the Uniting Church in Australia those of us who were struggling for a new church had to make a choice between the battle for representation of women in our councils and committees and inclusive language in the *Basis of Union*. We did not have the energy to fight both battles. And, have no doubt, it was a very hard struggle even to get a women's issue on the agenda of the church at that point." [49]

McMahon points to the all pervasiveness of patriarchy and the failure of the church to recognise its influence, not just in these two issues of representation and language but in all forms of language, tradition and norms from which structure and theology were drawn. Since Union, the Uniting Church's structures and processes have been fundamentally engendered through its ideological and theological construction of divisions based on gender.

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[45] Pitman, J 2016, *'Our Principle of Sex Equality': The ordination of women in the Congregational Church in Australia 1927-1977*, Australian Scholarly, Melbourne, Victoria, p.157.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid, p.156.
[48] Ibid, p.157.
[49] Ibid.

Gendered symbols and images

The second dimension of the gendered organisation identified by Acker's work claims that gender in an organisation consists of symbols, images and ideologies.[50] The construction of symbols and images are typically used to explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose the types of gendered divisions. Among the many possible biblical names and models for the church, the church has used dominant gendered familial themes to define and represent its ecclesiology. The church as the bride of Christ matrimonially wedded and adorned for her husband to become one flesh is a dominant image in the gospels and letters of the New Testament.[51] St Augustine is famously referenced as saying: "The church is a whore, but she's my mother." Of these familial themes one of the most potent symbols in post reformation Protestantism has been that of family. The Reformer's rejection of the superiority of celibacy over marriage led to a new emphasis on the centrality of the family and on the roles of motherhood and fatherhood. In Protestant homes, the roles of women were restricted to those of motherhood and homemaking, tasks that were elevated to the status of a vocation ordained by God. "These were described to Protestant women as 'glorious and ennobling works, which were pleasing in the eyes of God and equal in value and dignity to all other human endeavours."[52] In creating godly households, married women carried out domestic missionary activity in the home; praying, reading the scriptures, and doing good works. Education became a necessity for women who were given the task of nurturing and teaching the next generation and women became more involved in ministerial activities in support of their husbands. The Protestant home became an important religious centre of cultural and intellectual activities of which wives were models of obedience and charity.[53] This household model maintained a woman's economic, legal, social and political dependence on her husband and reinforced patriarchy in the home, the church and the public realm into the nineteenth century.

The rise of fundamentalism in the 1960' and 1970's in England and America was rapidly accepted in Australia and deeply rooted in the evangelical fundamentalist

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[50] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*,1990, vol. 4, no. 2, pp.139-158.
[51] Matthew 9:14-15, Ephesians 5:23, Galatians 2:24, Revelations 21:2
[52] MacHaffie, B.J 2006, *Her Story: Women in Christian Tradition*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, p.93.
[53] Ibid, p.92.

subculture of the Protestant church. The growth of the Christian Right as a political force developed a moral absolutism among conservative evangelicals who proposed a divinely ordained family life consisting of traditional gender hierarchy in patriarchal marriage.[54] This view ensued man as the authority and head of the home and the woman's first duty as wife and mother, defining Christian behaviour by heteronormative roles and promoting the nuclear family as the only healthy model for adult family life. The movement gave theological sanction to conservative facets of Australian society and validated gender hierarchy. John Piper, American Pastor and noted apologist for conservative Christian gender ideology, infamously advocated women submitting themselves to verbal and physical abuse from their Christian husbands for "a season" before seeking help from the church.[55] The icon of church as family has been understood in terms of hierarchy, giving strong authority to male and elderly leaders, emphasising the submission of its members.

While the Uniting Church does not condone or support a theology of headship or such a narrow view of family life, it has emerged from a cultural and political history that embraced these images as godly and representative of good citizenship. In her article, *"Christian Women Concerned",* Dorothy McRae-McMahon describes her experience of being a 'token woman' on various church bodies prior to church union and demonstrates the dominant image of woman as submissive homemaker.

> "I recall being on a Methodist Standing Committee where there were around 50 men and two women...I would speak in the committee debate and it was obvious that the men assumed that I was speaking for all women. If I said nothing in a meeting, they would say things like, 'You're very quiet tonight Dorothy?' This is not something they would say to the majority of men who rarely said anything…Some of the men flirted with me and others made snide comments about my obviously being a 'man-hater'…On one occasion, I was at some gathering with my then husband and a male minister walked up to us and said, 'So, which one is Mr McMahon?' If we ever tackled people on these remarks they always said, 'Can't you take a joke?' …We hated being told that we were not real women and certainly not at all 'feminine', whatever that meant…Every time we rose to speak in the councils it was an act of determination and courage." [56]

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[54] Ruether, R.R 2001, *"Christianity and the Making of the Modern Family"*, SCM Press, London.
[55] Gordon, C 2014, found in Schnabel, E.S 2015. *The gender of spiritual gifts in the evangelical tradition: How women narrate their role in the church*, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, Purdue University.
[56] McRae-McMahon, D 2007, "Christian Women Concerned", *Women-Church: an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion,* no. 40, pp.17-21.

McRae-McMahon offers repeated examples of comments and innuendos that challenged her presence in male dominant spaces as being 'not normal' for a woman.

Gendered interactions as discourse

The third set of processes Acker[57] argued produce gendered organisations is around workplace interactions. These include interactions between men and women, between women and women and between men and men, including all those patterns that enact dominance and submission. Acker sites the work of West and Zimmerman, "Doing Gender", to account for the reproduction of gender through interaction.[58] They reference recent studies of interaction[59] that have illustrated how Western men use language to create and demonstrate their power in both institutional and conversational talk, orienting towards the desired social position of hegemonic masculinity they strive to portray. Coates notes this orientation to the hegemonic norms of masculinity through various linguistic strategies as the most striking feature of men's talk.[60] Stereotypical masculine strategies are said to include interruption, topic control, swearing, aggravated comments, avoidance of personal topics and self-disclosure, boastful storytelling and unsupportive conversational behaviour in regard to a lack of backchannels and delayed minimal responses.[61]

In the formation of the Uniting Church, deliberations and conversations were, in this sense, a political tool that shaped the meanings, interpretations, and practices of gender dominance and subordination. Since early this century discussions directed towards church union were taking place among the various churches in Australia and by 1971 the three churches had progressed far enough to have drawn up a *Basis of Union*. By 1974 they were in the final stages of drawing up a constitution and regulations for the new church they were to become, to be called the Uniting Church in Australia. The body responsible for drafting the constitution and regulations had 21 members and was called the Joint Constitution Commission. All its members were

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[57] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp.139-158.
[58] Ibid, p.147.
[59] McDowell, J 2015, "Masculinity and Non-Traditional Occupations: Men's Talk in Women's Work", *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp.273-291.
[60] Coates, J 2003, *Men Talk, Stories in the Making of Masculinities*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, p.196.
[61] McDowell, J 2015, "Masculinity and Non-Traditional Occupations: Men's Talk in Women's Work", *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp.273-291.

male and came from the upper reaches of the legal and administrative hierarchies of the three churches.[62] Astonishingly, not one woman was present in the conversations that constituted the direction and formation of the new church, affirming Coates' theory of language as a tool to orient towards hegemonic norms of masculinity. Women were simply left out of the conversation. Mary Tulip in her chapter, *"Affirmative action in the Uniting Church 1977-83"*[63] traces the steps towards the historic step of adopting in its constitution and regulations the commitment to the representation of women in all its decision-making bodies at the Inaugural Assembly in June 1977. She tells the story of this struggle for change, the resistance from the Joint Constitution Commission and the Joint Constitution Council and the lack of women involved in deliberating the formation of the Uniting Church.

