

SPEAKING THROUGH THE STAINED GLASS CEILING: WOMEN BISHOPS'  
RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

by

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(Under the Direction of Thomas Lessl and Celeste Condit)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation considers the rhetorical leadership of three women bishops who are all “firsts” in important ways: Marjorie Matthews, the first woman bishop in any mainline Post-Reformation church, Leontine Kelly, the first woman bishop of color in any mainline church, and Katharine Jefferts Schori, the first woman to lead a national church in the Anglican Communion. The chapter about Marjorie Matthews argues that Matthews combines constitutive rhetoric and enactment in seeking identification with various audiences. The next chapter suggests that Kelly combines the ironic perspective with the prophetic rhetorical tradition in order to address racism in the church and society. Finally, the chapter about Jefferts Schori argues that Jefferts Schori uses a feminist progressive civility and transcends controversies—especially about human sexuality—to call the church toward her vision of social justice for the church and world. The conclusion addresses themes that connect the three case studies with special emphasis on the bishops’ indebtedness and contribution to the historical-rhetorical trajectory of (clergy)women public speakers, the relationship between these bishops and the question of women in leadership, and the particular significance of the religious nature of the bishops’ rhetoric.

INDEX WORDS: Feminism, Religion, Leadership, Women, Bishops, Civility,  
Transcendence, Prophetic rhetoric, Irony, Race, Constitutive rhetoric,  
Enactment

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## PREFACE

I was born on October 11, 1984. On that same day, astronaut Kathy Sullivan became the first American woman to walk in space. Meanwhile, back on earth, Congresswoman Geraldine Ferraro debated Vice President George H. W. Bush, becoming the first woman to participate in a general election debate as a major party candidate. Had she been alive, Eleanor Roosevelt would have turned 100 that day.<sup>1</sup>

I have never put much stock in astrology, but I sometimes wonder if the events of my birthday somehow destined me for feminism. I began to call myself a feminist when I was about twelve years old, though I did not know precisely what I meant by that at the time. Fifteen years later, I still call myself a feminist, and while I have several ideas about what I might mean when I say that, I am not convinced it would be wise to settle on any one meaning for too long. What I can say with absolute clarity is how I came to my initial identification as a feminist.

Accompanying my grandparents to various church conferences around that time in my life, I began meeting clergywomen. As I got to know them, I learned that they faced all sorts of discrimination that men with half their talent and experience never encountered. I learned that some parishioners leave congregations when they hear a woman pastor is being appointed—before they ever even meet her! Hearing those stories, I discovered for the first time what I now recognize as male privilege. I experienced what Jane O'Reilly famously called the “click,” that moment of truth where someone realizes she (or he!) is a feminist.<sup>2</sup>

That click moment developed into a deep commitment and an abiding academic interest for me. I took on one or two feminist projects in high school and quickly found support for such work in college. Throughout all my years of higher education, I have been fortunate to be

surrounded by professors and classmates who have challenged and nurtured my work as my thinking has matured. In all this time, the significance of my click moment has fueled and inspired my work.

It is no surprise, then, that I turn here to the question of women's leadership in the church, a topic I seem in some sense born to study. In October 1984, while Sullivan walked in space and Ferraro ran for Vice President, Marjorie Swank Matthews, Chistendom's first woman bishop, was in her second month of retirement. Bishops Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly and Judith Craig were busy in the second month of their new posts as the leaders of the United Methodists in Northern California and Michigan, respectively. Meanwhile, in the Episcopal Church the Reverend Barbara Harris was named the executive director of the church publishing company. In 1989, she would become the Episcopal Church's first woman bishop.<sup>3</sup> While Kelly and Craig began their ministry as bishops and Harris began hers as publishing executive, Katharine Jefferts Schori found her career as an oceanographer ending. Federal funds for science research were drying up, and Jefferts Schori began to consider entering the priesthood. This discernment process would eventually take her all the way to the top of the Episcopal Church, where in 2006 she became the first woman primate of a national church in four centuries of Anglican history.<sup>4</sup>

My training as a rhetorical critic situates me ideally to consider primarily these women's sermons. I gravitate toward the contingencies and problems they addressed as leaders, with special attention to particular challenges of context and audience. Along the way, I identify strategies, and my overall assessment of those strategies is positive, though I acknowledge limitations and problems with the strategies as well. Lest I be accused of writing about figures I have a high regard for and so laud their strategies without appropriate critical distance, allow me

to admit up front that I do admire these women. I take solace in Bonnie Dow's advice that critics should write about what we like. For feminists and rhetoricians, the notion of the detached and disinterested critic is an unnecessary fiction—neither possible nor desirable. With Dow, I believe that criticism need not be negative, and that it can highlight a rhetor's or strategy's liabilities without asperity when appropriate.<sup>5</sup> I hope the reader will find that in any event I approach the critical task as more than epideictic. My goal, at least, is to explain and analyze more than to applaud or censure.

Like any worthwhile undertaking, this project is not merely (or even mostly) a result of my own effort. I first owe a debt of gratitude to my major professors, Thomas Lessl and Celeste Condit. Their erudition is outmatched only by their patience and graciousness. Working with both of them has been a treat and a joy for me. Most of my friends in the academy looked at me sideways when I said I was going to work with co-advisors, but the process has been a gift far more often than it was ever a burden. For their willingness to do the extra work of co-advising, and for their warm collegiality with one another, I give thanks. For enduring my stubbornness and finding a way again and again to respond to yet another email from me, I am most grateful. My committee members, Kelly Happe, Belinda Stillion Southard, and Peggy Kreshel have been an enduring source of encouragement and support—from chance greetings in the hallway or the grocery store to sending relevant articles or books my way, I have appreciated their help and support throughout this process. I especially thank them for their close reading and thorough responses to early drafts of Chapters 1 and 2.

When I visited the University of Georgia as a prospective student in 2009, the phrase I heard over and over again in describing the graduate community was “intellectual generosity.” Now I understand why. It has been a privilege to take classes and share offices and meaningful



conversations with my colleagues both in Communication Studies and the Institute for Women's Studies. I have especially benefited from conversations with Jamie Landau and Bethany Keeley-Jonker. In the wider academy, my network of support is vast, and thanking everyone would be impossible. I am profoundly grateful for MaryAlice Adams and Joshua Trey Barnett, who read chapter drafts and talked through ideas on a regular basis.

My initial decision to pursue graduate education was nurtured by Mary Eicholtz and Jamie Capuzza, two professors from my undergraduate experience whose encouragement and advice has been a continual source of succor for me. Likewise, I was fortunate at the University of Cincinnati to benefit from the mentorship of John Lynch and Kris Galyen.

I am grateful for funding from the Department of Communication at the University of Cincinnati, which defrayed the cost of copying archive materials about Marjorie Matthews. The graduate school at the University of Georgia provided generous support for Chapter 3 in the form of an Innovative and Interdisciplinary Research Grant. Reference librarians and archivists around the country have been helpful in various ways large and small. Among them are Nadine Cohen and Amber Prentiss at the University of Georgia; Matthew Collins at the Pitts Theology Library, Candler School of Theology, Emory University; Wesley Wilson at the DePauw University Archives; Caryn Dalton at the United Theological Seminary; Sarah Dana at the Episcopal Archives; Jaeyeon "Lucy" Chung at the United Library, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary; Mark Shenise and Frances Lyons-Bristol at the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church; and Lynn Lubkeman at the Wisconsin Annual Conference Archives.

Finally, I want to thank my close friends and family. Melissa Spitzig has the gift of exhortation, and she serves as a model of tenacity and strength in more ways than I ever

acknowledge. Julie Beadle and Kenneth Schoon are invaluable friends and most delightful conversationalists. Lisa Caine and everyone at Oconee Street United Methodist Church have been great encouragers throughout this process. Several other friends and acquaintances—far too many to name—have been wonderfully supportive.

My parents, Tammy and Lee Spencer, and grandparents, Diane and Leland Spencer, have always had more confidence in my abilities than I did, and even when I questioned whether a PhD was a task I could finish, they never did. I thank my brother Logan for years of laughter and also for listening while I talked about ideas. I am grateful for my nephew Niko, and I hope his love of books blossoms into a lifelong desire to learn.

Scholarship is mostly a private enterprise, and even for this introvert, sometimes one that tends toward isolation. I offer the warmest appreciation to my partner, Jason Rutledge, for joining me on this journey, for learning that sometimes I just need to talk to myself until an argument makes sense, and for only complaining a little bit when I woke up at 5:00 AM because some idea or another would not let me sleep. While I am not entirely comfortable with the phrase “man’s best friend,” our beloved Tobi has been an asset in this process as well—both when he forced me to take breaks for walks or fetch and when he sat in my lap and “helped” me write. To Jason, my deepest gratitude and love.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: CRACKING THE STAINED GLASS CEILING

In one sense, Marjorie Swank Matthews, Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly, and Katharine Jefferts Schori have no predecessors. As the first woman bishop in mainline Protestant Christianity, the first woman bishop of color in mainline Protestant Christianity, and the first woman bishop to lead a national denomination within the Anglican Communion, respectively, Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori are trailblazers, something like John the Baptists (or Joan the Baptists), whose work helps to “prepare the way” for those who will follow.<sup>1</sup>

In another sense, Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori lie along a historical-rhetorical trajectory of women who speak and lead despite cultural and institutional obstacles. Though no woman before Matthews carried a crozier and no woman before Jefferts Schori bore the primatial staff, Matthews’s, Kelly’s, and Jefferts Schori’s ascensions through the stained glass ceiling did not occur in a historical vacuum. Before them came many women who led and spoke in the public sphere, in the church, and in the pulpit. From Aspasia’s work in Ancient Greece, writing Perciles’s funeral oration and teaching Socrates his famous dialectical method, to the laywomen in the Quaker tradition and beyond of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries in the United States, to the first women to be ordained with full clergy rights in the Methodist tradition in 1956 and the Episcopal Church in 1976, Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori have rhetorical predecessors on whose shoulders they stand.<sup>2</sup> In turn, Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori are rhetorical pioneers for other women to come, particularly within organized Christianity, but also in leadership more broadly.

The goals of this chapter are twofold. First, I offer a justification for the project, focusing in turn on the bishops' significance as rhetors of interest, the rhetorical import of sermons, brief biographies of the three bishops, and the feminist rhetorical critical lens through which I explored the bishops' sermons. Second, I offer a preview of the whole project, beginning with three inter-related questions that guided my work and concluding with a summary of the arguments that follow in each chapter.

### **Justification: Who, How, and Why?**

#### *Three Breaks in the Stained Glass Ceiling*

In her 2008 concession speech for the Democratic presidential primary, Hillary Clinton consoled supporters: "although we weren't able to shatter the highest hardest glass ceiling this time, thanks to you, it's got about 18 million cracks in it."<sup>3</sup> The glass ceiling metaphor refers to a relation of invisible obstacles that limit the advancement of women in professions.<sup>4</sup> Sociologists of religion refer to the same phenomenon within churches as the stained glass ceiling.<sup>5</sup> Barbara Finlay explains, "many studies of clergy find women somewhat segregated in lower-status, lower-paid positions that are less influential and have less career mobility potential than is typical for men."<sup>6</sup>

Given the challenges of the stained glass ceiling, women bishops are exemplary. Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori are especially noteworthy for being *firsts* in their respective roles. Judith Craig, the United Methodist Church's third woman bishop, explains that

to be first is to carry unique and heavy burdens along with the thrill and wonder of making history. Marjorie [Matthews] was pulled in many directions; her presence was desired everywhere at once. Every move she made was under scrutiny by those who had doubts about women in the episcopacy.<sup>7</sup>

Indeed, the particular challenges and legacy associated with being first are rhetorically significant.

In the United Methodist tradition of Matthews and Kelly, election to the episcopacy requires support from clergy and laypeople at jurisdictional (multi-state regional) conferences.<sup>8</sup> Successful candidates for the episcopacy typically receive endorsements from organizations like the Black Methodists for Church Renewal, the United Methodist Women, and the Methodist Federation for Social Action. To get such an endorsement is to have at least a reputation for strong leadership skills and rhetorical eloquence. Similarly, in the Episcopal Church, the Presiding Bishop is elected from among the House of Bishops; his or her (!) election must then be confirmed by a vote of the House of Deputies, a body composed of clergy and laypeople from the various dioceses of the church.<sup>9</sup>

As such, Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori seem in every respect to qualify as rhetors of interest for feminist rhetorical critics, for whom one mission, according to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, is to “recover the unpublished and/or out-of-print speeches of women of extraordinary rhetorical ability, and through critical analysis [to] show how and why these works are eloquent [and] vital to our understanding of rhetorical history and how humans have been symbolized.”<sup>10</sup> In each case, sermons are the primary artifacts I considered for thinking about these women’s eloquence. Some of the speeches might more accurately be called lectures or addresses because of their contexts (e.g., speeches delivered as part of an endowed series or at university commencement exercises), but I considered them as sermons because they tend in structure and content to be highly sermonic and function in the civil or secular occasion as sermons function within worship services. I also read essays, books, and magazine articles authored by the bishops as well as news articles and books about them, and those materials were helpful supplements to close analyses of the bishops’ sermons.

A focus on sermons is warranted because sermons are the central rhetorical form in Christian worship services. In most Protestant traditions, the sermon appears in the middle or toward the end of the service as its climactic event. The sermon also takes a plurality of the time in a worship service. In the United Methodist tradition, sermons usually take 15 to 20 minutes of the 60 to 90 minute service. Typical Episcopalian services tend to be slightly longer than that with somewhat shorter homilies, but even so, more time is devoted to the sermon than to any other element of the service, with the exception of the Eucharist. The sermon offers more options for rhetorical adaptations than the Eucharist because the communicative impact of the Eucharist resides in its performative iterability whereas sermons vary week-by-week.

The work of bishops is largely administrative, but in preaching, bishops often have an opportunity to connect to local congregations or to address assemblies made up of representatives (laypeople involved in leadership in local congregations and clergy) from the various congregations in their care. In local congregations, the sermon is a chance for laypeople to hear from and get to know the bishop, especially for those congregants not involved in church leadership and otherwise probably not likely to hear from a bishop. In assemblies, the sermon might focus on issues of regional or denomination-wide concern and provide an opportunity for the bishop to discuss her vision or respond to other exigencies.

As a genre, sermons have developed over time. Homiletics scholar O. Wesley Allen explains that fifteenth-century monks developed a preaching style now known as the *university sermon*. The university sermon has a central thesis, developed in three points, each of which is normally divided into three subpoints. A related sermon form, developed in the late sixteenth-century and popular in England and New England, is the *Puritan Plain* style. Allen elucidates,

There are three major parts of the sermon—first, commentary on the ancient text in its ancient setting; second, eternal doctrinal points drawn from the exposition of the ancient

text; and third, application of the doctrine to the current lives of those in the congregation. While the Puritan Plain form is different than the structure of the three-point sermon, the logic is the same. They are both deductive approaches to proclamation. They move from the general to the specific. In the Puritan Plain form, exegesis and theological reflection in the first parts of the sermon name the general principles, which are then applied in specific ways at the end of the sermon.<sup>11</sup>

These two forms dominated Christian preaching in Europe and North America from the seventeenth century until fairly recently, when the field of preaching changed in the 1960s and 1970s with a turn to inductive preaching collectively known as the New Homiletic. Allen explains that the New Homiletic emerged from three inter-related cultural forces: theological arguments that sermons needed to solve people's problems, the linguistic turn's insistence that language is performative, and the idea inspired by media ecology that form should not pre-determine content. In place of deductive sermons that move from general theological theses to practical applications, the New Homiletic suggested that sermons should begin with the lived experiences of the congregation and move to more general claims.<sup>12</sup> Typifying the perspective of the New Homiletic, Eugene Lowry says "a sermon is not a doctrinal lecture. It is an *event-in-time*, a narrative form more akin to a play or novel in shape."<sup>13</sup> The New Homiletic revolutionized the field of preaching, and based on its timing, very likely influenced the preaching education of Kelly and Jefferts Schori, if not Matthews.<sup>14</sup>

However influential the New Homiletic has been, it is not without its detractors. Theologian Stanley Hauerwas avers that sermons are the proper place "for doing the work of theology," even noting that he expects his "hearers to do the hard work of listening" because "sermons should be arguments."<sup>15</sup> Roxanne Mountford charges that the New Homiletic is complicit with patriarchy because, she contends, it posits "the inductive method of preaching as a universal prescription for the 'anti-authoritarianism' of the late twentieth century" and thereby



“inverts the tradition without reforming its masculine bias.”<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the New Homiletic has made a mark on preaching, particularly white preaching.

There are notable differences between the historical development of white preaching and the black homiletic tradition. The effects of the New Homiletic on black preaching have been more subdued, in part because black preaching has historically been rhythmic, experiential, and participatory—in short, black preaching has been less susceptible than white preaching to charges of irrelevance or boringness.<sup>17</sup> The New Homiletic’s focus on narrative influenced black preaching, but did not excuse black preachers from their congregations’ expectation of deductive preaching that exposit scriptural texts. Henry H. Mitchell explains:

In our culture, the last fifty years have not removed the deductive requirement that the preacher first announce a text from the Bible, as certification that this is not mere personal opinion. Until this announcement, we preachers are just talking. After that, we are expected to offer vivid, gripping tales out of the Scriptures, and oratorical *tours de force*. But that vast majority of us still want to know first, “Is this from the Bible, or is this something you made up?”<sup>18</sup>

As a genre, black preaching has often successfully encouraged political mobilization, particularly by drawing on the prophetic tradition from the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>19</sup> James Frances Darsey argues that radical rhetoric throughout American history has its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures,<sup>20</sup> and black preaching certainly participates in that tradition—even when it may not be classified as radical by Darsey’s standards. According to Darsey, the epideictic function of prophecy creates community by encouraging common values. In the black church, the prophetic voice of the preacher creates community around values of justice and freedom. Kenyatta R. Gilbert explains how black preaching has historically constituted a community where emancipation is a central value:

The exodus motif is an essential part of Black Christianity's socioreligious imagination. Slaves intuitively recognized the inadequacy of the conventional ‘theology from above’

that formed the basis for much of the Euro-American-influenced worship practices. Their encounter with God was different.<sup>21</sup>

Within the prophetic tradition, the jeremiad is a popular form in black preaching. “As a pervasive idiom for expressing sharp social criticism,” David Howard-Pitney explains, the jeremiad “has been frequently adapted for purposes of black protest” and is a “prime black rhetorical and ideological force in the twenty-first century.”<sup>22</sup> Generically, the jeremiad, a form followed by the prophecies of Jeremiah, includes four key parts: a chosen people who have fallen short of a covenant, a prediction that the people will suffer because of their transgression, a promise that the predicted calamity can be avoided if the people return to righteous action, and an opportunity for the chosen people to reclaim their favored status because of their repentance.<sup>23</sup>

While the jeremiad is the most common of the prophetic forms, rhetorical studies scholars have identified other less condemnatory subgenres of prophetic rhetoric. For example, George Kennedy suggests that a covenant speech reminds the audience of what God has done, issues a new command or guiding principle to the community, and warns the assembly about the consequences of disregarding the new command.<sup>24</sup> Other scholars have suggested that variations on the jeremiad include the covenant affirming address and the covenant renewal address, both of which share similar generic features of the jeremiad but are more positive because they do not accuse the audience of breaking the covenant but instead encourage the audience to address external challenges from within the terms of the covenant.<sup>25</sup>

Within preaching in the black church, historian Bettye Collier-Thomas argues that black women’s sermons are particularly important to study:

All theology, including that espoused in sermons, is on some level autobiographical. In analyzing sermons to find the underlying autobiographical content, one can see the unique value of ... black women's sermons. No other group of Americans has experienced multiple oppressions based on race, sex, and often class and color, as much as black women have.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike most black preaching in the black church, most of Kelly's audiences during her preaching as a bishop were not primarily black. Nonetheless, according to Gilbert, black preachers speaking to white or ethnically diverse audiences still speak in the tradition of black preaching: "Without much effort African American preachers tend to be carriers of culture wherever they preach. The most effective preachers ... make certain adjustments in sermonic presentations based on the relational configuration of the preaching context."<sup>27</sup> Sermons, then, are a rhetorical genre and are important in American religious history generally and African American religious history in particular.

#### *Marjorie Swank Matthews*

I next turn to brief biographies of Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori. Matthews was born in Michigan in 1916. She married early in life, but the separation of World War II took its toll. Her husband left her when their son was an infant, and they divorced in 1946. She did not remarry. Matthews's first career was as a secretary for an automobile-parts manufacturer in Michigan. *Christian Century* journalist Jean Caffey Lyles notes that Matthews decided to go into the ministry when she was 47 years old: "She first entered the profession by the back door, as a part-time local pastor, with no seminary training but only the annual conference's in-training course."<sup>28</sup> Matthews went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts from Central Michigan University, a Bachelor of Divinity from Colgate Rochester Divinity School, and a Master's and a PhD in religion from Florida State University. "All the while," Lyles says, "she was serving pastorates, baptizing babies, burying the dead, performing marriage ceremonies, counseling and ministering to those in need."<sup>29</sup> Unlike the ministerial career of typical candidates for the office of bishop in the United Methodist Church, who often serve large urban or suburban churches before their election, Matthews's pastoral ministry mostly included rural churches. In a few cases, she served

two smaller churches simultaneously. Matthews impressed her supervisors. While she was serving in small churches, Bishop Dwight Loder noticed her abilities and appointed her a member of his cabinet and superintendent of the Grand Traverse District.<sup>30</sup> As a district superintendent, Matthews supervised the pastors and churches in the geographic area around Traverse City. Additionally, as a member of the cabinet, she was responsible for assisting the bishop with making pastoral appointments to the churches on her district. She was serving in that position in 1980 when she traveled to Dayton, Ohio for the quadrennial meeting of the North Central Jurisdictional Conference as a delegate and candidate for the episcopacy.

On the first episcopal election ballot, Matthews was one of thirteen candidates who received twenty or more votes. The rules require candidates to receive votes on sixty percent of the eligible ballots cast to be elected, until the thirtieth ballot, when the top candidates may be elected by acclamation. Edwin Boulton, the assistant to the bishop in Iowa, was elected on the thirteenth ballot. Matthews and Emerson Colaw, “a thoroughly traditional bishop ‘type’ – successful pulpiteer and longtime senior pastor of a large suburban church,” were in a deadlock by the twenty-ninth ballot.<sup>31</sup> Judith Craig witnessed Matthews’s historic election to the episcopacy. Her description of the event captures the momentous significance of the occasion:

In the waning hours of the North Central Jurisdictional Conference, the presiding officer received a motion from the floor: “I move Marjorie Swank Matthews and Emerson Colaw be elected to the episcopacy.” A second, the vote, and the announcement, “Motion carries.”

With those words, United Methodist church history changed forever. For the first time in postreformation history, a woman was elected to the office of Bishop in a major Protestant church. Diminutive Marjorie Swank Matthews, barely five feet tall, was almost carried by two escorting bishops to the platform of the North Central Jurisdictional Conference. It was late on Thursday afternoon, just hours before the Service of Consecration was to take place. Hearts pounded and huge sounds of elation soared. She stood before us, so small in stature, yet so huge in presence. The moment was like the gushing up of a new spring that would stream out into a great river of history.<sup>32</sup>

The stole for the Service of Consecration was designed for a six-foot man, so it dragged on the floor when Matthews put it on. She reportedly told someone, “Don’t give me a crozier. It will make me look like Little Bo Peep.”<sup>33</sup> Following her election, Matthews served as the bishop of the United Methodist churches in Wisconsin from September 1, 1980 until August 31, 1984, when she retired. Craig reports that Matthews was lonely at meetings of the Council of Bishops, especially during social times and meals: “She was single and female. The Council really didn’t know what to do with this diminutive powerhouse of a woman. She had to push against so much as a ‘first’ that she chose not to push hard at the Council, and simply endured her isolation.”<sup>34</sup> Matthews’s service in Wisconsin was marked by firmness, warmth, and humanity. Following her retirement, Matthews taught courses in wisdom literature at Florida Southern College in Lakeland until she became ill with cancer and returned to Michigan, where she died on July 30, 1986.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly*

Leontine Turpeau,<sup>36</sup> called “Teenie” by her family, was born in 1920 in Washington, DC, and spent most of her childhood in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her father was a pastor in the Methodist Episcopal Church, a predecessor denomination to the United Methodist Church. As an infant, Leontine was reportedly baptized by a bishop who said, “How I wish you were a boy, so that my mantle could fall on you.” Kelly once quipped, “He’d probably turn over in his grave at the idea of a woman being a bishop in the church.”<sup>37</sup> Leontine’s mother was a founding member of the Cincinnati chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In an interview with Craig, Kelly recalls the impact of her parents’ church and community involvement on her:

Papa and Mama knew how to help us understand our history long before black history became important during the Civil Rights Movement. We had been reared with that. And

we had a wide sense of the Church, because when any of the leadership of the Church came to Cincinnati, they stayed at our house because black people couldn't stay in the hotels. When I was in elementary school, many people who would become famous came through the church. I met great leaders.<sup>38</sup>

Among the many people to pass through the Turpeau household was Mary McLeod Bethune, the noted black educator and founder of what is now Bethune-Cookman University. When Bethune visited, the eight-year-old Leontine answered the door, and Bethune asked her, "Young lady, what do you plan to be? You must plan to be somebody."<sup>39</sup>

Leontine's reputation as an outspoken advocate for justice was part of her upbringing and evident even in her teenage years. As a high school student in Cincinnati, she objected to a principal who refused to let the black class valedictorian speak at graduation. Leontine brought a map of the Underground Railroad and explained that Cincinnati had been a place of freedom a few generations before, so the principal could not treat people of color discriminately. The principal called Leontine's mother, who supported her daughter's early rabble-rousing.<sup>40</sup>

Leontine began her higher education at the University of Cincinnati but transferred to West Virginia State University because of the racism she experienced at the University of Cincinnati. In 1941, she married her first husband, Gloster Current. They moved to Detroit, where Leontine continued her education at Wayne State University. Her studies were interrupted again when she gave birth to her daughter, Angella, in 1942. Angella's brother, Gloster, Jr., followed four years later. Shortly thereafter, the family moved again—this time to New York City—when Gloster was promoted to an administrative position in the NAACP. Leontine's third pregnancy, in 1953, came with medical complications. She moved to Cincinnati to stay with her sister, and when her son, John was born, she did not return to New York City due to her health and increasing unhappiness with her marriage. Her daughter Angella explains:

As Gloster's job responsibilities and travel schedule increased, his attention to Teenie's needs for companionship and emotional support waned. Although he may have felt that their marriage would last forever and their relationship was stable—they had acquired a house and car, had an income that provided the basic necessities, and had children who were well cared for and loved—for Teenie it proved not to be enough. She began to experience illness and depression and, already slight of build, started to lose weight. The weight loss resulted in a kidney disorder, which required her to wear a steel belt to hold her kidneys in place when she stood.<sup>41</sup>

Leontine enrolled Angella and Gloster, Jr. in school in Cincinnati and filed for divorce in 1955. Leontine met the Reverend David Kelly at a church conference in Cincinnati and married him in 1956. The marriage brought another move, as David was a district superintendent in Knoxville. Leontine continued her undergraduate education at Knoxville College. One year later, David was appointed to pastor the Leigh Street Methodist Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia, and the family moved again. Leontine transferred college credits one last time and finally finished her undergraduate degree with honors from Virginia Union University in 1960. She took a job teaching social studies at a local high school. In 1964, David retired from Leigh Street and took a part-time appointment at Galilee Methodist Church in Edwardsville, Virginia.<sup>42</sup>

David died in 1969, just a year after the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the United Methodist Church. Upon David's death, the congregation requested that Leontine, who had been trained as a lay speaker, be appointed to the church as a supply pastor, a layperson who fills in between pastoral appointments in cases where another clergyperson is not immediately available. The appointment was intended to be temporary, but the church took off under Leontine's leadership. Angella writes, "people began hearing of Leontine, this unique personality who had followed her husband into ministry. She was engaging the Galilee members in a building campaign, exposing and involving them in the program ministries of the annual conference, and responding to the social issues within the country and surrounding community—and she could preach! Her contributions did not go

unnoticed by church officials in high places either.”<sup>43</sup> Leontine finally felt a call to ordained ministry and began License School for Local Pastors in 1970 through correspondence courses. Shortly thereafter, Leontine discovered that the Union Theological Seminary<sup>44</sup> in Richmond had a scholarship fund designated for use only by United Methodist students (though it was a Presbyterian seminary). She enrolled full time, completed her Master of Divinity degree in 1976, and was ordained in 1977 at the age of 57.<sup>45</sup>

After ordination, Leontine served a variety of appointments: associate director for the Council on Ministries for the Virginia Conference, pastor of the United Methodist Church on Church Hill in Richmond, director of Church Hill Urban Ministry, and assistant general secretary for the General (denomination-wide) Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church. During all these appointments, Leontine received and accepted several requests to speak at events and conferences all over the country. In 1983, Leontine and more than a thousand other clergywomen attended the National Clergywomen’s Consultation in New Mexico where Leontine was endorsed as a candidate for the episcopacy. Episcopal candidates are typically elected in their home jurisdictions, but church policy does not require that. The National Clergywomen’s Consultation’s strategy was to put Leontine’s name into nomination in four of the five jurisdictions. Leontine’s home jurisdiction, the Southeast Jurisdiction, was so mired in sexism and racism that she did not have enough support for an election there.<sup>46</sup> Leontine left from the Southeast Jurisdiction meeting and immediately flew to Boise, Idaho for the Western Jurisdiction’s conference, where her candidacy seemed to have more traction. There, she was elected the United Methodist Church’s second woman bishop and first woman bishop of color. Her daughter Angella arrived the next day for Leontine’s Service of Consecration:

Friday, July 20, 1984, was a glorious and historic day. The sun was shining brightly, and many believed God and the cloud of witnesses were smiling and rejoicing. First United



Methodist Church of Boise, Idaho, was filled to capacity. The halls and auditorium were buzzing with excitement. Hawaiian [leis] of lavender and pink orchids were placed around the necks of the special guests and family members of the bishops to be consecrated. ... The grand pipe organ swelled with the sounds of E. Gigout's "Grand Chorus Dialogue," and the conference choir sang Hopson's "Festival Psalm" as the choral introit. Some experienced goose bumps while others felt their eyes fill with tears as they reflected upon God's amazing grace, the events of the week, and this unique and special occasion.<sup>47</sup>

Sixty-four at the time of her election, Kelly served for four years as a bishop in the San Francisco area, leading more than 100,000 members in 400 churches. Kelly retired in 1988 but continued to be active as a member of the Council of Bishops and as a popular conference preacher for events around the country (within and beyond the United Methodist Church).

Kelly resided in San Francisco until her death on June 28, 2012. Kelly is remembered, in the words of retired Bishop Sharon Brown Christopher, as "the spiritual mother of many clergywomen and especially women bishops."<sup>48</sup> Harriett Olson, the top executive for the United Methodist Women, lauded Kelly's "impatience with things that have prevented the church ... from living the active, holy and fruitful [life] we are called to."<sup>49</sup> Kelly's legacy is one of a lifetime of advocating for justice and inspiring others—particularly women—to embrace skills for leadership.

### *Katharine Jefferts Schori*

Jefferts Schori grew up in the Pacific Northwest and from a young age loved to be outside, exploring nature. Both her parents were scientists, and she wanted a career in science as well. She was only sixteen when she started college as a biology major at Stanford University.<sup>50</sup> Jefferts Schori became a pilot after she graduated from college, taking her father up on a promise that she could have pilot lessons if she finished her studies.<sup>51</sup> Jefferts Schori went on to earn a PhD in oceanography from Oregon State University, and she worked as a visiting scientist at Oregon State and as an oceanographer for the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle,

Washington. However, in the mid-1980s, Jefferts Schori painfully realized she needed to make a career change. Journalist Daniel Burke explains that “the federal government slashed funding for scientific research ... Jefferts Schori applied for work from Hawaii to Washington, DC, and received countless letters back telling her that she was ‘one of more than 125 qualified applicants.’”<sup>52</sup>

Although some close friends suggested Jefferts Schori consider entering the priesthood, she dismissed the idea. The Episcopal Church had only been ordaining women for ten years. “It wasn’t something little girls aspired to when I was growing up, and I just couldn’t see how it could make sense,” Jefferts Schori said.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, she became more involved in community organizations and started taking classes in religious studies at Oregon State University. In 1991, Jefferts Schori had the opportunity to preach when the clergy at her home church were out of town for a convention. A few months later, she was a seminary student at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific.<sup>54</sup>

After completing seminary, Jefferts Schori accepted a part-time position at a church and served as a hospital chaplain and as dean of the Good Samaritan School of Theology. She had only been a priest for seven years when she was elected bishop of Nevada. Just five years later, she was elected presiding bishop.<sup>55</sup> As Daniel Burke explains, her election came as a surprise to many:

To be sure, she was a longshot candidate for the job; as the only woman nominated, Jefferts Schori was thought to be a token of Episcopalians’ progressive values, but an unlikely choice at such a tumultuous time for the church. Bishop of the small diocese of Nevada at the time, she came from a family of converts from Catholicism, had never been rector of a large parish, and was just fifty-two years old. Presiding bishops typically follow a long path that starts in old Episcopal families and winds through top seminaries and posts at prominent parishes before election to the bishopric of a large East Coast diocese. Until the twentieth century, the church’s top job went to the bishop with the longest active tenure, said church historian David L. Holmes. Even Jefferts Schori pronounced the odds against her “ridiculous.”<sup>56</sup>

Jefferts Schori's nine-year term as presiding bishop began November 1, 2006.

*Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori*

In addition to their success in challenging the stained glass ceiling, a few commonalities among the three women are worthy of note. Matthews and Kelly share in common an indirect educational trajectory toward ordained ministry, and both were elected to the episcopacy at age sixty-four with only four years to serve. Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori were all second-career pastors who began their ministries somewhat later in life than most people who go on to be bishops. None of the three served in the kinds of positions typical for their respective elections. Matthews and Kelly served small churches. Jefferts Schori served a church part time and was then the bishop of Nevada—a state with relatively few Episcopal churches. Finally, they do not have the kinds of domestic lives most (men) bishops have. Matthews and Kelly were both divorced and both smaller in stature than the average bishop. Jefferts Schori is still married, but her husband lives in Nevada while she resides in New York City and travels extensively.<sup>57</sup> For my purposes, the most notable commonality among these three is their status as “firsts” in their work as bishops: women in the church at the highest levels of leadership.

