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**WHY DO SO FEW YOUNG MALES OF ST VINCENT AND
THE GRENADINES EMBRACE CHRISTIANITY?**

By

HADYN MARSHALL

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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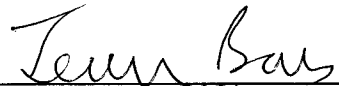
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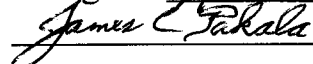
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine how young Vincentian males view manhood and Christianity in order to understand why they may have difficulty becoming Christians. The study utilized a qualitative design involving semi-structured interviews with fifteen male students of St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College. The research questions were designed to elicit views on manhood, Christianity, and the impact of becoming a Christian on a male. The literature review focused on attempts to explain the relative lack of men in the church and on material with particular relevance to the Caribbean. Accordingly, the material was organized under three headings: The Feminization thesis, Responses to the Feminization Thesis, and The Construction of Caribbean Masculinity.

Varying views were expressed as regards what constitutes a real man. A composite description of a real man, according to the respondents, is one who is strong, assertive, caring, calmly confident, hospitable, wise, loyal, self-reliant, not given to displays of emotion indicating distress, and able to attract women.

Positive views of Christianity were that it is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; that it gives a sense of belonging; that it upholds sound moral values; and that it has a worldwide appeal. Pastors were viewed positively as hospitable, moral, and skilled in communicating the Christian message. Christianity was viewed negatively as too restrictive, having unattainable standards, hypocritical, bigoted, and prone to divisiveness. A minority saw pastors as con men and leaders who do not set a good example.

Most respondents saw major changes taking place their lives if they became Christians, with a larger number focusing on new obligations/restrictions and a smaller number on new benefits. Respondents were more or less evenly divided between encouragement and caution in their reaction to a best friend's decision to become a Christian. Finally, they claimed that young men were reluctant to become Christians because they saw negative consequences such as being linked to the female world; loss of freedom to do what they really like to do, e.g., engage in premarital sex; and loss of friends, especially through refusal to participate in gang activities.

The study concluded that the most significant factors contributing to the difficulty young males have in becoming Christians seem to be those involving a clash between Christianity and culturally constructed views of manhood. Engaging in premarital sex and participating in gang activities are both marks of manhood in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and both are incompatible with Christianity. A young male who is presented with the claims of Christianity, therefore, has an extremely difficult choice to make. In order to be a Christian, he has to surrender his manhood, as defined by society. The fact that some young men do become Christians means that it is not impossible. The fact that many do not strongly suggests that it is difficult. In comparison with a young female who is also considering becoming a Christian, a young male has one additional hurdle to clear: the apparent loss of, or inability to establish, his manhood. This may help explain why fewer young males than young females tend to identify with Christianity.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

“I will send the madam and the children. You see, women and children go to church and we, the men, go to the bar.” These words, uttered by a Jamaican man in response to an invitation to an evangelistic crusade, reflect a problem that most, if not all, Jamaican pastors face. For, as is commonly known, females outnumber males significantly within the churches of Jamaica. In a study entitled “Urban Life in Kingston, Jamaica,” sociologist Diane Austin claims that membership in Jamaican Pentecostal churches is overwhelmingly female, even though the leadership is male. In support of her claim, she references a specific Pentecostal church, in which there are only eighteen males to every fifty-six females.¹ In the same publication, she asserts that, in general, the women of the community under study tend to be involved in religious activities, while the men gather instead on the playing fields or at the bars.²

Barry Chevannes, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica seems to support Austin’s claims in his description of life in “Motown,” a community situated in western Kingston: “This is early Sunday afternoon... There is a basketball game and a football match in progress, boys standing at gates talking to girls, nicely dressed women and girls (no men) coming

¹ Diane Austin, *Urban Life in Kingston, Jamaica* (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publications, 1984), 105.

² *Ibid.*, 119.

from or going to church.”³ Although Chevannes is not writing about religion per se, he seems to take great pains to point out that there are no men among those going to or coming from church. Given this kind of evidence, it is not surprising that a Sociology lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica seemed quite confident telling a group of visiting students from the Dominican Republic that only women and children go to church in Jamaica.

Based on my experience as a traveling evangelist operating in St. Vincent, the Grenadines, and the wider English-speaking Caribbean, I think it safe to say that the situation in these places is similar to that which exists in Jamaica: the ratio of males to females in the church is astounding. Sunday is arguably the biggest day for sports in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. As I drive to church on Sundays, I pass the young men in large numbers at the various playing fields throughout the country. By contrast, I see lots of women going to, or coming from, church. In over twenty years of ministry, I can think of only one congregation, a Plymouth Brethren congregation in a rural area of the Windward Islands, where I encountered more males than females at a service. When I inquired about the cause of this unusual situation, I was informed that there had been an exodus of females from that particular church because of conflict with the leaders, who were generally perceived to be extremely authoritarian and anti-women.

As Caribbean pastors, we can resign ourselves to the high ratio of females to males as simply a reflection of the sociological view that females tend to be more

³ Barry Chevannes, *Learning to Be a Man* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), 126.

religious than males,⁴ or we can explore the issue more deeply, with the hope of finding a better way to reach and minister to men. To adopt the first option is to assume a defeatist stance. It is to say that nothing will ever change. To adopt the first option also means operating in disobedience, since the church has a responsibility to seek to reach all people with the gospel. I find the second option more attractive since, at the very least, it opens the door to the possibility of making a difference.

In 1982, as a budding evangelist and young student of Mass Communications at the University of the West Indies, Mona, I took a step toward making a difference, composing a paper entitled “Where are the Men?” In that paper, I questioned whether the preaching of a “gentle Jesus, meek and mild” was helping to keep men away from the church. In an attempt to show that Jesus was not a weak or “soft” person, I focused on his denunciation of the Pharisees in Matthew 23; his driving of the traders from the temple, using a whip of cords (John 2: 13-16); and his refusal of the stupefying drink as he hung on the cross (Matthew 27: 34). I sought publication assistance from a Christian journalist who worked for *The Daily Gleaner*, but he rejected the article, claiming that it posed a problem but did not really offer a solution. He seemed to have missed, or dismissed, my suggestion that the content and tone of the Caribbean church’s preaching be altered to show that Jesus was nothing like the artists’ renditions of him that are popular in the Western World, renditions which colonization and, more latterly, cultural penetration, have also introduced to us in the Caribbean.

⁴ Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent* (Dallas, Texas: Spence Publishing Company, 1999), 9, quoting Charles S. Prebish, “Religion and Sport: Convergence or Identity” in *Religion and Sport: The Meeting of Sacred and Profane*, ed. Charles S. Prebish. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1993).

Despite the aforementioned setback, my interest in the topic has never really disappeared. Indeed, it cannot, as I am confronted with the issue daily, working within a denomination⁵ that strongly advocates a restricted role for women in ministry but which, sometimes, does not have enough men to function effectively. I have witnessed how the shortage of men can often lead to frustration, especially among spiritually alert professional women, who are sometimes forced to play a secondary role in the church, while less competent men assume leadership. This study, then, represents another stage in my consideration of this burning issue.

Before I go any further, however, I need to note the attempts that have been made in the past to address this gender imbalance. As far back as 1895, Charles Queen, writing in the *United Brethren Review*, sought to account for the relative lack of men in the churches. He cites men's love for money, business interests, alcohol consumption and illicit sex as some of the things that keep men away from church and calls for preaching that focuses on Christ as the magnet who will draw men to himself.⁶ In the early 1900s arose The Men and Religion Forward Movement, which sought to reach men by adopting a businesslike approach to Christianity, in which Jesus Christ was presented as a successful businessman. This movement had some success, as evidenced by the fact that most churches saw an increase in male membership during the period in which the movement held sway.⁷ In more recent times, Promise Keepers has arisen. This evangelical movement targets married men,

⁵ Gospel Halls of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; an offshoot of the Plymouth Brethren.

⁶ Charles N. Queen, "Why So Few Men in the Churches," in *United Brethren Review* 6 No. 4 (October, 1895), 311-320.

⁷ Leon J. Podles, *The Church Impotent* (Dallas, Texas: Spence Publishing, 1999), 158-161.

seeking to help them fulfill their responsibilities as husbands and fathers.⁸ These are just some of the attempts to address the issue that I have come across in the literature. However, although successes may have been achieved in the past, and though some may be occurring today, the church still suffers from a relative lack of male involvement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The common understanding that females significantly outnumber males in churches in St. Vincent and the Grenadines challenges pastors and other Christian workers on the island to seek to understand what is hindering males from embracing Christianity. Are females simply more religious than males, or are there special problems males have with Christianity purely because they are males? The study will focus on a segment of the male population, namely, young, unmarried males. The available literature suggests that this is a particularly difficult group to convert to Christianity.⁹ My experience as a visiting minister at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College seems to support this idea. The students who attend the Bible studies I conduct are, generally, overwhelmingly female. There have been days when I have been happy just to see one other male in the room. Therefore, out of personal interest, as well as for reasons of practicality, I have chosen to narrow the focus of the study to male students at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College. I am interested in finding out why they do not seem as ready as their female counterparts to identify publicly with Christianity.

⁸ Ibid., 162.

⁹ Ibid.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Can a young male at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College be a real man and a Christian at the same time? The answer to this question may depend on how one defines a real man and how one defines Christianity. If a young man can see a clash between what he perceives to be the essence of manhood and what he perceives to be the essence of Christianity, then one can expect the young man in question to have some difficulty in embracing Christianity. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to examine how young males at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College view both manhood and Christianity, and to see if these views can help clarify the reasons for their apparent rejection of Christianity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following primary research questions will be used to generate the data for the study:

1. What do young males at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College think manhood entails?
2. What do young males at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College think Christianity entails?
3. What do young males at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College think will be the impact on a man if he becomes a Christian?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In my search for literature on the relative lack of men in the church, I have come across a number of studies that seek to offer an explanation of the phenomenon. These studies have all focused on the developed, Western world, particularly the

United States of America. In all my searching, I have not been able to find a study addressing the issue of the lack of men in the church in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. While pastors and other Christian workers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines may learn from experiences in other contexts, there is a need to study the Vincentian situation in order to be able to minister more effectively in that setting. Additionally, I am not aware of any study that focuses on young, unmarried males. Understanding the forces that work to hinder young, unmarried males from embracing Christianity can help the church in devising programs to reach them. Implementing an outreach program to young, unmarried males without a proper understanding of the issues they face will be like firing shots in the dark, hoping to hit something. This study is a small step towards helping pastors and other Christian workers to gain the required understanding.

At the national level in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, there is concern about male underachievement in high school education. This phenomenon has been recorded by Odette Parry, research fellow at the Research Unit in Health and Behavioral Change at the University of Edinburgh Medical School in Scotland, whose research focuses on Jamaica, Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Based on data from a 1993 World Bank study, Parry has this to say: "In the developing world these trends in education are equally apparent. Caribbean females are largely outperforming their male peers. Females do better than males at both primary and secondary levels of schooling."¹⁰ Parry feels that the relative under-performance of male students, as compared with female students, has its roots in the

¹⁰ Odette Parry, *Male Underachievement in High School Education* (Kingston, Jamaica: Canoe Press, 2000), 6.

construction of male sex/gender identity in the Caribbean. According to her, attitudes toward education are being informed by a male sex/gender identity that is extremely homophobic. Anything that can be remotely construed as in any way female, feminine or effeminate is violently rejected. Unfortunately, Parry asserts, education has come to be associated with females, so a boy who studies hard is likely to be dismissed as a sissy or a nerd.¹¹

Whatever the reason for this under-performance, there is little doubt that it has contributed significantly to the development of the popular view that young males in Vincentian society are in crisis. Many fear that if young men do not do well at school, their chances of securing decent jobs will be greatly reduced, and this will make them more likely to make a living through involvement in violent crime, drug dealing, or other socially destructive behaviors. Just about everybody, except perhaps the young men themselves, seems to think that something is radically wrong with young males in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

From a spiritual perspective, one could argue that the under-representation of young males in churches in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is an even more serious problem than underachievement in education. Just as people today seem to take for granted that boys will not perform as well as girls at school, it seems also to be taken for granted that boys will not be as interested in Christianity as girls. If you told a group of people that your teenage daughters, but not your sons, were attending church, probably nobody would bat an eyelid. However, if you told that same group that your teenage sons were going to church but your daughters were not, you would probably witness some jaw-dropping and be subjected to a barrage of questions. This

¹¹ Ibid., 56-57.

reality means that young males are at an even greater risk than that to which they are exposed because of their under-performance in education. It means that society seems to have resigned itself to a situation which, in the final analysis, means that a disproportionately large number of young men are not exposed to the moral and spiritual training Christianity has to offer. Popular experience suggests that young Christian males are less likely than their non-Christian counterparts to be involved in violent crime, drug abuse, risky sexual behavior, and other harmful activities.

Unfortunately, authorities do not often highlight this when they hold meetings to discuss crime and other forms of undesirable behavior. It would seem that undesirable forms of behavior are more often than not regarded purely as social problems, so solutions are sought from disciplines such as sociology and economics. However, in my view, there is a spiritual dimension to these problems that Vincentian society will ignore to its own peril. Young men need moral and spiritual training to assist them in becoming more productive members of society. If this study can help the church to be more effective in reaching young men for Christ, the possibility is increased for the nation to see both improved productivity and some reduction in crime and other antisocial behaviors among young men.

Finally, at the personal level, this study is significant because I have a ministry at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College. From time to time, I conduct Bible studies and minister at special services organized by their Inter-Schools Christian Fellowship. These activities, though geared mainly to Christians, are sometimes attended by non-Christians. As a minister, I see it as my responsibility to gain as much insight as possible into the minds of the non-Christian male students

in order to be able to communicate the gospel with greater sensitivity. This, I hope, will lead to an increasingly effective ministry to male students at the college.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Some of the key terms of this study may be unfamiliar to readers, while other terms may have many meanings, depending on their contexts. Therefore, to reduce the chances of misunderstanding, this study's most crucial terms will be defined as follows:

1. **Young-** Between 15 and 21 years of age, the normal age-range for students at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College. Because this institution is still somewhat of a high school, and not a college in the true sense of the word, the students discussed in this study will all be unmarried.
2. **Christianity-** An evangelical variety of the religion that traces its origins to Jesus Christ, which stresses, among other things, conversion, personal holiness, the authority of Scripture, and the literal return of Christ. This is how the average Vincentian defines Christianity. It is not uncommon in St. Vincent for members of mainline Protestant denominations to say that they are not Christians.
3. **Vincentian** – A national of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; or, pertaining to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.
4. **Christian** – A person who claims a “born again” experience and professes adherence to the tenets of Christianity as defined in the study.
5. **Non-Christian** – A person who makes no claim of being a Christian, as defined in the study.

6. **Windward Islands** – A group of four island nations, all former British colonies, located in the southern part of the Caribbean archipelago, north of Trinidad. Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Grenada make up the Windward Islands.
7. **St. Vincent and the Grenadines** - A former British colony, now an independent multi-island nation in the Windward Islands, south of St. Lucia, north of Grenada and west of Barbados.
8. **Jamaica** - A former British colony, now an independent island nation in the northern part of the Caribbean archipelago, southeast of Cuba.
9. **Western World** – Western Europe, Great Britain and North America.
10. **Manhood** – The status achieved by meeting society's expectations as to what is appropriate for an adult male.
11. **Male Underachievement** – The relatively poor performance of male students, when compared with female students.

Having defined the crucial terms, we can now move forward in our quest to better understand why young males at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines may find it difficult to embrace Christianity. In the next chapter, we will do a review of all available literature that has any bearing on the subject of the study. In Chapter Three will be a description of the methodology used in carrying out the study, and in Chapter Four, a presentation of the findings of the study. The final chapter will include the conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for additional research.

CHAPTER TWO: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The available literature related to the topic of study can be divided into three areas: literature which focuses on the feminization of the Western church, literature which responds to the feminization thesis, and literature which focuses on the construction of masculinity in the Caribbean. These three areas will be explored in order to establish the necessary background to the study. Before looking at the literature, however, it is necessary to set out the theological framework within which the literature will be reviewed and the study will be conducted. While every effort will be made to represent all views fairly, I think it only fair that the reader know the author's personal perspective on the issues being examined.

First of all, this study assumes that men are called by God to spiritual leadership. According to the account of the Creation in the second chapter of Genesis, Adam was created first, and then Eve was created to support him in his God-given responsibilities.¹² Paul develops this idea in I Timothy as he argues for a restricted role for women in the teaching ministry of the church.¹³ There is little room for dismissal of this restriction as a mere product of Paul's culture, since he discusses it in terms of the Creation and the Fall of Man ("the Fall"). In addition, it can be shown that there is a pattern of male spiritual leadership in the Bible. The Old Testament

¹² Genesis 2:15-19.

¹³ I Timothy 2: 11-15.

priests were all male,¹⁴ and the Lord Jesus chose twelve men to be apostles.¹⁵ All of this seems to point to male responsibility for spiritual leadership in the public sphere.

It can also be argued from Scripture that male spiritual leadership is expected in the home. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, the husband is described as “the head of the wife.”¹⁶ Indeed, male headship can be traced back to Adam. From the account of the Fall in Genesis 3, it is clear that it was the woman who was deceived by the serpent and became the first to sin. However when the entrance of sin into the world is discussed in the Bible, Adam is held responsible. It would seem from this that the ultimate responsibility for the spiritual well-being of the family lies with the man. This strongly suggests that men ought to play a leading role in the rearing of children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”¹⁷

Insofar as men are expected to be spiritual leaders, their relative absence from the church takes on greater significance. It means, at the very least, there will be a number of homes in which there is no Christian father to provide spiritual leadership. The importance of the father as spiritual leader has been highlighted by Robbie Low, Vicar of St. Peter’s, Bushey Heath, England. Using data from a census conducted in Switzerland, he concludes that it is the church attendance of the father, and not that of the mother, that has greatest weight in determining whether children attend church when they grow up.¹⁸ Although this may not necessarily apply to all countries and all situations, it does point to the power of the example of a Christian father.

¹⁴ Leviticus 21.

¹⁵ Matthew 10:1-4.

¹⁶ Ephesians 5:23.

¹⁷ Ephesians 6:4.

¹⁸ Robbie Low, “The Truth About Men and Church, *Touchstone Archives* (June 2003) <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/print.php?id=16-05-024-v>

The second assumption is that there is a definite place for young men in God's service. There is a tendency in Vincentian society to think that serving God is for older people. Even some older people are guilty of discouraging young people who want to serve God by telling them that they are too young. However, as the biblical record shows, young men have distinguished themselves in God's service.

From the Old Testament, one can highlight the example of Joseph, who served with distinction as a slave/steward in the house of Potiphar, the Egyptian. Because of his relationship with God, Joseph resisted the sexual advances of his master's wife, thereby demonstrating that a young man, in a right relationship with God, can maintain sexual purity.¹⁹ In addition, David, as a teenager, was willing to fight a giant to defend the honor of the Lord.²⁰ At the age of sixteen, Josiah led Judah's last great revival before the Babylonian captivity.²¹

The New Testament shows us Jesus going about his Father's business at the tender age of twelve.²² There is also the example of Timothy, who was recruited by the Apostle Paul as a young man.²³ Finally, one can note the appeal to young men in I John. The writer focuses on their strength and commitment to the word of God, which enabled them to overcome obstacles.²⁴

This study focused on a group of people who, by virtue of their strength, enthusiasm and creativity, have the potential to make a unique contribution to the body of Christ. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon challenges the reader to remember the

¹⁹ Genesis 39: 1-9.

²⁰ I Samuel 17: 26-47.

²¹ II Chronicles 34: 1-33.

²² Luke 2: 49.

²³ Acts 16: 1-3.

²⁴ I John 2: 14.

creator in one's youth.²⁵ It is important to understand why young Vincentian males struggle to respond positively to that call.

The third important theological assumption underlying the study is that human beings are fallen creatures. The Bible describes in detail how the original human beings disobeyed their creator and were driven out of paradise.²⁶ One of the consequences of the fall from the original state of bliss is that the human understanding is "darkened."²⁷ This makes it possible for human beings to have flawed views on any number of issues, including how masculinity is defined.

Stuart Scott, Associate Professor of Biblical Counseling at The Master's College in Santa Clarita, California, is convinced that human concepts of masculinity have been affected by the fall. He says:

Depraved ideas about what is manly have affected men and women negatively through the ages. In the ancient world, there was everything from mild mistreatment of women to full-scale barbarism. In the early Greek culture, "real men" looked down on their wives as mere child bearers and housekeepers. They also did not allow them at the dinner table or in any assembly.²⁸

Turning his attention to the modern era, Scott comments, "In reality, following what seems right about masculinity is doing great damage to men's lives. Young men are floundering and grasping at wrong ways to express their manhood."²⁹

In light of the foregoing, one can assert that any definition of masculinity put forward by humans needs to be tested by Holy Scripture before it is accepted. Any view of masculinity that is not true to Scripture must be rejected, regardless of how

²⁵ Ecclesiastes 12: 1.

