



waterwheel

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

Feminist Religious Communities

by Mary E. Hunt

The term "feminist religious communities" strikes some as an oxymoron. What would such entities look like? Who would join? Why bother? To others, namely, progressive Catholic nuns and their friends who have been discussing how to make their communities feminist since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's, "feminist religious communities" are how they want their lives to look. But regardless of the starting point, the term is an intriguing invitation to build ways to live out feminist values of inclusivity and mutuality with attention to deep-rooted beliefs without falling into the postmodern trap of individualism and privatization.

Parameters of the conversation are expanding; new people are asking questions. Good answers would be a hot commodity in many circles. But lacking those, I offer these reflections in the spirit of one such international community, the Grail, which has a saying: "Together we're a genius." Your ideas, perhaps sparked by mine, will help bring about some of what we envision.

The concept of religious community without feminism is not new. In Christian circles, it dates to the second century, with monasti-

cism rising in the next ten centuries and mendicant orders flourishing from the thirteenth century onward. But as kyriarchy, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's insightful term for interstructured forms of oppression, would have it, most such Roman Catholic women's communities today are caught in the demands of a church that imposes top-down structures, restricts choices and requires public conformity to its policy. Rome resists women's efforts to broaden the base to include a wide range of people as full participants. It rejects many associate, co-membership and other programs aimed at moving groups from a one-size-fits-all to a feminist mode that leaves room for options.

Lots of feminist women have, understandably, left such communities, often at great personal price and pain. But many of them and their sisters who remain have not given up the possibility of developing "feminist religious communities" as new outgrowths of established groups. Nor should they: their efforts recycle into this larger conversation in the ecology of change.

The concept of feminist community minus religion is not new either. The second wave

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...an intriguing invitation to build ways to live out feminist values...



WATER, face to face: (l. to r.) Efu Nyaki, Maryknoll Sister from Tanzania; Audrey DuPuy, Grail member from Ohio, and Amy Blumenshine, Re-Imagining representative from Minnesota, connect at the third "Shared Garden" in Recife, Brazil, in June, 1998.

Editorial

The religious education of children is a perennial feminist concern. Cindy Lapp at WATER has creative ideas that she shares occasionally in these pages such as her lovely reflection on grief and death in this issue. But we all scratch our heads when we try to explain to our children that human beings beat a man, then tied him to the back of a truck and dragged him to his excruciating death. James Byrd, Jr., an African American man in Jasper, Texas was killed in this hideous way by

white supremacists. How do we explain this to our children? Where do we start? What do we say about people who trivialize this heinous crime?

The first inclination is to deny it, to keep children from such unspeakable atrocities. But television rules, so better we say something rather than have them hear such horror unfiltered by the values of love and justice. Better we explain that some people act in unimaginably cruel ways because of prejudice than let

them think for a moment this is ordinary. Better we help them to incorporate the reality of evil than pretend it does not exist.

Maybe the best way is simply to weep for the deep injustice of racism, and let them see us weeping, then work for change and invite them to participate, each according to her/his age and ability. Hopefully, the message will then sink in and their children will never know such cruelty. Hopefully.



ISSN 0898-6606

Vol. 12 • No. 1 • Spring 1999

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Graphic Artists: Acknowledged when known, and always appreciated.

WATER is a feminist educational center, a network of justice-seeking people that began in 1983 in response to the need for serious theological, ethical and liturgical development for and by women. We work locally, nationally and internationally doing programs, projects, publications, workshops, retreats, spiritual direction, counseling and liturgical planning which have helped thousands of people to be part of an inclusive church and society.

WATERwheel is published quarterly by the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual. Annual subscription, \$35. Additional copies of this issue can be ordered for \$5 each. Complimentary copies are available on request for conferences, seminars, classes or discussion groups. Send inquiries and comments to:

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...Communities

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of the women's movement includes stories of many cooperatives, communes and collectives that have come and gone, as well as those that have endured. Incredible production emerges from such groups, from music to literature, publishing to land trusts. Less formal gatherings like writers' groups and worship circles, mothers' and survivors' groups, fulfill an important communal need. Without their communities, many feminists might long ago have given up the struggles for childcare, violence-free homes, equal access to opportunities. With their communities, feminists still struggle but the process is infinitely more doable and more enjoyable!

