

Glossary

The terms in the glossary are indicated with an asterisk and bold type in the text on the first significant appearance.

abolitionist: Someone who seeks the termination of slavery. Abolitionists have often condemned slavery on religious grounds with a commitment to emancipate those who have been sold into slavery.

Adam: Hebrew for "human earth creature." Its roots lie in Genesis 2 and God creating the first human creature from the soil or dust of the earth. It is the name by which the Bible identifies the first male human.

anchoress: A woman who chooses to live a solitary life of prayer in small rooms attached to a church. During the late Middle Ages people visited anchoresses for spiritual guidance.

androcentrism: Literally, it means "man- or male-centered." Androcentrism results in making what is associated with being male central in every facet of life; being male is regarded as normative, while being female is regarded as the exception to the norm.

apocalyptic: From the Greek for "uncover." Used in reference to the Bible it denotes crisis literature that uncovers the secrets of the end of time and the beginning of a new age.

Apocrypha: From the Greek for "concealed" or "hidden," refers to those books not part of the canon of Hebrew Scriptures but found in early Christian versions of the Old Testament (based on the Greek Septuagint). The Apocrypha includes 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach, Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, the Letter of Jeremiah, and additions to Esther and Daniel. During the Reformation, Protestants set aside a special section for them in their Bibles, following Martin Luther's decision to incorporate only books written in Hebrew into the Old Testament canon. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches regard these books to be "deuterocanonical," meaning secondarily canonical, and do not locate them in a special section of their Bibles. To them Eastern Orthodox churches add additional books, such as 3 and 4 Maccabees.

apostles: From the Greek for "one sent." In the New Testament it is used in reference to the circle of friends who worked closely with Jesus in his ministry.

baptism: A ritual blessing using water modeled after Jesus' own blessing by John (Mark 1:9-11); according to Christian belief, through this ritual action

or sacrament a person is incorporated into the Christian community, bringing with membership in the church the forgiveness of sin and the grace of salvation. Although the Christian churches have different perspectives on the sacraments, there are no fundamental disagreements on baptism among the Christian churches.

basic ecclesial communities: In Spanish, *comunidades eclesiales de base*, and in Portuguese, *comunidades eclesias de base*. Small groups of Christians, especially poor families at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid, who gather regularly to pray, to read the Bible, to celebrate their faith, and to plan actions to be taken by the community that will benefit the poor.

Bible: From the Greek for "books." Composed over a span of many centuries, it is a library of books in two major divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. This collection is often referred to as the Word of God, Sacred Scripture, or the canon.

canon: From the Greek for "measuring rod." Used of the Bible it refers to the books that the Christian churches agree to accept into their sacred libraries as divine revelation.

canonize: To publicly recognize the holiness of a person's life and appropriately honor the person for what she or he accomplished with the help of God's grace. Canonization of a saint in the Roman Catholic Church is a gradual process: (1) papal declaration that the candidate is "venerable"; (2) papal proclamation that the candidate is beatified, or "blessed"; and (3) papal canonization of the person as a saint. Roughly 75 percent of the canonized saints are men; the remaining 25 percent are women.

catechism: A handbook of religious beliefs expressed in question and answer form.

communion of saints: From the Latin *communio sanctorum*, meaning "fellowship of holy persons" (also, depending on the context, referring to "sacred things"). In the Roman Catholic Church, the communion of saints includes the canonized saints, the blessed dead, and the church as the people of God.

conscientization: The first step in liberation theology, it is the process of raising awareness and analyzing the causes of oppression.

contemplative prayer: Derived from the Latin word *templum*, referring to time and space; it is a form of communing with God in which one places oneself in the presence of God to become more deeply united with God in love. Such communing with God may be facilitated in a formal way by imaginatively entering a biblical narrative, placing oneself in the time and place of the unfolding story, while being attentive to how it touches one's mind and heart. In a less formal way, contemplative prayer is an awareness of the presence of God in creation and in the midst of the events of daily life.

Council of Trent: The nineteenth ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church, which met intermittently between 1545 and 1563. It was called to clarify issues raised by Protestant Reformers, particularly Martin Luther. Among the major decrees are those that deal with the number and nature of sacraments.

creed: Derived from the Latin *credo*, meaning "I believe." A creed summarizes the beliefs agreed upon by a particular church.

cultural feminism: The form of feminism that seeks to humanize society by emphasizing the special contribution that women can make to create a better world because women tend to be more nurturing, less competitive, and more collaborative than men.

denomination: Derived from the Latin word *denominare*, meaning "to name." It is used in reference to a specific Christian group or church whose members have the same or similar beliefs and social organization and engage in similar practices. A denomination acknowledges that it is one expression of a larger whole, a greater unity shared by others. In the annual *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* over two hundred denominations are listed. Similar religious groups, like the many Baptist bodies in the United States, constitute a denominational family; the largest denomination within the Baptist family is the Southern Baptist Convention.

disciples: Those who follow Jesus and carry out his mission. Some Christian feminists envision the church as a "discipleship of equals."

dualism: From the Latin *duo*, meaning "two." It is a construction of the world in terms of binary oppositions: male/female; white/black; rational/emotional.

ecclesiology: The name given to the study of the Christian church with focus on doctrine (teaching) about its organization and lines of authority.

ecofeminism: Specifies the connection between the domination of women and other forms of social domination (e.g., racism and economic classism) and the exploitation of nonhuman nature.

