

The Story of Mary: Luke's Version

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Mary's role in the first chapter of St Luke's Gospel is integral to the author's overall design, introducing his major themes of Christian discipleship and social justice. This chapter, which forms part of Luke's infancy narrative, has been neglected by many modern biblical scholars. On the one hand historical critics have relegated it to the realm of 'secondary source material'¹. On the other hand it has not readily attracted the serious attention of new hermeneutical schools that have arisen in the area of biblical studies, in particular feminist theology. Perhaps this is because one of the main characters featured in these chapters is Mary, the mother of Christ, who is a figure radical feminists tend to dismiss rather than use as a role model². One notable exception to the body of feminists who have rejected the figure of Mary is Rosemary Ruether. She has demonstrated that devotion to Mary and allegiance to feminist ideals do not have to be mutually exclusive. Although the Church has concentrated on certain aspects of the Marian tradition which centralise Mary's passivity and immaculate nature, these are not central themes in her portrayal in the New Testament. Like the Liberation theologians of the Third World, Ruether puts the biblical evidence at the heart of her argument and assesses the tradition of the Church in its light. She takes as her evidence Luke's Gospel, where Mary is portrayed as a character with an active role to play in God's plan for the salvation of the world³. Here I shall extend Ruether's insight into Luke's portrayal of Mary to suggest that this character provides an important clue to understanding the purpose, unity and integrity of the Gospel itself.

The critical method I have used has taken a variety of forms in recent years, for example, 'canonical criticism', 'structuralism' and 'rhetorical criticism'. Central to these approaches is the text itself, which is believed to provide the essential clues for its interpretation. The proponents of traditional critical methodologies may well regard this approach as potentially unprofessional and untamed in comparison to the strict controls of their own discipline. The American theologian Phyllis Trible, an exponent of 'rhetorical criticism', makes the point that as well as being a scholarly and disciplined approach to the text, rhetorical criticism also leaves room for intuition, guess and surprise on the part of the exegete as she or he engages in an interpretation of the text⁴. The constraints on this type of criticism come from the text itself. If an interpretation is alien to and out of sympathy with a passage within its wider context, then that interpretation is

false. In this critique of the first chapter of Luke's Gospel rhetorical criticism is the method used predominantly, and always from the hermeneutical standpoint of feminist theology.

If we make ourselves aware of the wider context of the story of Mary, we see that Luke has chosen to open his Gospel with this passage, and in this sense it acts as an overture to all that is to follow. In it we find hints and clues to concepts which will become major themes in the rest of the Gospel: social justice, women, true discipleship, the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist, Christology, the miraculous, and the Holy Spirit. Set at the head of the Gospel, this passage demands the closest attention on the part of the exegete if the meaning of the Gospel as a whole is to be understood. If we are to regard the biblical writers as creators of literature, rather than individuals who have pieced together a jigsaw of sources with no overall purpose in mind, then it is at our peril that we ignore the natural units and divisions of the text.

The passage which is of interest to us forms part of the opening section to Luke's two volumes: St Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. It follows the prologue, the first unit of the Gospel, 1:1—4, and continues to the end of the chapter. It begins and ends with the characters Elizabeth and Zechariah, and is distinguished from chapter two with a second 'historical' statement comparable to that found in 1:5. This passage can be clearly divided into four smaller units: 1. 1:5—25 —Gabriel's visit to Zechariah; 2. 1:26—38 —Gabriel's visit to Mary; 3. 1:39—56 —Mary's visit to Elizabeth; 4. 1:57—80 —the naming of John the Baptist. Although units two and three are of the greatest interest to our study, unit one stands as a conscious parallel to unit two and as such is an integral part of Mary's story.

In unit one the characters Elizabeth and Zechariah are introduced. The details of this unit resound with motifs from the scriptures: Temple, priest, altar of incense, even Zechariah's name. This is the name of the prophet who spoke out against the lost integrity of prophecy, and who traditionally marks the end of the age of prophecy⁵. Now in Luke we find the second Zechariah, who, ironically, is to be the father of the prophet for the messianic age, the new Elijah. Zechariah's unbelief at the news that he is soon to be a father is again reminiscent of a biblical character: in Genesis Sarah laughs at the news that she is to bear a child in her old age (Gen. 18:12).