The critical lens I have brought to studying the rhetoric of Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori is a feminist rhetorical critical perspective. I agree with Campbell that a central task for feminist rhetoricians is to introduce women rhetors into the canon and offer critical readings of the texts they produce. I next turn to explaining what I mean by *feminism* as it has informed this work.

*A Feminist Rhetorical Critical Lens*

In the field of rhetorical studies, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell has led the way in introducing women into the canon. In a number of essays, books, and edited collections, Campbell has enacted what

she sees as the primary task of feminist rhetoricians: increasing the inclusion of women rhetors and women's rhetoric in the pages of our field's journals and the bookshelves and course syllabuses of students and scholars of rhetoric.<sup>58</sup> Like Campbell, I regard the introduction of women rhetors into the canon to be innately feminist because it affirms that women are fully human, eloquent, and worthy of serious attention from students and scholars of rhetoric. I do not assume that any woman so introduced into the canon is necessarily feminist; after all, Campbell's bio-critical sourcebook of women rhetors from the twentieth century includes a chapter on the ardently anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly.<sup>59</sup> More important than labeling a particular rhetor feminist or not, is understanding what her rhetoric does, how it works, and what it may offer to our understanding of feminism and rhetoric.

What then, do I mean by feminism and feminist rhetorical criticism? Helen Sterk differentiates between gender criticism and feminist criticism on three criteria: the inclusion of power, a focus on cultural bases, and the awareness of race, class, and gender identity. Specifically, she notes that gender-based criticism "uses men and women as categories of analysis" while feminist scholarship "brings in power analyses of differences between and among men and women, preferring to use categories such as masculine and feminine, to highlight cultural bases rather than any essential, biologically grounded bases of gender." She adds that "the goal of feminist scholarship tends toward advocacy of gender equity."<sup>60</sup> Similarly, Dow and Condit suggest that "the moniker of 'feminist' is reserved for research that studies communication theories and practices from a perspective that ultimately is oriented toward the achievement of 'gender justice,' a goal that takes into account the ways that gender always already intersects with race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class."<sup>61</sup>

As I read the bishops' sermons as rhetorical texts, looking for how the bishops constructed themselves as leaders and navigated the challenges of leadership (as bishops, as women, and as "firsts"), I was ultimately interested in producing historical-critical work that contributes to gender justice. For example, in the chapter on Jefferts Schori's sermons, I suggest that Jefferts Schori moved toward progressive, feminist goals within an ethic of civility through a rhetoric of transcendence. My argument is, at least in part, an effort to redeem civility as an appropriate approach for feminist rhetors who are interested in pursuing gender justice without demonizing their rhetorical opponents.

I have avoided identifying rhetorical elements or strategies *a priori* and then seeking them out. Chances are, were I to have taken such an approach, I would have found what I went looking for and produced unimaginative criticism as a result.<sup>62</sup> Instead, I read the bishops' sermons as rhetorical texts through an emergent feminist rhetorical critical lens, a perspective that prioritizes questions of gender justice. I looked for both content and form: content that exemplifies each bishop's work to embrace her authority and responsibility as a bishop to articulate visions, overcome obstacles, and address the needs of the people and congregations in her care; and form that illuminates the efficacy of a particular strategy, especially for feminist use, as in my argument about transcendence and civility.

With regard to which forms to give primary attention, I took my cue primarily from rhetorical studies scholars Vicki Tolar Burton and Michael P. Graves. Burton's study of early women preachers in the Methodist tradition considers how "women adapted male genres to their own purposes, both resisting and accommodating themselves to societal expectations."<sup>63</sup> Graves's study of impromptu preaching among seventeenth-century Quakers considered some of the following questions: "What themes (or topics) are addressed in extant seventeenth-century

Quaker sermons, and what are their implications?"; "What key metaphors are discovered in Quaker sermons, and how do they function rhetorically?"; "How are spatial terms employed in the sermons?"; "To what extent is the guilt appeal present in the surviving sermons?"; and "How is personal testimony employed in the sermons?"<sup>64</sup> While Graves's study does not include sermons by women preachers, his questions were helpful examples for my project because they illustrated the types of questions that may emerge from a critic's engagement with sermon texts. I asked questions about goals and strategies, particularly in challenging contexts that illustrated the bishops' abilities to navigate difficult leadership situations.

To the degree that the project seeks to introduce women's speeches and criticism thereof into the canon, I agree with Campbell about the appropriateness of focusing on the rhetoric of so-called great women (even while I set aside the categories *qua* categories associated with Campbell's notion of feminine style). Barbara Biesecker has accused Campbell of female tokenism, or of simply aligning a few select women alongside the great men of the rhetorical canon. Biesecker argued that most women cannot achieve the level of accomplishment of the rhetors whose work Campbell seeks to recover and analyze. Biesecker suggested that Campbell fails to challenge the criteria for canonicity, which are themselves symptomatic of patriarchy.<sup>65</sup> However, I am persuaded by Campbell's response, which in part suggests that the women she introduced into the canon are by no means defenders of the status quo because each in some way is radical for her own specific time and context.<sup>66</sup> (Even Phyllis Schlafly, for all her anger about the importance of traditional women's roles, was an unconventional woman by her own definition in the sense that her performance of public advocacy and full schedule of speaking engagements kept her from tending to her family in the home!)

In sum, I approached this project from a critical rhetorical feminist perspective, broadly defined as a lens that makes visible the relationship between gender and power and is oriented toward gender justice. I resisted claiming allegiance to a rigid system whereby the critic is committed to look for examples that fit into categories defined *a priori*.<sup>67</sup> On the question of whether to study the rhetoric of so-called great women or challenge rhetorical standards, I rejected the perceived binary between the two approaches and worked with the assumption that one can (and should) study notable women and simultaneously challenge what counts as canonical. Next, I turn to the three questions this project addresses.

### **Preview: Guiding Questions and the Arguments to Come**

These three questions guided my work on this project: (1) How do these women bishops draw from and contribute to the rhetorical-historical trajectory of (religious) women public speakers and rhetorical strategies in the United States?; (2) What strategies do they use to establish themselves as leaders, and in what ways are issues of gender and power evident in and obscured by those strategies?; and (3) How does their particular status as religious leaders influence their rhetorical strategies and choices?

#### *Rhetorical-historical Trajectory of (Clergy)women Speaking*

The first question I address in the dissertation relates to the paradox with which I opened this chapter: Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori simultaneously have no predecessors and have at least four centuries of predecessors. Therefore, I asked in what ways they draw from the rhetorical-historical trajectory (of speakers and strategies) that led up to their elections to the episcopacy and how they contribute to that trajectory as predecessors for clergywomen bishops who have come since and who are still to come.

According to church historian Karen Jo Torjesen, women served as priests and even bishops in the first couple centuries of the Common Era. Prohibitions on women's ordination and preaching developed as the church became more organized, institutionalized, and hierarchal.<sup>68</sup> In the pre-Reformation church, while women were not ordained, a few women attained the rank of teachers of the faith, an honor rarely bestowed in Catholic history. Catherine of Siena relied on ethos and identification in her letters to the pope, and she eventually achieved her goal of persuading the pope to return to Rome from Avignon. She also taught, but she strategically downplayed her intelligence around her male superiors in order not to be perceived as a threat.<sup>69</sup> In the late sixteenth century, Teresa of Avila relied on rhetorical strategies of humility, irony, and obfuscation to teach the faith. Initially, contemporary theologians condemned her work as heretical, but less than 50 years later, she was canonized. Spanish language and history scholar Alison Weber explains, "Teresa was a captivating individual who was able to win over even hardened adversaries with her great charm, humor, and humility. But her personal powers were matched by her persuasiveness in writing."<sup>70</sup> Like Catherine of Siena, Teresa of Avila embraced contemporary stereotypes of women's inferiority but then claimed that because women were unable to understand the scriptures, they were ideal teachers of the faith because they relied on God to supply what they were incapable of comprehending. Despite the social and institutional obstacles facing them, Saints Catherine and Teresa managed to teach the faith and make rhetorical arguments about women's abilities. Later in the seventeenth century, even more women speakers and strategies would emerge on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

From its beginnings, American Christianity has been rife with women who strategically navigate their way to the pulpit and podium. Michael W. Casey has argued that studies of the emergence of women public speakers in the United States often erroneously ignore women's



public speech within religious institutions. Quaker women were speaking to promiscuous (mixed-sex) audiences as early as 1662 in colonial America, often offering defenses of women's speaking and preaching. In the 1750s, Sarah Townsend was a popular preacher at the New Light Baptist Church on Long Island, New York. Dorothy Ripley addressed Congress with the president's approval in 1806. A black woman known only as Elizabeth began her four-decade preaching career in 1808. Harriet Livermore preached to Congress in 1827. Therefore, Casey writes, "When the first important American female secular speakers emerged, they were stepping into an almost two-hundred-year-old tradition of female oratory."<sup>71</sup>

Campbell notes that for early women speakers, presence enacted equality. The woman rhetor "herself was proof that she was as able as her male counterparts to function in the public sphere," and I would add *religious sphere* as well.<sup>72</sup> However, presence alone was not enough to overcome cultural beliefs and ostensible biblical prohibitions against women's speaking in public generally or in church meetings more specifically. Therefore, early women speakers—whether secular or religious—often gave a defense of their right or ability to speak as a part of their addresses. Among the more common strategies these early women used to assert their rights to the pulpit or dais were: constructing themselves as prophets who spoke messages directly from God, appealing to examples of women leaders and speakers in the Bible, attacking the sexism and racism of the church, and claiming spiritual equality to men.<sup>73</sup>

In the early 1900s, Aimee Semple McPherson founded the Foursquare Gospel Church. According to Kristy Maddux, McPherson developed a popular preaching style by relying on storytelling and developing relationships with her listeners—a few decades before the narrative turn in the field of homiletics.<sup>74</sup> Later in the twentieth century, advocates working for women's ordination faced many of the same arguments their foremothers countered so effectively. Sonja

K. Foss reports that arguments against women's ordination in the Episcopal Church included the assumption that women were too emotional, the fear that women as leaders would rely too heavily on intuition to make decisions, and the assumption that women needed to focus on child rearing instead.<sup>75</sup> Finlay adds that another argument against the ordination of women was the fear that women might one day want to become bishops.<sup>76</sup>

Despite the persistence of arguments against women's ordination, the Methodist Church approved the full clergy membership of women in 1956; the Episcopal Church did the same 20 years later. While the Roman Catholic Church and several conservative fundamentalist and many evangelical Protestant denominations continue to admit only men to the ranks of clergy, the ordination of women is growing in mainline Protestant denominations, including the United Methodist and Episcopal Churches, but also the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).<sup>77</sup>

Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori, then, entered the rhetorical-historical trajectory of women speaking in public, and in the church, at a particular moment. They simultaneously benefitted from the rhetorical history of speakers and strategies on which they stood and contributed to that history as role models for the women who would come after. Since Matthews and Kelly were elected, the United Methodist Church has elected more than twenty additional women bishops, including three African American women, a Hispanic woman, and a woman in a Central Conference (outside the United States). Jefferts Schori is the incumbent presiding bishop for a few more years, but her work in that role may serve as an inspiration to laywomen thinking about entering ministry or to clergywomen considering putting their names into consideration for the episcopacy.

Throughout the history of women's rhetorical practice in and beyond the church, the question of women's styles and abilities to lead has emerged repeatedly. Next, I turn to a consideration of the relationships between and among gender, leadership, and power.

### *Women, Leadership, and Power*

In this section, I explore issues related to the second question I addressed in this project, which considers these tensions: What strategies do Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori use to establish themselves as leaders, and in what ways are issues of gender and power evident in and obscured by those strategies? These sorts of questions have emerged throughout the history of leadership studies in communication.

Gail T. Fairhurst notes that the study of leadership “began with the turn of the twentieth century ‘great man’ school of thought, which led social scientists to look for those characteristics and traits (such as intelligence, dominance, height, and so forth) that differentiated leaders from non-leaders.”<sup>78</sup> Leadership scholars only considered including women in theorizing leadership when women began to enter the workforce in sizable numbers in the 1970s. Patrice Buzzanell suggests that feminist scholars of organizational communication and leadership generally work to respond to “traditional themes that guide theory and research in the United States” and “contrast these themes with feminist theorizing.”<sup>79</sup> Traditional studies emphasize “competitive ethics, cause-effect linear thinking, and separation or autonomy,” which Buzzanell contends are limited and limiting themes because they neglect “women's behaviors and reasons for action.”<sup>80</sup>

Both within organizations and in theorizing about organizations and leaders, Buzzanell writes,

women's role of organizational ‘other’ is ... unconsciously sustained by: dominant gender ideologies, over-emphasis on advancement which usually requires stereotypically masculine behaviors; continuation of behaviors that are essential for the socio-emotional atmosphere of the workplace but which are detrimental to promotion; and beliefs that, if women have not succeeded, it is the fault of the individual women despite lack of family and community support structures.<sup>81</sup>

Embedded in Buzzanell's critique is the assumption that women's contributions to organizations are often social, relational, and emotional, and that women's leadership style is more centered on sharing power *with* rather than wielding power *over*. Buzzanell's analysis borders on but avoids gender essentialism because she seems to recognize gender as a social construction, and she acknowledges that women have different experiences and are not monolithic. Still, Buzzanell's ideas seem to reify stereotypes. Furthermore, the use of Buzzanell's ideas to inform a critical perspective is risky because it has the potential to result in the same sort of unoriginal criticism that some appropriations of Campbell's feminine style exemplify.<sup>82</sup>

Nonetheless, I find Buzzanell's call to question the masculinist trajectory of leadership studies scholarship compelling. If masculinist leadership styles are rewarded in organizations, there is utility in considering how women leaders embody, subvert, or re-interpret those styles. Rather than asking whether Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori are more likely to lead collaboratively than competitively, I am interested in how they enact their leadership rhetorically and what we might learn from it. How do these women at the top of the power hierarchies in their professions talk about themselves as leaders, about their visions, and about the work of the churches and pastors they supervise? Furthermore, how do they respond to sexism, racism, and patriarchy, whether subtle or explicit?

At the same time as I asked those questions, I wanted to avoid the shortfall that liberal feminism so often suffers in assuming, in Buzzanell's words, "that women can, and should, be more like men."<sup>83</sup> I also resist the idea that women are categorically different from men, with the caveat that women who seek ordination "while religious, are by definition not completely traditional. They frequently have to overcome barriers, discouragement, and lack of support from friends, family, and church leaders in order to be where they are."<sup>84</sup> I affirm that people are

different from each other, and that individual differences are always more pronounced than group differences. Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori are different from other leaders—women and men—by virtue of their firstness. Given the challenges of leadership in patriarchal organizations, how do these three women take authority and enact power where no other woman has done so before?

The particular context for these women's leadership provides an important frame for these questions about the bearing of gender on leadership styles and the rhetorical enactment of power. Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori are not chief executive officers of for-profit companies or governors of states; they are bishops, leaders in Protestant denominations. Next, I turn to the rhetorical significance of religious contexts for thinking through questions of leadership.

#### *The Rhetoric of Leadership in the Christian Tradition*

In the introduction of this chapter, I suggested that women in religious vocations face the same challenges as women in business and politics as well as additional challenges that are unique to religious vocations. I also affirm that the religious contexts for their leadership provide some rhetorical opportunities and advantages for at least two related reasons. First, within religious communication, revelation is understood as authoritative, which renders the identification of rhetorical strategies for persuasion more complex than in contexts such as presidential campaign communication. Second, Protestant bishops can expect a great deal more homogeneity among audiences than can political rhetors, which enables them to start from some more specific common assumptions than can leaders in business or politics. In addition to these opportunities the bishops have as religious rhetors, it is important to acknowledge that these women bishops

represent, embody, and frequently discuss issues related to the current tensions in Christianity between liberal and conservative theology.

First, then, how does the question of authority affect rhetorical possibilities in religious communication? In short, religious leaders can and are often expected to make specific appeals to the Bible, God, church history, and denominational doctrine in their addresses.<sup>85</sup> Priestly rhetoric, according to Thomas Lessl, insists that “its origins reside outside of ordinary human experience as revelations of spirit or nature.”<sup>86</sup> By contrast, politicians in the US refer to God regularly, but typically in vague, generic ways that bolster claims of American exceptionalism and nationalistic identity. Whether conceived in the strong sense as *civic religion*<sup>87</sup> or more loosely as *civic piety*,<sup>88</sup> such deistic allusions draw on non-unique elements from the Judeo-Christian tradition in the broadest sense. For this reason, Robert N. Bellah argues that church and state have had a relatively smooth relationship throughout American history.<sup>89</sup> Roderick P. Hart describes the vagueness of theological pronouncements in political rhetoric as “not a faith in faith,” but rather, “a faith in *statements* about faith, faith-in-faith as rhetorically pronounced.”<sup>90</sup> For example, comparing presidential nomination acceptance addresses to Puritan jeremiad sermons, Kurt W. Ritter writes,

the Puritan’s carefully proscribed religion has been replaced by the ambiguities of a civil religion—the American Dream. Its sacred texts are no longer the words of Jeremiah and Isaiah, but those of Jefferson, Lincoln, and even Harry Truman. In short, the scriptures have been replaced by a rendering of the national past. Those who present the modern jeremiad are no longer religious leaders, but political speakers.<sup>91</sup>

The distinction between religion as it manifests in political discourse and the religious rhetoric of bishops matters for the rhetorical critic. What might in the rhetoric of John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, or George W. Bush be regarded as merely a trope, a strategy of persuasion, or an example of an argumentative form could, in the rhetoric of a religious leader, be a fulfillment of that

person's religious convictions or a consequential interpretation of a commonly held theological doctrine. Hart suggests that American presidents are nominally religious,<sup>92</sup> but one can assume that bishops are genuinely religious. Bishops' references to God, then, are to be understood as reflections of deeply held theological belief, not (only) tropological strategies for gaining compliance. This distinction may manifest in rhetorical forms as well, as in my argument that Jefferts Schori embodies a feminist progressive civility. I argue not just that she employs civility as a means to a persuasive end, but that her civil discourse is a materialization of her spiritual conviction that each person is beloved and sacred to God.

Second, who are bishops' actual and implied audiences? Although bishops do receive a number of speaking invitations for special events like bacalaureate services, college and university commencements, and the like, most occasions that call for a bishop to preach are at local churches under their care or at regional or denomination-wide church gatherings. In these two most common settings, bishops can generally expect a religiously homogenous audience.<sup>93</sup> Undoubtedly, mainline Protestant denominations include adherents from the far left to the middle to the far right of the political and theological spectrum, but the overwhelming majority of an audience so assembled can be presumed to share most basic tenets of Christian faith. Particularly within the denominational gatherings, which tend to include a good number of clergy and only the most active and involved laypeople, the audience can be expected to have understandings of denominational distinctiveness, including some of the finer points of doctrine and church policy. Having a common starting place with the audience can be an asset, as the bishops can move into their agenda for the sermon without doing a lot of definitional groundwork.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to these advantages, though, the bishops face the challenge of ascending to leadership at a time in Christian history marked by change. Phyllis Tickle contends that Christian history is marked by recurring patterns of change where the source of authority for the church is the central dispute.<sup>95</sup> These changes result in new Christian communities and the reform of existing communities. In Tickle's view, the Protestant Reformation represented a shift from the church as the source of authority to scripture as the source of authority. New communities emerged (Protestant churches), and the Roman Catholic Church was forced to clean up some of the questionable practices with which Luther took issue. Tickle argues that Christianity is in the midst of another upheaval, and in this transition, authority is shifting from scripture to the Holy Spirit. Issues in Protestant churches around gender equity, racial reconciliation, and human sexuality represent, for Tickle, the last vestiges of a Christian worldview where scripture is the primary source of authority.<sup>96</sup> Many conservative and moderate Protestants may resent what they see as a confluence of Enlightenment ideals with Christianity, particularly when the principles of modernism seem to supersede orthodox doctrinal fidelity to Christianity.<sup>97</sup> These are recurring patterns, but Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori represent and embody the more liberal side of this particular instantiation of the ongoing historical struggle. Some of the difficulty the bishops face with audiences who resist their progressive visions is rooted in this precise problem. Audience members hostile to what they perceive as a liberal co-optation of their faiths may see these bishops as condensation symbols for their frustrations.

In sum, Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori have certain opportunities and advantages as leaders in religious institutions. Religious contexts suggest that what counts as a rhetorical strategy might be more complex than in political communication, and audiences can be expected to have some degree of homogeneity based on religious identity. The bishops also face the



challenge of working at a possible turning point in Christian history where the source of authority may be shifting. Next, I turn to a preview of the claims in each chapter.

*Looking Ahead: Appealing to Shared Values toward God's Shalom*

My overall argument is that the bishops share a common goal and a similar macro-level strategy for achieving their goals, even while their particular emphases and specific rhetorical forms along the way are different. The bishops' common strategy is appealing to values they share with their audiences in an effort to encourage the audiences to bring about the bishops' vision of God's *shalom*. Jefferts Schori explains what she means by *shalom* in her book *A Wing and a Prayer*:

That word “shalom” is usually translated as “peace,” but it’s a far richer and deeper understanding of peace than we usually recognize ... It isn’t just telling two arguers to get over their differences. Shalom is a vision of the city of God on earth, a community where people are at peace with each other because each one has enough to eat, adequate shelter, medical care, and meaningful work. Shalom is a city where justice is the rule of the day, where prejudice has vanished, where the diverse gifts with which we have been so abundantly blessed are equally valued. The biblical image of Jerusalem is a city like that—that’s what the “salem” part means.<sup>98</sup>

Matthews’s offered a similar definition in her sermon “This is the Day!”:

The Hebrew word “Shalom” has many more meanings than the absence of conflict. I am happy to see that we are coming closer to understanding this ancient word, when we define shalom as the “wholeness of one who is at one with God.” Such a definition would be in keeping with the example of Jesus Christ, who often asked, “Do you want to be whole?” “Do you want to be healed?” “Go in peace—it is your faith that has accomplished this thing.”<sup>99</sup>

Kelly defined *shalom* concisely: “God’s creative purposes were for wholeness, harmony, balance – peace, Shalom for all creation.”<sup>100</sup>

In Christian theology, *shalom*, sometimes called *pax Christi*, or the peace of Christ, is not an idealistic dream. Rather, it is what Christians pray for week by week when they say “Thy kingdom come, they will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” To pray for God’s kingdom to

come on earth means recognizing that the church visible actively participates in making *shalom* a reality. Theologian Ada María Isasi-Díaz prefers the term *kin-dom*. She explains: “I do not use *reign* or kingdom because of their sexist and classist connotations. *Kin-dom* is preferred because it includes a sense of community, of shared responsibility for survival and welfare.”<sup>101</sup> Importantly, the whole peace of God, whether construed as *kin-dom*, *shalom*, or *kingdom*, is not just a reality God bestows independently. Instead, Christians join God in co-creating shalom on earth. Though they use different rhetorical strategies and focus on different aspect of shalom, Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori all offer their audiences opportunities participate in the development of a church and world that reflects such a value on community and the welfare of those most marginalized.

Marjorie Matthews’s focus within the larger rubric of shalom was on gender equality. In Chapter 2, I suggest that Matthew’s preferred leadership style impels her to use a personal tone and autobiographical information in effecting identification with familiar audiences. However, when she addresses ecumenical audiences about the subject of women’s ordination, Matthews must instead use appeals to institutional authority. In those settings, Matthews celebrates the groups’ past liberal accomplishments to constitute them as audiences of progressive Christians whose next logical move is to support women’s ordination. In addition to this strategy of constitutive rhetoric, Matthews’s presence as a successful ordained woman performatively enacts her argument that women ought to be ordained. While contextual constraints and Matthews’s preference for liberal arguments without clear roots in Christian theology militate against her success, Matthews still attempted to use the values she shared with her audience to ask the audience to contribute to a church and world where women’s gifts are as equally valued and recognized as those of men.

In Chapter 3, I consider Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly. Within the expansive scope of shalom, Kelly's particular focus is on racial justice (with a secondary emphasis on the always-related issue of gender justice). My argument is that Kelly articulates the prophetic rhetorical tradition with an ironic perspective in order to address racism and sexism in the church. Borrowing from the prophetic tradition allowed Kelly to remind her audience that as Christians in the Wesleyan tradition, they were part of a covenantal relationship that emphasized both personal piety and social holiness. Speaking from an ironic perspective, Kelly was able to reveal the inconsistencies between the church's racist and sexist reality and the covenantal values the audience purported to profess as United Methodists.

Chapter 4's argument is that Katherine Jefferts Schori transcends controversies in the life of the church by appealing to her vision for the church, based in values she shares with her audience. Her vision of shalom emphasizes issues of global poverty, hunger, and health. Her transcendence of controversies allows her to prioritize people over abstract principles and therefore interact respectfully with those with whom she disagrees. As such, I suggest that Jefferts Schori's rhetoric of transcendence mean that civility is compatible with progressive politics, not just (as some recent rhetorical studies scholarship suggests) a conservative trope deployed to silence marginalized voices.

Finally, in the conclusion, I draw relationships and connections among the three case studies and make overall connections back to the theoretical and critical foundations from this introductory chapter. I also offer at least partial answers to the guiding questions I posed in this chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### MARJORIE SWANK MATTHEWS: ENACTING LIBERAL EQUALITY, CONSTITUTING PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY

Before Katharine Jefferts Schori carried the primatial staff or Leontine Kelly the crozier, before the House of Bishops would elevate Jefferts Schori and the Western Jurisdiction elect Kelly, there was Bishop Marjorie Swank Matthews. While Jefferts Schori and Kelly are firsts in their own right, Matthews is a first among firsts. Elected in 1980, American Methodism's 196th year, Matthews was, for four years, not only Protestant Christendom's first woman bishop, but its only woman bishop. During those four years and ever after, no United Methodist bishop addressing the Council of Bishops could any longer refer to his (or her!) colleagues as "brethren."

Matthews was aware—immediately upon her election as well as throughout her ministry—of the impact she would have on the stained glass ceiling. In an interview with the *Pittsburgh Press* shortly after her election in July 1980, Matthews averred that "This election is a recognition that equality is coming to women in the United Methodist Church." Yet she acknowledged that "there are no models for me," so "I'll have to make my own way." In the same interview, she reinforced that she did mean *her* own way: "I am a woman and do not intend to become a man when I take office."<sup>1</sup>

History remembers Matthews as a touchstone, the model for others that Matthews herself did not have. Judith Craig, elected the same week as Kelly in 1984, recalls that Matthews inspired her to run for bishop:

There was [a] procession of bishops at the 1984 General Conference when I saw Marjorie Matthews in the midst of the Council of Bishops and knew she was going to retire. It was

clear that never again should there be a time when there was not a woman in that Council. I had to look in the mirror and hear a voice that joined with many other voices at that time, a voice that said, “If not you, who? What right do you have to ask anyone to be available if you won’t?”<sup>2</sup>

During a sermon at a service of remembrance ten years after Matthews’s death, Kelly remembered how clergywomen across the church “exploded with joy when Marjorie was elected. The barrier was broken. We knew the Council of Bishops would never be the same. We would never be the same.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition to celebrations of Matthews’s trailblazing, those who knew her and worked with her fondly remember her leadership style. Sharon Brown Christopher, who served as a district superintendent on Matthews’s cabinet and was later elected a bishop, recalls that Matthews “assume[d] the authority that the church had given her to be the episcopal leader in the church” and “at the same time, as we worked together I sensed a highly consultive process.”<sup>4</sup> Clergy who served under Matthews concurred, praising Matthews’s integration of “mutuality and authority in her work.”<sup>5</sup> As a bishop elected around the time when the ecclesiastical zeitgeist in several Christian denominations was moving away from exclusively top-down models of leadership, Matthews seemed to find the appropriate balance of collegiality and authority.

Matthews’s iconicity and place in both church history and women’s leadership more broadly is established and needs little elaboration here. Instead, the question I consider as a rhetorical critic is *how* Matthews overcame the challenges not only of primacy, but singularity, in her rhetorical role as a bishop—both in leading the United Methodists of Wisconsin and in representing the United Methodist Church in various ecumenical contexts. In United Methodist contexts, where Matthews’s leadership was imbued with what Max Weber<sup>6</sup> called legitimate authority—or power whose exercise is socially and institutionally sanctioned—how did she manage to make her own way? And in ecumenical contexts where her singularity most especially

stood out, how did she respond to audiences who were unsure about whether women should be clergy members at all—let alone bishops?

The answer to these questions, I argue, lies in Matthew's identification strategies. This chapter is based on my close reading of approximately 20 sermon manuscripts from the General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church and the Archives of the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. I contend that Matthews's preference is for personal identification. Before familiar audiences, she relies on conventional identification strategies that emphasize her similarity and accessibility to the audience. When she addresses ecumenical audiences where women's ordination is not accepted or taken for granted, she must resort to appeals to institutional authority because personal identification is unlikely to be adequate. In these more challenging settings, Matthews shifts to constitutive rhetoric, seeking to interpellate her audiences as progressive Christians whose past accomplishments presuppose a commitment to the more liberal reforms Matthews advocates. In addition to her direct statements of institutional authority and her use of constitutive rhetoric, Matthews also enacts the leadership she calls for. When she occupies the space of the pulpit in a context where women's ordination is not accepted, Matthews's presence makes the argument that women in ministry are effective. The performative potential of these sermons, though, was ultimately limited because Matthews's arguments for women's inclusion were based on liberal feminist premises seemingly divorced from specifically Christian warrants. Before considering Matthews's strategies in detail, I turn to identification and its forms as well as a discussion of enactment.

## **Theoretical Angles**

### *Identification*

Kenneth Burke advocated a pivotal shift in the study of rhetoric to separate the twentieth century from the rest of rhetorical history: a transition from a focus on persuasion to an emphasis on identification. Aristotle's stress on persuasion "is concerned with deliberate design," but in Burke's view, "even without being subjected to such deliberate persuasion, we spontaneously identify ourselves with some groups or other, some trends or other – and we need a term for this kind of persuasion in which [...] we spontaneously, intuitively, and often unconsciously, act upon ourselves."<sup>7</sup> For Burke, identification is achieved when the rhetor and the audience have shared interest or when the audience believes its interests are one in the same with those of the rhetor.<sup>8</sup>

The most common and prosaic type of identification, sometimes called direct identification, involves establishing common ground between the speaker and the audience. The oft-used example of direct identification is the politician who tells a group of farmers that he grew up doing chores on a farm. Direct identification includes what Judith Trent calls obvious relations, specific references to the audience or local persons and places, and common ground techniques, which establish that the audience and speaker share beliefs, values, and experiences.<sup>9</sup> Another type of identification, antithesis, occurs when a rhetor establishes a common enemy against whom she and the audience can "join forces."<sup>10</sup> The subtlest and most powerful form of identification is unnoticed identification. Unnoticed identification occurs when a rhetor successfully uses the word "we" to include the audience in statements audience members might not otherwise endorse. Burke's "prime example" is the statement "we are at war," which "includes under the same head soldiers who are getting killed and speculators who hope to make

a killing in war stocks.”<sup>11</sup> These three types of identification, for George Cheney, lie “along a continuum of associational and dissociational symbolic processes.”<sup>12</sup> In every case, the rhetor seeks for the audience to associate with the rhetor’s goals and dissociate from that which (or those whom) the rhetor opposes. The end result of successful identification is consubstantiality, where the audience adopts the rhetor’s perspective.

### *Constitutive Rhetoric*

One particularly influential application of identification is Charland’s notion of constitutive rhetoric. Charland considered how an audience could be rhetorically constituted to understanding itself as a political collective. According to Charland, the definitive White Paper in the movement for the sovereignty of Quebec constituted its audience as the *peuple Quebecois*—a group defined by its political agency and subjectivity—rather than just “French Canadians.” For Charland, the very act of being addressed as such is rhetorical: “An interpellated subject participates in the discourse that addresses him,” and “this rhetoric of identification is ongoing, not restricted” to a single discursive encounter.<sup>13</sup> The rhetor’s message facilitates the adoption of a particular collective identity on the part of the audience. Especially astute rhetors tie their goals directly to the identity they are working to constitute such that “a subject is not ‘persuaded’” to support the rhetor’s cause, but rather, support for the cause “is inherent to the subject position” addressed.<sup>14</sup> Drawing on groups’ past achievements is appropriate because constitutive rhetoric “paradoxically must constitute the identity” even while “it simultaneously presumes it to be pre-given and natural, existing outside of rhetoric and forming the basis for a rhetorical address.”<sup>15</sup>

Subsequent work on constitutive rhetoric has explored both the conditions for its emergence and reasons why it sometimes fails to constitute an audience whose values match



with those of the rhetor. Christina Morus emphasizes Charland's point that the constitutive rhetor draws on elements of the audience's identity that are already there: "The identities hailed through constitutive discourses are not formed from scratch but are based on existent subjectivities that have in some way lost their force."<sup>16</sup> Helen Tate has argued that constitutive rhetorics of lesbian separatist feminism emerged because of the contradictions lesbians discovered within liberal feminism. The ideals of liberal feminism had lost some of their force, so separatist feminism emerged as an alternative for lesbians excluded from the mainstream women's movement.<sup>17</sup>

Constitutive rhetorics surface to offer audiences a way out of contradictions, but sometimes constitutive rhetorics are not successful. Kenneth Zagacki explains that constitutive rhetoric is likely to fail when a speaker tries to impose values extrinsic to the audience. For example, George W. Bush's efforts to interpellate an Iraqi people desirous of democracy were unsuccessful because the desire for democracy was not part of the "already there" identity of the audience:

Bush used the word 'democracy' to designate what the Iraqis *were*, but he employed a word that actually designated something the Iraqis were *not*...although utilized by the President to designate a quality or trait "*within*" the Iraqi people, "*intrinsic*" to them, democracy was something "*outside*" the Iraqis and their traditions, "*extrinsic*" to them or imposed on them by the United States.<sup>18</sup>

When material conditions are right, constitutive rhetors may effect a shift in the audience's identity,<sup>19</sup> but Bush's attempt at imposing democracy on the Iraqis was far too radical and thus rejected as most unwelcomed. Constitutive rhetoric presumes a history and a future for the audience interpellated, so the identity constituted must cohere with narratives of the past that audiences will find amenable.