²⁶ Genesis 3:1-24.

²⁷ Ephesians 4:18.

²⁸ Stuart Scott, "Profiling Christian Masculinity," 2004, page number unavailable. www.theresurgence.com

²⁹ Ibid.

much it resonates with men in a particular culture. Christianity will inevitably clash at some point with a culture that is constructed by fallen human beings.³⁰

Finally, this study was conducted under the assumption that salvation is by grace through faith.³¹ While pastors and other Christian workers may seek to understand the problems young men face, and try to remove unnecessary barriers to faith where possible, it is ultimately God who must move in the hearts of young men to bring them to Christ. It may seem trite to make a distinction between attending church and being a Christian. However, this distinction needs to be made because the emphasis in some parts of the literature seems to be on getting more men to attend church. Church attendance is but one aspect of the Christian walk. Furthermore, it is possible through human ingenuity to come up with ways to get more men to attend church. However it is not human ingenuity that will guarantee the salvation of men. There has to be a strong spiritual dimension to any effort to reach men. Therefore, any method designed to make the church more “man-friendly” is to be rejected if it involves a watering down, or worse, a distortion of the Christian message.

The Feminization of the Church

The first body of literature we shall examine has as its common theme the idea that Western church has become feminized. Weldon M. Hardenbrook, Senior Pastor of St. Paul’s Evangelical Orthodox Church in Ben Lomond, California, describes feminization as “...a conditioning process in modern American culture in which men have been trained to respond to people and situations in ways that are more akin to historical female behavior patterns than they are to historical male behavior

³⁰ John 15:18-20.

³¹ Ephesians 2:8-9.

patterns.”³² Taking a historical approach to the issue, Hardenbrook claims that there is a discernible process through which the American church has become feminized.

The first step in the process was the American Revolution. Hardenbrook quotes Peter Stearns in support of his claim that men were the most numerous churchgoers in seventeenth century New England.³³ However, according to him, the big change came with the American Revolution, which “...gave birth to a spirit that would ultimately be the undoing of the American male, the spirit of independence.”³⁴ He describes the effect of this new spirit as follows:

Independence was all but enshrined as a national virtue. As it spilled over into economic, religious, and domestic relationships, it began to profoundly alter our concept of manhood. The same bell that tolled for political liberty in the colonies rang out a death knell for American fatherhood.³⁵

He then asserts that the men who emerged as heroes during this period, eclipsing the colonial family man, were men whose performance in family life was far from exemplary.³⁶

The second step in the feminizing process, according to Hardenbrook, was the Industrial Revolution. He claims that the Industrial Revolution had the effect of moving the man from the farm to the factory, thereby eroding his control over his sons, who no longer depended on him to pass on land to them. This release of young people from all forms of patriarchal and communal control, he claims, inflicted a mortal injury on American fatherhood.³⁷

³² Weldon M. Hardenbrook, *Missing from Action* (Ben Lomond, California: Conciliar Press, 1996), 19.

³³ Ibid, 77.

³⁴ Ibid, 95.

³⁵ Ibid, 96.

³⁶ Ibid, 97.

The third step in the process was the removal of religion from public life through the disestablishment of the church. Hardenbrook says: "When the state pulled the rug out from under the church, men no longer identified being Christian with being masculine...men felt personally inhibited from discussing theology in the market place. Christian commitment was thoroughly divorced from masculinity."³⁸ The fact that it was no longer manly to talk about religion, Hardenbrook asserts, led to a change in the view of God, with American Christianity focusing "almost exclusively on a feminized and sentimental Jesus."³⁹

Hardenbrook's fourth step in the feminization process was the second Great Awakening. He claims that women were especially attracted to revivalism because it provided, among other things, a new place for them to employ their energies after their displacement from family industries by the Industrial Revolution.⁴⁰ The preaching style of the leader, Charles Grandison Finney, is also seen as a factor in drawing women to revivalism. Hardenbrook says: "Rather than emphasizing manly characteristics, such as courage, aggressiveness and a desire for justice, Finney aimed towards the feelings and emotions of the potential convert. As a result, many more women than men responded to his message of revival."⁴¹ Not only were women more ready than men to respond to revivalism, says Hardenbrook, they were also more willing to assume leadership. He sums up the situation this way: "Women, displaced by the Industrial Revolution and hungry for purpose, picked up, through the vehicle

³⁷ Ibid, 104.

³⁸ Ibid, 107.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 111.

⁴¹ Ibid, 112.

of revivalism, the mantle of headship in the home which had been dropped by men when they left the home and the church for the factory.”⁴²

The final, and perhaps the most telling, stage in the feminization process outlined by Hardenbrook was the rise to ascendancy of Victorianism. He does not mince words in his description of the Victorian period: “This is a critical period of national history from which most American men have never recovered. During the Age of Victoria, roles in crucial areas of social life were dramatically reversed. The Victorian period, by its very name, symbolizes feminine domination.”⁴³ The crucial areas were the home, the school, and the church, from which “men officially excommunicated themselves”⁴⁴ and “sold their patriarchal birthright for a life of banishment on the island of politics and commerce.”⁴⁵ The handing over of the church to women led to an increase in female membership and guaranteed its feminization. Hardenbrook concludes as follows: “Devotion was articulated in increasingly sentimental ways. Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, was addressed as ‘my dear sweet Jesus,’ a tone reflected in so many Protestant hymns today.”⁴⁶

In summary, Hardenbrook’s contention is that new attitudes arising from America’s Declaration of Independence, social changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution, the separation of church and state, the second Great Awakening, and the rise of Victorianism have all contributed to the creation of the feminized church that exists in America today. We shall now go on to look at another explanation of the feminization of the church.

⁴² Ibid, 116.

⁴³ Ibid, 119.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 120.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Dr. Leon Podles, Contributing Editor of *Touchstone*, shares Hardenbrook's view that the American church (as part of the Western church) has become feminized. However, he offers a different set of reasons for why this has happened. For example, he does not give as much credit as Hardenbrook does to the American Revolution, claiming that interest in religion was weak among men from very early in colonial America. He supports his claim by quoting Richard D. Shields, showing that most American Congregationalist churches were dominated by women, even in places where males outnumbered females in the general population.⁴⁷ The feminization of the Western Church, according to Podles, has its origin in medieval times and is linked to the bridal mysticism of Bernard of Clairvaux and Scholastic theories of masculinity and femininity. Bernard of Clairvaux is credited with popularizing an interpretation of the Song of Songs, traceable to Origen, in which the relationship of the individual soul to God is likened to that of a bride and a heavenly bridegroom.⁴⁸ This language, says Podles, was highly attractive to women and facilitated a massive influx of women into religious life.⁴⁹

The second factor, according to Podles, was the Scholastic acceptance of Aristotelian theories of masculinity and femininity. Aristotle, who tended to think of reality in terms of polar opposites, placed the male on the side of form and the female on the side of matter. Though this made the woman inferior in the realm of nature, the Scholastics believed that this gave her an advantage in the realm of grace. Because the woman, as matter, was more like malleable raw material, and the man, as form,

⁴⁶ Ibid, 129-130.

⁴⁷ Podles, 1999, 18, quoting Richard d. Shields, "The Feminization Of American Congregationalism 1730-1835," *American Quarterly* 33 (Spring 1981), 46-62.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 104.

was naturally resistant to alteration, she is more open to the formation of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰ This view of the woman as being more naturally receptive to God, according to Podles, provided a philosophical and theological explanation for women's greater devotion to Christianity and marked the Middle Ages as the period of the "rise of a new, feminized piety."⁵¹

Whatever their differences about the causes, Podles and Hardenbrook agree on one thing: the Western church has become feminized. The next section will explore the literature on the consequences of this feminization.

Consequences of Feminization

Those who are alarmed at what they call the feminization of the church claim that it has several negative consequences. The first, and the one which concerns us most, given the focus of the study, is the relative absence of men. Several reasons for this are advanced in the literature.

Absence of Men in the Church

Leon Podles claims that men have a need to distance themselves from anything regarded as feminine. Taking his cue from Richard Hawley, who describes masculinity as "a trajectory... a journey or a quest,"⁵² Podles argues that masculinity is "always a journey away from something, especially the feminine."⁵³ This, he says, makes men very uncomfortable with the bridal language used to describe a Christian's relationship with God since, in the masculine mind, it makes them either

⁴⁹ Ibid, 108-110.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 111-112.

⁵¹ Ibid, 112.

⁵² Richard Hawley, *Boys will Be Men: Masculinity in Troubled Times* (Middlebury, Vermont: Paul S. Erickson, 1993), 17.

⁵³ Podles, 1999, 45.

women or homosexuals.⁵⁴ He sums up the problem as follows: “Since normal men reject both homosexuality and femininity as incompatible with the masculinity for which they are always striving, bridal mysticism and the metaphors and attitudes to which it gave rise have placed a major obstacle to men’s participation in the church.”⁵⁵

David Murrow, Director of Church for Men, agrees with Podles that fear of homosexuality can make men avoid a feminized church. He says: “If a man walks into a church and finds himself surrounded by passive or sensitive men, he may become suspicious. Then there’s hand holding...and certain churches are hug-rich environments...A lot of man-to-man hugging can stir fears of homosexuality.”⁵⁶

Murrow also claims that men avoid a feminine church because it does not offer them a challenge. He draws much of his inspiration from John Eldredge, Founder and Director of Ransomed Hearts Ministries, who claims that “in the heart of every man there is a desperate desire for a battle to fight, an adventure to live and a beauty to rescue.”⁵⁷ Murrow says that the feminized church emphasizes feminine values such as safety, stability, preservation, and predictability rather than masculine values such as risk and reward, accomplishment, heroic sacrifice, action, and adventure. He concludes that a man can easily consider the church boring and irrelevant as a result of its failure to reflect the masculine heart.⁵⁸

Murrow’s third reason for the absence of men from a feminized church is that the dominant communication styles are more suited to women than men. Women, he

⁵⁴ Ibid, 119.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ David Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 123

⁵⁷ John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 7.

claims, are stimulated by words, and men are stimulated by images. The church culture is predominantly verbal, with the centerpiece of most Protestant services being a sermon. Murrow asserts that while this is no problem for women, men will have serious problems because of how their brains are wired, and they are likely to find the sermon boring.⁵⁹

Absence of Children in the Church

A second perceived consequence of feminization, and one that is directly related to the first, is the absence of children. Robbie Low is convinced about this. He sums up his findings from the Swiss census:

...if a father does not go to church, no matter how faithful his wife's devotions, only one child in fifty will become a regular worshipper. If a father does go regularly, regardless of the practice of the mother, between two-thirds and three-quarters of their children will become churchgoers.⁶⁰

With the father having such a strong influence on the church attendance of children, Low sees feminization as a serious threat. He says that "the churches are losing men and, if the Swiss figures are correct, are therefore losing children. You cannot feminize the church and keep the men, and you cannot keep the children if you do not keep the men."⁶¹ In short, missing fathers lead to missing children.

Attraction of Men of Doubtful Masculinity

A third consequence of feminization is the attraction to church life of men of doubtful masculinity. Focusing on the leadership, Podles claims that there are too many pastors who are not real men. He recounts a conversation with a mainline Presbyterian pastor, who, on entering seminary, was asked if he was a homosexual by

⁵⁸ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 15-16.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 87-88.

⁶⁰ Low, "The Truth about Men and Church."

a psychiatrist who had looked at his test results. When he replied in the negative, and asked the reason for the question, he was told by the psychiatrist that he had the psychological profile of a homosexual. He was then quickly reassured that all successful ministers in his denomination had the same profile. Podles' conclusion, based on the conversation, is as follows: "The problem, as the minister realized after reading my book, is that pastors too often become pastors because they enjoy working in a feminine world, and they adopt the mental attitudes of women, who are their principal audience. In men, such a profile is effeminate."⁶²

Focusing on the rank and file membership, Murrow claims that a feminized church is attractive to effeminate and homosexual men. He raises the question as to why the church is attractive to such men and offers this explanation of the phenomenon: "Maybe because the church is one of the few institutions in society where there's no pressure to act like a man. In fact, men are encouraged not to. Where else in our society can a man express his feminine side and be applauded for it?"⁶³ Unfortunately, Murrow does not give us any information about the doctrinal position of the churches to which gay men are attracted. This information would have been helpful, given the fact that liberal churches tend to be more accepting of homosexuality, while conservative churches tend to take a strong stand against it, even to the point of being accused of homophobia. Is acceptance the drawing card, or is it the feminine atmosphere? This area invites further investigation.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Leon Podles, "Missing Fathers of the Church," *Touchstone Archives* (Jan/Feb 2001) <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/print.php?id=14-01-026-f>

⁶³ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 73.

Robbie Low is also concerned about the level of masculinity displayed by pastors, particularly those in the Church of England. He blames this on the ministerial selection process and the theological training curriculum, which place a high value on flexibility and sensitivity. These concepts are not bad in themselves, but in a feminized church, they imply spinelessness and compromise. He concludes his evaluation of the training programs as follows: "They are very successful at producing malleable creatures of the institution, unburdened by authenticity or conviction and incapable of leading or challenging. Men, in short, (sic) who would not stand up in a draft."⁶⁴

The Undermining of Christian Fatherhood

The fourth major consequence of the feminization of the church is the undermining of Christian fatherhood. Podles make the obvious, but extremely important point that a man cannot be a Christian father unless he is a Christian first.⁶⁵ If men are driven away from the church, Christian fatherhood must inevitably suffer. Additionally, argues Podles, the role of the man in family life is constantly devalued or ignored in a feminized church. He sees evidence of this in the fact that the role of the father as head of the family is not stressed, and there are priests who boast that they became priests because of their mothers.⁶⁶ In pretty much the same vein as Podles, Robbie Low says: "We are ministering in churches that accepted fatherlessness as a norm, and even an ideal. Emasculated liturgy, gender-free Bibles, and a fatherless flock are increasingly on offer."⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Robbie Low, "The Truth about Men and Church."

⁶⁵ Podles, "Missing Fathers of the Church."

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Robbie Low, "The Truth about Men and Church."

Corruption of Christian Doctrine

The fifth consequence of the feminization of the church alluded to in the literature is the watering down or corruption of Christian doctrine. Podles argues that the doctrine of purgatory and Universalism gained acceptance in the feminized church because of their particular appeal to women. Concerning purgatory, Podles says: “The impetus for purgatory was not only popular, it was specifically feminine...The important role that purgatory played in the spiritual life of women is rooted in the feminine sense of connectedness, which causes them to seek to aid others even beyond the barriers of death.”⁶⁸

In relation to universalism, he claims that though it did not find immediate favor among orthodox clerics, it was attractive to women.⁶⁹ It was through women, he argues, that universalism eventually spread throughout the church. He sees the influence of female mystics in Hans Urs von Balthazar’s book, *Dare We Hope that All Men Can Be Saved?* In his closing comments on the book, he says: “Von Balthazar’s theology of Holy Saturday, in which the soul of Christ descends among the lost so that he may also be with them, and his consequent hope for universal salvation have their roots in the women mystics of medieval and post-medieval western Catholicism.”⁷⁰ Podles makes an even stronger claim for the corruption of doctrine through feminization in his later work, *Missing Fathers of the Church*, in which he describes universalism as “received wisdom in almost all churches today.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 128-129.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 129.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 130.

⁷¹ Podles, “Missing Fathers of the Church.”

Pursuit of Religious Fulfillment Outside Christianity

The final consequence of feminization in the literature is the pursuit of religious fulfillment outside Christianity. Podles sees fraternal organizations, sports, war, nationalism, fascism, and Nazism as vehicles through which men seek the transcendent apart from Christianity. He sums up the danger to those who choose this path in this way: "They know that to be fully masculine they must die and be reborn and they therefore seek this death and rebirth wherever they can find it....Christianity is a religion of death and resurrection, but masculinity, separated from Christianity, too often provides an ersatz resurrection and a real death."⁷²

We have examined the consequences of feminization as discussed by those who think that the real problem with the Western church is that it has become feminized. These consequences include missing men, missing children, the attraction to the church of men of doubtful masculinity, the undermining of Christian fatherhood, the corruption of doctrine and the pursuit by men of the pseudo-religion of masculinity. The next section will discuss some of the measures that have been proposed to correct this situation.

Correctives to Feminization

Our survey of the literature so far has revealed that feminization is seen by some as a dangerous trend, which must be reversed in order to bring them men back and ensure the general well-being of the church. We shall now review some of the corrective measures proposed by those who decry the feminization of the church.

Reinstatement of Patriarchy

Hardenbrook calls for the reinstatement of patriarchy. He sees the present disintegration of American society as the result of the devaluation of fatherhood. Civilization, he argues, has always been held together by fatherhood, from which true manhood is inseparable.⁷³ Arguing from the Greek origin of the word “patriarch,” which he says is derived from “patria” (“family” or “lineage”) and “arches” (ruler”), he concludes that a patriarch is a family ruler, the man in charge.⁷⁴ He argues further that God the Father is the foundation of patriarchy, the Patriarch of patriarchs, to whom men need to return.⁷⁵ Recognizing that patriarchy is often vilified by feminists as an oppressive system, he takes great pains to demonstrate that this is not true. Drawing heavily on the writings of Mary Ryan and James Dobson, he paints a picture of the colonial woman as far happier in family life than her modern counterpart.⁷⁶ He concludes, “Patriarchy is the biblical and traditional blueprint for family life. The American home has no chance for survival without it.”⁷⁷

Though not using the word “patriarchy,” Leon Podles also believes that an emphasis on the role of the father in the spiritual life of the family is necessary. He says: “Christian fathers should instruct their sons, primarily by example. Fathers should lead family prayers and read the Bible, and take the lead in getting the family to church.”⁷⁸ Of course, for this to happen, men must be willing to lead and women must be willing to let them lead. Hardenbrook seeks to address the former concern,

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Hardenbrook, *Missing from Action*, 197.

⁷⁴ Ibid, 204.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 205.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 79-87.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 216.

⁷⁸ Podles, “Missing Fathers of the Church.”

and he ends with a battle cry of sorts - a call to men to get back in action.⁷⁹ The second concern is addressed by Murrow, who sees men as stripped of their ancient role as family priest. He urges women to allow their husbands to lead family devotions, even in situations in which they believe themselves to be more competent.⁸⁰

Robbie Low shares with Hardenbrook the view that patriarchy is a blessing and not a curse.⁸¹ His views on the ordination of women as priests are quite strong: "To minister to a fatherless society, these churches, in their unwisdom, have produced their own single-parent family parish model in the woman priest."⁸² To him, the ordination of women is a capitulation to feminism, for which the church is paying dearly. What the church needs are not women priests, or priests of doubtful masculinity, but priests who are comfortable with their masculinity and maturing in their fatherhood, who can serve as "natural magnets in a confused and disordered society and church."⁸³

The Training of Boys

Another area of focus in the fight against feminization is the training of boys. Podles believes that the church ought to develop programs to help boys grow into men. He sees the development of these programs as the responsibility of the pastor and the men of the church. These programs, he says, should involve an adequate amount of physical activity and should supplement, if not totally replace, the Sunday

⁷⁹ Hardenbrook, *Missing from Action*, 307.

⁸⁰ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 198.

⁸¹ Low, "The Truth about Men and Church."

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

school, which is “but a continuation of the five day torment of sitting still.”⁸⁴ He thinks the programs can be patterned after those of organizations like the Boy Scouts, which include initiation rituals, which boys need, as well as the right amount of physical activity.⁸⁵

Preaching the Whole Gospel

As a corrective to the universalism engendered by feminization, Podles sees the need for the preaching of the whole gospel, including those parts considered uncomfortable. This kind of preaching, he says, will demonstrate that Christianity is a serious religion, far more serious than economics or politics.⁸⁶ He sums up the appeal of this kind of preaching to men as follows: “Churches that can preach the gospel without the modifications that make it easy and bourgeois have an advantage in reaching men. The rawer fundamentalist churches and the more traditional revivalist churches reach more men than liberal or latitudinarian churches.”⁸⁷

Changing the Message

In 1999, Frederica Mathewes-Green wrote an article in *Christianity Today* calling for a change in the message of the church to increase its appeal to men. After presenting what is, essentially, a favorable review of Leon Podles’ *The Church Impotent*, she says: “Perhaps the church’s message needs to be gender adjusted. We can try changing the sign in front of the church from ‘We care about you’ to ‘Faith

⁸⁴ Podles, “Missing Fathers of the Church.”