The second unit of our passage, 1:26—38, belongs intrinsically to what has come before. The phrase: 'in the sixth month ...', places the events that are to take place here in the same time period as those of 1:5ff. The angel Gabriel comes this time to visit Mary, and, underlining the link between the two units, relates to Mary the condition of Elizabeth. After recounting the annunciation to Mary and Mary's visit to Elizabeth, the narrative then returns to the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth and we are told that Elizabeth has given birth to a son. One reason why Luke places Gabriel's visit to Mary at this point, apparently interrupting the narrative of John the Baptist's birth story, is in order to prompt his readers to compare and

contrast the two annunciation stories directly⁶.

In the first place there is the contrast in setting. Zechariah belongs firmly within the institutions of Judaism—he is a priest and Gabriel finds him in the Temple burning incense. By contrast, Gabriel's second visit is to the northern province of Galilee, a long way from the Temple, and the recipient is not a priest, not even a man, but a young woman. By setting the two annunciation stories side by side, Luke accentuates the contrasts between the two. Elizabeth and Zechariah are upright, but it is Mary who is the favoured one of the Lord. John will walk before the Lord, but Jesus it is who will be called 'Lord'. The most significant point of contrast is that in the case of the second visit Gabriel is sent to the future mother of the child and not the father.

In order to underline the significance of this feature in our narrative we should compare it with Matthew's version. By doing this, we highlight the exceptional treatment given to Mary by Luke⁷. In Matthew Mary has no individual characteristics, she has no choice in her pregnancy, no angel visits her—that reassurance is given only to Joseph, her betrothed. Mary herself is given no explanation as to why she should be pregnant. The reader can only wonder at her apparent silence on discovering herself to be a pregnant virgin. Moreover, we have no account of her reaction to her betrothed's resolve 'to divorce her quietly', or, again, of her reaction when he changes his mind and decides to marry her after all. Thus, according to Matthew, Mary is a mute character, a passive victim of circumstance. She is certainly not an individual in charge of her own destiny, never mind the destiny and salvation of humanity.

When we turn to Luke's account, in the light of Matthew, we can appreciate just how positive his treatment of Mary is. Without resorting to attempts to show literary dependence either on each other or on a mutual source of tradition, but simply by comparing the manner in which the two different authors present the same basic story, we can observe that Luke is consciously presenting Mary to his readers as a real character. He is prepared to give space in his work to her reactions and feelings. Obviously it would be ridiculous to argue that Luke does this as a first-century champion of feminism. Instead, as we shall see, his motives are theological. What is of importance to us, who in the twentieth century are attempting to articulate an inclusive theology that no longer marginalises women, is that Luke allows his theology to be dependent on a woman.

Even if we restrict ourselves to looking solely at the Lucan account, we can see that attention is drawn deliberately to the gender of Mary. Simply by setting Gabriel's first visit to a prospective father immediately before a visit to a prospective mother, the emphasis on the contrast in gender is achieved. The announcement of a birth to a father is the more usual convention, according to the Bible, when that birth is to come about as a result of divine intervention. This can be illustrated in the case of the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 18:10). Isaac, in turn, prays to God for the child on Rebecca's behalf (Gen. 25:21). In the account of Samson's birth, related

in Judges 13, although the angel appears to the mother, we are not even told her name, and, furthermore, the author deems it necessary to have a second angelic visit, this time with the father present. Matthew's account of the annunciation to Joseph is, therefore, in line with the traditional order of miraculous births. The only biblical miracle birth story which seems to give the mother the central role is that of Hannah, the mother of Samuel. It is understandable that it is to this story that Luke goes when he looks for inspiration for the words of the Magnificat.

In Matthew's account the author was simply following the usual literary convention for a birth that is to come about through the will of God. In contrast, by representing the traditional form in his announcement of the birth of John the Baptist, and immediately following it with the unconventional annunciation to Mary, Luke deliberately confuses and surprises the reader. The presence of the angel tells us that God is about to intervene in human history. The presence of Mary tells us that this event is to be of unique importance to human history.

