



Religious Studies in Kansas

Department of Religious Studies

◆ The University of Kansas ◆

Vol. 1, No. 1, Fall 1992

“Envisioning the Past in Creating the Future”

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza
Harvard University

(1). Introduction: Issues and Definitions.

While formulating a topic for this lecture, I saw a television broadcast entitled “The Great Nobel Debate” which was held in Stockholm in 1991. The debate brought together recipients of the Nobel Prize to discuss possibilities for the future of the world. Some members of the panel contended that humanity has the knowledge and the will to make the world’s future possible. The other group of Nobel laureates argued to the contrary, that modern knowledge and technology have brought our planet to the brink of destruction. The South African novelist Nadine Gordimer summed up the deadlock in the debate, arguing that “scientific knowledge” and “spiritual vision” are presently turned away from each other. Only when knowledge and spiritual vision embrace each other will we be able to create a humane future. However, Gordimer did not point to another grave impairment of knowledge and

vision: the audience gathered in the Swedish Academy of Arts and Sciences primarily consisted of white elite men.

“How can we draw a full circle of the world’s vision so that our planet can have a future?”

One hundred years earlier, the African American feminist Anna Julia Cooper, made a similar appeal to restore the wholeness of vision and imagination. In distinction to Gordimer, Cooper insisted that those of us who until now have been excluded from knowledge and power must be allowed to participate in such a revisioning:

“It is not the intelligent woman vs. the ignorant woman; nor the white woman vs. the black, the brown, and the red, — it is not even the cause of woman vs. man. Nay, it is woman’s strongest vindication for speaking that the world needs to hear her voice. It would be subversive of every human interest that the cry of one half of the human family be stifled. Woman ... daring to think and move and speak, — to undertake to help shape, mold and direct the thought of her age, is merely completing the circle of the world’s vision. Hers is every interest that has lacked an interpreter and a defender. Her cause is linked with that of every agony that has been dumb — every wrong that needs a voice.... The world has had to limp along with the wobbling gait and one-sided hesitancy of a man with one eye. Suddenly the bandage is removed from the other eye and the whole body is filled with light. It sees a circle



Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

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where before it saw a segment. The darkened eye restored, every member rejoices with it."

Building upon what Nadine Gordimer and Anna Julia Cooper have said, I would like to submit that feminist theory and theology provides this different ethical and religious imagination which can serve the present and the future. It is the traditional knowledge and vision which are still biased to the extent that they continue to be articulated by elite white men.

Feminist theory and theology embrace both knowledge and vision in order to rectify our knowledge and vision of the world. In particular, I would like to explore how feminist biblical studies can contribute to an ethos and imagination that fosters a radical democratic religious vision. Positioned on the threshold not only of the "global village" but also in the midst of the 500th anniversary of the European "discovery" or better "occupation" of the Americas, I invite you to ask: How can we draw the full circle of the world's vision so that our planet can have a future?

"Feminist theory and theology embrace both knowledge and vision in order to rectify our knowledge and vision of the world"

Since "feminist" and "feminism" are still for most Americans "dirty words" I must first clarify what I mean by feminist theory and theology. Feminism as I understand it is first of all a social movement of women and men working to transform patriarchy. By patriarchy I do not mean the exploitation of all women by all men equally. Rather a critical theory of patriarchy understands women's oppression not just in terms of gender but also in terms of the multiplicative interstructuring of racism, class

Religious Studies in Kansas

Religious Studies in Kansas is the newsletter of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas, and continues the tradition of the former newsletter *Religion: Journal of the Kansas School of Religion* which published its final edition in the spring of 1992.

This newsletter is published twice annually in the fall and the spring and is edited by Professor Paul Allan Mirecki and Scott T. Kline (M.A. candidate in religious studies). Please send inquiries, change of address information, and notes for inclusion for the fall issue by October 15, and for the spring issue by February 15, to:

Professor Paul Allan Mirecki
Department of Religious Studies
Smith Hall
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas 66045
Phone: 913/864-4663
FAX: 913-864-5264 (attention Dept. Religious Studies)

exploitation, heterosexism, and colonialist militarism. If vision and knowledge are determined by their sociopolitical location and function, then knowledge and imagination for the future must be situated within the diverse feminist struggles which seek to overcome patriarchal oppression.

(2). The Framework for Feminist Interpretation.

Feminist theory constructs a "conceptual vision" or "vantage point" as an effective set of lenses which enable us to understand and change patriarchal reality. By utilizing a critical theory of patriarchy, it seeks to remove the bandage from the mind's eye in order to restore full vision. Feminist theology in turn explores what kind of role religious vision and imagination play in the limited imagination of the West. At the same time it seeks to recover religious vision and imagination that can help repair the full circle of the world's vision.

Feminist biblical interpretations seek to restore those segments of the biblical vision that have been marginalized, submerged, or erased from our political-religious consciousness. They seek to articulate a biblical imagination that can shape a more just future for the global village. Such a biblical imagination must be reconstructed as a historical imagination which can retrieve Christian history and theology as more than the memory of the suffering and victimization of all nonpersons. It must also be constructed as religious-ethical vision which can recover the voices of those marginalized women and men who have shaped Christian history as religious interlocutors, agents of change, and survivors in the struggles against patriarchal domination.

