

She Wants NOW In Cincinnati

BY JANELLE

Enquirer Women's Editor

"WOMEN EQUAL SEX which equals sin' is a syndrome that must be killed," said Dr. Elizabeth Farians at a get-acquainted meeting here of people interested in the National Organization of Women (NOW), a group striving for equality of the sexes.

"We are not a feminist group," cautioned Dr. Farians, teacher of religion at Loyola University, in her talk with seven women and one man gathered in Sullivan Hall at Edgely College to hear the views of this board member of the organization. "We simply want equality for everyone."

The syndrome quoted above is believed by Dr. Farians to be the basis for much discrimination against members of the so-called "fair sex."

"IF A WOMAN enter a bar alone, or with other women, it is assumed that she is there for a pickup,

while it's never automatically assumed that men are there for any such reason," she pointed out. "Under our system, people would never admit that she might just want to sit and relax over a drink!

"Women are thought of as sexy dumb blonds, housewives, or useful consumers," she exploded. "And we are out to change that entire image."

NOW was born in the fall of 1966 when several members of both sexes met in Washington to attend a presidential conference on the status of women. They quickly realized that more action—and less ideological chatter—was needed to start the movement toward true equality.

MOST MAJOR cities now have a chapter, Dr. Farians said, but it is a loose knit organization with very few facts known about the membership.

"Everything has been done with money from the pockets of our members," she explained. "Since there is no paid staff, it is impossible to have recorded details of the various groups.

"The purpose of NOW is to bring women into the mainstream of our society, and each chapter approaches this goal in the manner best suited to its city," she said.

People in the meeting represented a fairly even cross section of Cincinnati women so far as professional fields and personal lives are concerned.

THERE WAS a secretary, an accountant, an IBM programmer, two educators, a woman in job training and a mathematician who had gone into business for herself after discovering that major industries will not accept women in her field.

There were married women—one with grown chil-

dren and two with youngsters—as well as unmarried ones.

"This is another thing that smacks of inequality," Dr. Farians charged. "Why do people always ask whether a woman is married? It really doesn't matter. She should be treated as an individual whether going out socially or applying for a job."

AS SOME PEOPLE expressed doubt, particularly about the group's views on motherhood as stated in its list of objectives, Dr. Farians expanded on these statements.

"Just as with every group, each member has a right to disagree with some of the goals," she said. "Many women for example, might disagree with the objective of making reproduction a matter of choice.

"We are not suggesting that every woman practice birth control or that every woman have an abortion. We are merely saying it should be her choice and not that of some government unit.

"I have walked on lots of picket lines, but that does not mean that every member is expected to march. All we want is for each one to work in her own way to reach the same goal."

DR. FARIANS told of a law in Pennsylvania under which a woman convicted of a felony must receive the maximum sentence. The judge, on the other hand, can determine the sentence for a man convicted of the same crime.

NOW was instrumental in freeing a number of women from prison by fighting this law.

"Many people wonder why we fought so hard for women convicted of a felony," she said. "But we were fighting the injustice

of the penalty, not just contesting the guilt or innocence of the women."

"THERE ARE more than 1000 laws in the various states of this country that are specifically against the woman," she added.

"We know that fairness cannot be legislated, but at least a woman would have some legal backing to fight a case if we had a law against discrimination," she said, pointing out that the Equal Rights amendment to the Constitution has failed for 23 years now.

There are many discriminatory rules being practiced in our educational institutions, she told the group, drawing out a folder from the University of Cincinnati to back up her statement.

THERE ARE two sets of entrance requirements to the University College—one for males and the other for females.

"An out-of-state girl who applies there must be in the upper one third of her class academically, while a boy is only required to be in the upper half of his class," she said.

"This is the injustice we want stopped," she said as she slapped the conference table for emphasis. "We do not want to be the bosses. We simply think that the responsibility and the opportunity should be shared in every phase of life.

"Frankly, I want to walk this earth as a free human being, and I intend to do so!"

This final statement shocked the group into making definite plans to join the movement for equality. One member is opening her home for a meeting which the group hopes will lead to a better life for members of both sexes, at any age and in any social or economic bracket.

Those attending vowed not to wage a "battle of the sexes" but to fight for justice for all.



Enquirer (Ran Coshren) Photo

DR. ELIZABETH FARIANS, a board member of the National Organization for Women, is so fiery in her beliefs in the equal rights movement that she enlisted local citizens who met with her.

