

UC SANTA BARBARA

THE *Current*

February 20, 2001

Bill Schlotter

Talk To Tell How Early Christian Women Filled Important Church Roles Despite Subservient Status

A four-part series of programs exploring the roles of women in world religions will begin Tuesday, Feb. 27 when the UCSB Affiliates present "Prophets and Servants of the Word: Women in Early Christianity," a talk by Christine M. Thomas, a professor of religious studies at UCSB.

The presentation will run from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in the University Club, 1332 Santa Barbara St. in Santa Barbara. Cost is \$5 to Affiliates or Chancellor's Council members and \$8 to all others.

Despite early Christian philosophy which allowed women only a restricted role in the church, in fact, says Thomas, women carried out many important tasks.

They were missionary workers, benefactors, prophets and teachers, among other things, said Thomas, who will examine the differences between official church policy and reality.

Thomas studied the classics and ancient history at the University of Minnesota and the Eberhardt-Karls Universität in Germany and earned a Ph.D. in the study of religion at Harvard University.

She is an expert in early Christianity and since 1991 has spent part of each year in Turkey doing archaeological research seeking evidence of religion during the Roman Period.

Her writings include *Beyond Fiction: The Acts of Peter and the Ancient Novel* (Oxford: 2001) and *Phrygian Votive Steles* (Ankara: 1999).

Other programs in the women and religion series are "The Equivocal Attitude of Buddhism Toward Women, " Wednesday, March 14, Vesna Wallace, lecturer, UCSB Department of Religious Studies; "Women and the Qur'an, Tuesday, March 27,

Ruqayya Khan, visiting assistant professor, UCSB Department of Religious Studies; and "Mothers and Goddesses: Women in Search of the Feminine Divine," Monday, April 9, Nancy Ramsey Tosh, Ph.D., and Melissa Wilcox, faculty fellow, UCSB Department of Religious Studies.

For further information or to make reservations, contact UCSB Community Relations at 893-4388.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.