

Gnostic Feminism

Recently, one of the stars of The Vagina Monologues wrote me complaining about a column I published criticizing that infamous feminist play. She told me she was “offended” and “hurt” by my critique. Naturally, I asked her whether the flashing “vagina” sign advertising the play in front of our school was offensive. I reminded her that the Greek Orthodox and Baptist churches were located right across from the sign. She responded by saying that she “didn’t give a s#*t” what they thought.¹

Understanding the political and philosophical motives behind modern feminism will help shed some light on how these “modern” women endeavor to interpret religious history,² theology, thusly exposing an agenda. I myself encountered these embedded post-modern assumptions during a philosophy 101 course. The religious Hindu/feminist professor³ wrote on the board this phrase, “Women philosophers believe this, that there are no absolutes.” While making it apparent that she didn’t believe in *absolutes* in the opening class, when opposing values and propositions challenged her *absolute* statement, she *absolutely* defended her proposition.

Another feminist that has much to say about Christianity and who is considered by some to be an expert on early Gnostic traditions and writings is Harrington Spear Paine Professor of Religion at Princeton University, Elaine Pagels. Professor Pagels does state fairly that “Gnostics *were not* unanimous in affirming women, nor were the orthodox unanimous in denigrating them.” She then suggests that “on balance, women were somewhat better off in the Gnostic Church than in the orthodox.”⁴ (She says this while ignoring that only the male would shed this fleshly nature for that of the spiritual... in other words, women could not be “saved” in the *Gnostic sense of being saved*.)⁵ Professor Pagels uses the idea that

¹ Mike Adams, *Feminists Say the Darndest Things: A Politically Incorrect Professor Confronts “Womyn” on Campus* (New York, NY: Sentinel Publishing, 2007), 4.

² Some examples of how history is wrongly interpreted are as follows, the first is from the book *Ancient Goddesses*, in which the authors talk about the bias imposed onto archaeological finds:

...we need to ask: Was the figurine found in a building? In a grave? Was it in a well or on a rubbish heap and how might it have ended up there? What other objects were associated with the figurine? Was it found with everyday broken pottery or more precious finds like jewellery or weapons? We may now have a number of ideas about its possible use but we need also to explore the social context, that is, what other evidence is available for understanding the society which produced and used the figurine. How was society organized? Who had wealth and authority? What was the economic basis and the level of technical and artistic skills? Before drawing conclusions about the significance of our figurine the religious context of the society must also be explored: can we identify special cult places, ritual paraphernalia, depictions of religious activity? Unless it is situated in the archaeological record in this way, the figurine is decontextualized. ***It becomes simply a passive object onto which the beholder can project his or her fantasies.*** Time provides another context. Many Goddess writers have ignored the specificity of the historical moment when the figurine was made or used. Committed to the idea of a static ‘Golden Age’, they have often failed to recognize that human life is dynamic, always in a process of change. Compiling encyclopaedic works with the urge to universalize, Goddess writers have rarely looked closely enough at any one time and place to see the specific detail, or the value of differences between cultures. Cycladic figurines looted from their original findspot have been described as ‘orphaned’. Plucking a figurine from its geographical, social and historical context also leaves it orphaned: to deny an object’s physical circumstances, lifting it out of time, leaves it strangely disembodied. Moving from past to present, there is also the context of modern thinking.

Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris, *Ancient Goddesses: The Myth and the Evidences* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 15 (emphasis added); another example comes from Professor of Paleontology, University of Alberta, Phil Currie:

As scientists we have to be really careful because it’s very easy to get locked in by ideas, or by the search image that you have when you go in the field. In spite of the fact that you think you have an open mind, very often your perceptions of what things should be... or your search image, or your cultural beliefs in some cases, will actually be working on your mind. So that your eyes are open, but there not really open, there missing something that could take you in an entirely new direction.

(Atlanta, GA: Creation Ministries International, 2009. DVD, Fathom Media.)

³ An oxymoron in my opinion. One cannot truly fight for women’s rights in the face of evils and injustice committed towards them if such injustices and evils are in fact illusory.

⁴ Robert Sheaffer, “The Da Vinci Code Cult: A Critical Look at Dan Brown’s The Da Vinci Code,” *Skeptic* 11, no. 4 (March 22, 2005).

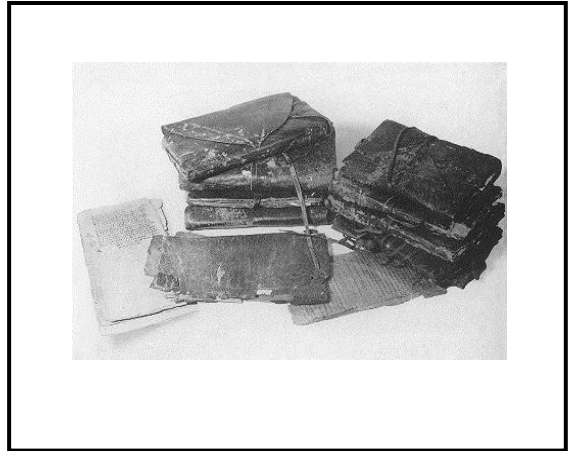
⁵ The fatal flaw in the Gospel of Thomas, and the reason it was not accepted as canonical is due to the boastful character it paints of our Lord which does not mesh with the humble character painted by the other four gospels. Thomas is surely Gnostic, for it begins with, “*These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas recorded.*” By contrast, in the Great Commission Jesus told the

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women were treated more fairly in Gnostic circles as part of her reasoning to attack and ultimately reject orthodox Christianity. Writing in other popular venues, Pagels has taken a strong feminist position, claiming that Gnostic feminism had been “suppressed” over the centuries.⁶

- **Nag Hammadi**

For many, many years, all that was understood about Gnosticism came through primarily the writings of the early church fathers, more specifically, Irenaeus⁷ (died about A.D. 200), Tertullian (died about A.D. 220), Hippolytus (died about A.D. 236), and Origin (died about A.D. 254).⁸ This is no longer the case. A cache of Gnostic thought has recently come to light due to an interesting archaeological find at Nag Hammadi (300 miles south of Cairo in the Nile River region of Egypt, in 1945.⁹



The 52 surviving Coptic writings (pictured to the right) are firmly placed from A.D. 350-400,¹⁰ based on the type of script, papyrus, and binding utilized. However, *some* of these documents were most probably taken from earlier Greek or Coptic versions that are, as of yet, not to be found. It is here where the scholarly consensus on the dates of these earlier Greek versions comes to an end. The *Gospel of Thomas*, one of these documents found at Nag Hammadi, is by far the most well well-known “gospel” of Gnostic tradition. This popularity can be attributed in part to the liberal *Jesus Seminar*,¹¹ and more recently to the movies *Stigmata* and the *Da Vinci Code*. In fact, in Dan Brown’s book, *The Da Vinci Code*, he writes about a common assumption held by many:

Fortunately for historians ... some of the gospels that Constantine attempted to eradicate managed to survive. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the 1950s hidden in a cave near Qumran in the Judean desert. And, of

Apostles to teach the world everything he told them. And Jesus held women in great esteem, especially in the Gospel of Luke, while the Gospel of Thomas has Jesus saying that women must become men to be saved.

Simon Peter said, “Make Mary leave us, for females don’t deserve life.” Jesus said, “Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the domain of Heaven.” (*Gospel of Thomas*, saying 114).

Gnostics hold the flesh in contempt, and women are considered to be closer to *fleshly things*. (Adapted from *Teresita* in comments section of, “Not Gnostic?!” DeConnick on the Gospel of Thomas,” *Theological Scribbles* Blog (Tuesday, 22 July 2008). Found at:

- <http://theologicalscribbles.blogspot.com/2008/07/not-gnostic-deconnick-on-gospel-of.html> (last accessed 9-7-09).

⁶ Robert Sheaffer, *Skeptic* 11, no. 4 (March 22, 2005).

⁷ It is worth noting that Irenaeus was discipled by Polycarp, who was in turn discipled by the Apostle John. Likewise, Hippolytus was discipled by Irenaeus. This direct lineage to an apostle is important because the early church fathers were in possession of not only written records of the disciples but were also contemporaries of persons who personally knew the apostles and forwarded *their* understanding of the gospels and *who* Jesus was/is. Josh McDowell & Bill Wilson, *He Walked Among Us: Evidence for the Historical Jesus* (San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, 1988), 89.

⁸ Trent C. Butler, gen. ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 1991), cf. Gnosticism, 558.

⁹ Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin, MS: College Press, 1996), 101.

¹⁰ The Nag Hammadi codices were found by an Arab peasant, though they remained obscure for several years due to several bizarre occurrences, including murder, black market sales and the destruction of some of the findings. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, 101,

¹¹ A very scholarly response to the Jesus Seminar is the book edited by Michael J. Wilkins & J. P. Moreland, *Jesus Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995).

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course, the Coptic Scrolls in 1945 at Nag Hammadi. In addition to telling the true Grail story, these documents speak of Christ's ministry in very human terms. Of course, the Vatican, in keeping with their tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls. And why wouldn't they? The scrolls highlight glaring historical discrepancies and fabrications, clearly confirming that the modern Bible was compiled and edited by men who possessed a political agenda—to promote the divinity of the *man* Jesus Christ and use His influence to solidify their own power base.¹²

While this work is considered fiction, Dan Brown himself believes it encapsulates real history: “One of the many qualities that makes *The Da Vinci Code* unique is the factual nature of the story. All the history, artwork, ancient documents, and secret rituals in the novel are accurate—as are the hidden codes revealed in some of Da Vinci's most famous paintings.”¹³ It should be pointed out *here* that no scholar believes the apostle Thomas wrote the Gospel of Thomas.¹⁴ Dating the document has proven a bit thornier however. Scholars such as Elaine Pagels think the Gospel was written around A.D. 80-90,¹⁵ however, the arguments with the most weight date the book to no earlier than A.D. 175.¹⁶ This early dating of the Gnostic gospels found in the writings of *Jesus Seminar* fellows like Marcus Borge,¹⁷ Robert Funk,¹⁸ John Dominic Crossan,¹⁹ is important to these researchers because they undermine the Gospels accuracy. These authors give a late date to the canonical Gospels and an early date to Gnostic writings in order to blur Jesus' distinctive claims to Deity.

<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i> —mid-second to mid-third century	<i>Gospel of the Savior</i> —second century
<i>Apocryphon of James</i> —late second to early third century	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i> —late first to early second century
<i>Apocryphon of John</i> —mid-second to early third century	<i>Gospel of Thomas the Contender</i> —early to mid-third century
<i>Dialogue of the Savior</i> —mid- to late second century	<i>Gospel of Truth</i> —mid-second century
<i>Eugnostos the Blessed</i> —late first century to second century	<i>Hypostasis of the Archons</i> —third century
<i>Excerpta ex Theodoto</i> —late second century	<i>Interpretation of Knowledge</i> —mid- to late second century
<i>Gospel(s) of Bartholomew</i> —fifth or sixth century	<i>Letter to Rheginos (= Treatise on the Resurrection)</i> —late second century

¹² Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2003), 234; found in, Mark D. Roberts, *Can We Trust the Gospels? Investigating the Reliability of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 154-155 (emphasis added).

