

Elaine Pagels, visionary scholar and author; distinguished historian of the early church; articulate explorer of your own faith, and explainer of ancient Sacred Texts and their modern implications; courageous challenger of time-bound methodologies of scholarship which have too long resulted in limited interpretations and limited understandings of the evolving nature of faith;

Through your skillful and meticulous application across the disciplines of Biblical studies, you have given clarion voice to long-lost and long-suppressed passages of Christianity's earliest development. By shining your scholarly light on the deepest roots of Scriptural tradition, you have coaxed into blossom whole new gardens of theological possibility.

In your book, Beyond Belief, you invite us to venture with you beyond the arbitrary, often historically invalid exclusion of early gnostic sources from the New Testament canon. In doing so, you take us beyond the illusion that Western faith must always and only be allied with hierarchical, guilt-centered, gender-biased custom and practice. In introducing a new generation of religionists to expanded gospels of gnostic insight, you have made possible a more inclusive, more diverse, more feminist access to religious expression and thus to faith itself.

In recognition of your singular contribution to the religious dialogue of our culture and times, the selection committee is pleased and honored to present the

2004 Frederick G. Melcher Book Award to
"Beyond Belief"

and we hereby add the name of **Elaine Pagels** to the distinguished list of Melcher Honorees.

Presented this 26th day of June, 2005
At the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association
In Ft. Worth, Texas