## *Enactment*

When inspiring identification with the audience is difficult, effective rhetors sometimes enact the very message they proffer. Phaedra Pezzullo explains that sometimes, presence itself is persuasive:

More than simply “showing up,” being present as a mode of advocacy suggests that the materiality of a place promises the opportunity to shape perceptions, bodies, and lives with respect to the people and places hosting the experience. Being “present,” like a roll call in school, indicates the significance of someone literally co-existing with another in a particular space and time.<sup>20</sup>

Elsewhere, I have argued that lesbian, gay, and bisexual activists who protested exclusionary policies at conservative Christian college campuses enacted their argument that lesbian, gay, and bisexual identities were not incompatible with Christianity: “By positioning themselves in the places where they are most unwelcome and where their presence seems most jarring, the [activists] become visible, corporeal manifestations of their message: All Christian contexts, whether churches or institutions of higher education, should (and can) be places where everyone is welcomed.”<sup>21</sup>

Presence, then, is persuasive when a rhetor enacts her message. Charles Kauffman defined enactment as demonstrating one’s argument through one’s actions.<sup>22</sup> For Robert Asen, attending to enactment means thinking about not just what someone says or does, but how she says and does it. To distinguish “acts from enactment,” Asen argues, is to recognize “that practices may express different meanings and significance for agents and audiences in different situations.”<sup>23</sup> For example, Asen suggests that a consumer who makes an effort to purchase fair trade coffee from a local coffee house is enacting responsible citizenship while the customer who buys coffee there just because the price is better than Starbucks is not. Their actions are the same (each bought coffee), but only the former enacts citizenship.<sup>24</sup>

Exploring the practicality of attending to this difference, several scholars of rhetorical studies have offered examples of the usefulness of enactment. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell has argued that early women rhetors in the US, who spoke despite cultural and social prohibitions against women's addressing mixed-sex audiences, demonstrated their competence performatively: "When a woman spoke, she enacted her equality, that is, she herself was proof that she was as able as her male counterparts to function in the political sphere."<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Susan Zaeske contends women abolitionists had no legal public subjectivity, but they enacted such subjectivity anyway when they signed anti-slavery petitions. In turn, the U.S. Congress, in tabling the women's petitions, granted legitimacy to the political subjectivity the women enacted.<sup>26</sup> Another example is Randall Lake's analysis of the American Indian Movement's "Red Power" rhetoric. Lake contends that activists enacted Native American sovereignty by reclaiming traditional Native names, occupying land formerly controlled by Native Americans, and opening "Survival Schools" as alternatives to white efforts at assimilationist education.<sup>27</sup>

Notably, all these examples are instances where identification is unlikely. Early women speakers and militant Native American activists typically faced hostile audiences who defined themselves by their difference from and perceived superiority over the *other*. In this chapter, I illustrate that enactment can also work alongside conventional identification and constitutive rhetoric. If Marjorie Matthews's presence in the Council of Bishops processional was enough to inspire Judith Craig to put her name into nomination for bishop, might Matthews's presence in the pulpit also have been enough to persuade audience members who were unsure whether women should be ordained?

## **What Does a Bishop Do?**

To appreciate Matthews's various uses of identification and enactment, we must first consider the contexts for her sermons as a bishop. Most United Methodist laypeople are probably only aware that they even have a bishop when their pastor retires or gets reappointed to another post. Bishops' most visible responsibilities are to appoint pastors and to preside over the annual conferences of their episcopal areas. However, bishops are also pastors of the whole church and have responsibilities to represent the denomination in a variety of ecumenical settings throughout the world. *The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church includes among parts of a bishop's job description, "encouraging and supporting all baptized people in the exercising of their gifts and ministries, praying for them, and proclaiming and interpreting to them the gospel of Christ. Bishops are to be prophetic voices and courageous leaders in the cause of justice for all people."<sup>28</sup> To that end, "the Council of Bishops may assign one of its members to visit another episcopal area or Methodist-related church."<sup>29</sup>

Bishops do not officially speak for the United Methodist Church; only the General Conference, a quadrennial meeting of elected lay and clerical delegates from around the world, can officially speak for the church. However, bishops often represent the United Methodist Church or the Council of Bishops at events like ecumenical gatherings, ordination services in other denominations, inaugurations of presidents at United Methodist colleges and universities, and other such occasions. During her short tenure as a bishop, Matthews represented the United Methodist Church on a trip to churches in Sweden and the former Soviet Union, at a meeting of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights, at a meeting of the World Council of Churches, and at a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council.

Of course, Matthews did most of her preaching in United Methodist settings, whether in local churches or at denominational assemblies. In these contexts, she had legitimate authority. Because of Matthews's position as a bishop, according to Weber, her use of power is institutionally sanctioned. In these contexts, most audience members will understand Matthews's exercise of power as appropriate.<sup>30</sup> This allows Matthews to use personal identification strategies that emphasize her similarity with the audience, which seems to be her preferred leadership style. In contrast, Matthews's authority is more contingent in more ecumenical or interdenominational settings. In such contexts, some audience members may have firmly held the conviction that women ought not be ordained, and in some instances this conviction was likely codified in their own denominations' polity. These settings, then, called for ethos appeals firmly rooted in Matthews's institutional role as opposed to ethos appeals rooted in personal accessibility.

### **Conventional Identification and Personal Ethos Appeals**

When Matthews's goals were related to individuals in her audiences and when she was addressing United Methodist congregations, her identification strategies are recognizably similar to the types enumerated by Burke.<sup>31</sup> In particular, her uses of direct identification linked her explicitly to her audience, often through the use of strategic self-disclosure. These disclosures made Matthews accessible to her audience, emphasizing that her leadership style underscored cooperation with rather than authority over those she served.

In at least two sermons, Matthews shared autobiographical information that allowed her to relate directly to her audience. This type of direct identification, "obvious relations" in Trent's language,<sup>32</sup> decidedly highlights similarities between the rhetor and the audience. A prime example of direct identification is Matthews's most autobiographical sermon, "One is a Whole Number," where Matthews said being single is not a deficiency or a sign of spiritual

incompleteness. Instead, she argued, one can live a meaningful and fulfilling life as a single person. While concrete evidence about the sermon's immediate context is scant, the specificity of the topic strongly suggests that Matthews delivered the sermon to a singles group for a local church or the entire annual conference, as a sermon so narrowly focused would be inappropriate in any other context.

In this sermon, Matthews addressed the difficulties of being single in the church, and she concluded, as her title suggests, that one is a whole number. Simply put, people can lead meaningful lives—spiritual and otherwise—without being romantically coupled. Matthews explained that more than half of the adults in the US are single, but she said, becoming “suddenly single” is not easy. Explicitly linking herself to the singles in the congregation, Matthews briefly narrated the story of her marriage and divorce:

Like most of you who were once married, I married for life—or so I thought. Many of you remember the American dream before Pearl Harbor—a story-book romance, a beautiful church wedding, a good job with a comfortable future, savings in the bank, building toward a down payment on a home for two or three more, as the old song went. All that ended during World War II—during which time I had moved five times in two years, criss-crossing the country to various army camps; my son was born in Texas, and my marriage ended when he was 10 months old.<sup>33</sup>

While Matthews did not share specific details about the divorce, she linked the dissolution of her marriage to the erosion of the American Dream narrative that coincided with it. The other divorcees in the room likely shared with Matthews an expectation that their former marriages would be lifelong, but like the other aspects of the American Dream narrative, this one does not always turn out to be true. Contrary to the image many laypeople may have of their pastors' and bishops' lives being perfectly ordered, Matthews's narrative revealed that she was more like her congregation than they may have assumed. Like them, she expected all the pieces of the American Dream would fall neatly into place for her, but that was not the case.

Matthews went on to explain that attending church became difficult for her. She did not want to leave her baby in the nursery, nor did she want to take him to classes or services otherwise full of adults. She was asked to join the choir, but to go to choir practice would have meant incurring the cost of a babysitter and missing valuable time with her son. “As a result,” she explained, “I became a Sunday morning dropout. I was aware of some speculation as to the reason for the divorce, and also an attitude of strong disapproval on the part of a few. It was much easier for me to avoid that kind of pain by avoiding those who cause it.”<sup>34</sup> Once her son was old enough to benefit from attending Sunday School, Matthews returned to regular church attendance, but she still struggled to fit in: “I was still not very comfortable in the young adult class [...] Most of the single young adults had been drafted as teachers, leaving couples as the main stay of the class. Sunday mornings were bad enough, but the fellowship attempts were much worse. These events were built around couples and families.”<sup>35</sup> She later noted that when she began pastoring churches part time, ostensibly helpful people “were always trying to match me up with someone.”<sup>36</sup>

Nothing Matthews said here is news to single people in church, but they are quite unlikely to have heard this sort of message at church before, especially from a bishop. Anyone single in the church is likely to identify with at least some parts of Matthews’s narrative: from feeling judged for being divorced (or never married), to feeling unsure about whether a church-wide invitation to a “family” event includes single persons, to turning down multiple would-be Cupids. Despite the fact that the church can unwittingly send the message that single people are incomplete or inadequate, Matthews’s sermon and her example illustrated otherwise, namely that singleness can be meaningful and fulfilling.

Matthews concluded the sermon by noting that the prophet Jeremiah was young and single, but this scriptural allusion was merely peripheral compared to the autobiography that formed the crux of the message. Matthews might identify with Jeremiah, but she asked the congregation to identify with her. Like her, they might have become “suddenly single” in a painful way. Like her, they may have left church or continued going to church despite feeling left out. And like her, they were leading lives that were complete and fulfilling, even if the church seems to say otherwise. Consequently, one is not a fraction, partial and incomplete, but a whole number. Matthews was different from her congregation in important ways, but she emphasized the similarities. She was the bishop, but she spent most of the sermon talking about her experience as a layperson in the church. When she talked about her experience as a single woman in ministry, she was discussing the early part of her ministry where she worked part time while she attended college alongside members of her son’s high school graduating class. Matthews may have been the bishop, but she was not distant or aloof, not out of touch with those she served. Instead, she was just like anyone else in the congregation: a faithful Christian who sometimes struggles to remember that a single life can be fulfilling. Thus, Matthews’s message facilitated a perception of the bishop not as some transcendent or ethereal being, but a normal, accessible person with the same challenges as anyone else.

In another sermon, Matthews again established identification by turning to autobiography. In “Chosen for Challenge,” Matthews argued that God calls people who seemed unlikely but provides them with courage to lead and confront injustice. Matthews initially delivered the sermon in 1982 in a local church and then gave a revised version of the sermon at the North Central Jurisdictional Conference in 1984, just two months before her retirement. Matthews began the sermon by speculating that perhaps the prophet Amos was a woman. “The



reason why I am tempted to think of Amos in that way,” Matthews elucidated, “is because Amos was a most unlikely candidate to carry the message of God’s justice to a society bent on satisfying its every desire.”<sup>37</sup> Matthews gave other examples of biblical characters who seemed unlikely for the role they played in the narrative of the Christian tradition, including Abraham, Sarah, Moses, and Ruth, among others. After working through more contemporary examples of unlikely characters, Matthews directed her gaze inward: “Why me? Why a middle age mother with a teen-age son, with no formal education beyond high school—why me? Why you?”<sup>38</sup>

Matthews’s “why me?” question bookended what she regards as the qualities that made her an unlikely candidate for ordained ministry (and certainly for the episcopacy). She was a single, divorced mother in her forties. Ordination had only recently opened to women, and the educational prerequisites for ordination would compel Matthews to get a college degree and a Master of Divinity degree, a process that would take at least seven years. Nevertheless, she experienced and responded to a call to ministry. By the time she asked, “why you?”—turning the question on the congregation—she had established that God calls unlikely figures, and she had offered the congregation a number of outlets for identification, including herself. Matthews established that even she, now a bishop in the church, had struggled and continued to struggle with God’s call. The bishop—indeed, the church’s first woman bishop—is no holier than anyone else when it comes to responding to God’s call. Instead, she is just like anyone else in the audience who may have some doubts or fears about taking on the challenge of doing God’s work. Matthews’s vulnerability in admitting that she too questions God’s call put her on the same level as the members of the congregation. Equality of the speaker and the audience is emphasized by the juxtaposition of the second “why me?” with “why you?” The question’s answer also equates Matthews with the audience and encourages the audience to identify with

her. Why does God choose Matthews or anyone else? According to Matthews, God calls people for courage and confrontation—not the courage they already have, but the courage God gives them as they respond to God’s call to work for justice in the world.

So far, I have suggested that Matthews used rather conventional identification strategies when she was addressing United Methodist congregations or assemblies with goals related to individuals in the congregation. Furthermore, Matthews’s ethos strategies are personal and emphasize her accessibility rather than her institutional authority. Additionally, Matthews demonstrated the sort of collaborative leadership style those who worked closely with her remember so fondly. She never referred to herself as “the bishop” or called attention to her own singularity as a leader. She wanted the audience to relate to her and to identify with her as a person and a Christian. By contrast, other bishops are often characterized by communicative practices that establish their authority and leadership even before members of their own denominations (where we might expect their authority is presumed). For instance, Carol Jablonski found that Roman Catholic bishops’ pastoral letters to their dioceses often used phrases like “I, your bishop, hereby direct that,” followed by a command or set of instructions.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, Methodist Bishop Nolan Harmon’s autobiography exudes a tone that emphasizes his leadership over rather than service with those in his care.<sup>40</sup> For Matthews, being introduced as the bishop seemed to be the only reminder of her authority she thought her United Methodist audiences needed. Barring this, she focused on her similarity to the audience.

Matthews may have been able to emphasize her similarities with the audience in familiar contexts, but when she spoke in settings where women’s ordination was not accepted, the personal ethos strategies Matthews preferred were not available to her. In the following section, I turn to a sermon and speech where Matthews’s goals call for collective action on the part of the

group she was addressing. These situations call for institutional authority rather than personal ethos appeals. So, Matthews must attempt to enact the sort of leadership she calls for while she simultaneously tries to constitute her audiences as progressive Christians whose liberal worldviews presuppose the acceptance of the goals she advances.

### **Constitutive Rhetoric and Enactment of Institutional Authority**

Matthews's two most challenging audiences are the body at the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches in Vancouver, Canada in 1983 and an ecumenical but substantially Roman Catholic audience at a service of celebration for the twentieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council. In both cases, Matthews argued for the ordination of women, but before she made this argument, she worked toward two preliminary goals. First, she established her institutional authority to speak before the assembled bodies, a goal that allowed her to enact the equality she called for in her messages. Second, she celebrated the progressive work the audience had already accomplished as a collective, constituting her audiences as faithful and forward-thinking Christians. These preliminary goals allowed Matthews to frame her eventual argument as a progressive extension of the audience's already-established identity rather than a radical demand from an uppity outsider. While her use of constitutive rhetoric has limitations and was certainly not (entirely) successful in an empirical sense, I contend that constitutive rhetoric allowed Matthews to sound reasonable and moderate in calling for collective action or dialogue in a way that would have seemed radical to an audience otherwise constituted. In addition, her presence in the pulpit on these occasions enacted the very rhetorical leadership she called for. If the audience can accept Matthews's performance as a bishop, their resistance to women's ordination is threatened.

*Justice and Human Rights for All? Matthews at the World Council of Churches*

In the summer of 1983, Matthews attended the sixth assembly of the World Council of Churches. The World Council of Churches is an interdenominational, global group of churches, including Protestant, Anglican, and Orthodox churches. The council is governed by a septennial meeting of the assembly. While the World Council of Churches does not have formal power over its member denominations, it is a forum by which member churches can act in concert on a variety of issues related to faith and society.<sup>41</sup> In a short deliberative speech (probably not more than three minutes long), Matthews established her credibility and authority, complimented the assembly on its position paper about justice and human rights, and finally called for the ordination of women based on the assembly's affirmation of human dignity in the position paper.

Matthews began her speech with a statement that both established her authority to speak and enhanced her credibility for addressing the particular issue of women's ordination: "Sisters and Brothers in Christ: My name is Marjorie Matthews. I am a bishop in The United Methodist Church of the United States of America. This is the first time I have attended an Assembly of the World Council of Churches. I believe it is also the first time that a woman has been able to attend the World Council of Churches as a bishop of her member church."<sup>42</sup> She then introduced herself as a bishop, a title that would give her credibility at least to audience members willing to grant the legitimacy of another tradition's ordination and consecration of a woman for pastoral ministry and the episcopacy. Finally, she called attention to her exemplarity and primacy (something she never did in any of the other speech or sermon manuscripts I have for her). As Christendom's first woman bishop, she was especially qualified to address the issue she spoke about in the remainder of the speech, the ordination of women. In addition to addressing the issue, though, Matthews embodied it as a woman bishop. Like the nineteenth-century women

Campbell and Zaeske studied, Matthews enacted her equality to men by occupying the rhetorical space of the episcopacy. However, Matthews is different from the subjects of Campbell's and Zaeske's studies in an important way. Unlike those early women, Matthews's enactment of her equality to men in the episcopacy was amplified because Matthews had been elected to the position by the same processes that had, for the previous two centuries, elected men. Conversely, Campbell's suffragists and Zaeske's abolitionists had no legitimate authority beyond that which they enacted. Matthews's enactment was buttressed, at least in part, by her claim to legitimacy as an elected bishop in the second largest Protestant denomination in the US.

While primacy itself was not central to Matthews's ethos challenge in this context, the presence of a woman bishop did have the potential to bring to the surface the issue of women's ordination and the related question of the acceptability of women in positions of authority (over men) in the church. While women bishops today still encounter people who do not believe women should be ordained, their presence is at least precedented. In this sense, Matthews prepared the way for those who would follow.

Before she turned directly to the deliberative goal of her speech, Matthews praised the Justice and Human Rights Paper under consideration by the assembly: "I want to commend those who have prepared this document. It is well-written and demonstrates concern for justice and human rights for all persons regardless of their status on the economic scale, color, race, or sex."<sup>43</sup> Although her direct praise for the committee is relatively brief, she has also noted by this point that the assembly is hearing from the first woman bishop to serve as a representative to the Council. To the degree that audience members are invested in gender equity or the progressive concerns of the justice and human rights report, they are likely to identify with Matthews's celebration of the committee report. If they are proud to see themselves as a part of a progressive

ecumenical body—that is, if they accept her constitution of them as such—they are likely to be more positively disposed to Matthews’s deliberative goals.

After Matthews applauded the justice and human rights report, she turned immediately to the issue of women’s ordination: “I wish to speak to an issue of justice and human dignity which affects well over one-half the members of our churches,” she said. “I am referring to the recognition of women as worthy candidates for ordination.” She went on to remind the audience that all “those who are baptized into the Christian faith, whether infant or adult, are received into the household of God,” so “Why is it, then, that for many, many years the men of the church have reserved to themselves the joys and trials of service as ordained priests, pastors, or ministers as though their sisters did not exist?”<sup>44</sup> Matthews’s argument here relied on two constitutive strategies. First, she used the phrase “justice and human dignity” in the sentence immediately after the one where she praised the committee’s paper on “Justice and Human Rights.” Using such similar language linked the issue of women’s ordination with the issues considered in the committee’s position paper. To support justice and human rights without also supporting women’s ordination is, in this constitution, paradoxical at best. Second, Matthews appealed to the Christian sacrament of baptism. While the member denominations of the World Council of Churches may differ on several important doctrinal details about the meaning of baptism—particularly on the question of the appropriateness of baptizing infants—baptism has been, throughout church history, a sign of the covenant between God and God’s people and a ceremony that identifies people as participants in that covenant.<sup>45</sup> Presumably the entire audience can agree with that basic doctrinal tenet. By bringing up baptism, Matthews introduced a theological reason for supporting women’s equality rather than the merely ideological warrant implicit in liberal calls for gender equity. The contradiction between the sacrament of baptism

(available to everyone) and the rite of ordination (in many cases available only to men) is intriguing, if not jarring. Such a moment of contradiction is ripe for the emergence of constitutive rhetoric.<sup>46</sup> For audience members who identify with Matthews's vision of a progressive World Council of Churches, her final recommendation seems reasonable: "I heartily encourage studies and dialogues on this issue within and between our member churches."<sup>47</sup> Matthews recognized that the World Council of Churches did not have authority to change policies in its member denominations, but it could speak with a collective voice to its member churches. Therefore, she realistically urged study and conversation. For denominations committed to justice and human dignity and who are serious about the inclusive meaning of the sacrament of baptism, at least talking about the topic of women's ordination is imperative. Furthermore, to the degree that the audience recognized Matthews as a successful religious leader, they saw the results of her argument (women's ordination) enacted before them. While Matthews's preference as a leader is for personal identification rather than appeals to institutional authority, the occasion called for institutional authority. Allowing her to speak at the meeting was an implicit recognition of her equality and legitimacy, so her presence alone, enhanced by her own reflexiveness about her role, must have narrowed her audience's ability to resist her message. Matthews's enactment of her message gave audience members another outlet for identification: they could identify with her, the woman bishop speaking, or with her constitution of the body as progressive and inclusive, or both. To the degree that any of these options for identification resonated with the audience, alternatives (i.e., opposition to women's church leadership) were foreclosed.

*Celebrating Vatican II, Hoping for Vatican III*

Matthews's speech at the World Council of Churches called for the ordination of women in light of the document about justice and human rights, but her sermon at the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of Vatican II issued an even bolder set of challenges. The audience was ecumenical but substantially Catholic. Matthews refers to "My own church, The Methodist Church" when she talked about her own views on Vatican II, so we can be sure the audience was not United Methodist.<sup>48</sup> Toward the end of the sermon, Matthews called for a third Vatican Council that would address inclusive language, the ordination of women, the marriage of priests, the empowerment of the laity, and interfaith cooperation. Before she explained that she had "been praying for a third Vatican Council which would provide some correctives" to the church, Matthews spent the first three-quarters of the sermon praising Vatican II.<sup>49</sup> Explaining the impact of the Second Vatican Council, sociologist of religion Melissa Wilde and colleagues write:

The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II, 1962 to 1965), a watershed event in the history of Roman Catholicism, brought about a multitude of changes. Vatican II ended the requirement of a Latin mass; sent nuns from their cloisters out into the world; relaxed dietary restrictions, confessional obligations, and service attire for the laity; significantly relaxed the Roman Catholic Church's (RCC) claim of being the one true church; and officially renounced the RCC's claims to power in relation to nationstates.<sup>50</sup>

Additionally, according to Jablonski, Vatican II is widely regarded as facilitating better relations between the RCC and Protestant sects.<sup>51</sup>

Appropriate to the occasion, Matthews's sermon celebrated the tremendous changes brought about by Vatican II. Matthews began the sermon by noting that Pope John XXIII's 1959 announcement that he was planning to call a second Vatican Council coincided with the beginning of Matthews's pastoral ministry. Before she elaborated on Vatican II, Matthews subtly moved into an explicit ethos appeal to establish her authority and credibility before an audience whose religious tradition does not ordain women: "By the time the Council had concluded its



deliberations in 1965, I was a full-time college student, and serving two small rural churches as a student-charge. When I retired in September of 1984, I was responsible for 520 churches, over 700 pastors, and about 125,000 members in the state of Wisconsin.”<sup>52</sup> At the beginning of Vatican II, Matthews was just starting her ministerial career, and when Vatican II was over, she was serving two churches and attending college full time. Both of these statements orient the audience to what Matthews was doing when Vatican II was going on, and this orientation is important later in the sermon because Matthews illustrated how the changes in the RCC influenced her thinking as a pastor and student studying for full time ministry. However, Matthews’s next sentence in the introduction shifted in time to 1984—the year of her retirement—with no evident connection or relationship to Vatican II. Topically, her mention of the pope’s 1959 announcement and the Council’s 1965 conclusion made sense, but the shift to 1984 served another purpose. Matthews did not identify herself as a bishop (we can presume the program or the person who introduced her accomplished as much); instead, she described what she was doing as a bishop when she retired. She had gone from “serving a small country church part-time” to “serving two small rural churches” to being responsible for all the United Methodist churches and pastors in the state of Wisconsin. This ethos strategy—similar to the one she used in her speech at the World Council of Churches—made it clear to the audience that Matthews was a bishop with many of the same responsibilities that Catholic bishops have. To audience members theologically opposed to the legitimacy of women’s ordination, this strategy was likely unsuccessful. Rejecting Matthews’s “priesthood” denotatively forecloses any possibility that her episcopacy is legitimate. However, anyone in the audience who could at least grant that women’s ordination is sanctioned by God would understand that Matthews retired not only as a member of the clergy, but a leader among leaders, a pastor with responsibilities for

several hundred churches and several thousand parishioners. Her ethos strategy, then, allowed her to have constitutive authority based on her experience even if she did not have legitimate authority in the Weberian sense (which, in such a setting, only a Catholic bishop would have). Again, she enacts equality from her official position as a bishop. Even if her official position is functionally irrelevant to most of the audience, the performative act of delivering a sermon from the masculine space of the pulpit<sup>53</sup> made a claim for women's pastoral leadership before Matthews explicitly expressed that very same argument toward the end of the sermon. For many in the audience, hearing Matthews may have been the first occasion when they, in Pezzullo's words, "literally co-exist[ed]" with a clergywoman "in a particular space and time."<sup>54</sup> Despite Matthews's preference for personal ethos appeals, her similarity with and accessibility to the audience is not as relevant or useful here because this setting requires institutional authority. The audience is unlikely to grant her such authority, so Matthews uses enactment to bridge the gap between ethos and context. Theological opposition to women in the clergy becomes more difficult to sustain in the presence of an effective clergywoman.

Having established her credibility for at least some audience members, Matthews returned to the topic of Vatican II. She explained that Vatican II coincided with the civil rights movement and thus "gave added impetus and legitimacy to reforms already taking place" in the culture and in various religious denominations at the time.<sup>55</sup> Citing a book chapter by Loyola University theology professor Stephen Duffy, Matthews praised Vatican II for "moving from a strict authoritarian rule to more collegial styles of leadership," shifting "from hierarchy to people—by the introduction of old images of the church as 'the people of God,' 'family of God,' 'prophetic community,' etc.," increasing ecumenicism by acknowledging "the common traditions and present realities of other Christian communities," and recognizing "the impact of

the world” and the church’s need to be “a part of the human family” rather than seeing itself as transcendent or above and beyond human experience.<sup>56</sup> Matthews expounded at some length on the importance of ecumenicism, maintaining a laudatory tone throughout her discussion of the importance of the various churches’ working together. She expressed the United Methodist Church’s commitment to ecumenical efforts as evidence of her enthusiasm for Vatican II’s turn toward cooperation among denominations.

By this point in the sermon, Matthews had not said anything challenging. Assuming the audience was generally positively disposed toward Vatican II, they are likely to identify closely with the version of the RCC that Matthews admires: one where leadership is cooperative, Catholics work with their United Methodist and Lutheran neighbors, and the Church understands that it is part of the world, thereby offering masses in the vernacular as opposed to Latin. Matthews’s praise is not merely sycophantic. Instead, it is bolstered by the witness of the entire United Methodist Church, the expert testimony of a systematic theology professor who works at a Catholic university, and the whole of American society, which underwent social reforms as the RCC experienced ecclesiastical ones. By this point in Matthews’s constitution of a progressive Catholic “people,” the attentive audience member is likely feeling good about being Catholic. The RCC that Matthews described is an institution with which one would desire to identify, in large part based on its willingness to change and to recognize that being in the world means affirming that traditions should be dynamic rather than static.

Authority, in the RCC, is grounded in church tradition,<sup>57</sup> so Matthews made the last twenty years of that tradition particularly salient in her sermon. Matthews’s rather thin conceptualization of church tradition was convenient for the constitutive work she was doing in the sermon, but Matthews ignored the complex notion of tradition for Catholics. Tradition is not

just precedent, but the development across history of the most essential teachings of Christian theology. The result of Matthews's shortcut on authority, I suggest, is an audience constituted for thought more than action. Matthews's next move was to call for a Vatican III to "provide some correctives." Matthews framed her suggestions for the future of the RCC not as a major reform or overhaul or as an assault on the church tradition faithful Catholics revere, but as "correctives" inspired by the ongoing positive changes accomplished by Vatican II. The persuasive potential of her sermon was considerably constrained by the limited role of laity in Catholic polity. Nevertheless, Matthews's suggestions may have affected the attitudes of some in the audience due, in no small part, to the careful work she did throughout the sermon to constitute her audience as progressive Catholics, Catholics who make a difference in the world because of their flexibility and adaptability to change.

Toward the end of the sermon, Matthews offered five such "correctives." First, she noted that as she re-read the documents produced by Vatican II, she was "struck by the sexist language, which must now seem offensive to over half of the world's population." Second, appealing explicitly to the audience's identification with Vatican II, she said, "although discrimination based on sex is certainly repudiated by the Vatican Council, ordination is still not possible for Roman Catholic women despite their excellent skills, high qualifications, and dedication to ministry." Third, though Matthews grouped this concern with the issue of the ordination of women, she briefly suggested that "a study of human sexuality would surely address the question of marriage for clergy." Fourth, she envisioned an RCC where "laymen and lay women are not primarily the objects of ministry" but "a part of the total ministry of Christ to the world." Finally, she posed the question of universalism: "How are Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, et al.

saved, and does their salvation relate to Jesus Christ? Are we shifting from a Christocentric viewpoint to a theocentric one?”<sup>58</sup>

While orthodox Roman Catholics might find all or several of these ideas scandalous, I contend that Matthews’s constitutive rhetoric had the potential to inspire the audience to think about some of these questions as mutable rather than inflexibly predetermined. For an audience that buys into Matthews’s version of the significance of Vatican II, these are reasonable questions from an authoritative, faithful Christian, not some threatening leftist reforms proffered by an extremist or a heretic. She established what she admired about Vatican II and presented it in a way that made it appealing. Then, from that shared basis, Matthews pushed on some of the edges, some of the places where Vatican II stopped short of its potential for making the church more effective in contemporary society. For example, why should a married priest or a woman priest seem like an impossible notion when a vernacular mass was inconceivable only a generation before? If ecumenical work within Christendom is more possible in light of Vatican II, why not interfaith work in the near future? If Vatican II represented a shift toward collegial styles of leadership, is it too difficult to imagine an RCC where laity have some share in governance? For an audience constituted as progressive Catholics whose relevance depends on adaptability, these questions are at least worth considering.

Whether Matthews’s audience indeed entertained these questions depends on the success of her constitutive rhetoric. The contradiction between the progressive moves of Vatican II and the restrictive policies the Church maintained gives Matthews the rhetorical space she needs for constitutive rhetoric. However, her potential for success is ultimately limited for at least three reasons. First, the audience cannot effect the changes Matthews desired. Only the pope could call a third Vatican Council. Second, Matthews appealed to too narrow a piece of church tradition in

only considering recent precedent. While she was wise to use tradition in constituting a progressive Catholic audience, Matthews missed the complexity of what *tradition* means to Catholics. As such, her correctives may have been rejected as extrinsic impositions, akin to Bush's invocation of *democracy* in Iraq. Certainly Matthews's constitutive strategies militated against this liability, but they did not assuredly insulate her from it. Whatever success Matthews had must have been limited to inspiring thought or dialogue—certainly not what Charland had in mind when he suggested that constitutive rhetorics “are oriented toward action.”<sup>59</sup> Dialogue about topics previously thought verboten—say, a serious conversation between lifelong Catholics about the possibility of women priests—seems a rather subdued form of action.

Third, and most important, Matthews's suggestions are based entirely in liberal ideology. Unlike the sermon at the World Council of Churches, this sermon's correctives are so brief that they do not include theological rationales. Even her enactment strategy in this sermon seems to rely on the liberal notion that women can do anything men can do, including supervising hundreds of churches and clergy, rather than on scriptural or otherwise explicitly Christian rationales. By itself, this performative claim is somewhat effective, but it does not address the theological arguments that divide Christians on the question of women's ordination. Instead, Matthews seemed to suggest that theological objections are subordinate to liberal ideological movements for equality. Her claim that sexist language is offensive to half the population likewise reflects the liberal politics of inclusion, but this claim does not offer any of the many possible theological reasons for using inclusive language. Matthews may have been somewhat successful in constituting an audience of progressive Catholics, but religious audiences want liberal beliefs to follow from their faith—not the other way around. When Matthews departed from theological rationales, she offered a Christian liberalism that was difficult to differentiate

from a secular liberalism. As such, she risked, in Zagacki's terms,<sup>60</sup> bringing change from without—specifically, by trying to interpellate liberal ideology into Christian theology instead of explaining how her liberal ideals were an outgrowth of her understanding of the Christian faith. Liberal arguments might be persuasive, but when they are conflated with Christianity to such a degree that Christianity is no longer recognizable as such, audiences for whom distinctly Christian arguments are important are lost.<sup>61</sup>

### **Conclusion**

When she had individual goals and spoke in familiar settings, Matthews relied on traditional identification strategies, including autobiography, to make direct connections with the audience. In so doing, she exhibited an accessible style of leadership, especially when compared to the top-down approach that often characterizes bishops' leadership. When she addressed groups in an effort to inspire collective action, particularly in more challenging contexts, Matthews praised the groups' previous successes before she called on them to continue or extend their good work. Matthews relied on the previous constitution of the audience and highlighted the parts of that identity that she admired and wanted to make salient. Beginning with some assumptions she could reasonably expect most of the audience to embrace allowed Matthews to make suggestions that might otherwise have seemed radical or extreme. Some audience members may still have thought Matthews's ideas were untenable, but Matthews avoided the judgmental tone that often seems to accompany sharp-contrast radical critiques and perspectives. Instead, she offered possibilities for progress based on the values and actions previously exhibited by the audience. Furthermore, as a self-identified bishop delivering a speech on the floor of an assembly or behind a pulpit, Matthews enacted her role as a leader in the church. Her presence and performance alone made the argument not only that women *can* lead, but that women *are* leading, and are

doing so competently. When Matthews argued for women's ordination, she made her claim twice: once with words, and once by the act of standing in the pulpit as a bishop and enacting the very leadership she called for. Here, the necessity for appeals to institutional authority eclipsed Matthews's ability to use the personal strategies she preferred, so Matthews relied on appeals to institutional authority as she performed the leadership she championed. Matthews's use of identification and enactment strategies together suggests that enactment need not be reserved for contexts where identification is seemingly impossible. Instead, even when facing dubious audiences, rhetors can inspire identification by strategically constituting the audience in line with particular goals while simultaneously making an argument with their very presence—literal co-existence—with their audiences.