The story began in an atmosphere of hope when the Commission on the Status of Women of the ACC called a meeting of Uniting Church women on 3 August 1974 in the Epping Congregational Church Hall to discuss the participation of women in the Uniting Church. The aim was to clarify and express women's views while the constitution was being drafted so that the structures of the new church could reflect the renewed hopes of women for full participation. Thirty-five women came to the meeting. After a great deal of discussion, agreement was reached on eleven recommendations. The meeting requested that the submission be conveyed to the members of the Joint Constitution Commission and to the Joint Constitution Council to be adopted by the Uniting Church and regulations be worked out to ensure they became part of the church's practice. She says:

> "Where we had hoped for the widest possible dissemination and discussion of our proposals, we found when the Uniting Church Office replied to us that they were unwilling to circulate our proposals or to give them any publicity or even to give us the names of members of the Joint Constitution Council to whom we had hoped they would be sent. Nor were they willing to allow our three representatives to attend a Joint Constitution Commission meeting to talk to members in person."[64]

The women then decided to send the submission to Joint Constitution Council members, using their informal networks to find the member's names and addresses,

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[62] Tulip, M 1986, "Affirmative action in the Uniting Church 1977-83", found in Franklin, M.A, *The Force of the Feminine*, Allen & Unwin, Australia. p.122.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid, p.126.

and invited them to a meeting to discuss their submission. Twenty one of the 35 women who made the submission attended, and seven of the 75 members of the Joint Constitution Council, two of whom were women who had signed the submission.

> "There was not then, and had never been, any disagreement about the aims of women participating fully in the life and ministry of the Church, or about general principles that special efforts should be made to include women in staff positions, in the ordained ministry, in theological study and teaching, in the language of the Church and all other aspects of the Church's life. However, as soon as we suggested how these principles might be incorporated in the constitution and regulations of the Church there was a complete block…"[65]

Looking back six years later (1983), Tulip reflects: "The weight of patriarchal tradition is strong, and the processes of change take a lot of work, energy and good will. To press on now requires another major effort."[66]… "Our earlier optimism about the willingness of the Uniting Church in Australia to move out of its conservative and patriarchal mould was unfortunately ill-founded."[67] Tulip's experience demonstrates how interactions and conversations to promote women's participation were dominated by entrenched patriarchal assumptions. Women's longings were tolerated until demands were made for structural and constitutional change to permanently disrupt the dominant discourse of men as the final authority on church matters and church leadership.

Gendered identities

Acker's fourth set of gendering processes concerns the identity of men and women in organisations and the way these processes help to reproduce not only the physical and biological distinction between men and women, but also the implicit and explicit norms of masculinity and femininity.[68] In her work Acker drew on Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinities, which are the socially dominant forms of masculinity that embrace the characteristics of strength, leadership, heterosexuality and authority, and perhaps most importantly, is seen as different from and superior not just to femininity but other forms of masculinity.[69] While women were denied positions of leadership within mainstream denominations in modern Western Christianity, they were the

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[65] Ibid, p.127.
[66] Ibid, p.138.
[67] Ibid, p.140.
[68] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol.4, no. 2, pp.139-158.
[69] Ibid. p153.

church's most loyal and numerous supporters and were its subjects in quite distinct ways. Much of the church's teaching was directed at women – at curbing their sexuality and prescribing their reproductive lives, at valorising their motherhood, at installing them as moral custodians.[70] They were also its most numerous workers. Over the years between 1892 and 1931 women made up 70% of missionaries sent by the church missionary society in NSW, a pattern replicated in other missionary societies.[71] Religion was an important component in the social, cultural and spiritual lives of most Australian women in the 19th century and they sought to find legitimate ways to serve the church and the community. The Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union, for example, raised funds to support overseas missionaries. The Methodist Ladies Church Aids who arranged the flowers or cleaned the church and women who attended monthly Mothers' Unions reveal the domestic spirituality developed by Australian women.[72] While women sought to legitimise their domesticity in the church through women's groups, they were systematically excluded from the rites of Ordination and clerical leadership.

In the formation of the Uniting Church, the experience of the diaconate offers an historical example of how gender has been organised hierarchically in the leadership of the church. The diaconate channelled women's service in the 19th century to express the servant leadership seen in the life and ministry of the servant Christ. In Australia, the Presbyterian Church formed a Deaconess Order in 1898 emerging from the establishment of a deaconess ministry in the 1880's in the Church of Scotland.[73] In 1935, observing the role of women in the new United Church of Canada in 1925, the Methodist Church of Australasia also viewed the ordination of women as incompatible with its system of itinerancy and established a deaconess order.[74] While the diaconate opened the door for women to be involved in full-time and representative ministry within the church, the expression of femininity as 'servant of the church' was reinforced and reproduced by this order. O'Brien, in her article "Playing second fiddle

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[70] O'Brien, A 2000, "Playing second fiddle for Christ's sake": women, religion and history", *Women-Church: an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion*, no. 27, pp. 13-16.
[71] Ibid, p.13.
[72] Ibid, p.14.
[73] Bos, D & McRae, A 1990, "The Renewed Diaconate in the Uniting Church", found in Wood Ellem, E (ed), *The Church Made Whole*, National Conference on Women in the Uniting Church in Australia, David Lovell Publishing, Melbourne, Australia, p.161,164.
[74] Pitman, J 2016, *'Our Principle of Sex Equality': The ordination of women in the Congregational Church in Australia 1927-1977,* Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, Australia.

for Christ's sake"[75], claims that the place of the deaconess within Anglican and Protestant church order was never consistently or clearly defined from the time of the revival of the order in the 19th century. Australian deaconesses lived with the ambiguity of their status for most of the 20th century. "Like all women they worked within an interpretation of Christianity which extolled selflessness as a virtue for all, but which formalised that in the case of women. But factors such as class and marital status could shape the imperative to selflessness: among applications from women seeking training as Deaconesses with the Methodist church in the ten years after 1945 was one where the applicant's referee, a Methodist clergyman, was delighted by her 'real ability to undertake the role of second fiddle for Christ's sake. She does not balk (sic) at difficult or unexciting duties and possesses an almost unsuppressable cheerfulness.'"[76]

At the time of church union, it was recognised that the diaconate was a traditional model of ministry requiring renewal and reform. It is specifically referred to in Paragraph 14: "The Uniting Church recognises that at the time of union many seek a renewal of the diaconate in which women and men offer their time and talents, representatively and on behalf of God's people, in the service of humanity in the face of changing needs."[77] At the time of writing, the ecumenical movement was reconsidering the ministry of the diaconate, broadening the diaconate beyond any previous thinking in the reformed tradition.[78] The Joint Commission was reluctant to come to conclusions prematurely on the diaconate and its document "*The Church, its Nature Function and Ordering*", understood union as an opportunity for "creative re-interpretation and broadening of this valuable form of ministry."[79] Di Bos and Dorothy McRae claim that the diaconal ministry led to the ordination of women to Ministry of

[75] O'Brien, A 2000, "Playing second fiddle for Christ's sake": women, religion and history, *Women-Church: an Australian journal of feminist studies in religion*, no. 27, pp.13-16.
[76] Ibid, p.15.
[77] Uniting Church in Australia 1992, "The *Basis of Union*", *Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly*, viewed on 2nd October 2020. Online: http://assembly.uca.org.au/basis-of-union-1971-1992.
[78] World Council of Churches 2002, "From Inter-Church Aid to Jubilee: a brief history of ecumenical diakonia in the World Council of Churches". *World Council of Churches Diakonia & Solidarity Documentation*, Geneva. p.14.
[79] Joint Commission on Church Union 1963, Second report of the Joint Commission on Church Union, found in *The church: its nature, function and ordering*, Aldersgate Press, Australia, pp.3-70.

the Word and needs to be celebrated.[80] While the diaconate provided opportunities for women to offer leadership to the church, it also reinforced the performative function of a socially constructed feminine identity in the ordering of the church.

In this chapter I have made cursory glances to the gendered nature of the churches that formed the Uniting Church in Australia to challenge the notion that the newly formed church reflected in practice the gendered neutral statements located in the *Basis of Union*. I have introduced gender organisational theory to reflect on the church as a gendered organisation and the ways it has, consciously and unconsciously, resisted the participation of women in positions of power and decision making within the life of the church. In the next chapter I will intensity the analysis by demonstrating how interactional encounters are mediated by the cultural and social context of the organisation which is itself mediated by the cultural and social ideologies, arrangements and practices of the broader society. I will highlight the deeply rooted gendering processes of organisations and the complex dynamic of discourse in producing practices that exclude women.

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[80] Bos, D & McRae, A 1990, "The Renewed Diaconate in the Uniting Church", found in Wood Ellem, E (ed), 1990, *The Church Made Whole:* National Conference on Women in the Uniting Church in Australia, David Lovell Publishing, Australia, pp.161-164.