Women have always shared remembrances, told stories, and kept their memories alive. However, history has by and large been written by elite men who have reconstructed the past as their own story and in their own interests. For instance, the apostle Peter, who according to some traditions was the first witness to the resurrection, has been hailed throughout the centuries as having primacy among the apostles. In contrast, Mary of Magdala, who according to other traditions was the primary witness to the resurrection, has lived in Christian memory as a repentant whore and sinner. Thus, Christian historical and religious imagination has been deprived of its fullness of vision.

Like historians of other oppressed groups, feminist biblical historians, therefore, seek to break through the silences and biases of historical records in order to reappropriate the past of women who have participated as historical agents in social, cultural and religious transformation. Such a task of a historical reimagining and reconstruction that seeks to recover early Christian history as a "dangerous memory," and an inspiring heritage for all nonpersons, encounters great methodological difficulties which are aptly described by the Caribbean writer Michelle Cliff:

"To write as a complete Caribbean woman, or man for that matter, demands of us retracing the African past of ourselves, reclaiming as our own, and as our subject a

history sunk under the sea, or scattered as potash in the canefields, or gone to bush, or trapped in a class system notable for its rigidity and dependence on class stratification. On a past bleached from our minds... It means realizing our knowledge will always be wanting. It means also, I think, mixing in the forms taught us by the oppressor, undermining his language and co-opting his style and turning it to our purpose."

In other words, the point of a feminist historical reconstruction cannot be to distill, for instance, the factual "truth" of Mary of Magdala, from its discursive representations. Neither can such a reconstruction hope to recover the "real" Mary of Magdala, nor should it try to establish the "actual event" of her first encounter with Jesus. Instead it must open up to historical memory and critical discussion all those traditions which have been suppressed in traditional historiography in order to explore the reasons for the exclusions from and deformation of our historical knowledge and imagination of Mary of Magdala.

In order to reimagine and reconstruct early Christian history as the history of women and men, as a discipleship of equals, feminist biblical studies must do more than question the prevailing accounts of the past. It must also situate its historical reconstructions within a critical democratic imagination that can conceptualize the writing of history not as an antiquarian science but as a rhetorical practice which shapes our vision of the present and the future.

In her 1989 Harvard commencement address, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto singled out "democracy" as "the most powerful political idea in the world today" and called for the creation of an Association of Democratic Nations to promote democracy as a universal value and global vision. Acknowledging the influence of Western democratic institutions Benazir Bhutto also underscored the influence of religion in shaping democratic vision. Bhutto asserted that in her country the love of freedom and human rights "arises fundamentally from the strong egalitarian spirit that pervades Islamic traditions." Therefore, according to Bhutto, the idea that the progress of a society can be judged by the progress of its women must be applied also to the sphere of its religion. The criterion for measuring whether a religion is democratic and liberating consists according to Bhutto in the practical test of whether it allows for the full participation and leadership of women.

If one accepts the religious status of women as a pragmatic criterion for judging whether a religion can sustain and nurture a democratic imagination and society, then religious studies must seriously attend to feminist questions and analyses. Since western society has traditionally realized democracy only in its patriarchal form, feminist theory and religious studies must seek to revision democracy and bring to consciousness the fact that a radical democratic imagination and politics must include women as full democratic citizens, who can equally participate in deciding the future of "our global village."

However, one would be ill-advised to approach in a defensive fashion the question as to whether Scripture supports democratic structures and the full participation of women and other marginalized people in public ecclesial government. For, it is not possible on epistemological

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grounds to "prove" without doubt that the Scriptures advocate egalitarian democracy rather than patriarchal monarchy since both forms of social organization shaped the socio-symbolic universe of biblical writings. Rather, one has to realize that socio-historical models that inform the reconstruction of biblical history and community are shaped by the interests of the biblical historian, theologian, or general biblical reader who reimages or reconstructs historical reality. Our own experience functions as what Clifford Geertz calls "a model of reality". Without such common sense models we would have no basis for comprehending the past that requires interpretation. In other words, those biblical interpreters whose polity resembles a "free church" model or who are committed to egalitarian politics will emphasize the democratic elements inscribed in biblical texts. Those whose polity favors a "hierarchical" model of church and society will stress the patriarchal-monarchical aspects advocated by biblical writers. They can do so, however, because variations of both models of church are inscribed in the biblical traditions and still available as social models of reality today.

(3). "Ekklesia": Equality in the Power of the Spirit

This tension between democratic participation and the patriarchal-hierarchical models of church and society may be explicated by examining the linguistic notion of the Greek word "ekklēsia" which is translated "church", although the English word "church" actually derives from the Greek word "kyriake" which is translated "belonging to the Lord". The original meaning of "ekklēsia" was "public assembly of the political community" or "democratic assembly of full citizens." The translation process which transformed "democratic assembly" into "church" indicates a historical development that has privileged the patriarchal hierarchical form of the church. The preferred meaning of "church" understands the equality of its members in terms of siblings in a family and in terms of friendship. This meaning of "church" derives from the classical institution of democracy that promised freedom and equality to all its citizens.

The traces of democratic structures and visions that surface, for instance, as "dangerous memory" in a critical

democratic reading of the apostle Paul's letters indicate that the two key terms for the self understanding of early Christian missionary communities in the Greco-Roman cities were political: "soma," the body of Christ and "ekklesia," the democratic assembly. The meaning of the metaphor of Christ's body is best contextualized within the popular political discourse of antiquity that understood the "polis" (the city state) as a "body politic" in which all members were interdependent. This metaphor circumscribes the reality of being "in Christ":

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so is it with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks, slaves or free [both women and men] - and all were made to drink of one Spirit" [1 Cor 12:12-13].