Matthews's identification, constitutive rhetoric, and enactment strategies are not without their drawbacks. First, when employed by Matthews in the interest of liberal reform—or dialogue toward liberal reform—constitutive rhetoric is at best an incremental strategy. She urged the World Council of Churches to encourage discussion about women's ordination. She “confessed” that she was praying for a third Vatican Council. Pragmatically, Matthews was not in a position to bring about the kind of change she would like to see in the RCC or in Protestant denominations around the world, so incremental change is probably better than nothing. But just how much progress can be made when the strategy's anchor point is the progress a group has already made? The prognosis for constitutive rhetoric, then, seems to be liberal reform at a glacial pace.

Second, the presumption of audience members' identification with their groups' previous progress is optimistic at best. Every group seems to have persons who resent so-called progress and pine nostalgically for the way things used to be. Matthews's liberal arguments without



theological rationales only serve to exacerbate this problem. Mel Gibson, a Roman Catholic who prefers a Latin mass,<sup>62</sup> would probably not attend a celebration of the anniversary of the Second Vatican Council; and if he did, he would certainly reject Matthews's characterization of the reforms as auspicious. Constitutive rhetoric calls an audience into being, but Gibson would not heed the call. Such a rejection, of course, would apply with perhaps greater severity to the new round of progress Matthews called for. Despite these limitations, constitutive rhetoric can be an effective strategy for nudging audiences forward, particularly when the impact of the identification is amplified by a productive performative enactment of the rhetor's message.

## CHAPTER 3

### LEONTINE TURPEAU CURRENT KELLY: TOWARD AN IRONIC PROPHETIC RHETORIC

When Leontine Turpeau<sup>1</sup> was born in March 1920, there was no federal mandate guaranteeing women in the US a right to vote. Additionally, while African Americans were promised the right of the franchise by the fifteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Jim Crow laws prohibited the vast majority of them from exercising this right. Compared to U.S. culture at large, policies in the life of the church were no more progressive. Women would not be admitted to full clergy membership in the Methodist Church until 1956, when Leontine was in her mid-thirties. Officially sanctioned segregation persisted in the Methodist Church until 1968.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout Leontine's life, more opportunities opened up to her even while the legacies of racism and sexism remain(ed). When she became the first woman of color elected to the episcopacy in 1984, she had spent more than half her life in a denomination where black pastors could not be appointed to white congregations and almost half her life in a denomination where women were not ordained. Even so, on September 1, 1984, she assumed the role of bishop—chief pastor—for 100,000 United Methodists in 400 churches in Nevada and Northern California. In this role, both during the four years of her active episcopacy and subsequently in the many years of her quite busy retirement, Kelly addressed sexism and racism in the church and culture before countless multicultural audiences.

To persuade her mostly white audiences that racism and sexism were sinful, Kelly articulated an ironic perspective with the prophetic rhetorical tradition. The ironic perspective is

characterized by an inversion of audience expectations when a rhetor presents the audience with two different narratives, one that reflects the audience's norms and an alternative narrative that reveals the rhetor's ideals. The prophetic rhetorical tradition is marked by a rhetor's commitment to absolute truth, outsider status as someone with a message from God for humanity, appeals to the shared values that constitute the audience as a people, and elicitation of emotional responses to sin. Bringing together the ironic perspective and the prophetic rhetorical tradition allowed Kelly to argue that racism and sexism are sinful by juxtaposing the narrative embodied in the church's white supremacist and patriarchal practices with an alternative narrative drawing upon her audience's Wesleyan heritage. In the following, I first offer brief histories of social justice, racism, and sexism in the United Methodist Church and predecessor denominations. These histories—though rife with contradiction—are important because they gave rise both to Kelly's rhetorical positionality and to the perspective and tradition of her audiences. Next, I elucidate the ironic perspective, drawing on Kenneth Burke's widely used interpretation of irony as one of the four master tropes. I then turn to an examination of the prophetic tradition to explain why Kelly's ironic perspective draws more from prophecy than from other parts of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Finally, I consider four stories from Kelly's sermons that address white audiences and focus on the sinfulness of racism and sexism. My analysis suggests that Kelly's articulation of the ironic perspective and the prophetic tradition, while not without risk and limitations, provided a strong means for persuading her mostly white audiences of their complicity in racism and sexism.

### **Social (In)justice and the History of the United Methodist Church**

Religious studies scholars often refer to world religions as faith traditions. The term *tradition* emphasizes the importance of history in a faith community's beliefs and practices.<sup>3</sup> To

understand Kelly and her audiences, an examination of the faith tradition that would come to be known as the United Methodist Church is necessary.<sup>4</sup> In this section, I summarize the emphasis on social justice that traces from the Wesleyan roots of the Methodist tradition. Then, I explain how a church founded on principles of social justice ended up regressing on questions of gender and racial justice. The cacophony of contradiction in the church's history gave birth both to Kelly's positionality as a rhetor and her audience's attitudes.

### **John Wesley and Social Holiness**

John and Charles Wesley, the sons of Susanna and Samuel Wesley, never planned to start a new religious denomination. They were reared in the Church of England, where Samuel was a priest. Susanna taught all of her children to read and mentored them spiritually.<sup>5</sup> When Samuel was out of town, Susanna hosted and led prayer meetings in the home that attracted as many as 200 people.<sup>6</sup> After their thorough spiritual and literary education under Susanna and Samuel, John and Charles were formally educated at Oxford and ordained in the Church of England. During their time at Oxford, John and Charles joined a group of students for prayer, fasting, and Bible study. The group became known as the Holy Club, and John eventually became its leader. Other students disparagingly called them "Methodists" because their spiritual practices were highly disciplined and methodical. Although intended as a pejorative, the sobriquet eventually became the name of the movement that emerged out of those early Holy Club meetings, of which John was to be the primary leader.<sup>7</sup>

John Wesley believed that the gift of God's grace should be made available to everyone, not just those who attended church, so he began preaching in fields and wherever else audiences would gather so that his preaching could be accessible to the masses. Several Church of England priests, regarding Wesley's outdoor preaching as undignified, denied him access to their pulpits.

Impervious to criticism, Wesley continued preaching, and soon thousands had converted because of his preaching. Methodist societies started forming, and Wesley began choosing and training lay preachers to lead them. By 1771, several Methodists had traveled from England to the American colonies. Francis Asbury, one of Wesley's faithful preachers, agreed to go to the Americas to lead churches there. In 1784, Asbury and Thomas Coke were elected general superintendents (a title later changed to "bishop") of the church at the Christmas Conference in Baltimore. That conference also adopted the Methodist Episcopal Church's first discipline, and the new denomination was officially born.<sup>8</sup>

Because Wesley was committed to issues of social justice, the (United) Methodist Church followed in this tradition. Wesley clearly stood with the poor, with women, and with people of color. Wesley's concern for the poor was a chief reason that he preached outdoors. Many poor people did not feel welcome in church or did not have the sociological luxury of free time to attend church, so Wesley preached wherever people gathered—often in fields or in the streets to audiences of “miners and humble townspeople, barmaids and farmers, industrial workers, and anyone who would listen.”<sup>9</sup> Vicki Tolar Burton explains that Wesley and other members of the Holy Club visited the poor and even raised funds to release poor people from debtor's prison. Wesley “called the world his parish and the poor his people.”<sup>10</sup> Methodist societies sponsored and led Sunday school classes for poor children whose factory jobs during the week prevented them from attending school. For many poor children, the Methodist Church was the only available pathway to literacy.<sup>11</sup> Women in Methodist societies have long supported mission work and raised funds for projects that benefit poor women and children throughout the world.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to his concern for the poor, Wesley was ahead of his time in his support for women's inclusion in the life of the church. The earliest Methodist societies were organized into

small gender-segregated classes with women leading classes for other women, so women's leadership was fostered from the very beginning. Women preached in mixed-sex Methodist meetings as early as 1760, and although Wesley initially hesitated about whether to permit women's preaching, he soon supported it, stating that he "saw God's hand in it."<sup>13</sup> Wesley's correspondence records indicate that he mentored and supported women leaders in early Methodism, and within a few years of his death, some women were even working as traveling preachers.<sup>14</sup>

While Wesley's views on women took some time to develop, on the question of race—consubstantial in the eighteenth century with the issue of slavery—Wesley's views were absolute. Wesley believed slavery was an evil, sinful, social ill. From his deathbed in 1791, Wesley wrote a letter of support to William Wilberforce, an activist working to end the slave trade in England. Encouraging Wilberforce's work, Wesley wrote, "Go on, in the name of God and in the power of [God's] might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away."<sup>15</sup> While little historical evidence survives about Wesley's interactions with black people, his journals reveal that he mentored at least one young black man in the faith.<sup>16</sup> On the whole, Wesley was a social progressive whose faith informed his interest in and activism on behalf of the marginalized. John Stott notes that "John Wesley remains the most striking instance" of Protestant Christianity's "remarkable history in terms of [its] commitment to social and economic justice."<sup>17</sup>

According to Kristy Maddux, Protestant Christianity (particularly in the US) has always been characterized by a tension between those who support a social gospel and those who prioritize "private Protestantism," marked by a focus on individual salvation.<sup>18</sup> The United Methodist Church seems to land between the two poles, emphasizing, in Wesleyan language,

both social holiness and vital piety.<sup>19</sup> Bishop Scott J. Jones contends that United Methodist doctrine is at the “extreme center” of the theological diversity within Protestant Christianity.<sup>20</sup> The *Book of Discipline*, the denomination’s official book of law, seems to deny the polarity suggested in language that bifurcates personal salvation and social holiness. In its statement on the church’s theological task, the *Discipline* makes clear that an individual faith connection *and* engaged social action are necessary for faithful Christian discipleship:

We insist that personal salvation always involves Christian mission and service to the world. By joining heart and hand, we assert that personal religion, evangelical witness, and Christian social action are reciprocal and mutually reinforcing. Scriptural holiness entails more than personal piety; love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the church’s mutual affirmation of social holiness and vital piety, and in contrast to the legacy of Wesley, the cultural forces of patriarchy and white supremacy led the church to adopt policies and practices in the years after Wesley’s death that would have devastated him. Regarding its position on women’s leadership and its views on slavery, the church regressed considerably in the first half of the nineteenth century.

### *The Fall and Rise of Clergy Rights for Women*

During Wesley’s lifetime, women led class meetings, prayed in public, offered testimonies about their religious experience, read and explicated scripture, and even preached. To combat social stereotypes and prejudices, early Methodist women preachers—like their counterparts in other traditions—used strategies that de-emphasized the authority of the preacher. Mary Fletcher, for example, asked questions of the audience about how they interpreted scripture passages, “using conversation as a model for public speech,” since social convention expected women to be able conversationalists.<sup>22</sup> Other women speakers traveled in groups to exemplify collaboration, another strategy that staved off suspicion and hostility to women speakers.<sup>23</sup> These women faced

cultural prejudices such as audiences who believed women should be silent in church, but they were protected by official sanction: Wesley approved their ministries.<sup>24</sup>

After Wesley's death, Burton writes, power "shifted to a group of men who opposed women's preaching and moved quickly to silence them."<sup>25</sup> In 1803, those more conservative leaders voted that women were only permitted to speak to their own sex.<sup>26</sup> Although several women continued to speak, especially as traveling preachers, they did so without official sanction or support. The issue of women's leadership and work in the Methodist Episcopal Church was debated at every quadrennial General Conference between 1872 and 1920. As early as 1869, when the New York Conference granted Maggie Newton Van Cott a license to preach, some regions of the church were allowing women to preach without the blessing of the General Conference.<sup>27</sup> In 1880, the General Conference dealt "a severe blow" by declaring not only that women could not be granted licenses to preach, but that the licenses granted heretofore were null and void.<sup>28</sup> Not until 1924 were women granted partial clergy status in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and these rights were severely limited to "particular location[s] in response to the emergency missional needs of the church."<sup>29</sup> When the Methodist Church was founded at the Uniting Conference of 1939, a motion for women's full clergy rights was defeated by a narrow margin, with 371 votes in favor and 384 votes against.<sup>30</sup>

The 1956 General Conference received more than two thousand petitions for the full clergy rights of women. Several amendments and substitutions were proposed that would have qualified or lessened women's clergy rights, but none of these measures passed. Then, in a vote described by the conference proceedings as "an overwhelming show of hands," the delegates of General Conference added the following words to church law: "Women are included in all the



provisions of the Discipline referring to the ministry.”<sup>31</sup> Women finally received full clergy rights in the Methodist Church in 1956, when Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly was 36 years old.

While women’s right to lead the church as clergy members was restricted between the dawn of the nineteenth century and the middle of the twentieth century, laywomen’s leadership on behalf of social justice issues in the culture thrived. Perhaps most famous was Methodist woman Frances Willard, leader of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, who advocated for prohibition on behalf of the thousands of women who were abused and penniless because of their husbands’ or fathers’ alcoholism. Within the church, Methodist women’s missionary societies supported missionaries around the world and donated money to help poor women and children globally.<sup>32</sup> To this day, United Methodist Women units in local congregations continue to support mission work and advocate for women and children.<sup>33</sup>

### *Racism as American Methodism’s Original Sin: From Slavery to Segregation*

#### *The Slavery Compromise: 1784-1844*

The church’s backpedaling on women’s leadership was unfortunate and contrary to Wesley’s example, but even more contradictory is the church’s history of institutionally sanctioned racism. Wesley, along with Coke and Asbury, the church’s first bishops, vehemently opposed slavery as a moral evil. Under Asbury’s leadership, Methodist circuit riders (clergy who traveled from parish to parish) in the American colonies voted in 1780 that slavery was “contrary to divine and human justice,” and in 1784 they took an even bolder position when they passed a measure to excommunicate members who owned slaves.<sup>34</sup> One year later, however, another conference voted to suspend that rule, reasoning that a rule supported by one group of pastors should not be applied to the whole denomination. Soon, the church found itself in a position of compromise.<sup>35</sup>

Bishop James S. Thomas argued that three prevailing views on slavery circulated within the church. One group of abolitionists held fast to Wesley's adamant opposition to slavery. A second group held a diametrically opposite view. They believed slavery to be a right and "had no more qualm of conscience about holding a slave than they had about owning a horse."<sup>36</sup> Still others held a position that seemed moderate by early nineteenth-century standards. This third group believed that slavery was an unfortunate but inevitable aspect of the human condition. By the 1800s, slavery in the Americas was 200 years old and therefore seemed to many to be an unavoidable state of affairs. These "moderates" believed that conditions for slaves should be improved and that the church should care for slaves' souls, but they did not work for abolition.<sup>37</sup>

The Methodist Episcopal Church effectively reached out to slaves. Many slaves became members of the church, but regardless of whether one was in the North or South, blacks and whites worshipped separately. Several black members of the Methodist Episcopal Church split off to form their own denominations, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (renamed the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1954).<sup>38</sup> Still other black people remained in the Methodist Episcopal Church despite their distaste for the segregation therein. Thomas notes that black people had been in the Methodist Episcopal Church from its beginning and many felt that it was where they belonged.<sup>39</sup>

Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, controversy over the issue of slavery in the church mirrored the growing racial tension throughout the US. That controversy climaxed at the General Conference of 1844 when Northern delegates prevailed in suspending a Southern bishop who held slaves. In response, the Southern delegates passed a plan of separation. One year later, on May 1, 1845, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South was formally organized. "These two

churches,” Thomas observes, “so similar yet so different, would remain apart for almost a century.” They could only be reunited by a plan that included segregation.<sup>40</sup>

*The Segregation Compromise: 1939-1968*

In 1939, the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church (an offshoot denomination formed in 1830) merged to form the Methodist Church. Prior to the Uniting Conference, bishops in the Methodist denominations were elected at the quadrennial meetings of General Conference and could be sent anywhere in the country to serve, but the delegates to the Uniting Conference organized the church into jurisdictions. Under the jurisdictional model, bishops would be elected in a jurisdiction and then be appointed to serve one or more (regional) conferences within the jurisdiction where they were elected. Five of the jurisdictions were regional: the Western, the South Central, the North Central, the Southeastern, and the Northeastern, but a sixth jurisdiction, euphemistically named the Central Jurisdiction, included all the black churches and black clergy. The Methodist Church, like the United Methodist Church after it, was a connectional church with an appointive system of clergy assignment (as opposed to a congregational denomination where individual congregations have the autonomy to hire and fire their clergy), so the separation of black churches and clergy into their own jurisdiction guaranteed that a white church would never be appointed a black pastor or a black bishop.<sup>41</sup>

The three denominations that merged in 1939 each overwhelmingly voted in support of the unification plan that included the Central Jurisdiction structure of official segregation. However, the vastly outnumbered black delegates to the Uniting General Conference rejected the plan decisively. Thomas explains the difficulty of the vote:

Of the forty-seven African American delegates to the General Conference, thirty-six voted against the Plan of Union and eleven abstained. ... When the General Conference

rose to sing “We Are Marching to Zion,” the African American delegates remained seated and some of them wept.<sup>42</sup>

Though not a single black delegate to the conference voted in support of the plan, the Central Jurisdiction became the organizing paradigm for black Methodists for the next three decades.

From the beginning, the bishops, clergy, and laypeople of the Central Jurisdiction did the best they could, but the Central Jurisdiction was a logistical challenge. It included some compact conferences, like the South Carolina Conference, which comprised only that state, but it also included large conferences spread out over wide stretches of geography. For example, the Lexington Conference included all of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Wisconsin and most of Illinois and Kentucky. Proposals to study and seek the dissolution of the Central Jurisdiction emerged as early as the 1944 General Conference. White and black bishops, clergy, and laypeople realized the dilemma of the Central Jurisdiction, but ending it was complicated for legal and financial reasons—not to mention the social implications. By 1964, some of the conferences in the Central Jurisdiction began transferring into their appropriate regional conferences and jurisdictions, but the Central Jurisdiction would not be completely dissolved until the 1968 General Conference when the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form the United Methodist Church.<sup>43</sup>

### *Kelly and her Audiences*

Kelly and her audiences of the late twentieth century, then, were inheritors of a rich but conflicted historical tradition. On the one hand, Wesley believed strongly in the necessity of both personal piety and social holiness. Among his social justice commitments were progressive views about women’s leadership in the church and staunch opposition to the practice of slavery in Europe and America. On the other hand, the church’s behavior did not match its values. Women’s leadership in the pulpit had been squelched, and the church compromised first on

slavery and then on segregation. Kelly was clearly aware of these contradictions and the sinfulness therein. Her audience's awareness and sensitivity to the contradictions varied widely, but by definition, privilege is invisible.<sup>44</sup> For many in the church, including white conservatives, moderates, and even race-unaware liberals, the election of a black woman bishop likely signaled the end of racism and sexism in the church. Kelly's rhetorical task, at least in part, was to persuade her mostly white audiences of the sinfulness of racism and sexism in the church and of their complicity in it. Such a task required the rhetorical perspective of irony.

### **The Ironic Perspective**

In *A Grammar of Motives*, Kenneth Burke classifies irony as one of the four master tropes. Burke's definition is widely used in rhetorical studies:

As an over-all ironic formula here, and one that has the quality of "inevitability," we could lay it down that "what goes forth as A returns as non-A." This is the basic pattern that places the essence of drama and dialectic in the irony of the "peripety," the strategic moment of reversal.<sup>45</sup>

Rhetoric in the ironic perspective, then, is effective because it persuades by violating the audience's expectations. The impact of the message is the revelation of the turn, what Burke calls the peripety or strategic moment of reversal, when the rhetor points out the difference between the audience's norms and the rhetor's ideal. The objective of these two contrasting narratives—that of the audience's reality and that of the rhetor's desire for the audience—is to inspire identification with the narrative championed by the rhetor. Identification, for Burke, "implies division," so rhetoric always "involv[es] us in matters of socialization and factionalization."<sup>46</sup> In juxtaposing two alternative narratives, the ironist divides herself from the audience and asks the audience to divide itself from its own undesirable behavior or worldview to favor the rhetor's instead.

While the importance of the ironic attitude to rhetorical theory and practice has been evident at least since Aristotle,<sup>47</sup> irony has emerged as specifically relevant as a perspective for black rhetors addressing white audiences. In his analysis of the ironic attitude in the rhetoric of Frederick Douglass's Independence Day Oration, Robert Terrill lamented that "theorists of irony frequently distinguish between irony as a totalizing character trait and irony as a figurative trope," but, he suggested, understanding the rhetorical potential of irony requires thinking about irony simultaneously in both senses.<sup>48</sup> That is, irony resides in both rhetors *and* their rhetoric. As a freed slave from the South speaking to white Northerners in the aftermath of the Fugitive Slave Law, Douglass himself was an ironic figure. Throughout the speech, Douglass's ironic perspective amplified the impact of his arguments against slavery as he claimed that Independence Day was a holiday for white people, not for black people. Douglass complied with the generic demands of an Independence Day address by celebrating the narrative of the nation's founding, but he violated those same demands by excluding himself from the story. Terrill explains, "As Douglass pushes himself away from his white listeners, he impels them toward their own past, requiring them to confront its inconsistencies."<sup>49</sup>

In another example of the felicity of the ironic perspective, Meagan Parker argues that the ironic register allowed James Forman to reverse the social roles of black and white people in the tragic narrative of his "Black Manifesto" speech. Delivered in 1969 to the mostly white meeting of the National Black Economic Development Conference, the "Black Manifesto" averred that black people should be in charge of the conference because the white organizers were complicit in the racism responsible for black people's social positions. Forman went on to demand \$500 million in reparations payments from white religious organizations. Forman's speech was an effective indictment of white complicity in racism at least in part because "black people, who

were once enslaved and characterized by white people as uncivilized savages” were, in the speech, “now championed as the most humane people in the world.”<sup>50</sup> In addition to the role reversal of white and black people, ironic narratives often involve a plot conflict that the rhetor never resolves explicitly. Instead, in irony, the “strategic reversal prompts the central discovery that triggers the plot’s resolution.”<sup>51</sup> Here, the key word is *discovery*; irony requires the audience to assume a role in managing the conflict in the message. When rhetors pose a problem and provide its solution in a narrative, the story has a conspicuous moral. In other words, it results in a maxim for the audience. By contrast, a plot from an ironic perspective leaves the possibilities open for the audience who must form their own conclusions with only the help of their interpretations of the peripety.

Like Douglass and Forman, Kelly is an ironic figure. She was elected bishop in American Methodism’s two hundredth year. During its two centuries, the church had moved substantially away from the ideals of its founder and the basic tenets of its theology, especially on the questions of racial and gender justice. Because her goals required that she make clear the inconsistencies between the church’s values and its behavior, the ironic attitude was an appropriate perspective for her rhetoric. As a Christian minister, Kelly had no shortage of ironic material from which to pull in crafting her messages. The Judeo-Christian tradition is rife with irony. From many of the most important characters in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Moses, a murderer with a speech impediment who was born Hebrew but raised by the Pharaoh’s daughter, is the person God calls to demand that Pharaoh release the Hebrew people from bondage) to the parables of Jesus (e.g., the despised Samaritan, not the religious authorities, is the character who shows compassion to the wounded robbery victim) to the Damascus Road experience of Saul (who is on a mission to persecute Christians, is converted and renamed Paul, and ends up writing

more than half of the New Testament), Christianity and its Jewish heritage are full of ironic figures and stories. Presumably, Kelly could have drawn on any number of these resources, but again and again she appealed to prophecy. Why was the prophetic tradition so important and useful to Kelly?

### **Rhetoric in the Prophetic Tradition**

Like Moses, the Good Samaritan, and the apostle Paul, the prophets were ironic figures as well. Jeremiah was called though only a youth. Isaiah responded to his call despite his initial protest that he was a person of unclean lips who lived among an unclean people.<sup>52</sup> For Kelly's particular positionality and rhetorical goals, the ironic character and voice of the prophets was an appropriate tradition to emulate. According to James Francis Darsey, radical rhetoric throughout American history has borrowed more from the prophets of the Hebrew Bible than from the rhetorical theories of ancient Greece. Several features of prophetic rhetoric are important, especially "a commitment to an absolute, sacred truth" with an "unwillingness to compromise," speaking from a sense of duty rather than desire, speaking as a rhetorical outsider, the ability to create an emotional reaction to sin, and a sense of the audience's shared values.<sup>53</sup>

#### *Absolute Truth and Unwillingness to Compromise*

A rhetor's unyielding commitment to an absolute truth is, for Darsey, the root of prophetic rhetoric. Prophetic messages are countercultural and therefore unpopular, so prophets must be entirely convinced of the truth of their messages in order to persist in delivering unpopular tomes to resistant audiences. The liability of this feature of prophetic rhetoric is that "unwillingness to compromise is often equated with 'unreason' by those it opposes," but prophets are unfazed by such opposition. Because prophets see God as the source of their messages, they regard their



messages as “largely determined.”<sup>54</sup> Hence, the commitment to an absolute truth is directly related to prophets’ divinely inspired duty to speak.

### *Duty over Desire*

Prophets do not speak because they want to prophesy, but because God calls them and leaves them no choice. Darsey points out, for example, that the Whigs who led the American Revolution understood themselves to be acting out of necessity: “The Declaration of Independence reflects the reluctance of duty in characterizing the action of the colonies as a last resort after all the pleas and patient sufferance had failed.”<sup>55</sup> The prophet is selfless, submitting to the will of the divine entirely. Prophets’ frequent refrain is that they have no choice in their mission; they must work for the cause to which they have been called.<sup>56</sup> As I noted in Chapter 1, this feature of prophetic rhetoric was especially helpful to early Christian women’s defenses of their own speaking.<sup>57</sup>

### *Rhetorical Outsider*

Prophets’ sense of divine call means their messages come from outside normal human experience.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, they have more freedom than most rhetors to speak in ways that alienate them from their audiences. In fact, this is a marked feature of the prophetic genre. Darsey explains that “the prophet does not speak as a member of the group he<sup>59</sup> is addressing; he does not speak in the inclusive ‘we.’ As a messenger, the prophet speaks in the voice of the divine ‘I,’ and the message of judgment is against ‘you’ the people.”<sup>60</sup> A prophet, by definition, “violates one of the traditional functions of rhetoric by emphasizing separation over identification.”<sup>61</sup> One source of separation between prophets and their audiences is the affective intensity of prophets’ messages.

### *Emotional Reaction to Sin*

Prophets are not called to speak about quotidian issues and problems in the lives of individuals and communities. Instead, prophets emerge in response to crises, and part of a prophet's job is to convey the seriousness of the crisis through pathetic appeals. The prophet must convey both God's anger and sorrow at the brokenness of the covenant, becoming "the vessel of Yahweh's pathos, a symbol of divine compassion and a vehicle for the reconciliation of humanity to God."<sup>62</sup> On the whole, the emotion prophets most often convey is the anguish God feels in alienation from God's people. Emotional appeals aim to persuade audiences to ameliorate God's grief by returning to the terms of the covenant and thus reconciling right relationship with God.<sup>63</sup> Prophets' audiences tend to share an understanding of their covenant with God, so prophets regularly call on those shared values to make their points.

### *Audience's Shared Values*

Shared values are particularly important because they constitute the audience as a "people" in the rhetorical sense.<sup>64</sup> Darsey explains that prophetic rhetoric "both depends upon and recreates community. Indeed, it is only in the presence of a viable community that the declaratory impulse in prophecy has adequate credibility to insist on engagement. In the absence of such a community, it is easily dismissed as lunatic rant."<sup>65</sup> The audience's shared values give the prophet's message an argumentative ground and legitimacy. When the prophet links her message to principles she knows the audience affirms, she can be assured that the audience has already accepted some of her premises. The audience is collectively accountable to and responsive to its shared values.

### *Why Amos in Particular?*

While the entire prophetic tradition is a useful rhetorical resource for Kelly, she seemed to turn to the prophet Amos the most. Amos exemplifies the ironic pattern that permeates the entire prophetic tradition of the Hebrew Bible, but Amos is especially appropriate for Kelly for a few reasons. Amos's and Kelly's messages are similar in two senses that I discuss in the next section: both speak from an ironic perspective and both are concerned with justice for the marginalized. In addition, both Kelly and Amos are cultural outsiders to their audiences. Alan D. DeSantis points out that Amos is unusual among the Hebrew prophets because he is not a member of the community he addresses.<sup>66</sup> By definition, prophets are *rhetorical* outsiders.<sup>67</sup> Typically, though, prophets are *cultural* insiders, Israelites addressing Israel.<sup>68</sup> By contrast, Amos was a cultural outsider who came from the Southern region of Tekoa in Judah and traveled north to Israel to deliver prophecies.<sup>69</sup> Like Amos, Kelly is a cultural outsider as a black woman bishop in a predominantly white denomination with a calamitous history of patriarchy and white supremacy. Less significant—but still notable—is the fact that Kelly was a geographical outsider since she was a member of the Southeastern Jurisdiction but elected in the Western Jurisdiction.<sup>70</sup> While the ironic perspective allowed Kelly to point out the difference between her audience's values and their reality, the prophetic tradition allowed her to call the audience back to its values without hesitation or compromise.

### **Toward An Ironic Prophetic Rhetoric**

Kelly kept an active preaching schedule throughout her career. Church law required that she retire at the age of 68, but she continued preaching actively for the better part of the next two decades, sometimes against the orders of physicians who told her to take a break and slow down.<sup>71</sup> I read approximately 40 sermons and 20 magazine and newspaper opinion pages written

by Kelly from the archives at the Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. The sermons span 25 years, from a seminary sermon she delivered in 1976 to sermons she gave in 2000. Across time and context, one theme often recurs in her preaching: the importance of racial and gender justice. Now, I turn to four narratives from those sermons to illustrate that Kelly articulates the ironic perspective with the prophetic tradition to persuade her mostly white audiences that racism and sexism are sins in which they are complicit.

*Can White Americans “Seek the Lord and Live” in 1976?*

In May 1976, Kelly was a seminary student enrolled in a class focused on preaching about social issues. One might reasonably assume Kelly was the only woman of color in the class.<sup>72</sup> Though she was not yet a bishop, her seminary class was likely one of her first primarily white audiences. Undaunted, she took as her subject the U.S. Bicentennial and argued that black people should not celebrate it. To understand the sermon, some context about current events that were salient at the time is necessary. While people around the country planned to celebrate the nation’s two hundredth anniversary in July, black students in South Boston were being attacked on the busses taking them to their newly integrated schools. The violence against these black students called to mind the contentious integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957—a comparison at least some media outlets were making explicitly.<sup>73</sup> In addition to polemics around integration, racial identity was also in the spotlight in the weeks immediately prior to Kelly’s class sermon because NBC aired a dramatized version of the infamous case of the black teenagers from Scottsboro, Alabama who had been hastily convicted (with scant evidence) of raping white women in the 1930s. The case was newsworthy in the spring of 1976 because the last defendant was still in prison at that time; he would eventually be

pardoned in October 1976.<sup>74</sup> Against that backdrop, Kelly delivered the sermon, “The Bicentennial: An Issue for Black Americans.”

Arguably, Kelly’s sermon belongs in the genre of ironic Independence Day orations. Independence Day speeches have a long and celebrated history in the US. Cedric Larson and Howard H. Martin argue that, especially before the Civil War, Independence Day was one of the most important holidays in the nation, and the occasion always called for a speech.<sup>75</sup> DeSantis explains that audience members expected such speeches to “celebrate the virtues of American independence,” “create unity through communality,” and “instill nationalistic pride.”<sup>76</sup> One of the earliest and most famous Independence Day orators to violate these expectations was Frederick Douglass. In his speech “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro,” Douglass drew the audience into a narrative of American exceptionalism but then, in the moment of strategic reversal, argued that he was excluded from such a narrative.<sup>77</sup> Jeffrey Strickland argues that following Douglass, other black leaders used their own subversive Independence Day orations to critique oppression and celebrate the freedom they found in community with one another.<sup>78</sup> Kelly inherits this ironic rhetorical tradition and joins it, invoking the prophetic tradition along the way.

In making her claim that black Americans should not celebrate the U.S. Bicentennial, Kelly offered an emotionally unrelenting litany of the injustices people of color were suffering. In a tone notably similar to that of the prophets who enumerated and decried the sins of Israel, Kelly said,

The strongest opposition to [black Americans’] participation [in celebrations of the U.S. Bicentennial] cites injustices of segregation, inequality, unemployment, racism, poverty. The Little Rocks, the Scottsboros, the South Bostons, they say no for Martin King and Malcolm X and Medgar Evers. No for the strong black presence within prisons, committed for crimes of survival and frustration. No for the answer of bigger jails, stronger laws, to provide for the predictable destiny of their sons and younger brothers. No to the idea that token visibility denotes great progress when the median income gap between black and white families has increased from \$1576 in 1950 to \$5326 in 1973. No

to the patience urged upon the families of 8000 Black soldiers who came home from Vietnam in metal boxes, while the President of the United States in anger, reacts quickly and ‘firmly and forcefully on behalf of Vietnamese aliens whose rights became unalienable.’ It is a woeful cry of judgment on a country that commits itself to principles of justice but fails to carry forth the supportive tasks involved. The bitterness of wormwood justice is pervasive.<sup>79</sup>

In this remarkable passage, Kelly began by listing in the generic the injustices that merit blacks’ decisions not to participate in Bicentennial celebrations. Next, she took on the collective voice of injustice as it manifested in the historical struggles of the Little Rock Nine, the Scottsboro defendants, and the black students in South Boston. Clearly within the ironic perspective, Kelly’s examples urge the audience to recognize the inconsistency between the freedom they celebrate and the oppression people of color continually experience.

In the collective voice of the Little Rock Nine, the Scottsboro defendants, and the black public school students in South Boston, Kelly employed *anaphora*, beginning a series of statements with “(They say) no,” followed by a list of racial injustices from general to specific that were salient at the time. *Anaphora*, as a form of parallelism, uses the same opening word or phrase in a series of statements and is common both in the language of scripture and the African American preaching tradition.<sup>80</sup> The device produces a sense of unity in sections of a speech and has the capacity to elicit a strong emotional response from audiences.<sup>81</sup> In this case, each repetition of the word *no* introduced a reason why black Americans should not celebrate the Bicentennial. The freedom and justice that others would celebrate in July did not apply to the black people whose beloved leaders were assassinated, nor to those wrongly jailed, suffering in poverty, or dead because they fought to secure freedoms for people in Vietnam while the US denied them those same freedoms at home. Because of Kelly’s use of *anaphora*, this section of the sermon is more than a list of grievances; it coheres as an argument for black Americans’ rejection of participation in celebrations of the country’s two hundredth anniversary.

