



Wisdom revealed

How Wisdom reveals herself in the Old Testament as Mother of the Lord.

How she manifests again in the New Testament in the Mother of the Lord, Maria.

Report of the Summer School of the 'Temple Studies Group' given by Dr. Margaret Barker from Monday 8 August to Friday 12 August 2011 in the Methodist church in Borrowash in Derby, mid-England.

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1. What preceded the Summer School 2011

How I finally contacted Margaret Barker. I had been trying to find Dr Margaret Barker since September 2008. I wanted to bring her my book 'From Sophia to Maria' in which she - besides Prof. Dr. Gilles Quispel - is quoted so much. Two years later I finally manage to contact her via one of her publishers. She very hospitably immediately invited me for a four day visit to England. All this happened in August 2010. I gave an account of this in the report 'Wisdom in action: transforming knowledge into Wisdom' www.academiepanosophia.nl under publications and reports.

This personal acquaintance lays the foundation of a further co-operation. During my four day visit in August 2010 I mention I would like to visit the 2011 Summer School. She conceives of a plan of having me give a lecture then. After that I don't hear from her for some time, for she is busy investigating an important find in the Jordan valley: possibly the find of the 21st century. It concerns in first instance 70 lead booklets, written perhaps by early Christians from the first century, for they wrote on booklets and not on scrolls. In the mean time another find has been uncovered. Some of the booklets are as small as a credit card, others are bigger, and a lot of consternation has arisen about them in the international press.

Coöperation. I happen to look for more information about the recent find on her website and there I find the programme of the Summer week 2011. To my surprise I see that I - besides Margaret herself - am the only speaker who is included in the programme. I really think this is too great an honour. How will I be able - besides a scholar of her calibre and handicapped by a language which is not my mother

tongue - to communicate something of true and lasting value about the Lady and the Mother; she who is known in ancient Israël as Wisdom and is later known as Mary ? However ... I accept the challenge.

2. About Dr. Margaret Barker and the Temple School

Who is Dr. Margaret Barker? She is an English theologian, the author of many books and articles, created a Doctor of Divinity by the Archbishop of Canterbury and Queen Elizabeth and in the past President of the 'Society for Old Testament Study'. Besides she is a wonderful wife, mother and grandmother. She is an excellent cook and is very hospitable. You can read more about her in the report *Wisdom in action; transforming knowledge into Wisdom* www.academiepansofia.nl under publications and reports.

Dr. Margaret Barker's work. She has published 16 books. Her richly illustrated book about Angels from 2004 has been translated into 6 languages, including Dutch and is entitled *Het complete Engelenboek* (2004). Besides she has written many articles, 24 of them can be found on her website www.margaretbarker.com under the heading 'papers' and can be downloaded from there.

The Temple Studies Group. Barker is with four others co-creator of the 'Temple Studies Group'. She is the spiritual mother of the group. This group does its best to rediscover the knowledge of the original and First Temple and to spread it. In the framework of this the Summerweek was organised.

The Temple School. The research is focused on the period of the first Temple in Jerusalem (968 - 586 B.C.). This period is characterized by the universality and the equality of the Divine Male and the Divine Female. They are the universal Father and Mother; the Mother who - among other things - is called Wisdom in ancient Israël at that time. Barker often speaks of 'The Lady'. She thinks that the Lady was very much alive then and now is waving at us to draw our attention. 'The Lady is waving at you', she often tells me.

The reform under Josiah. A reform took place in Ancient Israël, which according to Margaret may well be compared to the Reformation of Luther and Calvin in the 16th century. Under the direction of king Josiah in 623 BC a kind of cultural revolution takes place, in the course of which the Lady, the Mother, has to be removed and is expelled from her temple. Immediately afterwards the city of Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed and the elite has to go into exile in Babylonia.

Further reform after the exile. After returning from exile in Babylonia, the work of Josiah is carried on in Judea by a group of puritan Babylonian Jews. Their work was continued later in the second temple era by a group of scribes whose work was called 'the tikkune sopherim', meaning the restorations of the scribes. The 'adaptations' in the texts were considered by the official group of scribes to be no more than a 'return' to a so-called original version of the texts; their 'reformative' changes are in fact deformations. As a result the multiple divine images of a Divine Father, Mother and their first-born Son and their Angels are removed from the texts. An exclusively male interpretation is put over the older tradition. This re-adaptation of texts takes place in the Second Temple (525 B.C. till 70 A.D.) and also after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D.



