

Storytelling Resources

A shortened review of these books was published in KUCA e-News Winter 2009 page 19

Women in the Bible Series by Lois Miriam Wilson

Biblical Stories Retold for Children & Adults

Published by Northstone /Wood Lake

A story-teller, Biblical scholar, ordained minister and theologian, Dr Wilson was the first woman Moderator of the United Church of Canada and is a past president of the World Council of Churches.

Today it is generally acknowledged that the Bible is essentially a patriarchal book, written by men about men. To balance this, women are starting to read the Biblical narrative through the lens of women struggling to achieve justice and wholeness. The stories in this series attempt to portray life as it really was, through the eyes of women.

The Biblical stories on which they are based are often ignored, or deliberately left out, because many of them contain violence either against or by women (though we still tell stories of male violence e.g. David and Goliath, and Noah's ark, where everyone except one family perishes, seemingly by God's command; and the ultimate violent story, Jesus' crucifixion).

In these versions of women's stories the Biblical characters are not white-washed or sanitised, to make them 'suitable' for children. The failings and the ugly side of women have been told along with the good, the beautiful and the triumphs. These stories of deceit, shame, trickery, triumph, despair, struggle, joy and love are part of the story of human existence. Acknowledging them does not mean condoning them. Children know this.

Retelling the stories helps place them in a historical and cultural context where violence was a legitimate tool of war, power and patriarchy. We tell them, both in the hope that they may never happen again in human history, and to help us discover where the experiences of our faith communities coincide with

the Biblical story. The old stories are told in new ways, informed by women's contemporary struggles and perspectives. They are stories of women on the margins – and those on the margins are central to the gospel of salvation that Jesus portrayed.

The argument in favour of making these stories accessible to children is that to 'protect' children from such stories is to deny them the knowledge that their faith has struggled against violence. Somewhere down the track they will realise that, in passing on our faith stories we have deleted half the narrative record and denied them the full story of their faith journey.

The stories are written by a variety of women bringing with them a variety of experiences. They are meant to be read aloud, but not all stories are suitable for all ages, or for reading to a large group or in church or Sunday School – you will need to read the stories and use your own judgement whether, where and how they are to be shared with your children. Each story has, for adults, an introduction and explanation of the background to the text and a 'Further reading' list.

Telling the old stories through this new and different lens can help both children and adults see through fresh eyes the God who sets people free, requiring of us both justice and mercy, who walks with us through life as it really is. And helps us understand better what it is to be made in God's image, both male and female alike.

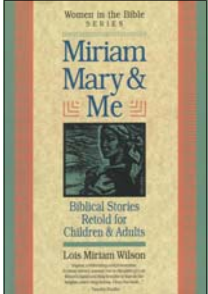
Miriam Mary & Me

ISBN: 1-55145-082-8 paperback ©1996

The 62 women's stories in this book are a mixture of Biblical narratives retold, Midrash-style stories that add texture and meaning to the Biblical narratives, legends and real-life stories of contemporary women in other lands and cultures, inspired by the Biblical narrative and blending the past with the present. It offers a "rich journey of discovery" for adults to share with their children, in the tradition of telling stories round the campfire.

There are women who break stereotypes, unconventional, committed to justice, politically powerful, even warriors, as well as women who are victims, in traumatic circumstances striving to remain true to themselves, and women in relationships.

A book that reinforces strong female self-images and role models, for girls growing up in a challenging world.



Stories Seldom Told

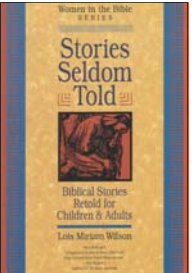
ISBN: 1-896836-03-8 paperback ©1997

Building on *Miriam Mary & Me*, there are 40+ stories in this book that realistically portray the struggles and joys of women in the Bible, and connect them to the struggles of women in similar situations today.

The stories fall into 8 sections:

- ◆ Jesus and women
- ◆ Violence against women
- ◆ Tricksters
- ◆ Women of the early church
- ◆ Women crossing boundaries
- ◆ Strong women
- ◆ Women of the Hebrew Scriptures
- ◆ Women of the Greek Scriptures.

All the stories tell of women longing for wholeness, honest stories essential for authentic life-giving community-building.



Available from **Unichurch Books** and **MediaCom \$38.95 each**