THE UNRECOGNISED PIETY OF MEN

STRATEGIES AND SUCCESS
OF THE RE-MASCULINISATION CAMPAIGN
AROUND 1900

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As soon as we could babble our first words, mother never put us to bed without letting us pray, and thanks to father fostering this domestic custom, we became accustomed to saying grace and to family worship. At the same time, father was most particular about attending divine service. He duly took us at least once every Sunday, if not twice. We did not really like going.¹

When Willibald and Franz Beyschlag were children, services at their local Protestant church were not in the least interesting. The services were too sober; the sermon, boring. Yet when he wrote his memoirs in 1858, Willibald Beyschlag was evidently appreciative of his religious upbringing, especially by his father, a bank clerk in Frankfurt. Born in 1823, the young Beyschlag studied Protestant theology in the 1840s, and in 1851 became a pastor in Trier; later he would be a professor of theology in Halle, and one of the leading figures of German Protestantism.

If we accept that Beyschlag’s memories of his pious parents and petty bourgeois family are reliable, the question remains whether they are representative. To set against the recurring complaints in the nineteenth century about men missing divine service, we have Beyschlag and his extraordinarily pious father. To be fair, growing anxiety about men neglecting their religious duties overshadowed the last decades before his death in 1900. Some historians see a general ‘crisis of masculinity’ at the fin de siècle, others a crisis of male religiosity. A striking indicator of this ‘crisis’ is the book published by Franz Xaver Wetzel in 1887, the title of which said it all: ‘Men also

¹ Beyschlag, Aus dem Leben eines Frühvollendeten, 15. All translations in this chapter are my own.
must pray’. Obviously Wetzel, a Catholic priest, had detected some deficiency here. Would he have felt called on to publish a work entitled, ‘Women also must pray’? Nor was Wetzel alone, for publications admonishing men were becoming increasingly common.²

It seems as if institutionalised Christianity was faced with a growing problem - the problem of male religiosity. The contemporary preoccupation corresponds perfectly with the notion of a ‘feminisation of piety’. Many scholars use this ‘key concept in feminist historiography’, which is equally important in the historiography of religion.³ Its validity has been demonstrated for many countries in the Western world - Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, and Sweden, for example - and in the US where it was initially developed.⁴ Callum Brown has demonstrated for Victorian and Edwardian Britain that “women were the religious solution, men were the religious problem”.⁵

In recent years, the feminisation of religion as a concept has been the subject of growing criticism. It is said to be of limited value, especially as the religiosity of ordinary men still remains to be scrutinised. The feminisation model is one-sided. Where do men appear in its scenarios? While taking a general view of the problem, this chapter examines German examples to establish the scope of the feminisation and, by way of balance, suggests that it be matched by the notion of re-masculinisation.

A DOUBLE MARGINALISATION OF MANLINESS,
A TWO FOLD FEMINISATION

Men and manliness seem to have been doubly marginalised: initially as social-religious actors living in the period of religion’s feminisation; and subsequently as worthwhile subjects to historians. In gender history, men’s studies, generally occupied with the construction of manliness, enjoyed something of a boom in the 1990s. Nevertheless, Nina Baur and Jens Luedtke could still reasonably claim in 2008 that “men’s studies are still in its infancy”.⁶ True, many issues have now been addressed: heroism, militarism, and nationalism; the male body; homosexuality; male societies; hegemonic masculinity; and the ‘crisis’ of manliness around 1800, around 1900, or in the inter-war period; indeed, whether there was a specific ‘crisis of manliness’ around

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² Wetzel, Auch die Männer müssen beten.
³ Brown, The Death of Christian Britain, 58-59. See also Brown’s chapter in this volume.
⁵ Brown, Religion and Society in Twentieth-Century Britain, 69.
⁶ Religion plays no role in Baur and Luedtke, eds, Die soziale Konstruktion von Männlichkeit, 8, 20; and the same is true of Martschukat and Stieglitz, Geschichte der Männlichkeiten; Schmale, Geschichte der Männlichkeiten in Europa. Connell, Masculinities, remains the classic on manliness, but is equally silent on religion. General surveys are Hanisch, Männlichkeiten and Kühne, ed., Männergeschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte.
1900, sparked by women’s emancipation, or whether it was part of a ‘constant crisis of masculinity’. Yet there remains one theme generally unrecognised by men’s studies: men’s religion. A few striking exceptions have dealt with issues of fairly limited scope, such as nineteenth-century ‘muscular Christianity’ (winning for Christ), and we can draw on a handful of specialised studies, ranging from nineteenth-century wills to the masculine Deutschchristen, the German Christian Nazi Movement, yet the fact remains that the field needs to be expanded, even if the topic of manliness and religion at first hearing may have a paradoxical ring. Had not all church history been male history? Yet while church history dealt with popes, bishops, consistorial boards, priests, and pastors, a closer look reveals that it did not gender its subject. The manliness of the social actors was taken for granted, and thus ignored. Church history has dealt with religion while neglecting masculinity; social history has dealt with religion and gender while neglecting men’s religiosity; and gender history has neglected religion, especially in its male form.

Since one reason for the scholarly disregard of men lies in the dominating concept of the feminisation of piety and religion, it is worth looking at feminisation more closely. At its heart lies a twofold notion of the feminising process: it posits women’s increasing religious commitment; and it implies that religious content, symbols, and practices, where gendered, became especially feminised. Thus it first deals with the commitment and agency of individuals. Men retreated from church, which remained in all essentials a male society, while it was women who availed themselves of what the church had to offer. “Similarly in Germany, there is no doubt that men retreated from the religious field in the wake of the secular, scientific, social, and political revolutions of modern times, especially in the nineteenth century. Due to better education, an unrestricted life, and their professions outside the home, men were more susceptible to secular influences than women.”

The family was the stronghold of the church. In the course of the separation of the public sphere from the private, mothers, often at the behest of their confessors, became responsible for religious socialisation. The segregation of gender spheres went hand in hand with the feminisation of religion.

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7 Brunotte and Herrn, eds, Männlichkeiten und Moderne, write of momentous shifts around 1900. See also Hämmerle and Opitz-Belakhal, eds, Krise(n) der Männlichkeit.
8 Tjeder, The Power of Character, 287.
9 Watson and Weir, “The Development of Muscular Christianity in Victorian Britain and Beyond”.
10 Schlögl, Glaube und Religion in der Säkularisierung, 249-252, 316-326, 331 ff; Bergen, Twisted Cross; Gailus, Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus; Gross, The War against Catholicism; see also my review in European History Quarterly, 37 (2007), 149-151.
11 See Yvonne Maria Werner’s introduction to this volume; Blaschke, “Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus”; Werner, “Religious Feminisation”.
12 Busch, “Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit”, 204.
14 Schlögl, Glaube und Religion in der Säkularisierung, 316 ff. In 1811 the pastor Friedrich Darup could still place the prayer of the father of the household alongside the prayer of the housewife. On the other hand, as Theodor von Hippel, a pupil of Kant, remarked as early as 1792, “The basic trend of Christian religion is feminine”.
seen as a woman’s sphere’. The ‘feminisation of Christianity’ can be observed in Protestantism, especially since women had more say there, but it was far more evident in Catholicism, which laboured under the Protestant offence of being effeminate. Catholicism was said to be a ‘female’ confession, whereas Protestantism praised itself for its masculinity. British readers will know of the controversy between Charles Kingsley and John Henry Newman in the 1860s, in which the socialist Anglican cleric Kingsley accused Catholicism of effeminacy. Protestants began to herald Anglo-Saxon Christian manliness and British imperial culture, and to contrast them with celibate clerics and feminine Catholicism.