An iconoclasm avant la lettre. But the matter does not end with only the changing of texts after 525 BC. The images too are broken. The priest scribes break with the older Temple tradition full of mysticism and connected to the invisible worlds. They break with angels, images, symbols and rituals. And they break with God's female aspect. With the Mother who therefore was co-creator, as well as main support and refuge for all of humanity. She takes care of the connection between the heavens and the earth.

Margaret's specialism. Margaret knows the Old and New Testament through and through. Because of her great knowledge of both the Hebrew canonical and apocryphal variants of the Old Testament, which she constantly compares to each other, she is able to penetrate and read through the deformations of the later transformed Hebrew texts and reconstruct the older version. She is also familiar with the later Rabbinical texts in which the exclusive Jewish law has been laid down and in which the Jewish tradition - transformed from inclusive to exclusive - has been transmitted. She also knows the Hebrew texts that have been translated into Greek in the Diaspora, especially in Alexandria in Egypt. So she knows the Greek and Latin translations of the Old Testament and is able to compare them to both the older and the later Hebrew revisions. The later and less authentic re-adaptations of the Old Testament were the original sources for the reformers from the 16th century. And that is the reason why they don't know the Mother of the Lord any more, for The Lady was eliminated from the Jewish texts they used as source for their translations of scripture.

Margaret Barker makes a connection. Her enormous knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin text traditions enables her to make a connection between the mystique of the Temple and early Hebrew and Hellenistic Christianity. Through her work we can make the link with the older Temple tradition, which continued to live on with the Hebrew exiles in the Diaspora and was known to Jesus and his Jewish and non-Jewish followers. The so-called liberal and inclusive interpretation of the Jewish law flourished in the Diaspora; the puritan and exclusive one in Judea and especially in the (Second) Temple in Jerusalem.

3. The Summerweek 2011

The Summerweek begins. On August 7, after weeks of hard work and an extremely thorough preparation, armed with an extensive PP presentation and an elaborate hand-out with two appendices - and of course all the Scripture-texts had to be in perfect English - I am boarding the plane to Mid-England. I am staying in her house and sleeping in her over-crowded study. For this special occasion she has rearranged this room and even cleaned it herself, for her study is prohibited to her household help!

During the Summerweek. She teaches for four days, from 10.00 to 16.00; she gives guidance to the group of sometimes changing participants, with an average of 50 people per day; she keeps in touch with the staff in the church, who receive and register the participants in the congress, provides them with hand-outs and caters for them, while in the mean time lodging two guests in her house. After four heavy days she gets up on Saturday 13 August at five o'clock in the morning and travels to Ireland to give a lecture. I take off my hat for her!

The hand-out. Margaret has made an elaborate hand-out with the main themes for each part of the day and the Bible passages belonging to them, which she discusses in a rapid tempo. There is also an impressive 'Annexe' or Appendix. It contains passages from outside the Bible from apocrypha from the Old and New Testament, which are numbered and copied-out, texts of church-fathers, hymns, maps and plans.

The daily arrangement and the programme. The four days in the Summerweek have been divided into four daily parts, each of which are opened with a psalm-reading and ended with a psalm-singing. The four days each have the following daily subjects:

1. Ancient Evidence for the Temple
2. Covenant and Atonement
3. The Holy of Holies, Resurrection and incarnation
4. The Lady of the Temple before and after Josiah
5. *Lecture* Dr. Annine van der Meer: Mary, daughter of Wisdom. Bridging Wisdom and Mary in their shared imagery in art based on archaeology, sacred texts, liturgy and theology
6. The church as the Original Temple Restored

The audience. For many years she has been educating people to become preachers. Among her audience there are a large number of preachers from her own stable who have come from the Anglican Church, the Mormon Church and her own Methodist Church. This is the ninth time that a Summerschool takes place; the first one was in 2000. During the afternoon-break BBC-radio is recording some interviews, that will be broadcast the next Sunday.

