

# The Representation of Women in Religious Art and Imagery

## Discontinuities in “Female Virtues”

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In the process of conducting research for a cultural-historical museum exhibit, “Spirituality and Piety of Protestant Women in Württemberg,”<sup>1</sup> I discovered a tradition of powerful, symbolic images of women, designed as models of strength and virtue, that was prevalent in Protestant traditions until the eighteenth century. This evidence challenges reconsideration of a widely held conviction that female figures appeared in Christian art and imagery only in pre-Reformation times or in Catholic settings. Even more important for the purpose of this study is the fact that by the eighteenth century, strong female images began to disappear. By the mid-nineteenth century, women either had become either invisible or, where their images still existed within the church, were diminutive, domestic, or angel-like. Why did the strong and established cultural and religious tradition of female strength and virtue disappear?<sup>2</sup> Neither the scholarship of theology nor that of church history offers an explanation; however, gender studies and the recent scholarship on the Enlightenment provide insights into this unexplored subject. Historians have established that a rational, scientific discourse transformed the accepted understanding of human society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including the normative ideals of femininity and masculinity.<sup>3</sup> Theological discourse also formed a part of this cultural shift of the *Sattelzeit*. The changes in the representation of the feminine in religious art, then, must constitute a part of the overarching discontinuity in society and culture of this era, a profound shift in gender values.

This chapter is based on a case study of Protestant religious artifacts

from Württemberg and consists largely of an analysis of allegorical representations of the female body and of female figures in the religious realm. After having depicted the prevalent, affirmative use of the female body in the religious art of the early modern era, I shall describe two developments that helped account for the dramatic change. The first was an iconoclastic early-nineteenth-century campaign to “cleanse” the church that resulted in the intentional removal and destruction of female images. The second was the drive of church leaders of this period to influence the depiction of the female figures in domestic settings so that they would conform to the mores of the day.

As the term is used in this chapter, an allegory is a symbolic representation of an abstract concept.<sup>4</sup> Scholars in gender studies have sometimes asserted that historical allegory is not representative of life and is therefore not to be used as a concrete source for understanding human experience. Sigrid Weigel, for example, concludes, “The allegorical picture is devoid of feeling and life, for it does not refer to a concrete woman.”<sup>5</sup> Writing about the classical art of the late eighteenth century, Gisela Kraut argues that one must take seriously the two completely different representational modes of males and females. One depicts the male in the historical present and legitimizes him through his profession and his social prestige; the other makes women appear ahistorical by means of mythological metaphor.<sup>6</sup> These scholars have searched, without great success, for social historical evidence in literal images of the pictures. In contrast, this chapter focuses on “mythological metaphor” and seeks to interpret constructions of sex and gender found in symbolic church discourse.<sup>7</sup> The connections among historical allegory, concrete images of women, and human experience should not be underestimated.

Before analyzing the allegorical figures, for the sake of context, we will examine some images from illustrated Bibles, especially the emblematic Bibles that were very popular beginning in the mid-seventeenth century and generally contained two illustrations for each biblical theme. Following a Reformation-initiated tradition of emphasizing the literal message of the biblical text, illustrators placed at the top of a page a concrete historical scene depicting a biblical event. The lower half of the page contained symbolic and allegorical representations, often depicted in baroque splendor. Although few women appeared in the “historical” pictures, the elaborate illustrations lower on the page were rich with female figures.

The literal scenes reflected a cultural blindness toward the real

women of the Bible and obscured the variety of female life roles portrayed there.<sup>8</sup> Conversely—and scholars have largely overlooked this fact—in the symbolic pictures, the female embodies spirituality and is used to both describe and prescribe the divine and the holy. This strongly contradicts the cultural assumption that women are fundamentally unable to embody the divine. Scholars of theological gender studies, however, reject the “unholy alliance” between maleness and divinity and assert “that the invisibility of woman in the divine symbolism conforms to and thus normalizes her social marginalization, her dependent, second-place status.”<sup>9</sup> Female symbols of the divine are largely absent from modern Protestantism and are sometimes considered to violate Christian traditions; until the eighteenth century, however, female figures of the divine were common. This chapter will offer some explanations for their disappearance.