Protestantism became the epitome of masculinity. Anglo-Saxon developments were matched in German countries. Indeed, there was a positive explosion in Catholic nunneries and female congregations, so much so that historians speak of a ‘spring of female congregations’. In 1855 the gender ratio for people living in religious congregations in Prussia was already uneven at 397 men to 579 women, but by 1872 we find eight times more women (8,000) than men (1,037). This has been termed the ‘féminisation du clergé’. The same was true of Belgium, Spain, and France, where the number of nuns increased from 12,000 in the early nineteenth century to 135,000 in 1878. Statistics on ecclesiastical orthopraxy, and especially on church attendance, clearly indicate the predominance of women in the Catholic and Protestant churches alike.

The second element to the feminisation argument is concerned less with believers and more with cultural patterns. The churches reacted against the fundamental threat of enlightenment and revolution, declining church attendance and secularisation, by specifically approaching women and emphasising feminine forms of the religious cult. It is tempting to think of it as intentional feminisation. Conceptually, the feminisation of religion offers a macro-theory and master narrative. A new theological discourse of feminism accentuated the feminine elements of symbolic communication, especially in Catholicism, but also in the Pietist movement. In Catholicism, the cult of Mother Mary was revitalised, as is evident in the enunciation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin in 1854 by Pius IX. It is not for nothing the nineteenth century is called the ‘Marian century’, a period that only really came to a close in the 1950s.

The combination of religion and femininity was new. Before 1800, it had been women who had been suspected of lacking religious commitment. The Latin word *femina* revealed the true nature of women, declared Heinrich Kramer in his *Malleus Maleficarum*, ‘The Hammer of Witches’, a treatise first published in 1486, and running to twenty-nine editions by the seventeenth century alone. According to his interpretation, the word derives from ‘fe’, from the Latin ‘fides’ or faith, and minus, thus announcing that the woman, ‘fe-mina’, was the less believing. Yet in the nineteenth

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15 McLeod, “Weibliche Frömmigkeit - männlicher Unglaube?”, 151-152. This is clearly demonstrated in several of the articles in the present volume.
17 Alderson, *Mansex Fine*. The same tendencies can be observed in Scandinavia, as shown in the chapters in the present volume by Kristin Fjelde Tjelle, David Tjeder, and Yvonne Maria Werner.
18 Meiwes, “Religiosität und Arbeit als Lebensform für katholische Frauen”, 70.
century it was not the woman who was the less believing; on the contrary, she was thought religiously reliable, while now it was the man whose belief was uncertain. While for the eminent Protestant theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) the fusion of Christianity with femininity and emotion posed no problem - indeed he thought it indispensable - later Protestants struggled with the notion that Christianity might possibly have feminine traits.

There is plenty of evidence to bear out the concept of the feminisation of religion. The iconography changed, as angels that had been male or genderless until the 1790s thereafter became more and more feminine. Church attendance was predominantly female, congregations became overwhelmingly female, and the Brotherhood of the Sacred Heart and other ecclesiastical associations found more female adherents than male. What then counts against the feminisation model?

A CRITIQUE OF THE FEMINISATION CONCEPT

The problems start with the statistical evidence. Often the priests and visitation reports from Catholic parishes gave no indication of female dominance in church attendance. On the contrary, they vehemently underlined that in church, men and women were represented evenly. However, since Catholics only started to count in the early twentieth century, it is more profitable to look at Protestantism to trace long-term developments, and to Lucian Hölscher’s historical atlas of the religious geography of Protestant Germany - four volumes overflowing with statistics on baptisms, church-elections, conversions, and church attendance.

Let us consider the statistics on Sunday communion (Abendmahl) in a gendered perspective. For the Protestant parish in Trier we have figures running back to 1861, with the distinction between female and male attendees noted from 1890. The black line shows that shrinking numbers of Protestants attended communion. In 1865 the proportion had been as high as 75 per cent of all Protestant members of the parish, a total from which children must be subtracted since they were not allowed to take communion, giving a percentage of communicants higher than 75 per cent; but then again, people taking communion twice were counted twice. The figures are not without their problems, but what is important is the trend. The proportion dropped to 66 per cent in 1890, climbed slightly during the First World War, but plummeted to 40 per cent in 1931. Today its range is under 20 per cent. This process can be observed in every region in Germany, and has often been taken as evidence of secularisation, though it should only be interpreted as a distance from ecclesiastical rites.

20 Kramer, Malleus Maleficarum, VII.  
21 Hartlieb, Geschlechterdifferenz im Denken Friedrich Schleiermachers.  
22 Busch, Katholische Frömmigkeit und Moderne, 277-278, for his discussion of feminisation: Id., “Frömmigkeit als Faktor des katholischen Milieus”; Jonas, France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart.  
23 Schneider, “Feminisierung der Religion”.  
24 Hölscher, Datenatlas zur religiösen Geographie im protestantischen Deutschland, III, 135 and IV, 479 ff., 581, 598 ff. The communion statistics count communions, not communicants (some of whom went several times, driving the numbers up). On the other hand, the percentages are too low, since underage children should be subtracted.
For some four decades, we have information on the gender ratio. In 1890 about 6,500 women took communion as against 5,200 men (first column). Indeed, the proportion of women was if anything higher, as 55 of 100 participants were female. Statistics do seem to bear out the concept of the feminisation of piety. Women were definitely over-represented in church as they were in the confessional. Nevertheless, a process of feminisation cannot be traced. Rather, calculating the ratio between men and women, an amazing result is revealed, for expressed as a percentage, an almost straight line appears for the entire period: the proportion of female attendance oscillated steadily between 53 and 55 per cent. During the First World War it increased, of course, when the men were serving in the trenches - and possibly attending divine service in the field. Again, in the inter-war period the proportion stabilised again, with 55 per cent of church participants being female against 45 per cent male, suggesting a clear continuity, given the fact that women were over-represented in society in general thanks to their longer life expectancy and the recent loss of two million men in the war. In the course of more than forty years, nothing changed in the ratio between male and female church attendance: nearly half of the people in church were men.

A much longer data sequence survives for the Lutheran Church in right-bank Bavaria (Bavaria minus its left-bank Palatinate districts). Apart from the fact that the general communion attendance rate remained stable at nearly 80 per cent until the 1870s, raising doubts about the idea of a continuous secularisation process beginning in the Enlightenment, the data confirm the continuity evident from gender statistics: in 1830, the proportion of men was 47 per cent; in the German Empire’s heyday it still was as high as 45 per cent; and it only dipped just before the outbreak of the Second World War, standing at 41 per cent in 1938. Where else in *la longue durée* can we find such a straight and impressive line? Not a glimpse of the flight of men from church in the nineteenth century, nor a dramatic process of feminisation. In other words, the glass remained nearly half full for more than a century.