In the body-politic of Christ, all have equal access to the gifts of the Spirit. This equality in the Spirit does not mean that all are the same. Rather, the gifts of the members vary and their individual functions are irreplaceable. No one can claim to have a superior function because all functions are necessary and must be equally honored for the building up of the body politic.

To exist "in Christ," that is, in the body politic, or in the power sphere of Christ, all socio-religious inequalities of status were understood to be abolished including those between priest and laity, between officials and ordinary members, as well as between holy or religious people dedicated to the sacred and the common people immersed in daily profane matters. Equally, socio-religious status distinctions and privileges between Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, slave and free—both women and men—were abolished among those who were "in Christ" (Gal 3:28).

Early Christians understood themselves as equally gifted and called to freedom. G-d's Spirit was poured out upon all, sons and daughters, old and young, slaves and free, both women and men (Acts 2:17-18). Those who have been "baptized into Christ," live by the Spirit (Gal 5:25). They are "pneumatics," or spirit-filled people (Gal 6:1). They are a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17).

All without exception are called, elect, and holy: Jews, pagans, slaves, free, poor, rich, both women and men, those with high status and those who are "nothing" in the eyes of the world. Their equality in the Spirit is expressed politically in alternating leadership and partnership. They, therefore, rightly name their "assembly" with the democratic term "ekklesia."

The full decision making assembly of Christians who understood themselves as exiles and resident aliens in their societies (1 Peter 2:11) and constituted a different politeuma (Phil 3:20) met in private houses. These house churches were crucial factors in the missionary movements into Greco-Roman cities insofar as they provided space and a forum for leadership. They supplied space for the preaching of the gospel, for worship and for social and eucharistic table sharing. Theologically, the community

that assembled in houses is called the "household of faith" (Gal 6:10). These house-assemblies did not take over the structures of the patriarchal household but were patterned after those of private associations. Women played a decisive role in the founding, sustaining, and shaping of such house-assemblies. Women could do so because the patriarchal division between private and public spheres was abolished in the "ekklesia" that assembled in the house.

Christians were neither the first nor the only group who gathered together in house-assemblies. Various religious groups, voluntary associations, professional clubs, funeral societies, and the Jewish synagogue regularly met in private houses, but with one important difference, they did not adopt the structures of the patriarchal household but utilized the egalitarian rules and offices of the democratic assembly of the polis.

(4). Advocacy of Patriarchal Adaptation.

Christian "assemblies", like other private associations of the time, were suspected as politically subversive to the patriarchal-imperial order. The early Christian texts advocating adaptation to the Greco-Roman patriarchal structures of household and state seek to lessen this tension (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus).

This conflict and contradiction between Greco-Roman socio-political structures of domination and the democratic vision of God's "ekklesia" as the "alternative democratic community" and "new [social] creation" has engendered the need for apologetic legitimization. Freeborn women like artisans or slaves (both women and men) belonged to a submerged group in antiquity and could become leaders in the emergent Christian assemblies because they stood in conflict with the dominant patriarchal ethos of the Greco-Roman world. The struggle is to be seen as an integral part of the struggle between the emerging Christian movement with its vision of equality and freedom and the hegemonic patriarchal ethos of the Greco-Roman world. In this struggle, ecclesial leadership in the "assembly" by freeborn women, slave women, and slave men was again submerged, transformed, or pushed to the fringes of "male-stream churches."

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However, the egalitarian currents of early Christianity have never been completely eliminated. Ecclesial struggles throughout the history of the church cannot be understood if one does not take this democratic undercurrent into account. These ecclesial reform movements have appealed in the past, and still do so today, to the traditions of freedom, equality and dignity of all the people of G-d which

have shaped the socio-symbolic universes of biblical writings.

In short, I argue that the patriarchal rhetorics of early Christian writings must be read as an attempt to adjust Christian community to its Greco-Roman socio-political environment. Such a rhetorical model for the reconstruction of the early Christian movements as I have proposed in *In Memory of Her* should not be misread as an apologetic search for the true, pristine, orthodox democratic origins of Christianity which were then very quickly corrupted by early Catholicism or gnostic heresy. Instead this model of historical reconstruction is one of social interaction and religious transformation, of struggle between "ekklesia" as the discipleship of equals, and "church" as the patriarchal household of G-d promulgating the "politics" of subordination and domination in western societies.

(5). Greco-Roman Patriarchal Democracy

Although this "patriarchal politics of submission" was inscribed in and mediated by Christian scriptures, it did not originate with them. It was not invented by Christian theology but was first theorized in the context of the classical Greek city-state where the notion of democracy was not constructed in abstract or universal terms but was seen as rooted in a concrete socio-political situation. Greek patriarchal democracy constituted itself by excluding the "others" who did not have a share in the land but whose labor sustained society. Freedom and citizenship were not only measured by contrast to slavery but were also restricted in terms of gender. Moreover, the socio-economic realities in the Greek city-state were such that only a few select freeborn, propertied, elite, male heads of households could actually exercise democratic government.

According to the theoretical vision of democracy (and not its historical realization) all those living in the city-state should be equal citizens, able to participate in government. In theory, all citizens of the "polis" are equal in rights, speech, and power. As the assembly of free citizens, the "ekklesia" should come together for deliberating and deciding the best course of action in order to achieve its own well-being and to secure the welfare of the polis.

