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Studying Christian masculinity

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STUDYING CHRISTIAN MASCULINITY

AN INTRODUCTION

YVONNE MARIA WERNER

Christianity has markedly patriarchal traits, and by tradition men have played the dominant role in the affairs of all churches. Yet from the middle of the nineteenth century, when the idea that religion was a private matter won acceptance in liberal, middle-class circles, and belief in science and social progress gradually replaced Christianity as a normative guideline, Christian faith and religious practice became increasingly associated with womanliness and docility. If religion was to have any place in modern society, then it was in the private home sphere, not in (male) public life.¹ The feminisation of Christianity went hand in hand with the division into private and public, and the spread of the idea of the ‘separate spheres’ that marked the initial stages of modern society. It was in the light of these developments that Christian manliness appeared as one of modernity’s paradoxes.

Religion and modern masculinity thus seemed incompatible², and this idea has since continued to characterise historical research on religion and gender, in which the theory of a feminisation of religion has found growing acceptance.³ From the 1980s onwards, several studies have established the importance of religion in the struggle for woman’s emancipation in the Protestant world, in which religion figures both as a hindrance for the emancipation movement, and as an instrument of empowerment used by women. It has been noted that religious engagement offered women

¹ McLeod, “Weibliche Frömmigkeit - männlicher Unglaube”.

² The difference between manliness and masculinity is blurred. According to Gail Bedermann, manliness, with its allusions to character, conduct, and an ideal of manhood, was the more common term in the nineteenth century, whereas masculinity refers to all-male characteristics, both good and bad (Bederman, *Manliness & Civilisation*, 17-20).

³ Bradstock et al., eds, *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture*, 1-9.

an alternative to their confined, domestic sphere.⁴ Other studies have pointed to the extent of female engagement in the Protestant missionary movements and the growing importance of female religious orders and congregations in the Catholic world.⁵ While women's and gender history has increasingly heeded the role of religion, religious issues have until recently been overlooked in the increasingly popular field of men's history, particularly in research on masculinity in the modern period. On those rare occasions that Christian ideas and ideals are addressed, they are usually interpreted in a middle-class, liberal perspective. The unspoken assumption is often that religion was a private matter, restricted to the ambit of home and the female sphere, and therefore of no relevance to public life, the male domain.⁶

The theory of the feminisation of Christianity in the nineteenth century, which has become the master narrative within modern research on religion and gender, posits women's increased religious commitment, but it also asserts that religious attitudes, symbols and practices were discursively feminised, and that many men distanced themselves from the church and religion.⁷ According to the British historian Callum Brown, women promoted and preserved Christian values and norms, whereas masculinity developed into the antithesis of feminised religiosity. He concludes that it was thanks to women that the Christian discourse continued to hold sway in Britain in the modern period. When many women abandoned specifically Christian values and traditions in the early 1960s, Britain lurched from a Christian to a secular discourse. The historians Norbert Busch and Raymond Jonas have arrived at similar conclusions in their analyses of Catholic spirituality in nineteenth-century Germany and France⁸, while elsewhere it has been noted that pious ecclesiastical associations found more female than male adherents, and that Catholic women were more fervent churchgoers than their husbands.⁹

Secular worldviews emerged alongside Christianity, and liberal demands that religion should be a private matter served to undermine the old political and social

⁴ Welter, "The Feminisation of American Religion"; Götz von Olenhusen, "Die Feminisierung der Religion und Kirche", 69-88; Busch, "Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit"; Hölscher, "Weibliche Religiosität?"; Kimmel, "Consuming Manhood"; Saurer, "Gender and the History of Religion".

⁵ Baumann, *Protestantismus und Frauenemanzipation in Deutschland*; Hill Lindley, ed., *You Have Stepped Out of Your Place*; Götz von Olenhusen, ed., *Wunderbare Erscheinungen*; Meiwes, *Arbeiterinnen des Herrn*; Hammar, *Emancipation och religion*; Markkola, ed., *Gender and Vocation*; Okkenhaug, ed., *Gender, Race and Religion*; Norseth, 'La os bryte over tvert med vor stumhet'.

