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BOOK REVIEW

Vimala Chenginimattam, CMC, *A Resonating Different Voice. PsychoMoral Development of Women According to Carol Gilligan*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2011. Pages: viii+264. ISBN: 978-81-89958-35-0

Vimala Chenginimattam's *A Resonating Different Voice...* is an in-depth study of the moral development theory of Carol Gilligan. This is in fact a modified version of her doctoral thesis, worked under the guidance of Dr Raphael Gallagher, C.Ss.R. and defended at Alphonsianum, Rome. The author points out that many feminist movements have attempted to bring about the emancipation of women through "imitating men than in finding means of expressions of a woman's God given nature" (p.2). Moreover, women themselves are ignorant of who they truly are. All these lead to further manipulation of women in the society. While revealing the complexity of the process of moral development, in a particular way this book provides the reader with the knowledge to understand and guide girls on the path of moral development, and to help the girls deepen their awareness and enhance the "freedom of being women" (p. 2).

The basic premise of the work, based on Gilligan's theory, is that women's moral development is different from that of men. The book has twofold objectives, namely, an analytical evaluation of Gilligan's theory of the moral development of women and an outline of a programme of moral formation of girls (p. 3). Special attempt is made to reflect on the implications of Gilligan's theory for Catholics.

The book is divided into four chapters. The scholarly foreword by Dr Thomas Srampickal introduces the book suitably and explains its relevance. An exhaustive bibliography that runs to 35 pages, especially the bibliography of both the individually authored and collaborative works of Carol Gilligan, is a great contribution to scholars and researchers.

The first chapter, "Influences on Gilligan's Life and Theory," introduces the developmental theories of Freud, Erikson, Kohlberg and Piaget, and

Gilligan's critical analysis of their theories. Even today many psychologists and cognitive theorists develop their theories based only on male samples and hence, their conclusions about women's development are often incomplete. The author underscores that Gilligan's attempt is not to discredit the theories of others, but to refute "the interpretation of female differences as deficient and deviant" (p. 60).

The second chapter, "Psychology and Moral Development of Women," discusses in detail Gilligan's concept of the psychology and moral development of women. Presenting the spiral model of girls' moral development and the characteristics of Gilligan's relational theory of the ethics of care and responsibility, this chapter helps us to appreciate that the different concept of self in girls and women leads them to have a different moral orientation and a different finality in their development. The author tries to explain how Gilligan "calls our attention not only to the silence of women in history, but also to the difficulty of understanding and accepting their original nature and experience" (p. 61).

In the third chapter, "Moral Formation of Girls: A Proposal," the author proposes some important elements in the moral formation of girls in the light of Gilligan's theory moral development, namely, self-esteem, emotional development and moral reasoning. Following this, the author discusses how the adolescents undergo a transitional crisis, and Gilligan's understanding of identity, autonomy, interpersonal relationships highlighting their difference from the traditional understanding.

The fourth chapter discusses the "Relevance of the Spiral Theory in the Catholic Church." Here, the author analyses Gilligan's theory in the light of the moral teaching of the Church. As an introduction to this consideration, Chenginimattam briefly presents a brief history of Church's attitude towards women. This is followed by a critical evaluation of the converging and diverging points between the Catholic Church's teachings and Gilligan's research on women, as well as proposals to acknowledge the nature and experience of women. Before concluding the chapter, the author offers an analysis of Gilligan's critics.

The author has convincingly presented how Gilligan's theory has lead to a paradigm shift, bringing the different voice of women into the human developmental theories and delineating a theory of development and method for moral formation of girls (p.109-110). The author, however, acknowledges that in the Church, though the "patriarchal way of

theologising is changing," "the acceptance of women with their differences as their richness is still far from reality" (p. 222). Chenginimattam is bold enough to state that the Church "must acknowledge its age-old tradition of indifference to women's full status in the Church" (p. 203). Without creating an atmosphere of antagonism and controversy, the author points out what is to be done so that women's voices may be recognised enough in the Church.

Chenginimattam's "resonating different voice" will be heard by many and will inspire those who are committed to bring about a more just space to women in the Church as well as in the society. This work will be a special help for those who are engaged in the formation of girls. Vimala Chenginimattam deserves our sincere appreciation.

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