There was feminisation, but it was less dramatic than the literature suggests. Women doubtless went to church more frequently. But how much visible piety was authentic piety, and how much was instrumentalised for other reasons? Some historians argue that piety was for many women a means to compensate for their disadvantaged social positions and even for their lack of emancipation. By feminising religion, they found a proper identity and improved their position in a society that only granted certain rights, such as suffrage, in the twentieth century. Furthermore, there may have been other reasons why women went to church more often. Severe normative and legal restrictions surrounded female activities in public. Until 1908 women were forbidden to participate in political associations in Germany. Church was thus an ideal place to meet, socialise, and communicate, and church attendance could have greater social than religious motives. Equally, there may have been very personal and private reasons. Some women felt an intense relationship with their priest; in

some parishes a veritable personality cult grew up around the priest, of which there are both Catholic and Protestant examples.\(^\text{27}\) Certainly a closer look at the female population in church on Sundays reveals that many of them were single women, and while their souls’ comfort may well have been their prime reason for going to church, another was the gender matrix’s requirement that women be pious and demure. Men expected this, and single women could enhance their chances on the marriage market if they made a show of submitting to this ideal. As late as the 1950s, advertisements for a marriage partner were designed according to this gender matrix, for in both men’s and women’s advertisements religion ranked higher than everything else, while in the 1960s it fell off dramatically, and virtually disappeared in the 1970s.\(^\text{28}\) In short, the higher figures for women attending church, mass, communion, and confession do not necessarily prove that they were more pious. Other motives must be taken into consideration, and in so doing the piety gap between women and men dwindles.

Traditionally, scholarship adduces the intensified Marian cult, the appearances of Mary, and the ‘Marian century’ (1854-1954) as strong arguments in favour of a feminisation of religion. In most female congregations, Mother Mary played a central devotional role, and thus a tendency towards feminisation seems obvious.\(^\text{29}\) Yet why should Marian devotion necessarily indicate feminism? Mary was more than just a symbol of feminine virtues such as motherhood and love, submissiveness and sympathy. The other tradition of Marian devotion, originating in the seventeenth century, emphasises Mary’s strong and combative traits. She is a protective patron; it is she who crushes the Satanic snake. This tradition was revitalised in the late nineteenth century. In the village Marpingen, where Mary appeared to three girls in 1876, police dispersed the crowds of Catholics because the Prussian authorities feared the Marian fans and pilgrims would cheer the ‘French Goddess of Revenge’ from Lourdes. Beginning in the 1920s, Mary was militarised and updated to serve male semantics and male interests. During the Spanish Civil War, Mary fought on the side of the Church against the Communist menace. The blue uniform of the Falangists, harking back to workers’ clothing, was sometimes associated with Marian blue.\(^\text{30}\)

Mary was also drawn in to play a crucial role in the Cold War. Marian pamphlets claimed that it was she who had defeated the Turks at Vienna in 1683 and, thanks to her, the anti-Christian Third Reich was overthrown; once again Christian Europe is in danger, the Communist East waiting to conquer it in the name of Satan, and against this new peril, Mother Mary will guarantee victory. When Mary was accorded the virtues of a soldier, a fighter, and a leader it was not only with the Soviet threat in mind. It was meant to touch male listeners and to encourage them to identify with Mary.\(^\text{31}\) *Maria vom Siege*, ‘Victorious Mary’: this Mary does little to prove feminisation theory.\(^\text{32}\) Bernhard Schneider recently distinguished a three-stage scale in feminisa-

\(^{27}\) Cf. Gailus, *Protestantismus und Nationalsozialismus*, 331.

\(^{28}\) For rural role models, see Dietrich, *Konfession im Dorf. Westeuropäische Erfahrungen im 19. Jahrhundert*, 140; for marriage advertisements in the period 1953 to 1983 see Gern, *Geschlechtsrollen*.


\(^{30}\) Perry and Echeverría, *Under the Heel of Mary*, 210-218.


tion, at least as far as Catholicism is concerned: a high degree of feminisation in the ecclesiastical field (church attendance, confession, pilgrimages); some in religious education and charity, for men participated as well; and no feminisation in the fields of politics and associations. Schneider suggests that men’s activities in the public sphere can be seen as a “transformation into another state of religiosity”. I would go further. There was a specific male transfer of religion from the ecclesiastical into the professional, public, and political sphere, matched by a wave of manifest religious re-masculinisation and re-masculinised religion.

**REACTIONS TO FEMINISATION**

Contemporaries were already talking about religious ‘feminism’. How were Catholics, confronted head-on by the ‘reproach of ‘feminism’”, to cope with this challenge? How should the churches and Christian men react to when piety was feminised and retreated to the private sphere? The world of men is now split into two great armies, Wetzel observed in 1887:

> In the one, men who pray, and in the other, men who ceased praying. The number of the latter is shocking. They are sadly deluded that praying is of no use, and is only good for women and children. No, men must pray too; yes, praying is even more necessary for men than for women. Generally, in church you see more women than men, especially on Sunday afternoon. In France and Italy things are even worse. ... Where does this painful phenomenon arise? From men believing they do have not time to pray.

Wetzel saw it as his mission to drive men back to church. In the wake of his ‘Word addressed to men’ this sort of agitation intensified. However, the reaction to the de-masculinisation of religion was not limited to campaigns of re-masculinisation. Protestantism ensured its male identity with a detour past nationalism: the feminist aspects of the Protestant religion were assigned to women, aspects external to it to Catholicism. For the majority who lived in the hegemonic culture of male, bourgeois Protestantism, the issue of true manliness was less of a challenge. In his *fin de siècle* lectures, Heinrich von Treitschke, the eminent German historian, gendered nearly everything: the German Reformation and Luther were masculine, and so too Prussia, and the State in all its powerful, nineteenth-century glory; in stark contrast to Catholicism, France, and the Baroque eighteenth century, all so womanish.36

33 Schneider, “Feminisierung der Religion”, 143.
34 Sträter, *Das Männerapostolat*, 3.
Linility was an essential component in Protestant identity, matching anti-Catholicism. Confession and gender were co-constitutive of each other.

Catholicism, for its part, succeeded in pursuing a dual strategy in coping with the feminisation of religion. Legitimate femininity was cultivated; the required dose of masculinity was boosted. Ideally, Catholic men should keep their distance from any exaggerated cult of manliness in order to avoid becoming national heroes when they should be the servants of Christ and the Pope. How different from hegemonic Protestant culture. Duelling was forbidden for Catholics, and Catholic students avoided the academic fencing fraternities. This does not mean Catholic men were more feminine, but it remained the case that priests had to relinquish certain attributes of hegemonic manliness. This group was as much idealised by their henchmen as it was stigmatised by anti-clerics. Their ‘habitus clericalis’ was the manifest expression of a limited but legitimate femininity. In the early nineteenth century, as part of a series of ultramontane sanctions to discipline them in body and mind, priests were obliged to wear the soutane, or cassock, making them look more female than male, at least in the eyes of caricaturists. The beard, a manly accessoire growing in importance from the middle of the century, was taboo for priests. Soon they were even forbidden to wear glasses.