⁶ See, for example, Stearns, *Be a Man!*; Mosse, *The Image of Man*; Schmale, "Einleitung, Gender Studies, Männergeschichte, Körpergeschichte"; Tosh, *A Man's Place*; Tjeder, "Maskulinum som problem"; Sidenvall, "Manlighet och mission"; and Tjeder, *The Power of Character*. There are a few honourable exceptions, however: see, for example, Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortune*, 71-191, in which the impact of religion on the construction of manliness is discussed.

⁷ Feminisation theory was introduced to American research in the 1970s by Welter in "The Feminisation of American Religion". For an overview, see Van Osselear and Thomas Buerman, "Feminisation Thesis".

⁸ Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*; Busch, *Katholische Frömmigkeit und Moderne*; Jonas, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart*.

⁹ Götz von Olenhusen, ed., *Wunderbare Erscheinungen*; Meiwes, "Religiosität und Arbeit als Lebensform für katholische Frauen".

order. Christianity in all its various denominations ceased to be the fundaments of society, and the connection between state and church became ever weaker. In a broad study of religion and society in Britain, France, and Germany, the British historian Hugh McLeod asserts that piety was seen as a normal and desirable part of womanhood in many parts of Western Europe, whereas religious indifference was regarded as an equally normal part of manhood. In many regions, not least in parts of Catholic France, but also in Protestant Scandinavia, there was a drastic reduction in church attendance, particularly amongst men.¹⁰ At the same time, women's importance for church life increased, reinforcing the image of churchgoing and worship as a female affair.

However, recent research has also pointed to other developments in modern society. Several researchers have stressed the link between confessional or denominational culture and national identity. Inherited Christian confession was thus an important factor in the construction of nineteenth-century national identities. In particular, nationalism and religion frequently intermingled to produce, as McLeod puts it, nationalist religions and religiously shaped nationalisms.¹¹ The German historian Olaf Blaschke, in drawing an analogy with the Reformation's confessionalisation, describes the period between 1830 and 1960 as 'a second confessional age', characterised by church consolidation and conflicts between the denominations. Bourgeois liberalism was certainly of crucial importance for the political developments of the period, yet it accounted for only a minority of the population, while despite dwindling attendance at religious services, Christianity in its different denominational forms in many ways continued to serve as the normative basis of society.¹²

Men ran the churches, and the clergy long remained exclusively male, but at the parochial level women began to dominate more and more. Similarly, men were heavily over-represented in free thought and secularist movements. In middle-class, liberal, anti-clerical, and socialist circles, the exercise of religion became identified as a female concern. But was this really the case? What were the outlets for male religiosity? And how to explain the large numbers of men who were committed to the church and the Christian faith? These are the questions addressed in the multidisciplinary research project *Christian manliness - a paradox of modernity* that concluded its work in 2010. Nine scholars from different Swedish universities and the previously mentioned Olaf Blaschke from the University of Trier in Germany have been engaged in the project, which was sponsored by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation. We have been fortunate enough to have Hugh McLeod and Callum Brown as advisers to the research group, and have benefited immensely from our collaboration with researchers working on similar issues in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands,

¹⁰ McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 124-136. However, he notes that the differences in religious commitment between men and woman varied greatly according to country and region.

¹¹ Ibid., 216-247, 286. Sweden followed much the same course, as is clearly shown by Blücker, *The Church as Nation*; Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, 1-25, 41; Haupt and Langewiesche, eds, *Nation und Religion in Europa*.

¹² Blaschke, "Das 19. Jahrhundert. Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?"; Id., "Der Dämon des Konfessionalismus"; see also Jarlert, "State Churches and Diversified Confessionalisation in Scandinavia".

and Belgium, of whom Tine Van Osselear, Marit Monteiro, and Nanna Damsholt have all contributed to this volume.¹³

Our work is part of the rapidly growing field of men's studies, which was originally closely connected to feminist-oriented women's studies, but has now developed its own profile. Whereas women's and gender studies largely deal with woman's subordination and the struggle for emancipation, men's studies often focus on ideals of manhood and the construction of masculinity. That said, both research traditions build on the assumption that men exercise true power, which explains why most studies of men and masculinity deal with homosocial relations between men and groups of men.¹⁴ The overall aim of our project was to shed light on the relationship between Christianity and masculinity in Northern Europe between 1840 and 1940, a period marked first by the emergence and ascendancy of the liberal-bourgeois gender discourse, and then by its initial decline. Here we consider how Christian ideals such as humility, self-abnegation, and piety, which were defined as female qualities in the middle-class, liberal discourse, affected the construction of Christian manhood, and how this was reflected in men's lives. Ideals of manliness are discussed, as are male piety and religiosity, male engagement in missionary and reform work, and the image of Christian masculinity in literature. Further, we analyse the wider theological and ideological perspectives, and their importance for the construction of manliness as well as for the relationship between manliness and womanliness, masculinity and femininity. The length of the period under consideration and the diversity of religious contexts make it possible to draw a broad picture of the complex relationship between confession, nation, religious culture, and the construction of Christian manliness.

