



CFTU

Christian Feminism To You

Speakers Bureau

Women in the Medieval World

We may think of religion as bad for women, especially back in “the dark ages,” but actually women in medieval times were reading the Bible to discover their equal rights.

In this program, Anne focuses on three proto-feminists: Hildegard of Bingen, Christine de Pisan, and Margery Kempe. Using the work of historian Gerda Lerner, she reports on the discovery of woman after woman that male rule over females is not a plan ordained by God but the result of sin. Unfortunately, women’s writing was not copied and shared widely, so the wheel had to be invented over and over. Christine openly questions the widespread idea that Eve and women are responsible for all the evil in the world. Hildegard sidesteps the question of women’s nature by running her own double monastery (for women with a few men), by writing books, and by reprimanding the pope on his hypocritical life. After raising fourteen children, Margery embarks on a mid-life career as a visionary, upstaging priests during Mass and traveling three times to the Holy Land. We can gain courage for the battles we fight today by meeting these medieval women.

Presentation can be adjusted from 30 to 60 minutes plus 10 or 20 minutes for Q & A. This presentation can also be combined with other lectures over the course of a weekend, with group time between sessions to examine Bible passages.

Anne Linstatter is a writer and scholar who lives in Santa Monica, California. She has taught English literature and Women and Religion at California State University, Northridge, and other colleges. She earned a doctorate in English literature with specialization in medieval women. After identifying as a feminist in 1968 and struggling to reconcile feminism with her born-again commitment to the Bible, she found *All We’re Meant to Be* by Letha Dawson Scanzoni and Nancy Hardesty in 1974 and met them later that year, becoming a founding member of the Evangelical and Ecumenical Women’s Caucus, now known as Christian Feminism Today. Since then, she has remained active in CFT and has served several times on their Executive Council. Linstatter collected and edited personal stories for a pro-choice book, *Abortion—My Choice, God’s Grace: Christian Women Tell Their Stories* (New Paradigm, 1994). She’s the mother of three daughters who blogs at <http://marthaymaria.blogspot.com/>. Read more at <http://annelinstatter.com/>.



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