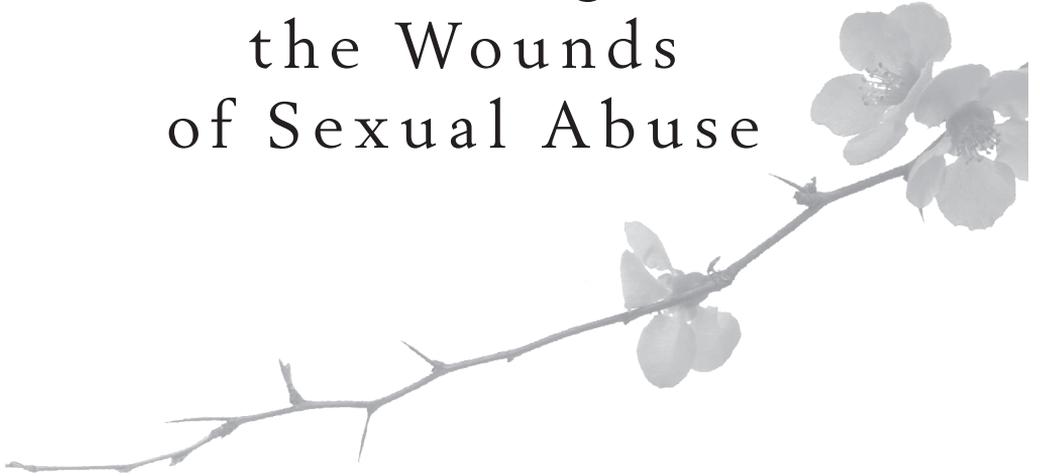


Healing  
the Wounds  
of Sexual Abuse



Reading the Bible  
with Survivors

Elaine A. Heath

1



We Were the Least of These

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. Laura's healing began with a sermon in which she finally heard her own story. My healing began with previewing a film at my daughter's school. How did your healing journey begin?
2. Complete the following statement: When I read this chapter,
  - a. I felt . . .
  - b. I remembered . . .
  - c. I hoped . . .
  - d. I prayed . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. Complete the following statement: When I think about using gender-inclusive language and images for God in the teaching, preaching, and worship resources in church,
  - a. I feel . . .
  - b. I think . . .
  - c. I hope . . .
  - d. I pray . . .

### *Recommended Activities*

- Watch: *The Color Purple*, *The Tale*
- Create: Paint, draw, or sculpt an image to express the promise of Revelation 21:5: "See, I am making all things new."

2



Fig Leaves

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. What are some of the interpretations you have heard of the story of Adam and Eve?
2. In what ways, if any, do you see the “Madonna and whore syndrome” in popular culture?
3. Complete the following statements:
  - a. The idea that God looks at sin first from the standpoint of the sinned-against leads me to think . . .
  - b. When I imagine Adam and Eve as vulnerable children rather than rebellious adults . . .
  - c. My own version of wearing “fig leaves” has been to . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. What are some of the interpretations you have heard of the story of Adam and Eve?
2. In what ways, if any, do you see the “Madonna and whore syndrome” in popular culture?
3. Complete the following statements:
  - a. The idea that God looks at sin first from the standpoint of the sinned-against leads me to think . . .
  - b. When I imagine Adam and Eve as vulnerable children rather than rebellious adults . . .

### *Recommended Activities*

- Watch: *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Forrest Gump*, *Precious*
- Create: Assemble a prayer center in your home that includes a candle, a photo of you as a child, and a card that says, “I am chosen and beloved.” For each chapter of this book that you read, add another item to your prayer center to represent the healing that you encounter in the chapter. If you do not have space to leave a prayer center set up, create a special prayer box or basket in which you

place these objects. You can take them out to prepare an altar space for your prayer time, then put them away when you are finished.

- **Discover:** Visit a local art museum that has works depicting the stories of Genesis. How do the artists interpret these stories? How did their culture and social conditioning shape their interpretation?

3



Through the Wilderness

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. What would happen if we rejected “permanent stain” theology?
2. The woman who was taken in adultery was about to be stoned by her accusers. What are some of the ways we survivors stone ourselves?
3. Tell about a time you were tempted to “repent” of healing and “head back to Egypt.”
4. Complete the following statement: As I reflect upon my own journey through the wilderness thus far,
  - a. the greatest struggles have been . . .
  - b. the “Moses” in my life has been . . .
  - c. my own “cloud of witnesses” includes . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. What would happen if we rejected “permanent stain” theology?
2. Some people think that if we believe and practice “mercy triumphing over judgment” we will trivialize or minimize or even give up belief in the reality of sin and evil. Respond to this assumption.

3. Complete the following statement: The most challenging aspect of journeying through the wilderness with survivors is . . .

***Recommended Activities***

- Watch: *Diary of a Mad Black Woman*
- Create: Chart a map of your own journey through the wilderness on a large sheet of paper, noting the “pillar of cloud” and significant times of growth and of struggle.
- Read: *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls and *Hillbilly Elegy* by J. D. Vance

4



## The Terrible Secret

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. Who have been the “angels” in your life, the ones who *did* come with a message of hope and healing?
2. Complete the following statement: As I read this chapter,
  - a. I felt . . .
  - b. I remembered . . .
  - c. I grieved . . .
  - d. I prayed . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. Complete the following statement: As I think about becoming one of the “missing angels” who bear the good news of the Redeemer,
  - a. I wonder . . .
  - b. I hope . . .
  - c. I remember . . .
  - d. I pray . . .
2. Many people believe that any sexual activity, including sexual violence, is acceptable as long as it is between consenting adults. Respond to this belief.

### ***Recommended Activities***

- Watch: *The Joy Luck Club*, *Enough*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *Greenleaf* (a television series)
- Create: Make a drawing, painting, or sculpture of the new story of the Levite's concubine. Depict angels coming to her aid.
- Discover: Find out about the battered persons shelter in your community. Do they have brochures and other information, including speakers, that can serve as resources for your church? What kinds of donations do they need? Many people working in domestic violence shelters have never met Christians who understand and resist domestic violence using the Bible. They have seen the Bible used only to perpetuate oppression. Consider taking them a copy of this book.
- Read: *The Shack* by William Young

5



## Beauty Pageants

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. What are some of the ways you were socialized into your gender as a child?
2. As you look around now at television, movies, magazines, and the internet, how do you see the objectification of women's bodies being played out? How are men's bodies objectified? What about the bodies of people of color?
3. Have you ever felt like Vashti? Esther? Mordecai? The virgins who were taken to the harem but did not become the queen?
4. Complete the following statement: As I read Nadia's story,
  - a. I felt . . .
  - b. I remembered . . .
  - c. I grieved . . .
  - d. I prayed . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. What are some of the ways you were socialized into your gender as a child?
2. As you look around now at television, movies, magazines, and the internet, how do you see the objectification of

women's bodies being played out? How are men's bodies objectified? What about the bodies of people of color?

3. What can we do in the church to raise awareness of the evils of sex trafficking, sex tourism, and child pornography? How can your church become involved in helping others to heal from these forms of abuse?
4. Complete the following statement: As I read Nadia's story,
  - a. I felt . . .
  - b. I remembered . . .
  - c. I grieved . . .
  - d. I prayed . . .

#### ***Recommended Activities***

- Watch: *Slumdog Millionaire*, *The Storm Makers*, *Girl Model*
- Discover: Do some research on the internet and find out how your denomination might be involved in helping persons who have been victimized by sex trafficking. Decide on one step that you can take to make a difference, such as a financial contribution, writing a short article for your church newsletter, or giving a talk on this topic in an adult Sunday school class.
- Observe: Visit an art museum in a metropolitan area to look at images of the biblical story of Esther, or view images online. How did the artists interpret the story of Esther according to cultural conditioning? Were any of the paintings sensitive to the story from Esther's or Vashti's perspective? How would you portray their stories artistically?
- Read: *Good News about Injustice* by Gary A. Haugen

6



## Prayers of Lament and Mercy

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. What does it mean to find our own voices?
2. Complete the following statement: As I read through Psalm 18 slowly,
  - a. the phrase or image that speaks to me the most is . . .
  - b. it speaks to me because . . .
  - c. I am challenged by . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. What would happen if we included imprecatory prayer in public worship liturgies?
2. What is your understanding of the process of forgiveness?
3. Complete the following statement: As I read through Psalm 18 slowly,
  - a. the phrase or image that speaks to me the most is . . .
  - b. it speaks to me because . . .
  - c. I am challenged by . . .