Our starting point is a critical attitude towards the feminisation theory and the all too simplistic use of this concept to be found in many studies. Further we have adopted an equally cautious attitude towards the term 'religion', which is often used in a way that disregards the political significance of religious activities. As the German theologian Bernhard Schneider points out in a critical examination of the feminisation theory, the organisational and political dimensions of religion - the engagement in church and religion shown in politics, social organisations, and public debate - must also be taken into consideration.¹⁵ The sweeping generalisation that religion

¹³ The research projects "Katholieke intellectuele voorhoedes: dragers van traditie en moderniteit (1900-2000)", led by Marit Monteiro at the Radboud University Nijmegen, and "Op zoek naar de goede katholieke m/v. Feminisering en masculiniteit in het katholicisme in België sinds de vroeg-moderne tijd (ca. 1750-1950)", led by Patrick Pasture and Jan Art at the Universities of Ghent and Louvain; see also Werner, "Religious Feminisation, Confessionalism and Re-masculinisation in Western European Society"; and Id., ed., *Kristen manlighet*.

¹⁴ Rotundo, *American Manhood*; Mosse, *The Image of Man*; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*; Göransson, ed., *Sekelskiften och kön*; Hirdman, *Genus: om det stabila föränderliga former*; Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*; Ekenstam, "Män, manlighet och omanlighet i historien". Earlier studies of masculinity often focused on typical ideals of maleness, whereas the more recent tend to concentrate on men's actual lives. See also Broughton and Rogers, eds, *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century*.

¹⁵ Schneider, "Feminisierung der Religion". The theory of feminisation has also been criticised by feminists for anthologising gender differences and deeming men's religious lives more important than women's. See also Warne, "Making the Gender-Critical Turn".

was a female concern excludes the possibility that men might have been religiously committed in their own way. In studying masculinity and religion, the focus must thus be moved from the places where women dominated to those where Christian men were active on behalf of the church. Blaschke goes one step further, interpreting this transfer of religiosity into the professional, public, and political sphere as a deliberate strategy of re-masculinisation, used by the churches to counteract the feminisation of religion.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The trend towards an ever more diversified society, in which Christianity was reduced to the status of one model of belief amongst many, unleashed a strong counter-reaction. Across Europe, religious revivals sprang up that contributed to the revitalisation of Christianity in the nineteenth century. In Protestant countries, these revivals often originated in Pietistic and Low Church movements, while the ultramontane revival in the Catholic world drew its inspiration from Counter-Reformation ideology. All these religious movements strove to restore a religiously determined social order, based on a traditional understanding of Christianity along confessional lines. The German historian Hartmut Lehmann argues that religious revival, church mobilisation, and de-Christianisation were the dominant cultural trends in the Western world in this period.¹⁶ It is this development that Blaschke describes in terms of confessionalisation. The word ‘confession’ is understood in a broad sense, comprising not only a community based on Christian belief but also the cultural context that it produced.

We have drawn on this perspective in analysing the debate on manliness and ‘unmanliness’, inspired by the work of the likes of Evelyn Kirkley. Using American material, Kirkley has shown how freethinkers and Christians alike claimed to represent true masculinity, while at the same time accusing the other side of being unmanly.¹⁷ Several historians have shown that the idea of unmanliness has had a great impact on the construction and impact of masculine ideals, including George L. Mosse, who writes of types and counter-types of masculinity, a perspective that has been further developed by the Swedes David Tjeder and Claes Ekenstam.¹⁸

Historians such as Gail Bederman, Norman Vance, Donald E. Hall, Clifford Putney, Allen Warren, and Anne O’Brien have analysed the reactions the feminised image of Christian religion provoked amongst Christian men in the English-speaking world. Movements sprang up that tried to find a spiritual dimension to typically male activities such as sports, politics, and business, and to shape the new synthesis of masculinity and Christian practice. Christianity was to be infused with manly vigour, and the current ideals of manliness were to be infused with Christian virtues. One

¹⁶ Lehmann, “Von der Erforschung der Säkularisierung zur Erforschung von Prozessen der Dechristianisierung und der Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa”; Graf, *Die Wiederkehr der Götter*, 69-101; Lehmann, *Säkularisierung*.