In the introductory statement to the second unit (Lk 1:26–38), Luke hints that something greater than the birth of John the Baptist is to occur. The man betrothed to her is not of a priestly family, as in the case of Zechariah, but of the house of David, the messianic line. Furthermore, we are made aware by Gabriel's first words to Mary, 'Hail, favoured one, the Lord is with you!', that there is something exceptional about Mary. These words of greeting stand in contrast to the angel's first words to Zechariah, 'Do not be afraid'. But Mary is depicted as a typical representative of humanity from the outset, being upset and confused by the exalted greeting. Here Luke allows us an insight into the character of this unknown virgin from Galilee. By means of her reaction to Gabriel, Luke conveys to us that she is a humble person who cannot relate the lofty tones of the angel to herself. Her reaction to Gabriel's words in effect reinforces them, 'But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be.' It is not the appearance of an angel that troubles her, as in the case of Zechariah, but the words he speaks. Mary's reaction could be seen to be a reflection of a humble character. Presumably this is one reason why she has been chosen and favoured by God, why she will be the mother of the promised Messiah.

Here we find an example of Luke introducing a theme in this opening section, in this case humility, which will become a major feature in the body of the gospel. Humility is an essential characteristic for any disciple, as for example Luke's parable of the pharisee and the publican (Lk. 18:9–14) illustrates. The conclusion: '... for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted', echoes the theme of the Magnificat⁸. Two other parables from Luke's Gospel, the good Samaritan and the prodigal son, promote the type of humble behaviour which does not demand any reward for good deeds. Behaviour should be motivated by compassion and love rather than material reward. Mary is the Gospel's first proponent of this attitude in that she cannot recognise

anything in herself to prompt such a greeting from God's emissary.

Gabriel continues by reassuring Mary, and discloses to her that she is to give birth to David's heir. It is because of Mary's character that she is to bear a child: 'For thou hast found favour with God' (vs. 30). The name-giving echoes the annunciation of John the Baptist, but the words of Gabriel continue to reflect and contrast with those spoken to Zechariah: John will prepare a people for the Lord (vs. 17), Jesus will reign over them in his eternal Kingdom (vs. 33). The language used is reminiscent of that found in 2 Samuel where the eternal covenant between God and David is described: 'And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever' (2 Sam. 7:16), and the reference to an everlasting kingdom alludes to Is. 9:6 and Dan. 7:14⁹. Luke is explicitly describing the dawn of the messianic age.

Luke does not merely report that 'The child is of the Holy Spirit', which is all that the reader is told by Matthew. Instead he uses the conception as a vehicle for his theological message. Throughout chapter one Luke has been alluding to scripture in order to find a context for the events he is describing. For us to understand the theological ideas he is attempting to convey at this point we should turn therefore to the scriptures for an explanation. We might be tempted to begin with biblical texts which describe past miraculous births. This was the context for John the Baptist's birth where the barren aged couple mirror the situation of Abraham and Sarah. But Mary's story stands in contrast to this; her pregnancy is not of the type found in those accounts. Mary has not been petitioning God for a child. As an unmarried young virgin the question of offspring had not become an issue in her life, let alone the subject of her prayers. Although betrothed, she was a virgin and if she were to find herself pregnant, the child could not have had a human father. Where then do we look in scripture to find a person, or persons, who came into being without a natural father? The only story which comes anywhere near paralleling this concept is the creation of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve come into existence only through the creative power of God. According to Luke, the Holy Spirit is to come upon Mary just as it had come upon the watery chaos at the beginning of time, when the world had been created.

Mary is told that the power of the Most High will overshadow her. The Greek verb used by Luke to describe this action is *episkiazō*. There have been many attempts to understand the background to Luke's use of this word. For example, David Daube sees sexual connotations in it and links it with Ruth 3:9, where Ruth encounters Boaz¹⁰. A more obvious scriptural background for *episkiazō* is creation, where, in Gen. 1:2, we find the description of the Spirit moving over the waters of chaos. In Hebrew the word for 'shadow' (*tsef*) bears none of the negative or sinister connotations that it has in English, as is shown, for example, by Ps. 121:5–6:

The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade on your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night¹¹.

The presence of the Spirit marks the presence of God, and in Lk. 1:35, as in Gen. 1:2, it marks the moment of creation. In this new creation Mary is to be God's partner, and together they will create the New Adam.

