

**Hedgerow Seminar 2010**  
**New Questions Change Everything!**  
**Women's Critical & Creative Dialog with Scripture**

Is the bible hopelessly dated? Why study texts used to silence women, rationalize slavery, promote suffering, and discount people of other religions?

Like sacred stories in every culture the bible holds stories that open us to the mystery in which we live. Sacred texts originate in the human experience of the holy in our world. Time distances us from the originating experiences and their cultural context and expression. In the last 60 years scholars, especially women scholars, have engaged scripture with new questions that arise out of their experience, out of their social locations around the globe, and out of contemporary worldviews that include evolutionary cosmology, ecological sensitivity, gender equality, democratic governance.

New methods actively engage today's readers in critical and creative dialog with scripture. Ecofeminist, womanist, and other liberation theologies give voice to women, people of color, people in poverty, people once colonized, and all of us in the seminar.

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**Required Reading Texts**

Bible (Revised Standard Version, or New International English, or New American)  
Barbara E. Bowe, *Biblical Foundations of Spirituality: Touching a Finger to the Flame*.  
Lanham, MD: Sheed and Ward, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2003.

**Requirements**

1. Read and wrestle with the scripture assignment each week.
2. Read and prepare to discuss assigned reading from *Biblical Foundations*.
3. Write a one-page (250 words) critical, creative reflection each week; for example—
  - A New Testament woman telling her story from her first-person point of view
  - A New Testament woman commenting on events in the gospel or early Church or on events in the world or church today.
  - A short homily on a New Testament passage involving a woman (or women.)
  - Your reflection on the input and discussion in class.
  - A prayer, poem, song, art, or ritual.

**Basic Reference Books**

Newsome, Carol A. and Sharon H. Ringe, eds. *Women's Bible Commentary*.  
London: SPCK, 1992. Has pieces on each book of the bible.  
Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth, ed. *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*,  
Vol. I. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1994.

**Note:** Each seminar session lists bibliography, featuring the scholarly work of women and of men about women in the New Testament. Participants can sign these books out a week at a time. The books will be available before and after class.

**IV. Wisdom's Prophet: Communities of Equals**

**February 8, 2010**

**Women in the Early Christian Communities**

**Read Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 1-2, 6-10, 18; Romans 16**

- Jerusalem community
- Widows, women's groups (Acts 6, 9, Tabitha)
- Women apostles, deacons: Priscilla, Junia, Phoebe
- Feminist/Womanist/Liberation Hermeneutics

Hollies, Linda H. "A Woman Worthy of Tears: Tabitha," *Jesus and Those Bodacious Women*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2007, 239-251.

Price, Robert M. *The Widow Traditions in Luke-Acts: A Feminist Critical Scrutiny*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

Richter Reimer, Ivoni. "The Miraculous Story of the Disciple Tabitha (9.36-43)," *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, 31-70.

Richter Reimer, Ivoni. "The Missionary Artisan Priscilla and the Universal Praise That Is Her Due (18.1-3, 18-19, 24-28)," *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, 195-226.

Martin, Clarice J. "The Acts of the Apostles," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary, Vol. I*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1994, 763-799.

## February 15, 2010

### **"No longer male and female, slave or free—one in Christ (Galatians 3.28)**

#### **Read 1 Corinthians 11, 14-15; Philippians 1-2; Galatians 1-3**

- Women of Corinth pray and prophecy
- Lydia and what we know about women's social world
- Cosmology of Jesus' time, women's bodies
- Philo and Paul, trained rabbis in a Greek and Roman world
- Read Bowe, *Biblical Foundations*, pp. 153-164. Prepare to raise questions and discuss how Pauline your Christianity or alienation from Christianity is.

Briggs, Sheila. "Galatians," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994, 218-236.

Richter Reimer, Ivoni. "Lydia and Her House (16.13-15, 40)," *Women in the Acts of the Apostles: A Feminist Liberation Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, 71-150.

Carol Osiek, "Philippians," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary, Vol. I*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1994, 237-249.

**February 22, 2010**

**In Memory of Them: Women in the First Gospel**

**Read Mark 1-3; 14.1—16.8**

- Peter's mother in law, the first woman disciple
- Mary, Jesus' mother
- Woman who anoints Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James and Joses, Salome, and women of Galilee
- Ritual of spices
- Read Barbara Bowe, "That Man Jesus," *Biblical Foundations*, pp 127-136. Prepare to discuss question 1.

Dewey, Joanna. "The Gospel of Mark," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary, Vol. I*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1994, 470-509.

Johnson, Elizabeth. *Dangerous Memories: A Mosaic of Mary in Scripture*. New York: Continuum, 2004, 38-44.

Nakashima Brock, Rita. *Journeys by Heart, a Christology of Erotic Power*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1995.

Mitchell, Joan. *Beyond Fear and Silence: A Feminist Literary Reading of Mark*. New York: Continuum International, 2001, 1-24.