¹⁷ Kirkley, “Is it Manly to be a Christian?”.

¹⁸ Mosse, *The Image of Man*, 56-76; Tjeder, *The Power of Character*, 283-285, 290-292; Ekenstam, “Män, manlighet och omanlighet”, 41-47.

example is the Anglo-American muscular Christianity movement, whose advocates tried to combine physical activity and Christian faith, and stressed the spiritual value of sports; another is the Christian scouting movement. The ideas of muscular Christianity were articulated within the missionary movements, and went on to inspire and influence both the Christian Socialist movement in Great Britain and the Social Gospel movement in the United States. These latter abided by the idea that religion and politics were inseparable, and that it was the duty of the church to find solutions to social problems.¹⁹

In our work we have also found inspiration in the gender theories of the sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and R. W. Connell. In brief, Bourdieu's theory of male dominance states that manhood is construed in competition between men in public spaces where women only play a marginal role. Yet women have an important function as onlookers, and their voluntary subordination confirms male patterns of behaviour, or *habitus*, and manly identity. Taken to the extreme, it descends into a struggle for power and dominance. Similar ideas are found in Connell's theory of 'hegemonic masculinity', which deals with the crystallisation of dominant ideals of manhood in a given social milieu. The relationship between different kinds of masculinities form a dialectic interplay of alliance, dominance, subordination, and - in the case of unorthodox forms of manliness - stigmatisation.²⁰ In these two theoretical models, it is primarily in the relationship between men and groups of men that manhood is constructed, while women play a passive role. Male dominance over women is asserted, as Bourdieu put it, through the 'symbolic violence' he saw embedded in the social order, and which is most evident in the religious sphere and in traditional forms of marriage.

According to the German historian Wolfgang Schmale, the liberal-bourgeois discourse of masculinity made triumphant progress in Western European society in the course of the nineteenth century, leaving its mark on the church. He follows Connell in writing of a hegemonic Western concept of manliness, derived from biological categories that centred on ideals such as self-control, endurance, rationality, patriotism, heterosexuality, and physical beauty. Hegemonic masculinity, Schmale suggests, was an expression of social modernisation, and the alternative constructions of manhood were either surviving remnants of older social structures or, as was particularly the case with the new homosexual movement, consequences of a radicalised modernity. The religious revivals and church mobilisations of the period were elements in the modernisation of society, and thus contributed, directly or indirectly, to the prevalence of the hegemonic concept of masculinity and its successive integration into the norms of the established churches. Schmale gives few concrete examples, however, and instead calls for empirical studies of actual church milieus.²¹

¹⁹ Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit*; Bederman, "The Woman have had Charge of the Church long enough"; O'Brien, "A Church Full of Men"; Hall, ed., *Muscular Christianity*; Warren, "Popular Manliness"; Putney, *Muscular Christianity*; O'Brien, "Missionary Masculinities".

²⁰ Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*; Connell, *Masculinities*. See Dinges, "Hegemoniale Männlichkeit".

²¹ Schmale, *Geschichte der Männlichkeit in Europa*, 153-154, 227-230.