What did not disappear were female images represented in biblical figures and depicting two opposite types. First was Eve, signifying the essence of woman as inferior to man because of her seductiveness and her susceptibility to temptation. Second was Mary—in reality three Marys, the mother of Christ, Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Bethany. They appeared as icons of humility, the opposites of Eve, often kneeling before the Lord or standing under “their cross.” Thus, the illustrated Bibles and artistic depictions of biblical figures in churches<sup>10</sup> clearly differentiated between good and bad in femininity. The negative images contained women who appeared upright, prideful, and powerful. Good women appeared kneeling, bowing, gracefully bending their bodies, and caring for children. In the pictures they appeared physically lower than men. Thus, biblical illustrations, both on paper and in murals, mainly depicted stereotypes of women’s roles and behaviors, the Eve type with a demonized body and the Mary type as an asexual being.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the biblical figures were not empowering to women viewers,<sup>12</sup> and the most marginalizing aspect of these media is the vastly disproportionate number of male images.<sup>13</sup>

### **Female Figures as Representations of Spiritual Power**

In spite of the relative scarcity of female biblical images, historical women had the opportunity to see depictions of their sex in religious art both in churches and in illustrated Bibles. Strong traditions had existed since antiquity of allegorical images and depictions of the virtues as females. Such images appeared in metaphorical texts and

allegorical imagery, often associated with mystical movements, as spiritual expressions of connectedness with God or at least with prosperity. In these traditions, all society's welfare depended on observance of the cardinal virtues (Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice) and the theological virtues (Hope, Faith, and Charity), which stood above all others in Christian tradition.<sup>14</sup> All of these virtues were depicted in human form. Prudence was connected with Sophia, the wisdom of God, and so was related to the divine trinity.

Prior to the eighteenth century at the latest, the Holy Spirit appeared as the mother of the virtues, the daughters whom she bore and in whom she was present. The terms *Charity*, *Holy Spirit*, and *Mother* were often used interchangeably.<sup>15</sup> Christianity's three cardinal virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity, were frequently depicted as the three figures of the trinity in an interchangeable hierarchy of order. In Protestantism as well as in Catholicism, they could appear as an effect, an attribute, or a personification of God. In figure 1, taken from the illustrated Bible *Heilige Augen- und Gemüthslust* (Augsburg, 1706), Charity appears in the midst of eight named Virtues. As she is not subsumed into the constellation of the eight but rather is placed as the ninth figure, she personifies the Holy Spirit, who also appears as a dove.

The virtues were also used to illustrate the Lord's Prayer, with a female figure representing each sentence.<sup>16</sup> Allegories were fundamental in the work of Johann Valentin Andreae (1586–1654), a well-known Württemberg theologian whose ideas later helped inspire the development of Pietism. In 1617 he had eighteen allegories painted on the walls of a church in Vaihingen at Enz. The virtues also appeared in his written works, with both the ethical and mystical aspects emphasized.<sup>17</sup>

The appearance of these spiritual figures, however, contrasts strongly with the depiction of biblical women. Allegoric women were usually portrayed upright, with self-confidence, and sometimes fully or partially unclothed but without shame or embarrassment and without being demonized like the Eve type (figure 2). Fortitude could carry heavy temple columns on her shoulders as casually as the mythical biblical hero Samson could.<sup>18</sup>

Faith, the most commonly portrayed allegorical virtue, appeared in every imaginable situation. She was often painted on church walls, and she appeared in epitaphs (figure 2). She was represented pictorially as a statue and in print media in both theological and nontheological texts. She could be seen giving advice to politicians. On a copper plate cre-



Fig. 1. Charity as Holy Spirit, surrounded by eight virtues as her daughters. *Heilige Augen- und Gemüthslust*, Augsburg, 1706. © Landeskirchliches Museum—Museum der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg

ated for the dedication of the City Church of Ludwigsburg in 1726, she and an androgynous angel instruct Duke Eberhard Ludwig to build the church (figure 3).

Faith adorned Christian households as well—for example, in the form of bas-relief metal plaques used as wall hangings (figure 4) or as decorations on stoves. She appeared in a variety of poses and with various symbolic attributes. In these pictorial traditions, characteristic symbols or attributes were used to identify the depicted persons, and the symbols indicated abstract meanings. But the abstractions often related to more than one allegory, making clear distinctions between the virtues difficult. Many different ones could accompany Faith: the cross, the lamb, the cup and host, a palm branch (the tree of life), a veil, a book (also signifying Wisdom/Prudence), and the tables of law (figure 2).<sup>19</sup> All of these symbolic attributes could also be associated



Fig. 2. Two images of Faith. Originally the frame of an epitaph (lost). Stiftskirche Herrenberg, seventeenth century. © Landeskirchliches Museum—Museum der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg

with the allegory *Ecclesia*. She represented the church, mainly in Catholic settings, and was often connected with iconographies of the Mother Mary.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Protestantism perpetuated many symbolic traditions, especially those of *Mary/Ecclesia*,<sup>21</sup> at times as scriptural representations when biblical women, primarily Mary and Mary Magdalene, came to be identical with the allegory Faith as a representation of a believing soul. The humility associated with female biblical figures was thereby infused into the proud figures of the allegories. The prevailing female gender role influenced the strong female image, although Faith was supposed to be a model for men as well.