¹³ An interview with Dan Brown found at Book Browse and is dated at 2001. Found at: http://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm?author_number=226

(last accessed 9-22-09); Also found in Richard Abanes, *The Truth Behind the Da Vinci Code* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2004), 9.

¹⁴ W.C. Campbell-Jack and Gavin McGrath, eds., C. Stephen Evans, con. ed., *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), cf. Gnosticism, 290.

¹⁵ Lee Strobel, *The Case for the Real Jesus: A Journalist Investigates Current Attacks on the Identity of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 36.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁷ *The God We Never Knew* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1997); *The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus* (Berkley, CA: Ulysses Press, 1996).

¹⁸ *The Gospel of Jesus: According to the Jesus Seminar* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 1999); *The Acts of Jesus: What Did Jesus Really Do?* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1998); *Five Gospels: What Did Jesus Really Say?* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1996).

¹⁹ *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1993); *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco, 1995).

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<i>Gospel of Judas—second century</i>	<i>Pistis Sophia—second century</i>
<i>Gospel of Mary Magdalene—early to late second century</i>	<i>Second Treatise of the Great Seth—late second century</i>
<i>Gospel of Peter—mid-second century</i>	<i>Sophia of Jesus Christ—second century</i>
<i>Gospel of Philip—late second to early third century</i>	<i>Teachings of Silvanus—mid-third to early fourth century</i>
<i>Gospel of the Egyptians—second to third century</i>	<i>Treatise on the Resurrection (Letter to Rheginos)—late second century</i>
<i>Gospel of the Savior—second century</i>	<i>Tripartite Tractate—third to fourth century</i>
<i>Gospel of Thomas—late first to early second century</i>	<i>Valentinian Exposition—late second century²⁰</i>
<i>Gospel of Philip—late second to early third century</i>	
<i>Gospel of the Egyptians—second to third century</i>	

As an example, in Pagels book *The Gnostic Gospels*, the thesis is put forward that the second century church had a panoply of documents and theologies to choose from, saying in effect that both the Gnostic and orthodox traditions circulated alongside each other.²¹ She goes on to say that because ecclesiastical and canonical views hadn't yet been settled, a struggle ensued and the orthodox views won out over the others and eventually became predominate. Pagels makes the point that rather than distinguishing itself as the superior historical and theological view, orthodoxy achieved victory largely on political and social grounds. Thus Pagels asks:

Why were these texts buried – and why have they remained virtually unknown for nearly 2,000 years? Their suppression as banned documents, and their burial on the cliff at Nag Hammadi, it turns out, were both part of a struggle critical for the formation of early Christianity. The Nag Hammadi texts, and others like them, which circulated at the beginning of the Christian era, were denounced as heresy by orthodox Christians in the middle of the second century. We have long known that many early followers of Christ were condemned by other Christians as heretics, but nearly all we knew about them came from what their opponents wrote attacking them.²²

Is there a response to this controversy that shows the early dates for the Gospels to be acceptable? Or, are these conspiratorial positions taken by these authors that say there were historical coercions, collaborations, and cover-ups, more likely? Only those interested in an honest, historical search and

²⁰ Darrell L. Bock, *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2006), 218-219.

²¹ This note is for the researcher. Elaine co-opts some of the ideas and language conservative Christian's use. For instance, in an appearance on Lee Stroebel's show Faith Under Fire, you hear Professor Pagels, who was debating Michael Licona for the show, say that her dating is the "conservative position" (follow this video link: http://viewers.316networks.com/ASX_Files/NAMB_-_Segment03_VOD_300k.asx). In another segment, she rejects the term "Gnostic" and says she doesn't use it any longer (http://viewers.316networks.com/ASX_Files/NAMB_-_Segment05_VOD_300k.asx), and instead uses "Christian Gospels" to describe the Gospel of Thomas (http://viewers.316networks.com/ASX_Files/NAMB_-_Segment02_VOD_300k.asx). this is important, because the co-opting of language and distortions of meanings of words or concepts is a harbinger for these types of movement.

²² Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1989), xviii.

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who are willing to suspend their presupposed biases or ideologies can benefit from this study. For example, one supposition that is concurrent between all the authors mentioned above is that the Biblical Gospels were written contemporaneously with the Gnostic writings. This *has to be* the case for the skeptic, "...the Gnostic holy books *must be assigned* such an early date that Christianity itself may be seen as no more than a "branch of Gnosticism."²³

A late date for the Christian documents is the one joining influence between all those who put a heavy emphasis on the Gnostic documents or mystery religions influence upon Christianity. However, this can easily be shown to be a mistaken position. This brings us to an archaeological find which involves some caves at Qumran, a small area off the shores of the Dead Sea in Palestine.²⁴ The Dead Sea Scrolls, as they are popularly known, has shed some light on just how early the Biblical Gospels were circulating.

Without going into much detail, I will lay out some of the reasoning (evidence) behind the rejection of the Gnostic tradition and writings while accepting the "superior historical and theological view" that orthodoxy rightly deserves.²⁵ This, then, would deal a deathblow to the various interpretations about the importance of Gnosticism, not the least of which is the thesis that orthodoxy "achieved [its] victory largely on political and social grounds,"²⁶ which seems hard to swallow considering the emphasis in placing women in positions of authority in the church and of importance in the New Testament -- thus challenging the patriarchy in Orthodox Judaism and Roman culture (this will be elucidated on shortly).

- **Too Young To Date**

Not only did the Dead Sea Scrolls yield portions of, and even entire books from the Old Testament, the scrolls offered up some possible New Testament allusions hidden in the Qumran caves dated no later than A.D. 68 due to the Roman X Legion "Fretensis" overrunning the area during the Jewish rebellion.

Qumran Artifacts²⁷

| Mark 4:28 ~ 7Q6? ~ A.D. 50;²⁸

²³ Andre Nataf, *Dictionary of the Occult* (Bordas, Paris: Wordsworth Editions, 1988), 37 (emphasis added).

²⁴ Douglas Groothuis, *Jesus In an Age of Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996), 152.

²⁵ Let us dispense now with the *Redeemer Myth* oft mentioned by these "scholars":

[Some] have argued that Iranian Gnostic redeemer myths influenced the formation of belief in the resurrection." According to this view, prior to the New Testament there existed a full-blown Gnosticism which included a redeemer myth. This myth involved the belief in an original man (Urmensch) who fell from heaven and was ripped to shreds by demons. Parts of the original man are hidden in each man in the form of a spark of eternity. Demons attempt to put men to sleep so they will not recognize their heavenly origin, preexistent souls, and divine spark. So God sent a heavenly redeemer to come and impart secret knowledge to men about their former state. After enlightening them, the redeemer returns to heaven. Several objections make this view untenable. First, there is absolutely no evidence for a full-blown pre-Christian Gnosticism. The texts which describe a redeemer all were written after the New Testament (140 and later). So if borrowing did occur, it must have been by the Gnostics. Second, elements in the New Testament which were thought to be Gnostic are now seen to be Jewish, and some of them are rooted in the Old Testament. For example, John often talks of light versus darkness—a prevalent Gnostic theme. But this does not show he borrowed from Gnosticism. The motif could have come from the Old Testament. Further, this motif is now known to have been prominent at Qumran, a community of conservative Jewish ascetics (Essenes) which flourished just prior to and during New Testament times. The Essenes were concerned for ritual purity and were well within the mainstream of Jewish thought. Thus, the presence of such a motif in their writings was not due to Gnostic influence; the same holds true for John's writings. For these and other reasons, most scholars today regard it a mistake to emphasize the importance of Hellenistic influences on the New Testament. Belief in Jesus' resurrection was born on Jewish soil and propagated by men nurtured in Jewish thought.

J.P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books/Academic, 1987), 182-183.

²⁶ Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, 103.

²⁷ The following list uses the numbering system established for manuscripts, for example, "7Q5" means fragment 5 from Qumran cave 7.

²⁸ Norman L. Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books/Academic, 1999), 188.

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Mark 12:17 ~ 7Q7 ~ A.D. 50;²⁹
Mark 6:48 ~ 7Q15 ~ A.D. ?;³⁰
Mark 6:52-53 ~ 7Q5 ~ no later than A.D. 68,³¹ possibly A.D. 50;^{32, 33}
Acts 27:38 ~ 7Q6? ~ A.D. 60;³⁴
1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1-3 ~ 7Q4 ~ no later than A.D. 68;³⁵
Romans 5:11,12 ~ 7Q9 ~ no later than A.D. 68;^{36, 37}
James 1:23,24 ~ 7Q8 ~ no later than A.D. 68.^{38, 39, 40}

There are also allusions to the Gospel of Luke in 4Q246,⁴¹ which some say date to *before* the possible time of deposition which could place Luke to A.D. 65.⁴² There is internal evidence that dates Luke;⁴³ however, here I only deal with manuscript evidence. Another little-known papyrus of Matthew has opened the trained eye as well. The *Magdalen Papyrus*, named after the university that houses it, corroborates three traditions:

That St. Matthew actually wrote the Gospel bearing his name;
That he wrote it within a generation of Jesus' death (dated to A.D. 60[-]);
And that the gospel stories are true.⁴⁴

This portion of Matthew is in Greek, this portion of Matthew before A.D. 60.⁴⁵ Chuck Missler comments on this evidence:

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Carsten Peter Theide and Matthew d'Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus: The Most Sensational Evidence on the Origins of the Gospels Since the Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York, NY: Galilee DoubleDay, 1996), 46.

³² Grant R. Jeffrey, *Jesus: The Great Debate* (Toronto, Ontario: Frontier Research, 1999), 67.

³³ Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 188.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Theide and d'Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus*, 140.

³⁶ Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 188.

³⁷ The early church testifies to having copies of Romans being passed between early Christians before even some of the Gospels.

³⁸ Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 188.

³⁹ Jeffrey, *Jesus*, 66-68.

⁴⁰ John Feakes, "The Ontario Debate," from C.A.R.E. Ministries of Winnipeg (2-7-2009). C.A.R.E.'s site is found here:

<http://www.carewinnipeg.com/Home/> The article is found at: <http://www.carewinnipeg.com/Home/articles-and-books/6-rebuttals-and-debates/89-the-ontario-debate-> (Last accessed 7-2-2009)

⁴¹ Jeffery L. Sheler, *Is the Bible True? How Modern Debates and Discoveries Affirm the Essence of the Scriptures* (San Francisco, CA: Harper San Francisco/Zondervan, 1999), 163-164; also see, Raymond Robert Fischer, *Full Circle: The Church Returns to its True Jewish Heritage as it Discovers Yeshua and Christianity in Ancient Judaism and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Tiberias, Israel: Olim Publishers, 2002), 59.

⁴² Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Signature of God: Astonishing Biblical Discoveries* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1996), 100-103. Whether this is an example of Essene knowledge about the coming Messiah or an early allusion to Luke, we may not know for quite some time.

