

Sexual abuse:

sin, guilt and shame in the context of pastoral care in the parish

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Reliable surveys suggest that between 20 and 30 per cent of women have been sexually abused before the age of sixteen. These figures do not include those women abused in later teenage years or adult life, or adult women who have been the victims of domestic violence or sexual harassment. About 10 per cent of men have been sexually abused in childhood.¹ It is clear from these statistics that a significant proportion of any adult worshipping congregation has suffered some form of sexual abuse at some stage in their lives. The Church's concern for the survivors of sexual abuse, then, is much greater than its responsibility for those who were abused by clergy or church workers; the reality is that the most serious abuse and sexual violence has usually been at the hands of fathers, step-fathers or other relatives or close family friends. Those abused by clergy and other church workers are a relatively small proportion of the total of abused people who sit in church pews Sunday by Sunday. The specific spiritual, theological and pastoral needs of all abused people have been largely overlooked, largely through ignorance both of those needs and of the important theological debate over the nature of sin, shame and guilt of the past fifty years.

The recent sexual abuse crisis in the churches has alerted church leaders at all levels to the gravity of sexual abuse. Until only a decade or so ago, episodes of sexual abuse committed by clergy or church workers were usually regarded by their superiors as little more than regrettable isolated misdemeanours. In some instances, leaders refused to believe complainants, insisting the accused was blameless. Where church leaders were not in denial, too often they excused at least some of the wrongdoing on the basis of a supposed culpability on the part of the victim, particularly where a young woman was involved, even if she was below the legal age of consent at the time of her abuse. The most serious outcome leaders recognized in sexual abuse was potential embarrassment to the Church, resulting in the common remedy of moving culprits to other postings.

Now, following the widespread disclosure of the extent and seriousness of sexual abuse, the churches are no longer in any doubt that it constitutes grave sin. The sin involved is multi-layered, involving more than sexual sin. It is nothing less than an assault by the powerful against the vulnerable, and most culpable when the victims are children. Jesus reserved his strictest condemnation for those who harmed children (Matthew 18:5-6).² When clergy are involved, the sin is arguably even worse because of their spiritual standing in relation to the victim; their abuse has been labelled as 'soul stealing'.

All too often, the assumption is that any shame and guilt experienced from the sin of sexual abuse is borne by the perpetrators and those who wrongly excused them in the past. But that ignores the extent of the psychological and spiritual damage done to the victims. There is still little awareness that most victims suffer persisting irrational feelings of personal guilt and shame as the result of their abuse, to a greater or lesser extent. Guilt and shame are closely-linked concepts but are not the same. *Guilt* derives its feelings from wrongdoing, what we have done or said; *shame* is about who we are. I *feel* guilty, but I *am* my shame.³

In his important study of child sexual abuse in relation to the churches, Prof. Patrick Parkinson has offered a valuable summary of the guilt and shame sexual abuse victims experience.⁴ Guilt, he writes, is a 'common sequel of sexual abuse in childhood'.⁵ Victims feel guilty because they wrongly believe they were somehow responsible for what happened to them - because they were bad and deserved to be punished in this way, or because they must have been sexually attractive and so 'invited' the abuse. Or they might feel guilty if they experienced arousal during the episode, or did not resist sufficiently, or accepted inducements to participate. These feelings of guilt can be so profound that they can lead the victim to feel 'utterly bad', with these feelings becoming 'deeply entrenched aspects of his or her self-identity'.⁶ The feelings 'stubbornly withstand the voices of reason within and without'.⁷ Parkinson points out that imagining some level of responsibility can be more manageable for a victim than accepting that they were utterly powerless, and so in danger of further abuse.

Together with guilt, many victims suffer a persistent sense of 'toxic shame'. Parkinson notes that this is perhaps 'the ultimate consequence of many of the other effects'.⁸ Their sense of having no value leads them to 'a deep sense of being ashamed of who they are'.⁹ The victim internalises and makes her or his own the shame that the perpetrator should feel. Shame, Parkinson writes, 'is one of the most destructive feelings associated with sexual abuse'.¹⁰ Victims feel 'chronically dirty', leading to such low self-esteem that many victims hate themselves.¹¹

The churches can minister to these feelings experienced by parishioners through sensitive individual pastoral care. But that is not always the case. Not all clergy and pastoral workers are sufficiently skilled in this area to provide the level of care that is required where abuse is acknowledged and care sought. Many people, however, have rarely if ever spoken of their abuse, and where they have admitted it, it has most likely been to a secular therapist or doctor rather than to a priest. Only the most perceptive clergy will suspect a parishioner might have been abused if they do not volunteer the information. This means that churches need to re-evaluate the theological and spiritual messages that parishioners receive as they worship, with a view both to ministering generally to unspoken needs and to ensuring that damaged people are not confronted by inadvertent reinforcement of their negative feelings.