Some feminist communities suffer from the very values they wish to promote. Leaderless structures with no accountability eventually falter. Or, where personal relationships are the only basis of community, when relationships break up the community falls apart. In other cases, where financial commitments are unclear or unfair, money eventually talks and people eventually walk as disagreements over how to spend group resources take hold. Nonetheless, hats off to feminists who try to counter western capitalism's tendency to atomize each of us, or at best allow us to couple and maybe have our 2.2 children. There is much to learn from these women as we try new models.

Why community at all? Not everyone wants the interconnections and responsibilities a community entails, but many people find the two by two model constricting in the best of relationships. We want more than just one anchor in the storm, more than even an extended family. At a time when many people cannot even call their closest neighbors by name, communities help to concretize the globalized world into real people, face-to-face groups with whom one can muddle along together. It takes time to develop such links, especially over barriers of class, race, gender, ethnicity and sexuality that stratify and divide. Maybe it cannot be done, but feminist religious communities are one good way to try.

Why? Feminist religious communities have at least three strong components that make them promising. First, people in them are

*Incredible production emerges
from such groups...*

self-consciously critical of kyriarchal socio-economic and theo-political overlays that dictate common life for the new millennium. One need not apologize for prioritizing women's well being and the safety of children as part of a multi-dimensional effort to make change. One need not ask permission to explore the implications of an issue for women. One can expect equality to be the dominant mode. Rather, members bond precisely to assure that these values hold sway both within the group and, because of the group's common work, beyond it.

Second, people in feminist religious communities are connected to the "renewable moral energy" of one or several faith traditions that have grounded previous generations in their efforts to live in right relation. It is helpful to realize that we are not the first generation to seek companions with whom to share faith presuppositions, ask hard questions and live the ambiguities with integrity. Whether in new religious movements or renewed versions of historical traditions, feminists can find helpful resources in religions once they have done the hard work of critically deconstructing them. In a world that would prefer to blur all normative lines, we make faith claims about justice and mutuality. In an economy that says "get all you can," we turn to religious concepts of jubilee and the dignity of human work. Far from being a throwback to unenlightened times, religious insights take on renewed meaning and offer strong challenges that only connected colleagues can sustain against the tide as we reconstruct the world.

Third, feminist religious communities offer more than simply a sense of belonging, though that is no small matter. They offer a network of accountability to all persons and to all of nature. It is in such communities that people take note of one another, rejoice when a new member is born or decides to say "we" along with us. In such communities our absences are noted, our illnesses prayed for and our deaths marked. It does not get more basic than this. Nor does it get much better.

Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., feminist liberation theologian and ethicist, co-directs WATER.

Picking Chanterelles and Sharing at the Table of Wisdom

by Ninna Edgardh Beckman, Uppsala, Sweden

If you love picking mushrooms, a Swedish woods in September is a dream come true, with spots of bright yellow chanterelles again and again surprising you in the middle of square miles of dark green pine trees. To a feminist theologian working with the transformation of liturgy and church, WATER's library on a cold winter day is something of the same delight.

To me the dream came true in January, when I spent two weeks going through every shelf in the WATER office looking for useful volumes for my research on feminist liturgy and ecclesiology.

Sweden is known as a country of gender equality. At the fourth UN Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995, Sweden was rewarded for extraordinary achievement with regard to gender equality. The situation in Sweden may be better than in many other countries. Nevertheless, women here are not equal to men. Women still earn much less money than men. The best qualification for a good position in Swedish working-life still no doubt is to be a man. Hardly any top business managers or university professors are women. Even worse, every 20 minutes a woman in Sweden is beaten by a man; every tenth day a woman is killed by a man she knows well.