### *Recommended Activities*

- Watch: *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Gran Torino*, *The Mission*
- Create: Write a prayer, psalm, or song that expresses your own deep struggle toward freedom and healing.
- Read: *Traveling Mercies* by Anne Lamott

7



Are You My Mother?

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. Who are the people in your life who demonstrate the motherly love of God to you?
2. What are some ways you, like the little bird in the story, have been disappointed as you looked for motherly love from people and things that could not provide it?
3. Complete the following statement: When I read that God is like a nursing mother and that God has my name imprinted in God's hands,
  - a. I feel . . .
  - b. I imagine . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. Why are so many Christian leaders afraid to think about or speak of God as Mother in addition to God as Father?
2. Who are the people in your life who demonstrate the motherly love of God to you?
3. What are some ways you, like the little bird in the story, have been disappointed as you looked for motherly love from people and things that could not provide it?
4. Complete the following statement: When I read that God is like a nursing mother and that God has my name imprinted in God's hands,
  - a. I feel . . .
  - b. I imagine . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .

***Recommended Activities***

- Watch: *How to Make an American Quilt*, *The Shack*, *Lion*, *Tully*
- Create: Draw, paint, or sculpt an image representing God's hands with your name imprinted in God's palms.
- Read: *The Red Tent* by Anita Diamant

8



Eunuchs

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. Which of the great, healing reversals of Isaiah speak personally to you, and why?
2. Describe a time when you witnessed or experienced someone being ridiculed or excluded because of their sexual ambiguity.
3. Complete the following statement: When I read that God has special promises just for eunuchs and that those who have suffered sexual abuse are a type of eunuch,
  - a. I feel . . .
  - b. I imagine . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. Which of the great, healing reversals of Isaiah speak personally to you, and why?
2. Describe a time when you witnessed or experienced someone being ridiculed or excluded because of their sexual ambiguity.
3. What are some ways the church could be invited to reflect upon the promises of God to eunuchs in Isaiah? What are the obstacles to opening the church's eyes to these promises for eunuchs?

4. Complete the following statement: When I read that God has special promises just for eunuchs and that those who have suffered sexual abuse are a type of eunuch,
- a. I feel . . .
  - b. I imagine . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .

***Recommended Activities***

- Watch: *Billy Elliot*
- Create: Bake a large batch of homemade bread, working the dough with your hands rather than a bread machine. (Plenty of good recipes are available on the internet.) As you knead the dough, meditate on God's promises to those who are eunuchs, those who will have a lasting memorial in God's house. When the bread is finished, share it with a neighbor or friend as a sign of the abundance of creative self-giving that is possible through the healing of eros.
- Read: *The Wounding and Healing of Desire* by Wendy Farley

9



We Are Clean

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

1. In what ways have you experienced conflicting desires to be healed and to run away from healing?
2. How have you experienced Jesus saying *talitha cum* to you?
3. Complete the following statement: As I read about the woman who bled for twelve long years,
  - a. I thought . . .
  - b. I felt . . .
  - c. I remembered . . .
  - d. I wished . . .
  - e. I prayed . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. What would it mean for you to “get in the boat and cross over to the other side”? What would be the challenges? What would be the risks?
2. Complete the following statement: As I read about the woman who bled for twelve long years,
  - a. I thought . . .
  - b. I felt . . .
  - c. I remembered . . .
  - d. I wished . . .
  - e. I prayed . . .

### *Recommended Activities*

- Watch: *Whale Rider*; *Reign Over Me*; *Juno*; *Girl, Interrupted*
- Create: Complete a series of paintings or drawings that tell the story of the healing of the Gerasene man.
- Read: *Reviving Ophelia* by Mary Pipher

10



About Judas and Mary

***For Survivors***

Complete the following statements:

1. The scene with Mary crossing the room and kneeling at Jesus's feet reminds me of . . .
2. I have encountered the spirit of Judas in . . .
3. When I think about Jesus telling Judas to leave Mary alone,
  - a. I think . . .
  - b. I feel . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .

***For Those Who Journey with Us***

Complete the following statements:

1. The scene with Mary crossing the room and kneeling at Jesus's feet reminds me of . . .
2. I have encountered the spirit of Judas in . . .
3. When I think about Jesus telling Judas to leave Mary alone,
  - a. I think . . .
  - b. I feel . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .
4. For those of us who are leaders in God's church, how can we guard against becoming "infected" with the spirit of Judas?

***Recommended Activities***

- Watch: *Les Misérables*
- Feel: Make an appointment to have a foot massage. As the massage therapist applies the fragrant oil to your feet, imagine the comfort Jesus felt at Mary's nurturing, safe

touch. Allow this experience to be a form of prayer, connecting you with Jesus's love for Mary and with her offering of nurturing, safe touch to Jesus.

- Create: Draw, paint, sculpt, or photograph an image representing Mary anointing Jesus's feet and wiping them with her hair.
- Discover: Using a good Bible dictionary, find out more about life in Jesus's day. Read about denarii, burial customs, nard, and cultural norms regarding prohibitions against unmarried women and men touching one another.

11



Emmanuel

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

Complete the following statements:

1. When I think about Jesus as a victim of sexual abuse,
  - a. I feel . . .
  - b. I remember . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .
2. Before I read this chapter, my understanding of atonement, if I had one, was that . . .
3. After reading this chapter, I think that atonement means . . .
4. If Molly was in my church . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

Complete the following statements:

1. When I think about Jesus as a victim of sexual abuse,
  - a. I feel . . .
  - b. I remember . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .
2. Before I read this chapter, my understanding of atonement, if I had one, was that . . .
3. After reading this chapter, I think that atonement means . . .
4. If Molly was in my church . . .

### *Recommended Activities*

- Watch: *The Green Mile*; *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*; *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy
- Create: Assemble a mosaic representing atonement as at-one-ment.
- Read: *Harry Potter*, volumes 1–7, by J. K. Rowling

12



In Remembrance of Me

## FOR REFLECTION

---

### *For Survivors*

Complete the following statements:

1. In my life I have experienced sexual shame as . . .
2. My experiences of the Eucharist or Holy Communion have been . . .
3. When I think about Jesus giving his body to me in the Eucharist,
  - a. I think . . .
  - b. I feel . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .

### *For Those Who Journey with Us*

1. My experiences of the Eucharist or Holy Communion have been . . .
2. When I think about Jesus giving his body to me in the Eucharist,
  - a. I think . . .
  - b. I feel . . .
  - c. I wonder . . .
  - d. I pray . . .
3. Respond to the concept of divine eros as an experience of some of the great Christian saints and mystics.

### *Recommended Activities*

- Watch: *Babette's Feast*, *Chocolat*
- Create: Prepare a delicious meal to celebrate the gift of God's healing love in your life. Invite loved ones to share the meal with you.
- Discover: Explore ways that you might get involved in ministries having to do with table fellowship (for example, Meals on Wheels, a food pantry, etc.).
- Read: *Take This Bread* and *Jesus Freak* by Sara Miles

13



Letting Go

***For Survivors***

1. Chuck's incarceration involved many experiences with the criminal justice system. In what ways has your recovery included contact with police, lawyers, or other official actors within the justice system?
2. Imagine yourself as Chuck's aunt Barbara. What would you have felt and thought upon receiving the terrible news?
3. What are some of the messages you have heard about forgiveness?
4. Imagine Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit upon you and inviting you to receive the power to forgive or retain sins. What do you feel? What do you see?

***For Those Who Journey with Us***

1. Chuck's incarceration involved many experiences with the criminal justice system. In what ways has your advocacy for survivors included contact with police, lawyers, or other official actors within the justice system?
2. Imagine yourself as Chuck's aunt Barbara. What would you have felt and thought upon receiving the terrible news?
3. Imagine yourself as Chuck's pastor. What would be the most challenging part of providing him with pastoral care?
4. What are some of the theological messages you have heard about forgiveness?
5. Imagine Jesus breathing the Holy Spirit upon you and inviting you to receive the power to forgive or retain sins. What do you feel? What do you see?

***Recommended Activities***

- Watch: *Dead Man Walking*, *Crash*, *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Schindler's List*, *The Shack*
- Create: Use torn pieces of colored paper and glue to create a collage representing the process of forgiveness.