As long ago as 1960, a pioneer woman theologian identified the dangers of some accepted theological views for people suffering from low self-esteem. Valerie Saiving was concerned about the impact on women of a theology of sin devised principally from male experience. Her groundbreaking study led to an intense debate about a gendered approach to sin that continues still. In her article, 'The Human Situation: A Feminine View',¹² Saiving made what was at the time an astonishing suggestion: that gender had some bearing on theological formulation.

She pointed out that theology (to that time) had been almost entirely written by men, and thus did not necessarily reflect the spiritual experience of the other half of the human race, women.¹³ In some detail, she discussed the fundamental differences between male and female development, and the impact of these on what she described as the 'hypermasculine culture' of the modern era (that is, from the Renaissance and Reformation to the mid-20th century).¹⁴ This period 'emphasized, encouraged, and set free precisely those aspects of human nature which are peculiarly significant to men', placing the highest value on external achievement, the creation of structures of 'matter

and meaning', on self-differentiation and 'the separation of man from nature', she wrote.¹⁵ By its emphasis on the external world of business and politics, this had the effect of devaluing relationships, the reproductive roles of women, and women's 'world' of home and family.¹⁶ Contemporary theology – in particular the writings of Anders Nygren and Reinhold Niebuhr – which identified sin with 'pride, will-to-power, exploitation [and] self-assertiveness' was a response to the situation of the modern male, she argued.¹⁷ This theology was not, however, 'adequate to the universal human situation'.¹⁸

Certainly, it had something to say to those modern women who had transcended the 'boundaries of a purely feminine identity', she agreed.¹⁹ However, these women did not necessarily want to reject their feminine sexual identity; they wanted to be 'both women *and* [her emphasis] full human beings'.²⁰ Such women learnt that though they rejoiced in their conjugal and maternal role, it was not 'the whole meaning of life': 'The moments, hours and days of self-giving must be balanced by moments, hours and days of withdrawal into, and enrichment of, her individual selfhood if she is to remain a whole person'.²¹ If a woman gave too much of herself, she could become 'merely an emptiness, almost a zero, without value to herself, to her fellow men [sic], or, perhaps, even to God'.²²

But women who saw themselves as full human beings did not represent all women. The 'basic feminine character structure' was conditioned to reject a desire for true selfhood. The specifically feminine forms of sin allied to this character structure – "feminine" not because they are confined to women or because women are incapable of sinning in other ways but because they are outgrowths of the basic feminine character structure' – could never be 'encompassed by such terms as "pride" and "will-to-power"', she argued.²³

Rather, 'feminine' sins were characterised by 'triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness; lack of an organising centre or focus; dependence on others for one's own self-definition; tolerance at the expense of standards of excellence; inability to respect the boundaries of privacy; sentimentality, gossipy sociability, and mistrust of reason – *in short, underdevelopment or negation of the self* [my emphasis]'.²⁴ Almost fifty years later and despite the significant changes to women's lives over that time, Saiving's catalogue of 'feminine' sins is still valid, particularly among older women. Those whose occupation is still classified as 'home duties', and who have had limited study or career options, are most likely to fall into this category. They conform to the pattern Saiving identified when she argued that these 'sins' developed in women who had been brought up to undervalue their femininity, rather than in women who confidently and joyfully treasured their feminine identity.²⁵

The changes in opportunities open to women over the past half century have not been uniform. The churches in particular have lagged well behind in this area. This is not the place to engage the debate about the ordination of women, but it is appropriate to note that that debate, which has lasted from the early 1970s until the present in Australia, has in some places served to reinforce notions that women are second class. That might not have been the intention of those who have argued sincerely from a theological perspective that women's role in church and family is one of submission to men, but the implicit message that many church women have imbibed is that theirs is a lesser status to men. Even where women are ordained, their example of female leadership has not always translated into parish life, particularly in parishes where the ministry of women clergy has

not been experienced or where male clergy have exercised an older style ‘father knows best’ control. Old habits die hard and paradigms can take several generations to shift. Female churchgoers, particularly in the older age bracket, are still most likely to exercise their ministry in traditional female roles as parish caterers, flower arrangers and the like, and to experience their primary parish role as one of service to the male leadership. They are still likely to undervalue their femininity.