⁴³ Dr. Geisler makes these internal evidences apparent:

The evidence for the date of the writing points to ca. AD 60, during Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea (Acts 23:31-35). The reasons for this are straightforward. First, it was before AD 70, since the destruction of Jerusalem is yet a future event (Luke 21:5-38). And it was written before Acts, which refers to a "former" treatise to the same person, Theophilus (Acts 1:1), and it is known that Acts (see below) was written by 61 or 62 AD. Yet Luke was written after Gentiles were attracted to Christianity (Acts 18:1-4) in about AD 54. Further, it was written after other Gospels were written (see 1:1), which could mean Matthew and Mark who wrote between AD 50 and 60. What is more, Luke 10:7 is cited in 1 Timothy 5:18, which was written about 64-66 AD. So the Gospel of Luke must have been composed before then. Finally, since it was apparently recorded just before Luke wrote Acts (being a two-part series to Theophilus), **a date of ca. AD 60 is likely.**

Norman L. Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books/Academic, 2007), 86 (emphasis added).

⁴⁴ Theide and d'Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus*, back cover.

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In 1994, Dr. Carsten Peter Thiede, Director of the Institute of Basic Epistemological Research in Paderborn, Germany, used a scanning laser microscope to more carefully examine these fragments, “P.Magdalen Greek 17/P64,” as they are formally designated.

A scanning laser microscope can now differentiate between the twenty micrometer (millionth of a meter) layers of papyrus, measuring the height and depth of the ink, and can even determine the angle of the stylus used by the scribe. Dr. Thiede compared the fragments with four other known references: a manuscript from Qumran, dated to 58 A.D.; one from the Herculaneum, dated prior to 79 A.D.; one from Masada, dated between 73-74 A.D.; and one from the Egyptian town of Oxyrynchus, dated 65-66 A.D. He astounded the scholastic world by concluding that the Magdalen fragments were either an original from Matthew's Gospel, or an immediate copy, written while Matthew and the other disciples and other eye witnesses were still alive! Matthew's skills in shorthand (an essential requirement for a customs official in a society devoid of printing, copiers, and the like) are evident in his inclusion of the extensive discourses, which he apparently was able to record *verbatim*!

The Magdalen papyrus discovery is distinctive in that it was dated on the basis of physical evidence rather than a literary theory or historical suppositions. This is just an example of how advanced technology can reveal discoveries *in existing artifacts*.⁴⁶

It is of note to mention as well that almost all Bible critics place Paul's first epistle at A.D. 52-57,⁴⁷ and the creed in that epistle (1 Cor. 15:3) is dated about ten years earlier than that, “Paul had not invented it but had been the one who transferred to them what he had received” (4:1).⁴⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 reads:

I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me—that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, he was seen by more than five hundred of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died by now. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. (NLT)⁴⁹

“‘Handed on to you ... what I had received’ (NRSV) is the language of what scholars call ‘*traditioning*,’ which is when Jewish teachers would pass on their teachings to their students, who would in turn pass them on to their own students. The students could take notes, but they delighted especially in oral memorization,”⁵⁰ and became quite skilled at hymnal style⁵¹ creedal formulations.⁵² The early Christian

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

⁴⁶ Chuck Missler, “Astonishing Rediscovery: The Magdalen Papyrus,” *Koinonia House* (<http://www.khouse.org/>), found directly at: <http://www.khouse.org/articles/2001/333/> (last accessed 9-7-09)

⁴⁷ Norman Geisler & Paul Hoffman, *Why I Am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books/Academic, 2001), 158.

⁴⁸ D. A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition, 4th ed.* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 1 Co 15:1.

⁴⁹ *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1997), 1 Co 15:3-7.

⁵⁰ Craig S. Keener, *IVP Background Commentary New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 1 Cor. 15:3.

⁵¹ D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo point to this:

Through stylistic and theological analysis, it is argued, we can identify within Paul's letters various early Christian creedal formulations, hymns, and traditional catechetical material. Unusual vocabulary, rhythmic and poetic patterns, and un-Pauline theological emphases are the criteria used to identify early Christian traditions that Paul may have quoted.

An Introduction to the New Testament, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 371.

⁵² In an article entitled “Creeds and Hymns,” by W.J. Porter, we find this summation:

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community had already memorized, codified, and passed on creeds within ten years of Jesus death, or, 15 years before Paul's earliest letter⁵³ -- *this* is very important.⁵⁴

- **Professional Input**

Paul's Letters A.D. 50-66 (Hiebert, Guthrie, Kummel, Robinson);⁵⁵
Matthew A.D. 55-60 (Theide, d'Ancona);⁵⁶
Mark A.D. 50-60 (Harnak);⁵⁷
Luke early 60s (Harrison);⁵⁸
John A.D. 80-100 (Harrison).⁵⁹

Evidence of this comes also from many sources, one being early Christian tombs with reference to *who* Jesus was understood to be at this early time, further confirming the Gospels. One tomb I wish to focus on is one found by professor Sukenik as reported in *American Journal of Archaeology*:

When the ossuary with four crosses on its sides was found there was not the slightest possible doubt as to the antiquity of the cross [marks], because it was clear that these [ossuaries] had not been touched from the moment they had been placed inside until the day we took them out.... I noticed the inscription on one of the ossuaries in which the name "Jesus" was clearly discernable, followed here not by the usual [second] name, but by a description or an exclamation.⁶⁰

After the name "Jesus," the exclamation or dedication read "y'ho," meaning "Yehovah" or "the Lord." The full inscription of the ossuary reads: "[To] Jesus, the LORD." In light of the A.D. 42 date for the

First Corinthians 15:3-5 is one of the main NT creedal statements (see Schweizer's comparison with 1 Tim 3:16), the essence of which is Christ died, was buried, was raised and was seen. R. P. Martin clearly sees the characteristics of a "creedal formulary" in these verses: "The four-fold 'that' introduces each member of the creed.... The vocabulary is unusual, containing some rare terms and expressions which Paul never employs again. The preface to the section informs us that Paul 'received' what follows in his next sentences as part of his instruction ... now in turn, he transmits ... to the Corinthian Church what he has received as a sacred tradition" (Martin 1963, 57-58).

Craig A. Evans and Stanley E. Porter, eds., *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 234.

⁵³ Ted Cabal, gen. ed., *The Apologetics Study Bible* (Nashville, TN: Holman Publishers, 2007), 1 Cor 15:3, 1730.

⁵⁴ Some commentary on this is that such an early date undermines a later formulation of Christ's "Lordship" by supposed church revisionists if it was already believed:

That Jesus was confessed as "Lord" dates to the earliest known record of Christian kerygma. There is one telling Pauline passage that undercuts the common form-critical theory that the ascription of deity only slowly evolved and that lordship was much later to be attributed to Jesus (Bultmann, TNT I, pp. 121-33). It is a prayer of Paul's of unquestionable authenticity: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Marano tha" (1 Cor. 16:22a, KJV), which means: "a curse be on him. Come, O Lord!" (v. 22b). "That Paul should use an Aramaic expression in a letter to a Greek-speaking church that knew no Aramaic proves that the use of *mar* (*Kurios*) for Jesus goes back to the primitive Aramaic church and was not a product of the Hellenistic community" (Ladd, TNT, P. 431). Just as Jesus had been *Mar* (Lord) to the earliest Aramaic-speaking Jerusalem Christians, so did he quickly become confessed as *Kurios* among the earliest Greek-speaking Christians (1 Cor. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:1; Mark 2:28; cf. *Didache* 10:6; Rev. 22:20; Rawlinson, NTDC, pp. 231-37). This Corinthian passage contains *strong internal evidence* that the earliest Christian proclamation attested Jesus as *Kurios*, confirming Luke's report of Peter's first sermon in Acts 2:36. This earliest Christian confession derives not from others but from Jesus himself, for in debating the scribes, Jesus made it clear that the Messiah was not merely David's son, but David's Lord, *implying that he himself was this divine Lord* (Mark 12:37; Taylor, NJ, pp. 50-51; Ladd, TNT, pp. 341, 167-68).

Thomas C. Oden, *Systematic Theology: Volume Two, The Word of Life* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 2006), 14-15 (emphasis Added).

⁵⁵ Bill Wilson, ed., *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 91; McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 52.

⁵⁶ Thiede and d'Ancona, *The Jesus Papyrus*, 124-125.

⁵⁷ McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 52.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Grant R. Jeffrey, *Jesus*, 88-89; quote taken from *Jerusalem Christian Review* 7, num. 6.

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sealing of this tomb, the presence of this dedication to “Jesus, the Lord” attests to the Christians’ acceptance of Jesus Christ as God within ten years of the death and resurrection of Jesus.⁶¹ Gary Habermas even drives home the idea that these texts demand an earlier date:

The most popular view among scholars is that Paul first received this very early material when he visited Jerusalem just three years after his conversion. He visited Peter and James, the brother of Jesus (Gal 1:18-19), both of whom are listed as having seen the risen Jesus (1 Cor 15:5, 7).

Stronger evidence to support this conclusion comes from Paul's use of the verb *historesai* in Galatians 1:18, which is usually not very helpfully translated into English. The Greek term indicates that Paul visited Peter for the purpose of investigating a particular subject. The immediate context reveals that subject: Paul's topic for discussion was ascertaining the nature of the gospel message (Gal 1:11-2:10). And Jesus' resurrection was the focus of the gospel message (1 Cor 15:3-4; Gal 1:11, 16). Without it, faith is vain (1 Cor 15:14, 17).

Critical scholars usually concede that this pre-Pauline tradition(s) originated at an exceptionally early date. For Ulrich Wilckens, this content “indubitably goes back to the oldest phase of all in the history of primitive Christianity.” Walter Kasper even thinks that this “ancient text” was possibly “*in use by the end of 30 A.D.*” Perhaps surprisingly, skeptics frequently even agree. Skeptic Gerd Ludemann asserts that “the elements in the tradition *are to be dated to the first two years after the crucifixion of Jesus ... not later than three years. ...* The formation of the appearance traditions mentioned in I Cor 15:3- 8 falls into the time between 30 and 33 C.E.” Philosopher Thomas Sheehan thinks that this pre-Pauline formula “*probably goes back to at least 32-34 C.E., that is, to within two to four years of the crucifixion.*” Michael Goulder holds that this resurrection report “goes back at least to what Paul was taught when he was converted, a couple of years after the crucifixion.”

Other skeptics are often not shy about expressing their agreement. In fact, most of the critical scholars who date these events conclude that Paul received this material within just a few years after Jesus' death, in the early or mid 30s.⁶²

These are merely a few of the many evidences for an early date for the Christian faith as it is relayed to us via tradition and written form. This is important because an historical event metamorphosing into myth needs more time than what is allotted here.⁶³ The belief that Jesus was God, the fact of His Resurrection, and the early belief in this as attested to in the early evidences of Scripture and archaeology show that those who believe that the Church later added these beliefs are simply mistaken, misguided, or calculating. How about a little honesty from skeptics:

⁶¹ Ibid., 89.

⁶² Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 183-184 (emphasis added).

⁶³ William Lane Craig quotes Oxford historian and intelligence officer A. N. Sherwin-White in regards to the time needed for a myth to evolve from the actual historical event:

Roman historian A. N. Sherwin-White remarks that in classical historiography the sources are usually biased [are] removed [by] at least one or two generations or even centuries from the events they narrate, but historians still reconstruct with confidence what happened. In the Gospels, by contrast, the tempo is “unbelievable” for the accrual of legend; more generations are needed. The writings of Herodotus enable us to test the tempo of myth-making, and the tests suggest that even two generations are too short a span to allow the mythical tendency to prevail over the hard historic core of oral tradition.