The tension between a formal dedication to gender equality and a reality where women are still in many ways subordinate to men is of course as present in the Swedish church as in the society at large. After 40 years of ordination of women to priesthood, the liturgy of the Lutheran Church of Sweden still pictures God as male, active, all-mighty and good, and the congregation as female, sinful, dependent on the gracious male God's undeserved forgiveness.

The focus of my doctoral study is on

women's efforts to renew the form and language of worship in Sweden in order for the liturgy to be liberating for women. "The law of prayer is the law of belief" is an old Christian axiom. The liturgy of the church is a mirror and a manifestation of the reality of Christian faith. But this is true also with regard to beliefs on gender. A church where women are subordinate to men will model this in its worship. Today, however, a new church, with a new belief with regard to gender, is emerging wherever women say "We are the church, and this is how we worship." As feminist theologians we have an important task to reflect on and develop a theoretical understanding of this process, with all its dangers and possible pitfalls.

In my doctoral work I analyze signs of a developing feminist liturgical movement among Christian women in Sweden during the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. Thanks to my explorations in the WATER library I now have a better knowledge of the women's liturgical movement in the U.S., the women-church movement and also the intersection between feminist theory and feminist theology, knowledge I will use in my analysis of the Swedish material.

My days as a Visiting Scholar at WATER also resulted in getting to know several good women with whom I will continue to share insights and doubts, laughter and tears, food for our bodies and food for our souls. I realize that we are all sharing at the table of Sophia, the Wisdom of God, who today puts up her tent in so many women-church groups all over the world, wishing to transform us and our churches and societies into her likeness.

Drink From This Fountain

by Sandra Duarte de Souza,
Sao Paulo, Brazil

When I first arrived at WATER I had a feeling that I am sure many other women before me have had: I found the fountain I was looking for!

WATER is the treasure a feminist doctoral student wants to find. In its stacks, wisdom; in its desks, creativity. The air we breathe is full of hope; day to day life is real feminist practice.

As a feminist source like none I had ever found before, WATER is a reference place for anyone who is dealing with women's issues in theology, ethics, sociology, psychology, anthropology, liturgy and many other areas. But the books are just a sample of the richness one can find there.

Share is a very meaningful word and practice at WATER. There the desks have no name. They belong to any woman who wants to sit at them and to create works from her own and other women's experiences.

I really hope other women can drink from this fountain. It has powerful WATER.

On Board

WATER is pleased to announce the formation of an Advisory Board to add good ideas, strong support and extra outreach to our efforts. Members include: Maria Pilar Aquino, Ph.D., Catholic feminist theologian, University of San Diego; Katie G. Cannon, Ph.D., womanist theologian, Temple University; The Rev. Darlene Garner, Elder, Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches; Ivone Gebara, Ph.D., Catholic feminist theologian, Recife, Brazil; Judith Plaskow, Ph.D., Jewish feminist theologian, Manhattan College; Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Ph.D., Catholic biblical scholar, Harvard Divinity School, who chairs the Board. Their collaboration and expertise are a welcome addition to WATER.





March 22, World Water Day, calls attention to a precious resource. All nations require a safe, plentiful supply. Water, from which all life emerges, has innate properties to sustain that life, quench thirst, cleanse, purify, restore clarity.

This liturgy invites participants to connect with water, listen to the sounds of water, pray for a healing of the waters, and bless their bodies with water. It is a restorative ceremony.

Preparation

Gather in a circle outside near water, if possible: a lake, the ocean, a river, a waterfall, a swimming pool or a fountain. Place in the center a bowl or a child's wading pool with some water in it, and a pitcher of water.

Call to Gather

(One plays a musical instrument such as a rainstick and says:)

Come to the water. (She gestures for all to gather in a circle around the water.) There is a time for everything and today, March 22, World Water Day, we give thanks for the precious resource of water, the life-giving element of nature from which all life emerges. Water refreshes, soothes and anoints the parched body and dry earth.