Elohim: Hebrew for "God" or "gods."

Epistles: From the Greek for "letter." In the New Testament, Epistles are letters of instruction; of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, twenty-one are letters.

etiology (also aetiology): In the context of the study of literary genres of the Bible, an explanatory story, rich in symbolism, that provides responses to questions about the basic causes of the present experience of the people. In the case of Genesis 2-3, responses are provided to questions regarding why animals are not suitable companions for humans, why men and women leave the homes of their parents and enter conjugal relationships, and why there is good and evil.

Eve: The first woman (Gen. 2:21–22). The meaning of the name is somewhat obscure, but its resemblance to the Hebrew word for “living” relates to the identification of Eve as the “mother of all the living” (Gen. 3:20).

femicide: The killing of women and female children because a particular society attaches very little value to the life of female persons.

feminism: In the broadest sense, a theory about women. It is used commonly to describe the discontent of women about the many manifestations of sexism directed to them and the struggle by women for social, political, and economic equality. As used in this book it refers to a coordinated set of ideas and a practical plan of action rooted in women’s critical awareness of how a culture controlled in meaning and action by men, for their own advantage, oppresses women and dehumanizes men.

first wave of feminism: Traceable to the mid-nineteenth century in Western Europe and North America; in the United States the first event of major significance was the Women’s Rights Convention, held in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. It continued until women gained the right to vote, which in the United States occurred in 1920 with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

First World: A common name for those countries that have higher levels of average per capita income, access to education, and technology. In these countries, nutrition levels are high and infant mortality low. These countries are located in North America (Canada and the United States) and Europe, and also include Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

gender: Socially acquired roles designated as appropriate to either males or females by a society at a given time in its history. The association of traits such as aggressiveness and competitiveness with males and nurturing and passivity with females is due to cultural gender stereotyping and is not biologically determined.

gnostic: From the Greek *gnōsis*, meaning “knowledge.” A variety of religious movements of the early Christian period that claimed to have special knowledge from which came salvation.

gospel: English translation of the Greek for “good news.” In the New Testament it refers to the message proclaimed by Jesus and his followers. Capitalized, it refers to the books in the New Testament called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Gospels: See gospel.

hermeneutics: A word derived from the name of the mythological Greek messenger Hermes. It refers to interpretation, especially the principles and methods of interpreting literature such as the Bible. Feminist hermeneutics is the theory and art of interpretation in the interest of women’s full humanity.

incarnation: The Christian doctrine that teaches that the second person of the Trinity assumed flesh and shared our human history in Jesus, the Christ, as both fully divine and fully human.

liberal feminism: The form of feminism that holds that female subordination is rooted in legal constraints that exclude or block women’s full and equal participation in the so-called public world. Liberal feminism tends to emphasize women’s rights and individual freedoms.

liberation theology: Theological response to social oppression guided by the gospel message of Jesus, who proclaimed liberty to captives. It is also reflection on liberating praxis, concrete actions undertaken to transform society. Liberation theology arose first in Latin America and now has a plurality of forms: black (U.S.), womanist (U.S.), *mujerista* (U.S.), *minjung* (Korea), and liberation theologies in most Third World countries (e.g., South Africa) and of indigenous peoples (e.g., Native American and Australian aboriginal).

liturgy: The form of public worship of God by believers, especially the celebration of the Eucharist.

Mary: The mother of Jesus. The Gospels of Matthew (ch. 1) and Luke (chs. 1–2) depict her as a young, unmarried woman blessed by God with the conception of the divine Son, Jesus. Early Christian doctrine called her a “virgin” and “Mother of God” (Greek, *theotokos*). A major element of critique for feminist theology today is the Marian symbol of the obedient “New Eve,” who contrasts sharply with the first Eve.

Mary Magdalene: A woman who accompanied Jesus in his missionary journeys, accompanying him even to the cross. On the third day after Jesus’ death, she found his tomb empty and was sent to the other disciples with the message. She is regarded as the first apostle of the good news of Jesus’ resurrection (see John 20:11–18).

misogyny: Male hatred of females, often involving male violence directed to women.