An extraordinary altar is hidden in a little church in the Black Forest village, Bad Teinach. The altar stems from a conceptualization of Princess Antonia of Württemberg und Teck (1613–79), the well-educated sister of Duke Eberhard III. She worked with four important theologians, including Johann Valentin Andreae, to develop the plans



Fig. 3. Faith instructs Duke Eberhard Ludwig to build a church. Copper plate, 1726. © Landeskirchliches Museum—Museum der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg

for the altar, which allows some insight into how allegorical expressions influenced women and into how women influenced art. The outer altarpiece shows ninety-four allegorical and biblical women climbing a hill toward Christ.<sup>22</sup> The first four women are allegories. Shulamite as the beloved or the bride,<sup>23</sup> crowned by Christ, comes first, and Faith, Hope, and Charity follow her. All are actually portraits of historical women. Antonia is Shulamite, and Hope and Faith are her two sisters, Anna Johanna and Sibylla,<sup>24</sup> thus presenting evidence of women's identification with the allegorical figures.

The inner altarpiece shows a large tower in a garden as a vision of wholeness and salvation. The garden, the tower, and even the heavens are adorned with countless symbolic figures, including persons, animals, and plants. It is a Christian adaptation of the Jewish mystical tradition of kabbalah. Kabbalism is a universal and holistic view of the world inspired by God's blessing and power of creation, extending to



Fig. 4. Winged Faith as an iron bas-relief plaque for the Christian home. Ca. 1860. © Landeskirchliches Museum—Museum der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg

all known arts, technologies, and sciences, all of which were considered to be pointing to God. The theological basis of this philosophical system is the ten *sephirot* (shinings), which inhabit every sphere of the world and constitute the manifestations and emanations of God.<sup>25</sup> In both Christian and Jewish kabbalism, the figures are male when depicted in human form. The exception in some cases was the tenth *sephira*, Shechina, God's presence on earth, who could be female. The first three *sephirot*, placed at the top of the system, sometimes are understood as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

However, Princess Antonia's altar completely changed the roles: The tenth *sephira* is portrayed as Christ, and all nine of the others are female, including the figures of the divine trinity. Charity, portrayed with a burning heart, occupies the role of Father. Faith, carrying the cup and host and embodying images associated with Mary, including her role as queen of heaven, represents the Son. In the Holy Spirit with

tongues of fire around her head, Hope can be recognized, with the anchor as her attribute. Prudence/Wisdom also appears, with her characteristic mirror and snake. In the altar scene, Antonia is walking into the garden as an exemplary believer, carrying symbols of Faith, Hope, and Charity: the cross, anchor, and heart.

Although scholars have analyzed in detail the meanings of this work, they have largely overlooked the female portrayal and imagery of the divine. Both female and male scholars have described the altar as a unique work conceptualized by an exceptional woman. Such interpretations marginalize it and diminish its place in scholarly discourse. My research into baroque traditions leads me to conclude that although this work of art is unusual, it is nevertheless firmly rooted in the allegorical tradition. The allegories not only were intended as models for women but also represented virtues whose ideals addressed both sexes. Men's as well as women's souls were considered to be female, and every human soul was preordained to be the bride of Christ. Death sometimes was represented as the female soul leaving a man's body. The religious arts and images of the early modern era embodied what could be termed spiritual gender crossing.

The Church of St. Barbara in Holzkirch contains a little eighteenth-century oil painting (figure 5) that depicts a vibrant, unclothed woman. The text admonishes, "Renew yourself, become Christ-like."<sup>26</sup> The mirror in her left hand is the well-known attribute of Wisdom, who has traditions reaching back to biblical times and has many connections and similarities to traditions relating to Christ. The female figure's reflection in this mirror is the head of Christ. The cross and cup in her right hand allude to Faith. A veil flows out of the cup, encircling her body and covering her hips. Between her bare breasts is a red heart on which "Jesus" is written. In the background a large serpent wearing a golden crown, again symbolizing Wisdom, crawls through two rocks. This female imagery was intended to portray the message, "Become Christ-like."<sup>27</sup>

