


# Diving amid patriarchy: Reading Exodus 2 and 15 from the perspective of fisherwomen in Moluccas, Indonesia

**Author:**

Margaretha M.A.  
Apituley<sup>1</sup> 

**Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Theology,  
Indonesian Christian  
University of the Moluccas,  
Ambon, Indonesia

**Corresponding author:**

Margaretha Apituley,  
apituleymargaretha@ukim.  
ac.id

**Dates:**

Received: 18 Nov. 2025

Accepted: 06 Jan. 2026

Published: 03 Feb. 2026

**How to cite this article:**

Apituley, M.M.A., 2026,  
'Diving amid patriarchy:  
Reading Exodus 2 and 15  
from the perspective of  
fisherwomen in Moluccas,  
Indonesia', *HTS Teologiese  
Studies/Theological Studies*  
82(1), a11160. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v82i1.11160>

**Copyright:**

© 2026. The Author.  
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is  
licensed under the Creative  
Commons Attribution 4.0  
International (CC BY 4.0)  
license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

**Read online:**

Scan this QR  
code with your  
smart phone or  
mobile device  
to read online.

Fisherwomen in the Moluccas (Maluku, Indonesia) frequently faced discrimination within a patriarchal culture that regarded the sea as a masculine and taboo space, especially during menstruation. This perception not only erased women's social and economic contributions, but also constructed the sea as a dangerous realm governed by patriarchal norms. This study reread two Exodus texts, the rescue of Moses in the Nile (Ex 2:1–10) and Miriam's song at the Sea of Reeds (Ex 15:19–21), through the lived experiences of fisherwomen in the Moluccas. The research was based on fieldwork conducted in the villages of Leahari, Seri, Wab and Lematang. Using intercontextual feminist hermeneutics, which integrated historical-literary analysis with ethnographic insights, the study highlighted how women emerged as agents of liberation within watery spaces. The findings showed that rivers and the sea were not merely sites of danger but theophanic spaces where God manifested life through women's courage, faith and solidarity. The sea was understood as a womb of life, a medium of both liberation and revelation, that opened space for a feminist sea theology connecting body, spirituality and women's experience within patriarchal contexts. This study offered a new perspective to Exodus scholarship, contextual theology and feminist hermeneutics, particularly within Indonesia's coastal communities.

**Contribution:** This article contributes to the development of feminist biblical interpretation by introducing a contextual hermeneutic rooted in the lived experiences of fisherwomen in the Moluccas. It expands Exodus scholarship by reading the sea as a theophanic and liberating space rather than a site of danger. The study also advances contextual and feminist theologies by articulating a 'feminist sea theology' that connects embodiment, faith and women's agency within patriarchal maritime cultures.

**Keywords:** feminist hermeneutics; Exodus; the Moluccas; fisherwomen; contextual theology.

## Introduction

Fisherwomen in the coastal areas of the Moluccas face complex socio-economic and cultural challenges. In villages such as Leahari, Seri, Aparara, and Wab, women are actively involved in nearly all maritime activities; however, despite their essential skills for family economic survival, their official status is almost always recorded as 'housewife' rather than fisher. Consequently, they are excluded from accessing fisher IDs, government assistance, and the empowerment programme, which are generally channelled through male fishing groups (Field research, Leahari, Seri, Aparara, and Wab, the Moluccas, August 2024; Apituley et al. 2025; Heryanto 2020:45–48). This social context reflects patriarchal patterns in coastal communities, where men dominate the marine space, a domain socially constructed as masculine, both economically and symbolically.

This inequality is also reflected in traditional theological interpretations. In many classical readings of the Bible, dichotomies such as male and female, and sacred and profane are reinforced, while the sea, often symbolised as a chaotic or threatening space, is associated with instability and a domain to be controlled (Tromp 2019:102–110). Recent scholarship emphasises postcolonial and context-sensitive readings that centre the experiences of women in non-Western contexts (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Dube 2017; Kwok 2005). This study intentionally moves beyond normative Western feminist frameworks by grounding interpretation in the practical and embodied knowledge of fisherwomen in the Moluccas.

Given these social realities, it is crucial to read biblical texts from the perspective of coastal women. The sea is not merely an economic resource or ecological threat; it is also a medium of life,

spirituality and revelation. Field observations and interviews conducted in previous research (Apituley et al. 2025) indicate that their maritime activities are consistently preceded by prayers, small rituals and adherence to customary taboos, reflecting a transformative relationship between humans, water and divine power (Field research, Leahari, Seri, Apari, and Wab, the Moluccas, August 2024; Apituley et al. 2025). Contemporary feminist ecotheology highlights such practices as relational encounters with water that sustain life and express agency, situating ecological labour within spiritual and ethical frameworks (Johnson 2014; Marlow & Harris 2022).

This study extends that work by applying a feminist theological lens, particularly in dialogue with Exodus 2 and 15. Recent studies on Exodus emphasise the active spiritual and communal agency of women in water-related narratives, reinforcing the relevance of this dialogue for Moluccan fisherwomen (Portier-Young 2024).

Against this socio-cultural background, this study aims to reread the narratives in Exodus 2 and 15. Both texts feature women who display courage, perseverance, and initiative in confronting patriarchal situations. In Exodus 2, the actions of Miriam and Moses' mother demonstrate women's bravery in protecting life and asserting agency amid social injustice. The guiding research question of this study is: *How can Exodus 2 and 15 be reread to affirm the dignity and agency of women in maritime spaces?*

Using an intercontextual feminist hermeneutical approach, this research integrates historical-literary textual analysis with field observations in four coastal villages in the Moluccas, situating the theological reflection within postcolonial, ecological and local contexts. This study opens new discourse in feminist maritime theology in Indonesia, affirming that recognition of coastal women's experiences and contributions is essential for social justice, sustainable marine resource management and inclusive spiritual understanding.

The research makes several contributions to the existing literature. Firstly, it fills a gap in research on fisherwomen in the Moluccas by providing empirical data on their socio-economic, ritual and maritime practices, which are often overlooked in both local and global scholarship. Secondly, it extends feminist theological discourse by situating biblical interpretation within the lived experiences of coastal women, moving beyond Western-centric frameworks and highlighting non-Western, postcolonial perspectives. Thirdly, it integrates ecological, social and spiritual dimensions, offering a holistic approach that links gender, labour and environmental ethics. By bridging field observations, feminist hermeneutics and biblical scholarship, this study provides a contextually grounded framework for understanding women's agency in maritime spaces, contributing both academically and practically to discussions on social justice, sustainable resource management and inclusive theology.