However, the socio-economic realities of the Greek city-state were such that only a very few freeborn, propertied, educated, male heads of households actually exercised democratic government. Active participation in government depended not only upon citizenship but also upon the combined privilege of property, education, and freeborn male family status. As Page Dubois has succinctly stated:

"The ancient democracy must be mapped as an absence. We have only aristocratic, hostile representations of it ... the demos, the people themselves, have no voice in history; they exist only figured by others."

It was this radical contradiction and tension between the *ideal* of democracy and the *actual* sociopolitical patriarchal structures that produced the master-centered

theory of "natural differences" between elite men and women, between different natural types of persons.

(6). Modern Democracy.

Although the classical Greek and Roman political forms of patriarchy have been modified under continually changing socio-economic and political conditions, they seem to have been the two prevailing forms of patriarchy in the history of western Christianity. This is due to a similar theoretical legitimization process which becomes evident again with the emergence of modern western democracy which articulated itself as a "fraternal capitalist patriarchy." In so far as patriarchal democracy is modeled after the classical ideal, it has inherited some of the same ideological contradictions. For example, it also claims that its citizens "are created equal" and are entitled to "liberty and the pursuit of happiness", yet still retains "natural" patriarchal and sociopolitical stratifications.

The ideological justification of the domination of men over nature, male over female, free over slave, and Greek over barbarian, which was articulated as "natural superiority" in classical philosophy, reappears in the discourses of modern Eurocentric political philosophy and theology. These classical patriarchal discourses have been mediated not only through Christian Scriptures but also through Christian theology.

This patriarchal Eurocentric discourse occurs also in western political science. It manifests in the construction of the ideal "Man of Reason" in Enlightenment philosophy, and of the "White Lady" in Euro-American racist discourses. It comes to the fore in the western colonialist depiction of "inferior races" and "uncivilized savages." Like the "White Lady," Christian religion was considered to be a civilizing force among the savages.

In sum, the western symbolic order not only defines woman as "the other" of the western "Man of Reason," but also maps the patriarchal systems of oppression which stand in opposition to the democratic logic of radical equality for everyone. The institutionalized contradiction between the western ideals of radical democracy and their patriarchal actualizations has also catalyzed movements for emancipation seeking full self-determining citizenship.

"The feminist vision of radical democracy must model itself on the tribal governments in the Americas, such as the Iroquois Confederacy, in which the Council of Matrons was the ceremonial, executive, and judicial center."

In the last centuries the emancipatory struggles for equal rights as citizens have brought national independence, voting, and civil rights for all adult citizens, yet these movements have not been able to overcome the patriarchal stratifications that continue to determine modern constitutional democracies. They were only able to create

liberal democratic formations that simply made the democratic circle coextensive with the patriarchal pyramid, thereby reinscribing the contradiction between democratic vision and political patriarchal practice. In turn, liberal theorists of democracy have sought to reconcile this contradiction through procedures such as periodic voting, majority rule, representation, and procedural resolution of conflicts. In the process, democratic liberty becomes construed merely as the absence of coercion, and the democratic process degenerates into the spectacle of election campaigns.

In an important article entitled the "Red Roots of White Feminism," Paula Gunn Allen, one of the foremost Native American literary critics, has argued that the creative roots for a radical democratic feminist vision cannot be found in the democratic traditions of classical Greece which did not know a pluralistic concept of democracy and did not allow women to participate in decision making government. Rather, the feminist vision of radical democracy must model itself on the tribal governments in the Americas, such as the Iroquois Confederacy, in which the Council of Matrons was the ceremonial, executive, and judicial center, as noted by Allen:

"The root of oppression is loss of memory. An odd thing occurs in the minds of Americans when Indian civilization is mentioned: little or nothing ... how odd then must my contention seem that the gynocratic tribes of the American continent provided the basis for all the dreams of liberation that characterize the modern world ... the vision that impels feminists to action was the vision of the Grandmothers' society ... it is the same vision repeated over and over by radical thinkers of Europe and America ... that vision ... is of a country where there are "no soldiers, no gendarmes or police, no nobles, kings, regents, prefects, or judges, no prisons, no lawsuits ... all are equal and free...."

Native Americans seemed gloriously free to European eyes. Their willingness to share their goods, their respect for the earth and all living beings, their preference for scant clothing, their derision of authoritarian structures, their permissive childrearing practices, their frequent bathing, their living in a classless and propertyless society, all these attitudes led to the impression of a "humanity unrestrained." The reports from Columbus and other Europeans about the free and easy egalitarianism of indigenous Americans were in circulation by the time the Reformation took hold in the sixteenth century. This view is corroborated by Gary Nash, a historian of colonial America:

"Many of the early colonists had envisioned a virtuous society organized around concepts of reciprocity, spirituality, and community. [With the passage of time] the only people in North America who were upholding these values, and organizing their society around them, were the people who were being driven from the land."

Although the system of modern democracy resembles in many ways the nonfeudal Iroquois confederacy, it is also quite different. Gunn Allen highlights two major

differences: first, that the Iroquois system is Spirit-based, and second, that the "clan matrons" performed the executive function which was directly tied to the ritual nature of the Iroquois democracy. "Because the matrons were the ceremonial center of the system, they were also the prime policy makers" states Allen.