In Matthäus Merian's popular illustrated Bibles, published in multiple editions in the seventeenth century, the angels in Jacob's vision of the ladder to heaven are unequivocally female. One caption reads, "He sees the angels ascending and descending. This spiritual symbol signifies the incarnation of Christ."<sup>28</sup> This illustrates that angels, the images of power emanating from God, were often depicted with sexual qualities,<sup>29</sup> although theoretically they fell outside the realm of sexuality or they were drawn androgynously. In Württemberg's Protestant



Fig. 5. "Renew yourself, become Christ-like." Church St. Barbara Holz Kirch, eighteenth century. © Landeskirchliches Museum—Museum der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg

churches, baroque female angels appeared in important and powerful roles. For example, female figures support the pulpits in the churches of Altheim and Langenau. In a 1734 painting in the church of Hürben, the judges who decided between heaven and hell in the Last Judgment were women angels. Such figures were female in sex but not in gender. Spiritual power in the early modern era was less gendered than in the modern era. Even warrior angels were generally androgynous in appearance; seldom were they male.

Thus, female forms played an important role in the theological and spiritual art and imagery of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The female sex was not as a rule excluded from the divine sphere, which could also be depicted with the female body, including the unclothed body. The polarized "character of the sexes" that would develop by the *Sattelzeit* and be established in the nineteenth century thus did not constitute a part of this early modern culture. Although

the biblical images conveyed the notions of female meekness, self-sacrifice, and rejection of the body, the powerful representation of femininity in the allegorical figures counterbalanced this phenomenon.

### **The Enlightenment and Discontinuity: Images of Female Domesticity**

It is well documented that ideals of the Enlightenment included the objective of rationalizing theology and religion. Many church leaders believed that Christianity could endure the scrutiny of rational questioning and advocated that Christians become more “enlightened.” The effects of this development lasted long beyond the traditional periodization of the Enlightenment era but are firmly rooted in it. This transition in religious life may help answer the sociohistorical question raised but not answered by Karin Hausen: “How and with what success” did the bourgeoisie bring about a “popularization of this code of values?”<sup>30</sup> The artistic representation of human forms is a significant vehicle of discourse in which to identify changes in the “character of the sexes.” Many examples of artistic representation demonstrate the realization of Enlightenment goals. Additional research is needed in this realm, but two major themes will be discussed here: the “cleansing” of the churches and the drive to change domestic life.

In 1837 Albert Knapp, a theologian influenced by Pietism, formulated and put into practice a principle for verbal representations in hymnals. Although he was referring to music and word, his rule exemplifies many authorities’ position on all types of imagery: “A truly . . . tasteless picture is to be either deleted or replaced by a better one. . . . When it . . . deviates too greatly . . . from the biblical norm, [it] should be reduced to the simple biblical norm.”<sup>31</sup> Theologians less oriented to Pietist tradition, such as Ignaz von Wessenberg, criticized religious art in the name of reason: “Religious imagery must not contain anything that offends the sense of shame, that drives away moral grace, that hurts decency, that is ridiculous, ignoble, low, or trivial.”<sup>32</sup> Working with the assumption that art and religion were sisters, authorities waged a battle against “wrong” and “unworthy” religious representations and regarded these efforts as a battle for morality. Secular as well as religious authorities engaged in moral campaigns of this sort. The goal was to remove everything that was not rationally explainable, including all mystical, symbolic, and allegorical images. Authorities suspected these types of images of evoking dark emotions and foster-

ing superstition, thereby preventing logical understanding. They worried about the emotional images cultivating sensual passions instead of encouraging morality and decency. During the 1780s, authors visited various churches and then wrote numerous tracts on the improvement of religious art.<sup>33</sup>

In 1817 the Württemberg Ministry of the Interior issued a circular ordering “the improvement of churches in preparation for Reformation Day.” “Because of the decisive influence of church exteriors on the propriety of church services,” the authorities ordered “the removal of everything that offends the eye and the senses.”<sup>34</sup> Church officials decreed<sup>35</sup> that improper art must be reported to the local authorities for confiscation.<sup>36</sup> These impulses were popular among the clergy, who understood pictures and sculptures as vehicles for either hindering or promoting true Christian belief. Authorities alleged that images that might have been “an annoyance to the educated” could arouse pure superstition among those with less schooling.<sup>37</sup> The bourgeois elite condemned any picture not conforming to their standard, including paintings by uneducated artists and those subject to symbolic interpretation. Paradoxically, one of the ideals was that artistic expression should be inspired by antiquity yet should not show nude bodies. The allegories of the virtues, which of course did not conform to the new values, came under attack.