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Chapter 3: Gendered Authority

In the previous chapter I argued that organisations are inherently gendered firstly because organisations mirror inequalities in society and secondly because organisations produce and reproduce gender through ideologies, norms and practices. I contended that the Uniting Church, given its pre-union structures and cultures, is a gendered vestige of its historical development. Through the experiences of women prior and during church union, I demonstrated that organisations gender their members proactively through a range of processes highlighted by Acker.[81] In this chapter I will focus on Acker's fourth gendering process which is concerned with the development of gender identity within organisations and the way norms of masculinity and femininity are reproduced performatively. One of the central proponents of the post-structural and discursive doing gender approach is Judith Butler[82] who shifts the focus of doing gender from interactions to the inclusion of the discourses through which gender is performed. Butler draws on Foucault in arguing that discourses provide positions which subjects can adopt, and the power of the discourse lies in its ability to determine which subjects are produced.[83] The first objective of this chapter then is to critique the western discourse of authority in doing gender by employing Judith Butler's notion of performativity and the way discourses influence the formation of subjects. The second is to contend with the ways the conception and operation of authority has legitimised the domination of masculine identities theologically, organisationally and performatively as a critical apparatus of patriarchy. The third is to begin to consider how this discourse might be interrupted to challenge the ontology of gendered authority within the church.

Authority of discourse

Michel Foucault's discourse theory has provided a radical interruption into the ordering principles of critical traditions dominating Western thinking since the turn of the century. Concerned with issues of power and domination, Foucault analysed the way power is manifested in a variety of social institutions. He identified the different elements that constituted those apparatuses, discourses, knowledge and sites

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[81] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol.4, no. 2, pp.139-158.
[82] Butler, J 1988, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory", *Theatre Journal,* vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 519–531.
[83] Butler, J. 1990, *Gender Trouble*, Routledge, New York and London.

through which power circulates and shapes our notions of truth, meaning, knowledge and reason.[84] Foucault holds that discourse, as a social construct, is created and perpetuated by those who have the power and means of communication. Discourse however is more than the content of the communication, but the ways in which communication, information, ideas and other sequences of signs are exchanged and signified.[85] As John Frow writes, "discourses are 'performative structures that shape the world in the very process of putting it into speech.'"[86] Foucault demonstrates his theory of discourse in Discipline and Punish[87] when arguing that in modern society juridical power can no longer function as an adequate representation of power as it is incongruous with new methods of power that employ technique rather than repression, normalisation rather than law. He presents another form of power; disciplinary power, and suggests that rather than employing prohibition, censorship, exclusion, rejection and the setting of limits, disciplinary power operates through techniques and procedures that measure, rank and evaluate individuals in terms of a norm, and demarcate a line between the normal and the abnormal. The power of discourse, determines Foucault, lies in its ability to provide legitimacy for certain kinds of knowledge while undermining others; and in its ability to create subject positions to turn people into objects that can be controlled. For Foucault, discourses are about what can be said and thought, but also about who can speak, when, and with what authority.[88]

Foucault's influence on gender theorist Judith Butler's thinking is widely recognised. Butler has consistently engaged with key concepts in Foucault's thinking and has also developed major elements in her own theoretical framework where she considers Foucault inadequate.[89] Referencing Foucault's relationship between knowledge, discourse and power, Butler's approach aims at de-centring the gendered identity imposed by patriarchal discourse and the unconscious mind. In Butler's theoretical

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[84] Schirato, T, Danaher, G & Webb, J 2012, *Understanding Foucault: a Critical Introduction*. Allen & Unwin, Australia.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.p.62.
[87] Foucault, M 1977, *Discipline and punish*. Pantheon, New York.
[88] Foucault, M 1972, *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse on language*. Pantheon, New York.
[89] Ennis, K 2008, *Michel Foucault and Judith Butler: Troubling Butler's Appropriation of Foucault's Work,* University of Warwick, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, UK.

lens of gender performativity,[90] gender is performatively constructed through an individuals' own repetition of practices or by mimicking of the hegemonic norms of gender given by a particular society. Butler suggests that gender is "a stylized repetition of acts… a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief."[91] For example, the ecclesial model of the church as a "bride" provide the masculine and feminine roles for subjects to adopt. Women assume the role of submissive bride and men assume the persona of the male Christ, adopting headship titles of 'Bishop', 'Father' and 'Priest'. Terms such as "masculine" and "feminine" are defined by social histories, geopolitical boundaries and cultural constraints on who is imaging whom, and for what purpose.[92] The concept of gender as historical and socially determined is rooted in assumptions about performances of gender. "When one performance of gender is considered real and another false, or when one presentation of gender is considered authentic, and another fake, then we can conclude that a certain ontology of gender is conditioning these judgments, an ontology (an account of what gender is) that is also put into crisis by the performance of gender in such a way that these judgments are undermined or become impossible to make."[93] In this case, Butler believes knowledge and power work together to establish a set of subtle and explicit criteria for thinking about the world and we are compelled to ask how the organisation of gender comes to function as a presupposition about how the world is structured.[94]

Discourse of authority

Historically authority has figured prominently in the tradition, practice and discourse of the Church. Hannah Arendt's[95] work on authority and founding, traces the conceptualising, legitimising and transmission of authority through history by identifying three critical moments in the conceptual and political development of authority: in Greek philosophy, in Roman Politics, and in the Christian Church. Her

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[90] Tingting L, Li, M & Wu, M (Shu-Fen), 2020, "Performing femininity: Women at the top (doing and undoing gender)", *Tourism Management*, vol. 80.
[91] Butler, J 1988, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory", *Theatre Journal*, vol. 40, no. 4, p. 520.
[92] Butler, J 2004, *Undoing Gender*, Routledge, New York.
[93] Ibid. p.214.
[94] Ibid, p.215.
[95] Arendt, H 2006, "What is Authority", found in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: six exercised in political thought,* Penguin Classics, New York, pp. 91-141.

conception of authority involves the notion of foundation as a starting point. The foundation is like a story that initiates, and is incorporated within, a defining tradition, where "Tradition preserved the past by handing down from one generation to the next the testimony of the ancestors, who first had witnessed and created the sacred founding and then augmented it by their authority throughout the centuries."[96] Arendt begins her theory by stating that "authority, as the one, if not the decisive factor in human communities did not always exist..."[97] While the Greek language or the political experiences of Greek history do not conceptualise authority, Plato and Aristotle tried to introduce something akin to authority into the public life of the Greek polis, by drawing on examples of human relationships from the Greek household and family life. The head of the household ruled as a "despot" in uncontested mastery over the members of his family and the slaves of the household. The despot was by definition vested with the power to coerce.[98] This coercive control of the household is also manifested in the pater familias, the head of the Roman family, who exercised autocratic authority. According to Arendt,[99] authority as a concept was legitimised by authoritatively created myths during the Roman period. It was a process whereby authority became linked to tradition and religion and one which obscured the fact that the political institutions of Rome were socially constructed and constantly augment by those in authority. What emerges is a trinity of authority, religion and tradition which is later taken over by the Catholic church. The conception of authority as male transmit from Rome into the life of the institutional church under Constantine where the legitimised inherited authority is reproduced through its own systems of tradition.[100]

Arendt's work offers, what Foucault calls, "a collection of discursive events made in history" to investigate the "knowledge structures" that make possible and hold together a discourse of authority that is pervasive in the church.[101] She establishes that institutional authority conceived in its historical and ecclesial context is inherently male, legitimised by referencing God as male and reproduced by sanctioning men in positions of ecclesial power. Janice McRandal in her paper, *"Against and Without*

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Foucault, M., 1989, *The archaeology of knowledge*, London / New York, Routledge.

Authority: writing feminist theology after the end of history"[102] observes that Arendt demonstrates the concept and operation of authority as a critical apparatus of patriarchal western history. Referencing the patriarchal slave economies in both the Greek and Roman tradition as a model for both private and public life, McRandal states: "the politics of authority belong to masters and fathers, to great men who own women and slaves, and not to women."[103] Within the context of patriarchal clerical leadership, with its hierarchically ordered perspective, authority has been envisioned as dominance and the production of authority as a discourse has been conceived, controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by male identity. Feminist hermeneutics have sought to unveil the underlying effects of patriarchy and account for the androcentrism in many biblical texts by reconceptualising biblical authority.[104] This task, however, often seems arduous and irresolvable when considering how authority as a dominant discourse has operated in the church.