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 204.

demands things of you.’ Then be prepared to include a choir budget item: you’ll need more stands for basses.”⁸⁸

Focus on Taking Risks

Inspired by John Eldredge’s *Wild at Heart*, Murrow recommends a number of measures designed to create an atmosphere in the church that will enable men to function in a manner that is true to their hearts. We shall now look at some of these measures. Murrow advocates a focus on risk-taking rather than on safety in the programs of the church. This can be achieved, he says, by sending people on mission trips abroad and by holding up as heroes those men who have jeopardized their lives for the Lord’s sake.⁸⁹ Missions trips to dangerous places, he claims, will help satisfy a man’s natural desire for adventure and make him fired up to serve God.⁹⁰ Murrow finds justification for this approach in the ministry of Jesus: “Jesus sent his disciples out ‘as sheep among wolves.’ He promised them arrest, floggings, betrayal, persecution, and death....There is a kind of high-octane man who will not follow unless he sees danger ahead. Jesus knew this.”⁹¹ He concludes by saying that the church will not attract aggressive, bold, greatness-seeking men unless it is prepared to act like Jesus and offer men hardship and danger instead of ease and safety.⁹²

Alteration of Teaching Style

Consistent with his claim that a man’s learning style is significantly different from that of a woman, Murrow recommends a change in the church’s teaching style to make it less verbal and more visual. He claims that a man will learn a lot more

⁸⁸ Frederica Mathewes-Green, “Men Need Church, Too,” in *Christianity Today*: May 24, 1999, 70.

⁸⁹ Murrow, *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, 75.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

from an object lesson than from a regular sermon.⁹³ Based on the premise that a man's attention span for the reception of a verbal message is six to eight minutes, he recommends that the message be presented in six to eight minute segments, with video clips, drama, or other breaks in between. He even suggests that you will attract men by posting a sign on your church saying: "HOME OF THE 10-MINUTE SERMON."⁹⁴

Murrow also believes that the church can be made more "man-friendly" by introducing an element of fun into the worship service, like hiring a Christian stand-up comedian, and allowing men to engage in friendly competition, such as a log-sawing competition.⁹⁵ He also recommends involvement in outdoor activities as often as possible, claiming that men are closer to God when they are outdoors. In support of this, he quotes John Eldredge: "If you want men to learn to worship, take them outside. Take them into contexts where their heart is alive and it will come naturally."⁹⁶ The bottom line for Murrow is that men must be allowed to act like men when they attend church services or participate in other programs of the church.

Radio talk show host, Paul Coughlin, shares Murrow's view that the church needs to become more man-friendly. He argues strongly that the church needs to change its view of what it expects of men if it is going to attract and keep them. He claims that too many Christian men live with the belief that they have to be nice guys because they have been presented by a feminized church with a false picture of Jesus

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 176.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 177-178.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 185-186.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 189, quoting John Eldredge, exact source of quotation unavailable.

as the Supreme Nice Guy.⁹⁷ Considering himself a kind of modern day Martin Luther, he outlines his mission as follows:

Like many men, I have felt needlessly but undeniably out of place in the church, so I am creating a place of truth and strength for myself and other men who love God, but who've had it with being shamed for being men.

And I'm not leaving either. I'm in it for the long haul, because, like my Savior, I love a good fight. It's time to put our boots on. It's time for the Good Guy Rebellion.

I call this a rebellion because the church, for all its goodness and beauty is not going to give men permission to completely embrace their masculinity and all of its traits. No wonder women outnumber men in every form of Christianity (with the possible exception of Eastern Orthodoxy). Outrageously, we mistake women's better attendance as proof that they are somehow more moral and spiritual, a false conclusion from flawed premises.⁹⁸

In keeping with the aims of the "Good Guy Rebellion," Coughlin seeks to present what he considers to be the true picture of Jesus, as presented in the Gospels. He says:

Regardless of how hard we try, Jesus will *not* be domesticated. Consult the gospel facts: He is no comfortable Christ, no meek and mild Messiah.

Let's set the record straight.

Here's our popular Nice Guy misconception: Jesus didn't drink, swear, get angry, use sarcasm, confront, avoid questions, grow impatient, or complain. Conversely, the record shows he did all of the above, and the gospel includes no apology, confession, or repentance for any of them.⁹⁹

He argues that this picture of Jesus must be presented to men in order to make them feel more at home in a church setting. The thinking seems to be that once men realize that Jesus was not a nice guy, they will no longer feel under pressure to behave like nice guys. This final quote pretty much sums up his position on the issue:

⁹⁷ Paul Coughlin, *No More Christian Nice Guy* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 2005), 13-16.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 27.

“When we’re free from the myths that Jesus is the Supreme Nice Guy, and that the Father is a cosmic teddy bear, and that the Holy Spirit is docile, breezy presence, men will find the church more compelling and relevant.”¹⁰⁰

Thus far, we have reviewed literature on causes of feminization, consequences of feminization, and correctives to feminization. An unspoken assumption underlying the literature we have examined so far is that there is a clear definition of what it means to be masculine, as opposed to being feminine, and that those who decry feminization know what that definition is. But is this really the case? Do writers like Leon Podles, John Eldredge, David Murrow, and Paul Coughlin have the last word on what it means to be a man? The next section will examine literature that takes a closer look at the definition of masculinity. Some of this literature will challenge some of the claims made by those who say the church has become feminized.

RESPONSES TO THE FEMINIZATION THESIS

The claim that the Western church has become feminized and is, therefore, in need of the injection of a masculine spirit in order to attract more men has not gone unchallenged. In this section, we shall first examine some responses to *Wild at Heart*, the book that has fuelled a new masculinity movement and go on to look at some responses to the masculinity movement as a whole.

Responses to *Wild at Heart*

Charles R. Swindoll, better known as Chuck Swindoll, speaker on the popular radio programme, “Insight for Living,” is reputed to have described *Wild at Heart* as

⁹⁹ Ibid, 34.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 68.

“the best most insightful book I have read in the last five years.”¹⁰¹ However, there are others who do not hold such a favorable view of the book.

Distortion of Scripture

One such person is Daryl Wingerd, Pastor of Christ Fellowship in Kansas City. He claims that John Eldredge badly mishandles scripture. He points to Eldredge’s use of Proverbs 20:5 in support of the idea that messages to men often fail because they ignore what is deep and true to a man’s heart. Eldredge quotes Proverbs 20:5 as follows: “The heart of a man is like deep water.”¹⁰² The problem, according to Wingerd, is that the verse actually says, “Counsel in the heart of a man is like deep water.” What Eldredge is doing, he asserts, is editing Scripture to suit his purpose and affirm his teachings.¹⁰³ Wingerd claims that taking such liberties with the Biblical text is wholly unacceptable in light of the warning given in II Peter 3:16 concerning distortion of Scripture. This raises serious questions about the validity of Eldredge’s thesis. People with a high view of Scripture will have great difficulty accepting a thesis that is based on a distortion of Scripture.

Orrel Steinkamp, a retired Assemblies of God minister, writes in *The Plumblne* that he shares Wingerd’s concern about Eldredge’s use of Scripture. While not quoting an actual verse used by Eldredge, Steinkamp makes the following comment, which, if accurate, casts further doubt on the validity of Eldredge’s thesis: “Lifting certain scripture verses out of context and wrapping them around

¹⁰¹ Daryl Wingerd, *A Critical Review of Wild at Heart*, available online at <http://www.ccwonline.org/wild.pdf>

¹⁰² John Eldredge, *Wild at Heart* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001), 1.

¹⁰³ Daryl Wingerd, *A Critical Review of Wild at Heart*, available online at <http://www.ccwonline.org/wild.pdf>

secular/pagan ideas does not ‘Christianize’ the ideas – it only twists the Word of God, leaving men with distorted pictures of God and of themselves.”¹⁰⁴

Use of Questionable Sources

Eldredge has also been criticized for using questionable sources in support of his thesis. According to Steinkamp, he relies heavily on stories, often taken from Hollywood films, to illustrate his message. The trouble, says Steinkamp, is that he often presents as heroic, and worthy of emulation, men whose standards of behavior are far from Christian. For example, Tristan, in “Legends of the Fall,” is presented as an example of someone wild at heart, a heroic character whom most Christian men deep down wish they were like. However, according to Steinkamp, based on the events in the movie, Tristan would be better described as, “pagan, uncivilized, primitive, selfish, rebellious, and barbaric.”¹⁰⁵

Steinkamp further claims that Eldredge imports most of his ideas from New Age/pagan sources. He notes that Eldredge has built his wild-heart paradigm on the works of Jungians like Robert Bly, Sam Keen, Brennan Manning, and other New Agers who hold worldviews that oppose Christianity.¹⁰⁶ Zeroing in on the influence of Bly on Eldredge, he says: “For Bly, contemporary men have been submerged and repressed into being nice guys and have abandoned the old macho version of manhood. Bly’s writings are near the center, if not actually the core, of Eldredge’s view of what it means to be a real man with a wild heart.”¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Orrel Steinkamp, “Braveheart vs. Mister Rogers” in *The Plumbline, Volume 9, No. 4* August/September 2004.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Imposition of the Outdoor Image

A third criticism leveled at Eldredge is that he seeks to make his own love for the wild outdoor life normative for all men, as the true reflection of the image of God. Steinkamp argues that men who do not enjoy climbing cliffs or hunting can still be true heroes, living respectable lives. However, according to Eldredge's paradigm, such men would be living according to their false selves, and not their true, wild selves.¹⁰⁸ Given the fact that men have different temperaments, it does seem legitimate for Steinkamp to question a thesis that seeks to make what can reasonably be described as one man's tastes normative for all men.

Inaccurate View of God

Finally, Eldredge has been criticized for presenting an inaccurate view of God. Steinkamp argues that Eldredge errs when he seeks to portray God as wild at heart. He notes that Eldredge claims that the wildness of creation is God's way of letting man know that he prefers adventure, danger, risk, and the element of surprise. Steinkamp responds, "The ferocity of nature reflects the post-creation Fall more than the eternal character of God. Furthermore, the biblical teaching of the eternal state has no suggestion of wildness in heaven."¹⁰⁹ He supports his claim by quoting Isaiah, who speaks of the leopard lying down with the goat.¹¹⁰ Since violence and pain will be gone, he argues, wildness cannot be part of God's intrinsic nature.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Isaiah 11:6.

¹¹¹ Orrel Steinkamp, "Braveheart vs. Mister Rogers" in *The Plumline*, Volume 9, No. 4 August/September 2004.

Steinkamp also claims that by picturing God as a risk taker, Eldredge is virtually advocating Open Theism, since a risk suggests, at least, the possibility of failure.¹¹² The implication is, of course, that this would do violence to the idea that one of God's attributes is infallibility. Wingerd is even more forthright and detailed in his denunciation of Eldredge's view of God as a risk taker. He dismisses Eldredge's claim that he is not advocating Open Theism. In his view, Eldredge's description of God puts him in the same boat as advocates of Open Theism, since a God who takes risks, and who can be surprised, does not know or command the future.¹¹³ He notes that Open Theism has been declared a heresy by the Evangelical Theological Society, which has voted to expel members who hold this doctrinal position. He also points out that John Sanders, an advocate of Open Theism, has written a book entitled, *The God Who Risks*. The marked similarity between Eldredge's views and those of known Open Theists, he argues, places Eldredge squarely in the camp of Open Theism, despite his disclaimer.¹¹⁴

Insofar as Open Theism can be shown to be heretical, it raises further questions about the value of Eldredge's work, or any other work based on it, for addressing the problem of the relative lack of men in the church. After all, it can be argued, it would be morally and spiritually disastrous for the church to seek to appeal to men, using an approach which is based on an inaccurate view of God.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Daryl Wingerd *A Critical Review of Wild at Heart*, available online at <http://www.ccwonline.org/wild.pdf>

Responses to the Masculinity Movement

John Eldredge's "Wild at Heart" has given impetus, if not birth, to a masculinity movement, which is quite strident in its demand that the church allow men to be raw and uninhibited, in accordance with their wild hearts. In the last seven years, there have been books written, and ministries launched, reflecting the views of this movement. We shall now look at some critical responses to some of these books/ministries.

Lillian Daniel, Senior Minister of First Congregational Church in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, has written a critical response to David Murrow's *Why Men Hate Going to Church* and Brad Stine's "God-men," the men's ministry started in 2004, largely as an application of the ideas put forward by Murrow. While she concedes that Murrow's message resonates with some people, she claims that it fails to explain why there are significant numbers of men in the very churches he claims do not meet their needs. This, she argues, forces one to recognize the possibility that all men are not the same.¹¹⁵

In response to Murrow's claim that a filmmaker who wants to attract a male audience will pack his movie with things men like: buildings exploding, cars crashing, guns blazing, and bodies flying, she says, "But here's the rub. Our hero, Jesus, preached a message that was the antithesis of 'buildings exploding, cars crashing, guns blazing and bodies flying.'"¹¹⁶ In response to the rallying cry at the launch of God-men, "Are you ready to kick ass?" she says: "Surely there are ways of

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Lillian Daniel, "Missing Men: Is the Church Low on Testosterone?" in *The Christian Century*, April 03, 2007, <http://www.Christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=3122>, Retrieved July 15, 2008.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

being a godly man that do not involve kicking ass. The cross stands out as one.”¹¹⁷ In summary, Daniel sees books like “Why Men Hate Going to Church” and ministries like “God-men” as attempts to make the church more palatable to a B-movie culture. In such a situation, she asserts, the church needs to take the moral high road and not simply opt for whatever sells.

Someone who has taken a position similar to Daniel’s is Brandon O’Brien, Christianity Today’s Assistant Editor for Leadership and buildingchurchleaders.com. He responds not only to Murrow but to what he refers to as the “new masculinity movement.”¹¹⁸ This movement, he says, claims that “men are uninvolved in church life because the church does not encourage authentic male participation.”¹¹⁹ O’Brien commends the movement for showing how the American church has reduced Christianity to minding one’s manners. However, he goes on to describe the solution proposed by the movement – injecting the church with a heavy dose of testosterone – as posing a genuine threat to Christian discipleship.¹²⁰

First of all, says O’Brien, the masculinity movement assumes that manly instincts are inherently godly. This understanding, he claims, does not factor in the Fall of Man. While a man may be naturally inclined to be bold, brash, bullying, and blunt, O’Brien sees these as features of the old self that need to be put away.¹²¹

O’Brien further claims that the masculinity movement offers a very narrow view of masculinity and excludes women from true discipleship. In the first place, it

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Brandon O’Brien, “A Jesus for Real Men” in *Christianity Today*, April 2008 at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/april/27.48.html>, retrieved July 25, 2008.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid.

blames women for making the church a nice and affirming place with no vision for reaching the world. In the second place, by presenting Jesus as modeling masculinity, the movement makes it impossible for women to imitate him. However, according to O'Brien, Jesus came not to model masculinity, but humanity. He says: "All believers are called to imitate Christ by exhibiting the same qualities; Paul makes no distinction between masculine and feminine fruits of the Spirit."¹²²

Jack Balswick, Professor of Sociology and Family Development at Fuller

Theological Seminary, expresses similar sentiments in an earlier work. He says:

When the Bible speaks of Christian temperament, it fails to make a distinction between males and females. Paul writes in Galatians 5: 22, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." In our culture, all these attributes are typically considered to be feminine. On the basis of these verses, I would argue that not only should males and females be more alike, but that males need to cultivate the Christian qualities that have traditionally been defined as feminine.¹²³

However, men who cultivate these qualities, according to O'Brien, will not qualify as real men, as defined by the masculinity movement. He sums up the clash between the masculinity movement and Christian values as follows: "Instead of being "brash, offensive" (Stine), "self-reliant, competitive" (Murrow), "punch-you-in-the-nose dudes" (Driscoll), Paul says that those who are filled with the Holy Spirit will be loving, patient, peaceful, kind, and gentle."¹²⁴

O'Brien also claims that the masculinity movement is mistaken as regards the model of Jesus that Christians are called to imitate. The masculinity movement, he asserts, would have Christians emulate the glorified Jesus, when the more appropriate

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Jack Balswick, *Men at the Crossroads* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: IVP, 1999), 62.

¹²⁴ Brandon O'Brien, "A Jesus for Real Men" in *Christianity Today*, April 2008 at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/april/27.48.html>, retrieved July 25, 2008.

model is the suffering Son. In his words, “We are most like Christ not when we win a fight, but when we suffer for righteousness’ sake.”¹²⁵

Finally, O’Brien accuses the masculinity movement of presenting Christian qualities as masculine qualities. He says: “Indeed, Jesus was not afraid to offend and rebuke. He was not kind at the expense of truth. But those qualities are not masculine as such; they are godly.”¹²⁶ He argues further that imposing qualities that are considered masculine on an image of Jesus that is considered feminine would simply create another culturally shaped Jesus, a masculine one. He calls, therefore, for submission to Scripture and recognition that the purpose of discipleship is not to become fulfilled men or women but to be transformed into the image of Christ. He concludes:

In the end, the biblical image of Jesus presents a far more radical role model than Jesus the dude. Jesus was gritty, honest, and fearless. Yet his strength was not displayed in his willingness to punch evildoers in the mouth, but in his suffering at the hands of the wicked for their good. Where such strength is found—whether in a man or a woman, a latte-sipping sissy or a muscled mason—there is godly strength.¹²⁷

The responses we have just examined call into question the validity of the feminization thesis for explaining the relative lack of men in the church. Are real men staying away from a feminized church or does authentic Christian discipleship challenge socially constructed definitions of masculinity?

Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, Professor of Psychology and Philosophy at Eastern University, believes that socially constructed views of masculinity, and not the feminization of the church, are what pose the most serious problems for men as

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

far as embracing Christianity is concerned. She points to the existence of a male culture of honor, which, in its classical form, “requires a man to resist challenges from other men, while advancing his own prestige and social ranking by a continuous display of cool-headedness, shrewdness, and verbal and physical dominance.”¹²⁸

Drawing on the work of social scientists Robert Brannon and Deborah David, Van Leeuwen identifies four imperatives for a boy growing up in America. First of all, he must do nothing that would cause him to be labeled as a “sissy.” “Feminine” emotions and behavior, like expressing empathy and showing distress, are to be avoided. Second, he must show himself to be a sturdy oak, stable and self-reliant. This means, among other things, to appear not to care when he is hurting. Third, he must cultivate success and status, provoking envy and admiration in others. This is often achieved through athletic prowess and the ability to attract girls. Finally, he must show himself to be tough. A boy is expected to defend himself vigorously when attacked. However, Van Leeuwen notes, given the emphasis on violence in popular culture, there can be a blurring of the line between self-defense and aggression for the sheer fun of it.¹²⁹

Focusing on the social imperative for a boy to be a sturdy oak, Van Leeuwen says:

It also helps to explain why Christianity is so often stereotyped as unmanly endeavor: to the extent that it calls on men to admit that they are not self-sufficient but need the grace of God and the support of other believers, Christian faith and lifestyle challenge the sturdy oak image.¹³⁰

¹²⁸ Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *My Brother's Keeper* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: IVP, 2002), 97.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 98-100.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 99.

Towards the end of the book, she makes the following statement, which seems to sum up her thinking on the conflict between Christianity and popular concepts of masculinity:

Here it may help to return to some points made in the early chapters of this book. There we learned that according to commonly held gender stereotypes, “real men” are --- and should be --- less interested in religion than women. This should come as no surprise, since the Christian gospel strongly challenged the competitive, self-aggrandizing male culture of honor in the time and place where it was first proclaimed. The writers of the Gospels and epistles, building on the foundation of the Hebrew Scriptures, announced a human – not just a female – ideal of cooperation, servanthood and humility.¹³¹

For Van Leeuwin, the problem is not a feminized church, but rather concepts of masculinity that make it difficult for a man to identify with Christianity and still be regarded as a “real” man by his peers.

Ruth Groenhout, Associate Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, echoes the sentiments expressed by Van Leeuwin in a highly favorable review of *My Brother's Keeper*, published in *The Christian Century*. She described the interaction between popular masculinity and Christianity as follows:

A strained relationship has sometimes existed between masculinity and Christianity. Masculinity is frequently defined in terms of control (of self and others) and the protection of one's honor. Christianity requires one to give up control, and to accept dependence on another for both salvation and sanctified living. Further, Christianity is a religion of servanthood, chastity and gentleness – not exactly characteristics that leap to mind when defining manhood.¹³²

Groenhout also makes the very important point that the way that a man is expected to behave should not be wholly attributed to biological programming. After

¹³¹ Ibid, 225.

alluding to the claim made by Van Leeuwin that the fact that insects are not eaten in

America has more to do with culture than with biology, she says:

In the same way, though masculinity arises out of biology, it is partly determined by cultural and individual beliefs. In an American culture that steeps men in images of cheap sexuality and macho posturing, biological tendencies toward domination, sexual promiscuity or aggression may be exacerbated. And this is bad news for men and those who love them, since it makes it harder for them to be good lovers and husbands, good fathers or good Christians.¹³³

Van Leeuwin and Groenhout focus on the clash between masculinity and Christianity in American society. Even if their conclusions can be proven valid, we would still need to determine whether they are relevant to men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, in general, and young males, in particular. This leads us into a review of the third body literature relevant to our study, literature dealing with the construction of masculinity in the Caribbean.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF CARIBBEAN MASCULINITY

The material in this section will be divided into three areas. First, we shall examine the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Secondly, we shall look at the impact of plantation slavery on black masculinity in the Caribbean. Thirdly, and finally, we shall look at the results of recent qualitative research on the socialization of young Caribbean males.