New print technology played an important role as church and lay leaders intensified their campaigns to influence religious artistic expression. The technique of reproduction made low-priced oil prints and chromolithographs available to a wide public for the first time, and their popularity rose. The market for illustrated Bibles also grew substantially. By the middle of the nineteenth century, authorities began to take an interest in these works and to try to ensure that “good” art spread among the people. Beginning in 1847, the Protestant Society of Stuttgart launched a campaign to distribute—and sell for profit—its “devotional miniatures,” which contained biblical scenes intended to replace “immoral” pictures. The Elbersfelder Church Congress of 1851 admonished Christians to display good art. In 1854, graphics, primarily etchings, were brought into circulation. In 1857, Carl Grüneisen, who for many years had favored replacing any art with a “perfection of scriptural research and a rational perspective,” founded the Society for Christian Art in the Württemberg Protestant Church. (He later became a prelate.)<sup>38</sup> The charter of the new organization established one of its main objectives as the distribution of good Christian art in

schools and homes. The other was the “appropriate decoration of church spaces.” The society grew steadily in influence, and by the end of the nineteenth century, nearly 60 percent of parishes and 65 percent of the clergy had become members.<sup>39</sup> The “ideal artistic taste” became a strong socializing norm.

The gender values associated with the movement to purify religious art are evident in the early editions of the publication *Christliches Kunstblatt für Kirche, Schule, und Haus* (Christian Art Journal for Church, School, and Home). One of its authors, Heinrich Merz, praised “the feminine” in art for its “tenderness, sincerity, mildness, and lyric.” Female representation depicted “the most heartfelt devotion and adoration, the most humble joy in God; heavenly beauty contained in the bounds of earthly form to create an un-self-conscious noble sweetness, biblical simplicity bound with the self-limitation characteristic of the mastery of ancient classical art.”<sup>40</sup> Coeditor Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld, usually admired for upholding the new standards, came under criticism for a picture of Mary of Bethany anointing Jesus: “The maiden is depicted in disproportionately enlarged body size, standing before her seated Lord and bowing to him in an imposing stance, not like a humble female disciple [*Jüngerin*] but rather like an exalted priestess, as if she were the protagonist of the picture.”<sup>41</sup>

The images were supposed to serve the desired morality, and so they depicted domestic gender roles that were proclaimed to be biblical and rational. Scholars who have examined this issue from perspectives other than gender studies have not explained why the female images changed so fundamentally—indeed, these scholars have not even noticed that female images previously had been used in the symbolic discourse describing God and the divine. However, the ideals of femininity that emerged from the *Sattelzeit* and became firmly established by the 1860s clearly served as criteria for the acceptable images of womanhood. Although many pictures displayed among the ordinary public would not have met critics’ ideal standards, the female images now were based on nineteenth-century norms of femininity.

Pictures of the mid- and late nineteenth century also dealt frequently with virtues, but they no longer depicted the allegorical women. An 1860 lithograph, *Symbol of the Christian* (Sinnbild des Christen), printed in Stuttgart by Renz, became very popular. In it, Faith, Hope, and Charity appear only as written words in the trunk of the Tree of Virtues. Other words are literally printed in the crown of the tree. Two androgynous angels are watering the tree and driving away the devil. A



Fig. 6. “A Christian’s Path and Goal.” Lithograph by Damel, Stuttgart, ca. 1830. © Landeskirchliches Museum—Museum der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg.

Stuttgart lithograph by Damel from approximately 1830 shows “a Christian’s Path and Goal” (figure 6). On this path, a female-like angel prevents the Christian man<sup>42</sup> from going to a seductive woman, represented by the Eve type. Another angel, less female in appearance, offers the communion cup beneath a crucifix. The caption to the picture makes it clear that the message addresses only males as Christians, and they must choose between Eve and the angel. Although the female sex is not directly addressed, Eve and the angel represent their gender. Thus, in these nineteenth-century images, females could not be human



Fig. 7. “Domestic Virtues.” Chromolithograph for the Christian home, about 1880. © Landeskirchliches Museum—Museum der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg.

in the same way that males could: Eve’s sinful nature was lower than human, and the angel belonged to the higher spheres.