In conclusion I would submit that only the indianization of classical notions of democracy with biblical understandings of "assembly," and western visions of individual freedoms and equal rights will result in a feminist vision and practice of radical egalitarianism. A feminist theological revisioning of the biblical past for creating a future of the "global village" must consequently locate itself in such a radical oppositional democratic imagination. The radical democratic imagination of the Grandmothers' society challenges responsible religious studies to revision biblical community and reorder our religious imagination in such a way that they can aid in creating a Spirit-center for a radical democratic Confederacy of global dimensions. ♦

Professor Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza of Harvard University is an internationally reknowned scholar, lecturer, and teacher. She combines her scholarly work on biblical interpretation with her pioneering research in feminist theology. Her books include the widely acclaimed *In Memory of Her* (1983), *Bread not Stone* (1984), and *Revelation: Vision of a Just World* (1991). After earning her doctorate in Germany, she taught for almost 15 years at Notre Dame University and in the fall of 1988 joined the faculty of Harvard Divinity School. Dr. Fiorenza was the first woman scholar to serve as president of the Society of Biblical Literature, the nation's largest scholarly society for biblical studies. This essay is an edited version of a lecture she delivered at the 1992 KSR Annual Banquet.

The First International Conference on Magic in the Ancient World

For three days in late August 1992, the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Kansas hosted the "First International Conference on Magic in the Ancient World". The conference brought together 32 scholars from the United States and Europe who presented and discussed their research on various features of ancient Mediterranean religious thought and practice popularly described as "magic."

The purpose of the conference was to bring together many of the leading scholars in ancient religious studies and classics, and to provide them with a forum for both the reading and discussion of scholarly papers and the sharing of new ideas and data. About 125 persons from the University of Kansas academic community and other national universities attended various parts of the conference as participants in discussions or as observers.



Group photo of participants at the "First International Conference on Magic in the Ancient World" held at the University of Kansas, 20-22 August 1992.

The conference was convened by professors Paul Allan Mirecki (University of Kansas) and Marvin W. Meyer (Chapman University), and was made possible through the generous support of the Kansas School of Religion, the Hall Center for the Humanities, and the Claremont Graduate School, and, at the University of Kansas, by the Office for International Studies and Programs and the College Lecture Fund.

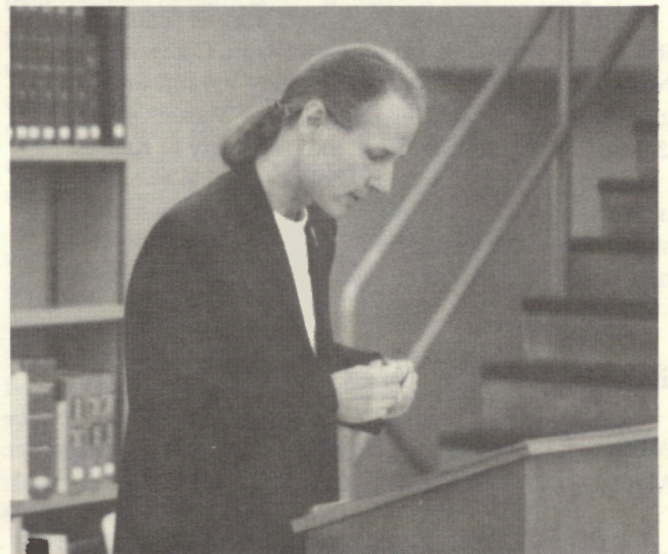


Paul Allan Mirecki and Marvin W. Meyer (standing) share a collegial moment with Anthony Corbeill (Classics, University of Kansas), and Michael Swartz (University of Virginia).

The plenary speaker was Jonathan Z. Smith (University of Chicago), who set the stage for the rest of the conference by presenting his ideas on issues of definition and taxonomy in the study of ancient "religion" and "magic." Two

special guest speakers were Robert K. Ritner (Yale University), who spoke on magic and religion in ancient Egyptian texts, and Fritz Graf (University of Basel, Switzerland), who spoke on magic and religion in Greek and Latin classical texts. International participants also included William Brashear (curator of the state manuscript collections in Berlin, Germany), Roy Kotansky (papyrologist from Cologne, Germany), Jacques van der Vliet and Ewa Danuta Zakrzewska (linguists from Leiden University, The Netherlands).

The papers read at the conference will be collected and published as a book by Fortress Press (1994) in its series "Studies in Antiquity and Christianity." Plans are already in the making for a second international conference to be held at the University of Michigan (1996) and a third conference at Basel University in Switzerland (2000). ♦



Richard Smith (Claremont Graduate School) reads a paper on the ancient gnostic ritual text *The Three Steles of Seth*, "the way of ascent is the way of descent."

News & Notes

Dr. Gordon K. Douglass to Present KSR Annual Lecture

Dr. Gordon K. Douglass will present the Kansas School of Religion Annual Lecture on Tuesday, April 20, 1993 on the subject of "Sustainable Development, Reformed Faith, and United States International Policy."

Dr. Douglass completed his B.A. degree at Pomona College and his doctoral degree in economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Educator, economist, and financial adviser to business and government, he has had a varied and significant career with an active role in church policy. His career as educator has included a faculty position at Pomona College with service as departmental

chair and endowed professorships in economics. He later served a dean and professor at Franklin and Marshall College. His economic research has included manager of special financial services for Sylvania Electric Products, research director of the Southern California Research Council, and senior economist for the Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare of the national government. Among his publications are *The Challenge of Leisure* (1968), *Efficiency in Liberal Education* (1972) and *The New Interdependence* (1979). Recently Dr. Douglass has served as chair of the Committee on Social Witness Policy of the Presbyterian Church of the USA.

KSR Scholarships Awarded

The recipients of the 1992-1993 Kansas School of Religion Scholarships are Barbara Dixon, Corey van Nostrand, and Patrick Prohaska. They are full-time graduate students working towards their Masters of Arts degree in Religious Studies at the University of Kansas.