The perpetuate hierarchisation of gender has been one of the ongoing challenges of the dualistic construction of male and female identities for women in the church. Carol Christ argues that this legitimising powerfully transmits in a way that makes women active participants in the continuation of inequality and power structures inherent within patriarchal society.[105] In this discourse subjects are produced, and women are produced as care givers, nurturers and servants. She argues that seeing divine authority as male serves to "keep women in a childish state of psychological dependence on men and male authority, while at the same time legitimating the political and social authority of fathers and sons in the institution of society." [106] As a result Christ continues, "women feel their own power is inferior or dangerous and they therefore give over their will to male authority figures in family and society."[107] Given that a masculine view of God reflects how people perceive power and authority in their world, a theological basis is easily formed to justify a masculine view of leadership. In

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[102] McRandal, J 2020, "Against and Without Authority: Writing feminist theology after the end of history", In Handasyde, K and Pryor, R (eds). *Power, Authority, Love,* Routledge, p.2.

[103] Ibid, p.9.

[104] Clifford, A.M 2002, *Introducing Feminist Theology*, Orbis Books, New York.

[105] Christ, C.P 1987. "Why Women Need the Goddess: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Political Reflections.", found in Bagley, K & McIntosh, K (eds), In *Women's Studies in Religion: A Multicultural Reader*, Pearson, New York.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid, p.8.

her paper, *"Why women need the Goddess"*, Christ quotes Mary Daly's detailing of the political ramifications of Father religion for women in *"Beyond God the Father"*: "If God in 'his' heaven is a father ruling his people, then it is the 'nature' of things and according to divine plan and the order of the universe that society be male dominated. Within this context a mystification of roles takes place: the husband dominating his wife represents God 'himself'."[108] The continuing legitimisation of male authority in the church cannot be underplayed as a source for sustaining patriarchy.

Gender reiterations within ecclesial discourse

As an enduring discourse within the church authority as dominance and male has restricted and resisted the acceptance of women into positions of clerical leadership. The experience of women's ordination in the Church of England and the Church of Sweden provide a pattern for how gender has been addressed by the church in overt and subtle ways, justifying a resistance to change theologically and constraining women to gender stereotyped roles. Caroline Gatrell and Nigel Peyton[109] researching women as religious leaders in the Church of England, report that the Church finally sanctioned the ordination of women as religious ministers in 1994. The path to accepting women's ordained ministry had been long and tortuous. From March to the summer months of 1994, nearly 1,500 women deacons were ordained to the priesthood. At the same time, 383 working male priests left with compensation of around £30,000 each, 40 of whom subsequently returned.[110] The high-level position of Bishop however remained open only to male priests until the 2014 General Synod when the metaphorical stained-glass ceiling barring women from the episcopate was finally shattered. Gatrell and Peyton[111] site the first reason for this resistance to change as the inherited and inflexible theological beliefs, based on particular interpretations of scripture, that women should not be ordained as religious leaders. Second, the Church of England enjoys an exemption from the 2010 Equalities Act on the basis of being the Established Church, able to make its own statutes which have legislative status in England alongside parliamentary legislation. Consequently, the Church may decide

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[108] Ibid, p.9.
[109] Gatrell, C & Peyton, N 2019, "Shattering the stained-glass ceiling: women leaders in the Church of England", found in Antoniou, A, Cooper, C & Gatrell, C, *Women, Business and Leadership: Gender and Organisations*, Edward Elgar Publishing, UK.
[110] Bagihole, B 2006, "Not a glass ceiling more a lead roof: Experiences of pioneer women priests in the church of England", *Equal Opportunities International*, vol.25. no.2.
[111] Ibid, p.300.

who is ordained, or not, and who may undertake a leadership role. The General Synod, as the Church's governing legislative body, principally comprises three "Houses": one of Bishops (42 Diocesan Bishops ex-officio), 209 elected clergy, and 207 elected laity. A two-thirds majority in each house is required for major legislation to be passed hence the difficult journey towards women's ordination.[112] While the gendered inequities of the priesthood have on paper been reformed, say Gatrell and Peyton,[113] some of the most problematic forms of unfair treatment centre around what has been seen by those opposed to female ordination as the 'invasion' of apparently non-stereotypical bodies within a male clergy-dominated institution.

A gender equality study of the Church of Sweden[114] collaborates the experience of women in the Church of England, citing theological teachings, gender stereotypes and a general sense of conservatism and inertia in the church, as reasons for resisting the acceptance of women in clerical positions. While women were first ordained by the Church of Sweden in 1978 controversial debates continued over the next two decades between traditionalists and reformists. The study found that many of the younger female ministers, acknowledging many battles had been won, believed it was time to create adequate professional jurisdiction and equality on the local level. One such issue was broadening the scope of what it means to be a female minister and allowing for diversity in terms of ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and personal interests.[115] Participants in the study identified the authoritarian and outmoded management system for recruitment and socialisation of vicars as 'the old boys club', upholding medieval traditions, rituals and ceremonies as barriers to reform.[116]

In both the Church of England and Church of Sweden, ecclesial discourse has invested leaders with authority to be the guardians of knowledge. Stephen Odgen in his book, "*The Church, Authority and Foucault*",[117] argues that these ecclesial guardians sort knowledges into acceptable, privileged and true knowledges, as opposed to disqualified, subjugated and illegitimate knowledges. All this can be done

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[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid, p.301.
[114] Styhre, A 2014, "Gender Equality as Institutional Work: The Case of the Church of Sweden", *Gender, Work and Organization*, vol.21, no.2.
[115] Ibid, p.114.
[116] Ibid, p.112.
[117] Odgen, S.G 2017, *The Church, Authority and Foucault,* Routledge, New York. p.38.

under respectable mantels of compromise, order or moderation but what it really does is stand against illegitimate knowledges and filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge. However, as Odgen notes, the clericalisation of women has disturbed the gender binary demonstrating that female bodies can perform something that is readable as masculinity and produce an intelligible identity that is not in line with the normative gender binary.[118] In these cases women are interrupting the authorial discourse with their bodies and performing a resignifying practice traditionally assigned to men.

Interrupting the discourse

In the discourse of authority gender has been involved in the reproduction of many forms of domination and inequality. As seen in the cases of the Church of England and the Church of Sweden, masculine gendered identities still occupy a dominant position in the church and male voices are still regarded as authorial. Given the entrenched nature of these leadership identities, we are left with the question: Can this discourse be interrupted and / or transformed? For Judith Butler, the means of undoing the way power dissimulates as ontology is to describe the knowledge-power nexus that constitutes the acceptability of a system.[119] Interrupting theologically constructed, traditionally enforced organisational gender norms of ecclesial leadership and the authorial structures that reproduce these norms requires the church to address the question of its life in the mesh of power-relations. The authority of an already masculine god, the authority of sacred texts, male saturated ecclesial leadership, and cannons and theological texts continue to influence and provide norms for the church. In the case of the Church of England and the Church of Sweden, change required the interruption of inherited and inflexible theological beliefs, based on particular interpretations of scripture and constitutional legal codes supporting the replication of the knowledge/power nexus. In both cases transformation occurred when the production of power and knowledge was undermined through exposure, rendering it fragile and making it possible to subdue. In the next chapter I will consider the ways the gendered identity imposed by discourse and the unconscious mind might begin to be *undone*.

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[118] Ibid. p.40.
[119] Ibid.

Chapter 4: Strategies for transformative action

In the previous chapter I focused on how gender is done by presenting a discourse of authority that continues to powerfully endure in the memory and practice of the church. Using Butler's theory of gender performativity, I argued that this discourse has provided positions which subjects have adopted and whereby subjects have been reproduced. I critiqued how the western discourse of authority in doing gender, proliferated by the church, has produced gender normative performances ordered by the patriarchal hierarchisation of gender. In this chapter I will seek to interrupt the authorial ontology of gendered leadership in the church through resignifying practices. In Butler's construct of gender performativity, the practice of doing gender implies that gender is constructed in pervasive social interactions.[120] It will therefore be assumed that gender can also be deconstructed and undone. What follows is an exploration of the negotiations and accommodations that are inherent for women to position themselves as both woman and leader when normative notions of leadership and femininity are radically conflicting. For each accommodation I will offer transformative actions that are located in organisational structural change. In this way I will highlight the work women in leadership do to construct and negotiate identities within an enduring male dominated discourse and the ways the church can take responsibility for this work by implementing structural change action.