Saiving argued that she did not wish to add to the burden of guilt ‘heaped upon women – by themselves as well as by men – for centuries’.²⁶ Rather, she wanted to awaken theologians to these differences, and to point out that theology, ‘to the extent that it has defined the human condition on the basis of masculine experience, continues to speak of such desires [that is, the desire for a good self-identity] as sin or temptation to sin’.²⁷ She wanted to seek their assistance in encouraging women to see themselves as individuals in their own right, entitled to strive for personal autonomy, to seek ‘a room of their own’, as Virginia Woolf put it.²⁸ While feminist theologians have presented fresh theological insights that encourage a new vision of the feminine, as will be discussed below, these have not yet penetrated the substratum of worship, teaching and preaching in the average Anglican parish.

Saiving’s thesis on the nature of feminine sin was supported and further developed twenty years later by Judith Plaskow.²⁹ Later feminist theologians dismissed the theory entirely, while others noted that the ‘feminine sin’ it identified was not a universal feminine trait, but rather one confined to a particular cultural construction of femininity. It was rejected, for instance, by some black female American theological students on the basis that it did not represent their experience as women.³⁰ It should be noted, however, that Saiving herself confined her theory to Western women of the modern era, and was in any case speaking out of reaction to theological assumptions made by Western males. For all that a robust debate about sin and gender developed out of Saiving’s original proposition among feminist and other theologians, Saiving’s work, though almost fifty years old, retains a refreshing corrective to traditional approaches still in wide use. Coming so early in the development of feminist theological critique, it is free of the more intensely ideological stances that were to develop in relation to a theology of sin, including some suggestions that women did not sin at all!³¹ Its core thesis – that the (male) sin of pride in achievement is not usually the primary sin of women – is recognised by feminist theologians as still having validity in the 21st century, despite half a century of growing male/female equality.³²

Sadly, Saiving’s work and the debate it ignited is unknown to most male and many female clergy, who still preach and teach out of the masculine theological paradigm she sought to correct. For instance, it is still common for clergy, usually male, to use spiritual resources that are positively dangerous for people with low esteem. An anecdote demonstrates this point. The ‘Litany of Humility’, a prayer popularised when it was included in a 1963 Jesuit prayer book, is often handed out at retreats. It was written by Cardinal Merry Del Val (1865 -1930), a man whose glittering Church career singled him out at times as a possible Pope. The prayer begins:

O Jesus, meek and humble of heart, Hear me.
From the desire of being esteemed, Deliver me, O Jesus.
From the desire of being loved, Deliver me, O Jesus.

From the desire of being extolled, Deliver me, O Jesus.
From the desire of being honored, Deliver me, O Jesus.
From the desire of being praised, Deliver me, O Jesus.
From the desire of being preferred to others, Deliver me, O Jesus.
From the desire of being consulted, Deliver me, O Jesus.
From the desire of being approved, Deliver me, O Jesus...

A woman I know – I will call her Joan - was given a copy of this prayer when she attended a retreat in recent years, a retreat attended in the main by older women. Now retired, the survivor of a difficult marriage who has raised her children mostly alone, she struggles financially on limited means. She lives with her frail, elderly father, giving him her constant care and attention. The one day a week she has off from this all-consuming duty, she spends caring for her preschool grandchildren. There is little joy in her life except for her wonderful gift of music, a gift which is at last being properly utilised and appreciated in her parish church. But instead of delighting in the praise and gratitude now coming her way, Joan is distressed by it. The words of the Cardinal's prayer rebuke her. She is ashamed of the rare experience of elation she feels when someone thanks her or asks for her opinion.