Hegemonic Masculinity

One cannot discuss what it means to be a man in the Caribbean without coming to terms with hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is described by

¹³² Ruth Groenhout, "My Brother's Keeper: What the Social Sciences Do Tell Us about Masculinity" in *The Christian Century*, December 4th, 2002 at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1058/is_25_119/ai_95599124/

¹³³ Ibid.

Odette Parry as “the configuration of gender practice which legitimates patriarchy and guarantees a dominant position for men alongside the subordination of women.”¹³⁴ Stephen Frosh, Ann Phoenix, and Rob Pattman of The Open University in Milton Keynes, England, affirm that hegemonic masculinity is the dominant form of masculinity that influences boys’ and men’s understanding of how they have to act in order to be acceptably male.¹³⁵ In a study of schoolboys in England, they found that boys regarded hardness, antagonism to school-based learning, sporting prowess, and fashionable style as marks of manhood.¹³⁶

Frosh, Phoenix, and Pattman also note that boys of African-Caribbean descent were seen by respondents as more masculine than boys of Asian descent or purely African descent, when measured by the previously stated standards.¹³⁷ This is a very interesting finding, which has relevance to this study of young males in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Since the majority of young males in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are African-Caribbean, it naturally leads one to ask why boys of African-Caribbean descent seem to show a greater tendency toward hegemonic masculinity. The next section will examine a possible answer to this very important question.

The Impact of Plantation Slavery on Black Caribbean Masculinity

Up to two hundred years ago, most, if not all, Caribbean societies had economies based primarily on plantation slavery. In these societies, the masters were generally white planters of British/European stock and the slaves were generally Negroes brought to the Caribbean from West Africa. According to Dr. Hillary

¹³⁴ Odette Parry, 20.

¹³⁵ Stephen Frosh, Ann Phoenix and Rob Pattman, “Emergent Identities: Masculinities and 11-14 Year Old Boys” at <http://www.hull.ac.uk/children5to16programme/details/frosh.htm>

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Beckles, Professor of History at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill in Barbados, the white planter class modeled a hegemonic type of masculinity. One way in which hegemonic masculinity was expressed, he says, was in the violent subjugation of black male slaves. He quotes from the diary of eighteenth century Jamaican planter Thomas Thistlewood to demonstrate the kind of humiliating violence to which black male slaves were often subjected. According to one entry in Thistlewood's diary, one slave was whipped and then washed and rubbed with salt pickle, lime juice, and bird pepper; another was whipped for losing his hoe and a fellow slave was made to urinate in his eyes and mouth.¹³⁸

The other major way in which white planters expressed hegemonic masculinity, according to Beckles, was in the sexual exploitation of black female slaves. Black female slaves were property and, as such, liable to be used in any way their owner deemed fit. This meant that black male slaves were rendered incapable of asserting domestic authority as husbands and fathers.¹³⁹ He once again uses Thomas Thistlewood to illustrate his point:

Another visit to the diary of Thomas Thistlewood reveals three issues:

1. Thistlewood's claim of a right to sexual access to all enslaved black women on the estate, and the right to punish enslaved black men who confronted or in any way questioned this right;
2. His right to allocate enslaved black women for the sexual pleasure of his friends, whatever their domestic relations with black men;
3. His right to punish enslaved black men for physically abusing their "wives" or "partners," since this constituted a violation of his property rights on the female.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Hillary Beckles, "Black Masculinity in Caribbean Slavery," in *Interrogating Caribbean Masculinities: Theoretical and Empirical Analyses*, ed. Rhoda Reddock (Kingston, Jamaica: UWI Press, 2004), 234.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 236.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Beckles makes the point that enslaved black males nevertheless shared basic patriarchal values with white men as regards asserting masculine authority and power over women, but they were unable to fully live this ideology because of their subordinate position in the society. Any exercise of male power in relation to black women tended to come as a “gift” from the master. Beckles says:

There were areas, nonetheless, where enslaved black men were allowed by white men to exercise male power in relation to black women. Moitt tells us that in the French slave colonies, especially in Saint Domingue, “Courrir les filles” (girl-hunting) was a popular pastime among enslaved males. They were given leave from estates by overseers and owners to wander through the countryside in search of sex.¹⁴¹

As further evidence of the enslaved black male’s commitment to patriarchal values, despite his subordinate position, Beckles alludes to Esteban Montejo, a Cuban runaway slave, who “expressed views of women and sexual relations in his autobiography that corresponded to the ideological expression of his owner’s masculinity, and that of other men within the slave-owning community.”¹⁴²

In summary, it seems fair to say that in Caribbean slave society, manhood was expressed primarily in terms of power over women. Manhood expressed in this way was enjoyed by white slave owners and desired by black male slaves, but never fully enjoyed by the latter because of their subordinate position in society. Odette Parry believes that the effects of expressions of manhood in Caribbean slave society are still being felt today. She says:

The historical impact of hegemonic masculinity has implications for the importance that Caribbean males attach to the exercise of power and control over women. Very recent ethnographic research carried out in Jamaican, Dominican and Guyanese communities suggests that “manhood” is attested by

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 238.

¹⁴² Ibid, 239.

sexual prowess, usually measured in terms of numbers of serial or concurrent female sexual partners.¹⁴³

The research alluded to by Parry will be the subject of the next section.

The Socialization of Young Caribbean Males

Barry Chevannes, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of the West Indies in Mona, Jamaica, has studied the socialization of young males in five communities drawn from Jamaica, Guyana, and Dominica. According to him, the aim of the study was to "...identify the processes and events through which Caribbean males were imbued with knowledge of the roles they were expected to play as boys and later as men; the process through which they acquired the status of manhood."¹⁴⁴ One of the underlying assumptions of the study is that a male is expected to prove his manhood, but there is no corresponding obligation for the female to prove her womanhood.

One of Chevannes' conclusions is that in the East Indian community in Guyana, participation in the public consumption of alcohol, especially rum, is a mark of manhood. He comments on the emphasis placed on marriage by East Indians and the concomitant stress on adult males who are unmarried. He says that young East Indian males do not feel the same frustrations as regards attaining manhood, giving the following explanation as to why this is so:

The reason for this is that manhood is determined by a number of other social behaviours typical of adult males. Among these is the participation in and maintenance of male bonding activities, particularly public drinking. When a young man is able to do this without sanction, he is a man, regardless of his marital status.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Odette Parry, 20.

¹⁴⁴ Barry Chevannes, *Learning to Be a Man*. (Kingston, Jamaica: UWI Press, 2001), 5.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 87.

Chevannes further claims that drinking rum is an institutionalized form of recreation among East Indian men and that it is only when one goes beyond socially acceptable limits that one is said to have a drinking problem.¹⁴⁶ Another of the conclusions of Chevannes' study is that there is a link between sexual activity and the acquisition of the status of manhood. He presents his findings as follows:

I draw attention to three points in relation to the acquisition of manhood status through sexual activity: the early start of it, the license it gives to men, and heterosexuality, under which I comment on the attitudes to homosexuality. My first point is that sexual activity begins early, among East Indians through ritually sanctioned marriage, among Africans casually and through one of the other forms of conjugal bonding among them.¹⁴⁷

On the matter of license given to men, Chevannes notes, "Becoming an African Caribbean man privileges one to engage in all of the above forms of sexual relationships, from the promiscuous and casual to multiple partnerships (which in effect is unrecognized polygamy)."¹⁴⁸ This final quote from Chevannes demonstrates the emphasis placed on sexual activity between males and females, and the pressure young Caribbean males are likely to face in this regard: "A man is not a real man unless he is sexually active. But his activism must be *hetero-* not *homosexual* ...Among Afro-Caribbean males, first sex takes place on average between fourteen and sixteen."¹⁴⁹

REFLECTIONS ON THE LITERATURE

So far, this chapter has reviewed three bodies of literature: literature which claims that the relative lack of men in the church is due to feminization, literature which challenges the feminization thesis and focuses on the clash between socially

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 215.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 217.

constructed views of masculinity and Christianity, and literature dealing with the construction of masculinity in the Caribbean. The researcher will now make some general observations about the literature that has been reviewed.

The responses to the feminization thesis have focused on its more recent, and more radical, proponents, such as John Eldredge, David Murrow, and Brad Stine. Critics of these authors have portrayed these spokesmen for the new masculinity movement as being more interested in catering to popular culture than in being faithful to Scripture. Insofar as this is correct, one can feel justified in not being too quick to accept any of the recommendations of the new masculinity movement. After all, once a person's faithfulness to Scripture cannot be guaranteed, the validity of any solutions he/she proposes to the problem of lack of men in the church is compromised. An unbiblical solution may result in greater attendance at church by men, but a greater problem may be created: a watering down or, worse, a distortion of Christianity.

Paul Coughlin's *No More Christian Nice Guy* can also be seen as presenting the views of the more radical arm of the movement that sees feminization as major factor contributing to the relative lack of men in the American church. A critical review of the book was not available, so the researcher will comment on it briefly here. First, one must commend Coughlin's attempt to offer a corrective to the "gentle Jesus meek and mild" portrayal of Jesus. As stated earlier, I considered this portrayal of Jesus as a potential obstacle to men in relation to identifying with Christianity. However, Coughlin seems to be in danger of going too far in the other direction and portraying Jesus as the "Supreme Tough Guy." One might question whether it does

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

justice to Jesus to describe him as someone who loves a good fight.¹⁵⁰ Unfortunately for Coughlin, and all others who seek to present Jesus as the tough guy, Jesus did not die like their definition of a “real man,” with sword in hand and the blood of the enemy splattered all over him. He died on a cross, in submission to the will of the Father, with the only blood on his body being his own. In other words, Jesus the macho man is not the answer to gentle Jesus meek and mild. A proper Scriptural balance is needed.

Weldon Hardenbrook’s *Missing from Action* and Leon Podles’ *The Church Impotent* are examples of more moderate positions on the issue of the feminization of the church. One cannot legitimately accuse either of these authors of distorting Scripture in order to advance his personal agenda. However, one can raise questions about their conclusions on other grounds. It is to this exercise that we shall now turn, beginning with the work of Hardenbrook.

To be fair to Hardenbrook, it must be said that he presents a good analysis of the factors that caused the church to become very attractive to women, including social changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution and Finney’s revivals. However, Hardenbrook can be faulted for not explaining why the men abandoned the church in the first place. The book abounds with words and expressions like “abdicated,” “deserted,” and “jump ship,” all of which suggest that the men pretty much left the church responsibilities to the women. The following quote ought to make the point: “The third, and perhaps the most critical domain, which Victorian men *handed over* to women was the Protestant Sunday school. In fact, women so

¹⁵⁰ Coughlin, 27.

completely dominated the protestant churches that they virtually *feminized* them.”¹⁵¹ (Italics added.) This evidence suggests that feminization, if it exists, is more of a consequence than a cause of lack of men in the church. It does no good to say that men do not attend church because they are uncomfortable in a feminized church. One still needs to know why men found it so easy to abandon the church in the first place. Hardenbrook does not provide an answer.

Leon Podles cannot be legitimately accused of subscribing to a narrow view of masculinity. He sees the tenderness and compassion of Jesus as “...not a grafting of feminine characteristics onto a masculine personality, but rather a profound expression of masculinity.”¹⁵² Questions can be raised, however, about the explanatory power of his thesis. His view that fears of homosexuality and the watering down of doctrine keep men away from the feminized Western church seems more applicable to Roman Catholic and Anglican/Episcopal churches in England and North America, especially in light of recent scandals and controversies involving homosexuality. However, it does not seem to apply so easily to conservative evangelical churches in the Caribbean, such as Pentecostal churches. These churches stress radical conversion (a concept to which Podles believes men ought to be able to relate¹⁵³), preach strongly about hell, and have no tolerance for homosexuality, but still have problems attracting men. This suggests that there is need for further study.

Van Leeuwin emphasizes the counter-cultural nature of Christianity. She sees American men as having problems with Christianity because what popular culture

¹⁵¹ Hardenbrook, 129.

¹⁵² Podles, 80.

¹⁵³ Podles, 155.

expects of them sometimes runs counter to Christian values. How applicable all of this is to the Caribbean situation can only be determined by further study.

The literature on the construction of masculinity in the Caribbean suggests that there is potential for a clash between cultural expectations and Christianity in the area of sexuality. Based on the evidence provided by Chevannes,¹⁵⁴ it seems fair to say that young Caribbean males are under pressure to prove their manhood through sexual activity with females. If Chevannes is correct in asserting that sexual activity begins between the ages of fourteen and sixteen for males, it means that sex outside of marriage is the most likely way for a young Afro-Caribbean male to attain manhood, since early marriage is not common among Afro-Caribbean people. This points to a potential difficulty that young Afro-Caribbean males will have with Christianity. Since Christianity approves sexual activity only within the context of marriage, a young, unmarried male who identifies with Christianity is thereby expressing a commitment to abstain from sexual relations until marriage. However, in so doing, he runs the risk of being considered not a real man by his peers and the wider society.

According to anecdotal evidence and personal experience, when a young Caribbean male makes a public declaration of allegiance to Christianity, the first question he tends to be asked by a non-Christian is, "Are you married?" If he answers in the negative, he is likely to get a response that questions either his seriousness as a Christian or his status as a man. How relevant all of this is to young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College, most of whom are Afro-Caribbean, and all of whom are unmarried, will hopefully be clarified by this study.

CONCLUSION

In light of all that we have looked at, it seems fitting to close this literature review by drawing on the thoughts of Tony Walter as expressed in a 1990 article entitled, “Why Are Most Churchgoers Women?”¹⁵⁵ Walter’s work is essentially a survey of different theories advanced to explain the fact that more women than men attend church. He ends by leaning towards an explanation that puts the blame on male pride,¹⁵⁶ a position similar to that articulated by Van Leeuwin and Groenhout.

There are two other points made by Walter that merit emphasizing as we conclude the review of literature. The first is that it is unlikely that any one theory will be correct in all situations.¹⁵⁷ Insofar as Walter’s claim is valid, we dare not assume that the reasons for the low attendance of men at church are the same in all countries or all denominations. We saw a bit of that when we noted that Podles’ thesis could not explain the relative lack of men in Caribbean Pentecostal churches. The logical conclusion to draw from this is that, in spite of whatever insights we gain from looking at conditions in America, or even Jamaica, for that matter, we still need to study young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College in order to discover what unique difficulties they face when identifying with Christianity.

The second point made by Walter is that there is a need for research which involves asking ordinary believers about their faith.¹⁵⁸ Similarly, it can be argued, there is need for research asking ordinary people about their lack of faith. In other words, one should ask non-Christians, why they find it difficult to identify with

¹⁵⁴ Chevannes, 5.

¹⁵⁵ Tony Walter, “Why Are Most Churchgoers Women?” in *Vox Evangelica* 20 (1990), 73-90.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 88.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 85.

Christianity. The reasons may not be as obvious as the Christian community believes them to be. Simply put, what “everybody knows” may turn out to be wrong. The young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College are best placed to state why they have difficulty identifying with Christianity. Their voices need to be heard.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE: PROJECT METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to explore why young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College often find it difficult to embrace Christianity. Three research questions were formulated in an effort to elicit the views of male students on manhood and Christianity. The questions were as follows:

1. What do young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College think manhood entails?
2. What do young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College think Christianity entails?
3. What do young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College think would be the impact on a male if he chose to become a Christian?

This chapter will outline how the study was conducted. Areas to be covered are design of the study, finding research subjects, background information on research subjects, data collection, data analysis, the researcher's perspective and, finally, limitations to the study.

DESIGN OF STUDY

As the researcher, I determined that the design of a generic qualitative study would enable me to explore effectively Vincentian male perspectives on masculinity and Christianity. Sharran B. Merriam, Professor of Adult and Continuing Education at the University of Georgia, provides the following summary of the main features of

qualitative research: "...the focus is on interpretation and meaning; the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection and analysis; research activities include fieldwork, the process is primarily inductive; and rich description characterizes the end product."¹⁵⁹

The features of qualitative research were thus eminently suitable for what I was trying to accomplish. I was interested in finding out why young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines generally find it difficult to identify with Christianity. The meanings they attached to their actions, therefore, were very important to me. It was also important for me to be intimately involved in the data collection process, since it gave me an opportunity to observe the subjects as they were interviewed and to refine and introduce additional questions where necessary. Because I was not, strictly speaking, testing a hypothesis (even though I had a few hunches) but rather seeking to gain insights that might help in the development of theory, the inductive approach characteristic of qualitative research was most appropriate. Finally, since I was exploring feelings, values, attitudes, and other personal expressions, I was interested in recording the exact words of research subjects when appropriate.

FINDING RESEARCH SUBJECTS

The study focused on non-Christian male students at St. Vincent and The Grenadines Community College. This meant, theoretically, that any non-Christian male student was eligible for inclusion in the sample. However, I felt that willingness to talk seriously about issues of manhood and Christianity was essential to being a good research subject. Because of this, I decided not to offer any sort of reward to

¹⁵⁹ Sharran B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 25.

students for participation in the study. Initially, I had toyed with the idea, but in the final analysis, I thought that in so doing, I might attract participants who were not necessarily the most qualified to provide the information I was seeking. I opted, therefore, for the potentially more difficult route of seeking students with intrinsic motivation to participate in the study.

As a first step toward finding the right participants, I secured permission from the Dean, a former colleague, to conduct the study under the auspices of the college. This gave legitimacy to the project and ensured that I was able to move freely about the campus and use college facilities where necessary. The fact that I knew several members of staff, either as former colleagues or former students, also helped in that it provided me with a valuable support network on campus. One critical example of the use of this network was the securing of the help of two senior members of staff, a male and a female, in promoting the research and serving as links between me and the students who were interested in participating.

In order to launch the research, I visited the college during the 2008 Independence celebrations, in late October. The general assembly was preceded by a session in which three students presented prepared speeches on the topic, "What independence means to me." Shortly after the students' speeches, I was given the opportunity to speak at the general assembly. One of the students who had spoken earlier had made the point that being independent meant being able to ask for help when you needed it, and I used that statement as a point of departure. I indicated that I was at the college because I was seeking help, and then I posed the following question: "Can a male community college student be a real man and a Christian at the

same time?” I then proceeded to inform the audience that I was looking for young men who were willing to share their unedited and uncensored views on this and other related questions. I asked those who felt they might be interested in participating to give their names and contact numbers to either of the two staff members I had asked to assist me.

About a week later, I visited the campus to see what sort of response there had been to my research invitation. I took with me a notice that posed the same question I had posed at the assembly and gave the same instructions for how to register if interested in participating in the study. I placed the notice on the two most strategically located notice boards on campus. Then, meeting with one of the lecturers I had asked to assist me, I explained that while I was willing to speak with anyone, I was interested primarily in non-Christian students since only they could be included in the final sample. I also spent some time in the staff room, conversing informally with the lecturers who were there. In one particularly fruitful discussion, the sociology lecturer assured me that she would raise my research question in her class since religion was a topic of interest for students of sociology. She also said she knew some students who would make good research subjects. I gave her a copy of the notice and asked her to share it with her class, later asking the same favor of the other lecturers who were present.

I made several visits to the campus over the next four days or so and collected names of volunteers from the lecturers who were assisting me. By the end of that time, I had a list of nineteen persons who had volunteered to participate, though two were excluded because they were known to be Christians. I sought to make contact

with the others and set up interviews, the final sample consisting of fifteen students with whom I was able to arrange an interview.

INFORMATION ON PARTICIPANTS

Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, in keeping with the commitment to protect the identities of research subjects. I followed the pattern of naming tropical storms in the Caribbean and chose the names alphabetically, with the first person interviewed being called “Alex” and the last person, “Owen.” I shall now give some brief background information on each participant.

Alex

Alex is a student in the Faculty of the Humanities. He used to attend church but has not gone to church in the last two months. He does not consider himself a Christian.

Barry

Barry is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious background is Pentecostal. He has not attended church in the last four years except for weddings and funerals. However, he still maintains a connection with the church through its youth group.

Carl

Carl is a student in the Faculty of the Humanities. His religious background is Roman Catholic. At present, he does not go to church. He considers himself as having no religion.