Sabin, Marie Noonan. *The Gospel According to Mark, the New Collegeville Bible Commentary*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2006.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Reconstruction of Christian Origins*. New York: Crossroad, 1985.

Thurston, Bonnie B. *The Spiritual Landscape of Mark*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008.

**March 1, 2010**

**In Memory of Them Who Tell the Story: Creative Moves, Healing Energies**

**Read Mark 4.35-6.52, 6.30-8.21**

- Woman with hemorrhage
- Jairus's daughter
- Herodias's daughter
- Syrophenician woman,
- Rituals of anointing

Anderson, Janice Capel. "Feminist Criticism: The Dancing Daughter," *Mark & Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, eds. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992, 103-134.

Corley, Kathleen. *Women & the Historical Jesus: Feminist Myths of Christian Origins*. Santa Rosa: Pleridge Press, 2002.

Dewey, Joanna "The Gospel of Mark," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994.

Fowler, Robert M. "Reader-Response Criticism: Figuring Mark's Reader," *Mark Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore, eds. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992, 50-83.

Hollies, Linda H. *Jesus and Those Bodacious Women*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2007.

Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.

Mitchell, Joan L. *Beyond Fear and Silence: A Feminist Literary Reading of Mark*. New York: Continuum, 2001, 57-98.

Selvidge, Marla J. "Mark's Story, Daughter As Leader," *Daughters of Jerusalem*. Kitchner, Ont: Herald Press, 27-60.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Bible Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

## V. Spirit, Fire, and Social Order

### March 8, 2010

#### Matthew's Gospel: Women and Slaves in Jesus' Parables

##### Read Matthew 1-2; 5.1-48; 11.1-18; 25; 28

- Jesus' Genealogy: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba
- Illegitimacy of Jesus question, Jane Seaburg
- Women at the cross and tomb
- The mother of James and John
- Women's work in Jesus' parables.
- Divorce, Christian ethic of mutual love
- Read Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations*, pp. 136-141. What icon do you picture in your mind to represent the Jesus of Matthew's gospel?

Balabanski, Vicky. "Opening the Closed Door: A Feminist Rereading of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25.1-13)," *The Lost Coin: Parable of Women, Work, and Wisdom*. Mary Ann Beavis, ed. New York: Continuum, 2002, 71-97.

Hearon, Holly and Antoinette Clark Wire. "Women's Work in the Realm of God (Matthew 13.33; Luke 13.20,21; Gospel of Thomas, 96; Matthew 6.28-30; Luke 12.27-28; Gospel of Thomas 36), *The Lost Coin: Parables of Women, Work, and Wisdom*. New York: Continuum, 2002, 136-157.

Tamez, Elsa. *Bible of the Oppressed*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1982, 66-82.  
(*On the beatitudes and the questions of who is poor*)

Johnson, Elizabeth. *Dangerous Memories: A Mosaic of Mary in Scripture*. New York: Continuum, 2004, 45-71.

Reid, Barbara. "Wisdom's Children Justified (Matthew 11.16-19; Luke 7.31-35)," *The Lost Coin: Parables of Women, Work, and Wisdom*. New York: Continuum, 2002, 287-305.

Wainwright, Elaine. "The Gospel of Matthew," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary, Vol. I*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1994, 635-677.

Yang, Seung Ai. "Has Jesus Ever Condemned Divorce? An Intercultural Interpretation of Jesus' Saying on Divorce," *Off the Menu: Asian and Asian American North American Women's Religion and Theology*. Rita Nakashima Brock, Jung Ha Kim, Kwok Pui-Lan, Seung Ai Yang, eds. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, 253-274.

### **March 15, 2010**

#### **Luke's Gospel: Keeping Women in Their Place and the Poor With Us**

**Read Luke 1.1--2.1-40; 4.1-30; 7.36-50; 8.1-3; 18.1-8**

- Mary
- Elizabeth
- Woman who loved too much: Can you see her?
- Luke 8.1-3, rewriting Mark, demonizing Mary Magdalene
- Read Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations*, pp. 141-145.

Hebblethwaite, Margaret. *Six New Gospels: New Testament Women Tell Their Stories*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 22-53.

Karlsen Seim, Turid. "The Gospel of Luke," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994, 728-762.

Matthews, Mary W., Carter Shelley, and Barbara Scheele. "Proclaiming the Parable of the Persistent Widow," *The Lost Coin: Parable of Women, Work, and Wisdom*. Mary Ann Beavis, ed. New York: Continuum, 2002, 46-70.

Price, Robert M. *The Widow Traditions in Luke-Acts: A Feminist Critical Scrutiny*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997, 101-126.

Reid, Barbara. *Choosing the Better Part: Women in the Gospel of Luke*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press

Schottroff, Luise. "The Stubborn Widow and the Resistance of Women (Luke 18.1-8)," *Lydia's Impatient Sisters: A Feminist Social History of Early Christianity*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995, 101-120.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Jesus, Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York: Continuum, 1994.