A heightened gender consciousness

Raising awareness of the roles that society and discourse have imposed on women in the workplace is key to understanding how gender ordering is constituted hierarchically. Martin[121] believes that to advance one's understanding of the practice of gender we must develop reflexivity as a special kind of awareness. "To be reflexive means to meditate or engage in careful consideration; it also means to ruminate, deliberate, cogitate, study, or think carefully about something. To practice gender reflexively, one would carefully consider the content of one's actions and act only after careful consideration of the intent, content, and effects of one's behavior."[122] Developing resignifying practices to challenge gender constraints requires a

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[120] Butler, J 1988, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory", *Theatre Journal,* vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 519–531.
[121] Martin, P. Y 2003, ""Said and Done" Versus "Saying and Doing": Gendering Practices, Practicing Gender at Work.", *Gender & Society*, vol.17, no.3, pp.342-66.
[122] Ibid.p.356.

heightened gender consciousness, a reflexive awareness, of the performing script. Barbara Pini[123], in her research *"The Third Sex: Women Leaders in Australian Agriculture"*, interviewed 20 Australian women leaders in the male-dominated field of agricultural politics who performed as members on the boards of agriculture and producer groups. What she found particularly interesting is that for them becoming a board member meant that they were suddenly aware of gender. "Respondents referred to the fact that in the past they had 'not been into gender', 'had little time for gender' or 'weren't into things about men and women.'"[124] For the majority, their board appointment had changed this as they found they had to learn a performative competence in masculine behaviours and practices while being constantly reminded of their feminine status. Diehl and Dzubinski, in their chapter *"An overview of gender-based leadership barriers"*[125] believe that recognising and understanding embedded gender-based leadership barriers is the crucial first step to eliminating them.

Disrupting the idea of gender-neutral organisations by becoming aware of the social construction of gender in organisations and the embeddedness of power in gender relations, process and structures, is part of the work women do in negotiating a leadership identity. Diehl and Dzubinski[126] note that this work is compounded by a Gender unconsciousness in organisations; a lack of knowledge or awareness of the role gender plays in the workplace. As an executive in an evangelical mission organisation explained to them, "We don't have in [our organization] someone who is working on this – women's ministry, empowering women, because there's not a felt need for it." As researchers examining women's presence in male dominated arenas have argued, men are not asked to undertake the gender self-censorship that seems to be part of the regular performance of leadership by women.[127] In these contexts the male body and masculinity are treated as unproblematic, but the female body and femininity must accommodate and adapt to a masculinised context.[128]

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[123] Pini, B 2005, "The Third Sex: Women Leaders in Australian Agriculture." *Gender, Work & Organization,* vol.12, no.1, pp.73-88.
[124] Ibid, p.80.
[125] Diehl, A & Dzubinski, L 2017, "An overview of gender-based leadership barriers" found in Madsen, S (ed.) 2017, *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*, pp.271-286.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Pini, B 2005, "The Third Sex: Women Leaders in Australian Agriculture." *Gender, Work & Organization,* vol.12, no.1, p.86.
[128] Ibid.

In Ibarra, Ely and Kolb's research,[129] transformation became evident when people became aware of the biases. Without an understanding of second-generation bias, people use stereotypes to explain why women have failed to achieve parity with men: If they can't reach the top, it is because they "don't ask," are "too nice," or simply "opt out". These messages tell women who have managed to succeed that they are exceptions and women who have experienced setbacks that it is their own fault for failing to be sufficiently aggressive or committed to the job. They found that when women recognised the subtle and pervasive effects of second-generation bias, they felt empowered, not victimised, because they could take action to counter those effects such as putting themselves forward for leadership roles, seeking out sponsors and others to support and develop them in those roles and negotiate for work arrangements that fit both their lives and their organisations' performance requirements.[130]

Transformative action: making masculinities visible

In previous chapters I have examined the Uniting Church's lack of gender consciousness and awareness of the construction of gender within the organisation and the embeddedness of power in gender relations. Its gender-neutral assumptions have failed to recognise the gender self-censorship women are required to do. Educating women about second-generation biases increases their awareness of how they might engage in the leadership discourse, however without making masculinities visible to men, women are once again left to carry the burden of organisational change. The woman who succeeds on male-defined territory, particularly if she expresses any interest in equity issues, is also often expected to clear the way for other women. Any anticipation of her capacity to be a change agent places a considerable burden on the woman whose token status can mean she needs to keep proving herself.[131] To address these anticipations for change, Joan Eveline[132] argues the need to address the drift of discourse emphasising "women's disadvantage", which is often used to inform feminist theory in favour of an emphasis on "men's advantage". Focussing on

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[129] Ibid, p.64.
[130] Ibarra, H, Ely, R & Kolb, D 2013, "Women rising: the unseen barriers", *Harvard Business Review,* vol. 91, no. 9, p.65.
[131] Eveline, J 2005, "Woman in the ivory tower: Gendering feminised and masculinised identities." *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, vol. 18, no.6, pp.641-658.
[132] Eveline, J 1994, *"The politics of advantage: Managing 'work' and 'care' in Australia and Sweden.",* PhD thesis, Murdoch University.

women's disadvantage serves to normalise men's advantage by dropping it from sight and rhetoric. In seeking to understand difference Eveline suggests we need to turn our attention from those who are different to exploring how and why that difference is constructed by power relations and discursive practices in organisations.[133] Amanda Sinclair[134] reflects on how masculinities and the way they shape how men manage remain a resisted subject in teaching. She identifies two sets of related issues which inhibit the discussion of masculinities amongst managers. The first is the invisibility of masculinities and the second, the undiscussability of masculinities. Sinclair believes that masculinities will remain invisible until there is the recognition that discrimination occurs and is experienced as a problem and until there is a movement from the unconscious or conscious belief that women are the problem to a broader view of seeing that the problem is in the way things are done.[135] This recognition opens the way for a discussion in the way masculinities are understood as having good and bad effects for men and for women.

In the formation of the Uniting Church quotas for committees and councils were implemented to promote gender equity in the decision-making bodies and to encourage women to be political actors in the life of the church. Quotas sought to interrupt the discourse of male hegemonic competence for leadership as normal and unquestioned and provide opportunities for women to participate. The abandonment of quotas as a sign that the church had 'solved the problem', only highlights the lack of awareness of the dominance of masculinities and the neglect of ongoing examination of the leadership discourse.

As a means of recognising the increasing recognition of the problem of discrimination against women, particularly at the middle and upper levels of their organisation, and a changing understanding about who is responsible for the problem and where solutions lie, Sinclair charts four phases of executive culture's approach to issues of discrimination:[136]

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[133] Ibid.

[134] Sinclair, A 2000, "Teaching Managers about Masculinities: Are You Kidding?", *Management Learning*, Sage Productions, vol.31, no.1, pp.83-101.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Sinclair, A 2000, "Teaching Managers about Masculinities: Are You Kidding?", *Management Learning*, Sage Productions, vol. 31, no.1, pp.88-89.

Stage 1:   Denial: No Problem

The absence of women from senior levels is not a serious business issue and not a problem.

Stage 2:   The Problem is Women

Women's difference is seen as the problem and the solution lies in women learning how to adapt to (male) norms.

Stage 3:   Incremental Adjustment

A problem is recognised – the organization losing senior women in whom it has invested – but the solution involves improved access to approved women, who are then expected to solve the broader problem of women in the organization.

Stage 4:   Commitment to a New Culture

The exclusion of women is recognised as a symptom of deeper cultural problems meaning the organization resists innovation, is insular and inflexible. Solutions are aimed at changing the existing culture and its leaders.

Sinclair's phases offer a critique of organisational culture and gender practice and how the church might chart an approach to second generation biases that recognises the deeper cultural problems and how changes to its current understanding of leadership might be achieved.

Since the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church assumes gender-neutrality, it locates itself in Sinclair's 1 and 2 phases of approach to issues of discrimination. In order to make masculinities visible the Synod must be engaged in research around how this gender unconsciousness is demonstrated in the unrecorded, personal, non-public interactions between members of the church. What is required is focused critique and qualified research to explain what these masculinities are, how they are represented in the life of the church and how they impact the promotion of women in leadership. The deeper work of cultural critique is required and the impetus to seek solutions that address resistance and creativity.

