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Comprehensive Analysis about Schüssler Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her* for the Korean Churches' Interpretation of the Bible

Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*

New York: Crossroad, 1988.

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1. Introduction

This paper critically reviews Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's book, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, focusing on the reconstruction of Christian origin in women's perspectives for the Korean Churches' interpretation of the Bible. Since her work was published in 1983, its influence has been enormous in the field of the New Testament, hermeneutics, and feminism. Many book reviews and discussions about it have invited various scholars and church leaders to consider the women's status and role in the early church and the importance of women's interpretation on the Bible.¹⁾ By doing so, they have criticized the current patriarchal

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1) Current discussion on her book are David A. Kaden, "Foucault, Feminism, and Liberationist Religion: Discourse, Power, and the Politics of Interpretation in the Feminist Emancipatory Project of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza,"

structure of this society and tried to support women's movement. In this regard, although Korean society has been interested in "Me too" movement, most Korean churches are relatively indifferent toward it and they still restrict the role of women in the church. In many churches, women cannot be a pastor, an elder, and any kind of an important leader instead of men in the congregation. Those theological foundations are patriarchal interpretations on the New Testament (especially Paul's epistles and pastoral writings). Although Korean Churches less pay attention to Fiorenza's insistence than that of Western ones,²⁾ I believe that Fiorenza successfully not only refutes these patriarchal codes, but also presents a proper biblical interpretation of the sacred text for current Churches. In addition, her work is the most influential in biblical feminism, which gives challenges for those who support 'Me Too' movement all over the world.

Neotestamentica 46:1 (2012) and Michael Demetrius H. Asis, "Suffering, Salvation, and the Filipino: Francis Schüssler Fiorenza's Theology of Divine Emancipatory Solidarity in the Context of Poverty and Marginalization," *Budbi* 17:3 (2013).

- 2) Although *In Memory of Her* was translated into Korean by Aeyoung Kim in 1986, the interest of her book is less influential than that of Western countries. Aeyoung Kim, *keurischankieweonui yeoseongsinhakjeok jaegeon* (Seoul: Jongrosojeok, 1986) [E. S. 피오렌자, 『크리스찬 기원의 여성 신학적 재건』, 김에영 역 (서울: 종로서적, 1983); E. S. 피오렌자, 『크리스찬 기원의 여성 신학적 재건』, 김에영 역 (서울: 태초, 1993). Both Korean versions went out of print.]; The Korean scholars' reviews on *In Memory of Her* are very limited. Sang Jang's review on it was only since 1983. Sang Jang, "Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza *in Memory of Her : A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (London: Scm Press Ltd, 1983)," *hangukyeseonghak* [Journal of Korean Women's Studies] 3 (1987). There are some Korean articles related with that of Fiorenza such as 진미리, "여성의 에클레시아의 후기토대주의적 해석," [The Postfoundationalist Interpretation of the Ekklesia of Wo/men - Focusing on Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza.] *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 108 (2018); 진미리, "엘리자베스 슈슐러 피오렌자의 해방을 위한 "비판적" 여성주체의 인식론적 배경," [The epistemological background the "critical" feminist subject for liberation in Elisabeth Schuessler Fiorenza.] *Theological Studies* [「신학연구」] 50 (2007).

I do not agree that her work is out of date and no longer useful tools for biblical study.³⁾ I will deal with her main argument first, then with her book's strength and weakness. Finally, I will summary arguments, and bring up the problem of the study of Christian origin and biblical feminism in the conclusion chapter.

2. Schüssler Fiorenza's Main Argument

Taking as her cue as the notice of the anonymous woman of Mark 14:9, "And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" (RSV)⁴⁾, Fiorenza attempts to "reconstruct early Christian history as women's history in order not only to restore women's stories to early Christian history but also to reclaim this history as the history of women and men" (xiv). She recognizes unequal reality between men and women in the description of the early Christian story. Her methodology are hermeneutics, feminism, sociological approach⁵⁾, literary criticism, and historical criticism.

3) Kaden indicates that *In Memory of Her* is still "most important and influential" and it has become "a classic in the field of early Christian Studies." David A. Kaden, "Foucault, Feminism, and Liberationist Religion: Discourse, Power, and the Politics of Interpretation in the Feminist Emancipatory Project of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza," *Neotestamentica* 46:1 (2012), 87.