## Theoretical and methodological framework

### Feminist and contextual hermeneutics

Feminist hermeneutics provides a critical lens for reading biblical texts from marginalised women's perspectives. Scholars such as Phyllis Trible and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza highlight androcentric bias and recover female agency within patriarchal narratives (Fiorenza 1983:45–59; Trible 1984:11–23). Trible's literary readings show subversive female agency within constrained texts, while Fiorenza reconstructs historical contexts to reclaim women's authority.

Classical Western feminist frameworks, however, are limited in postcolonial and maritime contexts, potentially marginalising women shaped by colonial histories, subsistence economies, ecological precarity, and intimate ties with land and sea (Dube 2000; Kwok 2005). In the Moluccas, where the sea functions as livelihood, spiritual space and site of resistance, these approaches alone are insufficient.

This study therefore adopts postcolonial and contextual feminist hermeneutics, prioritising lived experience, vulnerability, and relationality as epistemological sources (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Dube 2017). Dube (2000:27–41) advocates decolonising readings that affirm embodied experiences as theological knowledge, particularly relevant for Moluccan fisherwomen. Asian feminist perspectives complement this: Kwok (2005:34–56) emphasises reading from the margins within Asian colonial and cultural contexts, while Katoppo (1980:12–28) situates Indonesian women's theology in local cultural, ecological and social realities. These approaches shift interpretation towards relational, embodied and contextually grounded epistemologies.

Recent scholarship underscores embodied, communal and ecological dimensions of female agency. Portier-Young (2024) interprets Miriam's actions at the sea as embodied prophecy; Claassens and Juliana (2024) emphasises ethical and communal implications of reading texts alongside vulnerability and ecological precarity. These readings transform maritime spaces into theological sites shaped by women's bodies, labour and ritual practice.

Central to this methodology is *reading from the margins*: privileging voices structurally silenced by gender, ethnicity or socio-economic status. In the Moluccas, this entails dialogue with fisherwomen whose labour, knowledge and ritual practices challenge patriarchal constructions of the sea. Feminist hermeneutics thus becomes transformative, reorienting authority towards marginalised women as agents of theological knowledge (Dube 2000).

### Feminist ecotheology

Feminist ecotheology emphasises human-creation relationality. Ruether and McFague describe Earth and water as the 'body of God', reflecting divine care and

interconnectedness (McFague 1993:67–82; Ruether 1992: 88–104). Water functions as a womb sustaining life and as a site of divine encounter. McFague (1993:72–75) notes that ecological understanding requires attention to gendered experience: women’s engagement with water embodies care and stewardship.

Contemporary ecotheology emphasises ethical, relational and embodied engagement with ecological spaces. Johnson (2014) shows how encounters with non-human life reshape theological notions of agency and responsibility, while recent biblical scholarship situates water as a locus of divine–human interaction (Marlow & Harris 2022). In the Moluccas, the sea is reframed as nurturing rather than threatening; fisherwomen’s *bameti*, fishing, and ritual practices enact relationality with marine life and God, collapsing distinctions between sacred and profane, work and worship.

### Perspective of fisherwomen in the Moluccas

Fisherwomen in Leahari, Seri, Apari and Wab perform demanding maritime labour while sustaining domestic and ritual responsibilities. Their work is often undervalued and excluded from state recognition, reflecting structural gender inequality (Field research, August 2024; Apituley et al. 2025).

Their lives are guided by ritual, taboo and communal ethics. Practices such as pre-fishing prayers, maritime prohibitions, and resource-sharing are both functional and symbolic, constructing moral and spiritual relationships with the sea and affirming female agency (Research activities, August 2024). In this study, fisherwomen’s experiences function as a ‘second text’ in dialogue with Scripture, showing the sea as a site of resilience, creativity and spiritual engagement.

### Intercontextual feminist hermeneutical approach

This study applies an intercontextual feminist hermeneutical method, integrating historical-literary analysis, socio-cultural contextualisation and symbolic interpretation. It draws on recent European, American, and Asian scholarship to address embodiment, ecological agency and social realities (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Johnson 2014; Kwok 2005; Marlow & Harris 2022; Portier-Young 2024). The method proceeds in three stages:

- **Historical-literary analysis:** Situates Exodus 2 and 15 in ancient Egyptian and Israelite contexts, examining gender roles, social hierarchies and the symbolic role of water. The Nile exemplifies sustenance and control, reflecting patriarchal power structures (Exum 1995:54–60).
- **Symbolic and ideological analysis:** Interprets water as a medium of liberation and relationality. Actions of Jochebed, Miriam and Pharaoh’s daughter are read as ethical and spiritual interventions in patriarchal spaces (Marlow & Harris 2022; Portier-Young 2024; Trible 1984:15–22).
- **Contextual dialogue:** Reads texts alongside Moluccan fisherwomen’s experiences. Rituals, taboos and maritime

labour resonate with biblical narratives, demonstrating water, labour and ritual as theological and ethical sites (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Johnson 2014; Kwok 2005; Marlow & Harris 2022; Portier-Young 2024; Field observations, August 2024). This stage foregrounds praxis: theology must engage lived realities to remain meaningful and transformative.

Integrating feminist hermeneutics, ecotheology and lived experience, this framework produces a contextually grounded, liberative reading of Scripture. Moluccan women’s experiences both challenge and enrich biblical interpretation, offering insights into life, justice and relationality. This framework underpins subsequent analysis of Exodus 2 and 15, demonstrating how maritime spaces, female labour and Scripture interconnect in the pursuit of empowerment and theological meaning.

### Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

## Results and discussion

### Textual analysis of Exodus 2 and 15: Women, water and agency in liberation narratives

#### Exodus 2:1–10 – Water as the womb of liberation

The narrative of Exodus 2 introduces the role of women as primary agents of liberation within water-bound spaces. The following analysis focuses on the birth and rescue of Moses as a paradigmatic example of female agency and relational action.

Exodus 2:1–10 recounts the birth of Moses and the rescue orchestrated by three female figures: Moses’ mother (Jochebed), his sister Miriam, and Pharaoh’s daughter. This passage underscores women as primary agents in the narrative of Israelite liberation and highlights how the waters of the Nile function as a medium of life, salvation and subversive action. From historical, narrative and feminist perspectives, the story reveals the complex interactions of women with public and symbolic spaces. These interactions occur within the patriarchal structures of ancient Egyptian society. The Nile was central to Egyptian life, not only practically but also ritually. Women were actively engaged in water-related purification and domestic-agrarian management, giving Jochebed’s act both practical and symbolic resonance. Through an intercontextual feminist hermeneutical lens, the narrative invites interpretation as a contextually grounded account of women’s embodied agency. It is not a universal abstraction, but situated within a water-bound socio-political world.

