

Joy T. Barnitz:

“Something in the Air: the Decision to Ordain Women in the Swedenborgian Church of North America”

Abstract: The decision in the early 1970s to ordain women in Swedenborgian Church of North America was influenced by the social context in the United States in which women’s roles in society were rapidly expanding. Unlike many Protestant Christian denominations, the arguments opposing ordination of women in the Swedenborgian Church did not rely on Paul’s teachings. In this paper I examine the context of this decision using contemporary denomination publications and personal communications with both clergy and lay leaders with direct knowledge of this period in denomination history.

Lauren Guerra:

“A Womanist Contribution to Cosmic Hope”

Abstract: Theology and the natural sciences attempt to provide answers to some of our most pressing concerns. Needless to say, negotiating a relationship between these two fields hasn’t always been easy. What challenges do the natural sciences pose to Christian eschatology? With comic hope as a starting point of the discussion, I seek to unpack a Womanist contribution. Looking specifically at Emilie Townes, she offers new possibilities for the future of Christianity in light of cosmic hope. I intend to reveal how she affirms radical hope despite the bleak picture being presented by natural science.

Reception Following Conference



Contact wsr@ses.gtu.edu with any ?'s
Check out our Facebook Group “GTU Women’s Studies in Religion and our website www.gtu.edu/wsr for up to date information on events.

WOMEN’S STUDIES IN RELIGION HOSTS 2ND ANNUAL WOMEN & RELIGION STUDENT CONFERENCE



MARCH 1, 2013
Tucson Room at the
Church Divinity School of the
Pacific
2451 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709

Gather & Welcome at 12:30

Session I: (12:45-3:00)

TEXTS: Mining & Interpreting

Chair: Professor Steed Davidson, PLTS

Beth Anderson:

“Abigail’s Blessedness: Reading and Viewing 1 Samuel 25 from the Standpoint of Feminist Biblical Spirituality”

Abstract: In 1 Samuel 25:33, the character of Abigail is described as “blessed” (Hebrew: *ū-bā-rūk*). This paper explores the roots of Abigail’s blessedness. Following an initial exposition of Abigail’s character vis-à-vis the biblical text, I overlay the written narrative with two examples of Abigail in the medium of visual art: Abigail Before David by Lucas van Leyden, ca. 1507, and Abigail by Francisco de Zurbarán, ca. 1630. The paper’s final section weaves together insights from the written and visual texts and reflects on the significance of both the outcome and the process of this study for the project of biblical spirituality.

Rachel Wheeler:

“Competitive Asceticism: The Gendered Other as a Source of Self-Revelation in Palladius’ Lausiac History”

Abstract: In his early fifth-century Lausiac History, Palladius of Helenopolis holds up both women and men as exemplars of ascetic life. He does this by juxtaposing their bodily mortifications and prayer practices so as to demonstrate how each might function as a mirror for the other, enabling truer vision of the self and fostering opportunities for increased self-understanding and subsequent transformation. Palladius draws on language associated with the Apostle Paul and with martyrdom to make of behavior of comparison and competition among male and female ascetics a positive means by which each might enhance their knowledge of self, other, and God.

Hatice Yildiz: “Representations of Fatima in Alevi Buyruks”

Abstract: My conference paper will examine how Fatimah, the daughter of the prophet Muhammad and the wife of the Shi’i imam or the Sunni caliph ‘Ali was represented in Alevi texts named in Buyruks. This paper will only focus on a few published Buyruk texts. It will consist of four parts. The first part will briefly introduce Alevis in Turkey and Buyruks. The second will provide general information on the gender construction of Buyruks. The third will analyze different representations and roles of Fatimah in Buyruks. The fourth will compare these representations with Sunni and Shi’a portrayals of Fatimah for understanding the relationship of Alevis with other Islamic traditions.

Session II: (3:15-4:15)

SEX: Gendered Perspective

Chair: Professor Gabriella Lettini, SKSM

Kelly Kraus:

“The “F” Words: Broadening Faithfulness & Fruitfulness in Marriage”

Abstract: Faithfulness and fruitfulness are important aspects in Roman Catholic understandings of marriage. For women, these two concepts function in a unique way. The deficient vice associated with both faithfulness and faithfulness is selfishness which correlates with negative stereotypes about women. The excessive vice associated with each teaching, self-sacrifice, correlates with a positive character trait associated with femininity. Utilizing a Virtue Ethic framework, I argue for a broadening of the teachings on faithfulness and fruitfulness in Catholic understandings of marriage. This broadening leads to a fuller account of women’s flourishing in the marital life.

Katia Moles:

“The Alignment of Feminist and Religious Progressive Values toward Sex-Education in U.S. Public Schools”

Abstract: Disputes over sex-education have been well documented, but limited to the Christian-right and secular-left dueling for their particular approaches. Research has overlooked a third group: religious progressives. This paper first describes feminist critiques of how current models of sex-education in public schools fail youth, and then shows how religious progressives’ sexual values align with feminist scholarship on sex-education. Next, I argue that Our Whole Lives is a curriculum that fits with these values. I end by arguing how more religious progressive advocacy will make a difference in the sex-education of young people.

Session III: (4:30-6:00)

NEXT: How Women Are Changing Christianity

Chair: Professor Jennifer Davidson, ABSW

Khalia J. Jelks:

“Worship in Purple: Engaging Womanist Spirituality in African-American Christian Worship”

Abstract: Womanist theologian Delores Williams poses a theological method that includes a liturgical intent relevant to the thought, worship and action of the African-American church. Inspired by Williams womanist liturgical intent, this essay proposes the method of engaging womanist spirituality in African-American worship as a foundation for wholistic worship. This work examines the way in which engaging womanist spirituality makes a meaningful connection with lived experiences of African-American women and renders a worship experience in the African-American church that faithfully includes all participants – women, men and children. This liturgical focus of engaging African-American women’s spirituality in worship is the first step toward a womanist liturgical tradition.