England is relatively unacquainted with the 'Lady'. Shortly before, a BBC TV-Programme was broadcast entitled 'Did God have a Wife?' (Title of a book by William G. Dever, Cambridge, 2005). The programme raised a great deal of dust in England, as little is known in the Anglican tradition about the Mother of the Lord from the Old Testament, 'The Lady'. It appeared that there wasn't any - or hardly any - knowledge about archeological and art-historical finds that give evidence of the existence of the Lady and her iconography. People are in need of information about Mary and Mary Magdalen.

A great achievement. Margaret guides us along many themes and Scripture-passages, faultlessly and with great panache. Humoristically and brilliantly she strings together the fragments of the broken image of the Temple. She has so much material, that she repeatedly says that she would be able to speak for another week about some themes. She deepens my insight in a lost temple tradition which comes alive again in Christianity. She deepens my faith. You could have heard a pin drop in the church. In spite of the long days on the hard pews, she succeeds in holding the attention of her audience up to the last moment, through subject-matter, drama and tempo. Only now do you begin to understand what early Christianity is about. There is also a message for the future: for in the Book of the Apocalypse there is The Lady, the Mother, who - crowned with stars, clothed with the sun and standing on the moon - gives birth to a son, after which a new Age of Spirit will dawn.



4. Some highlights as regards content

The Temple and the Christians. There is an unbreakable relationship between the Original Temple and the early Christians, who considered themselves to be the restorers of the Original Temple

tradition. In order to understand the religious experience of early Christians, it is of fundamental importance to understand the symbolism surrounding the Temple. The architecture and geography of the Temple reflect the structure of the visible and invisible worlds and form an expression of the process of Creation. It is from the invisible worlds that the visible worlds are formed. This happens in seven stages or days. This symbolism is reflected in the structure and the furniture of the Temple.

Day 1. This is the period outside space and time, outside the material world, outside matter. In the invisible worlds there is a state of unity. Duality originates from the separation between light and darkness: the veil in the Temple symbolizes the separation between the pre-existent, pre-material worlds and the material one. The Holy of Holies symbolizes the non-material worlds of day 1. It is a gold cube. The walls are covered with a thin layer of hammered gold. It is dark inside. But as soon as the Tree of Life, [the seven-branched lamp] standing next to the throne, lights up, the walls, covered with gold, reflect and multiply the light a thousand times. Because the oil gives forth a fragrant scent, there is a smell of undescrivable loveliness.

The fiery Tree of Life gives enlightenment and unity. Margaret Barker is absolutely convinced that the Tree of Life stands in the Holy of Holies next to the throne consisting of the Ark and the cherubs. After Josiah the Tree of Life is supposed to have been removed and placed as a menorah in the space outside the veil that symbolizes the visible and material world.

At the foot of the Tree of Life, in the Holy of Holies, there is a spring or fountain, which splits up into many channels, from which living water is flowing. It is an extremely dark place. When the seven fires in the sevenfold tree are lit, this space is filled with not only an intense light, but also an intense heat. It is a fiery tree, that burns and illuminates, just like when the burning bush caught fire without being burnt up. The fruits of the Tree of Life give eternal life and her waters give life force. This room is also called 'the bridal chamber'. Here you come across many symbols of the Mother of the Lord: the Tree of Life with fruit, fire, water and the empty cherub-throne (chariot). Her Son is also present, who takes a seat on her cherub-chariot.

Temple experiences. During lunch, in a separate dark small room, in groups of two and three, we undergo the experience of darkness and light, of intense warmth of the light and its multiplying light effects in the golden cube. Only seven small birthday candles in a mini-cube of 30 by 30 by 30 cm in the pitch dark are needed to arouse an intense experience, that moves some people to tears, like Maureen, who helps with the catering.



On another day we smell the penetrating and peculiar scent of anointing-oil on a bit of cotton-wool in a small bag, for each person a separate one. It is a mixture of olive oil, myrrh and cinnamon, which normally should have been heated for three weeks, night and day. This anointment-oil was prepared by Margaret personally in her kitchen (she confessed turning out the gas under the heated pot at night) ...