- Discover: Go swimming in a pool where there is a diving board suspended above the water. Take the plunge into the water from the board, reflecting on the process of “letting go of the branch” of bitterness and entering the baptismal water of grace. Be playful in the different ways you dive and jump. Be gentle and kind with yourself emotionally. It is okay not to feel any differently in regard to forgiveness afterward, and it is okay to need an indefinite amount of time to forgive. This activity is to help us imagine letting go and trusting God’s healing, gracious love in our lives.
- Read: *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom

## Appendix A

# The Healing Cloud

### *A Five-Day Retreat Plan for Survivors of Sexual Abuse*

It is often the case at retreats that too much information is given—too many talks, books, words, ideas—when what retreatants really need are small, potent portions of artfully presented text from the life-giving Word and ample time, space, and means by which to fully digest them. The whole self—body, mind, and emotions—must have time and space to absorb and be nourished by God through the text.

This retreat is planned for the particular needs and life issues of women who are currently in counseling, survivors who have begun the journey of healing from sexual abuse and are now interested in strengthening their faith and building or exploring for the first time a trusting relationship with God. The retreat probably would not be suitable for a woman who is in the very early stages of recognizing the pervasive effects sexual abuse

of a healing retreat can sometimes open retreatants to experiences of deep emotional and spiritual distress that can feel overwhelming. These situations require immediate therapeutic attention. Thus, a therapist and a theologically equipped pastor or other Christian leader who is knowledgeable about recovery issues must be part of the retreat staff.

The following retreat plan is meant to be carried out over a span of five days, with each day having a theme based on one cloud story in the exodus narrative. This is primarily an outline, with the messages detailed only in a sparse and suggestive manner, so that the presenters can develop the theme in their own ways.

### Daily Schedule

8:00	Morning Prayer	Chapel
8:30	Breakfast	Dining Room
9:30	Morning Session	Conference Room
10:45	Sharing Groups	TBA
12:00	Lunch	Dining Room
1:00–4:30	Massage therapy and individual spiritual direction sessions may be scheduled during these times. Recreation options are also available. Check each day’s schedule and suggested response activities for recreation ideas that fit in with the day’s theme.	
5:30	Dinner	Dining Room
7:00	Guided Hike	Meeting Place TBA
8:30	Sharing Groups/Stories	TBA
9:30	Evening Prayer with Eucharist	Chapel
10:30	Please observe rule of silence until 8:00 a.m.	

Note: All group and individual activities are optional. If for any reason you wish to omit a scheduled activity, please do so. Please schedule in advance if you wish to have a massage

or a private spiritual direction session. Also, unless otherwise scheduled, swimming is restricted to afternoon free hours when the lifeguard is on duty.

### Day One

- Theme: Led Out of Egypt
- Text: Exodus 13:17–22
- Message

The message should center on the grace of God in leading the people out of Egypt into a new life where they could experience freedom, dignity, and wholeness and where they would receive the law (appropriate boundaries that honor God, self, and others). God anticipates the fears and needs of the people and is proactive, leading them by a route that will strengthen them for the long haul. The key word of this text is *lead*, so the key idea of this message is God's leading. The word *lead* in this text may be connected to the shepherding of God in Psalm 23. Other words to highlight include "change their minds" (repent) in verse 17 and "pillar of cloud" and "pillar of fire" in verses 21–22. Retreatants should be helped to connect their own flight from bondage to that of the Israelites and to see that God is the One who has led them out in order to give them life. Both during the message and in the small group sessions afterward, retreatants can be helped to identify the pillars of cloud and fire in their own journeys and the people who have been "Moses" to them.

### *Discussion Questions for Small Groups*

1. According to verse 18, the Israelites had to go on a winding, longer-than-expected route when leaving Egypt. Tell

about the “unexpectedly winding route” in your own “flight from Egypt.”

2. According to verse 17, Yahweh knew that if the people faced warfare immediately, they would “repent” of their new freedom and return to bondage because it was familiar. Share about a time you were tempted to “repent” of your new freedom and go back into a chaotic or abusive relationship. What helped you to finally get beyond this temptation?
3. According to verses 21–22, God came to lead the people out of Egypt and into the promised land by means of a pillar of cloud and fire. The cloud was a combination of natural elements (the stuff of clouds) and supernatural action (God actually was in the cloud, guiding and protecting them). What are some of the “natural” means God has “divinely infused” to bring you out of bondage and to lead you toward increasing freedom? In other words, what has been your own form of “pillar of cloud and fire”?
4. Who or what has been a “Moses” in your life, guiding, urging, and moving you toward a new life of freedom from shame and oppression?
5. Close your group discussion with prayers of thanksgiving, silent or vocal, for the gift of Moses and the pillar of cloud in our lives.

### *Suggested Response Activities*

1. Follow: In the afternoon, take a guided hike to explore the idea of being led on an unfamiliar trail by a seasoned guide/naturalist.
2. Create: Choose fabric strips or strips of different colors of paper to represent elements of your own process of

leaving a relationship of bondage. Weave them into a small mat. If you wish, share your mat with your small group in the evening, telling about the colors and pattern you chose.

3. Converse: In the evening, gather around a communal bonfire. Reflect on the many implications of the pillar of fire and recall the campfires that the Israelites used along their way to the promised land.

## Day Two

- Theme: A Path through the Sea
- Text: Exodus 14:1–31
- Message

This message should focus on the patience of God with the people's fear, the protection of God during the night as the cloud moved between the Israelites and the Egyptian army, and the power of God in using many elements to achieve a supernatural deliverance. A difficult theological concept that must also be addressed is God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart (v. 17). It is vital that the women not see their offenders' cruelty as an act of God literally hardening their offenders' hearts so as to gain eventual glory over the offender. Instead, the women can be helped to see that Pharaoh already had a certain self-chosen hardness of heart toward God and the Israelites, and in a sense, God was allowing this hardness to reach its logical conclusion. (There is a genuine parallel in the lives of many women who are survivors of domestic violence, in their former partners' "battering cycles" seeming to soften, then becoming harder and more violent with each

episode.) This message should also include reflections on God's ordering of primordial creation elements (earth, water, wind, and fire, with allusions to the primordial chaos of Gen. 1) in the deliverance of God's people and its parallel in the retreatants' lives, as they have seen God bringing order out of chaos in their own lives.

*Discussion Questions for Small Groups*

1. In verses 10–14, the Israelites became panic-stricken as they realized the Egyptians were in hot pursuit. This was their first real challenge to live the new way of freedom and trust in God instead of in the old way of oppression. In their fear they “remembered” Egyptian bondage as being not so bad after all. They blamed Moses for talking them into leaving Egypt and were sure they were about to die. What they needed was a reality check as to the way life actually had been for them in bondage. How did God help them during their weakness and fear in this episode? How is their selective memory about Egypt similar to the selective memory of survivors who as adults are trying to decide whether to leave chaotic and abusive relationships?
2. In verses 19–20, the pillar of cloud and fire moved around behind the Israelites, protecting them and hiding them from their pursuers. Share about your own experience of being “hidden, protected, and provided for” as you moved through the initial crisis of choosing to heal from sexual abuse.
3. God used the primordial elements of creation (earth, water, wind, and fire) to bring about the deliverance of the Israelites. In this way the story is reminiscent of the creation account in Genesis 1. Where do you most feel a need for God to bring new order into your life?

4. What does this passage say to you about God's character? About God's view of shame and oppression? About God's attitude toward us when we are weak and fearful?

### *Suggested Response Activities*

1. Watch: In the afternoon, ask a friend to join you for a movie about women coming into freedom and wholeness. Talk about which character you most identify with. Choose from *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *How to Make an American Quilt*, *The Color Purple*, or *The Joy Luck Club*.
2. Create: Make a mixed-media collage using seeds, small stones, string, twigs, and other natural objects as a reflection on God bringing order out of chaos in order to create new life for God's people. If you wish, share the collage with your small group in the evening.
3. Enjoy: Weather permitting, watch the sunset from a good vantage point outdoors. Notice the many fragrances, sounds, and sights of nature as you are present to the sunset. Reflect on God's presence revealed in the fiery colors of the sunset and the other sensory experiences of nature. If you wish, journal about the feelings that surface as you watch the sunset.

### **Day Three**

- Theme: Celebrating Our Victories
- Text: Exodus 15:1–21
- Message

Begin with the fact that Miriam's song was the original version of this victory song (helping retreatants see that Miriam was

a strong woman who had standing in her faith community). Discuss the importance of naming in this song (vv. 1–12): the naming of the Lord as Victor and Champion, the naming of the enemy, the naming of the victory, the naming of deliverance. Help retreatants link this to their experience in therapy of naming their pain, their need, the injustice, and their feelings concerning coming into freedom. (Such naming is essential to recovery and to beginning a process of forgiveness of the offender.) Hope for the future in verses 13–18 is based on the powerful victory of the recent past. Encourage retreatants to reimagine the future as a hopeful, God-directed adventure based on the powerful experience of deliverance they have had in the recent past. Notice the dance of joy led by the Israelite women in this passage. The whole body (the *female* body) is used in worship and praise, and God is pleased with their offering of dance. (For abuse survivors, there are often problems with body image and shame. This text helps to affirm both embodiment and sexuality as sacred gifts.)

