Book Proposal

Show Me the Honey: A Feminist's Guide to Good Stuff in the Bible

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Intended Audience

This book will be aimed at general educated but non-expert audiences interested in a liberal religious approach to understanding the Bible. It could be used in progressive seminaries, and undergraduate courses on religious diversity, but its main target is those who have long ago decided that the Bible and its interpreters have little to offer for forming a just and sustainable human society on Planet Earth. Ecology, human rights 'foundationalism', violence against women, and xenophobia will all be dealt with, and a theology based on readings of alternative texts will be proposed.

Style and Method

This work will be written in a lively essay style that welcomes the audience into the discussion at hand (writing samples available); there will be general references at the back of each chapter but few technical footnotes. Methods will include archaeology, anthropology and feminist literary critical techniques, but will not focus on detailed philological analysis of texts. Rather, the point will be to open up the possible data available from each of the methods highlighted, using it to craft a religious liberal reading of 'the good stuff'. The book will focus primarily on the Hebrew Bible, although the concluding essay will be on a new reading of Jesus as 'Human Rights' liberator and healer.

Competing Works

Actually, there are very few books which would fall into the category I envision. Richard Friedman's general book, *Who Wrote the Bible?* is more tendentious in point of view and presentation that this book will be. *A Feminist Approach to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods, Strategies* gives a good idea of the kinds of content issues to be treated in this volume, but is far too technical and specialized to constitute real competition within this category. The work of theologians Catherine Keller and Diana Eck are a potential models for the work I propose.

Outline and Content

Preface: Should UUs/Women/Liberals Read the Bible? Yes. No. Maybe.

1. *Battered by the Bible: Getting from Then to Now*

How Biblical Studies and the Church have failed to address modern crises of faith, morality and culture. The Conservative Challenge. Why Bother? Going Back Boldly: Reclaiming Our Biblical Birthright. Liberal Readers and the Hebrew Bible: the strange case of Job.

2. *The Challenge of Data: 'He' said, 'We' said?*

What makes 'Scripture' *Scripture?* Who says? New ways to think of 'Authority'. The Feminist Challenge. Why Conservative Readings Won't Work. Many Voices. Signs from the Sand: What Processual Archeology has to Offer. Test Case: Monotheism in 'Ancient Israel' (Exodus 3; the "Lapp" Incense Stand").

3. *Written in Stone: Gender, Sin, Survival*

Biblical societies and patriarchy. Lilith. The God Who Would Be One. The Legacy of the Sacred Tree: the Goddess Asherah. Women's popular religion: domestic cult, public professions. Test Case: ReWriting the Commands: A Girl's Eye View (Exod. 20; Num 5).

4. *The Legacy of the Other: When 'They' are 'Us'*

The Minimalists and the Canaanites: New Trends in Social Reconstruction. The Original Commuters. The Sorry Side of Settling Down. The Power of 'Othering'. Biblical Universalism: Does It Really Work? Test case: Ruth and Naomi; Esther

5. *The Divine Image: Only Humans Need Apply?*

Divine Image and Human Rights. 'Are the trees men...?': theologies of earth. God and the Trees; God of the Trees. Climate and Catastrophe: God's Holiness and Earth's Fullness. No More 'Sweet By-and-By': the Necessity of a Theology of Now.

6. *'Who Do You Say That I Am?': Jesus and Human Rights*

The Political versus the 'Spiritual' Jesus. Jesus and AntiJudaism in the New Testament. The Enduring Appeal. Carpenter of Justice. Crimes of the State. Why the Jesus Event Matters---Still.

7. *Conclusion: Show Me the Honey!*

The Bible as a source of radical religion. The Bible as a source for spiritual nourishment. The 'Slave' Subjectivity. 'Othering' Transcended: the Legacy of the Song of Songs.

I. Publications by Professor Hector Avalos since 1998

A. BOOKS

¿Se puede saber si Dios existe? [Can One Know if God Exists?] Lima, Perú: Ediciones Revista Peruana de Filosofía Aplicada, 2000.
*NOT PROVIDED EXCEPT BY SPECIAL REQUEST.

Health Care and the Rise of Christianity. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Press, 1999.

B. REFEREED JOURNAL ARTICLES

"Violence in the Bible and the Bhagavad gita," ***Journal of Vaishnava Studies*** 9 (2, 2001) 67-83.

"Maria Atkinson and the Rise of Pentecostalism in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands," ***Journal of Religion and Society*** 3 (2001) at http: moses//creighton. edu/JRS/2001/2001-5.html.

"Daniel 9:24-25 and Mesopotamian Temple Rededications," ***Journal of Biblical Literature*** 117 (3, 1998) 507-11.

"The Gospel of Lucas Gavilán as Postcolonial Biblical Exegesis," ***Semeia*** 75 (1996) 87-105. Actually appeared in 1998.

C. CHAPTERS/ARTICLES IN EDITED BOOKS AND REFERENCE WORKS

"Blindness," Epilepsy," "Illness and Health Care," "Leprosy," in D. N. Freedman, ed., ***Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*** (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000).

"Disability and Liturgy in Ancient and Modern Religious Traditions," in Nancy Eiesland and Don Saliers, eds., ***Human Disability and the Service of God : Reassessing Religious Practice*** (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998) 35-54.

D. INVITED PUBLICATIONS

"Rubel Shelly's Prepare to Answer as a Case Study in Current Christian Apologetics," Journal of Higher Criticism 8:1 (Spring, 2001) 18-40.

"Religion and Human Rights: A Secular Humanist Perspective," ***The Journal of Intergroup Relations*** 26 (4, Winter 1999-2000) 33-48.

"Heavenly Conflicts: The Bible and Astronomy," ***Mercury*** 27 (2, March/April, 1998) 20-24. The Journal of the Astronomical Society of the Pacific.