Wilkins and Moreland, *Jesus Under Fire*, 154.

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Even Adolf Harnack, who rejects the church’s belief in the resurrection, admits: “The firm confidence of the disciples in Jesus was rooted in the belief that He did not abide in death, but was raised by God. That Christ was risen was, in virtue of what they had experienced in Him, certainly only after they had seen Him, just as sure as the fact of His death, and became the main article of their preaching about Him.”⁶⁴

New Testament Documents vs. Ancient Documents

Another strength of the New Testament is its ability to be compared to other ancient documents, for example: the earliest partial copy of Caesar’s *The Gallic Wars* dates to a 1,000 years *after* it was written. This is a document that is accepted by almost all historians as factual. The *first complete* copy of Homer’s

AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	NO. OF COPIES
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs.	643
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480–425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460–400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs.	7
Demosthenes		300 B.C.	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs.	200
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100–44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs.	10
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C.–A.D. 17	4th cent. (partial) mostly 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs. c. 1,000 yrs.	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs.	20
Pliny Secundus	<i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61–113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs.	7
New Testament		A.D. 50–100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of N.T.) c. 325 (complete N.T.)	+ 50 yrs. 100 yrs. 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366

Odyssey dates to about 2,200 years *after* it was written. When the interval between the writing of the New Testament and earliest copies is compared to other ancient works, the New Testament proves to be much closer to the time of the original. There are over 5,500 Greek copies of the Gospels; this is far and away the most we have of any ancient work. Many ancient writings have been transmitted to us by only a handful of manuscripts, but these are accepted as reliable commentary on the events they describe (*Catullus* – three copies, the earliest copy being dated at 1,600 years after it was written; *Herodotus* – eight copies, the first being dated to 1,300 years later). Some other examples are the seven extant plays of Sophocles to which the earliest substantial manuscript in possession is dated to more than 1,400 years after the poet’s death. The same holds true for Thucydides, Aeschylus, and Aristophanes. Euripides has a 1,600 year interval. (This paragraph is adapted from the following footnotes: ^{65, 66, 67, 68})

Another example is from Livy’s 142 books of Roman history, “of which 107 have been lost. Only four and a half of Tacitus’ original fourteen books of Roman *Histories* remain and only ten full and two partial books exist of Tacitus’ sixteen books of the *Annals*.”⁶⁹ Yet, historians can use even these partial histories to confirm actual historical events. Not only do the New Testament documents have more manuscript evidence and close time interval between the original writing and its earliest copy, but they were also

⁶⁴ McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 206

⁶⁵ McDowell, *More than a Carpenter*, 47-49.

⁶⁶ John Warwick Montgomery, *History and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1965), 26-29.

⁶⁷ Josh McDowell and Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions: What Skeptics Are Asking About the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993), 5.

⁶⁸ McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 38.

⁶⁹ Terry L. Miethe and Gary R. Habermas, *Why Believe? God Exists!* (Joplin, MS: College Press, 1998), 250.

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translated into several other languages at an early date. Translation of a document into another language was rare in the ancient world. This is an added plus for the New Testament as one can compare these various documents for errors and agreement. This ability to compare and search for grammatical errors within the plethora of early New Testament text is nonexistent in other ancient documents⁷⁰ – Homer's *Iliad* [somewhat] excluded.

Extant Greek Manuscripts⁷¹

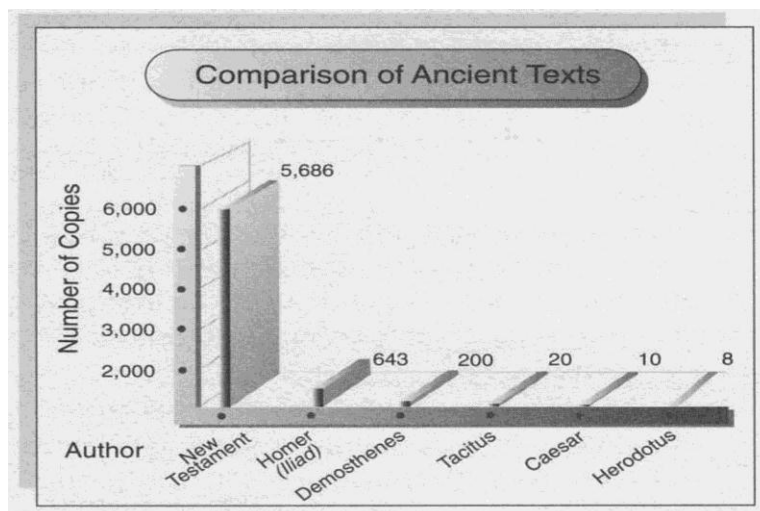
Uncials 307
Minuscules 2,860
Lectionaries 2,410
Papyri 109

SUBTOTAL 5,686

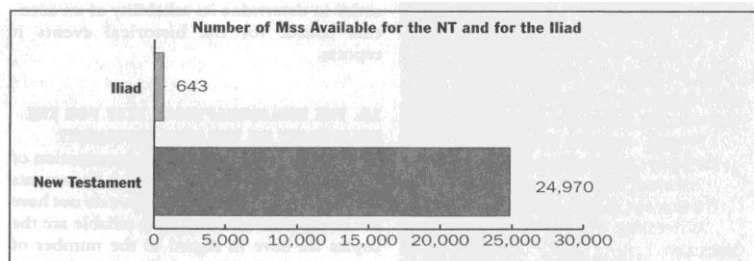
Manuscripts in Other Languages⁷²

Latin Vulgate 10,000 plus
Ethiopic 2,000 plus
Slavic 4,101
Armenian 2,587
Syriac Peshitta 350 plus
Bohairic 100
Arabic 75
Old Latin 50
Anglo-Saxon 7
Gothic 6
Sogdian 3
Old Syriac 2
Persian 2
Frankish 1

SUBTOTAL 19,284



The number of versions of the New Testament is in excess of 18,000-to-25,000. This is further evidence that helps us establish the New Testament text and its canonicity. Even if we did not possess the 5,500[+] Greek manuscripts or the almost 20,000 copies of the versions, the text of the New Testament



could still be reproduced within 300 years from its composition! How? Merely by the writings of the early Christians in commentaries, letters, and the like. These ancient writers quote the biblical text, thus

⁷⁰ F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 10.

⁷¹ Josh McDowell, *Evidence for Christianity: Historical Evidences for the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 60.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 61

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giving us another witness to the text of the New Testament. Dean Burgon has catalogued *more than 86,000 citations* by the early Church Fathers⁷³ who cite different parts of the New Testament. Here we have a small portion of these quotes (I added the rough dates these early Church Fathers lived):⁷⁴

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Totals
Justin Martyr <small>A.D. 100-165</small>	268	10	43	6	3 (266 allusions)	330
Irenaeus <small>A.D. 130-202</small>	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement (Alex.) <small>A.D. 150?-216?</small>	1,107	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen <small>A.D. 183-251</small>	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,992
Tertullian <small>A.D. 155-230</small>	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus <small>A.D. 180?-235</small>	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius <small>A.D. 263-339</small>	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Grand Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

On the same page of McDowell's book that the above graph comes from, he quotes the *Encyclopedia Britannica* as saying:

When the textual scholar has examined the manuscripts and the versions, he still has not exhausted the evidence for the New Testament text. The writings of the early Christian fathers often reflect a form of text differing from that in one or another manuscript... their witness to the text, especially as it corroborates the readings that come from other sources, belongs to the testimony that textual critics must consult before forming their conclusions.⁷⁵

Thus we observe that there is so much more evidence for the reliability of the New Testament text than any other comparable writing in the ancient world. We can reconstruct the entire New Testament just with these quotes alone, except for eleven verses. These early Church Fathers were quoting from manuscripts that were widely dispersed and written many years before their citing them, thusly exemplifying the plethora of widely distributed copies of the Gospels since these men likewise resided in a widely dispersed area.

⁷³ The British Museum houses Dean's sixteen thick volumes of his unpublished work which contains 86,489 quotations. McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, 45.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

- **Gnosticism vs. Feminism**

Another reason that Christianity succeeded over that of the other ideologies of its day is partly due to - I believe - the high regard given to woman as compared to the pagan religions of the day, Gnosticism included. This topic is dealt with in the book *How Christianity Changed the World*, by Alvin J. Schmidt. His chapter entitled “Women Receive Freedom and Dignity” is very revealing.⁷⁶ Paul, for instance, had a high regard for women as coworkers, which is amply demonstrated in other letters.⁷⁷ Barbara Geller points out that “during the Byzantine era, female leadership was exercised largely within the hierarchical structures of women’s monastic communities.” She continues, however, that,

...the letters of Paul and the Book of Acts suggest that in the earliest phase of emerging Christianity, the opportunities for women were far greater. The closing chapter of Paul’s letter to the church at Rome, following the epistolary conventions of that period, includes greetings and personal commendations. Paul mentions ten women, the first of whom is Phoebe, described in Greek as *diakonos* and *a prostates*, correctly translated in the New Revised Standard Version as “deacon” and “benefactor” (Rom 16:1-2). Older translations erroneously rendered these words as “deaconess” and “helper”; thus, generations of translators ignored the plain sense of the text because of their assumption that women could not have exercised significant roles in the early church. Ancient Inscriptions suggest, moreover, that *prostates* was not only a benefactor or patron, but also frequently the president or head of an association.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ The following list, “The Role and Status of Women” (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 120-121.

⁷⁷ Dale & Sandy Larsen, *7 Myths about Christianity* (Wheaton, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), see chpt. 2, “*Christianity Suppresses Women*”; also all one has to do is read 1 Corinthians 7:1-16, here Paul puts the male and female on equal terms and status, unheard of in the ancient pagan world... until that is, the New Testament and the Christian community. In fact, Wayne Grudem makes this new distinction apparent when he points out the role of women in the early church:

Perhaps the best example of a woman well trained in knowledge of the Bible is Priscilla. When Paul went to Corinth, he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla: “because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade” (Acts 18:3). Paul stayed a year and six months at Corinth (Acts 18:11), and we may ponder just how much Bible and theology Priscilla would have learned while having the apostle Paul as a house guest and business partner during that time! Then Priscilla and Aquila went with Paul to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19). It was at Ephesus in A.D. 51 that Priscilla and Aquila together “explained” to Apollos “the way of God more accurately” (Acts 18:26). So in A.D. 51 Priscilla knew Scripture well enough to help instruct Apollos. After that, Priscilla probably learned from Paul for another three years while he stayed at Ephesus teaching “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27; compare 1 Cor. 16:19, where Priscilla is called Prisca, and Paul sends greetings to Corinth from Aquila and Prisca and the church that meets “in their house”). By the end of Paul’s three-year stay in Ephesus, *Priscilla had probably received four and a half years of teaching directly from the apostle Paul*. No doubt many other women in Ephesus also learned from Paul—and from Priscilla! Aquila and Priscilla went to Rome sometime later (Rom. 16:3, perhaps around A.D. 58), but they returned to Ephesus, for they were in Ephesus again at the end of Paul’s life (in 2 Tim. 4:19, Paul writes to Timothy at Ephesus, “Greet Prisca and Aquila”). Now, 2 Timothy was probably written in A.D. 66 or 67 (Eusebius says that Paul died in A.D. 67), and 1 Timothy a short time before that, perhaps in A.D. 65. In addition, before he wrote 1 Timothy, Paul seems to have been in Ephesus and it seems he had told Timothy to remain there when he left for Macedonia (see 1 Tim. 1:3: “As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus . . .”). Therefore, both because 1 Timothy is near in time to 2 Timothy, and because Paul had recently been in Ephesus to know who was there before he wrote 1 Timothy or 2 Timothy, it seems likely that Aquila and Priscilla were back in Ephesus by the time Paul wrote 1 Timothy, about A.D. 65. This was fourteen years after Priscilla and Aquila had explained the way of God to Apollos in Ephesus.