Women's Liberation Movement Hits the Churches

By EDWARD B. FISKE

© New York Times News Service

NEW YORK—A joke currently making the rounds of liberal Roman Catholics holds that bishops attending the next Vatican Council will be accompanied not only by their theological advisers but by their wives. At the council after that, it runs, female bishops will bring along their husbands.

Far-fetched though it may sound, the idea of female bishops is being taken with the utmost seriousness by an increasing number of Catholics. It is a sign of an important new fact of American religious life: the women's liberation movement has hit the churches.

In all three major faiths women are rebelling against what they term their "second-class citizenship" and seeking new rights ranging from voting power to ordination. The latest victory came this week when the Episcopal Diocese of New York endorsed a revision of canon law at the national level to permit women to become priests.

Among Christians the tradition of male hegemony is deeply rooted. St. Paul wrote that in heaven there will be no distinction between male and female, but argued that in the meantime women should "keep silence in the churches" and in no case have "authority over men."

Opponents of ordaining women also argue that God chose to reveal himself to a man, that Jesus chose no women among his disciples and that female priests would undermine such traditional concepts as the "fatherhood of God."

The result is that although women make up a majority of the membership of most churches, they generally have only token representation on governing boards. About a quarter of the 235 members of the World Council of Churches ordain women, including Presbyterian and Methodist bodies.

Others, including Anglicans and Lutherans, have strict prohibitions that make churches one of the few important institutions that still elevate discrimination against women to the level of principle.

Recently, however, the situation has

begun to change. Among the developments are the following:

✓ Sally Priesand, a 23-year-old brunette, is studying at Cincinnati's Hebrew Union College to become a rabbi.

✓ The Episcopal Church is expected next fall to seat women delegates at its policy-making general convention.

✓ Women have been given the right to read the Bible and act as song leaders during Catholic Mass when no men are available. They must, however, stay outside the "presbyterium," the area immediately around the altar normally reserved for clergy. Some bishops have also given women the right to distribute communion.

A major factor in the change has been an increasing conviction that there is simply no good theological reason to

deny ordination to anyone because of sex. As a result, the debate on both sides has tended to shift to sociological and cultural arguments.

In January, for instance, the official Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, rejected Dutch Catholic arguments for women priests partly on the ground that God's choice to become incarnate in Christ in a specific time, place and Mediterranean "cultural and social ambience" had conditioned the church irrevocably.

In recent months, however, opposition to the "masculine mystique" in churches has been spurred by the women's liberation movement in society as a whole.

Women's caucuses have been formed in virtually every major denomination, and their leaders have lined up beside blacks, Mexican-Americans and youths in demanding more power.

An Ecumenical Task Force on Women

and Religion has been formed as part of the National Organization for Women (NOW). It is led by Dr. Elizabeth Farians, a Catholic theologian who complains that "it's all right if women come to church with a cake in their hands, but if they come with an idea in their heads, they're not welcome."

This group, along with militant nuns and lay organizations, have begun to seize on issues such as the Vatican's recent refusal to accredit a woman diplomat as West Germany's representative at the Vatican.

The seriousness of the new militancy has been demonstrated not only by demonstrations at conventions but by the reactions of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters of Los Angeles and other orders that have left the official church rather than give in to what they regarded as high-handed and arbitrary policies by male celibate superiors.

Bringing about change, however, will not be simple. Even women who gain ordination, for instance, face problems of lower salaries and fewer opportunities for employment than men. Reformers also find it difficult to win support of some militants who believe that church structures need to be radically changed and that putting women into them at this point would be a hollow victory.

Nevertheless the ordination question remains symbolically important as women seek to establish themselves as a persecuted minority group. As the Rev. Joseph H. Fichter, a Jesuit sociologist at Harvard University, put it last week in an article in the lay Catholic journal, *Commonweal*: "We shall witness the complete removal of discrimination in the Catholic Church on the day when there is a pregnant Pope who is either African or Asiatic."

Final Forum Speaker

Theologian Speaks Out on Religious Discrimination

By BETTY WINGROVE

Not only is discrimination against women apparent in the fields of education, employment and law but the Church and religion are also guilty claims Elizabeth Farins, professor of theology, philosophy, physical and health education and member of the board of the National Organization for Women (NOW).