The undiscussability of masculinities is sited by Sinclair as the second reason for limiting discussion of masculinities among managers.[137] Noting the hesitancy in academic writing and common culture to theorise "masculinities", Sinclair proves that reflections on masculine identity are generally regarded as an insight that is incidental to the main business of management training.[138] Yet keeping masculinities undefinable and possibly incomprehensible has profound consequences for men and women in leadership. It means many aspects of organisation life remain opaque, inaccessible, beyond discussion and change. It also means that managers revert to traditional concepts, such as 'the glass ceiling' to understand 'what's going on'.[139] What Sinclair found in her research was that attempts to discuss masculinities only endorsed rather than critiqued the status quo. She claims it is only in making masculinities more visible and discussable that managers will be able to work out how work cultures can be reshaped to decouple the links between repressive masculinities and workplace practices.[140]

Performing as a woman leader

In performing as a leader in the context of binary opposition women are faced with the challenge of developing a style that balances their expected gender identity behaviours as a woman and the behaviours expected of leaders. While these tensions are concerned with the woman's identity, the roots lie in organisational expectations of the woman's behaviour and places an extra burden on her beyond what is normally required of male leaders. Diehl and Dzubinski[141] identify communication style constraints as a barrier for women leaders who find they need to carefully monitor what they say and how they say it. Using a directive communication style breaks female gender norms, while using tentative or emotional language breaks the norms for competent leaders. Research shows that when female leaders enact authority in a traditionally masculine way, they are evaluated less favourably than male leaders for

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[137] Sinclair, A 2000, "Teaching Managers about Masculinities: Are You Kidding?", *Management Learning*, Sage Productions, vol. 31, no.1, pp.88-89.
[138] Sinclair, A 2000, "Teaching Managers about Masculinities: Are You Kidding?", *Management Learning*, Sage Productions, vol. 31, no.1, pp.88-89.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Diehl, A & Dzubinski, L 2017, "An overview of gender-based leadership barriers" found in Madsen, S (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*, Edward Elgar, Research Handbooks in Business and Management Ser. Web. pp.271-286.

potential leadership roles and they are under evaluated compared to men.[142] As a consequence, women have less access to leadership positions, achieve less success in these positions, and are more likely to be disliked when they occupy them.[143]

A woman in leadership also experiences intense scrutiny of her performance and appearance. Diehl and Dzubinski,[144] interviewing women leaders in higher education and women executives in evangelical mission organisations, heard one higher education executive describe a female colleague who would not take a female job candidate seriously because "she didn't have on pantyhose." Several female mission executives discussed the need to monitor what they wore even outside of work. One executive described the extent of such self-monitoring: "I do try and be very careful and aware and intentional about how I approach things. I really tried to think through how I present myself, in what I would say and even what I would wear. 'Does this look professional enough?'"

Attitudes toward self-promotion and negotiation reflect a disconnect between stereotypes associated with leadership and with femininity. Women are expected to be nurturing, not self-serving and entrepreneurial behaviours viewed as appropriate in men often seem distasteful in women.[145] Women struggle to be effective self-advocates and are more reticent than men to initiate negotiations. Research suggests when they do negotiate, they are less likely than their male colleagues to self-promote and ask for commensurate levels of compensation, challenging work assignments, or other benefits.[146] Self-promoting behaviours provoke backlash for women, being accused of appearing "tacky and shameless" and "leave a bad taste in people's mouth".[147] The result is to discourage women from performing in ways that are useful in obtaining leadership opportunities. In effect, women face trade-offs that men do not.

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Bligh, M & Ito, A, 2017, "Organizational processes and systems that affect women in leadership" found in Madsen, S (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*, Edward Elgar, Research Handbooks in Business and Management Ser. Web. pp.293.

[144] Diehl, A & Dzubinski, L 2017, "An overview of gender-based leadership barriers" found in Madsen, S (ed.), *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*, Edward Elgar, Research Handbooks in Business and Management Ser. Web, pp.271-286.

[145] Rhode, D 2017, "Gender stereotypes and unconscious bias", found in Madsen, S. R., *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*. Edward Elgar, Research Handbooks in Business and Management Ser. Web.

[146] Ibid, p.295.

[147] Ibid, p.317.

Aspiring female leaders can be liked but not respected, or respected but not liked.[148] Past research has indicated that women's reluctance to negotiate was related to gender differences between men and women, however, more recent research shows that women's reluctance to negotiate is significantly shaped by the context of the male-dominated organisational system.[149] Many women internalise these prejudices which diminishes their sense of self as leaders and their aspirations to positions of influence.[150]

Transformative action: Developing a leadership identity

It is clear that critiquing and understanding the leadership culture of an organisation and the intersection of gender and power is essential for women in developing a leadership identity. Ibarra, Ely and Kolb's research[151] suggest that creating a safe space for learning, experimentation, and community is critical in leadership development programs for women. These spaces offer women supportive environments to critique gender stereotypes which may colour feedback and perceptions of women's performance that subject women to double binds and double standards. Research has amply demonstrated that accomplished, high-potential women who are evaluated as competent managers often fail the likability test, whereas competence and likability tend to go hand in hand for similarly accomplished men.[152] Creating safe spaces such as a coaching relationship, a women's leadership program, a support group of peers in which women can interpret these messages is critical to their leadership identity development.[153]

In the formation of the Uniting Church, women's groups were essential in identifying gender issues, analysing the gender discourse and building cooperative relationships and alliances with other women and men in the church who sought to bring about change. Strong connections were built around women's events and conferences where theologies were practiced, and feminist hermeneutics rehearsed. These spaces gave women the opportunities to test their thinking and their resolves with other

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[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibarra, H., Ely, R & Kolb, D 2013, "Women rising: the unseen barriers", *Harvard Business Review,* vol.91, no.9, p.65.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.

women. The church financially sponsored these events and Lay and Ordained women were encouraged to engage in its organisation and leadership. The "Church made Whole" was the theme of the National Conference on Women in the Uniting Church in Australia in 1990. This conference did not simply discuss women's spirituality but deliberately critiqued the current experience of women in the Uniting Church, the advances of women and the barriers they continued to face in offering leadership and formation to the church's identity. Although women had served as Moderators of Synods from church union onwards, it was only after the "'Church Made whole' Conference" that significant numbers of women were appointed to positions within the church bureaucracy and the first woman was elected as President of the Uniting Church.[154] Currently the Uniting Church Assembly sponsors a bi-annual women's conference around the states of Australia. However, this conference seems to lack the theological critique and rigour women's experience in the church. In Queensland the Women's Theology Circle, organised by Rev Lyn Burden, Rev Anita Monro and Rev Elizabeth Nolan, offer monthly presentations for women to engage in feminist theology. This is the only current publicised gathering within the Queensland Synod.

What is needed to encourage women in developing a leadership identity is the formation of place and space to explore, theologise and practice leadership. Andrea Bieler and David Pluss in their chapter, *"In this moment of utter vulnerability: tracing gender in presiding"*[155] offer a contemplation on how to reflect on the performative dimension of presiding while focussing on gender as something that is also performed. Their reflection is based on a scene from a workshop on liturgical presence in which the participants were delving into their embodied felt sense of particular ritual gestures such as the benediction at the end of a service. Two clergy caucasian women described what their bodies know as they stand in front of a congregation opening and lifting their both arms, smoothly with open palms as they are speaking extempore their words of blessing. The exposure of vulnerability released a different awareness for both of these women. For one woman the exposure of her body – her torso, her breasts and her belly – left her with the fear of losing her protection and pushed her

[154] Pitman, J 2011, "Feminist Public Theology in the Uniting Church in Australia", *International Journal of Public Theology*, vol.5, pp.148-149.
[155] Slee, N & Burns, S 2010, *Presiding like a Woman*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Publishing, UK.

beyond her comfort zone. She had come to see her breasts as the sexualised locus of her female body and so describes a momentary sense of shame at what seems like the inappropriate unveiling of her breasts in a worship experience. For the second woman the physical action gave her a concreate sense that her body extends beyond its visible boundaries and the ritual posture helped her to step into a sense of power and spiritual fertility that God pours out onto us. The ritual gesture of blessing was steeped in a deep, felt sense of motherhood and of embracing others in which her experiences as a priest and as a mother converge. The writers continue to reflect on the gendered quality of these performances:

> "This showing is an interactive, communicative practice in which we engage certain ways of embodied knowing of what it means to be a woman as well as a presider who offers leadership in liturgical celebrations… In both circumstances a reordering of power is experienced: the power that might lie in the ritualized exposure of vulnerability and the power that resides in shifting qualities of nurturing and mothering."[156]

The feminine qualities of vulnerability and nurturing perceived in the terrain of intimate relationships are brought into the public arena of ritual and have the potential to reframe the experience of offering a blessing and of being blessed.[157] This insightful reflection emerges from a workshop designed to understand the performative dimension of gender in clerical leadership. It offers an example of how creative, reflective and safe places for conversation, sharing and theological reflection provide women with the opportunity to develop a gendered identity within their leadership role.

