

## **Tuesday Evening – One major social justice issue – *The Inequality of Women***

*"Feminism is the radical notion that women are people." Rachel Held Evans*

### **A. The Inequality of women as a worldwide phenomenon**

- Unequal status and unequal rights in most countries of the world
- Unequal victims of violence
- Unequal economic status
- Unequal status ecclesially.

### **B. The Phenomenon of Feminism as an attempt to address this**

#### **I. The Various kinds of feminism:**

- *Liberal feminism*
- *Romantic feminism*
- *Liberationist/Radical*
- *Womanist – Alice Walker*
- *“Intersectionality” - Feminism with a nuance – Amia Srinivasan*

#### **II. A generic definition of feminism -**

*Feminism is a comprehensive ideology rooted in women’s experience of gender oppression which believes that personal problems are also political and which offers a critique of patriarchy which it sees at the base of this oppression. (Sandra Schneiders)*

*Feminism is a worldview or stance that affirms the dignity of women as fully human persons in their own right; critiques systems of patriarchy for their violation of this dignity; and advocates social and intellectual challenges to bring about freeing relationships among human beings and between human beings and the earth. (Elizabeth Johnson)*

#### **III. Some common tenets within feminism**

- i) It is an *epistemological rupture* within Western History ... "another voice".
- ii) It is a challenge to dualism of all kinds.
- iii) It is an attempt to view things from the point of view of intimacy rather than from the point of view of ruptured intimacy.
- iv) It is an emphasis on the bodily, the incarnational, the embodied, the physical.
- v) It is a challenge to unbridled pragmatism and efficiency.
- vi) It is a challenge to understand the "political" dimension within personal problems.

- vii) In its more radical expressions, it is a positive challenge to re-integrate the insights of mythology and "paganism" into the Western mindset.

#### IV. Explication - "In another voice"

1. According to feminist ideology there have been two (human) voices within history
  - a. A dominant voice – Patriarchy
  - b. "Another voice" – The Feminine
2. Pushing things further, feminist ideology says this division of voices has made for a double dualism within history:
  - a. The dualism caused by Patriarchy – "father rule"

"If God is male, then male is God!"

    - + *God, as male – over – the earth*
    - + *King – over – kingdom*
    - + *Pope – over – church*
    - + *Bishop – over – diocese*
    - + *Priest – over- parish*
    - + *Father – over – family*
    - + *Husband – over – wife*
    - + *President – over – country*
    - + *CEO – over – company*
    - + *Dean – over – faculty*

And always this is conceived of as "superior over inferior"
  - b. This dualism then undergirds a second dualism – of superior over inferior
    - + *Spirit – over – matter*
    - + *Soul – over- body*
    - + *Men – over – women*
    - + *Rich – over – poor*
    - + *Strong – over - weak*
    - + *White – over – colored*
    - + *Humanity – over- nature*
    - + *Healthy – over – ill*
    - + *Rational – over – emotional*
    - + *Left brain – over – right brain*
3. Feminist ideology sees feminism as an "epistemological rupture", wherein the "voice" in the right-hand column is beginning more and more to be heard in history
4. Good and bad feminism: The difference between "strident feminism" and "healthy feminism" – i.e., the former denies the moral legitimacy of the patriarchal voice, the latter

affirms its legitimacy but sees the need for a radical rebalance and sees the rebalance as contingent upon “structural” change rather than on simply personal metanoia.

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