The sixth and final speaker for the annual LaFollette Lecture Series, Dr. Farins explained that the feminine role that has been depicted in Christian dogma in earlier

times is still found today. Women were thought of as impure, were often times connected with the devil and at times accused of being feeble minded. "I could give you many examples from the past about how women were thought of but the important thing is that because of what was said the result was the exclusion of women from the cult of the church."

BECAUSE SUCH deep cultural roots have been carried over "religion cannot be ignored" in the women's liberation movement, remarked the recipient of a Ph.D. in theology from St. Mary's College at the University of Notre Dame. "Religion does influence our culture whether people want to admit it or not. Whether or not religion is relevant or as many people say, irrelevant today, if

it does oppress women then it should be changed. Religion dominated Western culture and Western culture still dominates the world and it cannot be ignored. False religion is oppressive."

Among the worst offenders of sexual discrimination, cited the women's liberation lecturer, are people or men of the church. "The reasons are, first, the celibate, the man who cannot marry, for example the priest. He is not used to dealing with women in a professional way. They are subordinate to him as are the rest of the congregation. Also, men find their masculinity threatened by women."

As a result of some of this thinking "it is extremely difficult for women to take a professional role as a theologian," added Dr. Farins, who personally has encountered some of the discrimination she speaks about.

CLAIMING TO BE quite outspoken on women in religion and "one of the most hated persons by the Catholics," Dr. Farins says "officially the women's liberation movement isn't getting anywhere but we are making waves and dents.

Any social change does take time and we do hope to develop new lifestyles."

Besides lecturing before uni-

versities Dr. Farins is a member of the Illinois Committee on the Status of Women and has served as a consultant

on Cornell University Women Studies and at the Boston Theological Institute on Women's Studies, both in 1970.

Now a resident of Chicago, Dr. Farins has also written extensively on the subject of women's liberation and is founder of the Women's Theological Association, the Ecumenical Task Force on Women and Religion and the Women's Coalition for Dialogue with American Bishops.



DR. ELIZABETH FARIANS

Women and the Church

Before you take a pulpit, Ms., beware: It'll be hard

By DIANE ZIMMERMAN

Second of a series

Dr. Elizabeth Farians, a Roman Catholic laywoman, is a theologian and a feminist. Like the proverbial square peg and round hole, her church and Dr. Farians have not meshed too well.

Last spring she was dismissed from the faculty of Loyola University in Chicago, allegedly for speaking publicly in favor of abortion.

"Which I wasn't," she reports. From Dr. Farians' point of view, the real problem was that she was talking in class about women's rights, family life and birth control. So were some faculty men, but for a woman to do it? That, she contends, was what was found "intolerable." The case is now in the hands of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and HEW, she says, has ruled three times that she was discriminated against on the basis of her sex.

Finally, she got her dinner

The unfortunate fracas at Loyola was not the first face-off between Dr. Farians (who is now a consultant setting up a Women's Institute for Boston Theological Institute) and her church. In June, 1968, she was the first woman to attend the annual meeting of the Catholic Theological Society of America, of which she was a member. Yet when she attempted to attend a buffet dinner for the society, an irate priest vowed to have her forcibly ejected.

Although she finally got her dinner, Dr. Farians' experience is symptomatic of what happens to women who want to take an active role in church affairs.

Women theologians, for example, are a good bit less marketable than their male colleagues. Dr. Letty Russell, a Presbyterian minister and theologian who holds honors degrees from Harvard Divinity School and Union Seminary, didn't get a single job offer from a seminary when she completed her doctorate in 1969.

Union itself, which has been generally liberal in its admission and treatment of women students, still has only three full-time women faculty members out of 40—none of them tenured.

Ordained women generally have circumscribed job opportunities: poor rural parishes, slots as assistant ministers, youth work or an occasional chaplaincy. Many never get a church job at all. Ordination for women can be a prelude to disillusionment with the organized church.

The Rev. Tilda Norberg, 30, is a United Church of Christ minister who entered Union Seminary in 1963. "At that point," says the long-haired, informal Ms. Norberg, "people were saying there was a crying need for people in the helping professions. The ministry was one of them, and I thought I was a natural for it."

She was, but that didn't seem to matter. She couldn't get an urban church—her first choice—and the initial job offered her, six months after graduation, was a youth ministry for two Staten Island churches at \$100 a month. She soon moved on to a job with a church-sponsored community improvement organization.

Challenged assumptions

Then, Ms. Norberg and her husband, Methodist minister George McClain, decided to look for a church which would accept them as co-pastors for one salary. "The idea didn't catch on," she admits. "One church said it would take us, but for \$4,500 a year, and we couldn't live on that."