Evangelical Feminism: A New Path to Liberalism (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2006), 175-176.

⁷⁸ Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (2001 paperback edition; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 429-430.

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As is common, persons today with an agenda misinterpret Scripture to bolster a political position or to live comfortably within their own worldview. Paul, in his letters, interprets the role of women more liberally than his antagonists say he does. Even the Gospels portray women as being more spiritually perceptive than men.⁷⁹ So it is hardly surprising that early Christianity proved to have a deep appeal for women, as one scholar observes:

“It is probable that Jesus’ teachings attracted women in part because of the new roles and equal status they were granted in the Christian community. There were many cults in Greece and Rome that were for men only, or at best, allowed women to participate in very limited ways [as prostitutes, for instance, in the fertility cults within ‘goddism’].... Judaism offered women proselytes a circumscribed place at best, for they were faced with the Jewish restrictions that limited participation in religious functions. While women were not allowed to make up the quorum⁸⁰ necessary to found a synagogue, nor to receive the Jewish covenant sign (circumcision), these limitations did not exist in the Christian community.”⁸¹

The Book of Acts is another indicator of the early church’s emphasis on the important role of women. In fact, Peter’s speech to the Pentecost crowd included portions of the Old Testament book of Joel: *“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, your sons and your daughters will prophesy.... And on My menservants, I will pour out my Spirit in those*

THE ROLE AND STATUS OF WOMEN	
Non-Christian Practices (Past or Present)	Christian Practices (Past or Present)
<i>Gynaecium</i> : segregated quarters for the wife in her husband’s home in ancient Athens	No segregated quarters for wife in her home; she shared with her husband at all times
Athenian wife was confined to her quarters when men guests were present	Women (Mary and Martha) hosted Jesus in their home
<i>Hetaera</i> : man’s legal mistress in ancient Greece	No mistresses for men allowed
Veil: worn publicly by married women in Greco-Roman times and most other ancient societies	Veiling of women discontinued after ninth century
<i>Patria potestas</i> : father’s absolute power over family members	Father possessed no absolute family power
<i>Manus</i> : Roman husband’s absolute power over his wife	Husbands and wives: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Ephesians 5:21)
<i>Infamia</i> : label for a disobedient Roman woman	No cultural label for a disobedient woman
<i>Coemptio</i> : Roman father sells daughter to her husband	Father not permitted to sell his daughter to her husband
Adultery: based on woman’s marital status; a double standard of sexual behavior	Based on marital status of a man or woman; a single standard of sexual behavior
Female babies valued less than male babies	Female and male babies valued equally.
Infanticide: once widely practiced in pagan countries; victims are commonly female infants	Condemned and outlawed in countries with Christian influence.
Polygyny: man may legally have multiple wives	Monogamy: the only acceptable marriage
<i>Michetza</i> : ancient synagogue partition for women	No church partitions for women
Child brides: prepuberty girls given in marriage; still practiced in China, India, and some African countries	Child bride marriages not permitted in countries with Christian influence
<i>Suttee (sati)</i> : Hindus burning husband’s widow in India; practiced for many centuries	Banned in India by the British under Christian influence in 1829
Foot binding of young girls: once common in China for centuries	Condemned by Christian missionaries; Christian influence led to China’s outlawing female foot binding in 1912
Clitoridectomy: female genital mutilation, still common in Muslim countries in Africa and Middle East	Unequivocally condemned and outlawed in countries with Christian influence

⁷⁹ Compare Mark 4:40 and 6:52 to Mark 5:25-30. See also Mark 7:24-30 and 12:41-44.

⁸⁰ “The number of members of a group or organization required to be present to transact business legally, usually a majority.” Random House Webster’s Unabridged CD-ROM Dictionary, (1999).

⁸¹ Ben Witherington, *Women and the Genesis of Christianity* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 246. For those who are not familiar with the Gospel and assume this to reference female circumcision, it does not. Just a quick perusal of Colossians shows that there is freedom found in Christ (Colossians 2:9-15; 3:11-12, NIV):

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.... Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Circumcision was not a sign of salvation or status. We are set free to love and live for Christ Jesus. Freedom is a wonderful thing, both spiritually and economically, and this is the point, modern-day feminism lacks the understanding for both, as we shall see.

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days...” (Acts 2:17-18). In the beginnings of this new church founded by Jesus of Nazareth we find women mentioned at the very beginning of Christianities historical book, Acts. In 1:14 of Acts we find the disciples were constantly in prayer “along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus.” The first convert in Philippi, for instance, was Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth (Acts 16:14). The Philippi church meets first in her home (Acts 16:40). Then Priscilla is introduced (18:2), who was a Jewish evangelist! Together with her husband, Aquila, she is mentioned four times in Acts, always being the first mentioned.⁸² Likewise, In Romans 16:3 we find Paul mentioning first Priscilla and then her husband, Aquila - mentioning that both are equal in Christ: “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus.” In fact, Priscilla is always mentioned prior to her husband except for once, another key to the overturning of patriarchal customs up to that point.⁸³

Luke makes mention of when Paul visited the evangelist Philip in Caesarea, that he had four daughters who prophesied. Far from Paul and the church being oppressive to women, this type of universality that included women was a departure from both Jewish norms as well Roman norms. The Romans in fact, could have used this early equalizing as being socially subversive to their social order, in this case to the patriarchy. Likewise, the Jewish leaders who rejected Jesus and the teachings of the early church, including Paul at first, severely restricted the role of women.⁸⁴ Paul and the other writers of the New Testament telling men that they should cherish their wives (Ephesians 5), that marriage is a financial partnership (I Timothy 5:8), that the husband is to honor his wife (I Peter 3:7), and that the male should be a part of raising their children within the family unit was essentially unheard of until then. In contradistinction, the *Gospel of Thomas* “is clearly influenced by the kind of Gnosticism we know was prevalent in the second and third centuries, but not in the first.”⁸⁵ For example, we find Jesus of the *Gospel of Thomas* responding to Peter, let’s read:

114: Simon Peter said to them, “Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said, “I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. **For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.**”

“This demeaning view of women was common within Gnosticism, but utterly foreign to the historical Jesus.”⁸⁶ The fact that the canonical Gospels were written a century or two earlier than those of Gnosticism is at least a good *preliminary indication* that they could possibly also be more authoritative. O. C. Edwards agrees:

“It is precisely as history that I find her [Pagels] work most unsatisfactory. Nowhere, for instance, does she give the impression that the basic picture of Jesus given in the New Testament gospels did not arise

⁸² John W. Mauck, *Paul on Trial: The Book of Acts as a Defense of Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 56.

⁸³ Acts 18:2, 18, 19, 26; Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19.

⁸⁴ Mauck, *Paul on Trial*, 56.

⁸⁵ Gregory A. Boyd, *Jesus Under Siege* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1995), 118.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 118.

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contemporaneously with the Gnostic portrait, but antedated it by at least a century. As historical reconstructions [go,] there is no way that the two can claim equal credentials.”⁸⁷

To ignore the century before Gnosticism started, seems to me, like a *tell* in poker. That is when the opposing player does something or makes an odd move to show the other players that he or she is bluffing, verbal or not. In this case, the total disregard for pre-Gnostic history and roots is telling.

- **Context, Context, Context**

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, a New Testament scholar, responds in a similar manner: “Time and again, she [Pagels] is ignoring a good century of Christian existence in which those ‘Gnostic Christians’ were simply not around.”⁸⁸ He goes on to say that the title of Pagels’ book is misleading because “it insinuates that the heart of the book concerns the lost Gospels that have come to light, when in fact the majority of Pagels’s references are from early church fathers’ sources or other non-Gospel material.”⁸⁹ Obviously, because we can reference Matthew or Mark in about one-third of the Gospel of Thomas, and the rest is either clearly Gnostic or somewhat Gnostic in nature means that whoever wrote the *Gospel of Thomas* had a preexistent copy of the canonical gospels in front of them.⁹⁰

Gnosticism has influenced many religions, cults and the occult. Even going so far as influencing pseudo-Christian theologies such as the Word-Faith movement popularized by the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN),⁹¹ the Emergent Movement seems ripe with correlations to Gnostic flavorings,⁹² as well as the occultic teachings of the Theosophical Society, founded by Madam Blavatsky.⁹³ Gnosticism even played a major role in Nazism before and during World War II.⁹⁴ Ancient Gnosticism teaches that salvation was to be obtained through secret “*knowledge*” (Greek: *gnosis*) of the universe. It involved a rejection of matter in lieu of the spiritual. Since they considered materialism (matter) an evil delusion or way to hold back this “secret knowledge,” they considered any religion that taught that matter was normative misguided as well. They taught that this material world was created by an evil spirit, called a demiurge.⁹⁵ Since the God of the Jews, and later the Christians, is said to have created matter in contradistinction to all other major religious texts and gods, he must be this evil demiurge.⁹⁶

⁸⁷ O. C. Edwards, “A Surprising View of Gnosticism,” *New Review of Books and Religion*, May 1980, 27. Quoted in, Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin, MS: College Press, 1996), 107.

⁸⁸ “The Gnostic Gospels According to Pagels,” *America*, February 16, 1980, 123; Habermas, *The Historical Jesus*, 107.

⁸⁹ Douglas Groothuis, *Jesus In an Age of Controversy* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1996), 103.

⁹⁰ Douglas Groothuis, “The Gnostic Gospels: Part Two Are They Authentic?” *Christian Research Journal* (Winter 1991), page 15.

⁹¹ D. R. McConnell, *A Different Gospel* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishing, 1988); *Christianity in Crisis* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1993).

⁹² D.A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 182.

⁹³ Jonathan Z. Smith, Gen ed., *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion*, (San Francisco, CA: Harper, 1995), 1071, cf. Theosophy; Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1997), 287.

⁹⁴ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism: Secret Aryan Cults and Their Influence on Nazi Ideology* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 1992), see chapter two.