David

David is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious background is Seventh Day Adventist. He has never been baptized, and he does not attend church.

Earl

Earl is a student in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. His father is a Christian, but his mother is a Hindu. Earl considers himself a Hindu but admits that he is not very conscientious in carrying out Hindu religious duties.

Fred

Fred is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious background is Methodist. He does not attend church consistently and does not consider himself a Christian.

Gareth

Gareth is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His father is Roman Catholic and his mother is Seventh Day Adventist. He does not attend church.

Harold

Harold is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious background is Pentecostal. He has not attended church in the last seven years.

Ivan

Ivan is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious orientation is Pentecostal. He attends church “kinda regularly” but he does not consider himself a Christian.

Joel

Joel is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious background is Pentecostal/Spiritual Baptist. He does not attend church.

Kenrick

Kenrick is a student in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. His religious background is Methodist. He stopped going to church about four years ago.

Lionel

Lionel is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious background is Evangelical. He does not attend church. He wears his hair long and plaited.

Milton

Milton is a student in the Faculty of Natural Sciences. He is a practicing Muslim.

Norman

Norman is a student in the Faculty of the Humanities. His religious background is Anglican (Episcopal). He does not attend church.

Owen

Owen is a student in the Faculty of Social Sciences. His religious orientation is Apostolic. He attends church occasionally and does not consider himself a Christian.

DATA COLLECTION

The data for the study were gathered through semi-structured interviews with the research subjects. I personally interviewed each student participating in the study. Prior to each interview, I gave each participant two copies of a consent form, which outlined the nature of the research, the potential risks faced by participants and the obligations of the researcher. Each participant indicated his willingness to be interviewed by signing both copies of the consent form. One copy was kept by the participant, while the other was returned to me to be forwarded to Covenant Theological Seminary.

The interviews were conducted in a small, vacant room on the top floor of, next to the main office. This room proved to be quite appropriate, as it allowed for the interviews to be conducted in privacy. Additionally, because the room was on the same floor as the main office, students could come to be interviewed without it being obvious that they were coming upstairs to participate in research.

All interviews were recorded on audiocassettes, except for the case in which one student agreed to participate only on condition that the interview not be taped. In that situation, I concluded, like Chevannes, that it was more important to hear his views than to have a recorded interview.¹⁶⁰ In addition to taping the interviews, I made notes. I jotted down main points from participants' responses, noted questions arising out of the responses, and recorded body language, tone of voice, and other physical expressions wherever these seemed significant.

DATA ANALYSIS

I personally transcribed each interview within no more than a week of taping it. This ensured that the information was still fresh in my mind. Data analysis began from the transcribing of the first interview. Bearing in mind the purpose of the study, I looked at the answers to the research questions to see what information I could find that was relevant to the study. I sought as well to construct tentative categories based on recurring themes in the data. As the analysis progressed, the categories became clearer. (For example, several respondents named a responsible father, uncle, or other male relative who took care of them as a man whom they greatly admired. The category, "responsible male relative," was created to capture this). The constant comparative method was useful throughout my analysis. This involved using the

constructed categories to compare data from one transcript with data from other transcripts, in order to identify recurring patterns in the data as a whole. The information gleaned in this way forms the basis of Chapter Four.

BIASES OF THE STUDY

The researcher made every effort to be professional in the conducting of the study. I sought to include all views and present them fairly, whether or not I agreed with them. However, I think it only fair to make the reader aware of the perspective that I brought to the study, which may or may not have influenced what I emphasized. First of all, I did not conduct the study simply as a student of religion examining the attitudes of young males towards Christianity. I conducted the study as a Christian minister, with an interest in the conversion of young males. So, even though I was asking for their views on Christianity, including what they thought was wrong with it, I personally felt that nothing was wrong with Christianity in its essence. I tended, therefore to see their negative views of Christianity as wrong thinking that needed to be corrected in order to facilitate their conversion.

Secondly, I operated on the premise that young males in Vincentian society are in crisis. To be fair, I must say that this is not simply the view of a religious person. There is a general feeling in Vincentian society that young males have lost, or are losing, their way. This may well be reflected in the willingness of the authorities at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College to facilitate the research. Everyone in a position of authority in society seems to be interested in finding out why our young men are the way they are. I carried out the study as one such person.

¹⁶⁰ Barry Chevannes, 164.

Finally, I firmly believe that while the church has a responsibility to be sensitive to the needs of young men and do its best not to alienate them, it need not change its fundamental message and values to accommodate today's young men. Put another way, I do not favor the marketing approach to Christian ministry. I believe the Christian minister is not simply trying to sell a product; he is trying to communicate the truth of God. Respect and sensitivity are crucial ingredients in the presentation, but the message, if it is truth, cannot be altered to suit the demands of the market.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Barry Chevannes has made the point that the fact that we cannot know everything about a phenomenon should not prevent us from knowing something about it.¹⁶¹ Keeping this in mind, I acknowledge that this study may be limited in several ways. Four such limitations can be identified.

First, the sample contains only community college students, who constitute the cream of the crop as far as education in St. Vincent and the Grenadines is concerned. The study, therefore, does not reflect the views of young males who did not make it in the education system.

The sample is further limited to those students who were willing to talk to me. Given the nature of the subject and the need to complete the study within a specified time, I had no choice but to go with those who volunteered readily. For some reason, the students from the Faculty of Social Sciences showed the greatest interest. As a result, the sample contained nine students from that faculty as compared to three each from the Faculty of the Humanities and the Faculty of Natural Sciences.

Third, the data collected reflected the views of students in three specific areas. I have to concede that there may be other areas relevant to the issue that might have been explored. However, these three were chosen out of personal interest and the practical consideration that one could cover only so much in the available time.

Finally, I conducted the study as a Christian minister, who was known to be such by students at the St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College. Therefore, one cannot rule out the possibility that some students may have modified their views to bring them more in line with what they thought I would approve, while some others may have exaggerated things in an attempt to shock me.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I have outlined how I used a qualitative research design to explore why young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College may find it difficult to embrace Christianity. I formulated three research questions exploring the interaction between views of manhood and Christianity and enlisted the help of two lecturers at the college to find fifteen non-Christian male students willing to participate in the research. The students who volunteered were interviewed at the college in a room that was made available for that specific purpose. I personally transcribed all taped interviews and analyzed the data using the constant comparative method. Given the fact that I, as the researcher, was the primary agent in data collection and analysis, I indicated my personal perspective and also pointed out possible limitations to the study. In the next chapter, I will present the findings of the study.

¹⁶¹ Barry Chevannes, 5.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to examine how young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College view both manhood and Christianity, and to see if these views can help clarify the reasons for their apparent rejection of Christianity. Three research questions were formulated with the aim of eliciting young males' views on manhood, Christianity, and the likely impact on a male of becoming a Christian. In this chapter, we will look at the responses given by young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College.

MANHOOD

The first research question focused on determining the essential characteristics of manhood. Each student was asked to list words or phrases appropriate for describing a real man, and to name a man from fiction or real life whom he greatly admired, giving reasons for his choice. What follows is a description of what manhood entails, according to young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines College.

Strength

First of all, a real man is seen as being strong. Six students listed "strong" as a word appropriate for describing a real man. Gareth sees strength as essential to manhood. Of a real man he says: "...he has to have that man quality [pause]; he should be strong, in other words." Strength can be looked at from both the physical and the mental standpoint. We will look first at the physical.

Fred emphasized the physical aspect of strength when he squared his shoulders as he used the word “strong” to describe a real man. Alex also focused on the physical aspect of strength when he chose action hero, Arnold Schwarzenegger, as the man he admires. He gave this explanation for his choice of Arnold Schwarzenegger: “Basically, because of the way he handles situations, in terms of violent situations... He is always saving people and stuff like that, trying to make sure nobody dies. He is like a savior.” Carl showed similar admiration for physical strength, albeit in a different context. He gave the following defense of his choosing Canadian figure skater, Patrice Lauzon, as the man he admires: “Most people..., when they think of a figure skater, they think of a woman or something like that, and to me, to see him doing that, it’s an inspiration because you can still be strong, macho and independent on the ice. So I kinda admire him.”

Lionel emphasized the mental aspect of strength when he described a real man as “strong mentally.” He chose his uncle as a man he admires: “It happened when he was young, when my grandmother died and he was going to Grammar School, but through that he never missed school, and for most of his time in grammar school he was the best all round student.” Earl chose Donald Trump as a man he admires greatly. Among the reasons he gave is that Donald Trump is a man who “sticks to his guns.” Fred’s choice was his brother. He said this about him: “He has his values, right, and knows what his values are and stands up for them, and he is...a strong Christian.”

The physical and mental aspects of strength are combined in Harold’s choice of Denzel Washington, the lead character in the movie *John Q*, as a man he admires.

The movie *John Q* is about a father who cannot afford a heart transplant for his son and takes hostages in a hospital until all that is necessary for the operation is provided. Harold explained his choice of Denzel Washington as follows: “Well, the roles he plays in movies, they are very strong. Like the movie *John Q*, in which his son was dying and needed medication. He played the role of a strong man there. He was going out there to try and get the money to help his son – portrays a strong man.”

Sacrificial Caring for One’s Family

Eight students described a real man as responsible and caring. Kenrick identified his father as one such person: “He understands that to be a real man, to have a family, certain sacrifices have to be made for the good of the family.” For Barry, it was an uncle who played that role: “He is a father figure. He takes care of the children. He will let them eat while he goes hungry.” Gareth’s choice of Barack Obama was also based on the latter’s commitment to providing for his family. He explains:

Okay, from my perspective, he has the mindset, he looks as if he has the authority. And his leadership style...he has that relationship a man should have ...Okay, in other words, some women in society, they provide. Some are single mothers; they do everything. They have to work. They do man work, so to speak. They have to bring in money to fund the children. So I see Barack Obama, instead of having the woman lead, he has that quality to lead.

Calm Confidence

Two students saw a real man as being calm and confident. According to Joel, a real man is “confident in himself.” His choice for the man he admires greatly was Ian Mc Kellen, star of *Lord of the Rings* and *X-Men*. He justified his choice as follows: “I just think, well, he is very confident in himself. He is very tranquil, calm to me...” Ivan’s choice was Barack Obama, for similar reasons: “The way he carries

himself, like he appears to be above the fray of things and like he doesn't allow himself to be caught up in the day to day account in politics...like not just saying anything to get elected."

Independence

Two students saw a real man as being independent. Norman had this to say when asked to give three words or phrases to describe a real man: "Independent, more or less a person who deals with his own affairs, which still comes under 'independent,' but still..." Carl also saw a real man as being independent. On his list of words appropriate for describing a real man, "independent" was third. He also focused on this trait as he explained why he admired Patrice Lauzon: "...it's an inspiration because you can still be strong, macho and independent on the ice..."

Hospitality

Owen sees a real man as one who is hospitable. He stood out as the only person to choose a pastor as a man he admired greatly. Part of his reason for admiring the pastor is the latter's hospitable nature. Of the pastor, Owen says: "...when you come into the church he would socialize with you and make sure you are comfortable."

Honesty

Six students choose "honest" as one of the words appropriate for describing a real man. In four cases, "honest" was the first word on the list and, in the other two cases, it was the second. Honesty was a factor in Owen's choice of the pastor as the man he admired. Referring to the pastor, he says: "He is honest and knows how to get the word out to you."

Wisdom

Three students pointed to wisdom as an essential quality of a real man. According to Harold, a real man is “loyal, strong and wise.” Milton also emphasized wisdom when he described a real man as one who “makes right choices when he needs to.” Earl chose Donald Trump as a man he admires greatly. He presented him as a man of sound judgement: “Well, he’s very successful. Seems to have a good, how do I say this? He seems very responsible. He seems to be, he keeps things intact. He keeps his life together.”

Restraint of Tender Emotions

Ivan’s idea of a real man is one who does not display any emotion that may suggest tenderness or weakness. According to him a real man should be “slightly emotionless.” When asked to explain that statement, he responded: “ Like they can’t be packed with emotion, like any little thing would get them all sobbing and so forth.”

Sexual Prowess

David introduced the idea that being a real man is linked to sexual prowess through his choice of “Roy,” a character from a play, as a man he admires. He described “Roy” as follows: “He is a character that is a kind of womanizer. He is one of those guys who feel that he can’t stick to one woman. He has to be like a player and he can’t show any woman any respect.” When asked why he admired “Roy,” he responded: “The way he feels boastful about himself. As normally any young boy, they tend to look up to somebody who is a so-called ‘shotta’(Casanova) or player.” When questioned as to why young boys tend to admire ‘shottas,’ he explained:

Okay...most, this is just a different scenario that kinda strays off from the topic. Normally, young boys, right, they tend to have this kind of competition. It is not really a true competition but they look at it as a competition, where they try to see who could date the most girls and those kind of stuff. So they kinda do it to impress their friends so they would look up to them and say, "He is a 'shotta,' he is a womanizer" and that sort of stuff.

Other desirable qualities in a real man were mentioned but not elaborated on. These include loyalty, gentleness, knowledge of one's abilities, tolerance, respect for others, clarity in thinking, industry, high self-esteem and assertiveness.

CHRISTIANITY

The second research question sought to discover the views of young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College on Christianity as practiced on those islands. The information was elicited through asking students to give words or phrases appropriate for describing Christianity, to indicate what aspect of Christianity they would change if they had the power to do so, and to give their opinion on pastors in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The information is presented as positive and negative views of Christianity as a religion, and positive and negative views of pastors.

Positive Views of Christianity

Twelve of the respondents had at least one positive thing to say about Christianity. For Fred, Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ: "I see Christianity as when you accept Jesus Christ as your savior...and the Holy Spirit resides in you and so...when you sin, you realize that you sin and go to Christ and say, 'I have sinned' and ask for forgiveness." Alex also emphasizes personal relationship: "Christianity is like devoting to a particular purpose...having God as your savior and letting him into your life...accepting Christ for who he is. Whether

something happen you will know that Christ is there, he is there with you and he will just guide you through it.”

Other respondents focused on the positive lifestyle associated with Christianity. David described Christianity as “having faith in God, being honest and loving your brothers and sisters.” Barry spoke of Christianity as involving being trustworthy and forgiving. Joel, for his part, saw Christianity as meeting a person’s need to belong to something. He put it this way: “It sort of gives you a belongingness, something to share with, socialize...”

Carl’s view of Christianity is generally more negative than positive. Nevertheless, he is impressed by the fact that Christianity has a worldwide appeal. When asked to describe Christianity, his initial response was: “It’s a stronghold, first of all.” When an explanation was requested he replied: “Stronghold as in range...as in Christianity exists all over the world. It’s not something that is in just one place.”

Four students said outright that they would change nothing about Christianity, even if they had the power to change something. Fred and Barry did not hesitate in saying that they would change nothing. Lionel, despite the fact that he expressed some negative views about Christianity, also said that he would change nothing. Gareth was quite emphatic in his response. With a gesture that said, “Hands off,” he declared: “I would not tamper at all.”

Negative Views of Christianity

Twelve of the students interviewed had, at least, one negative thing to say about Christianity as it exists in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The perceived negative aspects of Christianity are listed below.

Restrictions

Lionel, who ended by saying that he would change nothing about Christianity even if he could, expressed the view that Christianity is too restrictive. This is what he said:

From what I am seeing, and getting from other people, it is basically a lot of restrictions on a person's life. A friend of mine recently became a Christian and he is telling me that the music I listen to is wrong and the way I live my life is wrong. To me, I love music. I don't want to lose my music. When he tells me now that the music I listen to is wrong and I should only listen to this certain type of music, then it is just putting restrictions on people and I am telling you now we weren't created to be drones and robots. There is this freedom we are entitled to have, not that we go about doing whatever we want, forsaking the Lord and stuff, but we have a choice to make and having people restrict us is something that, for my part, I hate that and I think other males hate that as well, having restrictions. So if they would say, 'Okay, this type of music is wrong,' but still we are humans and we are not robots to just stop one thing and jump into another, because that is impossible as I see it.

Kenrick expressed similar views:

Honestly, right, even though I don't go to church, I strongly believe in Christianity but, you know, some churches, right, they hold – they have their own separate rules. I don't really find it necessary. It's like they are trying to bind you. I understand that in religion you have to live a certain way but the churches, most of them, come up with their own separate rules.

Unattainable Standards

David sees Christianity as having some rules that are impossible to keep. On the matter of what he would change, he says:

Probably the parts where the Ten Commandments say, 'Thou shalt not lie' and they have another part where it says 'fornication' – probably those parts because those parts kinda difficult for a man to keep...for mankind in general because sometimes you don't really and truly go to lie. Sometimes you lie to get out of certain situations, just to save the outcome, and as in fornication, sometimes that is difficult to deal with because it goes on every day. I believe the rest can be accomplished but the lying part and the fornication, no.

Ivan shares David's view that some Christian standards are too high for the average person. He says: "When you are a Christian, people expect you to be at a certain level, so if you could lessen the requirements a bit...just so it won't be as hard."

Aggressive/Hypocritical Church Members

Kenrick sees most Christians in St. Vincent and the Grenadines as having "a sort of aggressive/hypocritical attitude." He elaborates: "Like, honestly, I have an aunt, right, she is a Christian, but the way she approaches non-Christians, her attitude towards them, wouldn't exactly sway them to come to Christianity at all." When asked to explain why he felt his aunt's attitude would not encourage people to become Christians, he replied:

Because you have to understand that everybody comes from a sinner to being saved. So you pass through that and you are approaching unsaved people and treating them like, for lack of a better word, abominations, and people would just look at that and be like, "If this is how a Christian is acting, is supposed to act, then why would I want to be a Christian?"

If this way of approaching non-Christians could be changed, Kenrick argues, "It would bring more people into the house of God."

Empty Christian Profession

The major issue for Norman is that too many people say they are Christians without displaying the fruits to support their claims. When asked what he would change about Christianity if he could, he responded:

All right, most churches, most people that I know, I won't say they are exactly Christians but self-proclaimed, that's it. So that is the thing I would change. I would try to focus on getting the people to more believe about it instead of telling themselves that they are Christians and not doing the right thing.

When asked why he would do this he explained: "Well, let's say, I would say, you want to have a true Christian. You don't just believe because you (are) going to

church that you are a Christian. You should do the right things, keep the commandments.”

Christianity's Exclusive Claims

Earl has a major problem with the idea that Christianity is the only way to God. This is something he would change if he had the power to do so. He says:

From my experience, most Christians try to force you or try to persuade you to be a Christian. It's not something I believe, on a whole, any religion should do, force someone to join their religion. That's one thing I would probably change, the mentality that they believe Christianity is the only religion...you are supposed to be in.

When asked why he would change that, he gave this explanation: “It gives Christianity an image that it is something forced, as in created. I would say it doesn't seem like a true religion, like a religion God would want.” When asked why God would not want this type of religion, he replied:

Well, from what they preach to me, like they say in school, they come up to me and say it is the only true religion, it is the only way to get into heaven, to be a Christian, because I have had people tell me that I am not a Christian and I am going to hell...It gives Christianity a bad image, makes it look like (pause) like a cult.

Division

Six students expressed the view that Christianity was too divided. Milton described Christianity as “fractured.” When asked what he would change about Christianity, Harold responded without hesitation: “One religion.” He was asked to explain that statement and he said: “Well, you have different branches like Methodist, Pentecostal, Adventist. You really don't know who to believe in. So if it could be one religion, because all of them is just one God, so I don't see the reason for these separate branches.” Joel agrees strongly with Harold. He says: “I think there should

be one church. It is confusing, with so many churches...instead of this church not agreeing with that church, let's just have one church." Owen gives some insight into the problems that result from having different denominations: "It's kinda confusing because you really don't know who is really Christians because you have some churches where you can't go [to] Carnival and them things and some other churches you could do all those things." Carl, for his part, is concerned about the enmity that can be created as a result of denominational differences, like worshipping on a Saturday instead of on a Sunday. He says: "I have seen on numerous occasions like Saturday worshippers hold certain things against Sunday worshippers. It's kinda ridiculous, so to save all that, we could just get rid of all of the enmity that is created."

Christian Leaders

Students were asked to give their views on Christian pastors. Two students were uncommitted. Nine expressed generally positive views while the other four expressed negative views. Some of the views are presented below, beginning with the positive.

Positive Views

Owen, the only person to choose a pastor as an example of a man he admires greatly, considers a pastor to be a role model or a good example. Barry has a similar attitude to pastors. He describes a pastor as follows: "Someone to look up to, someone who is there for the Christians." Barry believes that most pastors in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are like this. Ivan shares Barry's respect for pastors in St. Vincent and the Grenadines: "They have a good reputation in St. Vincent because you

don't hear any sex scandal and that type of thing about them. So they are generally good down here."