Each year the Kansas School of Religion awards outstanding students by offering these generous scholarships. This year alone, the Kansas School of Religion offered a total \$15,000 in scholarships.

Regional Conferences

National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion
March 28, 1993

The National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion will meet at the Central States Region, Annual Meeting in Kansas City, Missouri. The conference will be held at the Ramada Inn Southeast at 87th and I-435 in Kansas City. Papers dealing with some of the unique circumstances encountered by Baptist professors will be delivered. For more information concerning this conference, contact Andrew L. Pratt, Baptist Student Center, 909 Normal Avenue, Cape Girardeau, Mo. 63701.

SBL/ASOR Central States Regional Meeting
March 28- 29, 1993

The Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Oriental Research Central States Region will meet jointly at the Ramada Inn Southeast at 87th and I-435 in Kansas City, Missouri. This conference will address topics from a variety of fields within the study of religion. In past years, there have been sessions devoted to Genesis, Isaiah, and Wisdom Sayings from the "Hebrew Bible Session;" the Synoptic Gospels, Luke-Acts, and Magic from the "New Testament Session;" and to Barth and Bonhoeffer, Religious Movements, and Religion in America from "Theology Session." If you would like

more information concerning this conference, contact Victor H. Mathews, Department of Religious Studies, Southwest Missouri State University, Springfield Mo. 65804, or phone him at (417) 836-5514.

AAR/SBL Rocky Mountain Great Plain Regional Meeting

April 16-17, 1993

The American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature Rocky Mountain Great Plains Region will jointly convene a conference at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska. Session topics will range from Philosophy of Religion and Religious Movements from AAR to Hebrew Poetry and the Sayings of Jesus from SBL. If you would like more information concerning this conference, contact Richard A. Freund, Department of Philosophy and Religion, University of Nebraska—Omaha, 60th and Dodge, Omaha, Ne. 68182. ♦

Book Reviews

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Testament to Freedom: The Essential Writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.* edited by Geoffrey B. Kelly and Burton Nelson (San Francisco: Harper Publishing Co., 1990) 579 pages, \$32.95

It has been often argued that in this century there has been no one theologian who has impacted Christian theology and the history of Christian resistance more than Dietrich Bonhoeffer. While this may or may not be true, Bonhoeffer has clearly influenced more than three generations with his unique concepts of Christian theology and Christian resistance. Theologically Bonhoeffer is probably best known for his concepts of "cheap" and "costly" grace, Jesus as "the man for others," and "religionless Christianity." Historically Bonhoeffer is probably best known for his involvement in the Hitler resistance movement and the 20 July 1944 plot to assassinate the Führer, Adolf Hitler. It was because of Bonhoeffer's outspoken resistance against the Nazi state that Bonhoeffer was imprisoned in 1943 at Tegel Prison in Berlin. After the failed attempt on Hitler's life, Bonhoeffer was placed in the hands of the feared SS and subsequently moved to the dreaded SS Prison at Prince-Albrecht Straße. In February 1945 Dietrich was moved to Buchenwald Concentration Camp. On April 8, Bonhoeffer was transported to Flossenbürg Concentration Camp where he was court-martialed in the middle of the night. The following day, 9 April 1945, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, at the age young of thirty-nine, was hanged for crimes against the state.

This book is a collection of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings, sermons, and letters from his earliest days as a young theology student at the University of Berlin in 1928 to his days as an imprisoned member of the resistance movement against Hitler in 1944. The editors, Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, have divided Bonhoeffer's writings thematically into seven parts: Christ as Community, Bonhoeffer the Teacher and Lecturer, Bonhoeffer's Confession of Faith, Bonhoeffer the Pastor, Bonhoeffer on Following Christ, Bonhoeffer's Ethics, and Bonhoeffer's Correspondence. Each part is prefaced with a short introduction, often with quotes from Dietrich's best friend, Eberhard Bethge, which is meant to set the writings in an historical and a theological context. Then, each selection has a short paragraph or two delineating major themes found in the selection. In the back of the book, there is a useful chronology of Bonhoeffer's life, a glossary of terms, a bibliography of Bonhoeffer's works and works about Bonhoeffer (English only) and separate indices—of persons and of subjects.

In the past, collected works of Bonhoeffer in English generally concentrated on his major works, i.e., *Life Together*, *The Cost of Discipleship*, *Ethics*, and his *Letters and Papers from Prison*. However, in this volume, the editors have included writings, sermons, and letters which were previously untranslated. The aim of this volume is to support Bonhoeffer's well-known major works with writings, sermons, and letters which show how this theologian wrestled with theological, ecclesiastical, and political issues.

The approach the editors of this volume have taken is excellent. By dividing Bonhoeffer's works into thematic parts, one can see the development of the theme from Bonhoeffer's earliest impressions in 1928 to his final correspondences in 1944. The editors also do an adequate job in prefacing the selections with short helpful introductions which alert the reader to important events in Dietrich's life and their relationship to his thought. The most innovative aspect of this volume is undoubtedly the "Glossary of Terms." The glossary defines specific historical events, political and theological movements, and important theological terms frequently employed by Bonhoeffer.

In sum, this volume is extremely "user-friendly." A *Testament to Freedom* should serve as a useful resource to the Bonhoeffer scholar, but is clearly intended for the layperson or pastor who wants to become acquainted with one of the most influential Christian theologians and martyrs of this century.