In Exodus 2:1–2, Jochebed, an Israelite mother, faces the threat of her newborn son’s death as a result of Pharaoh’s decree to kill all Israelite male infants. Her response, placing Moses in a basket and setting it along the Nile’s edge

(‘she placed the child in a papyrus basket and laid it among the reeds by the riverbank’, Ex 2:3), was not merely an act to preserve life but a strategic use of water as a space of salvation. Miriam observes from a distance, ready to mediate between the infant and Pharaoh’s daughter (Ex 2:4–7). Pharaoh’s daughter, despite being part of the Egyptian ruling class, demonstrates empathy and moral courage by defying patriarchal policy to save the child (Ex 2:5–6).

These three women form a cross-identity network: Jochebed as the Israelite mother, Miriam as observer and mediator, and Pharaoh’s daughter as Egyptian authority. The narrative emphasises that women can create spaces of safety through collaborative action, even within oppressive social structures. Meyers (1988:112–118) notes that this story portrays women as historical agents capable of manipulating space and symbols to preserve life, strategically countering patriarchal dominance. Such collaboration reflects what contemporary feminist biblical scholars describe as relational agency, women acting not individually but through embodied, communal strategies that disrupt patriarchal power from within (Claassens & Juliana 2024).

Historically, the Nile held a central place in ancient Egyptian culture, serving not only as a source of sustenance, transport and agrarian livelihood, but also as a symbol of fertility, regeneration and protection. Egyptian women were often involved in purification rituals and the management of water for domestic and agricultural purposes (Watterson 2003:45–51). In this context, Jochebed’s placement of her child in the river can be read both symbolically and practically: she engaged intelligently with the social and ecological realities of her time, using a culturally meaningful, life-giving medium to resist political oppression. Fretheim (1991:41–44) emphasises that in Exodus, the river functions not merely as a geographical backdrop, but as a symbolic arena in which ethical action and moral rescue unfold.

From a feminist perspective, the women’s actions in this narrative are deeply subversive. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza emphasises that women in biblical texts often emerge as ethical agents who courageously challenge oppressive norms even when formally powerless (Fiorenza 1983:50–55). Jochebed risks her life to save Moses; Miriam observes and mediates strategically; Pharaoh’s daughter acts contrary to her social and political obligations. Understanding the historical and ecological context of the Nile further illuminates how Jochebed’s act was both practically effective and symbolically resonant. Historically informed feminist readings highlight that these actions resonate with known practices of women in ancient societies who navigated spaces like rivers to protect life and assert agency within constrained social structures.

Building on these early feminist insights, this study intentionally moves beyond normative Western feminist universalisms by grounding interpretation in embodied, water-based practices of survival and care, an approach

resonant with contemporary feminist ecological hermeneutics (Marlow & Harris 2022). This reading does not claim universal applicability but emerges from a particular maritime and postcolonial context, resisting abstract feminist generalisations detached from lived ecological realities.

Within this framework, the Nile is not merely a physical location, but a subversive, life-giving space that enables liberatory action. Water functions as a womb of life rather than a profane or dangerous domain, a space where women assert moral, strategic and spiritual agency. Tribble highlights that women in biblical narratives often exploit marginal or vulnerable spaces to redirect the course of history (Tribble 1984:15–22). Recent feminist readings of water further emphasise that such spaces are sites of embodied theological agency rather than symbols of chaos or threat (Johnson 2014).

Symbolically, the Nile may thus be read as a cosmic womb, a vessel of life sustaining the community. From an ecofeminist theological perspective, as proposed by Rosemary Radford Ruether, natural elements actively participate in the work of salvation and life (Ruether 1992:88–104). The river becomes a medium through which liberation unfolds, challenging patriarchal dichotomies of male/female and ruler/oppressed. The actions of Jochebed, Miriam and Pharaoh’s daughter are simultaneously political, moral and spiritual, rendering the river a site of female empowerment.

This interpretation resonates strongly when read in dialogue with the lived experiences of fisherwomen in the Moluccas. Like Jochebed and Miriam, these women navigate risks in aquatic spaces, care for children and perform protective rituals before and during fishing activities. For them, the sea is not a threat, but a source of life and solidarity (Field observations, Moluccas, August 2024). The historical and anthropological lens here underscores continuity: both biblical and contemporary maritime contexts reveal how women engage with water not as passive spaces, but as arenas of care, survival and empowerment. This contextual dialogue confirms that the meaning of water in Exodus emerges most fully when read alongside contemporary maritime experiences of women in postcolonial settings, rather than through abstract or universalised feminist frameworks.

Exodus 2:1–10 therefore offers a model for contextual biblical interpretation: identifying female agents, attending to the symbolic function of natural spaces and affirming women’s capacity to shape history. The narrative highlights several key insights: women act as liberatory agents; water functions as a womb of life; patriarchal structures are subverted through embodied, relational action; and contemporary fisherwomen’s experiences enrich the reading of the text. As such, Exodus 2 provides a foundational basis for developing a feminist sea theology that affirms water as a space of life, salvation and female agency. Building on this liberative dynamic, the narrative of Exodus 15 shows how water continues to function not only as a medium of survival, but

also as a site for communal and spiritual empowerment. Miriam's leadership at the Red Sea exemplifies this ongoing role of water as a space where women exercise moral, ritual and social agency.

### **Exodus 15:19–21 – The sea as a space of solidarity and revelation**

Exodus 15:19–21 presents Miriam's song following the Israelites' miraculous crossing of the Red Sea. This passage situates women not merely as witnesses, but as active participants in ritual and communal expression, emphasising the intersection of spirituality, social solidarity and ecological space. Building on the framework developed in Exodus 2, where women assert agency in water-bound spaces, Miriam's leadership demonstrates relational and embodied female agency, enacting communal and spiritual authority collectively rather than individually (Claassens & Juliana 2024). Historically, leadership by women in ritual contexts, especially near water, reflects known practices in ancient Near Eastern societies, where women often performed liturgical, commemorative or fertility rites at liminal ecological spaces, linking community, spirituality and survival.

The text describes Miriam taking a tambourine and leading the women in song and dance, celebrating the defeat of the Egyptian army (Ex 15:20–21). Structurally, the song mirrors the Hebrew poetic form of parallelism, combining affirmation of divine power with communal joy. The passage highlights the role of women as ritual leaders within Israelite society, particularly in moments of collective remembrance and thanksgiving. As Phyllis Trible notes, such performances are not incidental, but constitute a form of theological discourse, enacting memory and shaping communal identity (Trible 1984:55–60). Ritually, the women's song and dance function as both celebration and pedagogical practice, transmitting historical memory while enacting spiritual authority. This ritual action underscores that women are not confined to domestic or private spheres; rather, they occupy liminal spaces, between water and shore, danger and salvation, where communal memory and divine revelation intersect (Meyers 1988:125–130). From a historical perspective, the shoreline, between water and land, served as a socially and symbolically potent space in ancient Israelite and neighbouring cultures, where women's ritual acts could convey memory, protection and communal continuity.