Moses: Leader of the Jewish people to whom God revealed the divine name YHWH (Yahweh) and gave the law of the covenant on Mount Sinai. Under his leadership the Jews were liberated from slavery in Egypt.

mujerista: Coined by Ada María Isasi-Díaz, it refers to a Hispanic or Latina woman who struggles to liberate herself not only as an individual, but also as a participant in a Hispanic community.

nativism: An extreme form of American nationalism that expresses itself as intense opposition to an immigrant minority on the grounds that it is foreign. In the nineteenth century it focused on European immigrants, most of whom were Roman Catholic.

New Testament: Means “new covenant”; it is the second collection of sacred books of the Christian Bible. The use of the term can be traced to Tertullian (160–230 c.e.) in the West and Origen (185–254 c.e.) in the East. Although there are some disagreements about what books should be included in the New Testament, most Christian churches accept the twenty-seven books listed by

Athanasius of Alexandria in the fourth century. The major types of literature in the New Testament are Gospels and Acts, Epistles (Letters), and Revelation.

Old Testament: Means "old covenant"; it is the first major collection of sacred books of the Christian Bible. The use of the term can be traced to Tertullian (160–230 C.E.) in the West and Origen (185–254 C.E.) in the East. The Protestant pre-Christian Scriptures include the same thirty-nine books of the Bible of Judaism (the Hebrew Tanakh); the Roman Catholic Old Testament includes several other books and additions to books found in the Greek Septuagint; the Eastern churches' Old Testament is similar to the Roman Catholic Old Testament, with some Eastern churches including additional texts such as 3 and 4 Maccabees. The major types of literature of the Old Testament are law, narrative, prophecy, wisdom reflections, poetry, proverbs, and apocalypses.

ordination: The sacrament of orders by which ministers of the church are appointed in a sacramental manner, usually by the laying on of hands by a bishop or church authority, for permanent ministry within a Christian church.

Our Lady of Guadalupe: The apparition of Mary, the mother of Jesus, to an indigenous Native American in Mexico. Mexican and Mexican American feminists envision her to be the representative of oppressed women. She is associated with the biblical preferential option for the poor and is the basis for a spirituality of liberation from all forms of injustice. (Comparable apparitions can be found elsewhere in the Third World — for example, Purisima of Nicaragua, the Black Aparecida of Brazil, and the Black Madonna of the Philippines.)

paradigm: A symbolic framework that underlies the shared assumptions and understandings of reality of a particular society.

Paraclete: The Gospel of John's name for the Holy Spirit, the third person in the Blessed Trinity; the English noun form of a Greek verb *parakaléo* (meaning I exhort, I comfort). In John's Gospel Jesus promises his disciples that when he departs he will send them another Paraclete (NRSV "Advocate") to remain with them (John 14:16–17, 26; 16:7).

paternity: The state of being a father.

paternalism: Governing in a fatherly way; a male relating to his adult children or other persons over whom he has authority without respect for their autonomy and equality with him.

patriarchy: Literally, "the rule of the father." It is a system of legal, economic, and political relations that legitimate and enforce relations of dominance in a society. Historically, it has resulted in a hierarchically ordered society in which men have power. Patriarchy is commonly regarded as male dominance over women, but it is also manifested in the dominance of certain males over other males, and certain females over other females, particularly when the persons dominated are from a racial or ethnic minority and/or from a lower economic class.

praxis: A word used in liberation theologies, usually referring to transformative action, guided by the example of Jesus, taken in response to oppression. Its goal is the achievement of social justice and freedom from those things that dehumanize people.

radical feminism: That form of feminism that argues that patriarchy is the root cause not only of women's oppression but also of all forms of hierarchical dualism that result in women's secondary status in society.

reconstructionist Christian feminist theology: Theology done by Christian feminists who draw attention to patriarchal influences on Christianity that result in oppression and injustice. In this theology, the Bible and the Christian tradition are studied with interest in uncovering their manifestations of patriarchy and androcentrism ("hermeneutics of suspicion") and also as sources that support the struggle for liberation of women and other oppressed groups ("hermeneutics of remembrance").

reformist Christian feminist theology: Theology that reflects a commitment to the Bible and Christian tradition, opposition to gender bias, and a desire for greater participation in existing church structures.

revolutionary feminist theology: Influenced by radical feminism, this is a type of theology that rejects the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures and their male deity as sources of patriarchal oppression, and centers its reflection on Goddess traditions and the celebration of women's unique talents and abilities.

sacrament: Translates the Latin *sacramentum* and the Greek *mysterion*. It is (1) a significant symbol or religious rite through which participants experience the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ and the offer of salvation (e.g., baptism and Eucharist); (2) the mystery of the kingdom of God fulfilled in the church of Jesus Christ.

saints: Persons who manifest the holiness of God in their lives. In Judaism, saints are persons who live in accord with the sacred covenant with desire for communion with the living God. In Christianity and Islam, saints are persons who respond to God's call to holiness (Christians) or submit to Allah's will (Islam) by loving God (Allah) and creatures. They are also those persons who have died who are memorialized and/or venerated by Christians and Muslims for their exemplary lives of holiness. Roman Catholics, Eastern Christians (Orthodox and Byzantine), Anglican Communion churches, and most Lutherans venerate saints; all the Protestant churches influenced by Calvin and the Anabaptist traditions do not.