4) All Biblical quotations are Revised Standard Version, if there is no special mention.

5) Although Fiorenza criticizes so much the scholars who attempt the sociological approach to the New Testament such as Gager and others, "she adopts an explanation for the attraction of women to earliest Christianity which is remarkably similar to the sociological deprivation-theory." Cornel West and Ross S. Kraemer, "In Memory of Her, a Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins, by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza," *Religious Studies Review* 11:1 (1985), 7.

She begins *In Memory of Her* by criticizing many biblical scholars that those “who do not reflect or articulate their political allegiances are ‘objective,’ free from bias, nonpartisan and scientific” (xvi). Instead, she declares that “all historiography is a selective view of the past,” and that “Historical ‘objectivity’ can only be approached by reflecting critically on and naming one’s theoretical presuppositions and political allegiances” (xvii). Fiorenza wrote a three-pronged attack on the “patriarchalist” theology that has provided the orthodox interpretation of the history of the Jesus movement and the Christian church to the West. In part one, entitled “Seeing-Naming-Reconstituting,” Fiorenza lays the theoretical foundations for the work properly by surveying various feminist theoretical approaches to re-doing biblical (and especially New Testament) criticism, and by proposing her own “hermeneutics of suspicion.” She categorizes “the models of biblical interpretation” such as doctrinal approach, positivist historical exegesis, dialogical-hermeneutical interpretation, and liberation theology (4-6). She says that “The various forms of liberation theology have challenged the so-called objectivity and value-neutrality of academic theology,” which implies that interpretation of the Bible is a key issue. She suspects patriarchal interpretation of the Bible by the scholars, because “Throughout history and especially today the Bible is used to keep women in subjection and to hinder their emancipation” (11). She thinks that the problem is that “Not only men but also especially women are the most faithful believers in the Bible as the word of God” (11). Thus, new hermeneutics and methods are more necessary. Fiorenza quotes well Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s remark for the grounds of her argument, “The Bible is not a “neutral” book, but a political weapon against women’s struggle for liberation” (7).

Now, Fiorenza turns to the model of feminist interpretation of the Bible. She critically surveys ‘the neo-orthodox model of

feminist interpretation,' 'the feminist sociology of knowledge model,' and 'a feminist critical hermeneutics of liberation.' Needless to say, her concern is the third that must "move from androcentric texts to their social-historical contexts" (29). How can this third model of interpretation be sustained in the church and society? She answers that "Christian feminists reclaim their sufferings and struggles in and through the subversive power of the 'remembered past' in and through an engaged solidarity and remembrance of their hopes and despair" (31).

Fiorenza specifically investigates various Bible versions of the West which are "the androcentric selection and transmission of early Christian tradition" (52), and have marginalized women's role and leadership (52). In addition, like the androcentric model, even sociological approach of the New Testament that has given liberation implication to the oppressed does not contain women's view so that it becomes "the patriarchal sociological models for reconstruction of early Christian life and community" (83). But she gives it credit that can "explains the process of gradual ecclesial patriarchalization which entails the historically necessary development" (80).

Defining the Jesus movement as the renewal movement within Judaism, Fiorenza interprets the positions and power of women within the original "Jesus movement" (103). On the one hand, according to her, feminist hermeneutics suspects texts speaking about women in Judaism because "*The formal canons of codified patriarchal law are generally more restrictive than the actual interaction and relation of women and men and the social reality which they govern*" (108-9).

On the other hand, the Jesus movement can be the result of praxis of Sophia, the God of Jesus, which makes the movement become a "discipleship of equals" (135). Therefore, "the Palestinian Jesus movement understands the ministry and mission of Jesus as that of the prophet and child of Sophia [wisdom]

sent to announce that God is the God of the poor and heavy laden, of the outcasts and those who suffer injustice” (135). Fiorenza analyzes the deliberate re-reading and forgetting of this reality beginning with Pauline ideology (Ch.6). She sees the embedding of the early missionary movements, defined by the dichotomy between the religious equality of all members and the apostle (286), and ecclesiastical structure of the early church in the household and family as producing a patriarchal ideology, most clearly manifest in the so-called household codes,⁶⁾ that quite deliberately disempowered women (Chs. 7-8).