Building on the ritual and communal significance of women's song, an eco-theological perspective further illuminates the sacred role of water as a medium of divine action, carrying the people to safety and demonstrating God's sustaining presence (McFague 1987:112–115; Ruether 1992:101–104). Through ritual engagement at the sea and public leadership in song and dance, women emerge as coparticipants in divine action, asserting both spiritual authority and communal responsibility. In this interpretation, the Red Sea functions as a relational space in which human action and divine presence intersect,

highlighting the ethical and spiritual dimensions of ecological awareness. Historically and socially, women's leadership at aquatic sites also parallels practices in surrounding Mediterranean and Near Eastern communities, where liminal spaces like riverbanks and shores were sites of collective ritual, ecological management and gendered authority.

A feminist reading emphasises the subversive potential of Miriam's leadership. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues that biblical women often assert authority through symbolic and ritual acts, challenging patriarchal restrictions on public and sacred spaces (Fiorenza 1983:67–72). By leading the song and dance at the sea's edge, Miriam transforms a space associated with divine judgement and national salvation into one of female agency and spiritual leadership. This reinterpretation resonates with contemporary experiences of coastal women, such as Moluccan fisherwomen, who engage in ritualised song, dance and prayer in maritime spaces to ensure safety and foster solidarity. Just as Miriam's song consecrates the shore and affirms communal life, women today enact spiritual and social authority in aquatic environments, asserting both life-giving and prophetic roles within their communities (Field observations in Moluccas, August 2024). Historically, this parallel underscores continuity: water has been both a practical and symbolic site where women enact spiritual, social and ecological agency across time and cultures.

Symbolically, the sea represents both peril and salvation, chaos and divine revelation. Miriam's song transforms the liminal waters from a threatening space to a site of collective empowerment, ritual solidarity and theological reflection. The Red Sea, read through a feminist and eco-theological lens, embodies God's embrace, the communal power of women, and the interconnection of divine, human and ecological agency. Water functions as a medium and a metaphor for life, ethical action and prophetic witness, bridging historical and contemporary contexts of female spiritual agency (Fretheim 1991:60–63). Contextualising Miriam's leadership historically highlights how ritual and ecological awareness intersect, showing that water-bound spaces were recognised as potent arenas for female-led communal memory, protection and divine encounter.

Exodus 15:19–21 affirms women's active role in communal rituals, spiritual leadership and theological interpretation. The Red Sea functions as God's body, embracing the people while providing a space for female solidarity and public agency. Miriam's song exemplifies the subversive and revelatory potential of women's actions, highlighting the intersection of ritual, ecology and feminist agency. Connecting this reading to Moluccan fisherwomen demonstrates that aquatic spaces, historically and contemporarily, serve as arenas of spiritual expression, communal solidarity and prophetic witness.

Taken together with Exodus 2, these narratives illustrate a continuum of women's agency in water-bound spaces,

from individual acts of life-saving resistance to collective expressions of ritual and spiritual leadership. Such readings underscore the persistent theological, social and ecological significance of water as a site of female empowerment, inviting contemporary reflection on how women continue to navigate, protect and sanctify aquatic spaces in both historical and present contexts.

### **River and sea as womb and vessel: A site of life, transformation and theological agency**

In canonical biblical theology and contemporary ecofeminist hermeneutics, water is reframed not as a neutral backdrop, but as a generative and sustaining medium, rich with life, relationality and the presence of the divine. Water in Exodus functions as a theological actor: a participatory element that enables, mediates and shapes both human and divine action. In Exodus 2, the waters of the Nile are intentionally read as a womb of liberation. The placement of Moses in a papyrus basket and his subsequent rescue by three female agents illuminate how water can nurture life amid existential threat, enabling human flourishing against forces of political violence and structural domination. In this intimate terrestrial context, water becomes a space where embodied female agency – Jochebed’s strategic placement of her son, Miriam’s careful mediation and Pharaoh’s daughter’s empathetic intervention – intersects with divine providence, challenging reductive portrayals of water as chaotic or perilous and instead affirming its life-giving and relational character.

The narrative trajectory of Exodus 15 shifts from individual agency to collective formation, yet water remains central as a vessel of transformation. The Red Sea crossing narrative is not merely about physical survival, but about communal reconstitution, divine revelation, and liturgical memory. Through prophetic song and dance, Miriam and the women enact communal identity and spiritual authority, transforming the liminal waters from a site of threat to a space of collective celebration and theological significance. Here, water functions relationally: as a medium, memory and mediator of communal empowerment. The continuity between these two episodes suggests a symbolic fluidity; the same medium that nurtures individual life in the river becomes the vessel through which a people’s identity, solidarity and memory are enacted and embodied.

Ecofeminist hermeneutics deepens this reading by locating water within expanded ecological and ethical frameworks. Recent scholarship argues that natural elements such as rivers and seas are intrinsically relational and agentic, participating actively in theological meaning-making rather than remaining inert settings (Canete, Daton & Ching 2025; Marlow & Harris 2022). Water’s materiality becomes a locus where theology, ecological vulnerability and social justice converge, emphasising that the created order participates in God’s redemptive activity. This hermeneutical move challenges entrenched dualisms – sacred/profane, human/non-human, and masculine/feminine – and reframes theological reflection as embedded within ecological and embodied realities rather than abstracted from them.

This orientation resonates with broader feminist critiques of patriarchal structures, which highlight structural parallels between the exploitation of women and the degradation of nature. Ecofeminist scholars advocate for theological responses that foreground care, justice and relationality (Štante 2021). Emerging scholarship in Christian ecofeminist theologies of water further demonstrates that many traditional readings have overemphasised abstract spiritual meanings while understating the embodied, life-giving significance of water across human and ecological contexts (Canete et al. 2025; Kim 2023).

In many indigenous and coastal contexts, including the Moluccas, water carries deeply lived socio-cultural and spiritual meanings that are neither marginal nor incidental. Fisherwomen’s practices, ritual prayers before fishing, communal songs, and cooperation along the shoreline, exemplify an embodied theological engagement with water that is simultaneously familiar, sacred and life-affirming. These practices are what ecofeminist theology describes as ethical praxis: daily actions that affirm life, sustain community and enact ecological stewardship while eroding artificial boundaries between work, worship and care (Samorsir & Kakunsi 2025). Within this framework, water is neither a mere resource nor a latent threat; it is a medium through which spiritual agency, ecological solidarity and communal resilience are realised.