Kenrick's respect for pastors is linked to their approach to ministry. He says: "Well I know a few good, admirable pastors. They stick to the rules of the Bible itself. They teach, and their approach and everything is good. They would attract. I have respect for many." Earl also considers pastors as different from church members in a positive way. He explains:

To me they seem like true models of what Christianity is, most of them, not all. Like a couple of times friends invited me to church and you could actually tell the difference between a pastor and the people who come to church. The pastor is more, he seems to be more religious and...well, actually thinking what Christianity really is, and most pastors I have come across, they preach the word of God to you but they are not forcing you to join them, they want you to embrace God. But the fellow members, the people who come to church, it is a totally different story...so I think pastors who are this way are true Christians.

Negative Views

Lionel is not impressed with the pastors he knows. He began by expressing his strong disapproval of gay marriages and the pastors who perform them. When he was told that such things do not happen in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, he responded as follows:

It doesn't happen in St. Vincent, but in St. Vincent you see a lot of people trying to con the church members...yeah, they take the church's money, and that's something I have witnessed for myself, and that is just something I don't want to be a part of, so I will not follow that person in whatever...I will stay at home and read my Bible and praise the Lord.

Norman is likewise not happy with the behavior of pastors in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. He says: "Most I have seen so far, they are people who go around like they have their churches and they have their congregations, who still...the

majority I have seen, don't set no example for the congregation, which they should be doing." When asked what made him say that, he replied: "Two years ago, after Confirmation, the pastor said no one can go to Carnival because Carnival was the day after Confirmation, but he went to Carnival. He said we couldn't go, but he went to Carnival." In response to a follow up question on the impact of that experience on his view of Christianity, he said:

Well, what I am saying, if they consider themselves as Christians and they [are] preaching, they say, in God's name, but what they [are] saying is right but they ain't doing, that would make another person think otherwise. He would say, "Why go to church when the pastor is doing the same things that he's preached against?"

Carl thinks a pastor should be "honest, first of all, a leader, not a follower."

When asked whether he thought most pastors in St. Vincent and the Grenadines were like this, he responded: "No, I don't know much pastors who are like that, to be honest, that's what they should be." However, unlike Lionel and Milton, failure on the part of the pastor is not an issue for him as far as attending church is concerned. He says: "I really do not go to church for the pastor."

THE IMPACT OF BECOMING A CHRISTIAN ON A MALE

The third research question focused on the perceived impact of becoming a Christian on a male. Each student was asked to say how he saw his own life changing if he became a Christian; what he would say to his best friend if the latter became a Christian; and why he thought a young man might not want to become a Christian. We shall examine the responses to each of these in turn.

Changes in Lifestyle Caused by Embracing Christianity

Two students, Carl and Earl, stated that they could not tell how their lives would change if they became Christians. Carl's response was; "I really don't know." Earl provided a bit more information: "I, I have no idea. I have no idea, but because, I mean I am a Hindu. I pray to God as our creator and I pray to Hindu gods as well. I don't know how it will change."

Three students expressed the view that becoming a Christian would result in only minor changes in lifestyle. Milton gave this reason for lack of major change:

To me, being a Christian and being a Muslim is not that much different. We learn a lot of the same stuff. We learn about sins, what we should do, what we should not do. We learn about a higher spirit, a higher being, that this person brought me into the world.

David does not envisage any major change because he is already committed to certain Christian standards: "In spite of the fact that I am not a Christian, I still believe in certain Christian morals...the only thing that will change is I will be going to church more often and the certain things I might not partake in." Ivan, who attends church "kinda regularly," had this to say about the impact of becoming a Christian on his lifestyle: "I don't think it would change that much. I won't be that descriptive about other persons and so forth and would settle down more in school and even if I am kinda settled right now, I will be able to settle down a bit more."

The other ten students all saw Christianity as bringing with it major lifestyle changes. Four of them focused on new obligations or restrictions, while the other six focused on being changed for the better. We shall look first at the focus on new obligations and restrictions.

New Obligations/Restrictions

Gareth sees Christianity as bringing with it a whole new set of obligations:

For instance, I will have to make time for church. I will have to include spiritual time as in reading my Bible, praying, er, I will have to make more time for the Lord. I will have to be a more religious person. It will change my whole thinking. Sometimes, I do things without thinking at the time. I won't look out for the moral...Now I have to rethink my, er, whatever I am going to do, you know...I might even have to, well, I usually consider myself a very aggressive person...I will have to change in this area.

Joel also focuses on obligations:

There would be a great change. There's lots of things I wouldn't do. Well, for one, I would try to go to church more often, try not to break the commandments, not to lie and be more...Most things I would try to, not that I don't try now, but if I was to call myself a Christian, I would have to adhere to all the laws of Christianity.

Finally, for Barry, the focus is on what one cannot do when one becomes a Christian:

"Can't go to places you used to go, can't lie..."

Change for the Better

The other six students focused on how becoming Christians would change them for the better. We will now look at some of what they said. Describing how his life would change if he became a Christian, Owen explained: "Well, for sure, it would make me a better person. I will be, well, more in tune to God, even more able to help people and my friends and family to become servers of the Lord." Alex focused on the positive change in his thinking associated with becoming a Christian: "I think basically becoming a Christian means accepting God as my savior... I think it will give me an overall change and stuff like that, help me think different[ly], make my mind become more focused and help me to become a better person." Harold imagined himself changing in the sense of having a more positive impact on others: "I will be

more like helpful, generous, considerate of others' feelings, yea." Finally, Fred saw himself as becoming a more spiritual person due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: "Well, if I became a Christian, right, I would be changed for the better, seeing that the Holy Spirit will be living in me. I would be guided by him and I'll really not, I will be more concerned with spirituality than with the physical aspects of life."

Reactions to a Best Friend's Decision to Become a Christian

Two students, Carl and Earl, did not know what they would say to a best friend who came and told them he had just become a Christian. The responses of the other students tended to be either encouragement or caution. Six responses can be classified as primarily encouragement and six as primarily caution. One response was a mixture of encouragement and caution.

Primarily Encouragement

Lionel said that he would say to his friend, "Go ahead. Go for it." He explains why he would say this: "I am not one to discourage people from anything positive. I see Christianity as something positive, so if they want to go and become a Christian, I will be like, 'Hey, I am happy for you. Go for it and try your best to bring people to God.'" Kenrick also indicated that he would respond with encouragement and added that his respect for the person would increase. He said: "I would say, 'A great step.' The salvation of one's soul is more important than...so I will develop more respect for that person." Gareth's response showed respect for an individual's right to choose and moved beyond encouragement to the possibility of his being influenced by his best friend's decision into becoming a Christian himself. He said:

I would say, "Go right ahead." I won't discourage him. That's his choice. Some individuals, you know, they may discourage him: "What you doing that

for?” I am not that kind of person. I will encourage him. I may even join him because, you know, he is my brother, because my brother is an influential character. I look up to him, so if he does something, I may want to do it too.

Harold, Milton and Ivan also indicated that they would respond with encouraging words.

Primarily Caution

Owen appeared to be giving encouragement at first but, as he progressed, the focus on caution became clearer: “I will tell him that is very nice, that’s very nice of him. I hope he continues and hope he is serious and knows what he is getting into.”

When asked why he would say that, he replied: “Some people see Christianity different to other people and they go and get baptized and then do all the things that other people are doing. Knowing that you have been baptized, you should really stay as a Christian.” Alex’s response showed a similar concern for the maintenance of a good Christian testimony: “I would tell him that I hope he will stay devoted to Christianity and continue to serve God.” When asked to explain why he would say such things to his friend, he replied: “Because [emphatic tone] he saying that he [has] become a Christian is not just saying that he is a Christian. It basically means that his whole life [is] supposed to be changed...” Barry indicated that he would show concern about his friend’s ability to handle the responsibilities of Christianity: “That’s your choice. It is a good thing, but you have to make sure you know what you are doing. Can you carry out the duties?” Barry’s attitude is influenced by what he sees as a high rate of backsliding: “Based on what I see, people get baptized and then backslide. You can’t join the church and still want to do the same things you were doing before.”

Joel indicated that he would focus on ensuring that the decision to become a Christian was made by his friend, and his friend alone, after a careful consideration of all of the issues involved. He said: “I would say, ‘It’s your choice; and I just hope nobody pressured you and you want to do it because you feel it is right and you feel you should do it. Make sure your feeling is strong and think about what you are doing.’” When asked why he would say all of that, he responded: “Because it is a very serious – what shall I say? – matter you are dealing with, an obligation, and if he decides to become a Christian, make sure you are becoming a Christian for the right reasons.” Norman also expressed concern about becoming a Christian as a result of external pressure: “I have told my friends that already, ‘It’s your decision. Make it. Don’t let anyone force you into it. But if you say you get confirmed and think you want to go back and do the same things you were doing before, I think it would be even worse for you.’”

Perceived Negative Consequences of Embracing Christianity

The final question asked interviewees for reasons why a young man might not want to become a Christian. Earl, Harold and Joel asserted that some young men have no interest in Christianity because they are atheists. Though he was unsure of the number, Joel was confident about the presence of atheists: “You have to expect that in St. Vincent, there are people who do not believe in God. We have the right to choose. Some people just live...”

David blames the programs of the church for the reluctance of young men to embrace Christianity. To him, church programs are sometimes boring. He says:

Sometimes it is not because you do not want to be a Christian or sometimes it is not because you do not want to go to church, but sometimes the programs of

the church are a bit boring and drawn out, boring and drawn out. Sometimes the preacher would preach a sermon and grasp your attention, but the next time is like...it is not really and truly a good speech.

The previously mentioned reasons notwithstanding, the overwhelming majority of explanations for the reluctance of young men to become Christians center on perceived negative consequences for any young male who decides to become a Christian. These consequences are loss of friends, loss of freedom and loss of masculine identity.

Loss of Friends

Eleven of the respondents pointed to fear of negative reactions from friends or peers as a reason for the reluctance of young males to embrace Christianity. Gareth commented on the issue as follows:

Peer pressure. Okay, his friends. A lot has to do with his friends. Okay, depending on his friends who are not Christians, he may want to accompany them. Even though his pastor may want to make him a Christian, he may well follow his friends [rather] than to become a Christian because he thinks what his friends are doing is right, and [if] he do the opposite he may well lose his friends because they may discourage him even to become a Christian because...it is a choice that one has to make. You have to know if you want to give up your friends for that.

Fred also believes that becoming a Christian can mean loss of friends for a young man. He says: “Nowadays, right, you going up to a friend and saying you are a Christian, they like shun you and stuff.”

Lionel believes that it is the desire to maintain friendships that causes some young men to identify with the gangster lifestyle. He uses the community of “Ashville” to illustrate his point:

The way it is now, Ashville is one of the worst places in St. Vincent and I will say, one of the worst places – the gangs and guns, drugs and stuff like that. And if someone wants to be a Christian...you are a punk, you (are) just

backing down because you are afraid to do this and afraid to do that. Then it could affect that individual in, okay, they like, "I want to be a Christian but this certain group will not permit me to do so. I have to leave Christianity behind just to be in the group." And in a sense, they are just looking for a sense of security and (pause) love, I will say. So most of the times, these same people are drawn to a certain group because they want something from that group, and if Christianity is not a part of that group, then they will likely not.

Alex focuses on the ridicule that can be experienced by a young male who embraces Christianity. He says:

It's like society nowadays, they no longer abide by this form of going to church and stuff like that because they see other people on the streets every day, other boys, men, gangsters doing the same set of things, and no one wants to pass the street as a Christian and behaving like Christians do. They want to follow the bunch, the pack, which shows they can blend in, mix. No one wants to be seen looking like a godly person...

When asked why this was so, he replied: "That's because... Christians, when they pass the streets, people tend to laugh and stuff like that. Some reason I don't know why, because they are always different than everyone else and people tend not to like people who are different than they are..." He was then asked directly whether he thought that some young men were reluctant to become Christians because they didn't want to be laughed at. He replied: "That is basically it, because if you are a Christian and... in class you are praying or saying something that is related to Christianity for the whole class, then you have the outside gangster bunch who will be there as well. They will be laughing..."

Kenrik's succinct comments offer fitting closure to this section. Regarding the reluctance of young males to embrace Christianity, he reasoned: "The major problem with that will be peer pressure. People are concerned about what others will think or say about them. You go around as a Christian and people will treat you like an outcast."

Loss of Freedom

Ten respondents expressed the belief that young men are reluctant to become Christians because they think that becoming Christians will prevent them from doing things they like to do. This is what Norman had to say about why a young man might not want to become a Christian:

Well, mostly, he believes that if he is a Christian, there will be restrictions. For instance, he won't be going to parties. He has to live, like, no fornication and all that stuff, and mostly, most of the things that young men do today are not in the Bible as a commandment.

Owen gave an answer similar to Norman's: "Well, basically...Christianity takes a lot of dedication. You can't really be doing certain things like pleasures and sex and all those things. So probably [for] most men, I believe that is the reason. They believe Christianity has too many rules and regulations you have to follow." Joel also believes that Christianity has too many rules. He claims that young men know that they will not be able to keep them, so they choose not to identify with Christianity. He stated it this way:

In order to be a Christian, you have to go to church and don't lie and follow the commandments [sneering tone], and you can't watch certain things or do certain things like go to parties and stuff like that. That's what most young people think Christianity is, so they know they will not – if they become a Christian, they will still do these things so they choose not to. And when you are a Christian and you do those things, you are labeled, you know, as a hypocrite.

Loss of Masculine Identity

Two students claimed that some young men find the Christian lifestyle appropriate for a female but not for a male. Gareth gave that as a reason, apart from peer pressure, for the reluctance of young males to become Christians. He said:

"Some might not see it as their role as in, 'Why should I be a Christian?' They may

not see it as their thing. It is more for a female. Some young men have that perspective.” Joel asserted that some young men were of the view that becoming a Christian would make them more feminine. When asked to elaborate, he replied:

Well, men are supposed to be strong and not have a lot of feelings. Men think that becoming a Christian would make them more feminine, like kind. Then there is also the saying that you are born a male but you have to do certain things to be a man, like drink, do mechanical things. A young man would not want anyone to see him reading a book; that’s for females.

The general thrust of these comments is that a young man who becomes a Christian is effectively surrendering his manhood.

Summary of Findings

Based on the students’ descriptions of a real man and on the examples of men they greatly admired, a composite picture of manhood emerges. According to students who participated in the research, a real man is strong, assertive, caring, calmly confident, hospitable, wise, honest, loyal, aware of his abilities, self-reliant, not given to displays of tender emotion, and able to attract women.

Students expressed both negative and positive views of Christianity, as a religious system, and of Christian pastors. Christianity was viewed positively, as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ that provides a sense of belonging, produces sound moral values, and is a force to be reckoned with all over the world. Those who saw Christianity in a negative light saw it as restrictive, hypocritical, bigoted, divided, and having unattainable standards. On the other hand, most respondents viewed Christian pastors in a positive light, commending them for hospitality, morality and the way in which they communicate the Christian message. The minority who viewed

them negatively saw them as con men and as people who do not practice what they preach.

Most students saw embracing Christianity as bringing major change to their lives. Slightly less than half of them described these changes as new obligations, while the larger portion focused on how Christianity would change them for the better. Concerning what they would say to a friend who had just become a Christian, students were, more or less, evenly divided between offering words of encouragement and sounding notes of caution. Finally, becoming a Christian was seen by young males as likely to lead to loss of friends, loss of freedom and loss of masculine identity.

This brings us to the end of this chapter on the findings of the research. In the next, and final, chapter, we will examine these findings in light of the literature and make recommendations for further study and practice.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF STUDY

In chapter one, I sought to set the stage for the study. I identified the fact that females outnumber males significantly in Caribbean churches as an issue that needs to be addressed by the Caribbean church. I further narrowed my focus to young males. I stated the problem as understanding why males find it difficult to embrace Christianity and established the purpose of the study as examining how young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines view manhood and Christianity in order to see if these views can help one understand why they find it difficult to embrace Christianity. The research questions chosen were designed to elicit their views on manhood, Christianity, and the impact of becoming a Christian on a male.

I then sought to demonstrate the significance of the study, pointing to the lack of studies addressing this problem, the need for the church to have information that will enable it to minister effectively to young men, and the malaise afflicting young men in the area being studied, as evidenced by their underperformance in education. I stressed that things will only get worse if young men continue to avoid Christianity. Finally, I defined all terms to be used in the study which were considered crucial.

Chapter Two involved a review of the relevant literature. First of all, I established a theological framework which calls for a recognition of the role of men in spiritual leadership, the place of young men in God's service, the status of humans as fallen beings, and the sovereignty of God in relation to salvation. The literature

was reviewed in three sections: the Feminization Thesis, Responses to the Feminization Thesis, and the Construction of Caribbean Masculinity.

Proponents of the feminization thesis argued that a number of historical factors have combined to render the Western church feminized. As consequence, they assert, men tend to stay away from church because they are not comfortable in this feminine atmosphere. Their solution is to reverse the feminizing trend and bring the church back to a state in which men can participate and feel comfortable. The more moderate proponents of this view focus on cultivating an authentic masculine spirituality involving initiation, struggle, and brotherly love. The more radical side of this movement wants to change the entire church culture so as to allow men to be raw and uninhibited in the church setting, in accordance with their God-given wild hearts.

Those who reject the feminization thesis assert that the masculinity movement, especially in its more radical form, misuses Scripture and relies on unbiblical, or even anti-Biblical, sources for its authority. Rejecting the masculinity movement on account of its questionable foundation, they believe that the problems men have with Christianity are related to culturally constructed stereotypes of manhood.

The literature on the construction of Caribbean masculinity deals with the impact of slavery on Caribbean masculinity and current patterns in the socialization of young males. The writers seek to link the entrenchment of hegemonic masculinity in the Caribbean to the organization of male-female relationships in slave society and current patterns of male socialization, which establish a strong link between being a man and being sexually active.

Chapter two ended with personal reflections on the literature. I indicated a leaning towards views that regarded the radical masculinity movement as not Biblically sound. In view of this, I felt that it might be more fruitful to focus on areas of potential conflict between Christianity and cultural views of manhood. The view expressed in the Caribbean literature that manhood is attained by being sexually active was identified as one such area.

In chapter three, I described how I used a qualitative approach to study the difficulties young males at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College may experience in relation to identifying with Christianity. Permission was granted by the Dean of the school for the study to be carried out under the auspices of the college. The research was launched at a general assembly, using the stimulus question: "Can a male Community College student be a Christian and a real man at the same time?" With the help of two lecturers, I was able to find fifteen non-Christian students willing to participate in the study. The students were all interviewed on campus in a room that was made available for that purpose. I personally transcribed all taped interviews and analyzed the data using the constant comparative method.

The findings of the study were presented in Chapter Four. The information provided by the respondents was set out according to the research questions.

Manhood

Views in this area were elicited through asking each respondent to give words/phrases to describe a real man and to name a man he really admires. Based on their responses, a composite picture of a real man was formed. Such a man is strong,

assertive, caring, calmly confident, hospitable, wise, loyal, self-reliant, not given to displays of emotion indicating distress, and able to attract women.

Christianity

The respondents' thoughts on Christianity were elicited by asking them to give words/phrases to describe Christianity, to say what they would change about Christianity if they could, and to express their opinions on Christian pastors. Positive views were that Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, that it gives a sense of belonging, that it upholds sound moral values, and that it has a worldwide appeal. Pastors were viewed positively as hospitable, moral, and skilled in communicating the Christian message. Conversely, Christianity was viewed negatively as too restrictive, having unattainable standards, hypocritical, bigoted, and prone to divisiveness. A minority of the research subjects considered pastors to be con men and leaders who do not set a good example.

The Impact of Becoming a Christian

Respondents were asked how they thought their lives would if they became Christians. They were then asked what they would say to a friend who had just become a Christian. Finally, they were asked why they thought a young man might not want to become a Christian. Most respondents anticipated major changes taking place their lives if they became Christians. These changes were expressed in terms of new benefits or new obligations/restrictions, with a slightly larger portion of the respondents focusing on new benefits. Finally, it was claimed that young men were reluctant to become Christians because they saw negative consequences such as being linked to the female world, loss of freedom, and loss of friends.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

We shall now examine the findings of the study in light of the literature reviewed, other relevant literature, and the researcher's personal experience as a minister of religion. The purpose of the study – to determine why young Vincentian males may find it difficult to identify with Christianity – will serve as the filter through which the findings will be examined. We shall endeavor to look at the findings in three sections, addressing each research question separately. However, because of the overall focus of the study, it may not always be profitable to regard these sections as watertight compartments. Material that was provided in a response under one research question may be discussed under another if it is deemed relevant at that point.