In the course of the nineteenth century, angels became more and more a part of private religious art. Like Faith in early modern times, the angels signify a Christian household and home; some of them appear like housewives with wings. A color lithograph dating from approximately 1880 (figure 7) names the “domestic virtues”:

The home’s beauty is cleanliness,  
 The home’s honor [is] hospitality,  
 The home’s blessing [is] piety,  
 The home’s fortune [is] contentedness.<sup>43</sup>

Images of this sort became very numerous in the second half of the century and decorated many media—for example, porcelain dishes. Combined with the important word *Haus* (home, in its nineteenth-century usage, also meaning household) and often with a female angel, these icons depict women's Christian labors. In place of the earlier female figures of Christian virtues that represented norms for the whole community—male and female—the new spiritual images of women represented a specific, ideological gender role. The moralizing ideals of bourgeois domesticity had supplanted female spiritual images, especially those of the virtues.<sup>44</sup> These messages venerated the angel-like mother, wife, and housewife. The virtues of Wisdom, Fortitude, Justice, and Temperance had disappeared from the discourse describing and prescribing femininity.<sup>45</sup>

### Conclusion

The disappearance of divine female images is rooted in the *Sattelzeit*. Spiritual gender crossing vanished during this period. The early-nineteenth-century movements to extirpate images that did not directly conform to prescribed social reality eliminated the power of transcendence from female images. They could not compete with the normative limitations of changing gender ideals. Instead, they served as religious authentication and glorification of the “character of the sexes.”

The anthropomorphic virtues disappeared during the era when bourgeois economic ideals were replacing older notions of sustenance and common good<sup>46</sup> that were represented by Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence/Wisdom, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice. In the early nineteenth century, collective civic identities in German-speaking territories were changing. For example, Hamburg's “traditional republican concept of the public good”<sup>47</sup> could be identified with those virtues that adorned the sepulchres of many rulers. Both the virtues and their representation in the allegorical female figures were eliminated. The female body had come to be associated with weakness; it had become taboo to associate it with strength or other “male” attributes.<sup>48</sup> Even the angels of the nineteenth century were not allowed to appear androgynous. The normative alliance of maleness and divinity was enforced.

### Notes

1. The exhibit was shown at the Landeskirchliches Museum Ludwigsburg in Württemberg, 16 May–8 November 1998. This was the second part of a two-

year project, with the first part a sociohistorical exhibition that opened in May 1997. The exhibit is depicted in two catalogs: *Herd und Himmel: Frauen im evangelischen Württemberg* (Ludwigsburg, 1997); *Weib und Seele: Frömmigkeit und Spiritualität evangelischer Frauen in Württemberg* (Ludwigsburg, 1998).

2. Visitors and journalists at the exhibit called every female figure an angel, regardless of whether it had wings, illustrating the modern popular association between angels and femininity, which contrasts with early modern practices.

3. In the scholarship of theology and church history, the era 1750–1830 is not well researched, although abundant primary sources exist. See Karin Hausen, “Die Polarisierung der ‘Geschlechtscharaktere’—Eine Spiegelung der Dissoziation von Erwerbs- und Familienleben,” in *Sozialgeschichte der Familie in der Neuzeit Europas: Neue Forschungen*. ed. Werner Conze, (Stuttgart, 1976), 363–93.

4. For a common definition, see Lore Kaute, “Allegorie,” in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* (Freiburg i.Br., 1974), 1:97: “Darstellungen, die einen komplexen gedanklichen Vorstellungsgehalt in bildlicher Umschreibung durch sogenannte allegorische und symbolische Figuren zur Anschauung bringen.”

5. Sigrid Weigel, *Topographien der Geschlechter: Kulturgeschichtliche Studien zur Literatur* (Reinbek, 1990), 170.

6. Gisela Kraut, “Weibliche Masken: Zum allegorischen Frauenbild des späten 18. Jahrhunderts,” in *Sklavin oder Bürgerin? Französische Revolution und neue Weiblichkeit, 1760–1830*, ed. Viktoria Schmidt-Linsenhoff (Frankfurt, 1989), 348.

7. I mean this in a double sense, both architecturally within the church and within the realm of the church’s influence on daily life. The theological aspect rarely is considered, not even in Marina Warner’s opulent *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London, 1985).

8. These books, with their emphasis on Old Testament themes, depict an even greater variety of women and female roles than the paintings in the churches, which illustrate primarily New Testament themes.

9. Silvia Strahm Bernet and Doris Strahm, “Gott/Göttin: Systematische Theologie,” in *Wörterbuch der Feministischen Theologie*, ed. Elisabeth Gössmann, Helga Kuhlmann, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, Ina Praetorius, Luise Schottroff, Helen Schüngel-Straumann, Doris Strahm, and Agnes Wuckelt (Gütersloh, 2002), 244–47.

