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vene long-standing Catholic thinking on the subject.

"In the case of nuclear armaments," he notes, "it is very difficult to find cogent arguments in support of any single viewpoint in the Holy Scriptures." No statements by the bishops would be binding on individual Catholics. And while the Vatican could make such a pronouncement, it has avoided doing so.

One reason, says Bär, is that "although the word of God has implications for Christians in their political activities, [the Church] stands above, and in fact outside, politics." While the Vatican has stressed its desire for peace, it has addressed "all regimes without exception, thus avoiding any encouragement of unilateral initiatives." The "Christian peace movements," Bär contends, have plainly political objectives that would, in effect, require unilateral Western disarmament.

Their position is based on an appeal to conscience. But in traditional Christian thought, conscience is not merely emotional conviction, says Bär, but "the ability to understand the general rules on good and evil and to assess one's own deeds on the basis of this understanding." Conscience, the 1962-65 Vatican Council II declared, "frequently errs from invincible ignorance."

Indeed, Bär accuses the antinuclear activists of sinking into a "Utopian reverie." The church is not pacifist because it recognizes that it must exist in the real world; man was expelled from Paradise. It has "always known that an absolute 'no' to armaments and warfare is impossible, because right must be defended and oppression combated."

Why Calvin Courtied Women

"Calvin's Letters to Women: The Courting of Ladies in High Places" by Charmarie Jenkins Blaisdell, in *Sixteenth Century Journal* (No. 3, 1982), Center for Reformation Research, Northeast Missouri State University, LB 115, Kirksville, Mo. 63501.

During the last 22 years of his life, Protestant religious reformer John Calvin (1509-64) did most of his proselytizing through letters from his home in Geneva. According to Blaisdell, a Northeastern University historian, his correspondence shows that he was as eager to convert women as he was to win over men.

Protestantism was as much a political as a religious movement. Calvin realized that success depended on gaining the support of western Europe's powerful nobility. And aristocratic women frequently took the lead in championing new causes. Calvin courted some of the most important women in 16th-century France, such as Renée de France, daughter of Louis XII.

The chief theme of Calvin's letters is to "take a firm stand and serve God." For many women, unequivocal support for Calvinism was dangerous. They feared not only official persecution but the wrath of Roman Catholic husbands. Yet Calvin did not offer them the solace and

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John Calvin's theological teachings were most influential in 16th-century Holland, Germany, Scotland, and France.



advice they could have expected from a Catholic confessor. He "seems to have reserved no more sympathy for women than for men," Blaisdell says, and virtually ignored their special concerns.

Calvin held many orthodox 16th-century beliefs about the inferiority of women, but his letters show that he regarded them as the equal of men in spiritual matters. In one, he noted that it was a woman who brought the news of the Resurrection to the Apostles, who at first refused to believe her. Nor did women's "weakness" excuse them from religious responsibility in Calvin's eyes. When Jesuit priests persuaded Renée de France not to join Calvin's cause, he announced that "the devil himself could celebrate his triumph."

It was common for ambitious men of the time like Calvin to seek help from women in high places, Blaisdell notes, suggesting that in those days, "class differences were more significant than sex differences."

Is the Fetus a Patient?

"Operating on the Fetus" by William Ruddick and William Wilcox, in *The Hastings Center Report* (Oct. 1982), 360 Broadway, Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y. 10706.

Technological innovations during the 1970s make it possible today for surgeons to operate on fetuses in and outside the womb. They also raise potential ethical problems for physicians, parents, and society.