Reading the river or sea as womb and vessel is thus not merely metaphorical; it constitutes a theological and ethical intervention. It calls attention to water’s generative power, nurturing presence and transformative potential both within the scriptural narrative and within lived experience. By integrating ecofeminist hermeneutics with the embodied practices of Moluccan fisherwomen, water emerges as a continuous space where God’s life-giving presence, human agency and ecological solidarity converge, from intimate, protective waters to liminal, communal seas. This articulation sustains a feminist sea theology that is simultaneously anchored in biblical witness and responsive to the material and spiritual realities of women navigating aquatic spaces today.

### **Intercontextual dialogue: Exodus women and Moluccan fisherwomen**

Building on the narratives of Exodus 2 and 15, where women exercise agency in water-bound spaces, the lived experiences of Moluccan fisherwomen reveal contemporary continuities in how women navigate, care for, and claim aquatic spaces as arenas of survival, ritual and spiritual expression. This contemporary practice resonates with Exodus 2, where Jochebed and Miriam act strategically in the Nile to safeguard life. By placing these narratives alongside the lived experience of Moluccan fisherwomen, a dialogue emerges across time and culture, showing that water-bound spaces have historically enabled women’s relational, ethical and spiritual agency.

The stories of women in Exodus find contemporary resonance among the fisherwomen of the Moluccas, Indonesia, whose daily engagement with the sea mirrors, in symbolic and practical ways, the biblical narratives of female agency in aquatic spaces (Apituley et al. 2025). Drawing on Katoppo's (1980) insight that Asian women theologians must articulate theology from their cultural and ecological context, this section explores the theological, ethical and social significance of water as a liminal space where faith, labour and suffering intersect, and where women enact both survival and spiritual witness (Apituley et al. 2025). Recent studies in ecofeminist and postcolonial theology emphasise that local women's interactions with natural spaces provide key insights for understanding biblical texts in their socio-ecological context (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Marlow & Harris 2022). This inter-contextual dialogue highlights how biblical texts gain fresh meaning when read in conversation with contemporary embodied praxis, showing that spiritual, ecological and ethical dimensions of life converge in these spaces.

This biblical framework resonates with the lived experiences of Moluccan fisherwomen, revealing patterns of female agency that transform aquatic spaces into sites of solidarity, protection and theological meaning. Historically, liminal water spaces were recognised across the Near East and Southeast Asia as culturally significant sites where women exercised ritual authority, mediated life-sustaining labour and enacted protective practices for their communities (Field 2010; Watterson 2003). Engaging with both biblical and contemporary narratives allows a comparative lens, showing how water-bound spaces function as arenas of female leadership, ritual and care across distinct contexts.

Just as the biblical narratives portray women navigating water with courage and strategic action, the fisherwomen of the Moluccas similarly inhabit aquatic spaces as arenas of labour, ritual and solidarity. The narrative of Exodus 2 highlights the strategic and protective role of women: Yokhebed places the infant Moses in the Nile, while Miriam oversees the process, ensuring the child's survival (Meyers 1988:112–118). This act of safeguarding life parallels the daily responsibilities of the fisherwomen of the Moluccas, who 'keep the hearth', metaphorically and literally, while their husbands and male relatives venture into potentially perilous waters. Here, the dialogue becomes explicit: The strategic, relational agency of Jochebed and Miriam resonates with the fisherwomen's practical, protective and communal work, emphasising continuity in female ethical and spiritual action across centuries and geographies (Field observations in Moluccas, August 2024).

Similarly, Miriam's song at the Red Sea (Ex 15:19–21) celebrates divine deliverance and communal solidarity through ritualised performance (Trible 1984:55–60). The fisherwomen of the Moluccas perform daily and seasonal rituals along the shore: Singing, offering prayers and engaging in collective work before and after fishing expeditions. This practice resonates with Miriam's leadership

at the Red Sea (Ex 15:19–21), echoing female spiritual agency across time and space through these collective rituals. Through this intercontextual lens, ritual and labour are understood not only as survival strategies but also as embodied theological acts, creating a dialogue between biblical exemplars and contemporary praxis. Drawing on contemporary feminist theological insights, these acts can be understood as embodied theology, where ritual, ecological awareness and ethical labour converge to sustain both human and environmental flourishing (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Marlow 2021). By situating the biblical narrative alongside these lived experiences, the convergence of ritual, labour and spiritual expression becomes evident, highlighting continuity across historical and cultural contexts.

Contextually, the sea emerges as a complex theological and social space. It is simultaneously a site of economic labour, spiritual reflection and communal interaction. Drawing on ecofeminist theology, the sea may be understood as a 'womb' or life-giving medium, rather than a threat or patriarchally coded domain (Ruether 1992:101–104). Just as the Red Sea mediates divine intervention and human action in Exodus, the sea of the Moluccas mediates human resilience and divine providence. Recent feminist maritime ethnographies highlight that women's ecological knowledge and labour constitute ethical praxis, shaping both community survival and theological imagination (Marlow & Harris 2022). Faith, work and suffering converge in these waters, creating an arena in which the fisherwomen of the Moluccas exercise ethical discernment, communal solidarity and spiritual creativity (McFague 1987:112–115). This theological dialogue underscores that both biblical and contemporary contexts reveal water as a liminal site of empowerment, solidarity and spiritual witness, where women's agency transforms ordinary spaces into sacred ones.

By reclaiming the sea as a theological and ethical arena, the Moluccan fisherwomen enact social justice and spiritual agency, demonstrating long-standing female authority, ritual competence and stewardship within aquatic spaces. Such engagement destabilises traditional dichotomies of male and female, sacred and profane, and land and sea, offering an inclusive vision of creation and communal life (Watterson 2003:45–51).

Patriarchal interpretations often construe the sea as chaotic, dangerous, or 'male', thereby marginalising female presence and authority. A feminist contextual reading deconstructs these assumptions, reinterpreting water as shared creation, a site of relationality and divine encounter. New scholarship in feminist ecological hermeneutics stresses that interpreting water as a relational medium highlights women's historical and ongoing contribution to community resilience and ecological stewardship (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Marlow 2021). The sea is not the exclusive domain of men; rather, it is a home, womb and sacred space in which women's labour, ritual and witness participate in God's ongoing creative and salvific activity (Fretheim 1991:41–44). The intercontextual

dialogue between Exodus and Moluccan praxis thus illuminates the ways theological insight is deepened when historical texts converse with contemporary lived realities.