10. The fundamental literature for pictures and other artistic media in the churches of Württemberg (although these works fail to address gender issues) includes Martin Scharfe, *Evangelische Andachtsbilder: Studien zu Intention und Funktion des Bildes in der Frömmigkeitsgeschichte vornehmlich des schwäbischen Raumes* (Stuttgart, 1968); Reinhard Lieske, *Protestantische Frömmigkeit im Spiegel der kirchlichen Kunst des Herzogtums Württemberg* (Munich, 1973).

11. Exceptional women—for example, militant viragos such as Judith,

Yael, or Deborah—could be seen up to the seventeenth century. They subsequently either were interpreted as *männermordend* (murderers of men, “man eaters”) in an erotic sense or had disappeared.

12. Other than a spiritual empowerment that hardly can be proved.

13. Church illustrations more often portrayed scenes of Jesus’ life, usually dealing with men and the Marys, sometimes fitting other women into the Eve type. They also continued the apostle series and prophet series. I found only one female collection of prophets in the little village of Pappelau. It has not yet been precisely dated and may stem from the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

14. The imagery is not limited strictly to the seven virtues; others could be added in pictures as well as in spoken or written discourse.

15. See Verena Wodke-Werner, “Heiliger Geist oder Heilige Geistin im Trinitätsfresko von Urschalling?” in *Die Weiblichkeit des Heiligen Geistes: Studien zur feministischen Theologie*, ed. Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel (Gütersloh, 1995), 77–114.

16. See, for example, the drawings on the wall in the church of Untertürkheim dating from 1656.

17. See, for example, his utopian ideal of a Christian society with Christ as a center, “because he is the most perfect exemplification of the sum of all virtues” that should be imitated. As I discuss later in this chapter, in Andreae’s era, it was not regarded as inconsistent to combine female figures with Christ; see Johann Valentin Andreae, *Reipublicae christianopolitae descriptio* (Straßburg, 1619), 158; translated from *Christianapolis*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Stuttgart 1972), 170.

18. See Judges 16:29.

19. In later times, she occasionally also appeared with wings, possibly portending the transition to angels.

20. These are attributes of Mary as well as Religio. The palm branch was a common allegorical symbol. It is also often seen with angels.

21. I believe that the commonly held thesis that Protestantism had eliminated all holy and saintly female images should be reexamined. The saints were supposed to have been deleted from Protestant churches but often were not. Many functions and elements that formerly had belonged to the saints became associated with the allegories. Thus, for example, Protestant *Heiligenpfleger* (administrators) at Holzkirch ordered a new picture of their old patron, St. Barbara, in 1764: With her attributes, the cup and the host, there is no visible difference between her and a representation of Faith.

22. See the depiction of the altar in Otto Betz’s richly illustrated *Licht vom unerschaffnen Lichte: Die kabbalistische Lehrtafel der Prinzessin Antonia in Teinach* (Metzingen, 1996). Further literature can be found there, but Betz does not discuss the allegories. The altar was discussed in Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel, “Ein Altar weiblicher Heilsschau,” in *Wenn Gott und Körper sich begegnen* (Gütersloh, 1989), 88–107.

23. See the biblical Song of Solomon, which was interpreted in an allegorical sense.

24. Scholars have not yet identified Charity.

25. See Gershom Sholem, *Zur Kabbala und ihrer Symbolik*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt, 1981); Gershom Sholem, *Von der mystischen Gestalt der Gottheit: Studien zu Grundbegriffen der Kabbala* (Frankfurt, 1973). For the adaptation in the Teinach altar, see Betz, *Licht*.

26. "Erneüret Eüch Werd Christo gleich." This picture is one of a pair. The other portrays Eve, Adam, the tree, and the apple and is captioned, "The bite from the apple is the cause of all of this [Der Apfel Biß Bracht alles diß]."

27. Longing for a utopian androgyny may have been one of the reasons for such concrete drawings of gender crossing. Groups such as the Sozietät der Mutter Eva indeed practiced a very liberal sexuality about the time this picture was crafted. See, for example, Willi Temme, *Krise der Leiblichkeit: Die Sozietät der Mutter Eva (Buttlar'sche Rotte) und der radikale Pietismus um 1700* (Göttingen, 1998).

28. See Genesis 28. The caption in Merian's Bible reads, "Die Engel er darauff uff und ab steigen sicht / Christi Zukunft in Fleisch bedeutet diß geistlich Zeichen."

29. This may stem from Renaissance traditions; however, the tradition of the allegories undeniably constitutes an influence.