3. The Strength of Fiorenza's Argument

First, Fiorenza's work, with using hermeneutics, is strong and convincing in its negative critique of the formation of the “patriarchal ideology,” because up to the present, “biblical scholars to examine also the social, political, and economic interests of interpreters contained in texts.”⁷⁾

Fiorenza tries to show her hermeneutical strategy when she deals with her material. She largely accepts the hermeneutics of liberation theology because the model of liberation theology brings the surface to the ideological commitments of interpreters and texts within the context of class struggle, cultural/racial conflict, and feminist resistance.⁸⁾ And she further develops limitations of the liberation theology in the scope of the feminist theology. She says that most scholars work and the Bible translation are colored by the androcentric ideology, which

6) Fiorenza explains several household codes in the New Testament such as I Peter 2:11-3:12, Colossians 3:18-4:1, Ephesians 5:21-33. Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 260-70.

7) West and Kraemer, “In Memory of Her” (1985), 2.

8) *Ibid.*, 2.

explains why hermeneutical approaches must be needed.

Second, Fiorenza's proper biblical citation from the New Testament reinforces her theme, and enlightens Korean churches to see the Bible passage differently. Many scholars point out that disciples in Mark and John are described in negative way, while women, children (Mark 9:35-37), and other minor figures are pictured in positive way being represented as its true community members. In this point, she indicates that in Mark 7:24-30, a Syrophoenician woman was "a theologian and spokesperson for such a table sharing with gentiles" (157), and turns a spotlight from Jesus to the woman of Samaria in the spread of Christianity (138). While many liberation theologians zoom in both Galilee and Galilean people which signify resistance and revolution, Fiorenza specifically emphasizes the women of Galilee who were "not only decisive for the extension of the Jesus movement to gentiles but also for the very continuation of the movement after Jesus' arrest and execution" (138). In the interpretation of Matthew 23:8-9, she also draws a new discipleship of equal that "does not admit of 'father,' thereby rejecting the patriarchal power and esteem invested in them" (150). Regarding the omission of 'father' in the discipleship of the equal, Fiorenza also states that "those who live the gracious goodness of God are Jesus' true family, which includes brothers, sisters, and mothers, but, significantly enough, no fathers (147). In addition, by quoting the verse of Exodus 20:7, she raises the issue of a gender instead of that of idolatry. She says that "The address 'father' used by Jesus and his disciples has caused many Christian feminists great scandal" (150).

Third, Fiorenza notices the house church as the center of Christian origin. By emphasizing that the house church "provided equal opportunities for women" (176), she breaks a fixed idea that the house church is just small group, or is a modern cell organization in the church. She further explains that "House

churches were a decisive factor in the missionary movement insofar as they provided space, support, and actual leadership for the community” (176). Thus, she traces the origin of Christianity from “The Church in Her House” (chap. 5). From this house church setting, she emphasizes the women’s leadership. Despite all these strengths, there are some weaknesses of her argument.

4. The Weakness of Fiorenza’s Argument

First, Fiorenza’s hermeneutics lacks the partiality of the oppressed. To the One-Thirds World, Western countries, her study gives a challenge, but to the Two-Thirds World, her view might have a suspicion of her standpoint as a white woman.⁹⁾ Even Fiorenza tries to synthesize hermeneutics, liberation theology, and feminism into her book, those are filtered by the eyes of the power. She does not consider that Western countries’ imperialism and the Christian missionary movement are interwoven.¹⁰⁾ For instance, Tzvetan Todorov well shows that Columbus and Cortes commonly thought the goal of the conquest was to spread the Christian religion.¹¹⁾ That Columbus and Cortes did not admit the natives as their equal human beings is obvious; however more than gold, the spread of Christianity to the “barbarians” was their heart’s desire.¹²⁾

9) Thus, throughout Fiorenza’s book, the women’s struggles and sufferings are abstractly described. I believe that Fiorenza’s hermeneutics strategy is very powerful, though her insufficient statement about them are unpersuasive.

10) See Jae Hyung Cho, “A Postcolonial Interpretation of Matthew 28:18-20,” *Korean Journal of Christian Studies* 105 (2017), 14-20.

11) Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: HarperPerennial, 1984).

12) *Ibid.*, 10.