Reviewed by: Scott T. Kline
M.A. Candidate in Religious Studies
The University of Kansas

***The Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992) 396 pages.**

This long awaited publication presents a women's reading of the Bible. Produced under the joint editorship of Carol Newsom (Old Testament; Candler School of Theology, Atlanta) and Sharon Ringe (New Testament; Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC), the lengthy volume of 396 pages (double columns, small print) contains critical commentaries on each of the 66 books of the Christian canon.

Forty-one of the leading women biblical interpreters active in research and American higher education present their readings of these texts. Beginning the discussion of each biblical book with extended discussions on essential critical issues and a narrative summary of each book's content, the commentators then focus on select biblical passages in their respective books that have special relevance to women, and which enable women and men readers to understand the importance of both the presence and absence of women in and from canonical religious texts. Attention is then drawn to female characters, symbols, life situations (including marriage and family), the legal status of women (as presented in texts), and religious principles affecting relationships between women and between women and men. A special focus is on how those various texts both represented and misrepresented the lives and experiences of a broad variety of women in ancient Jewish and Christian communities, with lasting effects into the late twentieth century.

The book is prefaced by an informative discussion, jointly written by the editors Newsom and Ringe, on the history and significance of women's voices in the interpretation of biblical texts, focussing on the period from Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the 1890s up to the present. The first chapter, "When Women Interpret the Bible" by Sharon Ringe presents the basic elements of hermeneutical theories employed by feminist interpreters of ancient religious texts, focussing on issues such as "interpretation as active reading", "the ambivalent power of the Bible", "approaches to the task of interpretation", "the variety of women's voices within the text and the interpreting feminist community", and the welcomed "interpreting in a global context".

The Old Testament section of the book concludes with an essay by Carol L. Meyers (Duke University) on "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible" focussing on the biblical and extrabiblical sources for reconstructing women's lives. Meyers then focusses on the data available on women's lives in ancient Israelite villages and urban settings where women are variously categorized as workers, mothers, religious persons, and wives.

The New Testament section includes a superbly informative article by Diedre J. Good (General Theological Seminary) on women in "Early Extracanonical Writings"

which surveys the data for women in religion in Christian texts outside the traditional canon. Good focusses on women in early Christianity as first witnesses to the resurrection, and as prophets, ascetics, martyrs, widows, deacons, and scholars. She concludes that the extracanonical literature "provides evidence of a much fuller participation of women in the life and ministry of the early church" than either the canonical texts or later theological discussions suggest.

The New Testament section concludes with a discussion by Amy L. Wordelman (Princeton University) on "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the New Testament" focussing on women's cultural and political contexts, on women's class and work, women's stages of life, and women in religion.

This excellent volume can certainly be read through from cover to cover or simply employed as a sourcebook. It will prove to be highly informative for a broadly diverse audience not necessarily limited to women, Jews, or Christians. The reader will find an excellent volume, full of refreshingly new and useful insights on and interpretations of biblical texts. This volume effectively and convincingly demonstrates how women's perspectives can and must affect the interpretation of canonical biblical texts for today's world.

Reviewed by: Paul Allan Mirecki

Dieter Lührmann, *An Itinerary for New Testament Study* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989) 131 pages.

This is an introductory book for students as well as an excellent review volume for seasoned readers of New Testament texts by Dieter Lührmann, Professor of New Testament at the University of Marburg, Germany. Originally published in German under the title *Auslegung des Neuen Testaments* (Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 1984), this excellent English translation offers the reader in only 131 pages all of the basic information on the major issues of New Testament scholarship, and the history of their study, in a very concise, clear, and efficient manner.

Professor Lührmann divides his study into three sections. In the first ("The New Testament"), he focusses on the nature of the New Testament canon, the criticism of the canon through the Reformation period, and the canon as a problem for the historical reconstruction of early Christianity. He then moves onto larger issues of interpretation dealing with the two basic types of canonical writings: narrative and argumentative texts, and concludes this first section with a discussion of the basic problems of method associated with historical and literary critical exegesis.

In the second section of the book ("Historical Theol-

ogy"), he surveys the essential issues associated with the recovery of New Testament texts from the ancient and medieval manuscripts, modern attempts to reconstruct those texts, and an informative discussion entitled "textual criticism as exegetical questioning". He then focusses on the history and methods of literary criticism and the proposed cultural context of the texts.

In the third and final section ("Theological Exegesis"), Lührmann addresses the claim of the "Word of God" in modern theology, focussing on the work of Karl Barth (dialectical revelation) and Rudolf Bultmann (existentialist interpretation). He then concludes with informative discussions on the social situations that produces early Christian oral and literary forms (form-criticism) and the later editorial work of early Christian writers (redaction-criticism). This final chapter then ranges further afield by considering the relevance of related disciplines like linguistics, sociology, and psychology on the interpretation of New Testament texts.

The text is highly informative and challenging, is full of useful and relevant bibliographies of works in English, and is easily readable. The reader is presented with what is perhaps the best concise introduction to New Testament scholarship available today, and that by one of the leading international scholars in the field. ♦

Reviewed by: Paul Allan Mirecki

Meet the Faculty

Dr. S. Daniel Breslauer

Dr. Breslauer holds degrees in Near Eastern Languages from the University of California, Berkeley, and in Near Eastern Languages and Judaic Studies from Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts. He is also an ordained Rabbi from the Hebrew Union College—Jewish Institute of Religion. Professor Breslauer has taught courses in Judaism, Islam, and the Jewish and Christian Bible. He has published specialized studies on the Hebrew Bible, Jewish philosophy, and investigations of contemporary Jewish thinkers. Two forthcoming books are *Judaism and Human Rights: A Biographical Survey* (Greenwood Press: forthcoming 1992) and *Judaism and Civil Religion* (University of South Florida: forthcoming 1992). He seeks to place religion and thought in the context of lived experience—both historically and in the modern period.