### *Discussion Questions for Small Groups*

1. Take fifteen minutes and write your own version of your victory song, naming events and persons and celebrating your own “crossing of the sea.” Imagine it being sung by a mighty chorus of women with strong, clear voices. Read your victory songs to one another. (As always, sharing is on a volunteer basis.)
2. As you look to the future in light of your own crossing of the sea, what are some of your hopes and dreams?
3. How does it feel when you imagine Miriam, a woman, and her group of singers leading all of Israel in the victory song and dance?

4. Imagine yourself leading a victory dance concerning your own liberation. Describe your victory dance garments. What would be the ideal setting for the dance? Would the dance be slow and meditative or fast and energetic? Who would you invite to watch and listen?

### *Suggested Response Activities*

1. Journey: In the afternoon, go to the pool to swim. Walk through the water in the shallow end, reflecting on the “path through the sea” for the Israelites and “the path through the sea” in your own life. Then float or gently bob in deeper water, reflecting on the love and grace of God that has carried you thus far. Feel the water gracefully supporting the weight of your body. Experience God’s love for your body and your womanhood as the water holds you.
2. Create: Use pastels, finger paint, or crayon on large paper to create an image that evokes the crossing of the “Red Sea” in your own journey. If you wish, share the creation with your small group in the evening.
3. Move: In the evening, join the other women around the bonfire or in the conference room for a joyful time of music and simple folk/liturgical dance, using rhythm instruments. Celebrate your own crossing of the sea!

### **Day Four**

- Theme: My Presence Will Go with You
- Text: Exodus 33:12–23
- Message

A key idea in this passage is the importance of God knowing and calling Moses “by name.” God’s presence is not just transcendent in the cloud and fire but is also very personal and intimate: God knows us by name. Both “know” and “name” are richly nuanced with the ideas of intimacy and union. The message should help the women explore what it means that God knows them intimately, by name, and that God wishes to go with them, give them rest (v. 14), and show favor to them. God also wishes to continue to reveal God’s self to the women, just as God did for Moses. The theme of intimate prayer as listening and watching for “God’s glory” (vv. 17–23), and as speaking with God as with a friend, should be highlighted. Such prayer is indispensable in the journey to wholeness with God. Moses hungered to “see God,” which was pleasing to God. Even though Moses could not experience absolute, unbroken union with God, God was willing to give Moses as much revelation and union as Moses could receive. The idea that God loves to give God’s self to us and wants to be intimate with us is very healing for women who have suffered abuse. It helps them to see that they are lovable, desirable, strong, and worthy of intimacy.

#### *Discussion Questions for Small Groups*

1. Why do you think it was important for Moses to know that God knew him and called him “by name”?
2. What kinds of images and feelings surface when you think of God knowing you and calling you “by name”?
3. If God were to give you a loving and affirming nickname, what do you think it might be?
4. What are some ways we can deepen our ability to pray “listening and watching for God” prayers?

5. How have you “seen God passing by” most recently in your journey?

*Suggested Response Activities*

1. Discover: In the afternoon, take a hike through the woods and look for clefts in rocks or in tree trunks, where small animals make their homes or plants are growing. Think about the refuge the cleft is for these living things and the strong refuge God’s love is for us.
2. Write: Journal a dialogue between yourself and God, based on the theme of God’s name for you and God’s desire for an intimate relationship with you.
3. Create: Use clay to sculpt a form that represents your own experience of being safely hidden in the “cleft of the rock,” from which you came to see and understand God in a deeper way.
4. Tell: Before evening prayer, have a time of bedtime stories, with popcorn, hot cocoa, and the following children’s picture books, which reinforce the idea of God’s self-revealing, steadfast, *hesed* love for us: *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown; *Mama, Do You Love Me?* by Barbara M. Joosse; *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney; *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak.

**Day Five**

- Theme: Keeping on the Path
- Text: Exodus 34:1–16; 40:34–38
- Message

This message is in many ways a capstone for the week’s journey, designed to send the women away with hope, courage, and commitment to their ongoing journey with God. It should highlight the following four themes from the text: the effects of generational sin and God’s power to break the cycle (34:5–7); the hard work of recovery, which takes time and requires commitment to keep going even though we stumble along the way (vv. 8–9); a commitment to recognize destructive relationships, thought patterns, and idols in our lives and to get rid of them instead of trying to make treaties with them (vv. 10–16); and the necessary centrality of God’s presence (the cloud) and leading in our lives in order for us to be whole and free (34:10; 40:34–38). All these are necessary in order to fully heal. All of them involve individual commitments that are lived out in the context of community.

### *Discussion Questions for Small Groups*

1. In 34:11–16, God warns the Israelites not to “make covenants” of any kind with people who will emotionally and spiritually ensnare them and lead them into yet another kind of bondage. He warns them not to worship any other gods because only God is God. Based on the message and what you may have already known about these Canaanite cultures, why was this so tempting to the Israelites? What were the emotional and spiritual “hooks,” the things that drew them in and caused them to want to settle for less than what God intended for them?
2. Think about your own journey. What are the emotional and spiritual “hooks” of your potentially destructive

relationships and your potential idols? What can we do when we feel ourselves leaning toward a “hook”?

3. As we have seen, God’s love is powerful enough to break the cycle of generational sin and to help people start a new life free from the cycle of abuse. What are two or three ways you intend to hand down “wholeness” to your children or grandchildren? (If you don’t have children or grandchildren, what are two or three ways other women could do this, or that you could help cultivate freedom from abuse in the next generation within your church or community?)

### *Suggested Response Activities*

1. Pray: In the afternoon, swim laps or take a leisurely walk for twenty minutes, using your swim strokes or the stride of your walk as a kind of metronome to repeat the short prayer: “Merciful and gracious, God abounds in love” (based on Exod. 34:6–7).
2. Create: Assemble a string of prayer beads with which to pray Psalm 103, which is related to the Exodus text for today’s session. Choose twenty-two beads, one for each verse, and choose each bead’s color and size to express the meaning of its verse. If you wish, share your beads with your group in the evening.
3. Remember: In the evening, gather around a bonfire for a time of thanksgiving for the week, to bring the week to closure. Begin with singing some of the songs that have been used in the prayer services during the week, such as “Be Not Afraid.” Each woman should have written on a piece of paper three gifts she has received from the week. Each woman takes a turn reading her thanksgiving list,

then as she casts it into the fire to help create the “smoke of prayer” that “ascends to God,” all the women sing a brief chorus of thanksgiving, prepared by the worship leader. At the conclusion, everyone joins hands and sings a suitable “song of sending.”

# Recommended Resources

## Articles and Papers

- Heath, Elaine A. "Altar Tears." *Journal of Religion and Abuse* (Winter 2006): 5–6.
- . "Jabez, a Man Called Pain." *Asbland Theological Journal* 33 (2001): 7–16.
- . "The Levite's Concubine: Domestic Violence and the People of God." *Priscilla Papers* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 10–20.
- Liston, Pamela Harrell. "Sex Trafficking: Overview Analysis and the Church's Response." Unpublished paper presented to Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, May 2, 2008.

## Books

- Allender, Dan B. *The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1990.
- Augustine. *The City of God*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. New York: Penguin, 1984.
- Baker, Mark D., ed. *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of Atonement*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

- Brueggemann, Walter. "The Book of Exodus: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 1:675–981. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.
- . *Genesis*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1982.
- Carnes, Patrick. *Don't Call It Love: Recovery from Sexual Addiction*. New York: Bantam, 1992.
- Diamant, Anita. *The Red Tent*. New York: Picador, 1997.
- Farley, Wendy. *The Wounding and Healing of Desire: Weaving Heaven and Earth*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Ferree, Marnie C. *No Stones: Women Redeemed from Sexual Shame*. Fairfax, VA: Xulon, 2002.
- Flake, M. Elaine McCollins. *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing for Wounded Women*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2007.
- Foote, Julia. "A Brand Plucked from the Fire: An Autobiographical Sketch." In *Sisters in the Spirit: Three Black Women's Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century*, edited and with an introduction by William Andrews, 161–234. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Fortune, Marie M. "Toward a Feminist Theology of Religion and the State." In Fortune and Adams, *Violence against Women and Children*, 15–35.
- Fortune, Marie M., and Carol J. Adams, eds. *Violence against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*. New York: Continuum, 1995.
- Goudy, June Christine. *The Feast of Our Lives: Re-imagining Communion*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002.
- Green, Joel B., and Mark D. Baker. *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000.
- Hadewijch. *Hadewijch: The Complete Works*. Edited by Columba Hart. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1980.
- Hall, Thelma. *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina*. New York: Paulist Press, 1988.
- Haugen, Gary A. *Good News about Injustice*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999.
- Heath, Elaine A. *The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017.
- Julian of Norwich. *Showings*. Edited by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist Press, 1978.