Manhood

The essential qualities of a man which seem to have direct bearing on the purpose of the study are physical strength, restraint of emotions indicating distress, honesty, independence, and power over women. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

Physical Strength

Gareth sees a real man as “having that man quality,” which, for him, means being strong. Fred, who is of medium height and medium build, squared his shoulders to indicate that a man needs to be strong. Interestingly, Alex chose Arnold Schwarzenegger as the man he admires greatly. A former Mr. Olympia, Arnold Schwarzenegger, in his prime, possessed the kind of physique that most men can only dream of having. His phenomenal physical attributes made him eminently qualified to

become the ultimate B-movie hero. Often functioning as a one-man army, he consistently annihilates the bad guys because he is more adept at using violence than they – and he is always on the side of right. This is why Alex sees him as a real man.

The characters portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger in movies have enough physical strength to fulfill one of the imperatives for males in America, which is “to give ’em hell.”¹⁶² A real man is one who is tough enough to use violence to achieve his objectives because in the real world, the rule that “might makes right” is what works.¹⁶³ Van Leeuwin also claims that the desire to show they have what it takes may lead boys to “engage in behaviors risky to themselves, such as driving too fast or taking drugs, often on an implicit dare from which they feel they cannot back down.”¹⁶⁴

Lionel’s explanation for why some young men do not want to become Christians seems to be related to this desire to exhibit physical strength. Lionel says: “Ashville is one of the worst places in St. Vincent – the gangs and guns and stuff like that. And if someone wants to be a Christian...you are a punk, you are just backing down because you are afraid to do this or do that.” Here, Lionel is making the point that, in a community with an orientation towards the gangster lifestyle, Christianity is seen as cowardly. A young man who says he is a Christian is saying that he is not tough enough to be a part of a gang – in short, that he is not a real man.

The tendency of young men to gravitate towards the gangster lifestyle in order to show strength has also been noted by Harold as a hindrance to their acceptance of Christianity. He says:

¹⁶² Van Leeuwin, 99.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 100.

Because young men have egos... Well, each young man has something that people will watch, the way in which people look at us, like some, most young men try to give off like they are badman, gangster – most young men these days. So they try to play the role of gangsters, and in this they don't like really appreciate the word of God and thing anymore.

The message seems clear. Identifying with the gangster lifestyle has a lot to do with the male ego. A real man is one who is tough enough to be a gangster.

All of the foregoing suggests that young men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines may have serious problems identifying with Christianity. Christianity is still essentially a religion of non-violence. Brandon O'Brien describes Jesus as a strong person, despite his commitment to non-violence: "Jesus was gritty, honest and fearless. Yet his strength was not displayed in his willingness to punch evildoers in the mouth but in suffering at their hands for their good."¹⁶⁵

However, in Vincentian popular culture, the actions of Jesus are more likely to be interpreted as weakness. The Arnold Schwarzenegger type, who saves the world through the use of violence, is more likely to be seen as a strong person. Here we appear to have a clash between Christianity and a cultural imperative for males. Insofar as young males define strength in terms of the ability to use violence to achieve an objective, they are more likely to be drawn to the gangster lifestyle and, consequently, shy away from Christianity. They are not going to want to identify with Christianity if it prevents them from measuring up as real men. This is the point being made by Lionel.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ O'Brien, under "True Strength."

Restraint of Emotions Indicating Distress

Ivan's view of a real man is someone who is "slightly emotionless." When pressed for an explanation, he elaborated: "Like they cannot be packed with emotion, like any little thing would get them all sobbing and so forth." Several loaded expressions are used here: "packed with emotion," "any little thing," and "all sobbing." The use of such language strongly suggests that Ivan believes it is inappropriate for a man to express an emotion that indicates he is in distress.

This seems to lend support to the assertion by Chevannes that boys are socialized to take on a tough personality and "avoid a show of tears on every occasion of inward hurt."¹⁶⁶ A good example of this is when the father in Andrew Salkey's novel *Hurricane*, which is set in Jamaica, gave his son a long sad look after assessing the storm damage, and then said to him: "Big men don't cry, Joe. They plan."¹⁶⁷

Ivan's assertion is also consistent with another of the imperatives for boys growing up in America, as recorded by Van Leeuwin: the avoidance of sissy behavior.¹⁶⁸ Van Leeuwin claims that since showing distress is regarded as feminine, a boy in distress must grit his teeth and give no indication that this is the case.¹⁶⁹ She goes on to talk about the difference in the treatment of boys and girls:

The difference is that when girls suffer emotional distress, they are not as often discouraged from expressing it. Most parents of both sexes respond with warmth and concern to girls' fears, encouraging them to "talk it out" as an acceptable expression of femininity. But they use fewer emotion-words with sons, expecting them to limit their expression of vulnerability. Fathers are especially apt to use scorn and teasing to toughen up their sons in the face of fear or sadness.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ Barry Chevannes, 209.

¹⁶⁷ Andrew Salkey, *Hurricane* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1979), 78.

¹⁶⁸ Van Leeuwin, 98.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

It is important to note here that in at least two Biblical instances, the actions of Jesus run counter to this “manly” ideal of not showing emotional distress. At the grave of his friend Lazarus, he wept.¹⁷¹ Also, in Matthew 23, he wept over Jerusalem.¹⁷² In regard to the first incident, those who were looking on did not say: “Big men don’t cry.” They said: “Behold how he loved him.” Such a response would probably not be popular in Western culture today. A man has to show that he is in control. This indicates another possible area of difficulty for the identification of young men with Christianity. A person who is never in distress does not need a savior.

Van Leeuwin also demonstrates how the imperative to restrain emotions indicating distress can have serious negative consequences for young men. She explains:

We have seen that boys are pushed from an early age to suppress fearful or sad feelings and are often shamed when they fail to do so. But they *are* often encouraged to express one strong feeling: anger. Indeed when parents tell their children stories or teach them how to manage conflict, they are likely to stress empathy and harmony for their daughters but the use of anger for their sons. As a result, anger can become the single pathway or “emotional funnel” through which boys channel the forbidden, softer feelings.

Insofar as Van Leeuwin’s thoughts are applicable to St. Vincent and the Grenadines, one can see a possible reason for the attraction of young Vincentian males to the gangster lifestyle. Indeed, being a gangster provides plenty of opportunities to express anger, the only emotion young males are encouraged to express. As we have already seen, the gangster lifestyle is diametrically opposed to

¹⁷¹ John 11: 35.

¹⁷² Matthew 23:37.

Christianity. It means, therefore, that this emotional narrowing must also be considered a factor in making young males less receptive to Christianity.

Honesty

A number of young men saw honesty as a desirable quality in a man. The pastor chosen by Owen as the man he admires was honest, among other things. This emphasis on honesty may have implications for the willingness of young men to identify with Christianity.

An emphasis on honesty can lead to a low tolerance for hypocrisy. Kenrick and Norman illustrate this. “Honest” was the first word of choice for Kenrick in describing a real man. On the matter of what he would change about Christianity if he could, he pointed to the “aggressive, hypocritical attitude” of Christians, as exemplified by his aunt, who seems to forget she was once an unbeliever and treats non-Christians as “abominations.” Kenrick is firmly convinced that this type of attitude hinders others from becoming Christians.

Norman emphasizes independence in his description of a real man, but he also speaks much about honesty. The man he admires is his father, of whom he says: “Well, I would say he sets a good example for me...Like he never shows me anything wrong.” By contrast, Norman has little respect for most Christians in St. Vincent and the Grenadines because he considers them not true Christians, but “self-proclaimed.” He has even less respect for pastors, whom he sees as not setting a good example for their congregations. We heard from Norman earlier about the pastor who told his church member they could not go to carnival and then went to it himself. Norman’s reaction to this situation was to regard going to church as pointless. In short, an

emphasis on honesty can lead one to shy away from anything that appears to be phony. According to Kenrick and Norman, there is a lot that is phony about Christianity in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Another possible consequence of an emphasis on honesty is a reluctance to identify with Christianity because of an honest belief that one would not be able to live like a Christian. In such a situation, a real man may prefer not to call himself a Christian rather than say he is a Christian and run the risk of being branded as a hypocrite if he fails to live up to expected standards of Christian morality. This is the position taken by Joel: "That's what most young people think Christianity is, so they will not – if they become a Christian, they will still do those things...And when you are a Christian and you do those things, you are labeled, you know, as a hypocrite." I have come across this type of reasoning in my own work as an evangelist. I have had young men say to me point blank: "I will not become a Christian because I know I will still commit fornication."

It is also perhaps out of a desire to maintain honesty that David does not call himself a Christian even though he tries to "abide by certain Christian morals." Because he does not call himself a Christian, David is under no pressure to behave like a Christian. Without that pressure, he is free to "try to abide by certain Christian morals," knowing that if he fails, he is not going to be branded as a hypocrite. How many more young men there are like David, one cannot be sure. However, the fact that there might be many young men like this forces one to reckon with the fact that not identifying publicly with Christianity does not necessarily mean lack of commitment to Christian values or lack of effort to live like a Christian.

Power Over Women

David was the only person to make explicit a link between manhood and womanizing. He expressed his personal admiration for Roy, the womanizer, or “shotta,” saying, “He is one of those guys who feel he cannot stick to one woman. He have to be like a player and he can’t show no woman no respect...as normally in any young boy, they tend to look up to somebody that is a so-called shotta or player.” Even more interestingly, David goes on to assert that young boys tend to have a competition to see who can date the most girls. The aim of dating many girls, according to David, is to win the admiration of other males.

This kind of behavior among young men, insofar as it exists, indicates a commitment to hegemonic masculinity. We saw from Beckles that one of the ways in which the plantation owners asserted their masculinity was by claiming sexual access to female slaves. That point was supported by extensive quotations from the diary of Jamaican planter, Thomas Thistlewood.¹⁷³ We also noted the claim by Odette Parry that Caribbean men reflect the values of slave society when they define manhood in terms of the number of serial or concurrent partners a man has.¹⁷⁴

All of the foregoing has serious implications for young males in St. Vincent and the Grenadines with respect to identification with Christianity. Christianity stresses monogamy and faithfulness in the marital relationship. A Christian young man will be expected to date one girl, usually with a view to marriage. Being a “shotta” is diametrically opposed to expected behavior in Christian male-female relationships. Therefore, a young man who identifies with Christianity, unless he is

¹⁷³ Beckles, 234.

¹⁷⁴ Parry, 20.

going to be a hypocrite, is making a public statement that he does not intend to be a “shotta.” This effectively takes away one avenue through which he can be regarded as a real man by his peers. A young man, therefore, who is thinking about becoming a Christian will have to consider whether he will be able to do without this mark of manhood.

The situation is quite different for a young female. A young woman who is thinking about becoming a Christian faces no corresponding pressure. A young woman who dates several young men will not win the admiration of her peers. Instead, she will be negatively sanctioned by both males and females as a “whore.” This double standard may help explain why it is easier for girls to identify with Christianity. A young female can become a Christian without surrendering her womanhood, as defined by society. A young male has no such luxury. There is a clear clash between Christian values and the views of some members of society about manhood. He has to make a choice.

Independence

The view that a real man is independent may also have bearing on the difficulties young males face when they identify with Christianity. Hardenbrook, in his description of the impact of the Declaration of Independence on American church life, claimed that it gave rise to a new spirit of independence which caused men to abandon the church.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, Van Leeuwin noted that Christianity is often stereotyped as unmanly because it challenges men to realize that they are not self-

¹⁷⁵ Hardenbrook, 129.

sufficient, but need the grace of God and the support of other believers.¹⁷⁶ After all, an independent person does not need a savior.

If independence poses a problem for males who are considering embracing Christianity, young Caribbean males may well be disadvantaged by current child-rearing practices. As noted by Tony Sewell, the most common practice is “Tie the heifer, loose the bull,” which means that girls are closely monitored and protected, while boys are allowed, even encouraged, to be free and independent.¹⁷⁷ It can be argued that it is therefore culturally easier for a female to see a need for a savior, since she is accustomed to being protected. The male, by contrast, is allowed to roam free because it is assumed that he will be able to take care of himself. The problem with this is that it makes it more difficult for that male to accept the fact that he needs a savior.

CHRISTIANITY

This section will look at the relevant findings in relation to how young Vincentian males view Christianity. Among the negative views of Christianity expressed by young males are feelings that it is too restrictive, has unattainable standards, is too divided, and has boring and drawn out programs. The study has also revealed that while most of the respondents viewed pastors in a positive light, a significant minority viewed them in a negative light.

Before taking a closer look at these negative views, however, I wish to comment on the view expressed by one student that Christianity does not appear to be a true religion because it makes exclusive claims. Earl sees Christianity as a religion

¹⁷⁶ Van Leeuwin, 99.

¹⁷⁷ Tony Sewell, available at: www.id21.org/education/insightsEdu2art5.html-24k

that God would not want because it claims to be the only way to God and seeks to force people to join. It can be argued, however, that Earl's position may have more to do with his Hindu religious orientation than with his identity as a man. Earl is quite comfortable praying to Hindu gods as well as to the Christian God because Hinduism is pantheistic and pluralistic. A person with such an orientation is likely to have problems with any religion that claims to be the only way to God.

Milton, the other student in the sample with a non-Christian background, did not express any concerns about Christianity's exclusive claims. In fact, he seemed more interested in pointing out the similarities between Islam and Christianity: "To me, being a Muslim and being a Christian is not that much different. We learn a lot of the same stuff. We learn about sins, what we should do, what we should not do. We learn about a higher spirit, a higher being..."

Like Christianity, Islam is monotheistic and exclusive. The difference is that Islam is able to include "true Judaism" and "true Christianity" under its umbrella. Islam recognizes a number of Old Testament prophets, and Jesus, as true prophets. It is just that Muhammad is the final prophet of Allah. Milton, then, has no intrinsic problem with an exclusive claim, and his understanding of Islam can allow him to see any version of Christianity that regards a Muslim as unsaved as a corruption. The general point, then, is that the objection to Christianity's exclusive claims is more of a religious issue than a male issue. Having established that, we can now go on to look at the negative views that have no basis in religion.

Restrictions

Lionel expresses his dislike for the restrictions imposed by Christianity in very strong language. He makes it clear that he hates being restricted, and he is confident that other males hate it as well. He sees freedom as something males are entitled to have, so any attempt to impose restrictions would constitute a violation of the rights of the male. Kenrick expresses similar concerns. He speaks of churches coming up with their own separate rules and “trying to bind you.”

The attitude of Lionel and Kenrick towards restrictions is shared by many a Caribbean man. Very often, when a man gets married, he becomes the butt of jokes because he is “tying up his foot.” The idea is that being married may impose restrictions on a male. For example, he may no longer to go wherever he wants to go, whenever he wants to go. Indeed, there are some Caribbean males who attempt to deal preemptively with this “problem” by asserting that a man should be free to go wherever he wants to go without having to let his wife know where he is going or seeking her approval.

The views expressed by Lionel and Kenrick, and reflected in the attitude of some Caribbean men towards marriage, may well be linked to the child-rearing practices alluded to earlier and captured in the maxim; “Tie the heifer and loose the bull.”¹⁷⁸ Chevannes has documented this phenomenon in his study of male socialization in five Caribbean communities. He makes the point that girls tend to be closely monitored while boys tend to be allowed to roam free.¹⁷⁹ If boys are generally

¹⁷⁸ Tony Sewell, available at www.id21.org/education/insightsEdu2art5.html-24k

¹⁷⁹ Barry Chevannes, 107.

allowed to roam free, it is not difficult to see why they may regard Christianity as too restrictive.

Admittedly, some Christian churches in St. Vincent and the Grenadines can be very legalistic. Kenrick is right in asserting that some churches come up with their own separate rules. However, one still has to concede that Christian churches in St. Vincent and the Grenadines have relaxed those restrictions considerably over the years. There was a time when Christians were not allowed to go to the movies or attend socials. Christian men could not wear their hair long. Women could not wear pants, use make-up, or adorn themselves with jewelry. All of these things are now allowed, even in very conservative churches. However, in this more relaxed atmosphere, young men still find Christianity too restrictive. Any religion must have a set of rules, no matter how few. That some young males find Christianity too restrictive may well be linked to the fact that they have been allowed to roam free for most of their lives.

Insofar as the above is correct, it puts boys at a disadvantage compared to girls when they are considering Christianity. Of course, girls can and do rebel. However, those girls are violating social expectations of conformity. A girl who submits to the restrictions of Christianity is, in some ways, behaving in the way society expects her to behave since she is socialized to submit to external control. A boy, on the other hand, has to learn to submit to rules and regulations. That suggests that a boy is more likely than a girl to consider Christianity too restrictive.

Can it be, then, that Caribbean parents are doing their sons a disservice by allowing them to roam free, while keeping a tight grip on their daughters? Chevannes

has noted that when boys are allowed to roam free, it opens the door for them to learn about manhood from older males in the community, and what they learn may not necessarily be what their parents would desire them to learn.¹⁸⁰ Christian parents, in particular, need to be cognizant of this. Too much freedom may not be good for a boy.

Unattainable Standards

David expresses, quite strongly, the view that Christianity has commandments that are impossible to keep. He focuses on the commandments against lying and fornication. He sees lying as a matter of expediency and fornication as an everyday occurrence. If he had his way, he would remove lying and fornication from the list of forbidden things so as to make Christian living more attainable.

Ivan also feels that too much is demanded of a person once they profess to be a Christian. He points to the number of times you have to go to church and the standards of morality you are expected to maintain. If he had his way, he would lower the bar in order to make it easier to live as a Christian.

I know from experience that there are a number of men who attend more liberal churches who would not attend a Christian church, as defined in this study. If a young man attends a liberal church, he will be under no pressure to avoid pre-marital sex, since that is almost never the subject of discussion. Additionally, one gets the impression during funeral services that a person who was baptized as an infant in one of these churches will automatically go to Heaven. In these churches, there is little challenge to act like a Christian. Personal sin is hardly ever stressed. The preacher is more likely to speak of the sins of society. There are men I know who would be

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 109.

comfortable attending a funeral at this type of church because they are not likely to hear a message about Hell, for example. These same men would, if possible, skip the sermon at a funeral held in a Christian church because they know they are likely to be challenged in some way about their relationship with Jesus Christ.

All of this calls into question Podles' assertion that men stay away from church because of the watering down of doctrine. His general point is that men do not take the liberal church seriously because it does not take its own message seriously on matters of salvation and damnation. As a result, those men are more likely to be drawn to a fundamentalist church.¹⁸¹ Podles' claim may well have relevance for North America and England (although the size of the extremely liberal Lakewood Church, pastored by Joel Osteen, may cause some doubts to be raised), but the evidence emerging from this study suggests that men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are likely to shy away from Christianity, not because they think it is too easy but because they think it is too difficult.

Divisiveness

A third of the respondents felt that Christianity was too divided. They all said they would change that aspect of Christianity, if they could. Joel and Harold were quite strident in their calls for one church. The divisions in Christianity are seen as senseless, confusing, and counterproductive. One of the words used by Milton, the Muslim, to describe Christianity was "fractured." Apart from the basic Sunni-Shia split, and the existence of a few unorthodox groups, Islam is generally united. Therefore, the existence of many denominations of Christianity must be a bit puzzling

¹⁸¹ Podles, 204.

to a Muslim. It is, therefore, not strange that he would do away with the divisions in Christianity.

Nothing in the literature addresses the issue of whether divisions in the church impact males more negatively than females. One can only assert that the fact that a significant number of respondents identified divisions in the church as a problem means that it ought not to be ignored. Young males would rather have to deal with one church than with a bewildering array of denominations, which serve only to make the already difficult task of identifying with Christianity even more difficult.

Boring and Drawn Out Programs

One respondent, David, pointed to boring and drawn out programs as a factor that prevents young men from becoming Christians. He said: "Sometimes it is not because you do not want to be a Christian or sometimes it is not because you do not want to go to church, but sometimes the programs of the church are a bit boring and drawn out." David's statement appears to Murrow's claim that men do not want to attend church because they find it boring. Murrow claimed that a man's visual rather than verbal orientation would cause him to find the sermon boring.¹⁸² He claimed that the church would attract more men by posting a sign indicating that the sermon would not last longer than ten minutes.¹⁸³

David also focuses on the sermon: "Sometimes the preacher would preach a sermon and grasp your attention but the next time...it is not really and truly a good speech." What one needs to note here, however, is that David focuses more on the quality of the sermon than on its length. He finds the sermon boring because of its

¹⁸² Murrow, 87-88.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 177-178.

poor quality and not necessarily because of its length. Murrow, on the other hand, by advocating the ten-minute sermon, seems to feel that length is the major issue.

If one were to take the position articulated by Murrow, one would be hard pressed to explain how men are able to listen to the long speeches delivered at political meetings in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Musical entertainment is usually provided at these meetings, but that does not negate the fact that the speeches tend to be long. There are usually several speeches leading up to the main event, the feature address by the political leader, which lasts at least an hour. How are men able to receive such an abundance of verbal messages without being bored?

