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Saved from silence: finding women's voice in preaching

Nadine L. Nicholds

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for physical and spiritual self-care. *Making Room* concludes with descriptive commentaries on eight contemporary Christian communities where hospitality is regularly practiced as a skill and a gift.

I have two criticisms about *Making Room*. First, there is the tendency to be repetitious in places. I get the feeling that the chapters were, by-and-large at one point, lecture notes. Good editing from Eerdmans would have cleaned that up.

Secondly, while Pohl focussed on the poor, the refugee, the disenfranchised and the marginalized, her omitting of gays and lesbians as candidates for hospitality was apparent. Here she might have helped us peek at this issue through the lens of hospitality to see something different, but she failed to provide the opportunity.

Making Room is a welcomed book that will provide a lot of fodder for the Christian community as it seeks self-understanding in this post-modern time. With Pohl, I agree that, "Hospitality is a lens through which we can read and understand much of the gospel and a practice by which we can welcome Jesus himself".

Richard A. Thrift
 Hope Lutheran Church (LCMS, English District)
 Kitchener, Ontario

Saved From Silence: Finding Women's Voice in Preaching

Mary Donovan Turner and Mary Lin Hudson

St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999

\$26.75 Softcover

Saved From Silence is a timely book. Whether we like it or not, there are still subtle, and not so subtle, elements in our culture and church that continue to silence women. Turner and Hudson's book is a revelatory piece that examines this phenomenon and offers ways and encouragement for women preachers to find their voice.

Turner and Hudson have commandeered the metaphor of having "voice". To have voice means to have the ability to be authentic, distinctive, and to claim authority. Having voice is important because when we have voice we have the right to self-expression. When we lose voice, our lives are determined and defined by others. This is what is happening to women.

The authors present an extensive history of the Old and New Testaments and the Reformation. Within these chapters we see how women spoke and then were

silenced. The prophetic voice, a theme throughout the book, states that when the oppressed speak out, they are considered prophets, ground breakers. The lack of clear direction in the scriptures concerning the place of women in public discourse is the reason that the early church, Reformation and following generations encouraged the silencing of women. What is unique about *Saved From Silence*, however, is the fact that Turner and Hudson give the reader examples of women who spoke aloud during those periods of silence. Chapter 5 is an introduction to some women who lived in the eras examined and in contemporary times, who spoke up despite the fact they were considered to have nothing to say.

Chapter 6, "To be Saved by Silence" is, in my opinion, the highlight of this book. It is in this chapter where Turner and Hudson explore the sociological impact of our culture on girls' attitudes about themselves. In this chapter the horrible fact was made clear: girls feel they need to be silent to be accepted. Some women did find an outlet for their unspoken thought by singing (this was featured in the information about Anna Julia Cooper). The authors point out that systemic change, in both the secular and ecclesiastical world, is not as advanced as some might think.

Overall, I felt that *Saved from Silence* is an intelligent, comprehensive book on what it means for women preachers to have "voice". This book is wonderfully balanced between the reality of silenced women, then and now, in both church and society, and the vision of what can be, if we have courage enough to "step up to the mike". Turner and Hudson provide numerous examples of women from New Testament times to the present day who can and do encourage silenced readers. They also help the silenced reader by showing them *how* to speak.

A couple of questions came up during my reading of this book. Do women have an inherent homiletical style different from men? More importantly, why did it take a book, the written word, to bring the silencing of women to light? Do we need to write a book to have our voice respected?

Saved from Silence is a positive offering to the world. I hope that many women preachers are encouraged to move from silence into speech. "Moving from silence into speech for any oppressed, colonized or exploited being is healing [and]...it is liberation" (93).

Nadine L. Nicholds
Trinity Lutheran Church
New Hamburg, Ontario