Established confessional culture was an important marker in national identity. Several historians have pointed out the extent to which this fusion of confession and nation was characterised by a desire to strengthen masculine identity.²² In order to counterbalance the 'effeminate' image of religious practice, the churches developed male semantics, often fused with notions of nationhood, that were supposedly appealing to men, and offered a framework of associations and organisations in which male Christian identities could be formed. The re-masculinisation that followed in the wake of confessionalism made it possible for Christian men to compensate for the feminisation of religious culture, real or imagined, for it offered an arena where male virtues and powers could be used for religious purposes. Using the theoretical perspectives presented above, we have formulated a general hypothesis of church mobilisation and Christian confessionalism as a strategy used by the churches to counteract the secularisation of society and the feminisation of religion, and to restore and reinforce male domination in the religious sphere. This hypothesis should not be thought of as essentialist, however.²³ We are not intent on reconstructing true Christian manhood, but the prevalent ideas of masculinity and femininity, and how these categories were related to religious values, attitudes, and practices.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This volume of essays is divided into five thematic parts, each consisting of a number of essays produced within the project *Christian manliness* or in connection to it. The first part addresses the key concepts and theoretical perspectives of the project. Olaf Blaschke begins, with an analysis of constructions of masculinity in German Catholicism and Protestantism. He identifies the various strategies used by the churches to make religious life more attractive to men. Religious actions, attitudes, and people regarded as feminine, weak, and submissive in the hegemonic bourgeois discourse were re-coded into something masculine, strong, and heroic, and vice versa. Blaschke pays special attention to the Catholic Men's Apostolate, a campaign that began in the 1880s with the aim of bringing religiously indifferent men back to church and to engage them for the sake of the Church. The issue of the feminisation of religion was also debated amongst German Protestants. However, due to the amalgamation of Protestant culture, legitimate masculinity, and nationalism this question seems to have been less problematic for Protestant men, at least for those wrapped up in the hegemonic culture of male, bourgeois Protestantism. Blaschke concludes that while Protestants tended to use religion for the sake of nationalism, Catholics tended to use nationalism for the sake of religion.

²² McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe*, 217-247; Kjell Blücker, *The Church as Nation*, 148-203, 313-320.

²³ Van Osselear has pointed out that the terms 'feminisation' and 'masculinisation' easily lead to an essentialist view of gender characteristics, and instead argues for a shift in focus from gender constructions to differentiation within various religious groups along the lines of membership, class, gender, practices, and the like (Van Osselear, *The Pious Sex*, 274-278).

In a chapter on masculinity and secularisation in Great Britain, Callum Brown shows that the image of men as naturally 'more secular' remained very strong in the first part of the nineteenth century. Masculinity was still seen as an innate problem for the Christian faith, something that needed the discipline of increased 'feminine' attributes. Yet later the inter-war years witnessed the emergence of a new form of male relationship to organised Christianity that provided an alternative non-church focus, one in which male faith could be expressed and gave men a religious focus within popular culture. In the 1960s, when Christian culture was deeply affected by the sexual revolution, and many women adopted a secular identity, the moral problem of British society changed gender from male to female. According to Brown, women's changing relationship to church and religion lies at the heart of late twentieth-century secularisation. Perhaps, he concludes, secularisation in the shape of de-Christianisation is turning out to be a woman's thing, not a man's, as has been asserted for so long.

The second part of the volume is concerned with visions and ideals of Christian manhood. Alexander Maurits and Tine Van Osselear analyse the concepts of male Christian heroes in conservative, neo-Lutheran confessionalism, represented by the writings of Swedish theologians, and in the Catholic Sacred Heart movement in Belgium in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century. In both cases the Christian heroes, with Jesus as the ultimate example, were described as the instruments of God, distinguished by religious zeal and a willingness to refrain from the success and comforts of this world. In both cases, martial metaphors were used. Yet whereas the Protestant heroes to be admired were either kings or male church reformers, held up as model leaders and educators, fighting for the true faith or for their nation, the Catholic heroes were either heroic religious, zealous missionaries, or fervent laymen (or women), defending the rights of the church. Although the Lutheran heroes were also characterised by Christian virtues such as piety, humility, and self-denial, these 'soft' ideals were more frequently used in the Catholic discourse, together with asceticism and strict obedience to the ecclesiastical authorities.

The importance of these ideals is reflected also in Marit Monteiro's chapter on constructions of masculinity and identity in the Dominican Order in the Netherlands in the 1930s and 1940s. She focuses on the conflicts over the redefinition of the Dutch Dominicans' identity, and their impact on the understanding of Dominican manliness as expressed in the narrative structures of collective memorials. Whereas the international Order emphasised the monastic dimension of the Dominican tradition, the Dutch Preachers, who mainly served as parish priests, had developed a clerical identity, guarding the patriarchal structure of clerical authority. By the 1920s, this identity was questioned by some of the younger Dominicans who wanted to tone down the clerical dimension, underscore the monastic qualities of the Order's tradition, and at the same time open up for a more democratic relationship between the laity and the religious. Monteiro highlights the fact that, as a category, Christian manliness functioned across the boundaries between lay and clerical, clerical and monastic.