⁹⁵ *Demiurge* defined in the following:

To be sure, some of the elements often incorporated into definitions of “gnosticism” are, in themselves, reasonably clear. For example, ancient “gnosticism” is frequently defined as including the notion that the material cosmos was created by one or more lower demiurges (from the Greek demiurgos, “craftsman, fashioner, creator”), that is, by an entity or entities lower than and distinct from the most transcendent God or order of being. But by itself, this feature has never been viewed as sufficient to define “gnosticism.” And rightly so,

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The reasoning behind the view that the *God of the Old Testament* was an evil being was again due to their belief that matter itself was evil -- and the Old Testament expressly teaches that matter was made by a personal, creative act, by this God.⁹⁷ This leads to another of their views that Jesus in fact did not come to earth bodily, "he only *appeared* in bodily form and *appeared* to suffer."⁹⁸ Gnostic teachings are very dualistic, not unlike its Platonic parent.⁹⁹ Which is why they would use Christian writings *selectively* and adapt them to their teachings giving rise to a number of apocryphal¹⁰⁰ gospels. This is one of the catalysts that drove the church to use and pass around a body of works recognized as accepted by the early half of the second century,¹⁰¹ by A.D. 200 most of the early Church Father and writers were accepting these documents as almost canonized,¹⁰² this was confirmed by later councils of course.¹⁰³

- **Religious Women vs. Modern Feminism**

The thesis put forward by Pagels and others, does nothing to actually discredit the historicity of the Bible or its claims. On the other hand, it does show the propensity of the entrenched philosophies and biases that permeate the universities and their classrooms to direct students down the proverbial *primrose path*. In many cases this entrenched movement wishes to see the future failure of the nuclear family, and the "patriarchal" capitalist system. According to the gender feminist, if a woman holds to these views -- that is, the traditional family in a capitalist setting committed to the Judeo-Christian philosophy -- these women are merely deluded by the patriarchal system.

Gender feminists are especially disapproving of the lives of traditionally religious women such as evangelical Christian women, Catholic women, or Orthodox Jewish women, whom they see as being conditioned for highly restricted roles. Surely, they say, it is evident that such women are subjugated, and the choices they make inauthentic. As Gloria Steinem explains it, the appeal of religious fundamentalism for women is that "the promise is safety in return for obedience, respectability in return for self-respect and freedom -- a sad bargain."^(a)

That is a harsh judgment to make about millions of American women. Ms. Steinem is of course free to disagree with conventionally religious women on any number of issues, but she is not morally free to cast aspersions on their autonomy and self-respect. The New Feminism is supposed to be about sisterhood. Why are its most prominent practitioners so condescending?

Steinem herself knows a thing or two about how to recruit adherents to a cause by promises of "safety" and "self-respect." The feminist orthodoxy she portrays promises safety in a sisterhood that will offer unhappy or

because "demiurgical" doctrines certainly were not limited to the selection of sources normally considered "gnostic" but are encountered in other thinkers in antiquity as well (Plato, for example, and several Platonic philosophers from the Hellenistic-Roman era).

Michael Allen Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 4.

⁹⁶ J. C. J. Metford, *Dictionary of Christina Lore and Legend* (London, England: Thames & Hudson, 1983), 110, cf. Gnostic.

⁹⁷ Paul Evans, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 415-416.

⁹⁸ Nathan Busenitz, *Reasons We Believe: 50 Lines of Evidence That Confirm the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 147; Evans, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 416.

⁹⁹ Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism"*, 51.

¹⁰⁰ "Apocryphal: of doubtful authorship or authenticity." *Random House Webster's Unabridged CD-ROM Dictionary* [1999]

¹⁰¹ F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 123-124.

¹⁰² H. Wayne House, *Chronological Background Charts of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 22.

¹⁰³ Leo Donald Davis, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983).

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insecure women a venue where they can build self-esteem and attain an authenticity enjoyed by no other group of women.

The traditionally religious women of today, be they Protestant Christians, Orthodox Jews, or observant Catholics -- emphatically do not think of themselves as subjugated, lacking in self-respect, or unfree. Indeed, they very properly resent being described that way. For they are perfectly aware that they have all the rights that men have. If they choose to lead the lives they do, that is their affair.¹⁰⁴

Christina Sommers continues, "For their part, traditional women might try to persuade the feminists of the merits of the religious way of life. Mostly however, gender feminists are content to dismiss and even jeer at the religious women without engaging or confronting them in a respectful dialogue and it is not surprising that the latter have grown increasingly impatient with their feminist critics."¹⁰⁵ Another author makes the point that gender feminists try and "force us all to conform to their agenda based on the unnatural ideology that there is no difference between men and women.... As feminist author Robin Morgan told a Phil Donahue audience, 'We are becoming the men we once wanted to marry'."¹⁰⁶ This may explain the continued growth of the religiously conservative Concerned Women for America (CWA), and the continued decline of the National Organization of Women (NOW).

Keep in mind that "secular" feminism can be religious as well, Louis Frankel in an article that appeared in the humanist magazine *Free Inquiry*, suggests that women worship goddess – a female god. "Goddess religion celebrates the body," Miss Frankel says, "including its sexual and reproductive functions. Rituals celebrate menstruation, birth, and the joy of sexuality." Miss Frankel contends that "the values of Goddess religion are largely humanistic."¹⁰⁷ The move to goddess religion, however, is merely a halfway house to full Humanist theology – atheism. Says Frankel, "If we 'need the Goddess' to break the shackles of the patriarchal God, then once we are, we can thank her for her assistance and forge our own path toward freedom and independence."¹⁰⁸ Freedom and independence mean freedom from belief in God or Goddesses, i.e., atheism.¹⁰⁹

Now that we have discussed the religious aspects of the Gnostic writings within the context of a Women Studies class,¹¹⁰ we must come to grips with the setting in which feminism currently views its role in

¹⁰⁴ Christina Hoff Sommers, *Who Stole Feminism: How Woman Have Betrayed Woman* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 260.

¹⁰⁵ (a) Gloria Steinem, *Revolution from Within: A Book of Self-Esteem* (Boston, MA: Little & Brown, 1992), 260.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 261

¹⁰⁷ Phyllis Schlafly, *Feminist Fantasies* (Dallas, TX: Spence Publishing, 2003), 133.

¹⁰⁸ "Feminist Spirituality as a Path to Humanism," Fall 1990, 31.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 35

¹¹⁰ David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times: The Religious Worldviews of Our Day and the Search for Truth* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1991), 437.

¹¹¹ I would have to say what we find taught on our campuses is what is sometimes referred to as second wave feminism. The *APA Dictionary* makes clear the differences between first and second wave feminism. We will soon see when second wave feminism started.

feminism n. -- any of a number of perspectives that take as their subject matter the problems and perspectives of women, or the nature of biological and social phenomena related to GENDER. Feminism has evolved from a largely political movement in the 19th century, focused (in the United States) on women's suffrage and political and economic opportunities, into broader and more comprehensive academic, philosophical, and social movements. Although some feminist perspectives continue to focus on issues of fairness and equal rights, other approaches emphasize what are taken to be inherent and systematic gender inequities in Western society (see PATRIARCHY). In psychology, feminism has focused attention on the nature and origin of gender differences in psychological processes.

APA Dictionary of Psychology (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2007), cf. Feminism, 372-373.

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political and social life. As we will come to find, it is this political force that drives this re-interpreting of history and theology. Understanding that *modern* feminism is not necessarily monolithic is very important; however, at the university level it has become, or is becoming, institutionalized. So institutionalized, that many have asserted that it is simply impossible to oppose gender feminism and to be hired to teach Women's Studies.¹¹¹ For instance, the Committee on the Status of Women at the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) maintains that criticism of feminism or Women's Studies is impermissible because it has a "disparate impact on woman faculty and chills the intellectual climate for academic women."¹¹² According to Bell Hooks, a feminist writer and teacher, "feminist education has become institutionalized in universities via Women's Studies programs."¹¹³ The question is *what* has become institutionalized?

- **Defining Terms**

To better understand what *modern*, or *gender* feminism means, we must understand what *liberal* feminism represents.

The gender feminist believes that women constitute an oppressed class within an oppressive system: what ails women cannot be cured by merely achieving equal opportunity. As a class women are seen to be politically at odds with the patriarchy that oppresses them. Consequently, the gender feminist will never accept the testimonies of ordinary women, since the gender feminist believes that ordinary women have unconsciously bought into a system that oppresses them. Thus, without marshaling an argument... the gender feminist simply presupposes her worldview and reinterprets all contrary facts as examples of false consciousness.¹¹⁴

This worldview permeates all that the modern feminist comes into contact with, including such things as history and religion. The gender feminist, then, *has a radical perspective*. As Professor Sommers continues her thought, "She [the gender feminist] views social realit[ies] in terms of patriarchal

¹¹¹ As David Horowitz points out:

On what basis should political activists in women's studies departments be granted tenure and lifetime jobs? Professors of women's studies at the University of Kansas are not elected. They are appointed, and in fact they are self-appointed, since new hires in the Department of Women's Studies will be determined by the votes of the tenured members of the department. This means that not only is there no intellectual diversity in women's studies programs now, but as long as ideological departments continue to exist there never will be. The tenured members of these departments know the ideology they want in a hire, and will always hire someone who believes politically as they do. An analogy would be if the Republican majority in the Kansas Legislature had lifetime jobs and were entrusted with electing their Republican successors. This is a prescription for authoritarian rule, not the kind of principle that should govern the educational institutions of a democracy.

Indoctrinate U: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2007), 66; see also, Evan Coyne Maloney, *Indoctrinate U: Our Education, Their Politics* (DVD, On The Fence Films, 2007); also:

Women's studies programs are notorious for misusing statistics and repeating misleading information on topics ranging from rape and domestic violence to the prevalence of eating disorders and the size of the wage gap. The rejection of academic rigor suggests that women's studies programs have another purpose. It's not simply a field of study for college students—an alternative to English literature, history, or politics. Women's studies is a recruitment device for a political movement. As Shelia Ruth details in her women's studies 101 textbook, "Today, as in the past, if we lose our rootedness in the women's movement, in concrete social action, we will lose not only our passion but our heart, our meaning, and our whole point."

Carrie L. Lukas, *The Politically Incorrect Guide to Women, Sex, and Feminism* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2006), 177.

¹¹² *Academe*, July-August [1989], p. 38

¹¹³ Nancy Naples, *Teaching Feminist Activism: Strategies from the Field* (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 2002), 112. (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000), 111.

¹¹⁴ Christina Hoff Sommers, "Do These Feminists Like Women? A Reply to Friedman's Response," Francis J. Beckwith, ed., *Do the Right Thing: A Philosophical Dialogue on the Moral and Social Issues of Our Time* (Boston, MA: Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 1996), 587.

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‘sex/gender system’ that, in the words of Sandra Harding, ‘organizes social life throughout most of recorded history and in every culture today’.¹¹⁵ Of course the history of this movement has been this radical for quite some time, as one liberal professor¹¹⁶ explains in his book *The Dark Side of the Left*:

Among the most important legacies of the 1960s and the New Left is the contemporary feminist movement.^(a) Of course, feminism, even its more radical variants, long predates the 1960s. In the decades before the Civil War, radical abolitionists such as Stephen Foster and Abigail Kelley assailed the patriarchal family structure and the “slavery of sex,”^(b) while nineteenth-century utopian communities strove to construct alternatives to the conventional bourgeois family, in some cases forbidding marriage in favor of “free love,” in others separating children from their Parents so the young could be raised by the collective rather than the “isolated household.”^(c) The term “feminism” itself came into widespread Usage in the United States during the early 1960s, at the height of Progressive ferment.^(d) Those who identified themselves as “feminists” in the 1910s sharply distinguished the new “feminism” from the old “suffragism.” For these new self-described feminists, the vote was seen not as an end in itself but as a means to achieve what one activist described as a “complete social revolution” in gender relationships.^(e) Their aim was not only the political inclusion of women but a radical restructuring of private relationships between the sexes. For these early-twentieth-century feminists, the personal was political.^(f)

Feminism, then, was not born moderate and then radicalized by the 1960s. From its inception, the term “feminism,” in the minds of both its proponents and its opponents, has been linked with radicalism and even socialism.^(g) “Feminism,” as Nancy Cott explains, “was born ideologically on the left of the political spectrum, first espoused by women who were familiar with advocacy of socialism and who, advantaged by bourgeois backgrounds, nonetheless identified more with labor than with capital.”^(h) Max Eastman and Floyd Dell, both self-proclaimed feminists and socialists, frequently used the pages of the *Masses* to plead the case for the emancipation of women, and Randolph Bourne saw Greenwich Village feminism as a leading edge in the radical assault on deadening bourgeois conventions.⁽ⁱ⁾¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ In his second paragraph, Ellis quickly points out that he is a lifelong Democrat, a *card-carrying member* of the ACLU, an environmentalist, a supporter of women’s rights and a federalist.