Normative texts about how to behave only tell half the story if they are not translated into practice. ‘Doing gender’ means that gender is not only inscribed into discourses and mentalities, but also into everyday practices and on the body. In this respect, the petitions addressed by Catholic priests to their authorities show how they respected the rules. When the regulation on glasses was introduced in September 1838 in the diocese of Mainz, many short-sighted clerics petitioned the bishop for an exemption, arguing that their request was motivated not by vanity or a desire to impress women, but only so they could read the sermon. Frequently the exception was granted. In the early nineteenth century, glasses became a fashionable item for well-off bourgeois men who wanted to flaunt their good taste and education. Some even wore them though they had no need. Priests were not meant to participate in the bourgeois habitus, but to rise above it. Efforts to draw a line between the distinguished laity and priests were to be constantly repeated throughout the nineteenth century. With the advent of the bicycle, priests were forbidden to use it for fear of losing their dignity, just as women at the turn of the century would be ridiculed for

37 Frevert, Ehrenmänner; Wöhrmüller, Mannhaftes Christentum, 14.
39 Dom- und Diözesanarchiv Mainz (hereafter DDAMz), Generalakten, G XX, 11: L. Schneider (deacon), “Signing the petition of Pfarrer Keller zu Bodenheim to Erzbischöfliches Ordinariat, 16 October 1838”.
40 Rossi, Brillen, 87-92, 142-144. There was an optimal ‘codex of behaviour’. On greeting people were expected to remove their glasses, especially in Germany, Britain, and France, while official military regulations demanded that they be removed during greetings and remain off in the presence of superiors. Students wearing glasses were not allowed to approach professors. During the Great Parade of the Emperor, the wearing of Kneifer (pince-nez) and other glasses was absolutely forbidden (Rossi, Brillen, 118, citing Schmitz, “Die Sehhilfe im Wandel der Jahrhunderte”).
bicycling. The ‘flying priest’ was not welcome amongst the guardians of distinction, though rural population was unfazed by the more pragmatic of the priests.\footnote{Diözesanarchiv Köln, Archiv des Erzbistums Köln, CR 21.6.1: Deacon Christmann, St. Vith, to curate Dr. Kreutzwall, 7 July 1899, asking for an exemption; for another example from 1907 see DDAMz, Generalakten, G XX, 9.}

Other clear examples of ‘doing gender’ are to be found in pictures. The image shown here introduces an article on the Forty-sixth General Assembly of the Catholics of Germany held in Neisse in 1899, one of the principal platforms for social and political communication amongst Catholic associations, begun in 1848. Women were only allowed to attend to listen, a form of discrimination that remained in force until 1921.\footnote{Schneider, “Feminisierung der Religion”, 140.} The picture shows only men: a collection of photographs of the seventeen leading figures of the organising team, all men aged somewhere between 30 and 70. Two groups can be distinguished, nine laymen and eight priests, the latter easily spotted by their clothing and special clerical collar. In contrast, most laymen wear a jacket cut to show shirt and the tie. The caption supports the observation, in which the laymen are identified as lawyers, politicians, architects, and merchants, along with two aristocrats. However, there are other more subtle differences that signal that the group is made up of two classes of men. Of the eight priests, none has a beard; of the nine laymen, all. In other words 100 per cent of the priests are beardless, 100 per cent of the laymen are bearded. And the fact that the beards are worn differently also conveys a range of meanings. No priest would have dared to wear a handlebar moustache like Prince Löwenstein, in imitation of the Emperor Wilhelm II. Löwenstein was an aristocrat, not middle-class.

The other feature worth pausing over is the glasses the men are wearing. Although the initial prohibition was as old as the eldest person depicted, five of the eight priests still had no glasses while the majority of laymen, six of nine, wear them. Glasses were used to enhance a distinguished gentleman’s appearance: the dictates of vanity showed not in their absence, but in sporting them. For the bourgeoisie, and especially for educated or academic middle-class men (Bildungsbürger), spectacles or a monocle (for officers) indicated that they belonged to the better classes. Clothes, beards, and glasses served as signs of distinction; an important means of reinforcing masculine differences that simultaneously indicated the wearer’s social position. Hence the three priests who are wearing glasses wear only plain models, while half of the laymen wearing glasses have modish Klemmer, pince-nez. The image shows that a variety of masculinities was tolerated in Catholicism, while in hegemonic masculinity priests represented a legitimate form of femininity.

Alongside legitimate femininity, Catholics were also offered an outlet that compensated for the lack of legitimate bourgeois masculinity. If confession, prayer, and sanctimony appeared to be too embarrassingly ‘female’ for them, they could don the mantle of manly champion of their group in the public sphere: as brave parliamentarian, writer, or perhaps leading a public procession. Catholicism’s dual strategy was to permit a reasonable measure of femininity while cultivating masculinity and masculinising religious culture. In total there were four ways to deal with the accusation that piety, especially Catholic piety, was effeminate. Firstly, there was the
Generalversammlung der Katholiken Deutschlands, Neisse 1899.
manoeuvre to reinterpret supposedly female activities and symbols as male. Secondly, religion was transferred from the ecclesiastic sphere into professional life, and more particularly into the public arena, with its political conflicts reserved for men. In the tense atmosphere of religious mistrust, thirdly, neo-confessionalism served as a means to compensate for the feminisation of piety, while, fourthly, at times there were intentional campaigns of re-masculinisation, commencing in the late 1880s and reaching a peak in the ‘Men’s Apostolate’ (Männerapostolat) of 1910, with its eponymous monthly periodical.

**RE-EVALUATION: ‘FEMALE’ RELIGIOSITY BECOMES ‘MALE’**

Of all the strategies, perhaps the most significant was the careful *re-coding* of masculine and feminine attributes. Many men did not think that attending church required anything like male courage. Their wives and children went, so why would it be brave for them to do so? It took nerve to duel with another student or to march to war; going to a priest or praying were nothing like as impressive, and did not guarantee a positive response from their male peer group. In the face of mainstream opinion, church authorities set out to re-code attitudes, actions and attributes usually counted as feminine, weak, and submissive as masculine, strong, and heroic - and vice versa. Joseph of Nazareth and prayer were militarised. The tenderly loving Christian paterfamilias was transformed into a soldier fighting for the rights of Christ. The man who refused to attend church should no longer be admired as an independent, free character but should be disdained as a man insufficiently courageous to go to church - the one who was more feminine than his pious fellows.

From the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V to Johan Count Tilly, from Joseph Haydn to Hermann von Mallinckrodt - so many of the exemplary heroes of history, politics, art, and scholarship had, like Solomon, prayed, wrote Wetzel in 1887. Where there is no prayer, there is no manhood: “Is there anything more beautiful than tall youths and hardy men, rosaries in their muscular hands, kneeling to pray? Is there anything more beautiful than leading statesmen and eminent officers, scholars, and artists, priests, and soldiers, their hands folded in prayer? Be therefore men of prayer. ... Good, praying men are good, real men.” Social male virtues were pinpointed and linked to Christian ideals, using encouraging male homo-stereotypes to enlist them as ecclesiastical propaganda. Values widely acknowledged to be feminine and masculine were combined with Christian values. This mechanism was even applied to the delicate issue of the Sacred Heart, a cult definitely preferred by women. Recalling a phrase of Leo XIII’s, when he compared Constantine’s Cross to a new battle emblem, the Sacred Heart, and put it to all Christians - especially the men - that it was the battle emblem of their day, the Männer-Apostolat in June 1914 exclaimed that “Sometimes people claim that Sacred Heart worship is a matter for women. Nothing could be more wrong! It is men who must stand for law and justice in public and

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private life. To worship the Sacred Heart is to help Jesus claim what is his by right. His divine rights are in danger.” It was men’s duty and honour to reinstall these rights.44