Women of later middle-age and above, brought up under the old cultural pattern that required women to be selfless servants of others' needs, rarely need the kind of self-abnegation the prayer extols. Unlike the Cardinal, they are not self-confident leaders, publicly honoured by Church and community alike, and so used to praise and preferment that they can ask the Lord to deliver them from desiring it! Many of them, found in significant numbers in the pews of our parishes, are women like Joan whose whole lives have been spent in service to others – first, to husbands and small children, and now to aged parents and grandchildren. Pulpit (and retreat) exhortations to strive for humility can be nothing short of spiritually dangerous for people whose cultural conditioning and harsh life experience has left them with little self-esteem. They do not need their innate sense of unworthiness and shame reinforced in church. More, devout women like Joan have been taught to believe that their lives of complete self-denial are what is required of them as Christians. As American feminist theologian, Brita L. Gill-Austern, has put it, 'the equation of love with self-sacrifice, self-denial, and self-abnegation in Christian theology is dangerous to women's psychological, spiritual and physical health, and it is contrary to the real aim of Christian love'.³³

This issue has relevance for large numbers of parishioners in Anglican churches, where older women comprise up to two-thirds of worshippers. For many of these women, the classical Protestant root paradigm for sin as pride is both false and damaging. But it also has much to say to both women and men who have been abused, because the issue Saiving is ultimately concerned with is low self-esteem. As we have seen, low self-esteem is a pervasive and damaging effect of sexual abuse. This is akin to the 'feminine sin' of self-abnegation identified by Saiving, but where abuse is concerned, it is not connected entirely or at all to gender conditioning, but to the victims' absorption of the 'unworthy' identity constructed for them at a time of great vulnerability by those who abused them.

Numerous theologians over the past half century have identified the spiritual dangers of couching Christian teaching, preaching and worship in the male-oriented,

hierarchical framework that underlies Cardinal Del Val's prayer. But it is not easy to modify, given it is the model that has historically dominated Western Christendom and is so ingrained in cultural memory. The 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*, for example, is based in the thoughtforms of early modern England, where obedience to the Sovereign and submission to one's superiors were important themes for a state church. The prevalent images of God as an almighty king and governor reinforce a largely feudal worldview. The Prayer of Humble Access – still to be found in modern prayer books – is a good example: 'we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table' echoes the demeanour of a supplicant before a feudal lord. This is not to dismiss the theological principle of our total reliance on God's goodness that underlies this prayer, but it needs restating in a way that does not suggest 'worm theology'. Despite some token attempts at introducing alternative biblical metaphors in modern prayer books, the patriarchal metaphors have remained dominant.

Over the years since Saiving wrote, there has been vigorous discussion in the academy about these issues. At the extremes, some feminists such as Mary Daly and Daphne Hampson – originally devout Christians - have decided that Christianity and the Bible are both irredeemably patriarchal. They have declared themselves to be 'post Christian'.³⁴

More nuanced discussions of God imagery have emerged more recently, however. An example of this can be found in the work of English theologian Janet Martin Soskice. She explores beneath superficial concepts of inclusive language to present an interpretation of the 'Father' metaphor that is welcoming and generous to women and people of low self-esteem. She argues that what is objectionable in the use of Father terminology 'is not simply that God is styled as male in the tradition, but that the "divine male" is styled as one who is powerful, dominant, and implacable'.³⁵ She continues: 'This is disturbing not just in its subordination of women, but in giving divine justification to a hierarchical reading of the world conceived in the binaries of powerful/powerless, superior/inferior, active/passive, male/female'.³⁶

Soskice concludes that Jesus' use of the term Father for God was of a totally different order. Central to his eschatology was the intimate 'Abba' title for God, which turned the symbol from domination to 'God with us': Jesus' use of 'Abba' was central to his Good News, that God was not 'distant, aloof, not anti-human, not angry, sullen and withdrawn' but 'very near'.³⁷ This welcoming, forgiving, embracing father – modelled by the father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) – becomes, in the new creation inaugurated by Jesus' Resurrection, 'our' Father as well. Soskice reminds us that in his appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden (John 20:17), Jesus commissions her to proclaim that he is ascending 'to my Father *and your Father*' (my emphasis). At the Last Supper, the disciples had been named as friends and not slaves; now they are told that they are the brothers and sisters of Jesus, because they share the same parent. So the Father Jesus called 'Abba' is also 'Abba' to his disciples. Mary's commission is to testify not just to the Resurrection, but to 'a new relationship of kinship now established among the followers of Jesus'.³⁸

This God as Father image is one that needs much greater emphasis in Christian teaching and liturgy. Janet Morley has written a formal collect which captures this image powerfully:

God our Father
you disarm our judgement
with your outrageous mercy;
and the punishment we seek
you turn to celebration.
Lift our self-loathing,
and embrace our stubbornness,
that we too may show such fathering
to an embittered world,
through Jesus Christ, Amen.³⁹

Likewise, she speaks of Jesus as mother in a way that reflects themes from medieval theologians such as St Anselm of Canterbury and the mystic Julian of Norwich:

Christ our true mother
you have carried us within you,
laboured with us
and brought us forth to bliss.
Enclose us in your care,
that in stumbling we may not fall,
nor be overcome by evil,
but know that all shall be well. Amen⁴⁰

Both of these prayers have much to offer the abused and people of low self-esteem alike, as well as providing powerful fresh images for congregational prayer in general. Many more collects and prayers in this vein are needed in formal Anglican liturgy. Women of all ages and most men would surely benefit from preaching, prayers and liturgy that celebrated their God-given identity and self-hood, their gifts and joys, and that helped them build a robust self-esteem from which they could praise and serve God with their whole hearts. In this way, the Church could contribute powerfully to the redemption of people damaged by all forms of abuse.

Liturgy and preaching, then, need to be sensitised to the damage that can inadvertently be done. Theological educators need to be alert to these gender-and-abuse linked dynamics in their instruction to ordinands about what constitutes sin and temptation to sin. Clergy, and specially male clergy given that most sexual abuse and domestic violence is perpetrated by males, need to be particularly sensitive. They need to be careful when they preach about pride and humility, obviously, but they also need to consider their whole demeanour as people of authority.

Clergy also need to be alert to the many conflicting messages that sexual abuse survivors can receive in church. A teaching emphasis on sexual purity, for instance, can provoke feelings of being 'dirty' because of their violation, while the expectation that all churchgoers will be morally upright can make them feel forever marginalised.⁴¹ These emphases make them reluctant to tell their story, or to seek a form of ritual cleansing. So they feel they should not even approach the throne of grace. They can also have problems with liturgical actions that involve touch and intimacy, such the greeting of peace, healing ministry and even receiving Holy Communion.

Christian teaching on forgiveness can also be a deeply troubling issue for the victims of sexual abuse.⁴² If they are worshipping Christians, they are well aware of Christ's teaching on the subject. In return for God's free gift of forgiveness for their sins, they must forgive others: 'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'. Taken to its logical conclusion, this seems to mean that unless they forgive their abusers, they cannot receive God's forgiveness for their own failings. Yet forgiving those who have violated them so profoundly is far from easy. Given their deep sense of unworthiness, guilt and shame as a result of the abuse, the judgement that they cannot be forgiven unless they first forgive is particularly painful and all too often exacerbates their psychological and spiritual suffering. Even those who are not religious may have imbibed the Christian expectation through the culture. And both Christians and non-Christians alike usually assume that forgiveness also involves forgetting – an unbiblical concept. This view is reinforced by pressure from perpetrators, family members or even some clergy, who want victims to forgive and forget as a means of covering up the abuse, avoiding its consequences, limiting damage done to family or other relationships, or enabling everyone to 'move on'.

Parkinson points out that forgetting is something abuse victims usually cannot, and almost certainly should not, do: 'The process of healing for the abuse survivor involves facing up to the abuse and the emotions associated with it, rather than trying to block it out'.⁴³ The victim, he writes, needs to integrate the experience of abuse into their personal history, rather than forget it. In doing so, they are likely to become angry as they finally confront the extent of their damage. Most child abuse victims initially underestimate the importance of what has happened to them until they uncover the reality during therapy, Parkinson points out. Their anger is, he says, righteous anger: 'It is being angry about something God is angry about. It names sin for what it is. It does not minimise or excuse it'.⁴⁴

Only when victims have come face to face with the full reality of the sinfulness of the abuse they have suffered, can they offer meaningful forgiveness. And forgiveness cannot be expected to happen quickly. It usually only comes at the end of the process of healing, and only the survivor knows when the time is right.⁴⁵ Forgiveness, if the victim is able to offer it, does not necessarily or even usually imply reconciliation in the form of a return to any former relationship. Even where the stringent ethical conditions for forgiveness have been met, forgiveness cannot be demanded of the victim. It has only been made possible, argues Parkinson.⁴⁶

When clergy are individually counselling abuse victims, they are in a good position to help them realise that God is extremely patient and accompanies them as they undertake the long journey to healing and therefore, the capacity to forgive their abusers. But as has been noted, many unidentified abuse victims are part of worshipping congregations. Unknown to anyone, they are likely to struggle endlessly with their anger about their abuse (which they may believe is sinful), with their inability to forgive, and with their consequent fear of God's judgement. Who knows how much silent spiritual agony is experienced in the pews week by week? Regular, compassionate and thoughtful teaching on the nature of forgiveness is an important aspect of the Church's ministry to the survivors of abuse, together with sensitive and imaginative attention to teaching on sin, and the form of prayer in public worship.