The Moluccan fisherwomen engage in what Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza calls a 'subversive hermeneutics from the margins', enacting both social justice and spiritual agency (Fiorenza 1983:70). Their daily work, combined with ritualised song and prayer, embodies prophetic witness, resilience and solidarity within a context of economic precarity and environmental vulnerability. This reflects a postcolonial feminist insight: local knowledge and embodied praxis are central to both ecological survival and theological imagination (Katoppo 1980; Marlow & Harris 2022). Taken together, the biblical and contemporary narratives enter into sustained dialogue, illuminating the lived realities of Moluccan fisherwomen and providing the conceptual groundwork for a feminist sea theology that synthesises ritual, labour and spiritual agency across time and space. In the following section, the focus shifts from descriptive and interpretive analysis to a more systematic exploration of the theological principles emerging from these practices.

## Towards a feminist sea theology: Hermeneutical, theological and social reflections

Building on these insights, a feminist sea theology may be articulated with three core emphases. Firstly, the sea itself functions as a womb. Water is read as a life-giving medium, echoing ecological and biblical motifs. It nurtures, sustains and shelters life, offering a counter-narrative to notions of the sea as threatening or exclusively masculine (Ruether 1992:102). Contemporary ecofeminist scholarship emphasises the sea as a relational space, where human, female and ecological agency intersect (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Marlow & Harris 2022). However, it is necessary to critically analyse how this womb metaphor interacts with local cultural understandings of the sea, including potential tensions between ecological metaphors and lived labour experiences.

Secondly, female solidarity embodies the *imitatio Dei*. The collective action of women through work, ritual and mutual support reflects divine care and relationality. Solidarity is both ethical and spiritual, producing communal flourishing and reinforcing the value of each life within creation (Meyers 1998:118–120). This emphasis can be deepened by explicating how specific cooperative practices of Moluccan fisherwomen, such as synchronised fishing, collective prayers and resource-sharing, instantiate theological and ethical models that parallel biblical female agency. By drawing a more systematic comparison between Miriam's leadership and fisherwomen's coordinated action, the analysis moves beyond analogy to reveal underlying principles of relational ethics (Marlow 2021; Tribble 1984).

Thirdly, the work and song of women act as prophetic witness. The embodied labour and ritual expressions of Moluccan fisherwomen transform ordinary activities into theological and ethical acts, akin to Miriam's song and Yokhebed's courage. These practices assert female agency, resist patriarchal marginalisation and affirm the sacredness of both human and ecological life (Tribble 1984:60). A deeper interrogation is warranted: How do these ritualised practices explicitly subvert patriarchal norms, and how might they challenge conventional ecclesial hierarchies? Incorporating critical reflection on the potential limits of such analogies strengthens the theological argument (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Fiorenza 1983).

Together, these three interrelated dimensions set the stage for considering the interpretive, theological, and social implications of a feminist sea theology. Here, it is useful to underscore that feminist sea theology is not merely descriptive; it requires analytical rigour to connect praxis with theological principles, highlighting how lived experiences concretely shape doctrines of liberation and ecological responsibility.

## Hermeneutical implications and contribution: Towards a feminist intercontextual reading

### Intercontextual reading as hermeneutical implication

By tracing the practices of Moluccan fisherwomen alongside biblical narratives, biblical interpretation emerges as a dynamic arena in which divine, human and ecological agency converge. Jochebed's act of safeguarding Moses in the Nile parallels fisherwomen's careful management of risk and childcare while navigating hazardous waters. Miriam's song at the Red Sea resonates with the ritualised singing and communal prayers of fisherwomen, expressing gratitude, resistance and communal solidarity. Pharaoh's daughter's intervention reflects ethical courage that disrupts patriarchal norms, akin to fisherwomen asserting agency in male-dominated maritime spaces (Dube 2000; Marlow & Harris 2022).

Through this mapping of biblical actions to socio-ecological strategies, interpretation moves beyond historical reconstruction towards a dialogical engagement between text and lived experience. Scripture is thus read as living theology rather than a static artefact, revealing how ancient narratives of water-bound female agency continue to illuminate contemporary practices (Fiorenza 1983:45–55; Tribble 1984:15–22).

### Feminist ecological hermeneutics and the reclaiming of water

This intercontextual feminist reading also enables a critical reassessment of traditional exegesis that has minimised both women and water as active agents of divine liberation. Rather than portraying water as a neutral setting or a site of chaos, this approach recognises rivers and seas as liminal spaces

where ethical discernment, survival and spiritual witness converge. Fisherwomen's embodied praxis – ritual labour, cooperative work and risk navigation – provides a hermeneutical lens for rereading Exodus as a text deeply concerned with relational ethics, ecological responsibility and communal solidarity (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Marlow 2021).

By situating biblical interpretation within feminist ecological hermeneutics, this reading challenges entrenched dichotomies such as male and female, sacred and profane, and land and sea. Women's engagement with aquatic spaces is interpreted as an expression of *imitatio Dei*, relational stewardship and prophetic witness (Fretheim 1991:63; Trible 1984:60).

### **Hermeneutical contribution: Scripture as dialogical and liberative theology**

As a hermeneutical contribution, this study proposes a feminist intercontextual reading that places the biblical text in sustained dialogue with the lived realities of marginalised women. Building on the insights of Trible and Schüssler Fiorenza, this approach systematically maps biblical narratives onto contemporary socio-ecological contexts, thereby foregrounding women's embodied agency as a site of theological meaning (Fiorenza 1983; Trible 1984).

By treating Moluccan fisherwomen as interpretive partners rather than illustrative examples, revelation is no longer confined to text, temple or male-dominated spheres. Instead, divine presence is discerned in embodied practices of labour, care, ritual and survival. In this way, Scripture becomes a pedagogical and theological resource that speaks to ecological precarity, gendered injustice and communal resilience, offering a model of feminist hermeneutics that is ethically socially, and ecologically grounded (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Oduyoye 2001).

### **Theological implications: Towards a liberative feminist sea theology**

#### **Women and water as agents of liberation**

The narratives of Exodus 2 and 15, when read through a feminist and contextual hermeneutical lens, reveal women and water as active agents of liberation rather than passive settings or symbols. In Exodus 2, Jochebed's decision to place Moses in the Nile, Pharaoh's daughter's intervention, and Miriam's vigilant oversight together enact relational ethics, strategic courage, and life-preserving agency within a liminal aquatic space (Meyers 1988:112–118). The river functions not merely as a backdrop, but as a mediating space through which divine care and human resistance converge.

Similarly, Exodus 15 portrays Miriam leading the women in song at the Red Sea, transforming the waters from a site of danger into a space of communal memory, celebration and theological proclamation (Trible 1984:55–60). Water here becomes a medium of liberation that sustains collective identity and spiritual agency. These biblical narratives challenge patriarchal readings that portray women as marginal actors and water as chaotic or threatening, instead

presenting aquatic spaces as sites of ethical discernment, ritual leadership and divine–human collaboration.