Dr. John S. Macauley

Dr. Macauley, with a Ph.D. from Cambridge University, has primary interest in church history, with special emphasis on the English Reformation in the 17th century. He teaches courses in the Supreme Court and religious

issues and church history from the Middle Ages through Karl Marx. In the past he has directed K.U. study abroad programs in Great Britain. Professor Macauley has recently published a book entitled *The Autobiography of Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury* (1988).

Dr. Timothy Miller

Dr. Miller's field is American religion, with an emphasis on American religious history. His specialty in research and teaching is in new and alternative religious movements. He also serves as the department Undergraduate Studies Advisor. Professor Miller's current research focuses on communal groups and movements, and he is in the process of writing a survey history of communitarianism in America in the twentieth century. Among his books are *Following In His Steps: A Biography of Charles M. Sheldon* (1987); *American Communes, 1860-1960: A Bibliography* (1991); and *The Hippies and American Values* (1991). He also edited *When Prophets Die: The Post-Charismatic Fate of New Religious Movements* (1991).

Dr. Robert N. Minor

Dr. Minor is currently Chair of Religious Studies at K.U. He has taught courses in eastern religion, primarily India, China, and Japan, and courses focusing on approaches to the study of religion. In the past year, he was inducted into Phi Beta Delta, an honors society for international scholars. His current research project is an historical study of the ideals of various groups about the town of Auroville in southeast India, particularly in the light of the government of India's interest in it and issues surrounding India as a secular state. He spent the spring semester 1992 on leave in India doing research for an upcoming book. His most recent book is *Radhakrishnan: A Religious Biography* (1987). In October 1991 Professor Minor read an invited paper "Religious and Secular: Auroville and the Courts of India" at the international conference on "Religion and Law in Independent India" at the University of Iowa.

Dr. Paul Allan Mirecki

Dr. Mirecki, who holds a Th.D. from Harvard Divinity School (1986), is Assistant Professor of Religious Studies. He is currently the department Graduate Studies Advisor and Faculty Editor of *Religious Studies in Kansas*. Teaching in the areas of religious thought and literature in the ancient Mediterranean world, his research interests include the discovery and publication of ancient Greek and Coptic language manuscripts in American and European museum collections. During the summers of 1987, 1989, and 1991, he worked on Greek and Coptic manuscripts in Berlin, Germany. In August 1992, he convened at the University of Kansas an international conference "Magic in the Ancient World." He has authored numerous articles and the forthcoming book *A New Approach to the Longer Ending of Mark* (Edwin Mellen Press: forthcoming 1993).

Dr. Robert Shelton

Professor Shelton received his Ph.D. from Boston University in 1970, and has taught at K.U. since 1967 in religious ethics and religion and society. He chaired the Department of Religious Studies from 1978 to 1988, and has been University Ombudsman since 1985. Recent research interest include ethical issues in health care and justice issues in dispute management. He is the author of *Loving Relationships* (1987) and "Recent Developments in Medical Ethics in the Methodist Tradition," in *Theological Developments in Bioethics: 1988-1990*, edited by the Center for Ethics, Medicine and Public Issues, Houston, Texas.

Dr. Daniel Stevenson

Dr. Stevenson is new to the K.U. Religious Studies faculty. He received his Ph.D. at Columbia University in 1987, has taught at Butler University, and was a research fellow at the University of Michigan Institute for the Study of Buddhist Literature. His area of specialty is Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, East Asian religions, ritual and religious experience. He has authored "The Four Kinds of Samadhi in Early T'ien't'ai" in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Peter N. Gregory, and has a book, which he co-authored, forthcoming from Hawaii University Press titled, *The Great Calming and Contemplation: An Annotated Translation and Study of Chih-i's Mo-ho Chih-kuan*.

Dr. Paul Zimdars-Swartz

Dr. Zimdars-Swartz is also new this semester to the K.U. Religious Studies faculty. He received his Ph.D. at Claremont Graduate School where he focused on the philosophy of religion with an emphasis on the thought of the Marxist-atheist philosopher Ernst Bloch. He is currently teaching a section of Search for Meaning: Introduction to Religion. Dr. Zimdars-Swartz's current research interests are in the area of German mysticism and the role of male-female imagery in Christian thought and practice.

Dr. Sandra Zimdars-Swartz

Dr. Zimdars-Swartz joined the faculty in 1979 from Claremont Graduate School, where she received her Ph.D. and was a visiting lecturer in church history. Her field is the history of western religious thought and symbol, with concentration in women and religion, religious symbolism, and popular religion, particularly devotion to the Virgin Mary. In the Spring of 1991 she convened an international conference at the University of Kansas "Visions and the Visionary Experience." During the summer of 1992, she spent time in Paris, France researching the phenomena of the stigmatic experience. In the past year she delivered numerous paper and gave many lectures on the subject of Marian apparitions and their unique histories. Dr. Zimdars-Swartz is the author of the critically acclaimed *Encountering Mary: From La Salette to Medjugorje* from Princeton University Press (1991). ♦



University of Kansas
Religious Studies in Kansas
Department of Religious Studies
Smith Hall
Lawrence, KS 66045

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