As a result, Ms. Norberg now works as a Gestalt therapist and as co-leader of the United Church's Task Force on Women, while McClain serves on the Staten Island Peace Coalition. And they share a rambling white frame house with five other adults and three children. The commune members, although religiously oriented, do not relate for the most part to any formal church.

"I guess you'd say 'though,'" she muses, "that we all stand with one foot in each camp, because we're not at the point yet where we think the church is hopeless."

Tilda Norberg's experience has not been unique. And a great part of the trouble is that women ministers challenge in a more direct way than women

When theologian Elizabeth Farians went to a dinner for the Catholic Theological Society, an irate priest tried to bounce her. Traditions of the ages change slowly, but women are stepping up the pressure.



NEWS photos by Bill Stahl and Richard Corkery

Rabbis Abraham Gross and David B. Hollander (top of page, left and right) take an apprehensive view of women's lib movement. But many young women, Jewish and Christian—such as the group below at Union Theological Seminary—are demanding equal opportunity before God as well as before the law.

in other professions the common assumptions about female roles.

As Ellen Kirby, a women's lib activist in the United Methodist's Board of Missions, puts it, the religiously sanctified ideal of the home is where "daddy makes the money and mommy stays home and takes care of the kids. Women as ministers really throw this picture out of whack," says Ms. Kirby, "because the minister's family is supposed to be the model for the Christian family." And, she adds wryly, "People have certain assumptions about ministers—that they should have wives, for instance." The free labor of the minister's wife in a parish has traditionally been as taken for granted as the prize in a box of Cracker Jacks.

Therefore, when a woman minister is married and has children, she is subject to criticism. "I've had groups of women attack me verbally," admits Rev. Patricia Kepler, full-time staffer for the United Presbyterian Church Task Force on Women and mother of three, "for what I'm doing. They say that my children will grow up to be juvenile delinquents—or already are. They have long hair," she laughs, "and that helps."

Cultural assumptions about women can make even the process of ordination itself more difficult for them than it is for men. A Methodist woman in the Midwest who has come before the board that must approve her ordination three times now for questioning, reports that she's been asked questions like: "How do you plan to combine your role as a wife with that of minister?" "What does your husband think of this?" "What will happen when you have kids?" Not once has anyone thought to ask her about her theology.

Lonely pioneering

Women seminarians are beginning to anticipate these problems, and they are developing their strategies. "I think women have to go on the attack about this, take the issue off the base of their personal life, and put it on the level of their qualifications," says Emily Hewitt, 27, an Episcopalian doctoral candidate at Union. When Ms. Hewitt prepared her resume, she pointedly left out any reference to her marital status.

Women in seminaries are also working for reform in organizations like the Boston Women's Institute or in informal caucuses.

Because there are increasing numbers of women in many seminaries (129 out of 538 at Union), they can not only nudge the schools into policy

changes, but can offer each other support and companionship.

In Reform Judaism, however, women students are still a rarity, and pioneering can be a lonely business. Michal Seserman, 25, is a second-year rabbinical student, the only woman so enrolled at the New York branch of Hebrew Union College, although two others are in the cantorial program.

Resentful men

"At the beginning," recalls the dark-haired, pretty Miss Seserman, "things were very difficult. The men reacted to me as a representative of all womankind, and the jokes used to fly left and right—things like whether we were going to have pink prayer books." The joking has long since stopped, probably because faculty and students alike recognized Miss Seserman's dedication. But many men still resent the publicity she has gotten.

She admits that "anything out of my lips is received by the press like pearls of wisdom. But certain types of publicity are necessary—something has to make people aware that there are women rabbis. If people are going to accept the idea, they have to know about it and have time to think it over."

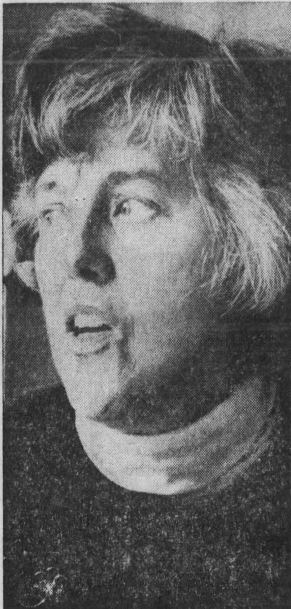
What bothers her most, therefore, is not the glare of the media but her social isolation. Her study and work schedules make it difficult for her to see friends outside the seminary. "I wouldn't be adverse to female companionship sometimes," she says wistfully.