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This article has been peer reviewed, and is deemed to meet the criteria for original research as set out by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

Notes

¹ Patrick Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse and the Churches: Understanding the Issues*, second edition, Aquila Press, Sydney, 2003, pp.15-19.

² Most commentators take 'little ones' in the context of Matthew 18 to refer to disciples rather than children: see for example Daniel J. Harrington SJ, *The Gospel of Matthew*, vol.1 in *Sacra Pagina Series*, The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1991, p.264. Because Jesus is using children as a metaphor for any who are vulnerable, his condemnation implies that harm to children *per se* is culpable.

³ See John Watson, *Shame: Biblical Reflections and Pastoral Advice on Living with Shame*, Grove Books, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 8, 10.

⁴ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, pp.131-137.

⁵ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.133.

⁶ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.134.

⁷ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.135.

⁸ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.136.

⁹ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.136.

¹⁰ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.137.

¹¹ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.137.

¹² Valerie Saiving, 'The Human Situation: A Feminine View', *The Journal of Religion*, 40, 2, April 1960, pp.100-112.

¹³ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.101.

¹⁴ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.107.

¹⁵ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.107.

¹⁶ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.107.

¹⁷ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.107.

¹⁸ Teaching women that pre-marital sex is the sinful failure to control carnal desires is another example of the universalising of male experience. For many young women, it is more likely to be lack of self-esteem that leads them to acquiesce in the demands of their boyfriends.

¹⁹ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.107.

²⁰ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.108.

²¹ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.108.

²² Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.108. Self-giving love, the highest virtue taught by traditional theology, does not depend on self-deprecation or self-loathing. Rather, self-giving love needs to issue from a healthy love of self: Jesus (see Matthew 22: 36) identified the second of the two great commandments as 'You shall love your neighbour *as yourself* [my emphasis]'.
²³ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.109.

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- ²⁴ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.109.
- ²⁵ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.109.
- ²⁶ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.109.
- ²⁷ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', pp.109-110.
- ²⁸ Saiving, 'The Human Situation', p.110.
- ²⁹ Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich*, University Press of America, Washington, 1980. See also a recent nuanced restatement of Saiving's thesis in Mary Potter Engel, 'Evil, Sin and Violation of the Vulnerable', in Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel (eds), *Lift Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside*, revised ed., Orbis Books, New York, 1998, pp.167-169.
- ³⁰ See various discussions on women and sin in Angela West, *Deadly Innocence: Feminism and the Mythology of Sin*, Cassell, London, 1995, and Daphne Hampson, *Theology and Feminism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1990.
- ³¹ See Susan Dowell, 'From Daphne Hampson to Angela West: Some Issues in Recent Feminist Theology', *Sewanee Theological Review*, 44, 1, 2000, p.50; also the useful overview of this debate in Joy Ann McDougall, 'Sin – No More? A Feminist Re-Visioning of a Christian Theology of Sin', *Anglican Theological Review*, 88, 2, Spring 2006, pp.215-235.
- ³² McDougall, 'Sin – No More?', p.221.
- ³³ Brita L. Gill-Austern, 'Love understood as self-sacrifice and self-denial: What does it do to women?' in Jeanne Stevenson Moessner (ed.), *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1996, p.17.
- ³⁴ See Angela West, *Deadly Innocence*, pp. 4, 63.
- ³⁵ Janet Martin Soskice, *The Kindness of God: Metaphor, Gender and Religious Language*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p.71.
- ³⁶ Janet Martin Soskice, *The Kindness of God*, pp.71-72.
- ³⁷ Janet Martin Soskice, *The Kindness of God*, p.77.
- ³⁸ Janet Martin Soskice, *The Kindness of God*, pp. 89-90. This point has also been made by Rowan Williams in *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, Canterbury Press, London, 2007, p.94.
- ³⁹ Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, third edition, SPCK, London, 2005, p.35.
- ⁴⁰ Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, p.26.
- ⁴¹ See the helpful detailed discussion in Jeanette Gosney, *Surviving Child Sexual Abuse: Supporting Adults in the Church*, Grove Books, Cambridge, 2002.
- ⁴² A separate essay in this collection deals more fully with the topic of forgiveness.
- ⁴³ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.178.
- ⁴⁴ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.195.
- ⁴⁵ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.194.
- ⁴⁶ Parkinson, *Child Sexual Abuse*, p.192.