## Recommended Resources

- Kasl, Charlotte S. *Women, Sex, and Addiction: A Search for Love and Power*. New York: HarperOne, 1990.
- Kelsey, Morton. *Psychology, Medicine, and Christian Healing*. New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988.
- Kiuchi, Nobuyoshi. *Leviticus*. Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007.
- Lamott, Anne. *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1999.
- Linn, Dennis, Sheila Fabricant Linn, and Matthew Linn. *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life*. New York: Paulist Press, 1995.
- Miles, Sara. *Jesus Freak: Feeding, Healing, Raising the Dead*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010.
- . *Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2007.
- Milhaven, Annie Lally, ed. *Sermons Seldom Heard: Women Proclaim Their Lives*. New York: Crossroads, 1991.
- Motyer, J. A. "Curse." In *New Bible Dictionary*. 2nd ed. CD. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1982; Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997.
- Murk-Jansen, Saskia. *Brides in the Desert: The Spirituality of the Beguines*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998.
- Niditch, Susan. "Genesis." In *The Women's Bible Commentary*, edited by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, 13–29. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998.
- Park, Andrew Sung. *The Wounded Heart of God*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.
- Park, Andrew Sung, and Susan L. Nelson, eds. *The Other Side of Sin*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.
- Pipher, Mary. *Reviving Ophelia*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994.
- Procter-Smith, Marjorie. *Praying with Our Eyes Open*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.
- . "The Whole Loaf: Holy Communion and Survival." In Fortune and Adams, *Violence against Women and Children*, 464–78.
- Rowling, J. K. *Harry Potter*. 7 vols. New York: Scholastic, 1997–2007.
- Ruffing, Janet. *Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings*. New York: Paulist Press, 2000.

## Recommended Resources

- Scruton, Roger. *Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic*. New York: Continuum, 1986.
- Simons, Walter. *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.
- Spencer, F. Scott. "Eunuch." In *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: D–H*, 355–56. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007.
- ten Boom, Corrie. *The Hiding Place*. New York: Bantam, 1984.
- Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.
- Vance, J. D. *Hillbilly Elegy*. New York: HarperCollins, 2016.
- Van Selms, A. "Balaam." In *New Bible Dictionary*. 2nd ed. CD. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1982; Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997.
- Walls, Jeannette. *The Glass Castle*. New York: Scribner, 2005.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Leviticus*. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984.
- Wilkinson, Bruce. *The Prayer of Jabez*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2000.
- Young, William P. *The Shack*. Newbury Park, CA: Windblown Media, 2007.

## Children's Books

- Brown, Margaret Wise. *The Runaway Bunny*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005.
- Eastman, P. D. *Are You My Mother?* New York: Random House, 1960.
- Joose, Barbara M. *Mama, Do You Love Me?* Vancouver, BC: Raincoast Books, 1991.
- McBratney, Sam. *Guess How Much I Love You*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2008.
- Sendak, Maurice. *Where the Wild Things Are*. New York: HarperCollins, 1988.

## Movies and Television Shows

- Babette's Feast*. Directed by Gabriel Axel. Denmark: MGM, 1987.
- Billy Elliot*. Directed by Stephen Daldry. United Kingdom: Universal Focus, 2001.

## Recommended Resources

- Chocolat*. Directed by Lasse Hallström. France: Miramax, 2001.
- The Color Purple*. Directed by Steven Spielberg. United States: Warner Bros., 1985.
- Crash*. Directed by Paul Haggis. United States: Lionsgate, 2005.
- The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Directed by Andrew Adamson. United States: Walt Disney Pictures, 2006.
- Dead Man Walking*. Directed by Tim Robbins. United States: MGM, 2000.
- Diary of a Mad Black Woman*. Directed by Tyler Perry. United States: Lionsgate, 2005.
- Enough*. Directed by Michael Apted. United States: Columbia Pictures, 2002.
- Forrest Gump*. Directed by Robert Zemeckis. United States: Paramount Pictures, 1994.
- Fried Green Tomatoes*. Directed by Jon Avnet. United States: Universal Pictures, 1991.
- Girl, Interrupted*. Directed by James Mangold. United States: Columbia Pictures, 2000.
- Girl Model*. Directed by David Redmon and Ashley Sabin. United States: First Run Features, 2011.
- Gran Torino*. Directed by Clint Eastwood. United States: Warner Bros., 2008.
- Greenleaf*. Directed by Clement Virgo. Aired June 21, 2016—on OWN. United States: Lionsgate, 2016.
- The Green Mile*. Directed by Frank Darabont. United States: Warner Bros., 2000.
- How to Make an American Quilt*. Directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse. United States: Universal Pictures, 1995.
- The Joy Luck Club*. Directed by Oliver Stone. United States: Hollywood Pictures, 1993.
- Juno*. Directed by Jason Reitman. Canada: Fox Searchlight, 2008.
- Les Misérables*. Directed by Tom Hooper. United States: Universal Studios, 2012.
- Lion*. Directed by Garth Davis. United States: Weinstein Company, 2016.
- Little Miss Sunshine*. Directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris. United States: Fox Searchlight Pictures, 2006.
- The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Directed by Peter Jackson. New Zealand: New Line Cinema, 2002–4.
- The Mission*. Directed by Roland Joffé. United States: Warner Bros., 1986.

## Recommended Resources

- Precious*. Directed by Lee Daniels. United States: Lionsgate, 2009.
- Reign Over Me*. Directed by Mike Binder. United States: Columbia Pictures, 2007.
- Roots*. Directed by Marvin J. Chomsky, John Erman, David Greene, and Gilbert Moses. United States: Warner Home Video, 1977.
- Schindler's List*. Directed by Steven Spielberg. United States: Universal Pictures, 2004.
- The Secret Life of Bees*. Directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood. United States: Fox Searchlight, 2009.
- The Shack*. Directed by Stuart Hazeldine. United States: Lionsgate, 2017.
- Slumdog Millionaire*. Directed by Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandan. United States: Twentieth Century Fox, 2009.
- The Storm Makers*. Directed by Guillaume Suon. United States: First Run Features, 2014.
- The Tale*. Directed by Jennifer Fox. United States: HBO, 2018.
- Tully*. Directed by Jason Reitman. United States: Focus Features, 2018.
- Whale Rider*. Directed by Niki Caro. New Zealand: Newmarket Films, 2003.

## Websites

- Epiphany Academy of Formative Spirituality. [www.epiphanyassociation.org](http://www.epiphanyassociation.org).
- FaithTrust Institute. [www.faithtrustinstitute.org](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org).
- Genesis Women's Shelter. [www.genesisshelter.org](http://www.genesisshelter.org).
- National Center for Victims of Crime. [www.nvc.org](http://www.nvc.org).
- National Coalition against Domestic Violence. [www.ncadv.org](http://www.ncadv.org).
- Rape Victim Advocacy Program. [www.rvap.org](http://www.rvap.org).
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov).
- WorkplaceViolence911. [www.workplaceviolence911.com](http://www.workplaceviolence911.com).

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Christen A. Johnson, K. T. Hawbaker, Randi Stevenson, Susan Moskop, and Lauren Hill, “#MeToo: A Timeline of Events,” updated September 26, 2018, *Chicago Tribune*, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/ct-me-too-timeline-20171208-htmlstory.html>.

2. Lindsey Bahr, “Harvey Weinstein to Take Leave of Absence after Bombshell New York Times Sex Harassment Report,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 5, 2017, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/movies/ct-harvey-weinstein-new-york-times-sexual-harassment-report-20171005-story.html>.