Luise Schottroff also criticizes that Fiorenza failed to grapple with the social struggles of the ancient world. For Schottroff, Fiorenza by naming the Jesus movement as a renewal movement in Judaism missed a point that it was not about abuses within Judaism but about the suffering of the whole Jewish people under Rome.¹³⁾ In this regard, Schottroff has more effort to overcome the split between theory and praxis in the context of Germany and Western Europe and tries to see the New Testament in the eyes of women from 'below.' For this, Fiorenza also admits that the power is closely related to the Bible in Western society, saying that "Western women are not able to discard completely and forget our personal, cultural, or religious Christian history" (xix).

However, Musa W. Dube responds to Fiorenza's this remark with saying, "In other words, for Western women to surrender their heritage is to surrender their power."¹⁴⁾ Dube's main critique about Fiorenza is that "Fiorenza's reconstructive efforts are ethically motivated and committed to the empowerment of Western women."¹⁵⁾ Dube's hermeneutics is clearly different from that of Fiorenza in the aspect of partiality of the oppressed. She emphasizes that Christian tradition is dominated by imperialism so that feminist movement must realize the double-colonized situation of the women in the Two-Third World being oppressed by patriarchy and imperialism. Dube argues that: "First, that the Bible is the most influential book in the West, and it is also patriarchal. Second, that modern Western imperialism was effected not only through military power but also through the use of an ideology of Western cultural

13) Luise Schottroff, *Lydia's Impatient Sisters: A Feminist Social History of Early Christianity* (London: SCM Pr; Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1995), 8-10.

14) Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 27.

15) *Ibid.*, 28.

texts, including the Bible.”¹⁶⁾

In this respect, Fiorenza’s hermeneutics chooses the Bible as “their political weapon” intentionally against White-male men and unintentionally (?) against Two-Third Worlds. Dube continues to argue that “White middle class feminists regarded patriarchy as the foundational oppression, while colonized nations focused on imperialism, hence implicating the former as oppressors-and denying that patriarchy is also a problem.”¹⁷⁾

Second, Fiorenza’s reconstruction of a Christian history is dubious because of her viewpoint of history. She maintains that “If a feminist reconstruction of history can no longer take patriarchal texts at face value but must critically interpret them in a feminist perspective, the notion of history as “what actually happened” becomes problematic” (68).

Although Fiorenza declares that “all historiography is a selective view of the past” (xvii), she also tries to hold different facts to be able to reconstruct a prior alternative world of women behind the patriarchal texts. But, Thomas A. Robinson properly indicates that “Any deliberate reconstruction of the past that is designedly so committed risks merely mapping its own constructions.”¹⁸⁾

In *What is History?*¹⁹⁾ Edward Hallett Carr revealed that a historical fact could not be approached. Even if it were possible, that would be meaningless for us. He concluded that history was continual dialogue between the past and the present. His argument implies that current situation is able to modify the historical fact, and the past events rationalize the present ones

16) Ibid., 198.

17) Ibid., 112.

18) Thomas A. Robinson, *The Early Church: An Annotated Bibliography of Literature in English*, trans. Richard Howard (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1993), 418.

19) Edward Hallett Carr, *What Is History?* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Knopf, 1962).

by historians. Therefore, “what actually happened” does not become problematic, but the interpreter’s viewpoint is puzzling. This reason is that Fiorenza’s “model seems to lead her into feminist history about Christian women rather than *Christian* feminist historical reconstruction.”²⁰⁾

If Fiorenza’s reconstruction rediscovers the historical fact of the early church’s women, her hermeneutical methods would be less influential. If I borrow Burton L. Mack’s terminology, Fiorenza’s attempt might be another ‘myth.’ Mack argues that “the picture of Christian origins might change with a single shift in perspective on the social history documented by the early texts.”²¹⁾ For Mack, the gospel of Mark invented the eschatological figure of Jesus as the ‘Son of Man,’ producing the impression that there could be and was someone in charge of human history. Unfortunately, Fiorenza’s reconstruction of Christian origin does not make a potent liberation theology for the oppressed while Mack’s one can be imagined powerful latent ‘anti-myth’ of Christian origins by the powerless.