### **March 22, 2010**

#### **Mary, Martha, Evolving House Churches, Prodigals**

**Read Luke 10.1-42; 13.1-35; 15.1-32; 23.44-56; 24.1-35**

- Triangulated sisters: Martha, Mary
- Bent over woman: what men think about her
- Lost and found
- Superseded at cross and resurrection

- Conflicts between Peter and Mary Magdalene
- For discussion: What icon do you picture in your mind to represent the Jesus of Luke's gospel?

Reid, Barbara. *Choosing the Better Part: Women in the Gospel of Luke*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press,

Schottroff, Luise. "The Lost Coin: Women's Daily Struggle for Money and Bread (Luke 15:8-10)," *Lydia's Impatient Sisters: A Feminist Social History of Early Christianity*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995, 91-100.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Bible Interpretation*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.

### **March 29, 2010**

#### **John's Gospel: Wisdom's Community**

##### **Read John 1.1-18; 2.1-25; 4.1-42; 9.1-41**

- An alternative footwashing community holds a memory of women as equals
- The new community of the Spirit (John 2)
- Photina, the evangelist, the Samaritan Woman (John 4)
- Antagonism between Christian Jews, Rabbinic Jews (John 9)
- Read Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations*, pp. 145-149.

Brown, Raymond. "Appendix II," *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979, 183-198.

Edwards, Denis. *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1995, 44-87.

Ringe, Sharon. *Wisdom's Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.

Reinhartz, Adele. "The Gospel of John," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary, Vol. I*, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 1994, 561-600.

Schneiders, Sandra. *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*. New York: Crossroad, 1999.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *Jesus, Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology*. New York: Continuum, 1994.

## **VI. Spirit Animating Every Generation**

### **April 5, 2010**

#### **Discipleship as Friendship**

##### **Read John 11-12; 13-17; 20;**

- Friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11-12)
- Community of Friends
- Mary Magdalene (John 20)
- For discussion: What icon do you picture in your mind to represent the Jesus of John's gospel?

Hebblethwaite, Margaret. *Six New Gospels: New Testament Women Tell Their Stories*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 78-93. (Martha of Bethany)

Hebblethwaite, Margaret. *Six New Gospels: New Testament Women Tell Their Stories*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 94-114 (Mary of Bethany).

Hebblethwaite, Margaret. *Six New Gospels: New Testament Women Tell Their Stories*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 115-149 (Mary Magdalene).

Ringe, Sharon. *Wisdom's Friends: Community and Christology in the Fourth Gospel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.

Schaberg, Jane with Melanie Johnson-Bebaufre. *Mary Magdalene Understood*. New York: Continuum, 2006.

Schneiders, Sandra. *Written That You May Believe*. New York: Crossroad, 1999.

Yamaguchi, Satoko. *Mary & Martha: Women in the World of Jesus*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002, 113-138.

**April 12, 2010**

### **Household Codes: Taming Pentecost**

**Read 1 Corinthians 7.1-40; 9.1-27; 11.2-16; 14.34-36; Philippians 1-2; Romans 6; Ephesians 5.21-33; 6.1-9; Colossians 3.18-4.1; 1 Timothy 2.8-15, 1 Peter 3.1-7**

- Women's place in society, Christian community (1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy)
- Who keeps quiet in the churches? Who speaks out? On whose authority?
- How useful are the master/slave, husband/wife metaphors today?
- Contending with the household codes in today's churches and world

Kittredge, Cynthia Briggs. *Community and Authority: The Rhetoric of Obedience in the Pauline Tradition*. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998.

Maloney, Linda. "The Pastoral Epistles," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994, 361-280.

Osiek, Carolyn. "The Household Codes and Its Implications," *What are they saying about the social setting of the New Testament?* Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1984, 73-83.

Schottroff, Luise. "He Lived the Life of a Slave: Slave Parables in the Gospel of Luke," *The Parables of Jesus*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006, 171-187.

Wire, Annette. "1 Corinthians," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994, 153-195.

**April 19, 2010**

**Persistent icons of hope and images healing**

**Read Revelation 1-2,16-22; Romans 8**

- Tiamat Returns: Women Icons of the Apocalypse
- Whore of Babylon, Dragon
- Woman with the child
- Rivers and Trees of Healing
- Read Barbara Bowe, *Biblical Foundations*, pp.165-176. Prepare to discuss questions 2, 5.

**April 26, 2010**

**Women in Leadership: Tensions Between Mary Magdalene and Peter**

- Gospel of Thomas
- Gospel of Mary Magdalene
- Acts of Paul and Thecla

Brock, Ann Graham. *Mary Magdalene, the First Apostle, the Struggle for Authority*. Boston: Harvard Theological Studies, 2003.

King, Karen L. "The Gospel of Mary Magdalene," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994, 601-634.

King, Karen L. *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*. Santa Rosa: Poleridge Press,

Perkins, Pheme. "The Gospel of Thomas," *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary*. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, ed. New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1994, 535-560.

Schaberg, Jane. *The Resurrection of Mary Magdalene: Legends, Apocrypha, and the Christian Testament*. New York: Continuum, 2002.