The U.S. Bicentennial celebrates the values of American freedom and independence, but Kelly's alternative narrative in the ironic perspective reveals the inconsistencies between America's principles and its reality. With each parallel refusal, Kelly divides herself more and more from her predominantly white audience. As Burke reminds us, identification follows quickly on the heels of division.<sup>82</sup> The audience, then, is compelled to confront its own inconsistencies as identification with the hegemonic American narrative grows less and less plausible in light of Kelly's damning examples and vivid evidence. The effectiveness of the division is heightened by Kelly's additional appropriation of the prophetic tradition's emphasis on pathetic appeals. The emotional assault of one injustice on top of another demands from the audience what Darsey calls "a reaction to the *pathos* of God."<sup>83</sup>

Following the series of "(They say) no" statements, Kelly continued her emotional appeal by explicitly grounding her indictment of racial injustice in the prophetic tradition. The final sentence of the section quoted above, "The bitterness of wormwood justice is pervasive," alludes to Amos 5:6-7, which Kelly had likely read before she began the sermon: "Seek the Lord and live or he will break out against the house of Joseph like fire, and it will devour Bethel, with no one to quench it. Ah, you that turn justice to wormwood, and bring righteousness to the ground!"<sup>84</sup> Wormwood, according to biblical scholar Donald E. Gowan, is "a shrub that produces a bitter liquid used as a flavoring in absinthe and vermouth. Its English name comes from its use as a vermifuge and insecticide, but the Old Testament never refers to its useful qualities, using it always as a metaphor for bitterness."<sup>85</sup> Just as the prophet Amos's wormwood is inconsistent with a healthy future for Israel, the "wormwood justice" of U.S. American racism is inconsistent with the values the Bicentennial purports to celebrate. Like the episode in the book of Revelation where a star named Wormwood falls from the heavens and poisons one-third of all the water on

earth, causing all who drink it die of its bitterness,<sup>86</sup> Kelly's "wormwood justice" refers to an emotional bitterness of a supernatural order—so potent that it robs the vitality from human experience.

In the sermon's conclusion, Kelly had one more strategic reversal. She urged her seminary classmates to "seek the Lord and Live" in recognition that the new covenant with God requires "love not equated with charity, but with justice; with deed, action, laws, customs, a total social order overhaul which is not contrary to the democratic system but demanded by it."<sup>87</sup> The ostensible exhortation "seek the Lord and live" comes from Amos as well,<sup>88</sup> but Gowan points out that within the scope of the rest of the book of Amos, this sentence is not a word of encouragement. The advice to seek God and live "is more than ironic in a chapter whose main theme is death," and it "has an almost wistful tone, for Amos knows he is addressing a dying people who have forgotten how to seek the Lord."<sup>89</sup> Of course, the imminent destruction of Israel is relevant for Amos's context, but not for Kelly. She was not predicting that U.S. American injustice would bring swift doom. However, the relationship between "seek the Lord and live" and the rest of her message *is* another inconsistency. How can white people who benefit from privilege and from their complicity in racism seek the Lord and live? Do they even know how, and is redemption possible alongside complicity? These are questions the audience must answer. As in Parker's analysis of Forman's unresolved conflict,<sup>90</sup> this closing peripety in Kelly's speech demands resolution from the audience, theologically and behaviorally, individually and structurally.

#### *Cellars or Chandeliers? On the Real Witness of the Church*

While Kelly's 1976 seminary sermon may not have been very hopeful, another story Kelly used often in her ministry as a bishop suggested that sometimes people and churches do manage to



live out the principles they affirm. The narrative that seems to appear the most in Kelly's sermons and writings (as well as in accounts about her life) is the story of her going to the parsonage basement with her brothers during her childhood in Cincinnati and finding a tunnel.<sup>91</sup> This discovery led Leontine and her family to research the Underground Railroad, and they learned that their parsonage had been a stop. They lived in a house that was literally a pathway to justice and freedom for black people.

Of the many iterations of the story, the most detailed is one she told in a 1984 sermon, "Entitled and Empowered." The sermon was part of a series that celebrated the two-hundredth anniversary of Methodism, commemorating the Christmas Conference of 1784 where the Methodist Episcopal Church was officially organized.<sup>92</sup> The theme for the anniversary was "Methodism: For Two Centuries Proclaiming Grace and Freedom," and Kelly was not shy about her view that the theme "is not a comfortable phrase to be viewed as a *fait accompli* – an accomplished fact. Those of us who are members of this denominational tradition know better, the world knows better, and indeed God knows better."<sup>93</sup> Kelly used the prophet Amos to frame her sermon as one that encouraged the denomination to move into its third century with greater determination to live out that theme than it had in its first two. She argued that the church could, in the tradition of Wesley, pursue social holiness. Here again, articulating an ironic perspective and the prophetic tradition allowed Kelly to present the inconsistencies between her audience's norms and the ideals she believed the Christian faith and United Methodists' Wesleyan heritage demanded.

To illustrate her claim that the church could and should work for justice in the world, Kelly told the story of moving with her family to Cincinnati when her father was appointed as the pastor of the Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church. She and her siblings were impressed with

the beautiful big building and its support beams made from imported Italian wood, its crystal chandeliers, and its noted history as the church where U.S. President William Henry Harrison was married. The more important feature of the church, though, was its history in social justice that Leontine and her brothers found in the basement:

Around the kitchen table of Calvary Church parsonage, my father made historical, biblical, and theological wholeness for me. This church had evidently been a station of the Underground Railway, he told us. Cincinnati was on the Mason-Dixon Line and to imagine slaves being brought to this church located so near the Ohio River was believable. Fugitive slave laws encouraged people to seek any escaped slaves in order to collect rewards, and Cincinnati was filled with persons of this nature. . . . “The witness of this church,” [my father] said, “is not in its gothic architecture, or its crystal chandeliers or its social standing. The true witness of this church is in the cellar beneath us. Perhaps some of our forebears were held here.” We imagined the great services, the inspired preaching, the biblical understanding that encouraged people to take such a risk of justice. We saw the church as a way station, a place of renewal of strength, a law that superseded the unjust structures of human government. We understood that justice need never stand suspended, but can freely move like streams of water to thirsty people.<sup>94</sup>

The Underground Railroad tunnel was an outward and visible sign of the faith she learned about in Sunday school and in her father’s preaching. Her father’s use of antithesis, which Kelly appropriated in the ironic register, emphasized that the outward appearance of the building—though ostensibly the most impressive feature of the church—was not of central importance. Instead, the church’s real witness was its involvement in social justice, leading people from bondage to freedom, putting the faith professed in its preaching and liturgy into action in material ways in the world. The ironic perspective in Kelly’s presentation of this story is pivotal. Kelly’s lead-in to the story, describing the beautiful chandeliers, the imported wood, and the historical importance of the building, invited the audience to feel the same sense of awe she and her siblings experienced when they first walked into the magnificent edifice. This first narrative—of the building’s glory—is the one that seems valuable, but in the ironic perspective, “what goes forth as A returns as non-A.”<sup>95</sup> The second narrative—of the apparently prosaic

cellar—would turn out to be the one that best exemplified the mission of the church and what Kelly wanted her audience to emulate in their own lives and congregations. The true message of the church is not found in things like fine chandeliers that link it to the status quo but in the hidden basement tunnels that facilitate the release of captives and more broadly represent freedom from oppression.

Kelly used the courage and conviction of the nineteenth-century Cincinnati Methodists simultaneously as a source of inspiration for her congregation in 1984 and as a standard against which they could be judged. If the people of nineteenth-century Cincinnati could defy the law of the land to serve the higher law of God's justice, surely the late twentieth-century church could pursue racial reconciliation and social holiness to bring the professed theme of Methodism's anniversary into reality. The narrative of one faithful congregation in Cincinnati—when held against the bombastic fiction of the bicentennial theme with its unspoken historical narrative of slavery, segregation, and patriarchy—forced the audience to consider the contradiction. To that end, one of the most powerful sentences in subtly revealing the inconsistency is Kelly's description of how she pictured the everyday worship life of that church a century earlier: "We imagined the great services, the inspired preaching, the biblical understanding that encouraged people to take such a risk of justice." With indirectness befitting the ironic perspective, Kelly did not explicitly say what her audience might reasonably conclude: if the rest of the United Methodist Church were characterized by such "great services," "inspired preaching," and sound "biblical understanding," the bicentennial theme of freedom and grace might be more a reality than a tagline. The challenge to the clergy and laypeople in her audience was to make it so in the congregations they led.

As in her Bicentennial sermon in 1976, Kelly concluded her Underground Railroad narrative with an allusion to the text from Amos: “We understood that justice need never stand suspended, but can freely move like streams of water to thirsty people.”<sup>96</sup> The text from Amos reads, “Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”<sup>97</sup> Kelly’s allusion was indirect; instead of telling the congregation to let justice roll down like waters, she indicated that the example of the Underground Railroad showed her that justice could flow “like streams of water to thirsty people.” Given the ironic inconsistency between the narrative of the faithful congregation and the narrative of the denomination that arise from this prophetic vision, the bicentennial theme becomes mere “noise.” Instead of celebrating two centuries of complicity with the status quo and calling it “Proclaiming Grace and Freedom,” Kelly’s audience is enjoined to follow the model of the faithful Cincinnati Methodists who took risks to defy national laws in the service of their principles.

### *The True Miracle of Love*

An ironic perspective relies on an audience’s understanding of two narratives. In Kelly’s seminary sermon and bicentennial theme sermon, she contrasted a narrative of faithful discipleship with a narrative of the racist reality of American culture. The narratives considered in the following sections are about conversations Kelly had with two individuals, one about race and one about gender. In each instance, the peripety reveals the narrow-mindedness of Kelly’s interlocutor and challenges the audience to examine racism or sexism in their lives and in the church.

Both of these stories come from a sermon Kelly delivered in 1986 at the fifteenth meeting of the World Methodist Conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya. The World Methodist Conference is

a quintennial meeting that brings together representatives from various denominations with Methodist roots and heritage, including the United Methodist Church, the historically black Methodist denominations, and several other Methodist denominations from around the world.<sup>98</sup> Notably, in this setting, her entire audience shared the social holiness tradition of Wesley, but their histories of racial relations were varied. Many black Americans in the audience were part of denominations that had split from the Methodist Episcopal Church because of racism and segregation. Some in the audience were Methodists from South Africa, a country at the time entangled in Apartheid. While many churches around the world spoke out against Apartheid, some churches crafted theological rationales that supported it. Indeed, according to Christian ethicist Neville Richardson, Apartheid “has theological and ecclesiastical roots as well as powerful social ethical and ecclesiological effects.”<sup>99</sup> Apartheid was a topic of conversation at the conference, and before Kelly’s sermon, the delegates had affirmed a resolution calling for the release of Nelson Mandela, who was then in prison. According to the conference proceedings, there were no speeches in opposition to the resolution, but “there were a few who voted against, and a few abstentions.”<sup>100</sup> Presumably, at least some in the audience disagreed with the resolution and supported Apartheid as a manifestation of the natural order (not unlike American defenses of segregation only a generation earlier), although those views were in the minority. Overwhelmingly, the conference delegates from around the world spoke out in support of South Africans and against the violence of Apartheid.<sup>101</sup> Therefore, when Kelly addressed racism in this sermon, she addressed it in an international context on the African continent where the politics of Apartheid were not far from the minds of the conference delegates at that time.

The theme of her address was that the World Methodist Conference could make a difference, even if believing so seemed unlikely. Toward the end of the sermon, she told a story

about an experience she had while leading a training workshop as a denominational staff person with responsibilities for the whole state of Virginia:

This young preacher came to me and asked, “Teenie, can I have lunch with you?” I thought, “There goes my meal,” but I said, “Yes, we can have lunch together.” As we had lunch I celebrated the fact that at least in the church we have reached the point where we can sit down and talk together and share perspectives.

As we talked he said, “You know, Teenie, you’re too hard on us. Racism isn’t a sin.” I said, “Brother, it’s a sin, and I am beginning to understand why we can’t get the ‘white church’ straight. As long as racism is just custom and culture and not sinful, then we will never help you understand that those of us who are ethnics are in mission to the majority church. He had been acculturated to believe in his superiority. He said, “I love black people. I had a black mammy. I loved her. She’s the one who taught me about Jesus Christ. She nursed me. I sometimes thought she was my mother rather than my own mother.”

I said, “You see, that has been the pattern all along. I understand that.”

He continued, “But I *even* came home from seminary to attend her funeral.”

When he said “even,” I said to him, “My brother, the miracle of love is not that you loved *her*. The miracle of love is that she loved *you*. Given the context of her history, the way by which she had come, the understanding of Jesus Christ so clear in her life that she could hold a white male child and so sincerely love that the child would never question her love. That is the miracle.”<sup>102</sup>

If the peripety in this story could be reduced to one word, it would be *even*. The white pastor, who took for granted that racism was simply the natural order of the world, was proud of himself for spending the time and money to leave his important pursuit of an advanced degree in theology to attend the funeral of a black woman who probably had no more than a high school education (if that). Despite her race, despite his presumption of social superiority, he loved her so much that he bore the inconvenience of traveling to his hometown for her funeral. In his mind, the hapless white pastor’s decision to come home for his mammy’s funeral was evidence not only of his love for her, but also a pardon from complicity and participation in the structural institution of white supremacy. Kelly’s workshop addressing racism had felt accusatory to him, and he needed to explain himself, to defend why he should not have to listen to Kelly’s teachings

about racism. “You’re too hard on us,” he complained. After all, what could he—a white man who loved a black woman enough to travel for her funeral—have to learn about racism?

In a profound moment of role reversal, Kelly inverted the arrogant white pastor’s self-congratulatory tone. In the ironic register, Kelly reversed the social roles of black and white. The character who represents the miracle of love is not the haughty white pastor, but the black woman who manages to love so unlovable a character. The contrast between division and identification is clear here: the audience should identify not with the educated white man with all the markers of status and privilege, but with the nameless black mammy who is memorable not for her status, her education, or her power, but for the love she showed to another. She loved him so much that she introduced him to the faith in which he would grow up to be an ordained minister. The miracle of the black caregiver’s love for the white child stood in for the miracle of black people who manage to love a church with a troubling racist history. In a Christian context, the allusion to Jesus’ miraculous love for a sinful church is unmistakable. That same miracle of love is what allows the church, despite its differences, to have a positive influence on the world. The love of the black caregiver for the white child is the love of black people for Methodism, the love of Jesus for a sinful church.

In addition to the main strategic reversal of the story, Kelly’s prophetic commitment to an absolute truth and unwillingness to compromise is evident. Her interlocutor confidently declares that racism is not a sin. In her answer, Kelly responds not just to the white pastor but to white audience members who have inexplicably found ways to reconcile Christianity and Apartheid, or those who, like the white pastor, wish people of color would stop “being too hard” in their prophetic responses to racism. Kelly did not invoke the prophetic “woe to you,” but she was unwavering in her denunciation of the white pastor’s excuses. She rejected his implicit attempt to

reframe racism as a cultural custom rather than a social evil, and she neutralized the all-too-common “I love black people” (or “I have black friends”) defense.<sup>103</sup> In his complaint that she was being too hard, the white pastor responds to Kelly’s absolute commitment by suggesting, in a sense, that it is unreasonable. However, as Darsey asserts is typical for prophets’ unwavering commitment to their principles, Kelly refused to back down. Then, she went a step further. In another reversal, she suggested that “those of us who are ethnics are in mission to the majority church.” Capitalizing on the assumptions of power differentials embedded in the word *mission* (e.g., missionaries typically leave more developed nations of origin to “help” people in less developed nations), Kelly set herself apart as a rhetorical outsider, placing white people in the position of the less powerful, those who need the mission of others. For Kelly, what the white church needs is to recognize the sinfulness of racism, a mission to which her commitment is solid.

*“Paul Didn’t Call Me”: Prophetic Duty, Irony, and Sexism*

Kelly understands her prophetic call as a mission to educate the white church about the sin of racism, and while racism is a far more common theme in her rhetoric than sexism, she told another story during her sermon at the World Methodist Conference that addressed the latter:

I remember on a weekday going from the parsonage in Richmond, Virginia, where I was pastoring Asbury United Methodist Church, over to the church. As I passed the bus stop an elderly man standing there stopped me. He said, “Come here a minute, sister. Are you the woman who is preacher at the church on the corner?” I answered, “Yes.” He said, “I’ve heard about you. You’re doing a good job.” And I said, “Thank you very much” and started away. He called me back and said, “Wait a minute, there’s only one thing wrong. You don’t have any business doing it.” He then began to quote my brother Paul to me and I said, “My brother, let me tell you something. There are 250 children waiting for me at the church in this community that denies they are even human beings. I don’t have time to defend my ministry. Paul did not call me, Jesus called me!”<sup>104</sup>

In this articulation of the ironic perspective and the prophetic tradition, Kelly brings together two strategic reversals and a strong sense of duty. Kelly is the target of the first peripety.



The man at the bus stop gives her a compliment, and she thanks him, but the compliment turns out to be ironic. The man believes she is in violation of Paul's epistolary command that women be silent in church. His condemnation of her right to be in ministry is jarring after his compliment, a recognition that she is effective in the work she is doing. The man's incoherence almost seems laughable: he understands that she is good at her job, but he still doubts that she has a right to do it. Anyone in the audience who had not yet embraced the ordination of women is, along with the man at the bus stop, faced with a contradiction. Can opposition to women's pastoral leadership sustain scrutiny when ample evidence suggests that women in ministry are effective?

Kelly's answer to the man includes another twist. The substance of her response comprises three sentences: first, she explained that her ministry was important because the basic dignity and humanity of the congregation she was pastoring were constantly eroded in Richmond, Virginia in the 1970s; second, she denied that she had time to defend her ministry; third, in true prophetic fashion, she defers to duty. Paul did not call her, Jesus did, and she has to obey. The second sentence contradicted the first and third. She actually gave two defenses for her ministry: she was involved in the important work of loving the marginalized, and her call to that work was divine, not human. In addition to offering two defenses for her ministry, Kelly preempted the possibility of continued debate with the man, recognizing that fulfilling her divinely appointed duty to love the marginalized was her priority, not debating her qualifications or right to do so.

For a prophet, the appeal to God's call was the justification for one's ministry.<sup>105</sup> Kelly borrowed from that tradition here. Rather than explaining how she interprets the few Pauline scriptures that are so often invoked out of context by people who deny women's rights to preach,

Kelly refused to allow her interlocutor to define the boundaries of the conversation. Arguing about scripture was not a priority because God called her to minister to those in the church basement, so Kelly appealed to the source of her call and then went on with her business. If this story represents Kelly's larger response to sexism in the church, her perspective seems to be that women should do their prophetic duty and offer as justification only their divine calls and the qualitative need for their ministries.<sup>106</sup> If every prophet responded to her detractors, no prophet would have time to prophesy. As Darsey insists, the prophet's role "places the speaker outside the frame of reference of [her] audience."<sup>107</sup> Prophetic faithfulness requires the expectation of audience resistance and the tenacity to persist impervious to naysayers.

### **Conclusion: Articulating the Ironic and the Prophetic**

Hebrew Bible scholar Donald E. Gowan has argued that the book of Amos is thoroughly negative. It predicts destruction, and each of the book's four verses that seem to be exhortations are either severely qualified or meant to be read ironically.<sup>108</sup> Gowan, then, has identified a prophet who at least occasionally spoke from the ironic perspective. In this chapter, I have argued that Kelly's rhetoric reflects an articulation of the ironic register and the prophetic tradition. Exemplars from Kelly's sermons over the years of her ministry illustrate the usefulness of this articulation.

The characteristics of the ironic perspective and the prophetic tradition make their union a productive one, but also one with some limitations. Ironic rhetoric involves a peripety, a moment of strategic reversal where the rhetor's ideal is held in contrast to the audience's norms. The ironic rhetor divides herself from the audience, inviting the audience along the way to identify with her ideal narrative rather than the narrative of the status quo. In the ironic perspective, audience members' expectations are violated, sometimes by an inversion of social

roles where the marginalized become powerful while the powerful are dispossessed; alternatively or additionally, audience expectations may be violated when the conflict in the narrative is unresolved. In these cases, the rhetor leaves the problem's resolution to the audience rather than supplying the audience with an easy answer. The prophetic tradition is characterized by unwillingness to compromise on an absolute truth, a prioritization of divine duty over human desire, the elicitation of pathetic reactions to sin, rhetorical division from the audience, and an appeal to the shared values that make the audience a unified people.

Both the ironic perspective and the prophetic tradition involve, then, the rhetor's division from the audience in order to reveal the inconsistencies between the audience's principles and its actuality. In irony, the narrative of the ideal stands opposed to the narrative of the status quo. In prophecy, the covenant the audience professes to share is the standard against which the audience is judged. To that end, the ironic and the prophetic are also alike in their reversal of social roles. The black characters in Kelly's stories are the ones who represent God's love, just as the black people in Forman's speech are the ones with the power. Likewise, in the prophetic tradition, the prophet's call for justice often means that the wealthy individuals who are exploiting the poor will themselves end up penniless and destroyed.

While their similarities make the ironic and the prophetic easily compatible in some senses, each adds to the other as well. The commitment to an absolute truth in the prophetic gives a deeper level of seriousness to the alternative narrative in the ironic. An ironic perspective allows a rhetor to reveal that a community has failed to live up to its principles, as Douglass did when he reminded his white audience that the Fourth of July was their holiday, not his; Douglass held his audience to the standard of American democratic ideals. By contrast with an ironic perspective, the standard in the prophetic tradition is covenantal rather than contractual. In other

words, the consequences are more serious in an articulation of the ironic and the prophetic because violations of the covenant are an affront to God while breaches of the secular social contract are only human. Douglass's white audience, in its complicity in racism, violated the principles of American democracy, but before Kelly's explicitly Christian audiences, charges of complicity in racism are much more serious because the principles violated are not merely those of a nation, but of God and the Christian tradition *in toto*.

In addition, a union of the prophetic and the ironic raises the stakes for the rhetor because the message becomes something not her own. Prophets share the characteristics of other ironic figures, but they also speak out of a sense of divine call or compulsion. Their appeals to a divine call grant them legitimacy even amid their irony. Both Douglass and Forman were ironic characters, but each one's irony was as much a liability as an asset. Douglass was able to rebuke his audience's racism, but only after praising his audience considerably. He had to be cautious because, as DeSantis noted, while Douglass's "Rochester audience may have been liberal by nineteenth-century standards, this did not mean they would tolerate 'imprudent Negroes.'"<sup>109</sup> Forman capitalized on his ironic character to make hyperbolic demands and declare that black people were in charge, but as Parker notes in her review of scholarly treatments of Forman, the speech is largely regarded as outrageous, unrealistic, and a rhetorical failure.<sup>110</sup> As a prophetic ironist, Kelly avoided those liabilities. Her call is from God, so, as she reminded the man at the bus stop, her accountability is to God, not to some audience's arbitrary sense of prudence.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that merging the ironic and the prophetic involves risk and is likely useful in limited contexts. According to Darsey, the most important feature of prophetic rhetoric is its commitment to absolute values.<sup>111</sup> According to Burke, the simplest definition of irony is "what goes forth as A returns as non-A."<sup>112</sup> How, then, can irony work in a

context of absolute truth? One way around this problem is deferring to the mysticism of religious meaning and separating “absolute truth” in a spiritual sense from “absolute truth” in terms of knowledge or intellect, but reading a creed in the ironic perspective, for example, seems untenable. Such a religious rhetorical situation, responding to the basic question of what a tradition believes, requires a straightforward answer.

Kelly was able to work around these pitfalls precisely because the absolute truth she affirmed about the sinfulness of racism and sexism was a part of the shared values her audience ostensibly affirmed as inheritors of the Wesleyan tradition, but her audiences were not living those beliefs into reality. In other contexts and for different rhetorical problems, the ironic and the prophetic may not be suitable companions, but for Kelly, this articulation allowed her to address racism and sexism as sins and reveal the inconsistency between her audience’s covenant and its historical and contemporary behavior.

## CHAPTER 4

### KATHARINE JEFFERTS SCHORI: TOWARD A FEMINIST PROGRESSIVE CIVILITY

In a book optimistically titled *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women from 1960 to the Present*, journalist Gail Collins argued that “the feminist movement of the late twentieth century created a new United States in which women ran for president, fought for their country, argued before the Supreme Court, performed heart surgery, directed movies, and flew into space.”<sup>1</sup> The most recent “Mindset List” produced by Beloit College reminds us that American college students who matriculated in the fall of 2012 have lived most of their lives in a United States where “maintaining relations between the US and the rest of the world has been a woman’s job in the State Department.”<sup>2</sup> While proponents of post-feminism are perhaps too quick to highlight examples like these in declaring the work of feminism finished, these facts do point to an expanding range of opportunities for women. The women of the college class of 2016 may well aspire to be Secretary of State or President of the United States, but Katherine Jefferts Schori never imagined herself as an Episcopalian priest when she grew up. She entered the ministry as a second career, starting seminary only ten years after the Episcopal Church began ordaining women. She became the church’s presiding bishop in 2006, only twelve years after her ordination.

As the presiding bishop, Jefferts Schori has many opportunities to preach, addressing local congregations, the House of Bishops, and sometimes the entire denomination. In the following sections, I explain the politics behind Jefferts Schori’s election to the presiding bishopric, placing special emphasis on points of dissension that offer important insights into the

context for some of the issues she addresses in her sermons. Next, I explain the theoretical concepts at the crux of this chapter, transcendence and civility. Then, I argue that Jefferts Schori embodies a feminist progressive civility by casting a vision for the church, by rhetorically transcending controversies related to gender and sexuality within the church by reframing them in terms of her vision, and by responding to natural disasters and current events from within the vision she articulates for the church. Most notably, when Jefferts Schori responds to crises and controversies, she treats people who disagree with her with respect and dignity, which is consistent with the liberatory vision she establishes as leader. In this way, Jefferts Schori's rhetoric offers new possibilities for theorizing civility as feminist and emancipatory.

### **Gender, Sexuality, and Politics: Responses to Jefferts Schori's Election**

According to the constitution of the Episcopal Church, a presiding bishop is elected by the House of Bishops during a meeting of the General Convention. The election must then be affirmed by the House of Deputies, which is comprised of lay and clergy delegates from the various dioceses of the church.<sup>3</sup> The 2006 General Convention marked the conclusion of the Most Reverend Frank Griswold's nine-year tenure as presiding bishop. The House of Bishops elected Jefferts Schori on the fifth ballot. She held a plurality of votes on every ballot except for the second (when she tied with another candidate). On the fifth ballot, Jefferts Schori received the requisite 95 votes to have a majority of the 188 ballots cast.<sup>4</sup> Compared to previous presiding bishop elections, Jefferts Schori's election required slightly more ballots. Frank Griswold was elected on the third ballot in 1997 while Edmond Browning's election in 1985 took four ballots and the 1973 election of John Allin required only two ballots.<sup>5</sup> Jefferts Schori's election was approved overwhelmingly in votes from the clergy and lay members of the House of Deputies.<sup>6</sup>

Consistent with a journalistic flair for conflict, media coverage of the election emphasized the controversy around Jefferts Schori's election. Nevertheless, the ease of the election's affirmation suggests that Jefferts Schori's detractors were eager to give interviews to reporters, but not successful in mounting a referendum against Jefferts Schori's confirmation by the House of Deputies.<sup>7</sup> The conservative backlash against Jefferts Schori represents the views of a small but vocal and active minority within the Episcopal Church. According to Daniel Burke, "four dioceses and dozens of parishes have seceded from the denomination"<sup>8</sup> and some members of the worldwide Anglican Communion have called for the Episcopal Church to separate from the rest of the Communion because of Jefferts Schori's election and the denomination's recent trend toward liberalism that Jefferts Schori's election seems to represent.<sup>9</sup> Thus, while the controversy surrounding Jefferts Schori's election was probably overstated in the media, on the whole, Jefferts Schori likely has more support among the clergy than among the laity of the Episcopal Church.

The controversy over Jefferts Schori's election centered primarily on her supportive position about the consecration of lesbian and gay priests and bishops. For some, her sex was also a matter of controversy. Another issue was that of Jefferts Schori's relative inexperience, which emerged in at least one news article about her election,<sup>10</sup> but the complaint about her inexperience seems to be a straw issue that buttresses her detractors' overall disdain for her.

The Episcopal Church is the primarily American branch of the Anglican Communion (though the Episcopal Church also has congregations in several other countries). Of the several dozen nations with Anglican churches, only the United States, Canada, and New Zealand consecrated women bishops at the time of Jefferts Schori's election.<sup>11</sup> In the Episcopal Church, the dioceses make their own decisions about ordination criteria, and in 2006, three dioceses in



the US had bishops who refused to ordain women.<sup>12</sup> Theological opposition to the ordination of women is often grounded in a strict, legalistic reading of scriptural passages that seem to say women should not speak in church or have authority over men, so Jefferts Schori's election was problematic for Anglican dioceses that held these more rigid positions on gender roles. Dioceses that refused to allow women priests must now submit to the authority of a woman in the office of presiding bishop. Former Bishop Robert Duncan, then the moderator of the Anglican Communion Network, an unofficial conservative caucus of Episcopal dioceses, told *The New York Times* that Jefferts Schori's election "reveals the continuing insensitivity and disregard of the Episcopal Church for the present dynamics of our global fellowship."<sup>13</sup>

Most controversial was Jefferts Schori's outspoken support for the consecration of openly lesbian and gay bishops. The question of lesbian and gay clergy and related questions about whether to celebrate same-sex unions have been a challenging topic for some time in mainline Protestant denominations in the US. Additionally, Jefferts Schori's election came only three years after openly gay clergyman Gene Robinson was consecrated as a bishop. Jefferts Schori supported Robinson's election, an event which inspired considerable dissonance in the denomination.<sup>14</sup> One disgruntled member of the General Convention, most upset about Jefferts Schori's earlier support of Robinson, responded to Jefferts Schori's election by decrying "the peculiar genius that our church has for roiling the waters."<sup>15</sup>

Since her election, Jefferts Schori's theologically liberal views have caused some ripples among the same conservatives who expressed regret at her election. In response to the question posed by *Time* magazine, "Is belief in Jesus the only way to get to heaven?," Jefferts Schori responded, "We who practice the Christian tradition understand him as our vehicle to the divine. But for us to assume that God could not act in other ways is, I think, to put God in an awfully

small box.”<sup>16</sup> This simple, two-sentence response drew criticism from conservatives that Jefferts Schori was promoting universalism.<sup>17</sup> In addition to controversy about Jefferts Schori’s apparent unorthodoxy on metaphysical issues of theological import, the question of the Episcopal Church’s relationship to the rest of the Anglican Communion has emerged several times as well, particularly with respect to issues related to human sexuality.<sup>18</sup>

Despite the controversy that Jefferts Schori seems to inspire, especially in the minds of newspaper reporters, Jefferts Schori does not view questions of theological liberalism or human sexuality as vitally important. In interviews and in the sermons I analyze here, Jefferts Schori repeatedly emphasizes that the goal of the church should be the fulfillment of one of her favorite scripture texts from the prophet Isaiah. As she paraphrases it, the Isaiah prophecy “talks about a vision of the reign of God where those who are mourning are comforted, where the hungry are fed, where the poor hear good news.”<sup>19</sup> Jefferts Schori takes full advantage of her position in setting the agenda for the church rather than letting media coverage or her detractors within the church define the issues of central importance. Jefferts Schori’s commitment to her vision is reflected in the Episcopal Church’s strong identification with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, to which she often refers.

In this chapter, I focus on sermons where Jefferts Schori addresses one of three themes: (1) the primary task of the church as she sees it, based in values she hopes her audiences share with her; (2) controversies in the life of the church, especially related to gender and human sexuality; and (3) crises and current events that are not (as) theologically controversial, whether natural (e.g., earthquakes in Haiti and Japan) or otherwise (e.g., the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords). I selected sermons focusing on these themes because the tasks of casting a vision and responding to problems are central to effective leadership. I include the latter two

themes because they illustrate the differences in Jefferts Schori's response to crises that are implicated in her vision for the church and those problems that she brackets as a distraction from the ultimate values she hopes her audiences share with her. In short, when she discusses issues related to human sexuality and theological differences, her response seems to be aimed at transcending the controversies and asking the church to move past those questions so that the church might instead focus on its central mission. Alternatively, when she addresses natural disasters or acts of human violence in the world, Jefferts Schori invites the church to respond to those crises *because* of its central mission of comforting the mourning, feeding the hungry, offering good news to the poor, and setting captives free. I suggest that Jefferts Schori's rhetorical approach to conflict is one of transcendence, or resolving a dualism by taking what she likely regards as the proverbial high road: valuing people over ideological positions on controversial issues. Particularly because her response to divergent points of view is simultaneously respectful as well as focused on human liberation, I argue that Jefferts Schori embodies a feminist progressive civility.

### **Transcendence**

The strategy colloquially referred to as "taking the high road" is known in rhetorical studies as transcendence. As a rhetorical form, transcendence has long been recognized as effective. According to Kenneth Burke, an argument from transcendence tries to "reconcile opposites by a concept of 'higher synthesis.'"<sup>20</sup> Simply put, when two values come into conflict, a strategy of transcendence recognizes that resolving the dualism or binary opposition is unlikely, so the rhetor "must find a way to move the debate beyond rigid and polarized alternatives."<sup>21</sup> By transcending an irreconcilable opposition, the rhetor moves the conversation away from (and

metaphorically, above) that difference by identifying a different theme, topic, or concept that subsumes the original two issues that are at odds.