Jesus' existence is to come about through the direct work of God and for this reason, as the angel tells us, he will be called 'Holy' and, more importantly, 'Son of God'. Jesus is not the only individual to be called son of God in Luke's Gospel. At the beginning of Luke's account of Jesus' ministry his genealogy is traced back to Adam who in turn is traced directly to God, '... the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God' (Lk. 3:38).

Luke, like the author of St John's Gospel, harks back to creation in order to explain the events which mark the beginning of the Gospel. Creation is the only event that is comparable to the powerful intervention of God in the act of the conception of the Messiah. Just as Adam was the first-born of the old creation, so Jesus is the first-born of the new. The new age was to be the age of the Spirit¹², and the Spirit was to be the hallmark of the Messiah¹³. By referring to the Spirit at the very beginning of the Gospel, Jesus' birth is put into the context of the new age. Jesus' conception, which involves the unique action of the Holy Spirit, is the unique conception of the Messiah. The role of the Spirit is central to this theological insight, as it is central throughout Luke's Gospel and throughout the second volume of his work, the Acts of the Apostles. One of the most dramatic examples of Luke's use of the Spirit is in Acts 2, where the events of Pentecost are described. It is interesting to note that the central role of the Spirit described at the beginning of Luke's Gospel is balanced by its equally central role in Acts, this time at the birth of the Church. It is in the story of Mary that Luke first introduces his characteristic theology of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, Luke does not simply allude to creation as a parallel to the events he is describing. Creation also acts as a contrast to his narrative. Luke transforms the idea of a transcendent God creating from a distance by his word, into the revolutionary concept of God's total involvement in the world, with humanity, in this creation.

In the case of the Genesis narrative, immediately before the creation of humanity, we find the puzzling phrase, 'Let us create man in our image, after our likeness' (Gen. 1:26). Who is God talking to? The ancient commentators of both Judaism and Christianity attempted to answer this question, and for Christianity the answer lay in the mystery of the Trinity. In the case of Judaism the rabbis' speculations revolved around God's angelic attendants whose advice God sought when creating humanity. In these speculations, found, for example, in the midrash *Genesis Rabbah*, the angels tend to be negative in their reaction to God's idea to create human beings, prophesying humanity's tendency to rebel against God's will. In Luke's story of the new creation God does not involve the angels of heaven in his decision to create: on the contrary, he selects a human being. What is more, a person of high rank, or even the first sex, is not chosen. Instead God's choice lies with a young peasant woman from a Galilean village.

In this choice of Mary we discover another Lucan theme, namely social

justice, one of the most distinguishable features of the whole Gospel. The manner in which this feature is presented in the opening section of the Gospel shows us that the birth of the Messiah, the embodiment of the future redemption of the world, is dependent on Mary's affirmative to God's plan. Mary stands as the representative of the human race, and it is typical of Lucan theology that this representative is a peasant woman. Now we are able to see why Luke chooses to expand the character of Mary in his narrative to a far greater extent than the author of Matthew's Gospel. Luke stresses the role of Mary in order to express the theological concept of God's renewed and reformed solidarity with humanity. Mary in her willingness to take part in God's plan becomes co-creator in the new dispensation. God becomes subject to a woman's decision, just as the Messiah born to her will allow himself to be subject to human justice. In Jewish midrash when God mentions the plan to create humanity the angels reply negatively, in Luke's account of the new creation God asks humanity, in the form of Mary, to take part in the next stage of the plan for the world, and her reply is one of complete affirmation and faith in God's will: 'Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.' As Rosemary Ruether comments: 'Mary's faith makes possible God's entrance into history'¹⁴.

It is worth dwelling on Mary's faith as it is depicted by Luke. Such submissiveness to the divine will is reminiscent of that of Abraham, the father of Israel, the nature of whose faith St Paul regarded as leading to justification in the sight of God. God called Abraham to leave his homeland, and he obeyed without question¹⁵. Likewise Mary is called from obscurity and submits to God's will. Mary's 'yes' to God puts her on the level of Abraham and she becomes the mother of the new Israel. It is interesting to note that perhaps it is in the story of Mary that we can discern traits of Pauline theology in the work of Luke. The birth of Jesus can be seen in terms of the new Adam, and this theology, contrasting the old creation with the new and the first Adam with the second, is first articulated in the letters of St Paul¹⁶. Furthermore, in Mary's complete submission to God's will and the totality of her faith, we are presented with the supreme example of perfect behaviour that in St Paul's theology leads to a new covenant between God and humanity¹⁷. In Luke's portrayal of Mary she cannot be conceived of in terms of a new Eve since, unlike the first Eve, she is not the object of God's creative work. Instead, together with God, she is the subject of creation, and Christ, the new Adam, is the object.