## Chapter 1: We Were the Least of These

1. The national statistics for abuse for both genders are staggering. While both men and women are victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence, 95 percent of domestic violence is against women. Twice as many girls as boys are victimized by sexual abuse, with one out of three girls and one out of six boys experiencing sexual abuse before the age of eighteen. FaithTrust Institute, “Learn the Basics,” [www.faithtrustinstitute.org/resources/learn-the-basics](http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/resources/learn-the-basics); UnityPoint Health, “Myths & Facts about Child Sexual Abuse,” [www.unitypoint.org/blankchildrens/myths-and-facts-about-sexual-assault.aspx](http://www.unitypoint.org/blankchildrens/myths-and-facts-about-sexual-assault.aspx); WorkplaceViolence911, “Workplace Violence Fact Sheet,” <http://www.workplaceviolence911.com/node/975>; and National Coalition against Domestic Violence, “Domestic Violence Facts,” [https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/domestic\\_violence2.pdf](https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/2497/domestic_violence2.pdf).

2. My definition of evangelism is the process of holistic initiation of persons into a holy life, revealed in Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, surrendered to the reign of God for the transformation of the world. Holiness is about giving ourselves completely to God and being in partnership with God in this world. It is a dynamic, daily process of receiving and giving the love of God. There are many people who, like Laura, attend church and are members of the church but have never been evangelized.

3. At that time I used the New International Version or the King James Version of the Bible. The 1984 version of the NIV is quoted here; the 2011 translation has updated the language to say, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

4. Robert Manzano, “Beauty for Ashes,” Thankyou Music, 1979.

## Chapter 2: Fig Leaves

1. A hermeneutic is a method or set of principles for interpretation.

2. Andrew Sung Park prefers the doctrine of original “han” instead of original sin. He draws from the Korean concept of han, which is the accumulation of bitterness, shame, anger, despair, and other destructive attitudes and feelings that result from experiences of being sinned against. Park’s work is enlightening to this discussion of sexual abuse but especially focuses on han brought about by the systemic oppression of racism, classism, and sexism. Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993); and Andrew Sung Park and Susan L. Nelson, eds., *The Other Side of Sin* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

3. My reading of this text has also been inspired by Phyllis Trible’s hermeneutic that honors the victims of violence in the Bible who are so often nameless and voiceless women. Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

4. Saint Irenaeus’s exact dates of birth and death are not clear, but he lived in the second century, was Bishop of Lyons, and died around the beginning of the third century.

5. Julian (ca. 1342–1417) experienced a series of sixteen christological visions that, in light of Scripture and Christian tradition, became her primary source of theological reflection for the rest of her life. Within the visions Julian saw fallen humanity as one person, “the servant.” In Pauline terms, she saw first and second Adam as one servant, simultaneously corporate humanity (Adam) and Christ. In her vision, Christ is bound to humanity forever in infinite love. The servant parable (chap. 51) is pivotal to understanding the rest of her visions and her theology. Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, ed. and with an introduction by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

6. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 186; and Susan Niditch, “Genesis,” in *The Women’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 16. Indeed, as ancient exegetical approaches demonstrate, a text can have numerous meanings at the same time. This is part of the reason that the Bible is “living and active.”

7. My interpretation of Gen. 3 appears in a shorter and somewhat different form, focusing on hamartiology and the doctrine of atonement, in my book *The Mystic Way of Evangelism: A Contemplative Vision for Christian Outreach*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017).

8. The Hebrew concept of “knowing” is holistic, nuanced by a sense of participation in that which is known, unlike the Enlightenment concept of knowledge as supposedly objective intellectual awareness of that which is known.

9. As Walter Brueggemann notes, this text is more concerned “with faithful responses and effective coping” in a world in which evil exists than with the origins of

evil. The mystery of iniquity is unexplained. Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 41.

10. Westermann insightfully comments, regarding the nature of the temptation, that “at bottom what entices a person to transgress a limit is not the sensual pleasure heightened even more by the prohibition, but the new possibilities of life that are apparently opened by the transgression.” Westermann, *Genesis*, 249.

11. UnityPoint Health, “Myths & Facts about Child Sexual Abuse,” <http://www.unitypoint.org/blankchildrens/myths-and-facts-about-sexual-assault.aspx>.

12. When Adam first meets Eve in Gen. 2:23, he calls her “bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh” and names her *Isba*, the Hebrew word that sounds like *Isb*, the word for man, underscoring their equality. While “Eve” is a positive name, “mother of all the living,” the former equality of the man and woman has been broken.

13. Many of these strategies are described in Dan B. Allender, *The Wounded Heart: Hope for Adult Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse* (Colorado Springs: Nav-Press, 1990). Park describes the residual effects of “disgrace shame” that is left in victims of oppression, including sexual abuse victims, as disgust with the self, feelings of deficiency, abandonment, defectiveness, and defilement. Park, *The Wounded Heart of God*, 83–84. For a related discussion of the pervasive effects of shame from child sexual abuse from the perspective of moral philosophy, see Roger Scruton, *Sexual Desire: A Moral Philosophy of the Erotic* (New York: Continuum, 1986), 295–98, 311–15.

14. FaithTrust Institute, “Learn the Basics,” <http://www.faithtrustinstitute.org/resources/learn-the-basics>. Many survivors do not understand how the abuse has affected them until well into adult life, if ever. Most survivors of child sexual abuse do not become sexual abusers as adults. The wounds of sexual abuse do result in many kinds of attitudes and behaviors that then become the source for additional wounding and sin, which may or may not be sexual. For example, a survivor may become enslaved to sin against herself in allowing herself to live in a relationship of domestic abuse as an adult. In all of this it is important to keep in mind that victims of child sexual abuse are not responsible for their abuse, and victims of domestic violence of any kind neither deserve nor cause the violence of their offenders. See UnityPoint Health, “Myths & Facts about Child Sexual Abuse,” <http://www.unitypoint.org/blankchildrens/myths-and-facts-about-sexual-assault.aspx>; and the National Center for Victims of Crime, “Child Sexual Abuse Statistics,” <http://www.victimsofcrime.org/media/reporting-on-child-sexual-abuse/child-sexual-abuse-statistics>. For more about the sins of sexual abuse and domestic violence from a Christian perspective, see Marie M. Fortune and Carol J. Adams, eds., *Violence against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook* (New York: Continuum, 1995). Also see Allender, *Wounded Heart*.

15. Chap. 7, “Are You My Mother?” addresses the mother wounds of survivors.

### Chapter 3: Through the Wilderness

1. Emilie Townes is a leading womanist theologian whose thought reflects the perspectives and voice of African American women. Other well-known womanists are Karen Baker-Fletcher and Renita Weems. James Cone and Cornell West are prominent black liberation theologians.

2. “Go Down Moses,” Afro-American spiritual, adapted and arranged by William Farley Smith, 1986, *The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1989), 448–49.

3. Walter Brueggemann, “The Book of Exodus: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 788.

4. The explicit identification of God the Creator in the Exodus theophany is found in one of the deuterocanonical texts of the Bible, Wisdom 19:6.

5. This perspective on the power of Christ is called a “high Christology” in systematic theology.

#### Chapter 4: The Terrible Secret

1. Genesis offers a wide array of services to help battered people heal, including counseling, advocacy, and programs to educate religious communities, schools, and the police about the problem of domestic violence. See <http://www.genesisshelter.org/index.php>.

2. This chapter draws from my article “The Levite’s Concubine: Domestic Violence and the People of God,” *Priscilla Papers* 13, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 10–20. *Priscilla Papers* is a journal of Christians for Biblical Equality, an evangelical feminist organization that provides resources and support for egalitarian leadership in church, home, and society. See <http://www.cbeinternational.org>.

3. For this narrative I am indebted to the work of Phyllis Trible. See Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

4. Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 66.

5. The Masoretic text is the complete Hebrew Bible that was translated between the seventh and tenth centuries AD.

6. The Syriac texts of the Bible are very old, dating back to the early centuries of the church.

7. The Septuagint (the LXX) is an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, translated during the intertestamental period, between the third and first centuries BC.

8. The Old Latin texts date back to the third century AD.

9. Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 66.

10. Trible, *Texts of Terror*, 80.

#### Chapter 5: Beauty Pageants

1. Pamela Harrell Liston, “Sex Trafficking: Overview Analysis and the Church’s Response,” an unpublished paper presented at Perkins School of Theology, Dallas, May 2, 2008, 3.

2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet,” <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/otip/resource/fact-sheet-sex-trafficking-english>.

3. “The Murder of Emmett Till,” *American Experience*, aired January 20, 2003, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/till>.

4. “Murder of Emmett Till.”