Despite the multiple difficulties, women are being ordained, and are winning more allies, sometimes among open-minded male colleagues.

Perhaps these men will help dispel antifeminist stereotypes in their own ministries. Beverly Harrison, a faculty member at Union, is hopeful: "It is absolutely critical," she stresses, "for men in their seminary time to experience a different kind of man-woman relationship than has been expressed in their former church experience. I think that's happening. For the first time, in these past couple of years, it's been hard for men studying here to be oblivious to what's going on."

Still, times and mores in the church change more slowly than they do in society at large, and it would be hard to argue with Dr. Russell when she says, "I wouldn't advise any women today to enter seminary and be ordained unless they don't care about the fact that it is going to cost a lot."

Next: The challenge to authority



Staff Photos—George Clark

TWO CATHOLIC THEOLOGIANs TAKE PART IN EMORY SYMPOSIUM
L-R: Dr. Elizabeth Farians and Dr. Jane Furlong Cahill

BASIC CHANGES URGED

2 Female Theologians Blast Catholic Church

By FARNUM GRAY
 Constitution Religion Writer

Two female Catholic theologians—expressing powerful disgust with their church hierarchy—said at Emory last week that sexism in the church is so profound that, for the church to be acceptable to women, fundamental changes would have to be made.

Dr. Elizabeth Farians and Dr. Jane Furlong Cahill said the church would have to change its entire attitude toward sex—"exorcise the sexual demon," in Dr. Farians' phrase. "The church has a grave fear of sex," Dr. Cahill said. "The very advocacy of celibacy for priests is an indication of our enormous sexual neurosis." Because of the fear of sex, religious leaders have portrayed women as "the gateway to hell," she said.

Belief that everything in the Bible is divinely inspired and true is also an insufferable barrier to women, Dr. Farians said, because the Bible is rife with sexist statements.

And, she added, "the divinity of Jesus would have to go.

How can women gain an image of themselves as whole, worthy beings when God is seen to be male and all the divine symbols are male?"

Nevertheless, they expressed admiration for Jesus Christ, saying that he had a favorable record of following feminist policies. The Catholic hierarchy, they charged, has "covered up" Christ's feminist beliefs and "rewritten church history" to obscure the "profoundly egalitarian view of women" among early Christians.

Dr. Farians said the divinity of Jesus might be acceptable without slighting women only if there also were recognition of God in the person of one or more women. In one of her talks last week, she said, "A Second Coming is promised because the First Coming somehow is incomplete. God became man but the manifestation was in the form of the male (or so it is understood). Thus, it was incomplete. The Second Coming may well be the Coming of Woman."

The two theologians were a part of last week's symposium titled, *Female and Male in a Changing Society: Symbol of Oppression Motif of Hope*. The symposium was sponsored by Candler School of Theology and the Atlanta Theological Association.

Both women got their doctorates in theology from St. Mary's in Notre Dame, Ind.

Dr. Farians has taught at a number of colleges and universities, the last of which was Loyola University, a Catholic institution in Chicago, which she left following disputes related to her challenge of the church hierarchy.

She is now a consultant, lecturer and writer on women's affairs, institutional sexism and theology. She heads the National Organization for Women's Ecumenical Task Force on Women and Religion, which she founded.

Dr. Cahill has been on the faculty at two colleges and now is a lecturer. She has lectured frequently at colleges in Philadelphia, and she was the only theologian to testify before the Pennsylvania legislature when it was considering the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

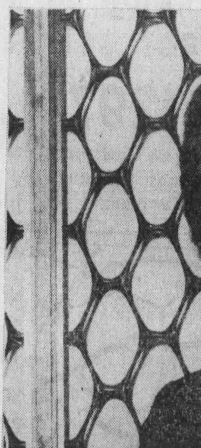
She became a controversial figure in Pennsylvania Cardinal John C. Krole on the ERA, which he opposed.

She now lives in Athens with her husband and five daughters.

When asked why they continue as members of the Catholic Church, of which they often spoke with ridicule or anger, they seemed hard-pressed to explain.

Dr. Cahill said that in spite of everything it was her church. She made it clear that her criticisms of it largely apply to other Christian denominations and Judaism, as well.

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