A closer look at this journal, the Männer-Apostolat reveals that it did not report exclusively on piety and the Sacred Heart. For religious reasons, it also instrumentalised topics that men were likely to be interested in. There were articles about heroes in the sea battle of Tsuschima (1905), the invention of manned flight, the dangers of socialism, about politics in general and current affairs. Religious messages were skillfully woven in. Heroes appeared everywhere, so why not be a hero for the church? In the very first article of the very first issue the pattern of linking male-oriented semantics with Catholic propaganda is set. The article dealt with John the Baptist, “a true man, enlightened by his belief in the Redeemer”, who from small beginnings in Galilee helped to unleash the Christian movement. Men joined in their ones and twos, then hundreds and thousands, and finally millions, in imitation of Christ. John “created the first Männer-Apostolat in order to save the world”, the reader was told. He should act just like John had done: “As a grown man you are aware of the pressures of our time. Save! Courage! If the handful of men in Galilee in a pagan age could win such a success, should anyone be afraid today? Be bold and courageous! ... Some men proclaim their disbelief, others the decline of moral standards - you should promote Christ!”65 Another article in 1914, an elaboration on why Mother Mary was the ideal mother men should look up to, ran under the headline Stahlhart, ‘Hard as Steel’. It deals with an exemplary worker in the steel company in Essen. “He is always dutiful and his character is as hard as steel. He never missed the congregation’s Holy Communion.”66

Harping on traits such as courage and steeliness was supposed to charm men. Such characteristics were not to be banned; rather, they were to be embraced. The only remaining step was to translate them into Christian values. The Männer-Apostolat addressed male homo-stereotypes and linked them with Christian ideals, but the concern here was not in re-masculinising men, but in persuading men to accept the preferred gender role, and to make pious values palatable by painting them in manly colours. Military metaphors, which were also applied to Mother Mary, were supposed to satisfy the inherent belligerence of men. The ploy of using semantics of this kind had been well established ever since the mid nineteenth century, had intensified around 1900, and expanded rapidly during the First World War. Shortly after the outbreak of the war, the Männer-Apostolat explained that this was a just war, and it assured its readers that as long as they prayed diligently, Germany would win. “An army of prayers on their knees in church at the communion rail - a brave army out there in the field - together victory is ours!”67 The close pairing of real soldiers and virtual soldiers for Christ was meant to convince men that they were man enough already, although ultimately they were not required to do anything their wives did not already do: go to church.

44 “Heilandsrechte”, Männer-Apostolat. Monatsblätter für die katholische Männerwelt (hereafter MA), 6 (1914).
46 MA, 5 (1914).
47 „Jetzt geht in die Kirche, kniet nieder vor Gott und bittet ihn um Hilfe für unser braves Heer”, MA, 9 (1914).
The introduction of figures to identify with was meant to stabilise male identities for ecclesiastical purposes. Faced with a raft of medals, heroes, and battles, at the end of 1914 the Männer-Apostolat pointed to heavenly heroes like the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV and Joseph of Nazareth. During the war Fr. Hermann Sträter (1866-1943), one of the main initiators of the Männer-Apostolat in the city of Krefeld in the upper Rhine area, published a collection of sermons. One began by speaking of the horrors of warfare, and then continued: “But now I would like to talk to you about another battle. A battle everyone has to join, in the field and at home ... You, men, are in the vanguard. In the Männer-Apostolat you gathered, determined to wage this battle. You have to protect three sanctuaries: your soul, your family, your fatherland.” Sträter, later made suffragan bishop of Cologne in 1922, retained the war metaphors in the second edition of his sermons in 1929. During the war, more and more heroes were brought into play: military, Christian heroes such as Ignatius of Loyola, who served as a shining example for the brave men of the Apostolate. Even Jesus was pictured as a great ‘field marshal’ in 1915, a good decade before he had to compete as the superior ‘Führer’ with the Führer of the Nazi party.

RELIGIOSITY TRANSFERRED TO ‘MASCULINE’ SPHERES

Women were excluded from the public sphere, and obliged to care for the private and religious spheres. Nevertheless, the sweeping generalisation that religion was a female sphere excludes the possibility that men got involved in their own way. They just got involved in ways that historians today do not expect. That it was hoped men would attend church more often is certain. However, at the same time they were encouraged to continue to act as before in their normal haunts: in the public sphere and politics; in schools and universities; in newspapers. Religion was not only performed in church but also in the Catholic milieu with its Catholic parties, associations, and media; areas from which women were explicitly excluded, such as the General Assembly of Catholics (later called the Katholikentag). Men’s favourite activities were recruited to ecclesiastical ends. Established patterns of masculinity were taken on board and organised, but then transformed into domesticated forms of masculinity for Christian purposes.

This framing of conventional male activities also amounted to an act of tolerance towards them. Men did not need to change utterly, and they did not have to stop fighting and become Holy Joes; on the contrary, they should keep on fighting if it was in the right cause. Men’s activities in the public sphere were embraced, and thus served pious needs. “The Catholic man has to be a man of action”, high school teacher Johannes L. Schlich underlined in 1911 in his manual for men, and certainly

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48 “Jetzt geht in die Kirche, kniet nieder vor Gott und bittet ihn um Hilfe für unser braves Heer”, MA, 9 (1914).
49 Sträter, Männerpredigten (2nd ed.), 18.
50 “Ein edler Kriegsheld”, MA, 6 (1915); see also Konrad Algermissen, “Ein Führer und sein Testament”, MA, (1931); and Otto Cohausz, SJ, “Unser Führer”, MA, 10 (1932): “The world needs a great Führer. Many set themselves up as Führer nowadays. But the only Führer who possesses all Führereigenschaften [qualities of a Führer] is Jesus.”
many men would have agreed. “In our turbulent times in particular, a man does not fulfil his duty if he does not care for public life, the state, and politics. Those cowards who do not dare defend their religious and moral convictions in public betray the holy cause of their religion and their church.”51

The Men’s Apostolate was so called in an attempt to avoid the connotations of an association, with all its duties, or a fraternity, with its endless obligations. It was not founded to promote the transfer of piety into other spheres. Instead, given that its members were already committed to this transfer, the Men’s Apostolate planned to appeal to piety in the narrow sense again. Their aim was not to reverse the transfer, but to recombine it with traditional piety. Piety was not ‘feminine’, as the contemporary reproach ran, and men as such did not have a religious tin ear. It only remained to give men the proper framework and to dispel the whiff of feminism. “Did we not underestimate the religious energy of men? Did not some of us at times ask them to demonstrate a firm belief in public life, while failing to ask them to believe in private life and family life?” In his retrospective, the man behind the Apostolate, Hermann Sträter, suggested in 1917 that Church’s pastoral care used to neglect men’s piety, though the “reproach of ‘feminism’ brought against the ‘church pastoral’” was exaggerated. Sträter admitted that he and others had been convinced that a life dedicated to piety was out of reach for most men. “We were blind”. The success of recent religious campaigns proved that thousands of men were looking for deeper piety.52

In other words, the Men’s Apostolate stressed men’s double duty. They were meant to remain as active in public life as before, but should also find their way back to piety. Both sides of the coin were important. They should vote for Christian parties, thus defending the throne; they should take communion, thus defending the altar.53 Membership of the Volksverein, the People’s Association for Catholic Germany, which stood at 800,000 in 1914, was promoted as another male obligation. Even wielding a pen against the Church’s enemies was hailed as an especially male activity if undertaken in the name of religion. In March 1914, the Jesuit Anton Hellmich reminded his readers of bygone “German days of heroism”, with victory in war and the victory of Christianity over paganism. Just as Germany should look to its defences, so the Church should guard the achievements of Christianity. “It is only in battle that this can succeed.” The urgent task was to supply the Church with constant flow of new ‘fighters’, and they were to be found in the ranks of the Men’s Apostolate. Nevertheless, this regiment would be useless if it could not fight the battles of modern times with modern weapons - the press. Unfortunately, the Jesuit continued in openly anti-Semitic vein, it was “our enemies” such as the Jew Adolphe Crémieux who realised this before “we” did. “You, a Catholic man, had to read yet again how meanly we were treated. There is lightning in your mind; there is thunder in your chest. Why do you keep the flashes within? Why do you smother the holy anger? Try to use it for the sake of other people. You may discover that you are a skilled writer.” The male reader is explicitly asked to use his feelings of rage to spur him to put his thoughts

51 Schlich, Der gläubige Mann, 254.
52 Sträter, Männerpredigten, 3-4.
down on paper, and then in print. “Then you have perfected our weapon.”\(^5^4\) If ever a time needed men, it was now, proclaimed an anti-Socialist pamphlet in 1911: “We need Catholic men, not dim-witted philistines; men, not sullen sluggards; men, not miserable whingers who are indifferent to everything higher than the head on their beer”, and the answer was for Catholic men to support Catholic newspapers.\(^5^5\) There was the terrain where men could legitimately demonstrate their piety.