## Chapter 6: Prayers of Lament and Mercy

1. Matthew, Dennis, and Sheila Fabricant Linn are internationally beloved writers and retreat leaders whose gifts are especially helpful for people recovering from trauma. I have used their delightfully illustrated “adult theology picture books” (my term, not theirs) as resources in pastoral care, retreats, and spiritual direction with survivors. See Dennis Linn, Sheila Fabricant Linn, and Matthew Linn, *Sleeping with Bread: Holding What Gives You Life* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995).

2. Elaine A. Heath, “Altar Tears,” *Journal of Religion and Abuse* (Winter 2006): 5–6. Used by permission.

## Chapter 7: Are You My Mother?

1. P. D. Eastman, *Are You My Mother?* (New York: Random House, 1960).

2. A fine little book that explains how to pray this way and includes five hundred Scripture texts for meditation is Thelma Hall, *Too Deep for Words: Rediscovering Lectio Divina* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988).

3. Some portions of this material on Jabez was first published as Elaine A. Heath, “Jabez, a Man Called Pain,” *Ashland Theological Journal* 33 (2001): 7–16. Used by permission. Many people have become familiar with Jabez through Bruce Wilkinson, *The Prayer of Jabez* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2000). Survivors read this story, along with the rest of the Bible, through a different lens.

4. We find a similar phenomenon in Hosea, where the prophet is commanded by Yahweh to name his children Jezreel (“God plants”), Lo-ruhamah (“not loved”), and Lo-ammi (“not my people”). Recall the naming of Jacob (“deceiver”) and how he lived his name. The theme of the power of naming runs throughout the Bible.

5. A. Van Selms, “Balaam,” in *New Bible Dictionary*, 2nd ed., CD (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1982; Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997).

6. J. A. Motyer, “Curse,” and Van Selms, “Balaam,” in *New Bible Dictionary*.

7. Fr. van Kaam cofounded the Institute of Formative Spirituality at Duquesne University with Dr. Susan Muto. The institute closed in 1993, but Dr. Muto continues the legacy of Fr. van Kaam’s work through the Epiphany Association. For more information about the late Fr. van Kaam’s work, see the website for the Epiphany Association and the Epiphany Lay Formation Academy at <https://epiphanyassociation.org/#home>.

8. This is only one of many passages in the Bible that contain feminine images of God. A well-known image from John 3 is the Holy Spirit as birthing Mother. Jesus tells Nicodemus that we are born of water and the Spirit.

9. Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, trans. and with an introduction by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 295.

10. In Christian theology, this is called “apophatic” spirituality, referring to the fact that God cannot be contained by any image or collection of images because God is not a created “thing.” To limit God to one image is in a certain sense to idolize that image. This is why we need to know about, appreciate, and pray with all the images of God in the Bible. Each of them communicates something essential to us about God’s nature. Yet all of them taken together still do not reveal the fullness of God’s person. A great, divine mystery remains, requiring humility and wonder on our part.

11. *Perichoresis* is a combination of two Greek words meaning “circle dance” and has been used since antiquity to describe the three-in-one relationship of love and creativity between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This beautifully nuanced image is one of the Triune God engaged in an infinite, circular dance of mutually interpenetrating love, with an overflow of creative energy. Creation, salvation, sanctification, all the work of God is perichoretic, involving the mutually self-giving, self-emptying, fierce love of the Trinity.

### Chapter 8: Eunuchs

1. Here I refer to hermaphrodite, gay, and lesbian persons.
2. F. Scott Spencer, “Eunuch,” in *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible, D–H* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 355.
3. Spencer, “Eunuch,” 355.
4. For more on sexual addiction, see Patrick Carnes, *Don’t Call It Love: Recovery from Sexual Addiction* (New York: Bantam, 1992); Charlotte S. Kasl, *Women, Sex, and Addiction: A Search for Love and Power* (New York: Harper One, 1990); and Marnie C. Ferree, *No Stones: Women Redeemed from Sexual Shame* (Fairfax, VA: Xulon, 2002).
5. See Lev. 25, for example.
6. Wendy Farley, *The Wounding and Healing of Desire: Weaving Heaven and Earth* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 58–59.
7. Farley, *Wounding and Healing of Desire*, 61.
8. Here I refer to all forms of intimacy, including friendship and healthy sexual love.

### Chapter 9: We Are Clean

1. The original purity codes are found in Leviticus, beginning with chap. 11. For Bible commentaries with detailed information about the reasons for the purity codes and their ramifications, see Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007); and Gordon J. Wenham, *Leviticus*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).
2. I am using the three narratives presented in Luke 8:26–56.
3. In v. 30, they self-identify as Legion, which was a military name for a large cohort of soldiers in the Roman army. The man was oppressed not by one but by many demonic spirits.
4. Mary Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994).
5. Pipher, *Reviving Ophelia*, 22.

### Chapter 10: About Judas and Mary

1. I include myself in the category of contemplatives, though I am still a beginner in many ways. The contemplative path is primarily what has brought deep healing to my wounds, in conjunction with loving friendships and appropriate counseling.
2. Robert Manzano, “Beauty for Ashes,” Thankyou Music, 1979.

## Chapter 11: Emmanuel

1. Christology is the area of theology that focuses on the nature and mission of Christ. Soteriology focuses on the meaning of salvation. Hamartiology deals with issues of sin and evil. Pneumatology has to do with the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Systematic theology is the school bus on which these subcategories ride to and from the theological academy and the church. There are other school buses for pastoral theology, ascetical theology, and biblical studies. Sometimes, I'm afraid, the buses don't reach their destinations and instead get stuck in the parking lot of one of the institutions.

2. See Daniel B. Schneider, "FYI," *New York Times*, May 13, 2001, <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/13/nyregion/fyi-273406.html>.

3. Marie M. Fortune, "Toward a Feminist Theology of Religion and the State," in *Violence against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*, ed. Marie M. Fortune and Carol J. Adams (New York: Continuum, 1995), 30.

4. *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, <http://www.cbs.com/primetime/csi>.

5. Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000). Also see the subsequent anthology of sermons by a wide array of contributors: Mark D. Baker, ed., *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006).

## Chapter 12: In Remembrance of Me

1. Marjorie Procter-Smith, *Praying with Our Eyes Open* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 115, 117–24, 133–34.

2. Marjorie Procter-Smith, "The Whole Loaf: Holy Communion and Survival," in *Violence against Women and Children: A Christian Theological Sourcebook*, ed. Marie M. Fortune and Carol J. Adams (New York: Continuum, 1995).

3. For a detailed map for eucharistic reform along these lines, see June Christine Goudy, *The Feast of Our Lives: Re-imagining Communion* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2002).

4. Quoted in Morton Kelsey, *Psychology, Medicine, and Christian Healing* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1988), 141. This book is a wonderful study of the history of healing in the church from the time of the New Testament through the late twentieth century. Kelsey argues for a retrieval of a strongly therapeutic theology of the Eucharist.

5. Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1984), 22.8.

6. Just how Jesus is present in the Eucharist is a source of sharp disagreement among major Christian traditions and is beyond the focus of this book. The three primary positions are transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and memorialist, all having to do with the degree to which Christ is present in the actual bread and wine of the Eucharist. Regardless of our position on this matter, virtually all Christians who celebrate the Lord's Supper believe that Christ is uniquely present in some way as we come to the table. Thus the potential for healing in the Eucharist is available to all Christians.

7. Beguines were an unofficial monastic order for lay women, originating in the German lowlands in the thirteenth century. They were known for their emphasis on healing and work among the poor and today are noted for their “love mysticism.” For more on the origins and early history of the Beguines, see Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200–1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001). For more about love mysticism and other aspects of Beguine spirituality, see Saskia Murk-Jansen, *Brides in the Desert: The Spirituality of the Beguines* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1998).

8. Hadewijch, *Hadewijch: The Complete Works*, ed. Columba Hart, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 281.

9. These are the kinds of comments I hear when this topic comes up in spirituality classes.

10. Julia Foote, “A Brand Plucked from the Fire: An Autobiographical Sketch,” in *Sisters in the Spirit: Three Black Women’s Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century*, ed. and with an introduction by William Andrews (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 202–3.

11. Janet Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), 100.

12. M. Elaine McCollins Flake, *God in Her Midst: Preaching Healing for Wounded Women* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2007); and Annie Lally Milhaven, ed., *Sermons Seldom Heard: Women Proclaim Their Lives* (New York: Crossroads, 1991).