The answer seems to lie in the suggestion that the speaker's skill in presentation and the listener's interest in the topic are two critical variables which influence whether or not a particular speech is perceived as boring. A poor speech on a topic that does not interest the listener will bore them, whether it lasts ten minutes or forty minutes. The greater length simply increases the listener's torture, especially if he is in a setting in which he cannot leave without being perceived as rude. On the other hand, a good speech may grasp the attention of a man who is not particularly interested in the topic being spoken about. Quality, it seems, is what matters most.

Insincere Leaders

More positive views of Vincentian pastors were expressed than negative ones. There was also the interesting fact that one respondent chose a hospitable and honest pastor as the man he greatly admires. This suggests there is not a crisis of leadership in Vincentian churches, at least in the eyes of the majority of the young men interviewed. However, the negative views expressed must be taken seriously since

they can help us understand why some young men may have difficulty becoming Christians.

Lionel believes quite strongly that a significant number of pastors in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are con men. His words bear repeating: "...in St. Vincent you see a lot of people trying to con the church members...yeah they take the church's money..." For this reason, Lionel prefers to stay at home and praise the Lord rather than go to church. Lionel's views reflect a fairly popular perception among men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines that pastors are only interested in money. I have had the experience of having men say to me, on being told I was a pastor, "So you are the man with the money." This perception of the pastor, sadly, is being reinforced by televangelists whose mercenary agenda is obvious to a discerning man. It is against this background that Lionel's statement, though reflecting a minority position in the context of the study, needs to be taken seriously.

Norman believes that most pastors in St. Vincent and the Grenadines set bad examples for their congregations. He expressed disgust and anger at the pastor who went to Carnival after telling his members that they could not go. Such behavior on the part of a pastor, he claims, would make some people think that going to church is pointless. Norman's comments reflect another view of pastors that is quite common among men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is common for a group of men to enumerate the sins of a particular pastor and end with a statement to the effect that a pastor's favorite exhortation is, "Do as I say but not as I do." Such lack of respect is quite likely to be a factor in keeping men away from church.

What has just been discussed takes on even greater significance when one considers that young men need positive male role models. From a personal perspective, one of the more interesting findings of the study was the fact that five respondents (one third of the sample) identified close male relatives as the men they admired. Alongside more recognizable names like Arnold Schwarzenegger, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump were Monty and Vinroy, an uncle and older brother, respectively. These male relatives were admired for their sacrifice on behalf of the family and their commitment to sound values. In age of absent, abusive, or withdrawn fathers, and general breakdown in the family, it is crucial that Christian pastors be true to their calling and serve as good role models for young men. This seems to be the point being made by Robbie Low when he speaks of the need for pastors to act as “natural magnets in a disordered society and church.”¹⁸⁴

The Impact of Becoming a Christian

In this section, we shall examine perceptions of personal lifestyle changes associated with becoming a Christian, responses to a friend who has become a Christian, and reasons advanced for the reluctance of young males to become Christians.

Perceived Lifestyle Changes

Two respondents had no idea how becoming a Christian might change their lives, and three others saw themselves as experiencing only minimal change. Of the ten who expected major change, six advanced the view that if they became Christians they would experience new benefits and be generally changed for the better. The other four anticipated taking on new obligations if they became Christians. Gareth

¹⁸⁴ Robbie Low, available at <http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/print.php?id=16-05-024-v>

said: "I will have to make time for church...I will have to be a more religious person...Now I have to rethink my, er, whatever I am going to do." Barry spoke of what one cannot do when one is a Christian: "Can't go places you go now, can't lie..." These respondents seem to see Christianity as meaning that you have to do, or not do, certain things. Unlike the others, who seemed to understand Christianity more in terms of a blessing, these subjects considered it more of a burden.

It is plausible to suggest that viewing Christianity in this way may cause some young men to be reluctant to become Christians because they believe that they would not be able to handle the responsibilities. In fact, Barry's response to a friend who had just become a Christian reflects this very concern: "Can you carry out the duties?" Nothing was said about the benefits to be enjoyed now that his friend was a Christian.

This focus on obligations may well be a reflection of type of preaching to which some people are exposed and the type of counseling or instruction they get after they decide to become Christians. In some circles, a person who responds to an invitation at an evangelistic meeting is likely to be presented with a list of things to do, or not do, without receiving information on the blessings and new power available to a Christian. It seems fair to say that this unbalanced type of presentation will make it more difficult for young men to identify with Christianity.

Response to a Friend Who Becomes a Christian

Two respondents could not say how they would react to a friend's announcement that he had become a Christian. The others were evenly divided between offering words of encouragement and sounding notes of caution. The fact that about half of the respondents said they would encourage a new Christian friend

raises the question as to whether the expected negative reaction of friends is more imagined than real. Gareth's comments, in particular, are worth noting: "I will encourage him. I may even join him because, you know, he is my brother, because my brother is an influential character. I look up to him so if he does something, I may want to do it too." It is well known that young people are influenced greatly by their peers. However, this influence is usually cast in a negative light. Indeed, many undesirable behaviors in young people are regularly blamed on "peer pressure." Gareth's comments indicate that there is another possibility: positive peer influence. A young man who becomes a Christian may influence some of his friends to become Christians as well. Young men who are wrestling with the decision to become Christians need to be made aware of this.

Those who sounded notes of caution were concerned that the friend was not pressured by anyone into becoming a Christian, that he knew what he was doing, that he was able to carry out the duties, and that he would continue as a Christian. Barry, one of those who offered caution, seemed concerned about backsliding: "Based on what I see, people get baptized and then backslide. You can't join the church and still want to do the same things you were doing before."

Barry's concerns about backsliding are not unwarranted. The prevalence of backsliding in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has been documented by Operation Mobilization researcher Patrick Johnstone. He writes: "St. Vincent has been described as a nation of backsliders. Pray for restoration."¹⁸⁵ In my own experience as an evangelist, I have encountered many people, a significant number of men included, who used to be Christians. Some of them even used to be pastors. With so many

examples of failure, it is easy for a young man to tell himself that he would end up being just another casualty and become too discouraged to follow Christ. Rather than try and fail, he chooses to fail to try.

Reasons for the Reluctance of Young Men to Become Christians

The study has revealed that some young men are reluctant to become Christians because they believe there will be negative consequences. These perceived negative consequences can be categorized as being linked to the female world, loss of freedom, and loss of friends.

Being Linked to the Female World

Two respondents suggested that some young men think Christianity is more appropriate for a female than for a male. Gareth reported that claim but did not elaborate. Joel provided more information: “Well, men are supposed to be strong and not have a lot of feelings. Men think that becoming a Christian would make them more feminine...”

This view reflects the kind of gender stereotyping that has been challenged, quite correctly, by O’Brien. He makes the point that the fruit of the Spirit are to be displayed by both males and females, and this involves being “loving, patient, peaceful, kind and gentle.”¹⁸⁵ There are, of course, other passages of Scripture that urge Christians to be kind and gentle.¹⁸⁷ Paul Coughlin tries to make the case that the call to display kindness is applicable only to the Ephesians, who had a tendency towards harshness, and not to all Christians. However, this appears to be more like

¹⁸⁵ Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World* (OM Publishing, 1993), 509.

¹⁸⁶ Brandon O’Brien, “A Jesus for Real Men,” *Christianity Today* (April 2008): paragraph 3. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2008/april/27.48.html> (accessed July 25, 2008).

¹⁸⁷ Philippians 4:5; Ephesians 4:32.

question-begging than sound exegesis. God expects all Christians, male and female, to be kind, whether they are from Ephesus, Corinth, The United States, or St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The idea that kindness is a feminine trait is a cultural one, which cannot stand up to scripture, and which reflects the kind of flawed thinking that occurs because humans are fallen beings. Sadly, though, as shown by Joel's comments, this idea appeals to society and can hinder young men from becoming Christians, as they seek to avoid being regarded as soft and feminine. A young female can become a Christian without jeopardizing her womanhood in this area. A young male, on the other hand, has to make a choice between Christianity and society's view of manhood.

Loss of Freedom

We noted earlier that ten of the respondents indicated that young men may be unwilling to identify with Christianity because they feel that becoming Christians will prevent them from doing things they really want to do. Norman's comments seem to sum up this position and will be repeated here: "Mostly he believes there will be restrictions. For instance, he won't be going to parties. He has to live like no fornication and stuff, and mostly, most of the things that young men do today are not in the Bible as a commandment." The general attitude of young men towards restrictions has already been discussed. The researcher has already noted that it may well be linked to the child-rearing practices described by Tony Sewell and Barry Chevannes.

It is important to highlight the fact that eight respondents identified the loss of the freedom to engage in sexual intercourse as a major problem for young men. The

other two, while not explicitly mentioning sexual intercourse, seemed to imply it. This is quite interesting, in view of the fact that there was no direct question about sexual intercourse in the interviews. Neither was there any question which could reasonably be seen as steering respondents in that direction. What, then, is to be made of these spontaneous responses?

For one thing, Christianity seems to deny a young man the freedom to enjoy a pleasant activity. Some respondents made statements to this effect. Others went even further and suggested that young people, in general, do not accept the Bible's teaching on sexual morality. Insofar as this is correct, it is reasonable to assume that there are some young women who would not want to become Christians because they, too, see Christianity as denying them the freedom to enjoy the pleasures associated with being sexually active. My experience as an evangelist lends support to this idea.

However, for young males, there is an additional dimension to the prohibition of extramarital sexual intercourse – their concomitant inability to establish their manhood through sexual activity. We have already noted from Chevannes that a man is not considered a real man unless he is sexually active and heterosexual.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, a single young man who becomes a Christian, and therefore abstains from sexual intercourse, is missing not only pleasure but also the status of manhood that sexual activity confers. It is common for young men to boast of their sexual exploits to each other. It is also common for some of the accounts to be exaggerated or even fabricated. The fact that young men would go to such lengths to advertise their sexual activity demonstrates the value that they place on convincing others that they measure

up. A Christian young man cannot be true to his profession and gain the admiration of his peers in this way. He will have to deal with the shame of not being considered a real man.

It is important to reiterate that a young female does not face this same kind of pressure. An article entitled, “Pure and Proud: Nakeisha London Happy with Her Virgin Status,” was published in the February 2008 issue of *Youth Uplifted Through Education* (YUTE), a news magazine designed specifically for young people. As the name of the article implies, a young lady by the name of Nakeisha London was unashamedly making her virgin status known to all of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and not through a Christian magazine. Nakeisha London can make a public declaration of her virgin status without putting her womanhood on the line. As a female, she will be admired by many for guarding her virginity.

One doubts seriously whether a young man in St. Vincent would be bold enough to do what Nakeisha London has done. Unlike the female, who has something to guard, the male has something to prove. Identifying with Christianity and having one’s sexual status implied is one thing; a public declaration of virginity by a male is quite another. It would be tantamount to a public declaration that one is not a real man. Having something to prove in the area of sexual activity is bad news for young men. It can have the effect of making them less willing to become Christians.

Loss of Friends

We noted earlier that eleven of the respondents identified a fear of losing their friends as one of the factors hindering young men from becoming Christians. The influence of peers on young people is well documented. Walt Mueller has pointed out

¹⁸⁸ Chevannes, 217

that the problem is not so much that a young person's friends will tell him what to do as it is that he will adjust his behavior according to what he thinks they will approve.¹⁸⁹ Gareth's comments bear this out: "A lot has to do with his friends. Okay, depending on his friends, ahm, who are not Christians, he may want to accompany them...It is a choice that one has to make. You have to know if you want to give up your friends for that." This shows that young men have a strong need to fit in, and they may try to do so even at the expense of their religious beliefs.

Four respondents asserted that one of the ways in which young men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines today show they can fit in to their peer group is by joining gangs or adopting a gangster attitude. Lionel's comments have already been alluded to in the discussion of physical strength, where it was suggested that some young men are driven to the gangster lifestyle because they have to show that they are tough. It is necessary, at this point, to quote Lionel again:

Then it could affect the individual in that...they like, "I want to be a Christian but this certain group will not permit me to do so. I have to leave Christianity behind just to be in the group," and in a sense, they are just looking for a sense of security and love, I will say.

The last line in Lionel's contribution lends support to the claim made by Podles that young men who join gangs are often in search of brotherly love.¹⁹⁰ If embracing Christianity means losing the brotherly love the gang provides, young men may consider the price too high and reject Christianity.

One student, whom we shall call Perry, could not be included in the sample because he was already a Christian when the study was being conducted. However, it

¹⁸⁹ Walt Mueller, *Understanding Today's Youth Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1994), 217-218.

¹⁹⁰ Podles, *The Church Impotent*, 207.

seems appropriate to quote him here because what he has to say reinforces all that has been said on the subject and drives home the point that adopting the gangster lifestyle is becoming a badge of manhood in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Perry says:

People like to follow friends so they are pressured into stuff they don't even really want to do: things like joining gangs... Well, the environment, the surroundings of today's modern world is like (laughs) you have to be a gangster. It's like people's point of view in this modern world, well young men's point of view in this modern world, well young men's point of view today, is like you have to be a gangster or you won't fit in... Well, that's how – No you don't have to be, you know, you could – Yeah, they think so, to fit in. (pause) But before in the olden times, you know, you didn't have to be a gangster but in today's modern world, yes, you have to be – the way you dress, the way you carry yourself – you just stop going to church and forget about the Christian life... People pressured me into doing that. I was influenced at some point in time but I have changed. I am trying to change my life from that gangster, trying to focus on my education and on serving God.

Perry's comments should be taken seriously, as they reflect deep personal experience. Here is a young man who grew up in church but was drawn to the gangster lifestyle because he felt he had to be a gangster in order to fit in with his peers. His language shows evidence of the struggle that took place inside of him even as he spoke to me: "No, you don't have to be... but in today's modern world, you have to be; I have changed... I am trying to change..."

Measuring up in the eyes of other young males and so gaining their respect and love can mean more to a young man than the approval of parents or church leaders. This is the difficulty that Perry expresses. If manhood means being a gangster, then a young man who is a Christian is disqualified from being a man. Young men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines who accept society's view of manhood have a very difficult choice to make: be Christian and abdicate manhood, or be a man and not reject Christianity.

CONCLUSION

This study has confirmed Tony Walter's view that there is likely to be no single explanation for the ratio of men to women in the church that fits all situations and all times. Even for a single situation, the case of young males in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the best we can do is to identify a number of possible contributing factors. Some of these factors appear to be related to how Christianity is viewed by young men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It can be reasonably asserted that divisions in the church, hypocritical members, pastors who are poor models, unattainable standards, boring programs, unnecessary restrictions, and fear of backsliding can all play a role in hindering young men from identifying with Christianity.

Other factors that hinder young men from embracing Christianity can be related to how manhood is viewed by young males in Vincentian society. These include restraint of emotions indicating distress, the value placed by males on independence, the stereotyping of some Christian virtues as feminine, the desire for freedom to engage in premarital sex, and the orientation towards joining gangs or, at least, adopting a gangster attitude. The last two factors are especially significant because they appear in they appear in data with the highest degree of frequency and they represent the two most common ways in which a young male can establish his manhood in Vincentian society.

The foregoing implies that the stage is set for clashes between Christianity and culturally constructed views of manhood in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Christianity is a religion of sexual purity and nonviolence. The most common message which young males in St. Vincent and the Grenadines appear to be imbibing is that being a man means being sexually active and being a gangster. A young male who is presented with the claims of Christianity, therefore, has an extremely difficult choice to make. In order to be a Christian, he has to surrender his manhood, as defined by society. The fact that some young men do become Christians means that it is not impossible. The fact that many do not strongly suggests that it is difficult. In comparison with a young female who is also considering becoming a Christian, a young male has one additional hurdle to clear: the apparent loss of, or inability to establish, his manhood. This may help explain why fewer young males than young females tend to identify with Christianity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the experience of doing the study, I will close with a few recommendations for practice and research. The recommendations for ministry practice will be given first.

Practice

First of all, I would recommend apologetic preaching to young males. Young males are a vulnerable group. They are desperately trying to establish their manhood. Apologetic preaching will not demonize them; it will show sensitivity to the issues with which they struggle. It will lovingly present positive alternative views of manhood and gently, but unashamedly, point young men towards them. The preacher will adopt the stance of a fellow struggler, since he too has to wrestle with culturally constructed views of manhood, albeit at a different level.

Secondly, I would recommend preaching that avoids legalism and stresses the positive aspects of Christianity, including the possibility of influencing one's peers to become Christians. David is right in claiming that mankind cannot perfectly keep all of the commandments. Indeed, mankind cannot keep any of the commandments apart from the grace of God. There is need for preaching which presents grace as God's enabling power. This will help to deal with fear of backsliding.

Thirdly, I would recommend the formation of support groups for young men in the church. The purpose of these groups will be to provide a safe setting for young men to share their struggles and encourage one another. Another benefit will be the meeting of the need of young men for brotherly love.

Fourthly, I would recommend the dissemination of messages targeting young men, which challenge the existing negative stereotypes of manhood and offer positive alternatives. The aim of this would be to prepare the ground for the Christian message. The posting of such messages on the Internet and the hosting of interactive websites for the discussion of male issues are possible ways to achieve this.

Finally, where possible, I would recommend the reinvention of organizations like the Y. M. C. A., in order to give young men an opportunity to belong to positive organizations that are not churches. I stress reinvention because some of these organizations seem to have grown stale, and something fresh, positive, and nondenominational, which can give young males a sense of belonging, is needed.

Research

Conducting the study has raised certain questions that can be fruitfully explored through additional research. I will now draw attention to some of these potential research areas.

First, I would recommend a study of youth gangs in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Such a study could seek to determine the extent of involvement in gangs and the factors which contribute to the involvement in gangs and/or the adoption of a gangster attitude. It is important to know why being a gangster seems so appealing to young men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. One respondent suggested that young men think being a gangster is what runs society. This area must be explored further.

Second, I would recommend research into the difficulties young women face with respect to identifying with Christianity. The fact that they may find it less difficult than young men in some ways to become Christians does not mean that they easily become Christians. In fact, a significant number of them do not become Christians. It is important to gain some insight into this. Young women need to be reached as well.

Third, I would recommend research into the level of atheism existing among young people in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. The study has revealed that some young men do not identify with Christianity because they do not believe in God. It would be important to find out whether atheism is growing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and whether males are more likely than females to gravitate towards atheism.

Finally I would recommend research into the appeal of religions other than Christianity to young men in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Our sample of fifteen students included a Hindu and a Muslim. There is a view in some circles that Islam is the natural religion of the black man.¹⁹¹ It is likely that others would make the same claim for Rastafarianism. It would be good to know the extent to which young men prefer to identify with these other religions than with Christianity.

The goal of research in areas of Christian ministry is to provide Christian workers with a better understanding of the challenges they face in order to enable them to devise ways of dealing constructively with these challenges. It is my prayer that this study of the difficulties young Vincentian males face when identifying with Christianity will accomplish just that. As ministers, we all need to sow and water as effectively as we possibly can. In the final analysis, it is God who will give the increase. To Him alone be the glory!

¹⁹¹ Imran Hosein, *One Jamaat, One Ameer* (Chaguanas, Trinidad: Masjid al Ansari, 1997), page number unavailable.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

These are the questions which were basic to each interview. In keeping with the nature of the semi-structured interview, the script was not followed verbatim. Questions were reworded for greater clarity and additional questions were asked as deemed necessary. At all times, the focus was on allowing the respondents to express themselves freely.

A: Manhood

1. Give me at least three words/phrases appropriate for describing a “real man”.
2. Give me at least three words/phrases appropriate for describing someone you do not consider a “real man”.
3. Name a man from real life, or from fiction, whom you admire a lot.
4. Why do you admire this person?

B: Christianity

1. Give me at least three words/phrases appropriate for describing Christianity.
2. If you could change one thing about Christianity, what would that be?
3. Why would you change it?

C: The Impact of Christianity

1. How do you see your life changing if you became a Christian today?
2. What would you say to your best friend if he told you he had just become a Christian?
3. Why would you say that?
4. Why do you think a young man might not want to become a Christian?

APPENDIX B

Below is the notice which was posted at St. Vincent and the Grenadines Community College:

**CAN A MALE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
STUDENT BE A REAL MAN AND A
CHRISTIAN AT THE SAME TIME?**

**I AM LOOKING FOR 15 YOUNG MEN
WHO ARE WILLING TO DISCUSS THIS AND
OTHER RELATED QUESTIONS. IF YOU
WOULD LIKE TO BE A PART OF THE
EXERCISE, PLEASE GIVE YOUR NAME AND
A CONTACT NUMBER TO MRS. VANLOO
OR MR. SCOTT.**

**ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU
MAY NEED WILL BE PROVIDED ONCE WE
ESTABLISH CONTACT.**

Hadyn Marshall (4561518)

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