Gender management strategies

To circumvent the masculine embodiment of leadership and to secure and legitimate their leadership position women in organisations engage in a range of strategies. Amanda Sinclair in her book *"Doing leadership differently"*[158] illustrates this process when the 12 women she interviewed described the ways in which they manage their gender to deal with the fact that in the boardrooms of executive Australia femininity is considered a pejorative term. To have influence and authority as managers they are required to camouflage their femininity and engage in discourses of masculinity. Strategies may include avoiding discussions about family, concealing pregnancies or

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[156] Ibid. p.113-114.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Sinclair. A 2004, *Doing leadership differently: Gender, power and sexuality in a changing business culture,* Melbourne University Press, Victoria, Australia.

repressing emotions. Pini's research[159] also illustrates this in the way women organise their domestic responsibilities and childcare to accommodate their leadership positions. While a leader is assumed to be free of domestic and childcare responsibilities, women board members with family were responsible for organising childcare in their absence, as well as most of the household and domestic work they normally did when they were present on their farms or properties. These women learned that their male counterparts were advantageously positioned in terms of this labour, including having meetings called at short notice, meetings being held over a week-long period rather than for shorter times, and meetings being held late into the evenings.

Gender management for women in leadership, however, does not simply require neutralising feminine prejudices, it also involves investing into dominant discourses about masculinity and leadership. Again, Pini's research[160] in Australian Agriculture described how women's constructions of agricultural leadership emphasised their on-farm background knowledge and skills. In this sense they were complicit with the masculine definition of farming leadership as requiring participation in on-farm physical labour. Women presented themselves as competent with on-farm technical expertise, mechanical competence and strength and consequently affirmed their right to a place in the agricultural boardroom. In this way women located themselves within a masculine discourse, while expressing their opposition to this discourse, particularly in terms of their leadership style. Poggio and Gherardi's, article *"Creating and recreating gender order in organizations"*[161] provides an account that highlights the need for women to take up a female posture showing meekness and humility. "I try to feign ignorance, asking for an opinion, trying to make the other person feel superior, so that I can get better treatment, because if you as a woman enter a male work setting and you're an analyst and begin to make comments, they cut you out. After which, after some time, when you manage to get yourself trusted again, then you can put yourself forward again and they'll listen to you. (Simona, electrical engineer)." This account describes tactics that women use to put men at ease and obtain their

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[159] Pini, B 2005, *"*The Third Sex: Women Leaders in Australian Agriculture", *Gender, Work and Organization,* vol.12, no.1, p.80.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Poggio, B & Gherardi, S 2001, "Creating and recreating gender order in organizations", *Journal of World Business*, vol.36, no.3, pp.245-259.

acceptance and trust. What this describes, say Poggio and Gherardi, is a gender dance in which women enter male territory and breach the symbolic gender order but at the same time decide to assume a 'one down' position to repair the breach and safeguard their space with strategies.[162] Once again women are required to do the work of compensating and assimilating into the masculine leadership discourse.

Transformative action: Implementing gender quotas

In the formation of the Uniting Church gender quotas were implemented as a means of ensuring the equal participation of women in the councils and decision-making bodies of the church. Arguments for quotas are that they are the best justifications for gender equality, parity and democratic legitimacy on corporate boards.[163] The main argument against quota reforms is that they are perceived as unfair or discriminatory and bring undeserving and insufficiently qualified women into decision-making bodies, assuming the criterion for the selection of candidates is based on merit.[164] Rodrfguez-Ruiz and Rubio-Marfn argue that,

> "the disqualification of women as citizens in the past was a central structural feature of the modern state, where autonomous male individuals could only thrive or continue to reproduce themselves socially by requiring women to perform tasks in the private sphere. It is only when women actively participate in the public sphere in significantly large numbers that the system will be forced to confront and solve the problems of dependency and social reproduction. Unless women are visibly participating in public institutions of the state, it can be assumed that the sexual contract is firmly in place."[165]

The implementation of quotas for women on decision making bodies of the church, correlates with a gender awareness of how biases against women are embedded into the culture and structures of the church and offers a structural strategy for managing gender. This ensures that gender management remains the responsibility of the church and provides constant critique to ensure the mode of operation does not default to the masculine leadership discourse.

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[162] Ibid.
[163] Spender, P 2015) "Gender quotas on boards is it time for Australia to lean in?", *Deakin Law Review,* vol.20 no.1, pp. 95-122.
[164] Lpinard, E & Rubio-Marfn, R 2013, "Gender Quotas: Towards Parity Governance?" (Policy Brief No 2013/08, *Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies*, European University Institute, p.4.
[165] Ibid.

Navigating the leadership discourse

Unconsciously and significantly the enduring male dominated discourse of leadership continues to demand of women the task of constructing and negotiating an acceptable leadership identity. Joyce Fletcher, in her essay, "*The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power, and transformational change*"[166], identifies and challenges the ongoing nostalgia for male authority and leadership. Fletcher draws on a number of studies to demonstrate that while the theory and practice of leadership have undergone a significant shift in the realities of today's workplace, heroic male models of leadership still persist. These studies[167] identify the traits associated with traditional heroic leadership as masculine ones. Men or women can display them, but the traits themselves - such as individualism, control, assertiveness, and skills of advocacy and domination - are socially ascribed to men in our culture and generally understood as masculine. In contrast, the traits associated with new, post-heroic leadership are feminine ones. Again, women or men can display them, but the traits themselves - such as empathy, community, vulnerability, and skills of inquiry and collaboration - are socially ascribed to women in our culture and generally understood as feminine.

With this in mind, Fletcher asks: "Why, if there is general agreement on the need for new leadership practices, are heroic models of leadership so resilient? Why, if new models of leadership are aligned with the feminine, are not more women making it to the top?"[168] Fletcher goes on to explore this phenomenon, arguing that it is rooted in a set of social interactions in which 'doing gender', 'doing power', and 'doing leadership' are linked in complex ways. What her analysis clearly highlights is that organisations with clearly and strongly defined gendered roles continue to recall a narrative about leadership that remains stuck in old images of heroic individualism, ignoring the relational practices and social networks of influence that accounted for that success and exaggerating the effect of heroic, charismatic leaders.[169]

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[166] Fletcher, J.K 2004, "The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power, and transformational change", *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol.15, no.5, pp.647-661.
[167] Ibid, p.650.
[168] Fletcher, J.K 2004, "The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power, and transformational change", *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol.15, No.5, p.652.
[169] Ibid.

Similarly, Helena Liu argues[170] that our enduring romance with leadership is in many ways a romance with white elite class masculinity. The subtle gendered, race and classed ideals of leadership mean that we have a tendency to venerate leadership for individualism, competition, aggression, rationalism and pragmatism, and to discount relationality, generosity and inclusion, and that those who contravene the hegemonic models tend to be denied the mantle of leadership.[171] As a result, organisations reinforce a double standard for women and create a psychological impasse that perpetuates the belief that women are less suitable for leadership positions. Women opt out of contention for leadership positions because the positions come at a greater cost than they do for their male colleagues in terms of likability, sacrifice and competing demand.[172] Decision makers then, implicitly or explicitly, assume that women are less motivated or willing to make the sacrifices necessary to compete for these top positions. One assumption is that this is due to family reasons. However, a recent survey revealed that parenting is not the first reason that millennial women between ages 22 and 35 quit their jobs. Better-paid jobs, lack of opportunities in the current workplace, and unsatisfactory work were rated as more important factors.[173] Research has highlighted that within this discourse of leadership are biased assumptions that disadvantage women in developing a leadership identity.