Another day again the church is filled with thick smoke clouds of the frankincense of the Frankincense tree (which can be acquired from the internet). Add half a teaspoon of cinnamon to the burning granules on the saucer ... On the Wednesday morning the incense is already emitting clouds of fragrance after a twenty minute period of burning. On the Temple mountain the incense used to burn day and night; as a result the Temple mountain was shrouded in clouds of incense, which could be smelled from a great distance.

The early Christian's experience in the Temple: Early Christians ascend through the Temple rooms via the front-Hall and the big festival Hall into the heart of the Temple, behind the veil: the Holy of Holies. If someone is going to become a Christian, he/she has to undergo -in the Valentinian ritual-

five ritual and symbolic initiations (sacraments): baptism and anointment, Eucharist and redemption and as a fifth, the mystical union in the bridal chamber.

In the Temple symbolism people are climbing up the Temple mountain as it were, and are ascending. After this, in the front-courtyard, they experience the first sacrament of baptism or rebirth into Spirit. With after this as a second experience the anointment to being a Christian (christos means anointed). Next they enter the great festival Hall (Hekal), where the table with the shewbread stands and the incense-altar, that spreads fragrant smells into the surroundings. Here the Christian receives the third and fourth sacrament: eating the bread of life (Eucharist) and redemption.

Finally as the last and ultimate sacrament in the Holy of Holies, there is the union with the non-visible world behind the veil: the bridal chamber.

The Trinity is very old. Margaret teaches about a Trinity that it has existed from ancient times. The Father-Mother-Child-combination manifests itself also in the Old Testament. Their Trinity is known to the very first Jewish and Greek Christians. They know that many light-beings emanate from this holy family, beings who initially are called gods and later angels. They connect with these 'Sons of God' who are one, in spite of their multiplicity.

Early Christians speak of the unity and connection with Spirit. They rejoice in the spiritual power that is based on knowledge, which results in wisdom. They sing in holy hymns: 'Holy, holy, holy, God of Divine Powers.' Heaven and earth are filled with Your glory' ... They sing hymns in which besides the Father also the Mother of the Lord or Son are celebrated. They paint images and later icons in which they use imagery and iconography of not only the Father, but also the Mother of the Lord or the Son.



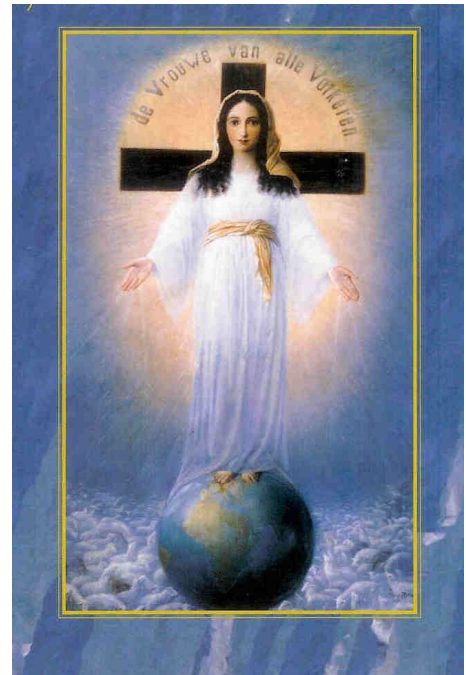
How wisdom degenerates into mere intellectual knowledge.

But both in orthodox Judaism and dogmatic Christianity the Mother got lost and with her - as a living source - we also lost her living Son/Daughter. From her child - called the Son in the tradition - nothing remained but an intellectual and in some theologies distorted torn and shrivelled shadow. No power radiated from this shadow any more and no longer was it an example to be followed. The Mother-tree was cut down and its fruit dried up and didn't come alive any more. Her bread of life grew mouldy and her spring of living water dried up.

5. The Lady of all Nations

My lecture. That Thursday morning before the afternoon-lecture, Margaret introduces The Lady's journey through history -that I hope to portray that afternoon- in such a marvellous way, that I become quiet within and can feel the grandeur of that Great Mother, that great red Angel, that hidden Lady.

