

**A Psalm of Lament and Obstreperous Hope
(Updated after the Project Violet Symposium)**

In the company of Baptists, we sat down and wept
When we remembered our fore-mothers in faith:
How can we celebrate women in ministry
And not recall their names?

If we forget you, Pioneers in England,
Edith Gates, Violet Hedger, Maria Loving Taylor,
May our voices be silenced too.

If we do not learn your names, our hidden Scottish sisters,
Jane Henderson, Mary Flora McArthur, Marjorie Taylor, Beth Dunlop,
And if we fail to tell your stories,
May our stories be forgotten too.

We confess with shame and regret
Our unconscious white, western, Anglo-centric biases
Asking that we might be forgiven,
Honour our black, brown and GMH sisters
And learn from their wisdom and grace.¹

Remember, oh God,
Those who blocked the way;
Who silenced our sisters
In the name of 'gospel truth'.

Remember, oh God,
The times we were ignored,
Excluded, ill-treated
Simply for being women.

Would that you would avenge us...
Call them to account,
Let them know the hurt we have known,
Even let them experience it for themselves...

And yet, your ways are not our ways,
And vengeance begets only vengeance.

Show us instead the ways of obstreperous hope.

Teach us to live as 'objects of wonder' bearing witness to your love.
Show us when to wear 'offensive tee-shirts' calling out what is wrong.

Help us to cling to the hope that heals,

¹ This stanza added after the Symposium, during which my own unconscious bias as a white, English woman, was brought into sharp focus.

The gospel that redeems all things,
The truth that, in Christ, all human distinctions disappear,
And the eschatological promise that all things will be made new.

And, until then, may we continue to widen the path and smooth the road
For the sisters who will follow us into Baptist ministry.
Amen.