Preachers are particularly well suited to use transcendence because they typically speak to audiences who invest authority in God, the Bible, and the church (or in some combination of them). As James Jasinski noted, one way for a rhetor to use transcendence is to appeal to God's will, particularly when one can make a convincing case that the resolution of the conflict is in line with God's intentions, religious teachings, or the tradition of the church.<sup>22</sup> J. David Cisneros argued that this form of transcendence, which he called *transcendence upward*, resolves problems by creating a hierarchy of values, thereby constructing "a new common ground on which a rhetor can build his/her persuasive appeal."<sup>23</sup>

### **Civility**

I argue in this chapter that Jefferts Schori's transcendence allows her to address difficult issues civilly, by which I refer to remaining respectful of people who disagree with her. Civility, for Stephen Carter, is what we do "for the sake of our common journey with others, and out of love and respect for the very idea that there are others."<sup>24</sup> Jennifer Bone and colleagues borrowed Carter's *journey* metaphor, suggesting that civil communication means "we cannot pretend that we journey alone, that others are unworthy or without voice, or that our view is the only 'right' view."<sup>25</sup> In the communication discipline, conversations about civility have emerged prominently in the last few years. For example, the September 2011 issue of *Spectra* featured several articles about the importance of civility, a topic National Communication Association (NCA) executive director Nancy Kidd argued was important in light of the shooting of Congresswoman Giffords: "Popular culture writers and public intellectuals bemoan what they identify as an increasing lack of civility in our country, and the frequency with which this mantra is repeated suggests that it

resonates with the public.”<sup>26</sup> Controversy around the NCA convention site in 2008 inspired spirited debate about civility in *Spectra* and in a follow-up forum in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* on engaged scholarship.<sup>27</sup>

While civility seems good at face value, some scholars suggest that civility is actually conservative and can contribute to an affirmation of the dominant culture. Nina Lozano-Reich and Dana Cloud maligned civility: “Historically, dominant groups have repeatedly enacted civilizing strategies to effectively silence [*sic*] and punish marginalized groups.”<sup>28</sup> Equality among interlocutors is often a presumption among those calling for civility, but, imagining every rhetorical situation as an interaction between an oppressor and the oppressed, Lozano-Reich and Cloud point out that equality is not guaranteed or even likely in many exchanges. Therefore, “it is irresponsible to displace more confrontational models of social change in favor of a politics of civility” and “civility should not be advocated as a stance for feminists or others struggling for change.”<sup>29</sup>

Lozano-Reich and Cloud seem to base their objection to civility on the assumption that oppression is a structural inevitability to which only hostility and confrontation are appropriate rhetorical responses. In another essay, with Anna Young and Adria Battaglia, Cloud contended that civility “assumes that conflicts are matters of disagreement always resolvable in polite talk.”<sup>30</sup> Young, Battaglia, and Cloud believe that only antagonism constitutes a fitting rhetorical response to conflicts because conflict always emerges from and signifies relationships of oppressive inequality.

While I contend that civility has progressive potential and hold up Jefferts Schori as an example, I recognize that arguably, a religious leader’s use of civility—like transcendence—is somewhat obvious. One might ask if civility is anything more than a manifestation of ethical

behavior that follows from adherence to (and especially leadership within) a system of religious faith. While we might expect religious leaders to be more civil than the average political rhetor, assuming that civility will always follow from religiosity is fallacious. Christian leaders from the far left and far right have made headlines for their incivility, including the Rev. Pat Robertson’s prayer “for God to remove three justices from the Supreme Court so they could be replaced by conservatives”<sup>31</sup> and the Rev. Jeremiah Wright’s infamous “God damn America”<sup>32</sup> sermon. White conservative grievances with judicial activism and black preaching’s prophetic tradition notwithstanding, both Robertson and Wright spoke disrespectfully—not in a way that recognized the humanity of those with whom they disagreed. Robertson seems to call for the death of justices with liberal views, and while Wright’s critique of institutional racism is on point, Martin Luther King Jr., made the same argument more civilly and more effectively decades earlier when King said, “I knew that I could never raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, while we might generally expect religious leaders to speak civilly, we cannot presume that they do so. Further, such a presumption is risky because it may obscure our attention from the rhetorical and ethical functions of civility employed effectively. To explore the rhetorical and ethical functions of civility, I next turn to Jefferts Schori’s sermons.

### **The Sermons: Casting a Vision, Returning to the Vision, Being Compelled by the Vision**

Many of Jefferts Schori’s sermons are delivered at local churches she visits around the country or overseas. The *Constitution & Canons* of the church requires the presiding bishop to “Visit every Diocese of this Church for the purpose of” consulting with bishops, clergy, and lay people, “Preaching the Word,” and “Celebrating the Holy Eucharist.”<sup>34</sup> Even so, Jefferts Schori’s visits

are often more purposive than simply checking a box on the map of Episcopal dioceses. She is frequently asked to speak on church anniversaries or on other notable occasions in the life of the local congregation or community. In each case, Jefferts Schori addresses the occasion of the day, whether the liturgical feast or the local celebration. I read approximately 200 sermons by Jefferts Schori preached between her election in June 2006 and the inception of this project, May 2011. The Episcopal News Service archives all of Jefferts Schori's sermons and addresses on its website.<sup>35</sup> In the next three sections, I consider in turn sermons that address three themes: what Jefferts Schori says about her vision for the church, controversies within the church, and crises external to the church.

#### *On Jefferts Schori's Vision for the Church*

In the *Time* magazine interview "10 Questions for Katharine Jefferts Schori," where Jefferts Schori made the arguably innocuous but later controversial statement about salvation, the first question columnist Jeffrey Chu asked was, "What will be your focus as head of the U.S. church?" Jefferts Schori responded, "Our focus needs to be on feeding people who go to bed hungry, on providing primary education to girls and boys, on healing people with AIDS, on addressing tuberculosis and malaria, on sustainable development. That ought to be the primary focus."<sup>36</sup> Despite Jefferts Schori's clear answer about her goals as the leader of the denomination and her beliefs about the proper mission of the church, none of the nine remaining questions addressed anything Jefferts Schori said in response to the first question. Chu is not the only journalist with a penchant for directing the conversation toward the controversies that make people want to buy magazines or click a hyperlink on a website, but Jefferts Schori's sermons spend much less time on those issues. Instead, Jefferts Schori's sermons are often centered on crafting and living out her vision for the church.

Setting a vision is one of a leader's most important tasks. Gail Fairhurst and Robert Sarr contended that "a meaningful vision charts a future path that is based on a well-defined mission, or purpose, and a clear set of values. Visions are central to leadership success because of their transforming power."<sup>37</sup> Effective leaders, in Fairhurst and Sarr's view, adapt and personalize their visions for local contexts; reference their visions when they discuss conflicts, crises, or problems; express sincere enthusiasm for their visions; and develop their own theories for how the visions work. According to the vision Jefferts Schori casts, a world with poverty, violence, and countless erosions of human dignity is an exigent circumstance for the church, and she spends most of her preaching time reminding the faithful that they are called to make a difference in that world.

Jefferts Schori references her vision frequently, and she often connects her vision to the theme or occasion for her homily. For example, she was invited to speak as part of the Margaret Parker Memorial Lecture Series on the topic of "Peace and Justice through the Empowerment of Women." Referencing her vision for the church, Jefferts Schori explained that questions of gender justice are important to the church because "we profess a faith that says none of us is ultimately saved until we all are. Until all of humanity is set free for abundant life, none of us will be able to enjoy a world of peace and justice."<sup>38</sup> She went on to cite her favorite passage from Isaiah to reiterate that for her, fulfilling Isaiah's vision of a world of justice and peace is the mission of the church. The principle of the full dignity of all humanity allows Jefferts Schori to transcend whatever controversy might surround her invocation of feminist ideology in addressing gender and sexuality by refocusing on justice more generically. Jefferts Schori later related an anecdote about sexism in the church. In her interpretation of the story, she returned to her vision for the work of the church as the solution to sexism and related forms of injustice:



In the days just before the Lambeth Conference began, a layman from England said to me that the biggest difficulty in the Church of England's struggle to embrace women's ministry as bishops is that, in his experience, most men cannot imagine taking orders from a woman. I think he is both right and wrong, for the ordained ministry is not about giving orders so much as it is modeling Jesus' kind of servant leadership. When we begin to shift the understanding of ordained leadership, indeed all leadership, toward that model of servanthood and friendship, then we do begin to transform the world toward that great vision of God's, where no one is devalued or ignored or excluded because of that person's created gifts of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, or physical ability. That kind of world is founded on a theology that upholds the image of God in all God's creatures.<sup>39</sup>

For Jefferts Schori, the topic of the memorial lecture series, the empowerment of women, is necessarily contained within the mission of the church. Making Jefferts Schori's vision a reality means doing away with distinctions that leave some people more valued than others. Jefferts Schori included race, class, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability, too—not to focus on any one of them—but to suggest that divisions based on those identity categories also fall when one embraces “a theology that upholds the image of God in all God's creatures.” Jefferts Schori's abolition of distinctions is reminiscent of St. Paul's theological idea that “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.”<sup>40</sup> In addition, Jefferts Schori illustrates a core inversion of human-constructed hierarchy here, consistent with Jesus's reminder that in the reign of God, “many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.”<sup>41</sup> Here and elsewhere, Jefferts Schori invokes forms of transcendence that play upon the distinction between the earthly, visible church and the ethereal invisible church, which is the church as God is building it with purposes beyond human comprehension.

Jefferts Schori's vision as a leader is even clearer when she contrasts the values she finds most significant with questions she finds less important for the church. Next to comparatively minor concerns, Jefferts Schori's affirmation of people is clearly the transcendent concept that

seeks to reconcile discord on subordinate topics. In a sermon in Richmond, Virginia, Jefferts Schori discussed worrying. She said one kind of worrying is appropriate for Christians, worrying about the poor:

When Isaiah insists that his people are meant to be a covenant to the nations, liberating prisoners and feeding the hungry, he's talking about tending to that kind of worry. [If] they are going to be God's people, they're supposed to act like God, who can't ignore the cries of people in the wilderness. He points out that God is like the mother of a nursing child, who can't ignore the urgent cries or hunger of her offspring for more than a few minutes.<sup>42</sup>

She took the opportunity to applaud the work that church was doing to relieve poverty in its own community, and then she turned her attention to another kind of worry that she regards as less productive:

This was the largest church in Virginia when it was built in 1845 – big enough for General Convention! – but I recall that when I was here last, people were worried about whether this space would hold everyone who wanted to come for the installation of [Bishop Shannon Sherwood] Johnston as your diocesan. Others were worried about the snow, and the safety of people traveling. Still others were tied up in knots about issues of human sexuality – what would the Diocese of Virginia do about X and Y? – and I don't just mean chromosomes.<sup>43</sup>

In these two paragraphs, Jefferts Schori carefully differentiated between worries that are important for the mission of the church and those that are not. Worrying about how to help people who are in need is emphasized throughout the history of the Judeo-Christian tradition and epitomized in this case by the prophet Isaiah. By contrast, being “tied up in knots about issues of human sexuality” is grouped along with worries related to weather and the question of how many people could fit inside the sanctuary. Snowstorms and overcrowded cathedrals are problems, but they are neither rhetorical (that is, discourse does not ameliorate their imperfections or urgency)<sup>44</sup> nor ongoing. They do not deserve prolonged attention, and their real danger is in distracting the church from attending to its central mission. By implication, Jefferts Schori sets aside questions of human sexuality, the crowning distraction in her triumvirate of less-important

topics on which to worry. The controversy surrounding human sexuality is for Jefferts Schori no more crucial to the work of the church than the morning forecast or the sanctuary's occupancy limit.

*On Controversies in the Life of the Church*

Robert Ulmer and Timothy Sellnow define an inter-organizational crisis as “a situation that runs the risk of escalating intensity, falling under close media ... scrutiny, interfering with the normal operations of business, jeopardizing the positive public image presently enjoyed by the company or its officers, and damaging to the company's bottom line in any way.”<sup>45</sup> The relationship between the Episcopal Church and issues related to human sexuality clearly qualifies as an inter-organizational crisis under this definition. The 2003 episcopal election of Bishop Gene Robinson followed by Jefferts Schori's election as Presiding Bishop in 2006, along with the continued discussion in the denomination about same-sex unions, suggests that the topic of human sexuality was and is escalating. Media coverage of Robinson's and Jefferts Schori's elections—with characteristic accentuation of conflict—and the movement throughout conservative dioceses to withdraw from the Episcopal Church make the topic one of scrutiny that threatens to interfere with the church's continued operation and public image. And while the “bottom line” language from Ulmer and Sellnow's definition seems crass for a church, the controversy over human sexuality is disadvantageous for the Episcopal Church both in terms of membership and economic solvency.

Although Jefferts Schori prefers to focus on her vision for the church's mission, questions about human sexuality are inescapable for religious denominations in the current social and political climate. The Episcopal Church faces issues related to human sexuality on two fronts. First, a minority within the Episcopal Church oppose the more liberal direction the

denomination has been moving toward in recent years. A few dioceses and several congregations within the Episcopal Church have broken away to form their own denomination called the Anglican Church in North America.<sup>46</sup> Second, in the context of the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church is in the minority in believing and celebrating that the sexuality of lesbian and gay people is a God-given gift. In a church-wide webcast following a meeting of the primates of global Anglicanism, Jefferts Schori explained the beliefs of Anglican churches in other regions of the world:

A number of the primates represent provinces, especially in westernized or developed nations, where homosexuality is recognized and discussed. Some of those provinces are, or are soon likely to be, faced with the issue of civil unions and the church's attitude toward them. Those primates may agree or disagree with our own church's recent actions, but they understand that those decisions are not sufficiently important to break communion. There is another group of primates whose provinces are not generally discussing these issues in any major way, and who are frustrated by the level of energy focused on them. Issues of poverty and disease, and the issues represented by the Millennium Development Goals, are far higher on their agendas. Generally, they do not see our church's actions as rising to the level of breaking communion, either. There is a final group of primates who are exceedingly exercised about our church's actions, and see them as anti-scriptural and incredibly difficult for them as they attempt to evangelize in their own contexts.<sup>47</sup>

Jefferts Schori held the webcast to inform Episcopalians about the meeting of the primates, where the Episcopal Church was faced with an ultimatum: stop consecrating openly lesbian and gay bishops and stop blessing same-sex unions by September 30, 2007, or risk removal from the Anglican Communion.<sup>48</sup> Under Anglican polity, the Steering Committee, which is comprised of 13 elected members from the 44 denominations that make up the Anglican Communion, has the authority to vote for a denomination's separation from the Communion.<sup>49</sup> Jefferts Schori's advice to the church, to be deferential in order to preserve a right relationship with the Communion and to be patient in the process of reconciliation, faced derision from the left. Gene Robinson said the church should "reject the ultimatum and 'get on with the work of the

Gospel.”<sup>50</sup> Although they disagree on rhetorical strategies, Robinson and Jefferts Schori seem to agree on the primary mission of the church. For Robinson, the ultimatum stands in the way of the church’s ability to do its most important work, but for Jefferts Schori, acquiescing to the ultimatum allows the church to re-center its focus properly. She concluded her remarks during the webcast with an exhortation to the church:

I ask you to continue to fast from ascribing motives to others, to seek Christ in the stranger, and to ask God to quiet your fears. May we continue to work and pray for those who die daily from hunger, lack of medical care, war, and oppression. Pray especially for those who suffer because of their minority status, whether sexual or theological, for in Christ we are all a minority. And give thanks to God who has created us in all our variety. As frustrating and annoying as that variety may be, it is the image of God.<sup>51</sup>

In this passage and the one where she initially described the various views people throughout the Anglican Communion hold, Jefferts Schori presented the views of others fairly. Even when she talked about people with whose positions she disagreed, she spoke respectfully. She spoke empathically and descriptively, helping her audience understand the diverse complexity of viewpoints in the Anglican Communion without appearing to favor any particular one. She reminded her audience that diversity is a gift from God, even when diversity of opinion may be frustrating for some. In each case, she also referred to the central importance of social justice work. For her mostly liberal, primarily U.S. American audience, Jefferts Schori simultaneously worked to achieve three goals. First, she humanized rather than demonized those with different perspectives on the question of human sexuality, explaining ideological and theological differences as both culturally bound and God-given rather than a result of bigotry or hard-heartedness. Second, she invited her constituents to remember that the more important task they share as Episcopalians is in addressing the Millennium Development Goals: working to eradicate poverty, warfare, and hunger throughout the world. In such a response, Jefferts Schori demonstrates the progressive potential of civility: based on her vision that the Episcopal Church

should be about social justice work and her privileging of affirming people rather than insisting on abstract positions, Jefferts Schori makes a case for deference that prioritizes human connection. Third, she re-insists on the correctness of her vision and its application to sexual diversity. Cloud and colleagues would likely suggest that Jefferts Schori is conservative, selling out gay and lesbian people in order to coddle the status quo rather than engaging in a confrontation, but what Jefferts Schori did is much richer than that. Although she did not support a break from the global Anglican Communion, which would have potentially decreased her ability to serve the broad world missions of caring for the poor, neither did she stop insisting on her principles—and those principles included people of all sexual orientations. Thus, based on her principles, she transcended the particulars of the conflict and exercised her commitment to caring for all people.

In another sermon, Jefferts Schori addressed the controversy over Robinson's episcopacy directly, again emphasizing people over issues:

I'm supposed to be pastor to the whole church, and that includes people who are certain that Gene Robinson is in the right place and people who are certain he shouldn't have been ordained. I may not agree with all of them, but my task is to provide pastoral care, or see that it is provided, for all the people in this church.<sup>52</sup>

In this case, as in the others, Jefferts Schori upheld her institutional duties as presiding bishop. Whether attempting to smooth over the relationship between the Episcopal Church and the rest of the Anglican Communion or addressing the divisions within her own denomination, Jefferts Schori presents herself as a leader to the whole church, including those more liberal and more conservative than she is. Although her own position is well known in the denomination and throughout the Anglican Communion, she does not use the homiletic occasion to advance her perspective as definitive in a way that excludes those who disagree with her. Instead, in each

case, she transcends the opportunity to side exclusively with people who hold one point of view and asks her audience to remember that “an ethic of justice and inclusion would seemingly also urge us to include the dissenter.”<sup>53</sup> Here, Cloud might say Jefferts Schori should employ a confrontational posture and stake an absolute claim based on abstract principles. But again, Jefferts Schori demonstrates a focus on people and human relationships. Additionally, Jefferts Schori’s rhetoric of transcendence makes sense against the backdrop of theological diversity in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. As a presiding bishop, Jefferts Schori needs to translate her own theological perspectives into a language that somehow fits within Christian orthodoxy, even while sometimes pushing those boundaries.

#### *On Crises External to the Church*

According to Robert S. Littlefield and Andrea M. Quenette, effective leaders’ responses to crises include “expressing sympathy to victims,” “prioritizing activities and resources,” “communicating core values,” and “paying symbolic attention to the crisis,” among others.<sup>54</sup> Although Littlefield and Quenette are specifically interested in leaders with some official responsibility for responding to crises, like President George W. Bush and his response to Hurricane Katrina, Jefferts Schori exemplifies several of the crisis responses Littlefield and Quenette regard as effective. During Jefferts Schori’s tenure as presiding bishop, she has responded to several crises that have made national news, including the ongoing needs of New Orleans in the aftermath of 2005’s Hurricane Katrina; the devastating earthquakes in Haiti and Japan in 2010 and 2011, respectively; the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill off the Gulf Coast; the barrage of lesbian and gay teenagers whose suicides made the news in 2010; the 2011 shooting of Congresswoman Giffords; and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

In addition to responding to crises of national and global proportions in her sermons, Jefferts Schori often addresses local exigencies that are particular to the communities where she visits. Though these are often considerably less serious problems, Jefferts Schori's reference to them personalizes her messages and connects directly with the congregations she visits. For example, in a sermon she delivered in Youngstown, Ohio, Jefferts Schori said, "Everyone is concerned about employment, and paying the bills. People are afraid they're not going to make it. Many people have left this valley in search of employment, and relationships are destabilized."<sup>55</sup> In the same sermon, Jefferts Schori referenced a shooting that happened the previous week at a nearby university. Taken together, these references suggest not just that she read a few articles from a Youngstown newspaper, but that she also knows something about the geography of the area and understands the special challenges that part of the country has faced in the economic recession. These specific references to local crises communicate that while Jefferts Schori has leadership responsibilities for the whole church, she also cares for the individual particularities of the bishops, pastors, laypeople, congregations, and dioceses in her care. Over and over again, Jefferts Schori's commitment to her vision for the church manifests in her particular focus on people rather than issues.

The crisis that most profoundly affected Jefferts Schori was the earthquake in Haiti. The Episcopal Church's largest diocese is in Haiti, and before the earthquake, it had more than 100,000 Episcopalians in 169 congregations, led by thirty-seven priests and one bishop. The diocese also ran 254 schools with a combined total of more than 80,000 students.<sup>56</sup> Jefferts Schori's admiration for the work of the Episcopalians in Haiti was evident in several sermons even before the earthquake made Haiti a focus of worldwide attention. At a sermon to open the March 2009 House of Bishops meeting, Jefferts Schori explained that the Episcopal Church's



presence in Haiti was due to the work of the denomination's first black bishop, James Theodore Holly. She noted that Holly served as a bishop in Haiti until his death at age 81 in 1911, in part because there was no pension fund for clergy in Haiti, "and the pension provisions for clergy in Haiti still aren't fully adequate," she reminded her colleagues.<sup>57</sup>

Following the earthquake, Haiti became a consistent theme in Jefferts Schori's sermons. For three months after the earthquake, Jefferts Schori mentioned Haiti at least once in every sermon she preached. Her most immediate homiletic response to the earthquake was at a prayer service at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC, five days after the disaster. She offered words of sympathy and grief, and true to the generic responsibilities of a religious leader in a time of tragedy, metaphysical reflections on the problem of suffering in the world:

We respond in lament and grief and sorrow, we push back against the senseless mystery of life's pain. We yield to the ancient questions: Why? What sort of a God permits destruction like this? ... God does not cause suffering or punish people with suffering, but God is present and known more intimately in the midst of it.<sup>58</sup>

Jefferts Schori's theodicy is not novel for mainline Protestantism, but such a word of comfort was important in light of the crisis itself as well as the media coverage of Pat Robertson's contention that the earthquake was divine retribution for voodoo practices in Haitian history. Having begun with sympathy and comfort, Jefferts Schori quickly moved to a discussion of compassion. She celebrated that the U.S. government was fast to respond to the need, and she applauded the outpouring of support from individual contributors around the world as well. She reminded her audience not to forget Haiti's need after the images faded from everyday news coverage.

In this sermon, Jefferts Schori stopped short of blaming structural inequality and racial injustice for the magnitude of the earthquake's terror—a point she made clear in later sermons

that addressed the topic. However, she did return to her favorite passage from Isaiah to remind her audience of a long-term vision of justice for all:

The ancient vision of a healed world demands that all people have decent and dignified life possibilities – clean water, adequate food, shelter, medical care, education for their children, stable government, the possibility of meaningful employment. Here in this nation we shelter that vision under the banner of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” That vision will never be possible in any nation while some live in want and fear.<sup>59</sup>

Speaking from a pulpit in the National Cathedral, Jefferts Schori used a key phrase from the Declaration of Independence of the United States to point out the disparity between the standard of life in the US and that in Haiti. The earthquake brought to the surface the already desperate conditions in Haiti, where water, food, shelter, and medical care had been comparatively scarce before. Jefferts Schori conflated “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” with Isaiah’s vision of the reign of God, communicating to her primarily U.S. American audience that these values ought not to stop at the national border of the US.

The day after the prayer service for Haiti, Jefferts Schori took a more biting approach to describing the situation in Haiti, again rooted in her vision for the church. In a service for Martin Luther King Day, Jefferts Schori said,

The damage in Haiti is far worse than it was when an equivalent earthquake hit San Francisco 20 years ago, when only 62 people died – it’s worse because the infrastructure in Haiti is so poor, and the buildings there so fragile. It is a result of poverty. And that poverty is what the prophet Martin would challenge us about.<sup>60</sup>

Taking full advantage of the secular-sacred celebration of the life and work of King, Jefferts Schori reminded the congregation that King was more than a dreamer who wanted to see black and white children holding hands in unity. By the end of his life, King’s rhetoric had shifted from focusing on civil rights to a broader concern with human rights. He argued for an end to war and advocated for the economic security of black people. In opposing the Vietnam War, this

more radical King broke with the Johnson administration against the warning of his advisors because King believed that speaking for peace was his duty as a Christian.<sup>61</sup> Jefferts Schori reclaimed the radical King of 1968—whose message is much more demanding than that of the dreaming King of 1963—and challenged the congregation to recognize the links between race, poverty, and injustice. She explained to the congregation that Haiti’s poverty is rooted in its history of slavery on the island, which dates back to the early sixteenth century. The legacy of slavery is at best implicit in the level of destruction the earthquake in Haiti caused, and anyone who takes King’s work seriously has a responsibility to respond. Jefferts Schori challenged the congregation:

Martin invited us as a church to become a thermostat, rather than a thermometer, to be an instrument that changes the temperature of the society around us. Well, my friends, it’s time to turn the heat up. Babies are dying out there. God’s children, our brothers and sisters, are dying of neglect – our neglect to work for justice both here and around the globe. Haiti is also a child of God, teetering on the cusp of life. She needs water, food, solidarity in prayer, work for justice, redevelopment, she needs milk and honey.<sup>62</sup>

Invoking a metaphor she borrows somewhat often from King, Jefferts Schori asked the congregation to become the impetus for change rather than merely reflecting the “temperature” of the status quo. She personified Haiti. More than a country, Haiti is a child of God, a *She*, who is hungry, thirsty, and broken. Jefferts Schori also established an expectation that her audience would react. “Turn the heat up” means being involved in relief work, doing something to make a difference for Haiti, and putting into practice the ideals celebrated on the commemoration of King. Jefferts Schori asked her audience to take up King’s work in 2011, to focus on the amplification of human dignity in Haiti, and to be part of the effort to mitigate anything that diminishes the value of human lives.

In summary, Jefferts Schori’s response to the Haiti earthquake demonstrated effective rhetorical leadership. She offered sympathy and support for the suffering, addressed the

metaphysical questions that religious leaders are expected to answer in times of crisis, celebrated the countries and churches that were involved in relief work, encouraged people not to forget about the ongoing importance of resources for Haiti, and connected both the crisis and her version of an appropriate response thereto to her vision for the church. Along the way, she also engaged the church in the difficult task of reflecting on the structural systems of inequality and injustice that grossly exacerbated the earthquake's terror. Jefferts Schori's response to Haiti illustrates why she transcends controversies about human sexuality: the highest work of the church in a hierarchy of values is in helping those in need and working for systemic justice. Civility can cohabit with radical admonition. Jefferts Schori is civil, but not, as Cloud might suggest, indifferent to justice or "ignor[ing] real antagonism and discourag[ing] necessary public confrontation."<sup>63</sup> Instead, Jefferts Schori takes a different route to justice, one that values people even while it challenges them, and one that extends grace to people even while it reminds them of their own culpability in participating in systems of inequality.

Jefferts Schori's responses to other crises are not as intense or as ongoing as her extended focus on Haiti, but in each case, she addresses the crisis in light of her vision for the church. For example, she blamed the BP oil spill on "the greed of some" who failed to recognize that "we are all connected, and that greed will eventually destroy the greedy as well as those who have been robbed."<sup>64</sup> With respect to the nationwide outcry about the construction of a community center with a Muslim prayer room a few blocks from the site of the former World Trade Center (colloquially mislabeled "the Ground Zero Mosque"), Jefferts Schori said,

The question of the cultural center in Manhattan – and the very fact that there is a question about it – can only be addressed by the larger community of compassion. As soon as voices are raised insisting that *those people* don't deserve the same dignity as we enjoy, it's become a large picture problem. No one of us can apply sufficient mercy to heal it. Together we can challenge our neighbors whose fear has begun to turn to hate,

together we can insist that freedom of religion applies to all of us, together we can work to reverse the prejudice that says some people can't have a place in this nation.<sup>65</sup>

Jefferts Schori's response to both of these news stories ultimately centers on a notion of human dignity rooted in a positive view of creation. Jefferts Schori believes that all God's creation is interdependent, so the greed of some harms everyone. Creation is diverse, so excluding some from full and equal participation in it is sinful. In each case, compassion is the solution to the problem: compassion for the whole of creation, the earth and all the people (plants, animals, and water) on it. For Jefferts Schori, these are not partisan issues to be decided based on political ideology. Environmental and interpersonal degradation are spiritual problems to which she and her parishioners (i.e., all Episcopalians) ought to respond by working to bring about a world like the one Isaiah envisions.

### **Visions & Decisions, or, Does Every Cloud Have a Silver Lining?**

Jefferts Schori's vision for the church—rooted in values she shared with her congregations—shapes her response to exigencies in the church and the world. Considering the differences between her responses to internal crises in the life of the church and problems in the world leaves an important question: Why does Jefferts Schori define some arguably political issues as intimately related to the mission of the church and others as a distraction? A basic ideological answer to this question may find Jefferts Schori's positions contradictory. The question of human sexuality is something not to get “tied up in knots about,” but environmentalism, especially when related to an implicit critique of capitalism, is. Arguably, the full inclusion of lesbian and gay people in the life of the church is as related to the work of treating all of creation with dignity as the questions Jefferts Schori addresses more directly and assertively. By Jefferts Schori's own construction, the Islamic community center in Manhattan is about compassion instead of insisting that “some people can't have a place.” Although her own views on the role of lesbian

and gay people in the life of the church are consistent with this inclusive stance, the position she takes rhetorically is calibrated to avoid allowing her detractors to define the terms of the agenda for the church. Where Anglicans on the right try to set the agenda by claiming that some people are excludable based on particular interpretations of scripture, Jefferts Schori downplays the claim. She resists arguing for rights as such, instead preferring to focus on questions of social justice more broadly defined. Since Jefferts Schori's focus is on elevating people rather than defeating contrary positions, articulating a hostile perspective on a position is not important to her.

Her contention that fighting about human sexuality is a distraction and her deferential position relative to the other primates of the Anglican Communion suggest that, for a time at least, she must tolerate a church where "some people can't have a place" in the House of Bishops or the religious rite of marriage. From the perspective of Lozano-Reich and Cloud, this move likely represents a contradiction in Jefferts Schori's rhetorical corpus: While she bemoans the bigotry of the public outcry against the Manhattan community center, she acquiesces to the bigotry of her colleagues in the Anglican Communion. On one level, then, Jefferts Schori can be said to be institutionally conservative, ultimately willing to sacrifice lesbian and gay people on the altar of global church unity.

While useful, such a response to Jefferts Schori's ostensible contradiction is somewhat shortsighted and belies the nuances of Jefferts Schori's skillful leadership. While understandably frustrating for the liberals in the Episcopal Church (especially within the US), Jefferts Schori's decision to acquiesce, at least temporarily, to the wishes of the primates in 2007 was an exercise in tact, cultural sensitivity, and decisive leadership. Jefferts Schori importantly recognized that the relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion was valuable to

preserve and that readiness for the full inclusion of lesbian and gay people was related both to culture and theological conservatism, not merely exclusive to the latter. Furthermore, Jefferts Schori's approach demonstrates that she placed greater importance on the dignity and full humanity of all people rather than the particular subordinate claim. Jefferts Schori's webcast about the primates' meeting acknowledged that opinions about questions of human sexuality varied greatly and primarily along geographical and cultural lines throughout the Anglican Communion. Without making sweeping generalizations or stooping to ethnocentrism, Jefferts Schori explained that some Anglicans lived in communities where the question is not even broached, others in places where it is insignificant compared to more immediate material realities, and still other places where sexuality is a matter of deep concern and is regarded with suspicion or contempt. She also reminded her Episcopalian listeners that there is diversity of opinion within cultures on those same questions, and that includes the Episcopal Church, even in the US. Because of the pronounced differences in cultural readiness throughout the Anglican Communion, a sustained focus on questions about human sexuality was unlikely to accomplish much. Particularly against the backdrop of Jefferts Schori's clearly stated vision for the church and her focus on people, a feud about human sexuality in the immediate global context is a distraction from problems that might be more immediately amendable to address.

Furthermore, Jefferts Schori's transcendence beyond ecclesiastical infighting about human sexuality cannot be understood as her devaluation of the dignity of lesbian and gay people. Jefferts Schori's critics on the left in the church may be justified in feeling some annoyance at her concession to the other primates, but her commitment to the full humanity of lesbian and gay people is strong nonetheless. Addressing the suicide of Tyler Clementi, the gay

Rutgers University student who jumped off the George Washington Bridge after his roommate secretly filmed him kissing another man, Jefferts Schori said,

Tyler Clementi was shamed to death, and that has something to do with the inability of people around him to assure him that he was loved and filled with dignity because he was a child of God. His roommates evidently didn't have an adequate sense of self-love, either, if they had to look for it in shaming somebody else.<sup>66</sup>

To some degree, the question of how to relate to lesbian and gay people in everyday life is inseparable from the issue of whether lesbian and gay people can be elected as bishops or married in Episcopalian churches by Episcopalian priests. Jefferts Schori wants everyone to be fully included, but she cannot mandate that inclusion. So, rather than trying to attack people who disagree with her views, Jefferts Schori carefully teaches via her principles, modeling the sort of leadership, love, and inclusion that she thinks the church as a whole should embody in policy and practice. As much as possible in their daily lives, Episcopalians should do their best to assure everyone like Tyler that she or he is “loved and filled with dignity” as a “child of God.” Although for a time the church may not be able to celebrate their marriages or elevate them to the highest church offices, lesbian and gay people should know they are loved. This solution is not perfect, but it manages all of Jefferts Schori's commitments within the confines of the constraints that exist. Jefferts Schori accepts what she cannot change, but she works to change it through a rhetoric of transcendence rather than confrontation. The passage from Isaiah talks about ministry to the poor, the brokenhearted, the mourning, and the oppressed, so the Jefferts Schori prefers to address suffering in the world more than questions of polity or theological diversity in the church. In her own theology, the issue is settled, but in her public presentation, she must translate those views within the orthodoxy of her rhetorical position.

When Jefferts Schori does address the emotionally charged controversies of the church, especially human sexuality and the relationship between the Episcopal Church and the Anglican



Communion, she carefully and empathically treats those she disagrees with as sacred, valued people. She affirms that her role is to be the pastor of the whole church, from those on the far left to those on the far right. In one sermon, she acknowledged this constraint of her job as presiding bishop directly: “I can’t do things as [presiding bishop] that I did as Bp [Bishop] of Nevada, and I couldn’t do things as Bp of Nevada that I did as a priest in Oregon, and I couldn’t do things as a priest in Oregon that I did as a lay person.”<sup>67</sup> Jefferts Schori recognized that her job widens her responsibility for inclusion and understanding beyond what is required of laypeople, priests, and even bishops, but she extended the challenge to the rest of the church to join her in welcoming even the voices whose perspectives are in the minority: “An ethic of justice and inclusion would seemingly also urge us to include the dissenter.”<sup>68</sup> Making Jefferts Schori’s vision a reality is difficult work, and it requires the full participation and cooperation of the whole church—a task with which a progressive civility is helpful. Additionally, the Episcopal Church can accomplish more as a part of the Anglican Communion than it can alone. Within the Episcopal Church and throughout the Anglican Communion, Jefferts Schori’s vision for the church requires unity, but not unanimity. Likewise, civility requires respectfulness, but not necessarily respectability in the conservative sense. Jefferts Schori models the principles that she wants others to live by rather than seeing the *other* as an irredeemable enemy who must be defeated in what Lozano-Reich and Cloud call a “real-world encounter marked by material and antagonistic interests.”<sup>69</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Jefferts Schori’s transcendence strategies hinge on her claim that God calls the church to live the vision of shalom from the prophecy of Isaiah. For her (mostly) Episcopalian audiences, appeals to the Isaiah prophecy are authoritative and function to move auditors’ attention away from conflicts or controversies that Jefferts Schori frames as minimally important. For example, when

challenged on issues such as ordination of gays and lesbians, she offers a vision that casts those disagreements as less important than, and therefore obstructive to, the biblical value that she portrays as occupying a more elevated place in the value hierarchy, specifically care for the poor. Thus, Jefferts Schori's transcendence is a theological strategy rooted in doctrine that can be persuasive for her audience. After all, her appeals are ultimately to values that most mainline Episcopalians—whether liberal, moderate, or conservative—share with her.