Third, Fiorenza’s construction omits to dialogue with the historical status of Jesus. For the most churches, historical Jesus is crucial. Even I understand that Christian origin might be possible without historical Jesus project as Paul only preserved the early church’s *kerygma* in his epistles instead of historical Jesus, I prefer to address “Jesus of history.” As a pastor of the local church, I consider that historical Jesus is the kernel of the political struggle of the oppressed to persuade their agenda to other conservative Christians. Marcus J. Borg states that a renaissance in Jesus studies “has potential relevance for the life of the church.”²²⁾ Because to preserve the privileged status of

20) West and Kraemer, “In Memory of Her,” 3.

21) Burton L. Mack, *A Myth of Innocence: Mark and Christian Origins* (Philadelphia: Fortress Pr, 1988), xii.

22) Marcus J. Borg, “A Renaissance in Jesus Studies,” *Theology Today* 45:3 (1988), 280.

Jesus Christ is ultimately to reject the Hegelian and Gadamerian strategies, it is natural that Fiorenza does not consider Christology. Cornel West and Ross S. Kramer review Fiorenza's this point that "The privileged status of Jesus Christ looms large in Schüssler Fiorenza's text.... Instead, we are offered a view of Jesus as a "woman-identified man" with a *basileia* vision of a discipleship of equals."²³⁾

Fiorenza addresses that the early Christian movement understood Jesus "as Sophia's messenger and later as Sophia herself" and that Jesus probably understood himself "as the prophet and child of Sophia" (134). Despite some doubts of Jesus as Sophia figure,²⁴⁾ Fiorenza presents that Jesus was a "wisdom prophet" in two sense: "he was a prophet of wisdom in that he was a spokesperson for Sophia," and "Jesus was social prophet who subverted the dominant structures of the time with a different vision of reality and human community."²⁵⁾ Thus, the tension between Jesus of history and Christ of faith disappears. If then, it is irony that Fiorenza's work is much dependent on Christian heritage and the New Testament as I shown in her strengths. In this aspect, I wonder how Fiorenza can trace, see, and name Christian heritage without Jesus Christ. How the women's movement in the early church can be related to Jesus in her argument? I think historical Jesus functions to express our culture whatever its debate might requires much myth and imaginary. Since Albert Schweitzer established that historical Jesus was not accessible in his reputed book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*,²⁶⁾ in which he interpreted the life of Jesus in

23) West and Kraemer, "In Memory of Her" (1985), 4.

24) Beverly Roberts Gaventa, "In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins," *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 20:2 (1985), 60.

25) Marcus J. Borg, "Portraits of Jesus in Contemporary North American Scholarship," *Harvard Theological Review* 84:1 (1991), 11.

the light of Jesus' eschatological beliefs, there were "no quest" in the history of Jesus scholarship for several decades. Schweitzer investigated all book about the life of Jesus, then concluded that all pictures of Jesus in the books were reflection of their images. But he acknowledged that "Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from Him and flows through our time also"²⁷⁾ in his conclusion chapter. Therefore, Fiorenza's Sophia Jesus needs to be more developed because her description of Jesus as a wisdom teacher and Jesus as Sophia are less persuasive in the New Testament.²⁸⁾

5. Conclusion

In her book, Fiorenza uses a feminist historiography that works around the present biblical canon with patriarchal occlusion of women and its androcentric practitioners, in order to reconstruct a canon of the discipleship of equals. In doing so, she places women at the center of early Christian beginnings. This makes her to show that many women of various economic and social standing, such as Prisca, Lydia, Nympha, Appia and Phoebe, were active missionaries in the early church who traveled to spread the gospel and who used their property to house the churches, in spite of the androcentric interpretations and translations that have excluded women's presence and contributions.

Fiorenza importantly attempts to explore the women's role in the New Testament with using hermeneutical approach. Her

26) Albert Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (New York: Macmillan, 1948).

27) *Ibid.*, 399.

28) In the Old Testament, especially, Proverb, Job, and Ecclesiastes describe wisdom as woman character.

hermeneutics has mainly moved between the One-Thirds Worlds and White women's situation, however, her study gives momentous implications for all women and men who want to overcome oppression of patriarchal structure. In this aspect, her realization about the women's political struggle must reach the situation of the Two-Third World.