When placed in dialogue with the lived experiences of Moluccan fisherwomen, these texts reveal striking continuities in female agency across time and context. The fisherwomen's daily engagement with the sea – through labour, ritualised prayer communal care, and risk navigation – mirrors the protective and celebratory roles of biblical women. Ordinary practices of survival are thus invested with theological significance, as women negotiate ecological precarity while sustaining life and community (Field observations in Moluccas, August 2024; Marlow & Harris 2022). This intercontextual reading demonstrates that both Scripture and contemporary praxis witness to water as a relational space in which women enact liberation, care and spiritual agency.

#### **Constructing a liberative theology of the sea**

Building on these intercontextual insights, this study articulates a liberative feminist theology of the sea. In this framework, the sea is not merely a geographical or mythological motif but a living locus of God's creative and redemptive presence, where ecological, human and spiritual life intersect. Drawing on ecofeminist theologians such as Rosemary Radford Ruether and Sallie McFague, creation is understood as participatory in divine relationality, and water emerges as a life-giving medium that embodies God's sustaining and nurturing grace (McFague 1987:112–115; Ruether 1992:101–104).

Unlike patriarchal interpretations that construe the sea as chaotic, dangerous or exclusively male-coded, a liberative theology of the sea reclaims aquatic spaces as sites of relational vitality and ethical responsibility. Reading Exodus alongside the lived practices of Moluccan fisherwomen illuminates concrete theological parallels: the Nile as a womb of salvation in Exodus 2 resonates with fisherwomen's care for families amid environmental vulnerability; Miriam's song at the Red Sea finds echoes in ritualised labour, prayer and communal celebration along Moluccan shores; and Pharaoh's daughter's intervention exemplifies ethical discernment that disrupts oppressive structures, analogous to women's leadership in navigating social and economic constraints (Dube 2000; Marlow & Harris 2022; Trible 1984:60).

This theology reconceptualises divine power not as domination but as relational vitality – a flowing, life-affirming force that nurtures interdependence among all beings. By foregrounding women's embodied praxis, divine revelation is located in ordinary actions such as labour, song, ritual and care, through which communities are sustained, and ecological relationships are negotiated (Claassens & Juliana 2024). A feminist sea theology thus integrates biblical exegesis, ecological consciousness and contextual praxis into a coherent theological vision that affirms life, justice and relationality.

## The sea as womb and stage: Synthesis

Taken together, these theological implications present the sea as both womb and stage. As womb, the sea signifies generativity, nurture and protection, sustaining life amid vulnerability and threat. As stage, it is a dynamic arena where women enact ethical discernment, ritual leadership, resistance and communal solidarity. In both biblical narratives and contemporary fisherwomen's practices, aquatic spaces become sites where divine presence, human agency and ecological interdependence converge.

Reading Scripture alongside contemporary female praxis demonstrates that liberation, ethical stewardship and spiritual insight are inseparable from everyday engagement with the natural world. The sea is neither a neutral resource nor a hostile force; it is a relational medium through which God's life-giving presence is mediated and contested. By reclaiming aquatic spaces as theological and ethical arenas, this feminist sea theology challenges entrenched dichotomies – male and female, sacred and profane, and land and sea – and affirms the dignity of women and the sacredness of water as integral to God's ongoing creative and liberative work.

This synthesis establishes a coherent foundation for a feminist sea theology that is biblically grounded, ecologically attentive and contextually embodied. It prepares the way for further reflection on the hermeneutical, theological and social consequences of reading Scripture in sustained dialogue with the lived realities of women navigating aquatic spaces today.

### Social contribution: Affirming the dignity and agency of fisherwomen

The social implications of this study are profound, revealing that women's labour, wisdom and faith are not merely cultural practices but critical loci of theological revelation. By situating the lived experiences of Moluccan fisherwomen alongside the narratives of Exodus, the study affirms that women's everyday engagement with water, caring for families, negotiating uncertainty in economic and environmental precarity, and performing ritualised practices of hope, constitutes a rich practical theology from below (Marlow & Harris 2022; Oduyoye 2001:67–71). These practices are not passive; they are intentional, strategic, and relational, reflecting complex socio-ecological knowledge that sustains community life while asserting female agency.

In the fisherwomen's songs, prayers and collective labour, theology becomes incarnate: a living testament to divine presence amid struggle. Their work embodies *imitatio Dei*, enacting nurturing, relational, and liberative dimensions of God, while simultaneously challenging hierarchical and patriarchal assumptions that traditionally exclude women from theological visibility (Claassens & Juliana 2024; Fiorenza 1983:123–128). These practices demonstrate that theology is not confined to texts or sacred spaces but emerges dynamically through embodied, communal action. By foregrounding these ordinary yet theologically potent

practices, the study shows that feminist theology can arise from the rhythms of daily life, offering insights into ecological stewardship, social solidarity and ethical resilience.

Moreover, by affirming fisherwomen as agents of faith, the study resists both ecclesial and cultural marginalisation that often silences their voices. Their lived experience exemplifies a *discipleship of equals*, where authority, knowledge and spiritual insight are distributed communally rather than imposed hierarchically. The waves, labour and ritualised songs of these women become a locus where the sacred intersects with survival, demonstrating that divine presence can be encountered within ordinary, embodied practices. This social reading thus not only validates the dignity and agency of Moluccan fisherwomen but also provides a methodological and ethical model for feminist, postcolonial, and eco-theological scholarship, highlighting the transformative potential of theology emerging from marginalised, embodied knowledge (Marlow 2021).

## Future directions: Reading across the waters

This study opens avenues for further intertextual and intercultural engagement with biblical 'water texts', treating water not merely as a motif but as a theological space of divine encounter, human transformation and ecological agency. Future research may pursue comparative readings of narratives such as Joshua's crossing of the Jordan, Jonah's descent into the deep, and the water imagery of the Psalms, examining how these texts disclose vulnerability, liberation, covenant and ethical formation. When read alongside fisherwomen's practices, such narratives illuminate water as both boundary and site of resistance, communal memory and relational ethics.

Building on this trajectory, comparative studies could engage indigenous oceanic theologies, Pacific women's spiritualities and other non-Western cosmologies that understand water as relational and sacred, enriching global discourse on ecological and gender justice in Christian theology (Pearson 2021:1–9). Within the Indonesian context, emerging blue and maritime theologies further support this approach by challenging anthropocentric interpretations of creation and reimagining the sea as an active participant within God's community of creation. Maggang's (2019) proposal of a 'blue Christianity', which critiques 'blue anthropocentrism', offers an eco-theological vision that affirms the sea's intrinsic value and theological agency.