By transcending controversies and conflicts, Jefferts Schori affirms the dignity and full humanity of people who disagree with her. The common ground, for Jefferts Schori, is not some claim to absolute truth on abstract concepts, but a prioritization of people from an ethic of care. Jefferts Schori's upward transcendence is reminiscent of Kenneth Burke, who suggested that if a rhetor "universalize[s] the idea of purpose (as when the mark of God is seen in each creature)," the rhetor identifies each individual with God's universal design. "The result," Burke commented, "is invigorating."<sup>70</sup> Based on Jefferts Schori's elevation of people over the dualistic side-taking endemic of controversies, I assert that her transcending rhetoric functions as a feminist progressive civility—respectful communication that is also progressive, not conservative.

I argue that the case of Jefferts Schori offers an opportunity to think about at least some forms of civility as positive, progressive, and feminist. Jefferts Schori advocates for a progressive vision of a peaceful, just world while also speaking with affirmation of the dignity and full humanity of her detractors. Jefferts Schori illustrates that one can be respectful without granting assent to oppression. Even when Jefferts Schori speaks as a representative of the institutional church, by definition a conservative rhetorical perspective, she does so with a mind toward her progressive vision and in a way that is civil toward people with different views and

experiences. Furthermore, she is not afraid to challenge the very institution she represents, particularly when its own history is complicit in systems of oppression that contradict her understanding of God's shalom. Jefferts Schori's transcendent rhetoric of civility is grounded in elevating people based on shared principles, even when people have different views about how to apply and live out those principles. Consistent with psychologist and counselor Carrie Doehring, I therefore contend that civility "can promote moments of empathy, deepening intimacy, and authenticity, and, in turn, individual and social justice that subverts oppression."<sup>71</sup>

Jefferts Schori's civility is progressive because it privileges human relationships and the continuation of institutional practices that work to alleviate poverty, war, and injustice throughout the world. It is feminist because it treats other interlocutors as equals in the communicative exchange, each with dignity, worth, and something to add to the conversation, yet it never departs from seeking gender justice. Lozano-Reich and Cloud demonized anyone who disagrees with a feminist or radical rhetor as an oppressor, but Jefferts Schori suggests that even those who disagree should be included in the conversation and treated with respect. If realizing Jefferts Schori's vision of God's shalom means recognizing and celebrating the full humanity of all people, the dissenter cannot be categorically castigated as an oppressor. Instead, the dissenter—even amid her or his dissent—is welcomed as valuable part of creation. Is welcoming the dissenter conservative? Or is it perhaps a most radical act to transcend disagreement and extend compassion to someone who might not (yet) reciprocate it?

## CHAPTER 5

### MULTIPLE PATHS TO SHALOM: TRANSCENDENCE, PROPHETIC IRONY, AND IDENTIFICATION

The longest conversation recorded in the Gospels is John's account of Jesus's meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well. Though she was a Samaritan and Jesus a Jew, Jesus broke custom and spoke to her. After their conversation about living water, the Samaritan woman ran into town to tell everyone about Jesus. "Certainly," Helen Bruch Pearson observes, "no one in town could have guessed that this outcast among outcasts would ever be found in the presence of the Messiah."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes known as the first evangelist, this nameless woman holds the distinction of being the first person in recorded history to tell others about Jesus. Since that "sermon," many other women, some just as unlikely, have followed the Samaritan woman's example.

In the preceding chapters, I have analyzed the rhetorical work of three such women, also firsts in their own ways, and each unlikely for her own reasons. I have two goals in this chapter: First, I summarize and synthesize my arguments with attention to the commonalities among and differences between the bishops' rhetorical strategies and ends. Second, I attempt to answer the three questions I posed in the first chapter, focusing respectively on the bishops' indebtedness and contribution to the historical-rhetorical trajectory of (clergy)women public speakers, the relationship between these bishops and the question of women in leadership, and the particular significance of the religious nature of the bishops' rhetoric.

## **Glancing Backward, Moving Forward**

So far, in sum, I have argued that Marjorie Swank Matthews, Leontine Turpeau Current Kelly, and Katharine Jefferts Schori all appeal to their audience's shared Christian values, but in different ways and toward different—yet all arguably feminist—ends: Matthews establishes identification by appealing to shared values in a conventional way when she has individualistic goals and in a constitutive way when she has collective goals. In the latter case, to the degree the interpellation is successful, the values Matthews shares with her audience compel the audience to extend the progressive work they have already done. Kelly appeals to the shared values of the Wesleyan tradition—tantamount, in her rhetoric, to a “covenant” for United Methodists—to reveal the difference between where her audience is and where she (believes God) wants them to be. For Kelly, the shared values serve to convict her audiences of their racism and sexism in a call to repent and return to the rich heritage characteristic of the Wesleyan tradition: not only vital piety, but social holiness, including an affirmation of the dignity, equality, and full humanity of women and people of color. Finally, Jefferts Schori appeals to her vision for the church in the face of conflict and disagreement, allowing her to transcend those disagreements and refocus on what she views as most important. For Jefferts Schori, the shared value of working for her vision is more important than differences of opinion about human sexuality.

Of course, the overall finding that these bishops navigate rhetorical challenges by appealing to shared values, though in various ways and with different goals, is not surprising. As I noted in Chapter 1, sermons typically reflect the speaker's presumption that the audience shares her basic beliefs.<sup>2</sup> The ideological, theological, geographical, and cultural diversity of the Episcopal and United Methodist denominations certainly means that bishops can expect less

homogeneity among their constituents than can the average cleric in a local congregation, but even so, what makes these bishops' appeals to shared values noteworthy?

The answer to that question is most compelling in cases where the bishops and their audiences expected not to have shared values. In many cases, the bishops' appeals to shared values were quite conventional, as when Matthews comforted congregants who struggled with whatever they felt God calling them to do by admitting that she too struggled to be faithful. However, when the bishops faced problems or controversies, finding shared values to which to appeal may have been more challenging. Kelly's appeals to shared values were ironic because her audiences were not living out the values they professed and prophetic because she called them to return to their values in order to be restored within the terms of the covenant. Before more challenging audiences, Matthews had to find shared values even when some present did not share the basic belief that she had a right to speak at all. Jefferts Schori's challenge was linking the values of mainstream liberal Episcopalians with their more conservative counterparts in the US as well as with Anglicans around the world whose cultural perspectives and material realities were vastly different from those of most Americans.

All three bishops' goals ultimately amount to asking their audiences to join them in working toward shalom. While their definitions of shalom are similar, the three bishops bring different pieces of that vision into focus depending on their particular contexts, goals, and positionalities. Matthews emphasized gender equity, Kelly focused on racial reconciliation, and Jefferts Schori directed her attention to issues of global poverty and hunger. All of these emphases are important to the goal of *shalom*, itself a rather ambitious aim.

If the bishops have in common the most general strategy of appealing to shared values and the most general goal of encouraging audiences to live out *shalom*, they differ on the specific

forms they use in their preaching. My analyses have suggested that a rhetoric of transcendence makes possible a progressive feminist civility, the articulation of an ironic perspective with prophetic rhetoric offers promise for religious rhetors addressing an audience whose behaviors and values are discordant, and identification and constitutive rhetoric are useful for liberal reform, albeit at a slow pace.

Putting these three specific formic strategies in conversation with one another immediately reveals some incompatibilities. Jefferts Schori and Matthews used strategies that identified them with their audiences, but Kelly divided herself from her audiences. All three bishops discussed common values they shared with their audiences, but Kelly's point was to highlight the audience's failure to live up to those values. Two observations emerge from this contrast. First, though all three bishops have majority-white audiences, Matthews and Jefferts Schori have white privilege. Even when Jefferts Schori addressed racism, as she did when she reminded her colleagues in the House of Bishops about the discrepancies between pension funds for Haitian and American clergy,<sup>3</sup> she was able to include herself in the implications of her message. When Jefferts Schori implicates white privilege, she implicates her own as well as that of her audience. Because Kelly lacked white privilege, she spoke as a prophet—by definition, a rhetorical outsider. While Kelly would certainly not claim to be without sin, when she talked about racism, she addressed it as a target rather than a perpetrator. She could not implicate herself in her message about racism the way Jefferts Schori did. Second, the particular difference between Jefferts Schori and Kelly reveals potential limitations for civility. While I would hesitate to call Kelly's responses to the white clergyman at lunch or the man at the bus stop uncivil, it is certainly safe to say that Kelly does not prioritize the voice of the dissenter in the same way Jefferts Schori does. Kelly is dismissive of her detractors, but not antagonistically so. This, too,

seems to be a function of privilege. As a straight white woman, Jefferts Schori can include dissenting voices on the question of human sexuality without too much risk. A lesbian woman addressing human sexuality, like a black person addressing racism, could be accused of speaking out of a personal motive or agenda, but Jefferts Schori's privilege shields her from such accusations. Jefferts Schori's intentionality about including the dissenter, I argued in Chapter 4, is radical insofar as it extends compassion to someone who does not (yet) reciprocate it. Expecting the same of Kelly—a black woman addressing the question of race before majority-white audiences—would be to disregard centuries of racist history and hold Kelly to an impossible standard. I maintain my claim that civility can be progressive and feminist, but making such a claim does not mean civility is the only acceptable strategy or a strategy appropriate for every rhetor and every situation.

On the other hand, constitutive rhetoric seems quite compatible with both transcendence and the prophetic-ironic. Broadly speaking, all three bishops constitute rhetorical audiences. When Jefferts Schori told audiences that Episcopalians should be more concerned with the Millennium Development Goals than the ordination of lesbian and gay people, she constituted an audience that shares her vision for the church. For an audience to embrace Jefferts Schori's vision is for them to be constituted as an audience of Episcopalians concerned more with the church's response to global poverty than to its position on human sexuality. The prophetic tradition relies on the rhetor's reconstitution of a covenantal people, even if the goal of such a constitution is pointing out the audience's shortcomings relative to the covenant. So, when Kelly calls the audience to account for the church's history of racism and sexism, the impact of her arguments is amplified by the covenant the audience ostensibly affirms, that of a Wesleyan tradition focused on vital piety and social holiness. Where Matthews goes a step further in her



constitution of rhetorical audiences is in asking her audiences to extend the progressive work they have already done. For instance, because the member denominations of the World Council of Churches have affirmed a progressive report on human rights and justice, they should support the ordination of women as an extension of those progressive views and their theological affirmation of baptism as a sacrament available to everyone.

### **Full Circle: Questions, Answers, and More Questions**

My abiding concern in this project was to understand how women bishops have navigated the rhetorical challenges of leadership in positions hitherto held by men throughout church history, and further, what their strategies might teach us about rhetorical forms. Having now addressed that question, I return to the three additional questions I proposed in the first chapter. I offer answers more in the spirit of keeping a scholarly conversation going than professing to have a final word. The three questions I address in turn are: (1) How do these women bishops draw from and contribute to the rhetorical-historical trajectory of (religious) women public speakers and rhetorical strategies in the United States?; (2) What strategies do they use to establish themselves as leaders, and in what ways are issues of gender and power evident in and obscured by those strategies?; and (3) How does their particular status as religious leaders influence their rhetorical strategies and choices?

#### *Rhetorical-historical Trajectory of (Clergy)women Speaking*

I opened Chapter 1 by noting that Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori simultaneously have no predecessors (as the firsts in each of their positions) and several centuries of predecessors (as American women speaking in the religious public sphere). I then asked to what degree they draw from and contribute to the rhetorical-historical trajectory of (religious) women speaking in

public. My answer is that the bishops are simultaneously beneficiaries and benefactors of the rhetorical-historical trajectory of religious women speakers.

First, the bishops benefit from the religious women speakers who came before them. As Michael Casey, Lucy Hogan, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, and others have noted, early women speakers in the American colonies or United States often gave a defense of their right to speak.<sup>4</sup> It would be naïve to say that by 1980 (or even 2013) all of Christendom is convinced that women should have such a right, but what can be said with certainty is that arguments in favor of women's right to preach and to be ordained had, by 1980, attained a critical momentum so that Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori did not need to expend considerable energy in each sermon defending their right to deliver it.

Each bishop did address objections to women in ministry, but compared to the detailed theological rationales offered by their predecessors, the bishops' arguments were curt. The bishops themselves enacted their equality more than they argued for it explicitly. When the man at the bus stop told Kelly she had no business leading a church, she used a one sentence summary of the carefully developed prophetic rationales constructed by the women of the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries: "Paul did not call me, Jesus called me."<sup>5</sup> Kelly's response to the man, as I noted in Chapter 3, also served as a response to anyone in her multi-denominational audience who still questioned whether women should preach. The enduring legacy of the early women speakers' work is clearest in Jefferts Schori's conversation with the English layman who averred that men opposed women's ministry as bishops because men could not imagine taking orders from women. Because she did not need to say anything new about gender, Jefferts Schori was able to respond instead to the man's misunderstanding of what leadership means for Christians: "ordained ministry is not about giving orders so much as it is

modeling Jesus' kind of servant leadership."<sup>6</sup> All three bishops could generally take for granted their right to speak, and in most cases, their audiences' assent thereto, because of the women who came before them and spoke that right into reality.

Second, as religious women speakers, the bishops contribute to the same rhetorical-historical trajectory from which they benefit. The bishops serve as touchstones for future women leaders. Obituaries and other remembrances of Matthews and Kelly are especially telling in celebrating their role as models for future women pastors and bishops.<sup>7</sup> Jefferts Schori is still alive and serving in her role, but it is reasonable to predict that her legacy will similarly be one of inspiration for the next generation. In addition to contributing to the rhetorical history of religious women speakers, my analysis of Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori also offers important insights about gendered questions of leadership and power.

### *Women, Leadership, and Power*

In the first chapter, I suggested that leadership studies eager to identify and separate feminine and masculine styles are essentialist and result in unoriginal criticism. Even so, I agree with Buzzanell that to question the patriarchy of most traditional, hierarchal organizations, leadership scholars must at least interrogate the masculinist presumption that the category "effective leadership" seems to enjoy.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, leadership scholar Todd Pittinsky and colleagues argue that labeling some leadership styles "feminine" and others "masculine" is problematic in part because such categorization limits the range of choices leaders have in responding to particular problems.<sup>9</sup> Some issues require an assertive response, and other challenges are best met with a collaborative approach. With that in mind, and without expecting that these three bishops represent all women in leadership—or that all women in leadership have anything in common—I

seek here to answer the question of leadership, especially with respect to the bishops' references to their own leadership.

As I noted in my discussion of Matthews's identification strategies in Chapter 2, Matthews's own references to her title are rare. When the audience already saw her as a figure with legitimate authority, Matthews downplayed her own exemplarity in favor of accessibility to her audience instead. She relied on autobiography that revealed her vulnerabilities without falling into the trap of deferential or apologetic self-effacement sometimes characteristic of so-called feminine styles. On the other hand, when she spoke in contexts where she was at best unsure of the audience's acceptance, she introduced herself as a bishop and explained what that title meant. She also enacted the leadership she called for by speaking as a bishop in the masculine space of the pulpit. Her preference for collegiality is clear in her veneration for Vatican II's move away from authoritarian approaches to leadership. The testimonies of those who worked with her verify that Matthews saw leadership as a "consultive process" even while she firmly recognized that she had the final say.<sup>10</sup> Like most effective leaders, Matthews recognized that different leadership challenges call for different styles.

Like Matthews, Jefferts Schori spoke about leadership in ways more nuanced than the masculinist presumption would seem to allow. In addition to the point I discussed above where Jefferts Schori disavows attempts to define leadership as "giving orders," her frank discussion of the *constraints* of leadership reveals how seriously she takes the task of providing leadership to the whole church, including the people with whom she disagrees on questions of ideology or theology: "I can't do things as [presiding bishop] that I did as Bp [Bishop] of Nevada, and I couldn't do things as Bp of Nevada that I did as a priest in Oregon, and I couldn't do things as a priest in Oregon that I did as a lay person."<sup>11</sup> Jefferts Schori's understanding of leadership, then,

is not one that embraces leadership as a site of power. Instead, as she said in recounting her discussion with the English layman, leadership is about service. As this quotation makes clear, a good leader *gives up* some of her own individual autonomy in order to lead effectively. When she became a priest, Jefferts Schori lost some of the freedom she had as a layperson, and with each “promotion,” even as she gained power in an institutional sense, she lost some freedom. For Jefferts Schori, being a leader in the church means subordinating one’s own preferences to the needs of the organization and its people—at least in part by casting a vision transcendent enough to include everyone in the organization.

I hesitate to call any of the bishops’ leadership styles “feminine,” not only for the reasons I discussed above, but also because I suspect a term like “adaptive” might be better. Furthermore, an emphasis on service rather than power and on accessibility rather than aloofness may be characteristics of effective *Christian* leadership, perhaps extending from the suffering servant in the Jewish tradition as recorded in the book of Isaiah.<sup>12</sup> For example, Jefferts Schori explicitly cited Jesus as her model for servant leadership. The singular importance of the religiosity of the bishops’ communication is the question to which I turn next.

### *The Rhetoric of Leadership in the Christian Tradition*

In Chapter 1, I suggested that the specifically religious nature of their contexts provided the bishops with two rhetorical opportunities not found in business or politics: the authority of revelation and the relative homogeneity of audiences. The authority of scripture and the Christian tradition has been consistently useful to the bishops. Jefferts Schori’s ability to transcend controversies she regards as less important to the church than her vision can only be successful because the vision she espouses is derived from scripture: the passage from Isaiah and Jesus’s appropriation of that passage as Jesus’s own mission. The rhetorical impact of the prophetic

tradition and Kelly's articulation of it with an ironic perspective is dependent on the covenantal relationship between God and God's people in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Political rhetors refer to the social contract and its manifestation in documents like the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence, and leaders in business can refer to their corporations' mission statements or charters; Kelly appeals to a covenant where accountability is divine. While Matthews's constitutive rhetoric relies more on appeals to liberal ideological claims and the Christian tradition than to scripture itself, the ethic that underlies her appeals is based in scripture. Especially when she talked about the initiatory rite of baptism as available to everyone, emphasizing the value she places on inclusiveness, Matthews drew on common sacramental theology for most of the Protestants at the World Council of Churches. As I suggested in Chapter 2, Matthews's reliance on liberal arguments rather than theological ones was a liability. In this sense, she did not take advantage of the particular opportunities afforded by religious rhetoric the way Kelly and Jefferts Schori did.

The relative homogeneity of the bishops' audiences is also an asset. As I have already noted, bishops face more heterogeneous audiences than most rank-and-file clergy, but particularly when they speak within their own denominations, the bishops can assume a common starting place for the audience. My argument that the most basic commonality among the bishops is their appeals to shared values relies, of course, on the premise that the bishops indeed share values with their audiences. Whether invoking those shared values to transcend other conflicts, to call for an extension of the progressive work a group accomplished so far, or to highlight the differences between values affirmed and actual behavior, the bishops assumed particular starting places with each audience. Kelly, for example, did not need to give a detailed account of the church's history of complicity in racism when she said the euphemistic bicentennial theme was

“not a comfortable phrase to be viewed as a *fait accompli*” because “members of this denomination know better.”<sup>13</sup> While Kelly might have been somewhat optimistic about her audience’s awareness of church history, she trusted that they “know better” than to believe “Two Centuries Proclaiming Grace and Freedom” was a realistic theme for Methodism’s two-hundredth birthday. Jefferts Schori’s transcendence depended at least in part on her ability to convince her various audiences that the most important issues for the church were questions of global poverty relief rather than disputes over human sexuality that are of low salience to most of the people who are food-insecure or living in countries ravished by war and political upheaval. She achieved this by appealing to a vision she appropriated from Jesus (who borrowed it from the prophet Isaiah). The authority of revelation and the comparative homogeneity of audiences, then, was an asset for these bishops.

### **Final Thoughts, and What the Bishops Did Not Say**

As I noted in Chapter 3, Protestant Christianity in the US has long struggled with tensions between individual salvation and the social gospel and the appropriate source of authority for Christians.<sup>14</sup> Questions about theological liberalism and the dialectical tension between the social gospel and individual salvation are not new, nor are they unique to American Protestantism. In some traditions, this tension has been more productive than in others. Episcopalians tend to favor the social gospel side while Southern Baptists are more inclined toward individualism. United Methodists, at least in their official *Discipline*, attempt to strike a balance between the two.<sup>15</sup> The three bishops I considered here, though, all fall squarely within the social gospel tradition, perhaps even at the expense of a focus on individual salvation. Of course, one reason for this is that they tend to address the already-converted. But even then, one might expect bishops of denominations facing their third or fourth decade of membership decline to address that topic

when they preach at denominational assemblies. Absent from their sermons are any calls for church growth or any language that ties membership and attendance numbers to clergy effectiveness or vitality. If these bishops represent change in their denominations—change toward more theological openness, or liberalism, or gender equity—are they at all interested in assuring that those changes abide?

The answer to that question seems to be a qualified yes. Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori do not seem as concerned with institutional maintenance as with their mission of shalom. Matthews raised the subject of universalism only as a question in her sermon about Vatican II, but Jefferts Schori is more direct. She never explicitly endorses universalism (in the sense that “anything goes”), but she is clear about her belief that it is arrogant to insist that Jesus is the only route to the divine.<sup>16</sup> I have no doubt that the bishops want their respective churches to continue and to grow, but I also suspect they are more concerned with shalom than with increasing attendance and membership figures. The changing geopolitical climate Matthews and Kelly anticipated and Jefferts Schori works within every day call for a Christianity that does not insist exclusively on its own way, but that actively partners with anyone who embraces a vision of shalom, a world of whole, real peace. Christianity—indeed, religiosity—does not have a monopoly on social justice, but in these bishops’ view, authentic Christianity demands social justice. For Matthews, Kelly, and Jefferts Schori, a church that grows but ignores social sins like sexism, racism, and economic inequality is spiritually defunct. As the epistle of James says, “If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,’ and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.”<sup>17</sup>



Matthews, Protestantism's first woman bishop, Kelly, Christendom's first woman bishop of color, and Jefferts Schori, the first woman to lead a national church in the Anglican Communion, want churches that have both faith and works, churches that strive to bring the vision of God's shalom into reality. These three bishops take different routes—transcendence and civility, ironic prophetic rhetoric, and identification and constitutive rhetoric buttressed by enactment—but all of these, in the service of social justice, are paths to shalom.

## NOTES

### Preface

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<sup>2</sup> Jane O’Reilly, “The Housewife’s Moment of Truth,” *Ms. Magazine*, December 20, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> “Profile--Barbara Clementine Harris,” *Episcopal News Service*, September 29, 1988, [http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress\\_release.pl?pr\\_number=88202](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=88202).

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Burke, “From the Depths: An Oceanographer Barred from the Sea Lands in a Most Unusual Place: At the Top of the Episcopal Church,” *Search*, May 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Bonnie J. Dow, *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women’s Movement Since 1970* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

### Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup> Mark 1:3, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, eds., *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, 2nd ed (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2001); Rebecca Larson, *Daughters of Light: Quaker Women Preaching and Prophesying in the Colonies and Abroad, 1700-1775* (New York: Knopf, 1999); Lucy Lind Hogan, “Negotiating Personhood, Womanhood, and Spiritual Equality: Phoebe Palmer’s Defense of the Preaching of Women,” *American*

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<sup>3</sup> Dana Milbank, “A Thank-You for 18 Million Cracks in the Glass Ceiling,” *The Washington Post*, June 8, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/07/AR2008060701879.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Julia T. Wood, *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender, and Culture*, 9th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Sally B. Purvis, *The Stained-Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995); Finlay, *Facing*; Maureen Fiedler, *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Religious Leaders in Their Own Words* (New York: Seabury Books, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Finlay, *Facing*, xi.

<sup>7</sup> Judith Craig, *The Leading Women: Stories of the First Women Bishops of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 10. As a noun, “episcopacy” refers to the office of

the bishop, and its common adjectival form is “episcopal.” This is not to be confused with the proper adjective “Episcopal,” which refers specifically to the Episcopal Church.

<sup>8</sup> Harriett Olson, ed., *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> The Archives of the Episcopal Church, ed., *Constitution & Canons: Together with the Rules of Order for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America Otherwise Known as the Episcopal Church* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, “What Really Distinguishes And/or Ought to Distinguish Feminist Scholarship in Communication Studies?,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 11 (Spring 1988): 4.

<sup>11</sup> O. Wesley Allen, “Introduction: The Pillars of the New Homiletic,” in *The Renewed Homiletic*, ed. by O. Wesley Allen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Allen, “Introduction.”

<sup>13</sup> Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*, expnd. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), xx.

<sup>14</sup> For more on inductive and narrative preaching, see Fred B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978); Fred B. Craddock, *As One Without Authority*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979); Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985); Lowry, *Homiletical Plot*; for discussions of the enduring legacy of the New Homiletic, see Allen, “Introduction”; Pablo A. Jimenez, “Responses,” in *The Renewed Homiletic*, ed. by O. Wesley Allen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 116–119; Fred B. Craddock, “Foreword,” in *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*, by Eugene L. Lowry, expnd. ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), ix–xvii.

<sup>15</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church: Reclaiming the Theological Heart of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2009), 12, 21.

<sup>16</sup> Roxanne Mountford, *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003), 62.

<sup>17</sup> For more on the historical criticisms of white preaching, see Mike Graves, ed., *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004); For more on the history and stylistic features of black preaching, see Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970); Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990); Evans E. Crawford, *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995); Cleophus J. LaRue, "Two Ships Passing in the Night," in *What's the Matter with Preaching Today?*, ed. by Mike Graves (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004); Henry H. Mitchell, "Celebration Renewed," in *The Renewed Homiletic*, ed. by O. Wesley Allen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 63–73; Kenyatta R. Gilbert, *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> Mitchell, "Celebration Renewed," 67.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Battle, *The Black Church in America: African American Christian Spirituality* (Blackwell, 2006); Gilbert, *Journey and Promise*.

<sup>20</sup> James Francis Darsey, *The Prophetic Tradition and Radical Rhetoric in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

<sup>21</sup> Gilbert, *Journey and Promise*, 36; For more on rhetoric as constitutive of communities, see Michael C. McGee, "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of*

*Speech* 61 (October 1975): 235–249; Maurice Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the Peuple Québécois,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (May 1987): 133.

<sup>22</sup> David Howard-Pitney, *The African American Jeremiad: Appeals for Justice in America*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005), 10, 13.

<sup>23</sup> Michael Salvador and Todd Norton, “The Flood Myth in the Age of Global Climate Change,” *Environmental Communication* 5 (March 2011): 45–61; For more the on the jeremiad form in American History, see Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); For more on the jeremiad form in rhetorical studies, see Kurt W. Ritter, “American Political Rhetoric and the Jeremiad Tradition: Presidential Nomination Acceptance Addresses, 1960-1976,” *Central States Speech Journal* 31 (1980): 153–171; Richard L. Johannesen, “The Jeremiad and Jenkin Lloyd Jones,” *Communication Monographs* 52 (June 1985): 156–172; Richard L. Johannesen, “Ronald Reagan’s Economic Jeremiad,” *Central States Speech Journal* 37 (June 1986): 79–89; John M. Murphy, “‘A Time of Shame and Sorrow’: Robert F. Kennedy and the American Jeremiad,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 76 (January 1990): 401–414; Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp, “Maria W. Miller Stewart, ‘Lecture Delivered at Franklin Hall’,” *Voices of Democracy* 1 (2006): 15–42; Brian Jackson, “Jonathan Edwards Goes to Hell (House): Fear Appeals in American Evangelism,” *Rhetoric Review* 26 (January 2007): 42–59; Dylan Wolfe, “The Ecological Jeremiad, the American Myth, and the Vivid Force of Color in Dr. Seuss’s *The Lorax*,” *Environmental Communication* 2 (March 2008): 3–24; John M. Murphy, “Barack Obama, the Exodus Tradition, and the Joshua Generation,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97 (November 2011): 387–410; Brian T. Kaylor, “A New Law: The Covenant Speech of Barbara Jordan,” *Southern Communication Journal* 77 (January 2012): 10–23.

<sup>24</sup> For an application and extension of Kennedy's theory of the covenant speech, see Kaylor, "A New Law."

<sup>25</sup> Denise M. Bostdorff, "George W. Bush's Post-September 11 Rhetoric of Covenant Renewal: Upholding the Faith of the Greatest Generation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (November 2003): 293–319; Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, "Recasting the American Dream and American Politics: Barack Obama's Keynote Address to the 2004 Democratic National Convention," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93 (November 2007): 425–448.

<sup>26</sup> Bettye Collier-Thomas, *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 8.

<sup>27</sup> Gilbert, *Journey and Promise*, 28.

<sup>28</sup> Jean Caffey Lyles, "An Improbable Episcopal Choice," *Christian Century*, August 13, 1980, 779.

<sup>29</sup> Lyles, "Improbable Episcopal Choice," 779; General Commission on Archives & History of the United Methodist Church, *Marjorie Matthews, 1916-1986*, 2008, <http://www.gcah.org/site/apps/nlnet/content3.aspx?c=ghKJI0PHIoE&b=3637665&ct=4506593>.

<sup>30</sup> Lyles, "Improbable Episcopal Choice."

<sup>31</sup> Lyles, "Improbable Episcopal Choice," 779.

<sup>32</sup> Craig, *Leading Women*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> Craig, *Leading Women*, 10; General Commission on Archives & History of the United Methodist Church, *Marjorie Matthews*.

<sup>34</sup> Craig, *Leading Women*, 283.

<sup>35</sup> General Commission on Archives & History of the United Methodist Church, *Marjorie Matthews*; Craig, *Leading Women*.

<sup>36</sup> Throughout this section, I refer to Kelly as “Leontine” when I am discussing the past to avoid confusion as she moves among last names. When I quote her recollections, I use her last name.

For the sake of parsimony, I also use first names to refer to her relevant family members.

<sup>37</sup> Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Born to Preach,” in *The African American Book of Values: Classic Moral Stories*, ed. by Steven Barboza (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 463.

<sup>38</sup> Craig, *Leading Women*, 139.

<sup>39</sup> Craig, *Leading Women*, 143.

<sup>40</sup> Craig, *Leading Women*.

<sup>41</sup> Angella P. Current, *Breaking Barriers: An African American Family & the Methodist Story* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 60.

<sup>42</sup> Current, *Breaking Barriers*.

<sup>43</sup> Current, *Breaking Barriers*, 84.

<sup>44</sup> In 2010, the seminary officially changed its name to Union Presbyterian Seminary. Karin Kapsidelis, “Richmond Seminary Getting New Name,” *Richmond Times Dispatch*, May 27, 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Current, *Breaking Barriers*.

<sup>46</sup> To this day, the Southeastern Jurisdiction has not elected a woman bishop of color.

<sup>47</sup> Current, *Breaking Barriers*, 109.

<sup>48</sup> Kathy Gilbert, “Bishop Leontine Kelly Dies at 92: First United Methodist African-American Woman Bishop,” *General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church*, June 29, 2012, <http://umc-gbcs.org/faith-in-action/bishop-leontine-kelly-dies-at-92?c=frLJK2PKLqF&b=8191847&ct=11930485#.UFM0SVG8C6Q>.

<sup>49</sup> Gilbert, “Bishop Leontine Kelly Dies.”



<sup>50</sup> Burke, "From the Depths."

<sup>51</sup> Pat McCaughan, "Jefferts Schori's 'Reign of God'," *Convention Daily*, June 19, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> Burke, "From the Depths," 40.

<sup>53</sup> Burke, "From the Depths," 41.

<sup>54</sup> Burke, "From the Depths."

<sup>55</sup> "The Rt. Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Bishop of Nevada," *Convention Daily*, June 18, 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Burke, "From the Depths," 42.

<sup>57</sup> The Schoris' living arrangement has inspired mean-spirited, anonymous remarks on conservative web forums, but as far as I can tell, no credible source has made a statement about their long-distance marriage. My point here is that while Jefferts Schori is married, she still does not live in a domestic relationship that would be considered conventional for a bishop.

<sup>58</sup> See, e.g., Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 59 (February 1973): 74–86; Campbell, "What Really Distinguishes"; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Biesecker Cannot Speak for Her Either," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 26 (Spring 1993): 153–159; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism: To Be or Not to Be a Woman," *Communication Quarterly* 31 (Spring 1983): 101–108; Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her, Volume I: A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak For Her, Volume II: Key Texts of the Early Feminists* (New York: Praeger, 1989); Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, ed., *Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1800-1925: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook* (Westport, CN: Greenwood, 1993); Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, ed., *Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1925-1993: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook* (Westport, CN: Greenwood, 1994).

<sup>59</sup> Campbell, *1925-1993*.

<sup>60</sup> Helen M. Sterk, "Faith, Feminism and Scholarship: The *Journal of Communication and Religion*, 1999-2009," *Journal of Communication & Religion* 33 (November 2010): 216.

<sup>61</sup> Bonnie J. Dow and Celeste M. Condit, "The State of the Art in Feminist Scholarship in Communication," *Journal of Communication* 55 (2005): 449.

<sup>62</sup> See Bonnie J. Dow, "Feminism, Difference(s), and Rhetorical Studies," *Communication Studies* 46 (Spring 1995): 106–117.

<sup>63</sup> Vicki Tolar Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism: Reading, Writing, and Speaking to Believe* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 154.

<sup>64</sup> Michael P. Graves, *Preaching the Inward Light: Early Quaker Rhetoric* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009), 4, 5.