Second Vatican Council: Commonly known as Vatican II. An international assembly of Roman Catholic bishops and theologians, called by Pope John XXIII, that met in Rome from 1962 to 1965. During the council, sixteen documents were written that articulated the Catholic Church's self-understanding and mission in the world.

second wave of feminism: Traceable to the adoption by the United Nations in 1967 of the "Declaration of the Elimination of Discrimination against Women"; in the United States its beginnings are closely associated with Euro-American women's advocacy for equal rights in conjunction with the civil rights movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. Among the earliest significant theological works was Mary Daly's *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968), read widely in the United States and Western Europe.

Septuagint: The translation into Greek of the Hebrew and Aramaic Jewish Scriptures between 250 and 100 B.C.E. The texts of the Septuagint were incorporated into the Christian Bible as the Old Testament and the deuterocanonical/apocryphal books.

sexism: The erroneous belief, conviction, or attitude that one sex, female or male, is superior to the other by the very nature of reality. Although it is possible for either females or males to be treated as inferior, historically, women have been more negatively affected by sexism than men.

socialist feminism: That form of feminism which uses Marxist and feminist analysis in tandem to argue that economic class and gender definitions work together in capitalist societies to oppress women.

sola scriptura: Latin for "scripture alone." Luther coined this term as an axiom to emphasize that the Bible is the authority for understanding and for living faith.

spirituality: Striving to integrate one's life in terms of self-transcendence toward what one perceives to be the ultimate value or good. Christian spirituality is striving for personal integration and self-transcendence in relationship to God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Synoptic: "To see together"; the term is used in reference to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. If printed in parallel columns with similar materials located side by side, it becomes clear that their accounts of the public life of Jesus are similar in content and order.

Tanakh: An acronym for the Hebrew Scriptures created from the Hebrew names for the three sections of the Hebrew Bible: Torah (Law), Nebi'im (the Prophets), and Ketubim (the Writings).

thealogy: Coined by Canadian Jewish feminist Naomi Goldenberg, it refers to reflection on the divine in feminine terms, especially when this reflection is associated with Goddess religion.

third wave of feminism: Traceable to the "International Women's Year" (1975), which launched the "UN Decade for Women" at a conference held in Mexico City. During this decade it became increasingly clear that European and Euro-American women's experience of discrimination was different from that of other racial and ethnic groups whose history included slavery and colonization. Since the early 1980s increasing attention has been given to the difference that so-

cial location makes in the lives of women, especially in the degree and kinds of struggles women face daily. During this period theologies that are location specific have emerged; among them are Christian feminist (European and Euro-American), womanist (African American), and *mujerista/Latina* (Hispanic and Latin American).

Third World: A name for countries, most of which are in the southern hemisphere, that have low levels of literacy and per capita income, and high levels of malnutrition and infant mortality. It can also be applied to poor persons, usually minorities, who live on the margin in societies of great wealth (e.g., the United States, Japan, Australia, New Zealand).

tradition: From the Latin *traditio* and the Greek *paradosis*, meaning "to hand on." The basic Christian meaning is the handing on of beliefs, doctrines, rituals, and revered sources, such as the Bible, by a church in ways that are responsive to the concerns of the time.

Trinity: A central doctrine of Christianity that affirms that there are three divine "persons" existing in one God. This mystery is rooted in the biblical belief in God as creator, redeemer, and sanctifier, and in the teachings of Jesus about God as "Father" and the promise of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to send the Holy Spirit after his earthly life had ended.

vowed women (and men) religious: Persons who live their Christian faith by belonging to a religious institute in which they make a permanent commitment to the evangelical counsels of voluntary celibacy, poverty, and obedience.

Wisdom literature: The body of biblical literature that is concerned primarily with the pursuit of God's proper order for life.

womanist: Coined by Alice Walker, and related to the term "womanish," it names the unique struggle of African American women to overcome the oppression of racism, sexism, and classism, and affirms the contributions that black women make to the well-being of African Americans, female and male.

Yahweh: A name for God (YHWH), which, according to the Old Testament book of Exodus, was revealed to Moses. In Jewish tradition, it is considered a name too holy to be pronounced aloud and is replaced by *Adonai* (NRSV "LORD").