¹¹⁷ Richard J. Ellis, *The Dark Side of the Left: Illiberal Egalitarianism in America* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 193-194:

^(a) See Stephen Macedo, ed., *Reassessing the Sixties: Debating the Political and Cultural Legacy* (New York: Norton, 1997), especially the chapters by Harvey C. Mansfield, Jeremy Rabkin, and Martha Nussbaum.

^(b) See Blanche Glassman Hersh, *The Slavery of Sex: Feminist-Abolitionists in America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978).

^(c) Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), especially 86-91. Carl J. Guarneri, *The Utopian Alternative: Fourierism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press), especially 197-211, 353-63; “isolated household” quotation on 19q. John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870) John L. Thomas, “Antislavery and Utopia,” in Martin Duberman, ed., *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists* (Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press, 1965), 257. Robert F. Fogarty, *All Things New: American Communes and Utopian Movements, 1860-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 106, 199, 215; also see 66-72 for a description of the Women’s Commonwealth, or the Sanctified Sisters of Belton, which Fogarty characterizes as “the first feminist collective in the United States” (66).

^(d) Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1987), 3, 13-15.

^(e) Ibid., 15.

^(f) Christopher Lasch, *The New Radicalism in America, 1889-1863: The Intellectual as a Social Type* (New York: Vintage, 1965), 90.

^(g) Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 15, 35. Ludwig Von Mises, *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis* (1922; reprint ed., Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981), 74-92. Lasch, *New Radicalism in America*, 91.

^(h) Cott, *Grounding of Modern Feminism*, 35.

⁽ⁱ⁾ June Sochen, ed., *The New Feminism in Twentieth-Century America* (Lexington, Mass.: Heath, 1971), viii-ix, 33-36, 45-46. Lasch, *New Radicalism in America*, 91.

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The liberal feminist, on the other hand, merely seeks legal equality for women and equality of opportunity in education and in the work place. It is this type of woman who wants what any classical liberal wants for anyone who suffers bias: fair treatment under the law. Unfortunately this is not what has been institutionalized in most of the Women's Studies programs at the university level.

- **What's Going On?**

Concerned Women for America has triple the members that National Organization of Women has, one of the reasons for this I believe is to be found in the current movement's direction. For example, in the January 1988 *National NOW Times*, the newsletter for the organization, said: "The simple fact is that every woman must be willing to be identified as a lesbian to be fully feminist."¹¹⁸ This is extreme to say the least, and it is this type of radical thinking that has made many women see the emperor with no clothes on, and she is not pretty. This radically political movement likewise looks forward not only to the overthrow of the nuclear family but of capitalism as well. Well-known feminist author and co-founder/editor of *Ms.* magazine, Gloria Steinem, said the following about feminism's end game: "Overthrowing capitalism is too small for us. We must overthrow the whole #@*! patriarchy!"¹¹⁹

How can a *civil rights* movement be interested in capitalism? As if chauvinism and patriarchal overexpressiveness suddenly vanish with Marxist forms of government. As if Stalin wasn't a womanizer.¹²⁰ Obviously then, it isn't the system of markets that create patriarchal attitudes.¹²¹ It is, however, free markets and government that afforded women the opportunity to create equal rights under the law. Here of course what these ladies are talking about are not equal rights under the law but using "special rights" to propose a whole new system of government, which drove Tammy Bruce, former president of the Los Angeles chapter of NOW as well as being a former member of NOW's national board of directors, to say: "What Gloria Steinem, Molly Yard, Patricia Ireland and all the rest have presented to you over the last 15 years (at least) has not been feminist theory."¹²² Ms. Bruce goes on to show that Betty Friedan and Patricia Ireland, ex-presidents of NOW, (and others) are involved with socialist or communist political parties or organizations.¹²³ ~Now~ the political goals become clearer as we understand the intent of these "posers,"¹²⁴ as Tammy Bruce calls them.

¹¹⁸ William D. Gairdner, *The War Against the Family: A Parent Speaks Out on the Political, Economic, and Social Policies That Threaten Us All* (Toronto, Canada: BPS Books, 2007), 295.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 300.

¹²⁰ "Stalin was attracted to strong women, but ultimately preferred submissive housekeepers or teenagers. He undoubtedly enjoyed adolescent and teenage girls, a taste that later was to get him into serious trouble with the police." Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Young Stalin* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2007), 235.

¹²¹ I am not here saying that the patriarchy is intrinsically bad either.

¹²² Tammy Bruce, *The New Thought Police: Inside the Left's Assault on Free Speech and Free Minds* (Roseville, CA: Prima Publishing, 2001), 123.

¹²³ *Ibid* (footnote 103), 123-124:

Do not be mistaken: what Gloria Steinem, Molly Yard, Patricia Ireland and all the rest have presented to you over the last 15 years (at least) has not been feminist theory. Betty Friedan, a former Communist Party member, was only the precursor of the hijacking of feminism to serve other political interests. Some consider Gloria Steinem, the founder of *Ms.* magazine and probably the second most influential feminist leader, after Friedan, of the last 30 years, to be the one who began blurring the lines between gender and race issues. This might be surprising to those who are unaware of Steinem's involvement in socialist politics. In fact, she serves as an honorary chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, which boasts of being the largest socialist organization in the United States and is the principal U.S. affiliate of the Socialist International. Good for her, but we should know this as we explore what factors influence those who are considered feminist leaders. Steinem's influence, combined with the socialist sympathies of NOW's immediate past-president, Patricia Ireland, explain the co-

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One sign of an over oppressive movement is illustrated in *The Animal Farm*, by George Orwell. Napoleon, one of the main characters, concerns himself with the education of the young, and forcefully takes two litters of puppies away as soon as they're weaned, saying he'll educate them. In effect the "State" are the ones who are charged with educating and rearing them. Now compare this to a statement made by feminist Mary Jo Bane, assistant professor of education at Wellesley College and associate director of the school's Center for Research on Woman, and the lesson taught in *Animal Farm*: "In order to raise children with equality, we must take them away from families and communally raise them."¹²⁵ Alternatively, Gloria Steinem declared: "By the year 2000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God."¹²⁶ NEA president/feminist Catherine Barrett wrote likewise that,

Dramatic changes in the way we will raise our children in the year 2000 are indicated, particularly in terms of schooling. ... We will need to recognize that the so-called 'basic skills', which currently represent nearly the total effort in elementary schools, will be taught in one-quarter of the present school day. ... When this happens—and it's near—the teacher can rise to his true calling. More than a dispenser of information, the teacher will be a conveyor of values, a philosopher. ... We will be agents of change.¹²⁷

- **Comparisons**

Brenda Feigen, the co-founder of *Ms.* Magazine, is a great example of what the movement offered in the past. ***She became the kind of woman the modern feminist couldn't keep up with!*** A lawyer, wife and mother, civil-rights activist, politician, Hollywood movie producer, and author... she is a feminist in the true sense of the word. *This feminist* sounds surprisingly like the one in Proverbs 31:10-31:

A good woman is hard to find,
and worth far more than diamonds.
Her husband trusts her without reserve,
and never has reason to regret it.
Never spiteful, she treats him generously
all her life long.
She shops around for the best yarns and cottons,

opting of NOW by leftist ideologues. A 1996 article in *Ms.* quoted Ireland as saying that NOW "must offer a clear understanding of what it means to be a feminist organization *concerned with ending discrimination based on race, class, and other issues of oppression* [emphasis mine] that come from a patriarchal structure." Steinem then commented, "To be feminist, we have to take on the entire caste system." Ireland details her support of the Communist Party in her autobiography, *What Women Want*. She admits that her socialist sympathies and participation in pro-Communist rallies in Miami (of all places!) were due in part to the fact that her friend and future lover, Pat Silverthorn, was an activist in the Socialist Worker's Party. There were problems, Ireland explains, with Silverthorn and her friends being Communists in Miami. "Later, after we'd become close," Ireland writes, "[Pat Silverthorn] would confide that she, too, had wondered how much more dangerous she'd made her life by openly professing communist convictions in that volatile, violent, commie-hating city... Working closely with Pat opened my eyes about the reality of living as a political leftist in this country."

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 142

¹²⁵ Fr. Robert J. Carr, "No News For You!!" *Catholic Online* (9-23-2004). Found on the Catholic Online site (<http://www.catholic.org/>) at: <http://www.catholic.org/featured/headline.php?ID=1364> (last accessed 7-29-09). Here is the full quote from Father Carr's article: "Mary Jo Bane, formerly of the Clinton Administration Department of Health and Human Services one of the major voices in the Boston Globe against the average Catholic's right to freedom of religion. Bane's most famous quote is 'We really don't know how to raise children. If we want to talk about equality of opportunity for children, then the fact that children are raised in families means there's no equality. ... In order to raise children with equality, we must take them away from families and communally raise them.'"

¹²⁶ Angela Howard and Sasha Ranae Adams Tarrant, *Reaction to the Modern Women's Movement, 1963 to the Present: Antifeminism in America: A Collection of Readings from the Literature of the Opponents to U.S. Feminism, 1848 to the Present* (New York, NY: Routledge Publishing, 1997), 153.

¹²⁷ Dennis Laurence Cuddy, *The Grab for Power: A Chronology of the NEA* (Washington, DC: Concerned Women for America, 2000), 6.