**NEO-CONFESSIONALISM: COMPENSATING FOR FEMINISATION**

As well as positive role models, it was important to conjure up enemies and then fight them. The clear separation of friends and enemies, of ‘in-group’ and ‘out-group’, was well established in ultramontane Catholicism long before the *Kulturkampf*. No wonder that this scheme was evident in the early issues of *Männer-Apostolat* before the war. In March 1914 we read: “Man’s atonement is sorely needed in our times. God is reviled, denied, hated. Catholic man, does God deserve to be mocked, and Christ the King derided? Can you not feel the holy melancholy and holy wrath within you? Atone!”\(^5^6\)

Protestants, Jews, Freemasons, and Social Democrats, liberalism and materialism: they were all already out there, a well-established set of wicked enemies and evil structures, menacing the bastions of the Church. A notionally just version of anti-Semitism - not in hatred but in defence - was encouraged by the *Männer-Apostolat* in 1921.\(^5^7\) It was thought to be especially appealing to men to dramatise the dangers, to paint an image of malevolent enemies, and to appeal to sentiments like wrath.

The fierce antagonism between Christian denominations during the second confessional age (c. 1830-1960)\(^5^8\) went some way to compensating for the feminisation of religion, since confessionalism was the arena in which male virtues and powers, used in the service of religion, could let off steam in a legitimate way. Re-confessionalisation was a reaction to a series of developments such as the problems arising from confessionally mixed states after 1806, secularisation, and the growing conflict between state and church. Yet it was also a reaction to the danger of losing the entire male population to the secular world. Since feminisation preceded re-confessionalisation, neo-confessionalism provided an outlet in the bourgeois society for men to

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act as *milites Christi*. During the second confessional age, specifically ultramontane forms of piety propelled masculine re-confessionalisation, and at the same time nourished the feminisation of religion.\(^{59}\) On the other hand, the distinction between different gender roles in the religious sphere served merely to reinforce the general direction taken by bourgeois society, and preserved distinctions in the religious sphere which had been established long before. A commitment to politics, journalism, or business offered a way to compensate for the feminisation of religion. Secular actions were religiously masculinised; writing for Christian newspapers and voting for Christian parties were acts of male commitment to the church, be it Catholic or Protestant. The separation of the (female) private and (male) public spheres allowed men both to hold on to their Christian beliefs and prove their masculinity in the public arena. Since public politics and public authorship in the second confessional age were conspicuously aggressive towards whatever was confessionally ‘other’, men could fight for their faith and at the same time leave religious devotion to their wives. Writing religious articles and condemning those who endangered one’s church was already felt to be a religious activity of sorts. The confessional age provided a battleground for men that saw religion gain a certain degree of re-masculinisation. This compensated for the feminisation of religion.

**OVERT MASCULINISATION**

Latent re-masculinisation should be distinguished from manifest re-masculinisation. Societies need constant reassurance about gender differences, balancing them with religious standards in daily practice. Feminisation and re-masculinisation, preserving male predominance and dealing with female demands, were constant, and latent, challenges.

One of the historian’s tasks is to reconstruct the “permanent reproduction of the objective and subjective structures of male dominance” from generation to generation.\(^{60}\) Nevertheless, there are occasional phases of explicit, and partly intentional, re-masculinisation, evident from the increased frequency and intensity of utterances about masculine values, and the studied actions on the part of the relevant actors or agencies, whereas latent re-masculinisation reveals little of either intention or agency. Men as men were scarcely the focus of society and the church authorities in the nineteenth century, even if some studies mistakenly extend pastoral care specifically directed at men back into the early nineteenth century, confusing profession and guild concerns (for apprentices and journeymen) with gender concerns (for men in general).\(^{61}\) Some papal encyclicals mentioned the role of wives, but none of them discussed men in the Church. For nearly two thousand years the Church’s most

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\(^{60}\) Bourdieu, *Die männliche Herrschaft*, 144.

important pronouncements pondered women, the laity, priests, bishops, children, and young people, and sometimes fathers, but never men per se.\footnote{Juchem, “Sag mir, wo die Männer sind”, 8.}

One striking example of their invisibility is offered by German encyclopaedias and dictionaries. From the mid nineteenth century, ‘man’ was rarely defined, and where there was an entry it was reduced to a short remark. The entry for Mann in Meyer’s Conversations-Lexicon of 1851 begins by referring to the entry for Mensch (human being), and was absent altogether from the seven subsequent editions, only reappearing in the ninth edition in 1975. In the same period, while men vanished from the reference books, the entries for ‘woman’ grew constantly, much like the entries for ‘gender’, which basically restricted their explanations to women. In the nineteenth century it was women who were at issue, not men. Men and male values represented the social norm; any explicit debate would have run the risk of fostering critical thoughts. The male component was not completely absent from the encyclopaedias, of course, since ‘implicit misogyny’\footnote{Tjeder, The Power of Character, 282.} was always present, alongside the explicit misogyny of entries for subjects such as gender, woman, family, and marriage. When ‘man’ re-entered the dictionaries in the 1960s, the dichotomies and biologisation in the entries for Frau and Geschlecht (‘woman’ and ‘gender’) of the last hundred and fifty years were finally called into question.\footnote{Frevert, ‘Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann’, 13-60.} Interestingly, the suspect absence of men from the national encyclopaedias and religious dictionaries broadly coincides with the second confessional age.\footnote{Blaschke, “Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus”, 32-35.} As confessionalism was increasingly visible, men as men were increasingly invisible. It seems as if there was a negative correlation between the two factors. Men were less in evidence than women in the discourse on gender, and less in evidence at mass on Sundays. Recognising this fact was a prerequisite for any attempt to make them visible again, be it in the gender discourse or in church: it was their very invisibility that prompted the unambiguous rhetoric of re-masculinisation in the years following 1887 and, with a slightly different emphasis, around 1950.