Theologically, future research may explore the ethical implications of reading water as a medium where divine solidarity meets human struggle, including how churches might integrate coastal and indigenous water practices into pastoral care, ecological stewardship and liturgical imagination. Grounded in feminist, ecological, and intercontextual engagement, such research models a theology that is responsive, contextual, and transformative, attentive to women's embodied labour as a locus of divine presence and liberation.

## Conclusion

This study has developed a liberative feminist theology of the sea that challenges patriarchal readings of both maritime spaces and biblical texts. An ecofeminist, intercontextual reading of Exodus 2 and 15 reveals the sea as a living locus of God's creative and redemptive presence, marked by relational vitality rather than domination. Water thus emerges as a life-giving medium that sustains liberation, interdependence and ecological relationality.

Socially, the study affirms the dignity and agency of Moluccan fisherwomen, whose labour, ritual and communal practices constitute a theology from below. Their embodied praxis enacts *imitatio Dei*, revealing divine care through ordinary acts of survival and faith, while challenging ecclesial and cultural marginalisation.

By placing biblical narratives in dialogue with women's lived maritime praxis, this research opens new avenues for engaging biblical water texts and indigenous oceanic spiritualities within ecological and gender-justice frameworks. It demonstrates that liberation and encounter with God are inseparable from water, women's labour and the ongoing relationship between creation and the Creator.

## Limitations of the study

This study focuses on fisherwomen from four coastal villages in the Moluccas and on Exodus 2 and 15, limiting broader generalisation and textual scope. Its intercontextual feminist hermeneutic shapes the interpretation of texts and data. Future research may expand contexts, gender perspectives, and biblical water texts to deepen feminist sea theology.

## Acknowledgements

The author acknowledges the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, and the Head of the Research Institute of Indonesia Christian University in the Moluccas for their support in the previous research contributing to this study.

## Competing interests

The author declares that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

## CRedit authorship contribution

Margaretha M.A. Apituley: Conceptualisation, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. The author confirms that this work is entirely their own, has reviewed the article, approved the final version for submission and publication, and takes full responsibility for the integrity of its findings.

## Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

## Data availability

The author declares that all data that support this research article and findings are available in the article and its references.

## Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency or that of the publisher. The author is responsible for this article's results, findings and content.

## References

- Apituley, M.M.A., Tuasela, J.A., Iwamony, R. & Saiya, R.R., 2025, 'Feminist economic theology and gender justice: The case of fisherwomen in Moluccas', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 81(1), a10781. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v81i1.10781>
- Canete, J.J.O., Daton, E.M.G. & Ching, G.S., 2025, 'Reimagining ecofeminism: Religious hermeneutics and ecotheology as conceptual tools for intergenerational climate ethics', *Religions* 16(4), 501. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16040501>
- Claassens, L. & Juliana, M., 2024, 'Feminist Biblical interpretation', in B.N. Wolfe et al. (eds.), *St Andrews encyclopaedia of theology*, University of St Andrews, viewed 19 December 2025, from <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/FeministBiblicalInterpretation>.
- Dube, M.W., 2000, *Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible*, pp. 27–41, 98–105, Chalice Press, St. Louis, MO.
- Dube, M.W., 2017, *Postcolonial feminist Biblical interpretation*, Zondervan/T&T Clark, New York, NY.
- Exum, J.C., 1995, *Plotted, shot, and painted: Narrative strategies in the Bible*, pp. 54–60, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield.
- Field, S., 2010, 'Women, water, and ritual: Gendered practices in ancient near Eastern societies', *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 69(2), 123–145.
- Fiorenza, E.S., 1983, *In memory of her: A feminist theological reconstruction of Christian origins*, pp. 45–55, 50–55, 57–60, 67–72, 123–128, Crossroad, New York, NY.
- Fretheim, T.E., 1991, *Exodus*, pp. 41–44, 60–63, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY.
- Heryanto, L., 2020, *Gender and coastal livelihoods in Eastern Indonesia*, pp. 45–48, University of Indonesia Press, Jakarta.
- Johnson, E.A., 2014, *Ask the beasts: Darwin and the God of Love*, Bloomsbury, London.
- Katoppo, M., 1980, *Menuju teologi feminis Indonesia (Towards an Indonesian Feminist Theology)*, pp. 12–28, BPK Gunung Mulia, Jakarta.
- Kim, E.J., 2023, 'Water, embodiment, and ecofeminist theology: Reclaiming life-giving meanings', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 39(2), 55–71.
- Kwok, P.-L., 2005, *Postcolonial imagination and feminist theology*, pp. 34–56, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY.
- Maggang, E., 2019, 'Menampakkan corak biru Kekristenan Indonesia: Laut sebagai komunitas ciptaan', *Indonesian Journal of Theology* 7(2), 179–185. <https://doi.org/10.46567/ijt.v7i2.149>
- Marlow, H. & Harris, M. (eds.), 2022, *The Oxford handbook of the Bible and ecology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Marlow, S., 2021, *Feminist ecological hermeneutics: Reclaiming space, water, and agency*, Routledge, London.
- McFague, S., 1987, *Models of God: Theology for an ecological, nuclear age*, pp. 112–115, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA.
- McFague, S., 1993, *The body of God: An ecological theology*, pp. 67–82, Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN.
- Meyers, C., 1988, *Discovering eve: Ancient Israelite women in context*, Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Meyers, C., 1998, 'Women and ritual in ancient Israel', in B. Green & M. Brettler (eds.), *The Bible and women: Essays in honor of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza*, pp. 112–130, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield.
- Oduyoye, M.A., 2001, *Introducing African women's theology*, pp. 67–71, Pilgrim Press, Cleveland, OH.
- Pearson, C., 2021, 'Oceanic theologies and the climate crisis', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77(4), 1–9.
- Portier-Young, A.E., 2024, 'Miriam's dance as embodied Prophecy (Exodus 15:20–21)', *Journal of Biblical Literature* 143(2), 207–227. <https://doi.org/10.15699/jbl.1432.2024.2>
- Ruether, R.R., 1992, *Gaia and God: An ecofeminist theology of earth healing*, pp. 88–104, 101–104, 102, Harper, San Francisco, CA.

Samosir, A. & Kakunsi, P., 2025, 'Fisherwomen and sacred waters: Embodied theology in coastal communities', *Indo Theology Journal* 12(1), 45–68.

Štante, N., 2021, 'Ecofeminist theology and the interconnection of women and nature', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 77(4), a6407. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i4.6407>

Trible, P., 1984, *Texts of terror: Literary-feminist readings of Biblical narratives*, pp. 11–23, 15–22, 55–60, 60, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PA.

Tromp, J., 2019, *Sacred and profane: Biblical constructions of gender and space*, pp. 102–110, Brill, Leiden.

Watterson, B., 2003, *Women in ancient Egypt*, pp. 45–51, Thames & Hudson, London.