Several historians have pointed to the differences between what is best characterised as secular masculinity and the Christian ideals of manliness. This is the starting-point for Anna Prestjan, who analyses the qualities, virtues, and characters to be found in the published eulogies for priests in two Swedish dioceses. Prestjan, who

has studied around two hundred such texts, shows that contemporary, secular ideals of masculinity were the order of the day. She interprets this as an attempt to show that the clergymen were ordinary men with worldly interests. A humble, mild clergyman could be shown as masculine by demonstrating physical strength or an inclination to wrath, and a passive virtue such as trust could be balanced by more active qualities such as initiative and rationality. In Prestjān's view it was this mixture of traditionally Christian ideals and contemporary masculine qualities that distinguished the image of Lutheran priestly manliness.

Modernity was an important tool in the construction of the hegemonic bourgeois ideals of masculinity. This is the starting-point in David Tjeder's chapter on religious faith and crises of masculinity in the writings of two theologians, Archbishop Nathan Söderblom and J. A. Eklund, the leader of the Swedish Young Church movement, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Tjeder shows how these church leaders tried to come to terms with the accusation that the Christian faith was incompatible with modern manhood by redefining both the content of modernity and their understanding of Christian faith. By referring to nationalist ideology and the Christian rhetoric of struggle, they sought to create an up-to-date male ideal that was modern, manly, and Lutheran; the diametric opposite of the 'effeminate' ideals of the 'foreign' free churches and the unmanly ideologies of the secularists. Tjeder reveals the importance played by the experience of crises of faith in the writings of these men. In their view, it was this intellectual fight in itself that made the Christian faith truly male, and distinguished it from the more 'natural' female religiosity.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, almost every Christian church and denomination had overseas missions. This should perhaps be seen as the overflow of the religious mobilisation of the period. Gender historians have pointed to the importance of these missionary endeavours for women, because foreign missions provided a space where renegotiations of traditional gender roles became possible.²⁴ But such studies have rarely focused on masculinity. Missionary masculinity is thus the subject of the third part of the volume. Erik Sidenvall's chapter is a micro-study of a Swedish evangelical missionary in China, who like his fellow missionaries had a rural, working-class background. Sidenvall shows that for these working-class men, missionary work was an alternative to emigration, and their engagement can be understood in part as their striving for middle class respectability. Thus they adopted the middle-class ideals of the American evangelical missionary movement to which they were connected, which they tried to combine with the traditional ideals of masculinity derived from the ideal of the Lutheran household, and personified above all by married clergymen.²⁵

The ideals of missionary masculinity are also discussed in my own chapter, which deals with the Italian Barnabites and German Jesuits who worked as missionaries in the Nordic countries. The Barnabites were important in the initial phase of the Nordic Catholic mission in the 1860s and 1870s, whereas the Jesuits, ostensibly the most fervent defenders of ultramontane confessionalism, held a dominant position in the Swedish and Danish Catholic church in the ensuing period. The humble, pious,

²⁴ Cf. Rowbotham, "Soldiers of Christ?".

²⁵ See also Sidenvall, *The Making of Manhood amongst Swedish Missionaries in China and Mongolia*.

obedient, and self-sacrificing ideals of manliness expressed in the reports of these celibate missionaries stood in sharp contrast not only to modern Protestant ideas of manhood, but also to the prevailing middle-class understanding of masculinity. Similar perspectives are also found in Catholic magazines, in which male saints are described as being just as pious and eager to live up to the religious virtues as female saints. But in a Catholic understanding, the question was not about male and female ideals, but about Christian ideals and their absence.

The fourth part of the volume focuses on the strategies adopted to foster young men as good Christian men. Elin Malmer explores the evangelical Swedish Mission Covenant's missionary work with conscripts and establishing a network of 'soldiers' homes', in which a specific evangelical male identity was formed. The mission was motivated by the idea that sin was thought more likely to take hold during conscription. Yet in Malmer's view, their determination to engage young men for the sake of Christ can also be interpreted as a strategy of re-masculinisation. The membership of the Swedish Mission Covenant was highly feminised, whereas the leadership was almost totally male. Malmer pays particular attention to the debate over military conscription, and to the boundaries created on a rhetorical level between good and bad types of manhood in the movement's youth magazine.