The term re-masculinisation has already been used in previous gender studies, though not in religious studies, in a very specific way. Back in 1989, Susan Jeffords published The Re-masculinisation of American Culture, in which she argued that much as a result of the peace movement, flower power, and opposition to the Vietnam War, and particularly because American soldiers returned defeated, men’s identity was severely challenged. In an attempt to turn the tide, Hollywood took the Vietnam theme and played it out with muscular, aggressive men. In the era of Ronald Reagan there was a re-masculinisation of politics and culture. Similar claims for the ‘re-masculinisation’ of societies, especially following defeat in war, have recently been made for Germany in the 1950s and for South Korea.\footnote{Jeffords, The Re-masculinisation of American Culture; Poiger, “A New, ‘Western’ Hero?”; Kim, The Re-masculinisation of South Korean Cinema.}

The idea of religious re-masculinisation was inspired by the findings of Norbert Busch on the ‘masculinisation’ of the cult of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the early

\footnote{Rukc, “Sag mir, wo die Männer sind”, 8.}

\footnote{For the homosocial discussion of masculinity in moralist manuals, see Tjeder, The Power of Character, 282.}

\footnote{Frevert, ‘Mann und Weib, und Weib und Mann’, 13-60.}

\footnote{Blaschke, “Fältmarskalk Jesus Kristus”, 32-35.}

\footnote{Jeffords, The Re-masculinisation of American Culture; Poiger, “A New, ‘Western’ Hero?”; Kim, The Re-masculinisation of South Korean Cinema.}
twentieth century. All these approaches, whether converging on Jesus or on Rambo, share a tendency to single out a limited time span, a decade for example, in which the effort to re-masculinise society thought to have been particularly marked. It seems as if a determined wave of de-feminisation around 1900 came in reaction to a period of feminisation. The Catholic Church successfully started to propagate devotion to the Sacred Heart from the mid nineteenth century on. Though this cult proved to be successful in the extreme, there is no doubt that it attracted far more women than men. Men, amongst them even some priests, found the practices and symbols of the cult too saccharine and soft, too sentimental and effeminate. No wonder that 76 per cent of members of Sacred Heart associations were women. The feminisation of this form of popular piety is very well documented. Men, meanwhile, kept their distance. Alarmed by this, in the early twentieth century the Church authorities launched a campaign to win over the men. There was a deluge of national vocabularies; there was a semantic shift from Jesus the devote and suffering lover to Jesus the ‘ideal man’; and even the iconography of the Sacred Heart abruptly changed. The image of a bleeding, submissive ‘softy’ was no longer in favour, and instead Jesus, still showing his Heart, was transformed into the King of Love, with crown and sceptre. The attempt to de-feminise the cult was institutionalised in the Men’s Apostolate, which in turn originated in a missionary campaign in Krefeld. The requirements for its members were not especially exacting:

1. Manly commitment to the cause of Christ and his Holy Church (and as of 1915) and his Vicar.
2. Dedication of one’s work, prayer, and suffering to the Sacred Heart.
3. Eager participation at the monthly male communion on Sacred Heart Sunday, the first Sunday of the month.

In an illuminating text, Sträter later admitted that the threefold slogan was carefully chosen to play on men’s expectations. Thus it opened with an appeal to men’s bravery. Placing the monthly communion as number three and starting with the manly commitment to the Church was an ingenious strategy. And what did ‘manly commitment’ mean? “Steadfastness and bravery should grace a man, who nowadays more than ever stands at the centre of public life; he has to speak up for Christ, the Pope, and the Church - the first basic principle.” Religion is in growing danger. “The man has to be a brave fighter for God ... As a convinced Catholic, he defends his religion from attack, repels all evil forces that invade the sanctuaries of mankind, fights immorality ... [and] alcoholism, supports the good [Catholic] press, ... participates in Catholic associations, ... [and] is a member of the Catholic People’s Association.” Only the second principle risked an appeal to heart and minds, while the third demanded minimal orthopraxy.

The overt campaign of re-masculinisation in the early 1900s was inherently reflexive. Although the lack of religiosity had long been lamented over, the complaints about the problem intensified. In 1901 the ‘Pastoral Papers’ of the diocese of Cologne

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67 See Busch, “Die Feminisierung der ultramontanen Frömmigkeit”.
68 Sträter, Das Männerapostolat, 23; for his sermons see Männerpredigten; Klassen, Sei ein Mann!
included in its series a disquisition on the subject ‘Why are women often more religious than men?’ The author refuted biological explanations. The notion that women are more emotionally driven while men possess greater reason, courage, and spirit did not convince him. Women’s stronger religious passion cannot be explained by the “natural superiority of the wife”. The real reason for the “religious indifference amongst men” had to be sought amongst men themselves. Amongst the upper classes, education hindered religious devotion. What would happen if women were allowed to register at universities? As for the lower classes, the Social Democrats and alcohol alienated them from the Church. The article ends with an appeal to men to be “good soldiers of Christ under his banner” and to fight for the truth.  

Besides the increasing element of reflexivity, another clear expression of a re-masculinisation project around 1900 was the institutionalisation of pastoral care for men, as evident both organisationally and in the press. A Protestant pendant to the Men’s Apostolate only came into existence five years later, since manliness there was apparently less called into question, and an amalgamation of Protestantism, legitimate masculinity, and nationalism made it less likely that it would be viewed as a problem. In 1915 the Kirchliche Männerdienst was founded under the auspices of the Inner Mission. The burdens of warfare made extra pastoral care necessary. On a local level, some Protestant associations had begun to address male issues as early as the 1880s. All these branches were united in one organisation in September 1933, the Deutsches Evangelisches Männerwerk (German Protestant Men’s Association). Under the leadership of Helmuth Johnsen it sympathised with the Nazi-friendly Deutsche Christen. The Männerwerk’s journal was called Mann und Kirche (Man and Church, 1939-1941). The tradition of hegemonic masculinity in Protestantism made it easy to collaborate with the Nazi movement. While Protestants tended to use religion for the sake of nationalism, Catholics tended to use nationalism for the sake of religion, and accordingly used masculinity for the sake of religion. However, Protestantism never was homogeneous. The German Christian Movement and the Deutsche Christen presented an explicitly masculine habitus, whereas the opposing Bekennende Kirche (Confessing Church) was accused of being effeminate. Such gender-dualism did not only lend itself to combating other denominations; it could be used against other Protestants. Because of the close ties with the Deutsche Christen, the Men’s Association in Württemberg refused to join the united Männerwerk, and in 1934, driven by the ‘resistance’ of the Confessing Church, branches split off in Westphalia, the Rhineland, and later in Bavaria. They went back to their former name, Männerdienst.  

On the Catholic side, initiatives to place male issues high on the agenda of church politics were more visible. This might have been due to the greater degree of religious

69 “Woher kommt es, dass die Frauen meist religiöser sind als die Männer?”, Pastoralblatt der Diözese Köln, 35 (1901), 204-208, 237-243, 273-279.  
70 Cf. Vorstand des Evangelischen Männerdienstes, Evangelischer Männerdienst Asseln; Moering, Kirche und Männer.  
feminisation (the prominent role of Mary, the Sacred Heart cult) and the questionable role of manliness in Catholicism, which had been vilified since the middle of the nineteenth century. The first monthly journal explicitly to deal with men and target male readers was the *Männer-Apostolat*. While the Protestant *Männerdienst* was founded during the First World War, the Catholic *Männer-Apostolat* had got underway in 1910; the journal *Mann und Kirche* first appeared in 1939, whereas the Catholic journal was launched in January 1914, seven months before the outbreak of the First World War. Though Protestant and Catholic institutions had different backgrounds - Inner Mission, Sacred Heart - and their journals were not identical, they still had several crucial things in common. They were the first and only journals in Germany produced by church authorities in the early twentieth century that explicitly tackled men and their problems. After the Second World War new journals were created in this tradition.