Mary's affirmative to God's plan marks the end of the second unit in chapter one. The next unit (vss 39—56) continues the story of Mary and acts as a link passage between the two stories, that of Mary and that of Zechariah and Elizabeth, when, following her encounter with Gabriel, Mary goes to visit Elizabeth. Again the Spirit is present, marking the new age, this time prompting Elizabeth to extol Mary's faith, and to recognise the significance of the child she is carrying. Mary responds to Elizabeth's blessing with the words of the Magnificat. These words echo the Song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel¹⁸:

My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord
... He raises the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the
ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of
honour. (1 Sam. 2:1 and 8).

Like Hannah, Mary describes how it is God's intent to reverse the present order of power and powerlessness. First, Mary gives praise for a concrete event in her own experience: God has regarded the low estate of a woman. This is the beginning of the new order for society: in the choice of Mary God has put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly. Luke's theme of social justice noted above, when it was implied in God's choice of Mary¹⁹, is now made explicit in Mary's own words. Thus one can see an identification between Mary herself and the words she speaks in the Magnificat. As Ruether observes: 'She herself embodies and personifies the oppressed and subjugated people who are being liberated and exalted through God's redemptive power'²⁰.

It is in the Magnificat that we discover the key link in Luke's Gospel between the story of Mary and the story of Jesus' ministry. The theme of social justice that is introduced here is the first characteristic of Jesus' teaching revealed by Luke, and it provides the clue to the nature of his person and message. The main body of the Gospel which describes the ministry of Jesus begins in chapter four with the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. There Jesus' resolve to fulfil God's plan is set, and his first act, as a product of this resolve, is to go to the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth. There he reads aloud from the Isaiah scroll: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach good news to the poor ...' (Is. 61:1). Thus, by taking chapter one as an integral part of the Gospel instead of marginalising it, we are able to see that Jesus takes up the radical message of the Magnificat spoken by his mother, the young woman from Nazareth. Again we can see how Luke uses the story of Mary as an overture to his presentation of the gospel. Mary's song of praise provides a foretaste of the very essence of Jesus' ministry.

The Magnificat marks the end of the third literary unit of chapter one. The fourth and final unit (vss. 57—80) tells of the birth and circumcision of John the Baptist.

The most important feature that becomes apparent when we examine Luke's presentation of Mary is that she stands at the beginning of his work embodying the essential features of Christian discipleship. In using a woman as a model for discipleship Luke is in line with his fellow gospel writers, a feature which distinguishes them from subsequent Christian writers, as Elizabeth Fiorenza notes:

Where the post-Pauline writers seek to stabilise the socially volatile situation of co-equal discipleship by insisting upon patriarchal dominance and submission structures, not only for the household but also for the church, the original gospel writers move to the other end of the social 'balance' scale. They insist on altruistic behaviour and service as the appropriate praxis and

ethos of Christian leadership²¹.

Fiorenza's comments are most apposite in relation to Luke's treatment of Mary. Mary has such perfect faith that she gives herself up totally to God's service. She gives up her body to God's will in order to allow the plan of salvation to begin. Her discipleship and faith are so perfect that they can only be superseded by the Messiah himself who dies in order to allow God's plan of salvation to continue.

When we study the figure of Mary in Luke's Gospel, we do not find a submissive creature of the kind so often at the heart of the Church's presentation of her, and the reason for feminists' rejection of her. The major fault so often levelled at the traditional picture of Mary is that it accentuates her virginity and her motherhood at one and the same time, thus making her an impossible model for women to emulate. In contrast, in Luke's story of Mary we find a new model of discipleship for all humanity, male and female alike. Mary is second only to the Messiah because her submissiveness is not negative but positive. According to Luke, Mary has the faith of Abraham, and courage reflecting that of Christ in the giving up of her whole self to God's plan:

Her pregnancy does not follow from the proper role of women. Indeed, it puts her under danger as someone who has been making her own choices about her body and sexuality without regard to her future husband. She may be accused of being a prostitute or a 'loose woman' and be 'put away'. In Luke, the decision to have a redemptive child is between her and God²².