Transformative Action: Developing a diversity and inclusion strategy

Diversity and inclusion policies and practice are becoming nearly pervasive in organisational settings, creating systems and environments in which bias and stereotyping are either less likely to become initiated or are prevented even when they are active. Diversity and inclusion strategies focus on particular issues and biases for the organisation to address. Employers have experimented with three broad approaches to promoting diversity. Some programs are designed to establish organisational responsibility for diversity, others to moderate managerial bias through training and feedback, and still others to reduce the social isolation of women and

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[170] Liu, H 2018, "Leadership from the Margins: Practising Inclusivity with 'Outsiders Within", found in Adapa, S & Sheridan (ed), A. *Inclusive Leadership Negotiating Gendered Spaces*. Palgrave Studies in Leadership and Followership. Web.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Ibid.
[173] Rhode, D 2017, "Gender stereotypes and unconscious bias", found in Madsen, S.R
(ed), *Handbook of Research on Gender and Leadership*. Edward Elgar, Research Handbooks in Business and Management Ser. Web.

minority workers.[174] The three most common diversity programmes of the past 30 years - mandatory diversity training, mandatory testing for job applicants, and grievance systems - are associated with decreases in the representation of white women, as well as black, Hispanic, and Asian men and women.[175] In research better results are seen with diversity programmes that capitalise on people's need for autonomy, increase contact between diverse groups, encourage personal engagement, and include all members of the organisation rather than only those who are part of the group targeted for intervention. Examples of successful diversity programmes are mentoring programmes, which effectively increase representation among minority women in particular, and the establishment of diversity task forces.[176] Even more effective are sponsorship programmes in which sponsors become personally invested in their protégé's career success, take risks to champion them for recognition and advancement, and actively embed them in powerful networks.[177]

The Queensland Synod does not have a Synod wide Diversity and Inclusion policy. The Synod office has an Anti-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Employment Equity policy. The Synod office has a Code of Conduct policy that contains the Synod office values, in particular respect that acknowledges inclusion. The development of a Diversity and Inclusion policy and strategy would acknowledge and recognise the inherit cultural bias in the church and seek to identify ways to address gender bias. Research suggests that identifying the specific behaviour that requires change is more effective than trying to change attitudes.[178] To move from abstract plans to actions and avoid unintended consequences, the church must clearly lay out specific steps that will be taken to enact its values and goals expressed in the *Basis of Union*, and specify the indicators that will be used to measure success, while also taking into consideration the many barriers that stand in the way of individual behavioural change.[179]

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[174] Kalev, A, Dobbin, F & Kelly, E 2006, "Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies", *American Sociological Review*, vol.71, pp.589-617.
[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Hewlett, S.A 2014, "(Forget a mentor) find a sponsor: the new way to fast-track your career", *ManagementNext*, Web: Global factiva.
[178] Kang, S.K & Kaplan, S 2019, "Working toward gender diversity and inclusion in medicine: myths and solutions.", *The Lancet*, vol.393, no.10171, pp.579-586.
[179] Ibid.

Interrupting the authorial ontology of leadership

In this chapter I have demonstrated that within the symbolic order of gender, women are required to understand the masculine discourse and make deliberate choices for how they will develop a leadership identity within the church. I have also sought to introduce transformative actions to address the incongruence women experience between gender and leadership. Ibarra, Ely and Kolb, in their article *"Women rising: the unseen barriers"* state: "Becoming a leader involves much more than being put in a leadership role, acquiring new skills, and adapting one's style to the requirements of that role. It involves a fundamental identity shift." [180] I have demonstrated that in developing a leadership identity, women are required to make many accommodations and negotiations that are not required of men. These accommodations are the result of entrenched gendering practices that continue to favour men over women. Addressing these structural and process inequities is essential to promoting women into leadership and encouraging them to be political actors within the church.

> "Organizations inadvertently undermine this process when they advise women to proactively seek leadership roles without also addressing policies and practices that communicate a mismatch between how women are seen, and the qualities and experiences people tend to associate with leaders."[181]

This is the work the church must attend to in seeking to fulfill its vision of equality for women and men in clerical leadership.

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[180] Ibarra, H, Ely, R & Kolb, D 2013, "Women rising: the unseen barriers", *Harvard Business Review,* vol.91, no.9, pp.60-67.
[181] Ibid.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This work began by identifying the disparity between The Uniting Church's theological and ecclesial statements about women in the church and the lived experience of women in leadership in the Queensland Synod. The impetus for this study resided in the question: "Why aren't more women, particularly clergy women, expressing their gifts and calling in senior leadership positions in the Synod?" And consequently, "Why has there been only one female Moderator in its 44 years?"

Beginning with the premise that organisational culture is a useful heuristic for the study of gender within the church, I set out to demonstrate how the social construct of organisational history has lent itself to gendered notions of how leadership is practiced. Through the experiences of women prior and during church union I demonstrated that organisations gender their members proactively through a range of processes highlighted by Joan Acker.[182] I particularly focussed on Acker's fourth gendering process which is concerned with the development of gender identity within organisations and the way norms of masculinity and femininity are reproduced performatively. The Third Wave of feminist movements, with its roots in socialist feminism and in the poststructuralist critique, brought the category of gender to the fore in organisational theory. I referred to one of the central proponents of the post-structural and discursive doing gender approach, Judith Butler[183] who shifts the focus of doing gender from interactions to the inclusion of the discourses through which gender is performed. Hannah Arendt's[184] feminist exploration of the gendered discourse of authority in the western church and Carol Christ's[185] reflection on the ongoing impact of this discourse on women in the church today, highlighted the deeply rooted and complex dynamic between this discourse and gender performances. Studies on the experience of women in church leadership have contributed to an understanding of the structural processes involved in the reproduction of gender in the church, however, there has been limited research on the way gender is resignified

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[182] Acker, J 1990, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations", *Gender & society: official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society*, vol.4, no. 2, pp.139-158.
[183] Butler, J 1988, "Performative acts and gender constitution: An essay in phenomenology and feminist theory", *Theatre Journal,* vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 519–531.
[184] Arendt, H 2006, "What is Authority", found in Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future: six exercised in political thought,* Penguin Classics, New York, pp. 91-141.
[185] Christ, C.P 1987. "Why Women Need the Goddess: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Political Reflections.", found in Bagley, K & McIntosh, K (eds), In *Women's Studies in Religion: A Multicultural Reader*, Pearson, New York.

performatively and how masculinity remains ontologically authorial. While this work helps to explain the persistence of gender inequality, the question, "how do organisations, and in this case the Queensland Synod, interrupt these longstanding distinctions between men and women, masculinity and femininity, power and domination?" is the focus of current research and organisational theoretical development.

One of the challenges in developing feminist organisational theory has been the inadequate integration of organisational studies and gender studies. Masculinity is of central importance to the study of organisations since management discourses and practices are steeped in the definitions and assumptions that it generates and sustains. This has problematised gender organisational theory and highlighted the obstacles scholars face in developing an integrated theory for studying gender and organisations. For the purpose and limitations of this work I have not sought to critique the Synod by using a particular systematic gendered organisational theory. Instead I have taken a gender focussed approach to study the impact of theology, history, culture, structure and procedure on the social construction of masculinity and femininity in the church. By examining the connections between gender, discourse, power and organisation, I have sought to explore the negotiations and accommodations that women are required to do when normative notions of leadership and femininity are radically conflicting. I contended that the Queensland Synod's failed consciousness around this issue and its lack of attention to disrupting these trends has enabled gendered processes to continue within the structure and culture of the church. Finally, I have begun to identify researched strategies to help the church address these biased processes and establish more gender inclusive strategies.

Clearly, there is much work to be done for the Uniting Church in Australia to live out its theological vision for women's full participation in the life of the church, especially through leadership roles. But in confronting these shortcomings, feminist scholars have always pressed on in hope. It is in the spirit of such robust hope that this thesis is offered, in the spirit of a church ever reforming. As the final paragraph of the *Basis of Union* declares "The Uniting Church affirms that it belongs to the people of God on the way to the promised end. The Uniting Church prays that, through the gift of the Spirit, God will constantly correct that which is erroneous in its life, will bring it into

deeper unity with other Churches, and will use its worship, witness and service to

God's eternal glory through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen."[186]

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[186] "The *Basis of Union*" 1992 (ed), The Uniting Church in Australia, Para.14.