### Chapter 13: Letting Go

1. Julian of Norwich, “Long Text,” chap. 50 in *Showings*, ed. and with an introduction by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

### Appendix B: A Definition of Sexual Violence

1. “Interrogating the Silence: Religious Leaders’ Attitudes toward Sexual and Gender-Based Violence,” Harvard Divinity School, Harvard University, accessed October 9, 2018, <http://www.src.hds.harvard.edu/RLA-SGBV>.

# Index

- abortion, 92, 130–32  
Abraham and Isaac, 44  
Abu Ghraib, 125  
abuse. *See* bodies; sexual abuse  
AIDS/HIV, 55  
alienation, 4–5, 21  
    from God, 6  
    *See also* eunuchs  
“Altar Tears,” 72  
anxiety, 2, 8, 21, 76, 83  
    and separation from mother, 76  
Aquinas, Thomas, 141  
*Are You My Mother?*, 75  
atonement, 127–29, 134, 167  
    Christus Victor, 134, 140, 142, 158, 160  
    punitive theory of, 128–29, 131–34,  
    140–41, 145, 159  
    theology of, 16  
    *See also* Jesus  
Augustine, Saint, 141  
  
*Babette’s Feast*, 149  
*Bachelor, The*, 51  
baptism  
    living in, 161  
    and visions of, 146  
    vows of, 160  
    *See also* Eucharist; liturgy  
Barbie doll, 51  
Barth, Karl, 16  
  
Bible, xiv–xv  
    difficulty in reading for survivors, xiv  
    healing interpretation of, 6, 10  
    living interpretation of, 15–16  
    as punishment, 26  
    words of, xv  
*Billy Elliot*, 99  
bodies  
    bearing consequences of abuse in,  
    90–91  
    objectification of female, 51–52, 61,  
    63–64  
    *See also* Eucharist; sexual abuse  
  
Candace, Queen, 89  
Catherine of Siena, Saint, 145  
child pornography, 52, 54–55  
    Nadia’s story, 57–59, 63  
*Chocolat*, 149  
Christ. *See* Jesus  
Christa, 126–27. *See also* gender; women  
*Chronicles of Narnia, The*, 136  
church, 1  
    abuse, standing against, 47  
    abused, rejection of the, 26  
    sexual perpetrators, relationship to,  
    21–22  
    sexual sin, obsession with, 5  
    vocation of the, 33, 36  
*City of God, The*, 141

- colonialism, 35  
*Color Purple, The*, 12, 176  
 communion. *See* Eucharist  
 cosmetic surgery, 51  
*Crash*, 162  
 Crusades, 35
- Dallas Jesus, 103–4  
*Dead Man Walking*, 162  
 Diamant, Anita, 85  
*Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, 37  
 discipleship, 6  
 divorce, reasons for, 34
- Emmanuel. *See* Jesus  
*Enough*, 49  
 eros, 95–97, 143–46, 149  
 Esther, book of, 52, 166  
   beauty pageant, 53  
   female objectification, 52–55  
   persecution of Jews, 60, 63  
   sexism and racism in, 52  
   sex trafficking, 54  
   Vashti as hero, 52–53  
 Eucharist, 137–48  
   as eros, 143–46  
   healing of, 138–40, 141, 145–48  
   meaning of, 139  
   as physical prayer, 142  
   practiced harmfully, 138–40  
   as remembrance of Christ, 137, 141–42, 148  
   and suffering, 141  
   as touch of Christ, 142–45, 148  
   *See also* bodies; Jesus; prayer  
 eunuchs, 88–99  
   and celibacy, 89  
   and genital disability, 89  
   Gregory and Sara, story of, 91–93  
   in Hebrew culture, 89–90  
   salvation of, 93  
   and sexual ambiguity, 89–90  
   and sexual wounds, 89–90  
   and spiritual progeny, 94–95  
   and suffering, 91  
   types of, 89  
   *See also* alienation  
 evangelicals, 15
- evangelism, 39  
 exodus narrative, 27–36, 41, 105  
   and Philistine territory, 30  
   and pillar of cloud, 27, 30–32, 41  
   and promised land, 30, 33  
   and repentance, 30  
   as road map for abuse recovery, 28  
   and the supernatural, 31  
   temptation of Egypt, 30–31, 36  
   and theophany, 30–33  
   and wilderness, 27–30, 36  
*Extreme Makeover*, 51
- fall, the, 11, 13–22  
   Adam and Eve, 13–14, 16–23, 25  
   beginning of salvation history, 19  
   fig leaves, 20–23  
   garden of Eden, 14, 19  
   knowledge of good and evil, 19  
   as narrative of abuse, 17, 20  
   serpent and evil, 18–20  
   theology of, 18
- Farley, Wendy, 96, 99  
 Feast of Purim, 61  
 fig leaves, 20–23  
 Foote, Julia, 146  
*Forrest Gump*, 23  
*Fried Green Tomatoes*, 49, 176
- gender  
   equality, 1  
   God, language for, 4–5, 11, 83, 84  
   “head of household,” 40  
   and patriarchy, 1–2, 21, 47  
   and sexual ambiguity, 89–90, 98  
   women, roles for, 14, 21  
   *See also* Christa; eunuchs; God  
 Genesis Women’s Shelter, 39  
 Gerasene man, 105–6, 111  
   and clean and unclean, 105–6  
   and redemption, 106  
 Gibeah, 44–45, 46  
*Girl, Interrupted*, 111  
*Girl Model*, 64  
*Glass Castle, The*, 37  
 God  
   and biblical images, 82  
   as Creator, 32

## Index

- as male, 5, 81–82
- as Mother, 21, 77, 81–85
- as real, 29
- as Redeemer, 26, 28, 47
- as Shepherd, 22
- sinners, view of, 17
- as Spirit, 83, 157, 166
- as Trinity, 83, 94, 166–67
- See also under* gender
- “Go Down Moses,” 28
- Good News about Injustice*, 64
- gospel, 1, 4–5
  - real, 26
- grace, 16, 35
- Gran Torino*, 74
- Greenleaf*, 49
- Green Mile, The*, 136
- Guess How Much I Love You*, 180
  
- Hadewijch, 144–46
- Halloween, 20
- Handel, G. F., 88
- Harry Potter*, 136
- Haugen, Gary A., 64
- healing, xiii–xiv, 1, 5–6
  - and biblical interpretation, 5–6
  - conflicted feelings of, 110
  - and courage, 69–70
  - forced healing, xv
  - gospel and, 1, 5
  - and Jesus, 10
  - journey of, 6–7
  - from rage, 96–97
  - and scars, 103
  - spiritual, 8
  - and warrior language, 69
- See also under* Eucharist
- Hearne, Nate, 61
- Hebrew Bible, 43
- Herodotus, 90
- Hicks, Edward, 87–88
- Hiding Place, The*, 163
- Hillbilly Elegy*, 37
- HIV/AIDS, 55
- How to Make an American Quilt*, 85, 176
  
- incest, maternal, 76
- Inquisition, the, 35, 114
  
- Irenaeus, Saint, 16, 18–19
- Isaiah, book of, 32, 82, 87–88, 94, 98, 167
  - and Messiah, 87
- Isha*, 21
- Israelites, 11
  - and Egypt, 26
  - and the exodus, 27
  - and the law, 27
  - and Pharaoh, 28
  - Red Sea, fleeing through, 26
  - in the wilderness, 11
  
- Jabez, 79–82, 84
  - and blessing, 80
  - curse of his name, 79
  - and familial abuse, 79
- Jairus, daughter of, 107, 109
- Jesus
  - and adulterous woman, 34
  - and blasphemy, 93
  - breathing the Holy Spirit, 155–57, 161–62
  - and commission of the apostles, 157
  - as Emmanuel, 123–24, 128, 134–35, 137
  - as eunuch, 97
  - and forgiveness of sin, 156–62
  - healing power of, 22, 104–9, 166–68
  - as hermeneutical key to Bible, 35
  - as Lamb, 88, 124
  - and the least of these, 8–9, 140
  - love of, 139
  - presence of, 10, 16
  - promise of, 11
  - as Redeemer, 35
  - resurrection of, 10
  - and shalom, 22
  - suffering of, 123–24, 134
  - as victim of sexual abuse, 125–28, 135, 140, 147
  - as Word, 84
  - See also* atonement; Eucharist
- Jesus Freak*, 149
- Job, 159
- Joy Luck Club, The*, 49, 176
- Judas, spirit of, 114, 118–20, 121
- Judges, book of, 40–41, 45
- Julian of Norwich, 16, 18–19, 117, 154
  - and God as Mother, 83