Nanna Damsholt's chapter deals with the discourse of masculinity in the Danish folk high school movement in the second half of the nineteenth century, focusing on the writings of one of its pioneers, Ernst Trier. These schools, which were part of a revivalist movement, represented a new kind of educational establishment, intended for young adults from rural areas. Damsholt traces the emergence of a new type of Danish masculinity at these educational institutes, characterised by a mixture of middle-class liberal and traditional Christian ideals. Certainly, a patriarchal model and the ideology of the separate spheres were upheld, but at the same time the young men were also taught to develop the 'feminine', gentler parts of their personality.

In the three chapters of the fifth part of the volume, a number of different perspectives are brought to bear on transgressions of gender boundaries. Inger Littberger Caisou-Rousseau describes the relationship between masculinity and Christianity in Swedish fiction. In analysing literary works by leading Swedish authors such as Carl Jonas Love Almqvist, August Strindberg, and Selma Lagerlöf, she illustrates the extent to which the fictional representation of Christian manliness was an unstable construction full of contradictions and rifts. The concept of masculinity is present in many different forms, and is described both as a female potential of Christian faith, as priestly activism, and as an androgynous potential for transgressing gender boundaries. The literary texts studied illustrate the complex character of both masculinity and Christianity, and reveal the importance of women for the religious identity of men, with the unavoidable conclusion to be drawn that the male characters portrayed would not survive without either women or the Christian faith.

The rhetoric of a positive combination of womanly and manly qualities is the frame of Anders Jarlert's study of Sweden's Queen Victoria, who was characterised by her contemporaries as 'manly', although with a certain feminine charm, in descriptions that refer to her self-discipline, firmness, spiritual strength, and strong sense of duty. Jarlert's analysis of the queen's correspondence reveals that her Christian faith, which was influenced both by Charles Kingsley's devotional books and by high

church Lutheranism, should also be understood as manly by the lights of the gender discourse of the day. As queen, she regarded herself in the spirit of the old Lutheran social teaching as the matron of the nation. By emphasising the manly virtues in a woman inspired by Kingsley, Jarlert questions the usual picture of this British novelist and Christian activist as one of the chief representatives of muscular Christianity.

The construction of Christian manliness can be seen as the rejoinder of a long-standing Christian pattern of interpretation to the modernity that confronted it. In the writings of the church fathers, male superiority in the order of creation is taken for granted and used to motivate male dominance at all levels of society. Even if women were seen as equal to men in spiritual matters, this very equality was conceived as 'spiritual manliness'. Mystical writings, however, tended to emphasise that both men and women adopted a 'feminine' role in relation to Christ. These different ways of using gender in theological metaphors is prevalent also in today's Catholic theology, which at the same time is exerting itself to come to terms with modern gender ideology. This is the starting point for the theologian Gösta Hallonsten, who analyses so-called new feminism in the Catholic Church. His focus is the problematic relationship between traditional theological anthropology and modern thinking, which underpins the notion of a 'feminisation' of religion in modern times. His conclusion is that feminist theologians, by taking physical sex differences as a given point of departure and emphasising (potential) female virtues, seek to transcend the gender stereotypes that characterise bourgeois modernity.

A common finding in all our studies is that social and missionary engagement on confessional grounds, whether interpreted in a Protestant state church, revivalist, liberal theological, or Catholic manner, were the main components in the construction of Christian manliness. Another is that there was a widespread determination to re-code as contemporary male values those classical, Christian ideals that were gendered feminine in the dominant discourse, and to harness the masculine combative spirit to Christian ends. In Catholicism, where regulated religious life served as a normative foundation, classical Christian ideals such as humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice played a more central role than in the family oriented Protestant gender ideology, with its sharp demarcation between male and female. For their part, Protestant ideals of manhood were more tightly entwined with nationalist ideologies, and accorded more closely with the gender ideologies of contemporary bourgeois society, whereas piety and the political struggle on behalf of the church were the most significant features of Catholic ideals of manliness. Our research thus illustrates not only of the importance of religion in any understanding of gender constructions, but also the need to take into consideration the confessional and institutional aspects of religious identity.