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and enjoys knitting and sewing.
She's like a trading ship that sails to faraway places
and brings back exotic surprises.
She's up before dawn, preparing breakfast
for her family and organizing her day.
She looks over a field and buys it,
then, with money she's put aside, plants a garden.
First thing in the morning, she dresses for work,
rolls up her sleeves, eager to get started.
She senses the worth of her work,
is in no hurry to call it quits for the day.
She's skilled in the crafts of home and hearth,
diligent in homemaking.
She's quick to assist anyone in need,
reaches out to help the poor.
She doesn't worry about her family when it snows;
their winter clothes are all mended and ready to wear.
She makes her own clothing,
and dresses in colorful linens and silks.
Her husband is greatly respected
when he deliberates with the city fathers.
She designs gowns and sells them,
brings the sweaters she knits to the dress shops.
Her clothes are well-made and elegant,
and she always faces tomorrow with a smile.
When she speaks she has something worthwhile to say,
and she always says it kindly.
She keeps an eye on everyone in her household,
and keeps them all busy and productive.
Her children respect and bless her;
her husband joins in with words of praise:
"Many women have done wonderful things,
but you've outclassed them all!"
Charm can mislead and beauty soon fades.
The woman to be admired and praised
is the woman who lives in the Fear-of-God.
Give her everything she deserves!
Festoon her life with praises!¹²⁸

Keep in mind, much like Mrs. Feigen, this addition by Lemuel's mother¹²⁹ about a role of a woman is over a lifetime. Mrs. Feigen wasn't all those things at once (a lawyer, wife and mother, civil-rights activist, politician, Hollywood movie producer, and author); she accomplished them over many years, a lifetime. Proverbs portrays the feminist exercising responsibility for the provision of food and clothing for the household, and also being involved in managing financial and business affairs outside the house

¹²⁸Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), cf. Pr 31:10-31

¹²⁹There is good evidence that this section of Proverbs was written by a women:

31:10-31 The complete woman. Vs 10-31 are often treated as separate from the sayings of Lemuel. But every other independent unit in Proverbs has its own heading, and the absence of such a heading in v 10 suggests that this section should be seen as part of the sayings of Lemuel. The fact that Lemuel's sayings came from his mother (1) suggests that this last section of the book is a woman's description of a woman's role.

New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition. 4th ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 607.

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itself. She also cares for the needy, and fulfils a wise teaching ministry. She parallels Ms. Wisdom in the opening chapters (corresponding expressions in 3:13-18; 9:1-6). Woman's teaching role in the book alongside man's (1:8; 6:20) fulfills part of the vision in Genesis 1-2 of man and woman **together** representing the image of God and called to exercise authority in the world on God's behalf. This is in stark contrast to *A Feminist Dictionary*, whose definitions are self-explanatory:

- **Male:** "... represents a variant of or deviation from the category of female. The first males were mutants... the male sex represents a degeneration and deformity of the female."¹³⁰
- **Man:** "... an obsolete life form... an ordinary creature who needs to be watched ... a contradictory baby-man."¹³¹
- **Testosterone Poisoning:** "Until now it has been thought that the level of testosterone in men is normal simply because they have it. But if you consider how abnormal their behavior is, then you are led to the hypothesis that almost all men are suffering from 'testosterone poisoning.'"¹³²

Feminist author Ti-Grace Atkinson shows her true autonomy when stating, "the institution of sexual intercourse is anti-feminist."¹³³ Marilyn French, feminist author calls all men rapists: "All men are rapists and that's all they are. They rape us with their eyes, their laws, and their codes."¹³⁴ Let us allow Gloria Steinen, feminist extraordinaire, to set the stage with the following praises about her contemporary, Andrea Dworkin, "In every century, there are a handful of writers who help the human race to evolve. Andrea is one of them."¹³⁵ Why preface Andrea Dworkin? Because she has this to say about men in general: "Heterosexual intercourse is the pure, formalized expression of contempt for women's bodies."¹³⁶

- **Creating Victims**

¹³⁰ Cheris Kramarac and Paula A. Treichler, eds., *Feminist Dictionary* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986), cf. male, 242.

¹³¹ Ibid., cf. male, 246.

¹³² Ibid., cf. testosterone poisoning, 446.

¹³³ Daniel Dervin, *Enactments: American Modes and Psychohistorical Models* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), 244; another telling quote comes directly from Atkinson's own biography, *Amazon Odyssey*:

The price of clinging to the enemy [a man] is your life. To enter into a relationship with a man who has divested himself as completely and publicly from the male role as much as possible would still be a risk. But to relate to a man who has done any less is suicide.... I, personally, have taken the position that I will not appear with any man publicly, where it could possibly be interpreted that we were friends.

Ti-Grace Atkinson, *Amazon Odyssey* (New York, NY: Links Books, 1976), 90, 91.

¹³⁴ Elizabeth Knowles, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 5th ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), cf. Freeman, E.A., 324.

¹³⁵ David M. Friedman, *A Mind of Its Own: A Cultural History of the Penis* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2001), 225.

¹³⁶ Neil Boyd, *Big Sister: How Extreme Feminism has Betrayed the Fight for Sexual Equality* (British Columbia, Canada: Greystone Books 2004), 23. Dr. Boyd continues with Dworkin's quote:

In fucking, as in reproduction, sex and economics are inextricably joined. In male-supremacist cultures, women are believed to embody carnality; women are sex. A man wants what a woman has - sex. He can steal it outright (prostitution), lease it over the long term (marriage in the United States), or own it outright (marriage in most societies). A man can do some or all of the above, over and over again.

Ibid.

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One must keep in mind that when studying theology through the lenses of gender feminism, hermeneutics¹³⁷ will be subjugated to gender influenced viewpoints. This revisionist starting point, e.g., class warfare, will not only affect the Bible, but also other holy books and religious beliefs. Other presuppositions that drive the modern feminist movement include philosophical naturalism (atheism) all the way to neo-paganism, an umbrella term for a more ancient tradition.¹³⁸ The real goal of gender feminism tends towards either a gender free society (which is not neutral) or one based on the matriarchy. Both are reactionary to a radical rewriting of history, as already discussed.

The Christian tradition is rich with examples of feminism.¹³⁹ The feminism that truly empowers women, not the feminism that makes vicitrats¹⁴⁰ out of well meaning woman that wish to make a difference. Christina Hoff Sommers, a liberal feminist and formerly professor of philosophy at Clark University, comments on the current condition of modern feminism:

The orthodox feminists are so carried away with victimology, with a rhetoric of male-bashing that it's full of female chauvinists, if you will. Also, women are quite eager to censor, to silence. And what concerns me most as a philosopher is it's become very anti-intellectual, and I think it poses a serious risk to young women in the universities. Women's studies classes are increasingly a kind of initiation into the most radical wing, the most intolerant wing, of the feminist movement. And I consider myself a whistle-blower. I'm from inside the campus. I teach philosophy. I've seen what's been going on.¹⁴¹

Many true feminists, like Dr. Sommers, do away with the many myths that are meant to “scare” women into becoming radicals.¹⁴² Books by feminist Christina Hoff Sommers¹⁴³ are good books to refute such myths. Alternatively, the *Independent Women’s Forum* can be accessed via the Internet.¹⁴⁴ This “backlash” by women against radical feminism is well summed up in a review of the book *Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life: How Today's Feminist Elite Has Lost Touch With the Real Concerns of Women*, by Elizabeth Fox-Genovese:

According to historian Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (who describes herself as a feminist), is that most women perceive “official” feminism as indifferent to their deepest concerns. In particular, they are put off by the movement's negative attitude toward marriage and motherhood, its intolerance for dissent from its most controversial positions, its attacks on men, and its inattention to the practical problems of balancing work and

¹³⁷ “Traditionally the sub-discipline of theology concerned with the proper interpretation of scriptural texts,” C. Stephen Evans, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), cf. hermeneutics, 53.

¹³⁸ For a good definition of and differences between “neo-pagan” and “new age,” see Sarah M. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions In America* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2004), 18-26.

¹³⁹ Helen Kooiman Hosier, *100 Christian Woman Who Changed the 20th Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books/Academic, 2000); and Rebecca Price Janney, *Great Woman in American History* (Camp Hill, PA: Horizon Books, 1996).

¹⁴⁰ “A vicitrat is one who blames all ills, problems, concerns, and unhappiness on others,” Larry Elder, *Ten Things You Can’t Say in America* (New York, NY: St. Martins, 2000), 22-33.

¹⁴¹ PBS, “Has Feminism Gone Too Far?” *Think Tank Transcripts: Has Feminism Gone Too Far?* Article found at: <http://www.pbs.org/thinktank/transcript132.html> (last accessed 8-6-09).

¹⁴² These include some of the following: 1) Myth of the Extent of Anorexia Nervosa; 2) Myth of Amount of Domestic Violence; 3) Myth of Increased Domestic Battery on Super Bowl Sunday; 4) Myth Concerning Percent of Women Raped; 5) Myth Concerning Female Self-esteem; 6) Myth of Discrimination Against Females in School; 7) Myth of Huge Gender Wage Gap, Etc.

¹⁴³ *Who Stole Feminism: How Woman Have Betrayed Woman* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995); *The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism is Harming Our Young Men* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

¹⁴⁴ <http://www.iwf.org/>

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family on a day-to-day basis. Hence the title, echoing a refrain running through the author's conversations with a diverse sample of women: "Feminism is not the story of my life."¹⁴⁵

- **To Conclude**

Social commentator and radio show host, Dennis Prager, takes note that males tend to be "rule oriented." The implication being that Western culture is heavily influenced in the Judeo-Christian standards of moral code -- this, he says, is ironic... that, in the name of feminism women are attempting to emasculate the God of Western religious morality. "For if their goal is achieved, it is women who will suffer most from lawless males."¹⁴⁶ This is seen in the history of pagan cultures and their tendency to crumble under the weight of licentiousness and the lowly place women had in it. Christianity raised women out of these "pagan cultures in which polygamy, arranged marriages, and oppression of women predominated, the church promoted the idea of monogamous marriage by free consent of both spouses."¹⁴⁷

Economist Ludwig von Mises often times went beyond just economic commentary on the shortcomings of socialism. He warns that "proposals to transform the relations between the sexes have long gone hand in hand with plans for the socialization of the means of production.... Marriage is to disappear along with private property."¹⁴⁸ Von Mises continues:

By 'abolishing' marriage one would not make woman any freer and happier; one would merely take from her the essential content of her life, and one could offer nothing to replace it.¹⁴⁹ So long as feminism seeks to adjust the legal position of women to that of man. So long as it seeks to offer her legal and economic freedom to develop and act in accordance with her inclinations, desires, and economic circumstances – so long as it is nothing more than a branch of the great liberal movement, which advocates peaceful and free evolution. When, going beyond this, it attacks the institutions of social life under the impression that it will thus be able to remove *natural* barriers, it is a spiritual child of socialism. For it is a characteristic of socialism to discover in social institutions the origin of unalterable facts of nature, and to endeavor, by reforming these institutions, to reform nature.¹⁵⁰

The "complex and varied role of women through the ages cannot be reduced to a simplistic slogan describing one half of all human beings as the 'victims of history.' Those who say so have a quarrel with

¹⁴⁵ "Feminism Is Not the Story of My Life," Books In Review, *First Things* 61 (March 1996): 46-48; also found at Leadership U: <http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9603/reviews/feminism.html> (last accessed 8-6-09).

¹⁴⁶ Dennis Prager, *Think a Second Time* (New York, NY: Regan Books, 1995), 249.

¹⁴⁷ Harold Berman, *Law and Revolution: The Formation of the Western Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 226.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas E. Woods Jr., *The Church and the Market: A Catholic Defense of the Free Economy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 24.

¹⁴⁹ Ludwig von Mises, *Socialism* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1981), 74.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 87.

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God, or with nature, or simply with the facts.”¹⁵¹ Either way, many of these feminists believe they are in a war, a gender war. And as Professor Sommers points out, the first casualty in any war is truth.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Balint Vazsonyi, *America's 30 Years War: Who Is Winning?* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 1998), 214.

¹⁵² John Stossel, *Give Me a Break: How I Exposed Hucksters, Cheats, and Scam Artists and Became the Scourge of the Liberal Media...* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004), 113.