Fiorenza's frequent examples of the New Testament, on the one hand, give a lot of persuasion for Christians. In particular, her stress for the house church provides a current church model with insight that church structure can change political power relationship between women and men. On the other hand, they make us think the position of historical Jesus, which might be her weakness. I cannot honestly separate Christian origin from historical Jesus. The separation of historical Jesus and Christ of faith is not relevant to Christian origin project. On the contrary, the tension of them will positively function to make the model of liberation for the oppressed. As history is a dialogue between the past and present, Christian origin project from the perspective of women is also genuine communication between current culture and past one. For this, interdisciplinary and postcolonial studies on the Bible are necessary; these approaches will "make biblical criticism more contemporary, preparing it for the vast theoretical challenges posed by a new millennium."²⁹⁾ Therefore, although there are some difficulties of Fiorenza's arguments to trace Christian origins, their "strengths significantly outweigh its weaknesses."³⁰⁾ Her feminist interpretation of the Bible is still necessary for the current Korean church and society.³¹⁾ Because her work gives biblical scholars the importance of interpretation on the New Testament from the perspective

29) Vernon K. Robbins, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 42.

30) West and Kraemer, "In Memory of Her" (1985), 8.

31) Jang, "Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in *Memory of Her*," 192.

of women, it is still useful, especially for Korean churches.

<주요어>

피오렌자, 『그녀를 기억하며』, 그리스도교의 기원, 한국교회의 성서해석, 여성신학

<Key Words>

Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, Christian Origin, Korean Churches' Interpretation of the Bible, Feminist Theology

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<초록>

한국 교회의 성서해석을 위한 쉬슬러 피오렌자의 『그녀를 기억하며』에 대한 종합적인 분석

조재형

(그리스도 대학교 강사)

이 서평은 그리스도교 기원의 여성신학적 재건에 초점을 맞추어서 엘리자베트 쉬슬러 피오렌자의 책, 『그녀를 기억하면서』를 한국 교회의 성서해석을 위해서 비평적으로 살펴본다. 그녀의 저서는 1983년에 처음 출간된 이후로 성서적 여성학과 해석학에 큰 영향을 끼쳐왔다. 여기에서 피오렌자의 여성해방적 사료 편집을 이용해서 여성들의 관점에서 성서를 해석하려고 노력한다. 이러한 해석은 남녀 동등한 제자직을 위한 성경을 재구성하기 위해서 여성의 가부장적 폐쇄와 남성중심의 사역자들에 의해서 만들어진 현재의 성경을 거부하면서 작업한다. 비록 그녀의 해석학은 주로 세계의 1/3과 백인 여성들의 상황 사이에서 움직이지만, 그것은 가부장적 구조의 억압을 극복하기 원하는 모든 사람들에게 중요한 의미를 준다. 그녀가 인용하는 빈번한 신약성서의 예들(특히 가정교회)은 그리스도인들에게 많은 설득력을 제공한다. 그러나 역사적 예수에 대한 그녀의 입장은 그녀의 약점이 된다. 왜냐하면 그리스도교의 기원은 역사적 예수와 분리될 수 없기 때문이다. 그러므로 그리스도교의 기원을 추적하는데 피오렌자의 주장들에는 난점들이 존재함에도 불구하고, 그녀 주장의 강점들은 약점들보다 훨씬 크며, 성서에 대한 그녀의 여성해방적 해석은 현재 한국 교회와 사회를 위해서 여전히 필요하다.

<Abstract>

Comprehensive Analysis about Schüssler Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her* for the Korean Churches' Interpretation of the Bible

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This paper critically reviews Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's book, *In Memory of Her*, focusing on the feminist reconstruction of Christian origin for the current Korean churches' interpretation of the Bible. Since it was first published in 1983, it has been great influential both in biblical feminism and hermeneutics. Here, Fiorenza tries to interpret the Bible from the perspective of women by using a feminist historiography. In order to reconstruct a canon of the discipleship of equals, her work argues that the present biblical canon has been written and interpreted by patriarchal occlusion of women and its androcentric practitioners. Although her hermeneutics has mainly moved between the One-Thirds Worlds and White women's situation, it gives crucial implications for all who want to overcome oppression of patriarchal structure. Her frequent examples of the New Testament (especially the house church) give a lot of persuasion for Christians. But her position of historical Jesus is her weakness because Christian origin cannot be separated from historical Jesus. Therefore, although there are some difficulties of Fiorenza's arguments to trace Christian origins, their strengths significantly outweigh their weaknesses and her feminist interpretation of the Bible is still necessary for the current Korean church and society.