These institutions, with their journals and morals, can also be read in the opposite direction. Do they not confirm the feminisation of religion by the simple fact that men obviously needed to be catered for separately? Textual discourses and moral postulations might well indicate that the moral was missing. In fact, the whole enterprise of re-masculinisation was a double risk, firstly because it addressed itself to men, and they were known to be less involved than women, and secondly because it chose a cult, the Sacred Heart, which was especially pious and feminised, and thus at first glance unlikely to suddenly begin to attract men. Nevertheless, the enterprise was successful. In fact, the Men's Apostolate enjoyed rapid growth. In February 1914 the “triumphal march of the Men’s Apostolate” was reviewed, from small beginnings in Krefeld, winding down the Rhine, stretching from Metz to Breslau, from Cologne to Berlin, and numbering more than 60,000 members. By May 1914 more than 100,000 men had joined, and the influx did not stop there. In 1919, while the 10-pfennig monthly reached a circulation of 200,000 copies, the movement itself comprised 300,000 members. In 1925 the monthly had climbed up to 250,000 copies, with “hopefully many more readers”. The peak was reached in 1933 with 800,000 members. Similar associations were founded in other countries, including Ireland, Belgium (500,000 members), and Canada (*Ligues du Sacré-Cœur*, with 350,000 members).

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72 Gross, *The War against Catholicism*.
73 “Siegeszug des Männer-Apostolates”, *MA*, 2 (1914); “Vom Herzen des Welterlöser”, *MA*, 5 (1914).
75 *MA*, 3 (1925).
76 Schwendimann, “Männerapostolat”. This gives the figure of 250,000 members for 1914, and no year for the figures for Belgium and Canada.
RECAPITULATION

Men’s piety has been widely underestimated. The theory of feminisation neglected men, but also their contemporaries suspected them of lacking belief. Pastoral care concentrated on women. It was only in the face of the ‘reproach of feminism’ in around 1900 that new initiatives were taken. The Church authorities realised that men were looking for religious edification and needed special provision to be made for them, while at the same time it was recognised that their existing commitment to public life, politics, and media could be interpreted as another, different demonstration of church loyalty. The wave of Catholic re-masculinisation in the early twentieth century concentrated on piety, while accepting male preferences. It was able to be successful because it picked up on established tendencies. It played on masculine and feminine values and tried to re-code them, but, more importantly, it interpreted male activities, which were not purely pious beforehand, as if they were pious enough. The theory of religious feminisation has overlooked this phenomenon because it concentrates on religious activities in the narrowest sense: prayer, confession, and attending mass regularly. Certainly, feminisation theory holds water. It is true that men were constantly accused of being under-represented in church. Nonetheless, men were over-represented in Catholic associations with public influence and in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Indeed, men dominated the most important and socially relevant parts of the Catholic milieu: mass organisations like the Volksverein, the Catholic parties, and the press. Women were explicitly excluded from active participation in the Augustinusverein (the Catholic Association of Journalists), the Volksverein until 1907, and the General Assembly until as late as 1921.\(^77\)

The manifest re-masculinisation so evident around 1900 was not particularly innovative, except clearly for the fact that male institutions were now intentionally rather than accidentally male institutions. Monasteries are monasteries, just ‘naturally’ separated according to gender. There were no journals explicitly directed at men; they first appeared well after 1900. There are several ways to approach the period from 1800 to 1900 even in the absence of a journal as handy source material: through the habitus clericalis; by looking at how hegemonic social male virtues were identified and linked to Christian ideals; by studying the male homo-stereotypes pressed into the service of ecclesiastical propaganda. Church authorities and priests, clerical and lay leaders, they were all well aware that they had to confront the ‘reproach of feminism’, but that they could not completely twist feminine values into masculine virtues, and neither could they turn ordinary men into devotees. It would be success enough to convince hundreds of thousands of men to take communion on the first Sunday of the month before a freshly masculinised Sacred Heart. Above all, they knew that what made men feel really secure was to appeal to their conventional masculinity.

Another wave of re-masculinisation followed the Second World War.\(^78\) Germany’s men and their ideals were defeated, and with that they lost their authority as

\(^{77}\) Cf. Schneider, “Feminisierung der Religion”, 140-141.

\(^{78}\) For re-masculinisation, see Poiger, “A New, ‘Western’ Hero?”; for Protestant crisis management see Bürger, MännerRäume bilden, 125-126.
the *caput familia*. The response was several initiatives launched on either side of the confessional spectrum. In May 1946 Protestants relaunched *Männerarbeit der Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands* (Men’s Work), combining the ideas of the (Nazi-resisting) *Männerdienst* with the organisational framework of the *(deutschchristlichen) Männerwerk*. In 1948 the journal *Mann und Kirche* from the Nazi period found its successor in *Kirche und Mann*, which continued until its bankruptcy in 1986.\footnote{Hoerschelmann, “Männerarbeit”, 662.}

Catholics based their provision for men in Fulda, where Bishop Johannes Baptist Dietz (1879-1959), head of *Kirchliche Arbeitsstelle für Männerseelsorge und Männerarbeit in den deutschen Diözesen* (Ecclesiastic Institute for Men’s Pastoral Care in the German Dioceses), took responsibility - and was soon being called the *Männerbischof*. The name of the journal, *Mann in der Zeit*, founded in 1948, echoed its forerunner the *Männer-Apostolat* (1914-1934) and its successor *Der katholische Mann* (1935-1941). Another journal from Fulda, launched in 1950, addressed priests committed to the care of men’s souls, and was called *Der Männer-Seelsorger* (Men’s Pastoral Care).

In 1952 *Mann in der Zeit* had a print-run of 320,000 copies, making it the biggest journal for men in Germany, and 1958 it even reached 600,000 copies.\footnote{Wohlgemuth, ed., *Männerarbeit aus der Wirklichkeit des Gnadenlebens*; see also Bleistein, 60 Jahre Männerseelsorgekonferenz in Fulda.} Its nationalist and masculine overtones still existed, but had been toned down remarkably. This generation of men was said to be a beaten generation. Their image was shaken. People cast about for new versions of masculinity. The sword-wielding man who believed in aggression was outdated. Yet one thing was certain: men were meant to be independent, fatherly, and pious. However, as the journal concedes, “who wants to be pious as a man?” That men were unable to be pious is denounced as one of the gravest misunderstandings of former centuries; on the contrary, the true man, the real father, is deeply pious.\footnote{“Männer in Entscheidung und Bekenntnis”, *Mann in der Zeit*, 2 (1948).} After the last war, the possibility of rediscovering a more childlike existence was emphasised. New feminine sides to male existence were the subject of much reflection. At the same time, the old patterns of mimicry and re-coding were popularised again.

Confessionalism stirred up men’s fighting morals. It was appropriate for priests to appeal to men’s masculinity in the second confessional age, while commitment in the public sphere, in politics and journalism, associations and culture, was the legitimate way for men to behave in a manner that was at once bourgeois, manly, and pious. In the 1980s men were rediscovered again by gender studies and by anxious theologians, but this time Jesus was popularised as a truly feminine new man. Men’s identities multiplied, as did confessional and secular identities. The second confessional age was history, and so was the religious re-masculinisation of piety and the re-masculinised religion of men.\footnote{A cluster of books that are more normative than analytical, produced by religious publishing houses, have tried to lure men back to the church with new kinds of personification (man as split personality, sensitive, domesticated, but still seeking his religious identity). See Fraas, *Mann mit Eigenschaften*; Lehner, *Männer an der Wende*; Hofer, *Männer glauben anders*.}