<sup>65</sup> Barbara Biesecker, "Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 25 (Spring 1992): 140–161; For more on "the great woman problem," see Carole Spitzack and Kathryn Carter, "Women in Communication Studies: A Typology for Revision," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (November 1987): 401–423.

<sup>66</sup> Campbell, "Biesecker Cannot Speak."

<sup>67</sup> Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).

<sup>68</sup> Karen Jo Torjesen, *When Women Were Priests: Women's Leadership in the Early Church and the Scandal of Their Subordination in the Rise of Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993).

<sup>69</sup> Harry Hazel, "Power and Constraint in the Rhetoric of Catherine of Siena," *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association* 19, no. 1 (1991): 35–46; M. Starr Costello, "The

Mystical Death of Catherine of Sienna [*sic*]: Eschatological Vision and Social Reform,” *Mystics Quarterly* 13 (March 1987): 19–26.

<sup>70</sup> Alison Weber, *Teresa of Avila and the Rhetoric of Femininity* (Princeton University Press, 1996), 5.

<sup>71</sup> Casey, “First Female Public Speakers,” 2.

<sup>72</sup> Campbell, *Man Cannot (Vol. I)*, 11.

<sup>73</sup> Campbell, *Man Cannot (Vol. I)*; Casey, “First Female Public Speakers”; Roxanne Mountford, “On Gender and Rhetorical Space,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31 (Winter 2001): 41–71; Hogan, “Negotiating Personhood”; Carlacio, “Ye Knew Your Duty”; Graves, *Preaching the Inward Light*.

<sup>74</sup> Kristy Maddux, “The Foursquare Gospel of Aimee Semple McPherson,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14, no. 2 (2011): 291–326.

<sup>75</sup> Sonja K. Foss, “Women Priests in the Episcopal Church: A Cluster Analysis of Establishment Rhetoric,” *Religious Communication Today* 7 (1984): 1–11.

<sup>76</sup> Finlay, *Facing*; For an analysis of arguments for and against women’s ordination in the Roman Catholic Church, see Carol J. Jablonski, “Rhetoric, Paradox, and the Movement for Women’s Ordination in the Roman Catholic Church,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 74 (May 1988): 164–183.

<sup>77</sup> Finlay, *Facing*.

<sup>78</sup> Gail Theus Fairhurst, *Discursive Leadership: In Conversation with Leadership Psychology* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2007), vii.

<sup>79</sup> Patrice M. Buzzanell, “Gaining a Voice: Feminist Organizational Communication Theorizing,” *Management Communication Quarterly* 7 (May 1994): 341.

- <sup>80</sup> Buzzanell, "Gaining a Voice," 341.
- <sup>81</sup> Buzzanell, "Gaining a Voice," 345.
- <sup>82</sup> Dow, "Feminism, Difference(s)."
- <sup>83</sup> Buzzanell, "Gaining a Voice," 373.
- <sup>84</sup> Finlay, *Facing*, 9.
- <sup>85</sup> Thomas D. Clark, "An Exploration of Generic Aspects of Contemporary American Christian Sermons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63 (December 1977): 384–394.
- <sup>86</sup> Thomas M. Lessl, "The Priestly Voice," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (May 1989): 184.
- <sup>87</sup> Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96 (January 1967): 1–21; Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial*, 2nd ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).
- <sup>88</sup> Roderick P. Hart, *The Political Pulpit* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1977).
- <sup>89</sup> Bellah, "Civil Religion in America."
- <sup>90</sup> Hart, *Political Pulpit*, 83 (emphasis in the original).
- <sup>91</sup> Ritter, "American Political Rhetoric," 158.
- <sup>92</sup> Hart, *Political Pulpit*.
- <sup>93</sup> Clark, "Exploration of Generic Aspects."
- <sup>94</sup> Clark, "Exploration of Generic Aspects."
- <sup>95</sup> Phyllis Tickle, *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008).
- <sup>96</sup> Tickle, *Great Emergence*.

<sup>97</sup> Ross Douthat, “Can Liberal Christianity Be Saved?,” *New York Times*, July 14, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/opinion/sunday/douthat-can-liberal-christianity-be-saved.html>.

<sup>98</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, *A Wing and a Prayer: A Message of Faith and Hope* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2007), 33.

<sup>99</sup> Marjorie Swank Matthews, “This Is the Day!” sermon manuscript (handwritten), n.d., General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church, 6.

<sup>100</sup> Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Spirituality for Dangerous Days: The Ralph E. and Vyril Swan Lecture” sermon manuscript (handwritten) (Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE, September 29, 1989), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library, 2.

<sup>101</sup> Ada María Isasi-Díaz, “Defining Our ‘Proyecto Histórico’: ‘Mujerista’ Strategies for Liberation,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 9 (Spring-Fall 1993): 17–28.

## Chapter 2

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<sup>2</sup> Sharon Zimmerman Rader, “Women Shaping the Church: An Interview with Bishops Craig, Morrison, and Brown Christopher,” *Wellsprings* 3 (Fall 1990): 10.

<sup>3</sup> Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Marjorie Swank Matthews” sermon manuscript (handwritten) (Celebration of Marjorie Swank Matthews, March 5, 1996), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library.

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<sup>5</sup> Troxell, “Honoring One Another,” 304.

<sup>6</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, trans. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Dramatism and Development* (Barre, MA: Clark University Press, 1972), 27–28.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969).

<sup>9</sup> Judith S. Trent, “Richard Nixon’s Methods of Identification in the Presidential Campaigns of 1960 and 1968: A Contest Analysis,” *Today’s Speech* 19 (Fall 1971): 23–30.

<sup>10</sup> Burke, *Dramatism and Development*, 28.

<sup>11</sup> Burke, *Dramatism and Development*, 28.

<sup>12</sup> George Cheney, “The Rhetoric of Identification and the Study of Organizational Communication,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (May 1983): 148.

<sup>13</sup> Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 138; See also, McGee, “In Search.”

<sup>14</sup> Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 134.

<sup>15</sup> Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 137.

<sup>16</sup> Christina M. Morus, “Slobo the Redeemer: The Rhetoric of Slobodan Milosevic and the Construction of the Serbian ‘People’,” *Southern Communication Journal* 72 (January 2007): 7.

<sup>17</sup> Helen Tate, “The Ideological Effects of a Failed Constitutive Rhetoric: The Co-option of the Rhetoric of White Lesbian Feminism,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 28 (Spring 2005): 1–31.

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- <sup>20</sup> Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), 9.
- <sup>21</sup> Leland G. Spencer and Joshua Trey Barnett, "Touring Homophobia: Understanding the Soulforce Equality Ride as a Toxic Tour," *Southern Communication Journal* (in press).
- <sup>22</sup> Charles Kauffman, "Enactment as Argument in the Gorgias," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 12 (Spring 1979): 114–129.
- <sup>23</sup> Robert Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (May 2004): 207.
- <sup>24</sup> Asen, "Discourse Theory of Citizenship."
- <sup>25</sup> Campbell, *Man Cannot (Vol. I)*, 11.
- <sup>26</sup> Susan Zaeske, *Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
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- <sup>28</sup> Olson, *Book of Discipline*, 267–268.
- <sup>29</sup> Olson, *Book of Discipline*, 306.

<sup>30</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*.

<sup>31</sup> See Burke, *Dramatism and Development*; Trent, “Richard Nixon’s Methods”; Richard E. Crable, “Ike: Identification, Argument, and Paradoxical Appeal,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 63 (April 1977): 188–194; Virginia Holland, “Rhetorical Criticism: A Burkeian Method,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 39 (December 1953): 444–450; Cheney, “Rhetoric of Identification.”

<sup>32</sup> Trent, “Richard Nixon’s Methods.”

<sup>33</sup> Marjorie Swank Matthews, “One Is a Whole Number” sermon manuscript, October 1, 1982, General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church, 2-3.

<sup>34</sup> Matthews, “One,” 3.

<sup>35</sup> Matthews, “One,” 4. Throughout this chapter, I enclose ellipses in brackets when I make an omission in a quotation. Ellipses not enclosed in brackets are in the original and do not indicate an omission on my part.

<sup>36</sup> Matthews, “One,” 5.

<sup>37</sup> Marjorie Swank Matthews, “Chosen for Challenge” sermon manuscript, July 1984, General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Matthews, “Chosen for Challenge,” 3.

<sup>39</sup> Carol J. Jablonski, “Aggiornamento and the American Catholic Bishops: A Rhetoric of Institutional Continuity and Change,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (November 1989): 422.

<sup>40</sup> Nolan B. Harmon, *Ninety Years and Counting: Autobiography of Nolan B. Harmon* (Nashville: Upper Room, 1983).

<sup>41</sup> For more on the World Council of Churches, see Emerson Vermaat, *The World Council of Churches & Politics, 1975-1986* (New York: Freedom House, 1989); Willem Adolph Visser’t



Hooft, *The Genesis and Formation of the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982); Marlin VanElderen, *Introducing the World Council of Churches* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> Marjorie Swank Matthews, “Speech Given at World Council of Churches with Reference to the Presentation of Justice and Human Rights Paper by Policy Reference Committee 2” speech manuscript (Sixth Assembly, World Council of Churches, Vancouver, Canada, August 1983), General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church.

<sup>43</sup> Matthews, “Speech.”

<sup>44</sup> Matthews, “Speech.”

<sup>45</sup> Gayle Carlton Felton, *By Water and the Spirit: Making Connections for Identity and Ministry* (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1997).

<sup>46</sup> Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric.”

<sup>47</sup> Matthews, “Speech.”

<sup>48</sup> Marjorie Swank Matthews, “Celebration of Vatican II: Past, Present, and Future” sermon manuscript, 1985, General Commission on Archives and History of the United Methodist Church, 2.

<sup>49</sup> Matthews, “Celebration of Vatican II,” 4.

<sup>50</sup> Melissa J. Wilde et al., “Religious Economy or Organizational Field? Predicting Bishops’ Votes at the Second Vatican Council,” *American Sociological Review* 75 (August 2010): 586.

<sup>51</sup> Jablonski, “Aggiornamento.”

<sup>52</sup> Matthews, “Celebration of Vatican II,” 1.

<sup>53</sup> See Mountford, “On Gender”; Mountford, *Gendered Pulpit*.

<sup>54</sup> Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism*, 9.

<sup>55</sup> Matthews, “Celebration of Vatican II,” 1.

<sup>56</sup> Matthews, “Celebration of Vatican II,” 2.

<sup>57</sup> Tickle, *Great Emergence*.

<sup>58</sup> Matthews, “Celebration of Vatican II,” 4.

<sup>59</sup> Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric,” 143.

<sup>60</sup> Zagacki, “Constitutive Rhetoric Reconsidered.”

<sup>61</sup> Thomas M. Lessl, *Rhetorical Darwinism: Religion, Evolution, and the Scientific Identity* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2012).

<sup>62</sup> Natasha Stoyloff, “Inside Mel Gibson’s Church,” *People*, April 16, 2009, <http://tinyurl.com/ch8vzv>.

### Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup> As in Chapter 1, I typically refer to Kelly by her last name throughout this chapter. However, for the sake of clarity, I use her first name when I refer to her childhood or events that took place during her first marriage.

<sup>2</sup> For a succinct history of the formation of the United Methodist Church, see Chester Eugene Custer, *The United Methodist Primer*, rev. ed (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2001); for a detailed history on officially sanctioned segregation in the Methodist Church and predecessor denominations, see James S. Thomas, *Methodism’s Racial Dilemma: The Story of the Central Jurisdiction* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> For more on this terminology, see Kristin M. Sziarto, “Critical Geographies of Alliance Politics: Spatialities and Practices in Religion-Labor Alliances” (PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2007), especially 95-97.

<sup>4</sup> The United Methodist Church was founded in 1968 as a result of a merger between the Methodist Church and the much smaller Evangelical United Brethren Church; the Methodist Church was established in 1939, when the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church merged. Kelly's (United) Methodist roots go back four generations. For more on these histories, see Custer, *United Methodist Primer*; for more on Kelly's family and the history of the United Methodist Church, see Current, *Breaking Barriers*.

<sup>5</sup> Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*.

<sup>6</sup> Jean Miller Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient: A History of Women in American Methodism, 1760-1939* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Custer, *United Methodist Primer*.

<sup>8</sup> Custer, *United Methodist Primer*.

<sup>9</sup> Custer, *United Methodist Primer*, 27.

<sup>10</sup> Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*, 6.

<sup>11</sup> Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*.

<sup>12</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*.

<sup>13</sup> Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*, 158.

<sup>14</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*.

<sup>17</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, 4th ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 25.

<sup>18</sup> Kristy Maddux, *The Faithful Citizen: Popular Christian Media and Gendered Civic Identities* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Paul Wesley Chilcote, *Recapturing the Wesleys' Vision: An Introduction to the Faith of John and Charles Wesley* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Scott J. Jones, *United Methodist Doctrine: The Extreme Center* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> Olson, *Book of Discipline*, 47.

<sup>22</sup> Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*, 166.

<sup>23</sup> Diane Helene Miller, "‘From One Voice A Chorus’: Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s 1860 Address to the New York State Legislature," *Women’s Studies in Communication* 22, no. 2 (1999): 152–189.

<sup>24</sup> Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*.

<sup>25</sup> Burton, *Spiritual Literacy*, 171.

<sup>26</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*.

<sup>27</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*.

<sup>28</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*, 192.

<sup>29</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*, 196.

<sup>30</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*.

<sup>31</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*, 282.

<sup>32</sup> Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*.

<sup>33</sup> For more on the United Methodist Women, see Olson, *Book of Discipline*; Schmidt, *Grace Sufficient*.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, *Methodism’s Racial Dilemma*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*, 21.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*.

<sup>38</sup> For more on these histories, see Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*; for a helpful chart that illustrates the various mergers and splits in the history of the United Methodist Church and its predecessor denominations, see Custer, *United Methodist Primer*, 51.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*, 39.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*; Some southerners who supported the jurisdictional plan argued that the central issue at stake was not race, but local autonomy. For a summary of this perspective, see Harmon, *Ninety Years*.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*, 43.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas, *Methodism's Racial Dilemma*.

<sup>44</sup> Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege," in *Gender Basics: Feminist Perspectives on Women and Men*, ed. by Anne Minas (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1993), 30–38; Barbara Trepagnier, "Deconstructing Categories: The Exposure of Silent Racism," *Symbolic Interaction* 24, no. 2 (2001): 141–163.

<sup>45</sup> Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 517.

<sup>46</sup> Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 45.

<sup>47</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Gerald Frank Else (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967); Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by Terence Irwin, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Robert E. Terrill, “Irony, Silence, and Time: Frederick Douglass on the Fifth of July,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89 (August 2003): 216.

<sup>49</sup> Terrill, “Irony, Silence, and Time,” 221.

<sup>50</sup> Maegan Parker, “Ironic Openings: The Interpretive Challenge of the ‘Black Manifesto’,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94 (August 2008): 326.

<sup>51</sup> Parker, “Ironic Openings,” 327.

<sup>52</sup> Jeremiah 1:6, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV); Isaiah 6:5 (NRSV).

<sup>53</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 57–58.

<sup>54</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 57–58.

<sup>55</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 48.

<sup>56</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*.

<sup>57</sup> Casey, “First Female Public Speakers.”

<sup>58</sup> Lessl, “Priestly Voice.”

<sup>59</sup> All of the Hebrew prophets (and all of the radical rhetors) Darsey discusses are men, so Darsey’s use of the male generic here is technically accurate. Darsey really does mean “he.” My own strong preference is never to use the male generic, and part of the function of this chapter is to highlight the appropriateness of other pronouns in this sort of sentence.

<sup>60</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 22.

<sup>62</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*.

<sup>64</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*; See also, McGee, “In Search”; Charland, “Constitutive Rhetoric.”

<sup>65</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 111.

<sup>66</sup> Alan D. DeSantis, “An Amostic Prophecy: Fredrick Douglass’ The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro,” *Journal of Communication & Religion* 22 (March 1999): 65–92.

<sup>67</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*.

<sup>68</sup> DeSantis, “Amostic Prophecy.”

<sup>69</sup> Donald E. Gowan, “The Book of Amos: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible: General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, vol. 7, 12 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 337–431; DeSantis, “Amostic Prophecy.”

<sup>70</sup> Church law permits ordained elders in good standing to be elected to the episcopacy in any U.S. jurisdiction, but a vast majority of episcopal candidates are elected in their home jurisdictions. For more on this anomalous detail of Kelly’s election, see Current, *Breaking Barriers*; for more on the rules of episcopal elections, see Olson, *Book of Discipline*.

<sup>71</sup> Leontine T. C. Kelly, “The Church as a Catalyst for Change” sermon transcript (General Council on Ministries Issues Forum, September 9, 1994), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library Throughout this chapter, I cite sermons from the archives in this format: Following Kelly’s name and the given title of the sermon, an identification of the type of manuscript, the location and occasion for the sermon (when known), the date of the sermon (when know), and the name of the archive. In identifying types of manuscripts, I refer to a typewritten manuscript as “sermon manuscript,” a handwritten manuscript as “sermon manuscript (handwritten),” and a sermon typed from a tape as a “sermon transcript.” The sermon transcripts in the archives were often sent to Kelly with a request for her to fill in missing words and send the script back. I created typed manuscripts from the handwritten manuscripts for the

purposes of analysis to the best of my ability. In cases of irregular punctuation--likely a delivery aid, as in the use of two periods with a space between to signal a pause--I have streamlined quotations for the sake of parsimony. Likewise, I avoid the use of brackets and “[sic]” in my editing because so many of the manuscripts were created on typewriters without the benefit of word processing software. The pedantry of correcting every error made on a typewriter would only serve to obfuscate, so I have chosen to err on the side of clarity. Finally, where Kelly used underlining for emphasis or in using Latin terms, I use Italics to maintain consistency with current convention.

<sup>72</sup> In 1972, at the beginning of Kelly’s seminary career, only 4.7 percent of mainline Protestant seminary students were women. By 1992, women made up more than one-quarter of all mainline Protestant seminary students. Barbara Brown Zickmund, “Foreword,” in *The Stained-Glass Ceiling: Churches and Their Women Pastors*, by Sally B. Purvis (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

<sup>73</sup> Paul Delaney, “Blacks’ Anger Rising in South Boston as Violence Over Schools Spreads,” *New York Times*, May 2, 1976; B. Drummond Ayers Jr., “Segregation Forces Work Behind Scenes in the South,” *New York Times*, September 8, 1975; B. Drummond Ayers Jr., “The State of Southern Schools 19 Years After Little Rock: Where Desegregation All Began,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1975.

<sup>74</sup> John J. O’Connor, “TV: ‘Scottsboro Boys,’ Quality Show: Drama Recounts Trial of 9 Blacks in 30’s,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1976; Thomas A. Johnson, “Last of Scottsboro 9 Is Pardoned; He Draws a Lesson for Everybody,” *New York Times*, October 26, 1976.

<sup>75</sup> Cedric Larson, “Patriotism in Carmine: 162 Years of July 4th Oratory,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 26 (February 1940): 12–25; Howard Martin, “The Fourth of July Oration,” *Quarterly*



*Journal of Speech* 44 (December 1958): 393; for discussions of humorous parodies of the Independence Day Oration genre, see Robert P. Falk, “An Early Parody of the Fourth-of-July Oration,” *Western Speech* 15 (March 1951): 58–59.

<sup>76</sup> DeSantis, “Amostic Prophecy,” 66.

<sup>77</sup> DeSantis, “Amostic Prophecy”; Terrill, “Irony, Silence, and Time.”

<sup>78</sup> Jeffery Strickland, “African-American Public Rituals on the Fourth of July and Citizenship in South Carolina During Reconstruction,” *Citizenship Studies* 10 (February 2006): 93–115.

<sup>79</sup> Leontine T. C. Kelly, “The Bicentennial: An Issue for Black Americans” sermon manuscript (Sermon for Class: Preaching on Contemporary Issues, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, VA, May 11, 1976), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library, 3.

<sup>80</sup> Drew D. Hansen, *The Dream: Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Speech That Inspired a Nation* (New York: Ecco, 2003).

<sup>81</sup> James Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001).

<sup>82</sup> Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*.

<sup>83</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 76.

<sup>84</sup> Amos 5:6-7 (NRSV).

<sup>85</sup> Gowan, “Book of Amos,” 388.

<sup>86</sup> Revelation 8:10-11 reads, “Then the third angel sounded: And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. The name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter” (New King James Version).

<sup>87</sup> Kelly, “Bicentennial,” 3.

<sup>88</sup> Amos 5:4 (NRSV).

<sup>89</sup> Gowan, “Book of Amos,” 387.

<sup>90</sup> Parker, “Ironic Openings.”

<sup>91</sup> For appearances in sermons, see Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Entitled and Empowered: A Series of Sermons Based on the Bicentennial Theme: Methodism: For Two Centuries Proclaiming Grace and Freedom” sermon manuscript, 1984, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library; Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Sermon 1” sermon manuscript (Protestant Hour [radio program], n.d.), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library; Leontine T. C. Kelly, “WTM Welcome Back Luncheon” sermon transcript (Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, GA, September 6, 2000), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library; Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Child of God: A Faith Concept for Black Children” sermon manuscript (National Black Psychiatrists Meeting, San Francisco, CA, January 24, 1987), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library; for appearances in writings by and about Kelly, see Kelly, “Born to Preach”; Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Foreword,” in *The Loyal Opposition: Struggling with the Church on Homosexuality*, ed. by Tex Sample and Amy E. DeLong (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000); Current, *Breaking Barriers*.

<sup>92</sup> For more on the Christmas Conference, see Custer, *United Methodist Primer*.

<sup>93</sup> Kelly, “Entitled and Empowered,” 2.

<sup>94</sup> Kelly, “Entitled and Empowered,” 4.

<sup>95</sup> Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 517.

<sup>96</sup> Kelly, “Entitled and Empowered,” 4.

<sup>97</sup> Amos 5:23-24, NRSV.

<sup>98</sup> For more on the World Methodist Conference, see a news article about its most recent meeting: Holley Galen, “Methodist Pastors Travel to South Africa,” *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal* (Tupelo, MS, August 24, 2011).

<sup>99</sup> Neville Richardson, “Apartheid, Heresy and the Church in South Africa,” *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 14 (April 1986): 5.

<sup>100</sup> Joe Hale, *Proceedings of the Fifteenth World Methodist Conference: Nairobi, Kenya July 23-29, 1986* (Lake Junaluska, NC: World Methodist Council, 1987), 284.

<sup>101</sup> Hale, *Proceedings*.

<sup>102</sup> Leontine T. C. Kelly, “Called to Make a Difference” sermon manuscript (World Methodist Conference, Nairobi, Kenya, July 27, 1986), Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary Library, 7-8 (emphasis in the original).

<sup>103</sup> For more on these common excuses, see Mary R. Jackman and Marie Crane, “‘Some of My Best Friends Are Black...’: Interracial Friendship and Whites’ Racial Attitudes,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (1986): 459–486.

<sup>104</sup> Kelly, “Called,” 4.

<sup>105</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*.

<sup>106</sup> For a print iteration of this justification, see Kelly, “Born to Preach.”

<sup>107</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*, 22.

<sup>108</sup> Gowan, “Book of Amos.”

<sup>109</sup> DeSantis, “Amostic Prophecy,” 66.

<sup>110</sup> Parker, “Ironic Openings.”

<sup>111</sup> Darsey, *Prophetic Tradition*.

<sup>112</sup> Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 517.

## Chapter 4

<sup>1</sup> Gail Collins, *When Everything Changed: The Amazing Journey of American Women, from 1960 to the Present* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009), 393.

<sup>2</sup> Ron Nief and Tom McBride, “The Mindset List: 2016 List,” 2012, <http://www.beloit.edu/mindset/2016/>.

<sup>3</sup> The Archives of the Episcopal Church, *Constitution & Canons*.

<sup>4</sup> Nicole Seiferth, “GC Makes History,” *Convention Daily*, June 19, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Mike Barwell, “Frank Griswold of Chicago Elected 25th Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church,” *Episcopal News Service*, August 6, 1997, [http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress\\_release.pl?pr\\_number=97-1902](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=97-1902); Thomas L. Ehrich, “Browning Elected 24th Presiding Bishop,” *Episcopal News Service*, September 19, 1985, [http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress\\_release.pl?pr\\_number=85177](http://www.episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/ENS/ENSpress_release.pl?pr_number=85177); The Archives of the Episcopal Church, *Journal of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America--Otherwise Known as the Episcopal Church* (New York: Church Publishing Incorporated, 1973).

<sup>6</sup> Pat McCaughan, “Church Elects 26th Presiding Bishop,” *Convention Daily*, June 19, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Neela Banerjee, “For an Episcopal Pioneer, the Challenge Is to Unite,” *The New York Times*, June 21, 2006; Cathy Lynn Grossman, “New Episcopal Leader Brings ‘Open Heart’: Her ‘Open Mind’ Discomforts Some,” *USA Today*, June 19, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Burke, “From the Depths,” 42.

<sup>9</sup> “Jefferts Schori Urges Restraint,” *Christian Century*, March 20, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Neela Banerjee, “Woman Is Named Episcopal Leader,” *The New York Times*, June 18, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Grossman, “New Episcopal Leader.”

<sup>12</sup> Banerjee, “For an Episcopal Pioneer.”

<sup>13</sup> Banerjee, “Woman Is Named,” A1. Bishop Duncan has since left the Episcopal Church and now serves as Archbishop of the conservative Anglican Church in North America.

<sup>14</sup> Banerjee, “Woman is Named.”

<sup>15</sup> Grossman, “New Episcopal Leader,” 5D.

<sup>16</sup> Jeff Chu, “10 Questions for Katharine Jefferts Schori,” *Time*, July 17, 2006, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Burke, “From the Depths.”

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Burke, “Jefferts Schori Woos Allies Among Anglicans Abroad,” *Christian Century* 127, no. 19 (2010): 17; “Jefferts Schori Urges Restraint”; Religion News Service, “Episcopal Church Held to ‘Double Standard,’ Says Jefferts Schori,” *Christian Century* 125, no. 2 (2008): 15.

<sup>19</sup> Chu, “10 Questions,” 6.

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History*, 2nd ed. (Los Altos, CA: Hermes Publications, 1959), 80.

<sup>21</sup> J. David Cisneros, “Latina/os and Party Politics in the California Campaign Against Bilingual Education: A Case Study in Argument from Transcendence,” *Argumentation & Advocacy* 45 (2009): 120.

<sup>22</sup> Jasinski, *Sourcebook on Rhetoric*.

<sup>23</sup> Cisneros, “Latina/os and Party Politics,” 120.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen L. Carter, *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 35.

<sup>25</sup> Jennifer Emerling Bone, Cindy L. Griffin, and T. M. Linda Scholz, “Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric: Invitational Rhetoric and a Move Toward Civility,” *Western Journal of Communication* 72 (October 2008): 457.

<sup>26</sup> Nancy Kidd, “Message from the Executive Director,” *Spectra*, September 2011, 1.

<sup>27</sup>See Joshua Gunn and John Louis Lucaites, “The Contest of Faculties: On Discerning the Politics of Social Engagement in the Academy,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96 (November 2010): 404–412; Anna M. Young, Adria Battaglia, and Dana L. Cloud, “(UN)Disciplining the Scholar Activist: Policing the Boundaries of Political Engagement,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 96 (November 2010): 427–435; Betsy Bach, “Engage All Voices,” *Spectra*, December 2009.

<sup>28</sup> Nina M. Lozano-Reich and Dana L. Cloud, “The Uncivil Tongue: Invitational Rhetoric and the Problem of Inequality,” *Western Journal of Communication* 73 (April 2009): 223.

<sup>29</sup> Lozano-Reich and Cloud, “Uncivil Tongue,” 224.

<sup>30</sup> Young, Battaglia, and Cloud, “(UN)Disciplining,” 430.

<sup>31</sup> CBS News, “Praying for Supreme Court Shake Up,” *CBS News*, May 7, 2009, [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-250\\_162-563247.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-250_162-563247.html).

<sup>32</sup> Brian Ross, “Obama’s Pastor: God Damn America,” *ABC News*, March 13, 2008, <http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/DemocraticDebate/story?id=4443788&page=1>.

<sup>33</sup> Martin Luther King, *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches That Changed the World*, ed. by James Melvin Washington (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 138–139.

<sup>34</sup> The Archives of the Episcopal Church, *Constitution & Canons*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> I cite the individual sermons I quote and provide links for them, but the general archive is available at <http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/presiding-bishop-sermons-and-statements>.

<sup>36</sup> Chu, “10 Questions,” 6.

<sup>37</sup> Gail Theus Fairhurst and Robert A. Sarr, *The Art of Framing: Managing the Language of Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996), 50.

<sup>38</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Peace and Justice Through the Empowerment of Women: Margaret Parker Memorial Lecture Series” (Los Angeles, CA, December 6, 2008), [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_103670\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_103670_ENG_HTML.htm).

<sup>39</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Peace and Justice.”

<sup>40</sup> Gal. 3:28 (New Revised Standard Version).

<sup>41</sup> Matt. 19:30 (NRSV).

<sup>42</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Sermon for Epiphany 8, Year A: St. Paul’s, Richmond, VA” (Richmond, VA, February 27, 2011), [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_127612\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_127612_ENG_HTML.htm).

<sup>43</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Sermon for Epiphany 8.”

<sup>44</sup> Lloyd F. Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation,” *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1, no. 1 (1968): 1–14.

<sup>45</sup> Robert R. Ulmer and Timothy L. Sellnow, “Strategic Ambiguity and the Ethic of Significant Choice in the Tobacco Industry’s Crisis,” *Communication Studies* 48, no. 3 (1997): 215.

<sup>46</sup> Sam Hodges, “Anglicans Flock to D-FW for First Meeting of New Faction Conservative Group Hopes Historic Assembly Will Lead to Recognition,” *The Dallas Morning News*, June 22, 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Presiding Bishop’s Opening Remarks for Churchwide Webcast: Trinity Church, Wall Street, New York City, 10 A.M.” (New York City, NY, February 28, 2007), [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_82918\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_82918_ENG_HTML.htm).

<sup>48</sup> “Anglicans Meet, Clash Over Gay Rights,” *Facts on File World News Digest*, March 1, 2007.

<sup>49</sup> Kevin Eckstrom, “Anglicans Reject Move to ‘Separate’ U.S. Church,” *States News Service*, July 27, 2010.

<sup>50</sup> “Bishop: Temper Support for Gays; Episcopal Leader Says ‘View Hasn’t Changed’ but Patience Is Needed,” *Richmond Times Dispatch*, March 1, 2007, A-4.

<sup>51</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Presiding Bishop’s Opening Remarks.”

<sup>52</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Chrism Mass with Delaware Clergy,” April 7, 2009, [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_106773\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_106773_ENG_HTML.htm).

<sup>53</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Presiding Bishop’s Opening Remarks.”

<sup>54</sup> Robert S. Littlefield and Andrea M. Quenette, “Crisis Leadership and Hurricane Katrina: The Portrayal of Authority by the Media in Natural Disasters,” *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 35 (February 2007): 30; Matthew W. Seeger, Timothy L. Sellnow, and Robert R. Ulmer, *Communication and Organizational Crisis* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2003).

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<sup>58</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Prayer Service for Haiti: Strength Through Unity” (Washington, DC, January 17, 2010), [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_118761\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_118761_ENG_HTML.htm).



<sup>59</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Prayer Service for Haiti.”

<sup>60</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Sermon at St. Andrew and Holy Communion, South Orange, NJ: The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” (South Orange, NJ, January 18, 2010), [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_118526\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_118526_ENG_HTML.htm).

<sup>61</sup> For more on the development of King’s rhetoric, see James H. Cone, *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

<sup>62</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Sermon at St. Andrew.”

<sup>63</sup> Young, Battaglia, and Cloud, “(UN)Disciplining,” 429.

<sup>64</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Sermon for Oklahoma IV Conference” (Sewanee, TN, May 30, 2010), [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_122584\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_122584_ENG_HTML.htm).

<sup>65</sup> Katharine Jefferts Schori, “Will You Seek and Serve Christ in All Persons?: St. Christopher’s, Grand Blanc, Michigan” (Grand Blanc, MI, October 16, 2010), [http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703\\_125526\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://archive.episcopalchurch.org/78703_125526_ENG_HTML.htm) (emphasis in the original).

<sup>66</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Will You Seek.”

<sup>67</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Christ Mass.”

<sup>68</sup> Jefferts Schori, “Presiding Bishop’s Opening Remarks.”

<sup>69</sup> Lozano-Reich and Cloud, “Uncivil Tongue,” 221.

<sup>70</sup> Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives*, 315.

<sup>71</sup> Carrie Doehring, “Civility in the Family,” in *Civility*, ed. by Leroy S. Rouner (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 174.

## Chapter 5

<sup>1</sup> Helen Bruch Pearson, *Do What You Have the Power to Do: Studies of Six New Testament Women* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 1992), 153.

<sup>2</sup> Clark, "Exploration of Generic Aspects."

<sup>3</sup> Jefferts Schori, "Sermon at Opening Eucharist."

<sup>4</sup> Casey, "First Female Public Speakers"; Hogan, "Negotiating Personhood"; Campbell, *Man Cannot (Vol. I)*; Campbell, "Femininity and Feminism."

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, "Called", 4.

<sup>6</sup> Jefferts Schori, "Peace and Justice."

<sup>7</sup> See especially Rader, "Women Shaping"; Troxell, "Honoring One Another"; Kelly, "Marjorie Swank Matthews"; Craig, *Leading Women*; Gilbert, "Bishop Leontine Kelly Dies."

<sup>8</sup> Buzzanell, "Gaining a Voice."

<sup>9</sup> Todd L. Pittinsky, Laura M. Bacon, and Brian Welle, "The Great Women Theory of Leadership? Perils of Positive Stereotypes and Precarious Pedestals," in *Women and Leadership: The State of Play and Strategies for Change*, ed. by Barbara Kellerman and Deborah L. Rhode (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007), 93–125.

<sup>10</sup> Troxell, "Honoring One Another," 304.

<sup>11</sup> Jefferts Schori, "Chrism Mass."

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., James Arnt Aune, "Lincoln and the American Sublime," *Communication Reports* 1 (Winter 1988): 14–19.

<sup>13</sup> Kelly, "Entitled and Empowered", 2.

<sup>14</sup> Maddux, *Faithful Citizen*; Tickle, *Great Emergence*.

<sup>15</sup> Olson, *Book of Discipline*.

<sup>16</sup> Chu, “10 Questions.”

<sup>17</sup> James 2:15-17, New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

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