30. Hausen, "Polarisierung der 'Geschlechtscharaktere,'" 381. The quotation is taken from the English version: Karin Hausen, "Family and Role-Division: The Polarization of Sexual Stereotypes in the Nineteenth Century—An Aspect of the Dissociation of Work and Family Life," in *The German Family: Essays on the Social History of the Family in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany*, ed. Richard J. Evans and W. R. Lee (London, 1981), 72.

31. M. Albert Knapp, *Evangelischer Liederschatz für Kirche und Haus: Eine Sammlung geistlicher Lieder aus allen christlichen Jahrhunderten, gesammelt und nach den Bedürfnissen unserer Zeit bearbeitet* (Stuttgart, 1837), 1:xx.

32. Ignaz Heinrich von Wessenberg, *Die christlichen Bilder: Ein Beförderungsmittel des christlichen Sinnes* (Constance, 1827), 2:47. See also Scharfe, *Evangelische Andachtsbilder*, 49.

33. See, for example, [Carl Ludwig Junker], *Meine Reise nach Karlsruhe und Stuttgart* (Neustadt an der Aisch, 1786); [Michael Dietrich], "Ulmer Albwanderungen im 18. Jahrhundert: Auszüge aus alten Briefen," *Blätter des Schwäbischen Albvereins* 25 (1913): 11–18, 39–44, 69–72, 121–26.

34. Theodor Eisenlohr, ed., *Sammlung der Württembergischen Kirchengesetze*, pt. 2, Vollständige, historisch und kritisch Bearbeitete Sammlung der Württembergischen Gesetze, ed. A. L. Reyscher (Tübingen, 1835), 9:383–84.

35. See "Entleerung von edlem altem Schmuck," in *Württembergische Kirchengeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1893), 604. It would be profitable to study original documents—for example, the protocols of church visitations. In research for the museum exhibit, we found many of the removed paintings in attics or learned that they had only recently been rehung in the church.

36. Ludwig Anton Haßler, "Ueber den Einfluß religiöser Gemähde auf die Sittlichkeit: Wohlgemeinte Winke für den Seelsorger," *Archiv für die Pas-*

*toralkonferenzen in den Landkapiteln des Bisthums Konstanz*, 1806, 358, cited in Scharfe, *Evangelische Andachtsbilder*, 45.

37. Wessenberg, *Die christlichen Bilder*, 41, cited in Scharfe, *Evangelische Andachtsbilder*, 44.

38. Carl Grüneisen, *Ueber bildliche Darstellung der Gottheit: Ein Versuch* (Stuttgart, 1828); Scharfe, *Evangelische Andachtsbilder*, 45.

39. Scharfe, *Evangelische Andachtsbilder*, 70.

40. Heinrich Merz, "Die neueren Bilderbibeln und Bibelbilder: Eine Ueberschau," in *Christliches Kunstblatt für Kirche, Schule, und Haus*, ed. C. Grüneisen, K. Schnaase, and J. Schnorr von Carolsfeld (Stuttgart, 1860), 2:121, 138.

41. *Ibid.*, 106.

42. Such pictures often came in pairs, each addressing one sex. Here, however, I have no knowledge of a counterpart addressing women, and I cannot imagine that one exists.

43. "Des Hauses Zier ist Reinlichkeit / des Hauses Ehr [ist] Gastfreundlichkeit / des Hauses Segen [ist] Frömmigkeit / des Hauses Glück [ist] Zufriedenheit."

44. See Paul Münch, *Ordnung, Fleiß, und Sparsamkeit: Texte und Dokumente zur Entstehung der "bürgerlichen Tugenden"* (Munich, 1984).

45. The angels are a culminating point in the discourse. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, female angels became prevalent. They were displayed not in churches but rather in print. Their role was almost exclusively caring for children, and they did not display any other divine qualities. Most instructive is a fact that can be deduced from drawings or photographs that commemorated the confirmation day. The same girl occurs twice: first as a pious believer, second as a lovely angel. On the photographs, since 1890 widespread throughout Germany and often originating from Berlin, a single model portrayed both roles, which were combined by a montage effect. Boys rarely were represented in the angel pictures. One exception, however, is a painted postcard from 1905 that shows a boy's angel wearing a long robe but with the same adolescent facial hair as the boy. The spiritual gender crossing was no longer extant. The image of the female angel has changed from an external transcendental power to an alter ego, an idol of woman's gender role. Mighty and powerful angels in the nineteenth and even twentieth century had become gendered males.

46. Marion W. Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women: The Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres during the German Enlightenment* (New York, 2000).

47. See Aaslestad, this volume.

48. See Sanislo, this volume.