An ode to Margaret Barker's life-work. My lecture has to become an ode to her work, in which I want to express my gratitude for her life-work. I want to visualize her texts, transform her words into images. The existence of the lost and hidden Mother is proved by recent archeological finds. I will demonstrate through these finds that Wisdom speaks the same symbolic language in this art as in the (distorted) texts of the Old Testament. That which got lost in the texts, was preserved in art. Within the symbol-system of Wisdom there are the Tree of Life, the fire, the water-of-life, the throne, the pillar, the clouds, the fragrant oil, the frankincense, the bread, the white-linen clothes and so much more.



From Wisdom to Mary. But the title of the lecture formulated by her also wants to make a connection between Wisdom and Mary. Mary is more than an earthly mother of Jesus. Mary is in the tradition of Wisdom and follows in her footsteps. Just like Wisdom, Mary is the Mother of the Son of God, the Lord. It is therefore going to be my task to show that the symbol-system of Wisdom is reflected in the iconography of Mary in the Eastern and Western Christian churches and in the hymns that were sung here.

A surprising turn of events. During the intensive preparation of the lecture 'Bridging Wisdom and Mary' I worked through many books and piles of literature. One day I could lay hands on a few books and booklets about the Lady of all Nations that were published in Amsterdam between 1945 and 1958, in which the Amsterdam Lady said the following: 'I am The Lady of all Nations, who once was Mary'. And: 'They will call me the Mother'. I experienced a flash of recognition and fell silent.

I am going to speak in England about the Mother from the Old and New Testament, who needs to be washed clean of the dust and the distortions of many centuries, while in the mean time, because of her message from 1951 given in Amsterdam of all places, she is suddenly drawing so near in space and time. I am looking for the English translation of the Dutch message on the internet and am including the Amsterdam Lady in the presentation with her message and image. She is the Lady of all Nations from Amsterdam, who constitutes the ninth Mary-appearance acknowledged by the Church.

The Lady of all Nations. When I have come to the end of my lecture, I hear myself saying the following words: 'It's not only in the ancient texts and art that you can recover the Mother with a lot of effort. She is also a living energy of strength and support here and now, of comfort and assistance. She has recently appeared in my own country, and she called herself The Lady of all Nations, who once was Mary. She said: 'they will call me the Mother'... Even if you are not familiar with the catholic Mary, you can have faith in her, the Mother of all Nations ... '.

The message comes through, the energy in the room is changing. The state of still serenity and intense concentration in the English audience is changing. I conclude with Margaret's legendary words: 'the Lady is waving at me and I do hope she now is waving also at you'.

After the lecture. Afterwards some people come to me, almost upset ... 'Why haven't I included in the hand-out that prayer of 'the Lady of all Nations, who once was Mary and called herself the Mother' ! Quietly I go home and after a moment's work there are the prints-out of image and prayer. The next day they are ready on the hand-out table for those interested. Margaret has also noticed the transformation in energy and marvels at it. We have succeeded. In England the ice has definitely been broken for the Lady of all Nations, the Mother, who once was Mary.

6. Home again

Back in Holland. Meanwhile I have been home for almost two weeks and I keep being amazed at the depth of the Summer School experience, which really touched me to the core. It was a memorable week, never to be forgotten. Margaret's teaching has broadened my insight and deepened my faith. It is amazing how deep the roots of the tree of Judaïsme and Christianity and Islam reach into Mother Earth and how far they extend back in time. They go back to the time in which God the Father and Mother created a universal union with humanity, who are all each other's brothers and sisters in spirit. They sent their son to remind humanity of their Parents' existence in the heavens. Their first-born child - called the Son by them - had to remind people of the fact that all people are each other's relatives in spirit. Remind them of the fact that people can create their spiritual relationship by loving each other , as their Parents love each other and their children. Even when these children are temporarily living on earth.

From the tree-stump a new shoot is growing. In this Summerweek I have been privileged to eat from the Tree of Life and drink from its living water. Owing to Margaret's insights I feel reborn in the spirit of my spiritual Parents and their Son/Daughter. I realize that the true range of the concept of what it means to be a Christian extends out to the farthest reaches of this universe. I realize that it is a matter of a community of like-minded people, who lovingly live their earthly life, knowing that the universe loves us earthly people. Yes, it is that simple.

Annine van der Meer Ph.D
Author and Founder and president of Academy Pansophia.

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