In Luke we find a woman who is not only in charge of her own destiny, which in itself is a revolutionary concept for the first century, but also the destiny of humanity.

By placing his portrait of Mary at the beginning of his Gospel, Luke's intention is two-fold. First, through her we are presented with the key themes that are to characterise the life and ministry of Jesus, namely obedience, self-sacrifice and social justice. These key themes act as an introduction to the main corpus of Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, throwing light on the theological meaning and purpose of these texts as a whole. To regard the story of Mary as secondary to Luke's Gospel, as a literary afterthought, is not a position that can be sustained when we fully appreciate the content of these verses, and note, in particular, their inherent theological harmony with the main corpus of Luke's writings. Secondly, we are given the perfect radical model for Christian discipleship, a model that is reproduced throughout the Gospel and Acts as we encounter more and more converts to the new faith.

Perhaps in studying Mary's story, in particular in relation to the Magnificat, we can understand the close relationship that exists between feminist theology and another hermeneutical school that has developed over the past twenty years, that of Liberation theology. Mary the woman and the liberator is recognised as such by the peasants of Solentiname:

And from now on all generations will call me happy (Lk. 1:48).

Olivia: She says that people will call her happy ... She feels happy because she is the mother of Jesus the Liberator, and because she also is a liberator like her son, because she understood her son and did not oppose his mission²³.

- 1 One extreme example is Hans Conzelmann, still the most renowned historical critic of Luke's Gospel, who, although acknowledging that Lk. 1:5—2:52 may have formed part of the original, does not include it in his thesis regarding the theological structure of the Gospel; see *The Theology of St Luke*, ET, London, 1982 (1960), e.g. p. 18 n. 1.
- 2 See e.g. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, Boston, 1974, pp. 81—90.
- 3 See *Sexism and God-Talk, Towards a Feminist Theology*, London, 1983, pp. 152—158.
- 4 Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Philadelphia, 1978, pp. 8—12.
- 5 See Zech. 13:2ff.
- 6 This parallelism is worked out in detail by J.A. Fitzmyer in *The Gospel According to St Luke (I—IX)*, pp. 313—321, also his contribution to *Mary in the New Testament*, London, 1978, Raymond Brown et al eds, pp. 105—177.
- 7 This point is made, for example, by Rosemary Ruether in *Mary — the Feminine Face of the Church*, London, 1979, pp. 26—28; see also Leonardo Boff, *The Maternal Face of God, The Feminine and its Religious Expressions*, New York, 1987, pp. 110—111.
- 8 This teaching occurs also in Lk. 14:11; cf Matt. 23:12.
- 9 See also, e.g., Ps. 89: 1—4, 29, 36; 132:12; Dan. 7:24.
- 10 Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, London, 1956, pp. 27—36.
- 11 Cf. Ps. 17:8, 57:1, 63:7, 91:1; Is. 25:4, 49:2; Jonah 4:5. *salmawet* 'the shadow of death', is the puzzling exception that proves the rule.
- 12 E.g. Joel 2:28—29, quoted in Acts 2:17ff; Is. 44:3b.
- 13 E.g. Is. 11:2, 61:1f, quoted in Lk. 4:18—19; also 1 Enoch 62:2; Pss of Solomon 71:37ff.
- 14 *Sexism and God-Talk*, p. 154.
- 15 Gen. 12: 1—4.
- 16 The best example of this theology in the Pauline epistles can be found in Rom. 5:12ff; 1 Cor. 15:20ff.
- 17 See, e.g., Rom. 4 where St Paul describes Abraham as one who was justified by his faith alone.
- 18 The account of Hannah's petition for a child, and her thanksgiving when her prayers are answered, is found in 1 Sam. 1:1—2:11.
- 19 See above p. 11.
- 20 *Sexism and God-Talk*, p. 155.
- 21 *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, London, 1983, p. 316.
- 22 Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk*, p. 153.
- 23 *The Gospel in Art by the Peasants of Solentiname*, Philip and Sally Scharper (eds), Maryknoll NY, 1984, p. 8.