This bowl (pool) of water (she stands and touches it or holds it, showing it to the gathered) signifies the well or spring, the traditional meeting place of women and the home of spirits, goddesses and healing energies. Sources of water are sacred.

Today we call attention to the global water crisis. As we pour water (she picks up a pitcher and pours water into the basin or pool), we know from the United Nations that during the '90's 1.23 billion people did not have adequate access to clean drinking water; 2.1 billion people did not have access to adequate sanitation. Those numbers are increasing, and women suffer because women worldwide are the family caretakers. Many women in the Two-Thirds World carry heavy loads of water

long distances, three to six hours per day, from remote water sources. Then, spend hours purifying it. And when children or family members become sick from waterborne diseases, women spend another portion of their lives caring for the ill and dying. All creation needs clean, safe water.

We gather to give thanks for water and pray for "Water to Make All Things New."

Naming the Circle

Let us form our circle by speaking our names, passing the bowl of water (or touching the pool), and sharing how we are connected to water in our lives. If you need healing, dip your fingers in the water and sprinkle your face, wrists or head with a few drops. (Naming and sharing)

Listening to Water

Water, life giving, life threatening, life blessing. Listen to sounds of water. (All listen to natural water sounds: one plays the rainstick; another pours water from a pitcher into the water bowl or pool.)

Song: "Living Water" by Colleen Fulmer, from *Her Wings Unfurled*, c. 1984.

Come, you hungry, come, you thirsty;
Drink living water, come to the well.
Come, you weary, bring your burdens;
Drink living water, come to the well.

Vengan, hambrientos, vengan sedientos;
Tomen agua viva, vengan a mi.
Vengan, cansados, vengan agobiados;
Tomen agua viva, vengan a mi.

Come, you wounded, bring your suffering;
Drink living water, come to the well.
Vengan, los pobres, vengan los humildes;
Tomen agua viva, vengan a mi.
(Add verses that reflect the group.)

Healing the Waters

Some waters need healing. Call to mind the places on this earth where the waters are polluted, troubled or in drought.

(Pause) Let us name them and say,
"May all waters be healed."

In the Two-Thirds World, hauling and purifying water is one of women's main daily works.

Response: May all waters be healed.
Many people in large cities worldwide do not drink water flowing from the faucets because the water is polluted.

Response: May all waters be healed.
In Bangladesh there is a new disaster: wells pump poison and people die from arsenic.

Response: May all waters be healed.
The Bagmati River in Kathmandu is characteristically dirty brown and full of particles that carry waterborne diseases.

Water :
All Thi
by Dia

Response: May all waters be healed.
Many U.S. urban cities are working to clean up their rivers: Atlanta's Chattahoochee, Cincinnati's Mill Creek, Denver's South Platte, Washington, DC's Anacostia.

Response: May all waters be healed.
Crossing the Andes, bus drivers routinely throw styrofoam trash into the rivers.

Response: May all waters be healed.
Name other problems now and we will respond. (Naming)

Response: May all waters be healed.

Prayer

Let us pray:
Spirit of Renewal, breathe into all waters. Waters, be made clean that you may fully praise our Creator and share your life-giving powers with all creation.



Source of Life, Living Water, Restoring
Holy One, heal all waters.
Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

Reading: "Water" by Paula Gunn Allen,
from *The Sacred Hoop*, c. 1986.

Water.
Lakes and rivers.
Oceans and streams.
Springs, pools and gullies.
Arroyos, creeks, watersheds.
Pacific. Atlantic. Mediterranean.
Indian. Caribbean. China Sea.
(Lying. Dreaming on shallow shores.)
Arctic. Antarctic. Baltic.
Mississippi. Amazon. Columbia. Nile.

to Make
ngs New
r L. Neu

Thames. Sacramento. Snake. (Undulant
woman river.)
Seine. Rio Grande. Willamette. McKen-
zie. Ohio.
Hudson. Po. Rhine. Rhone.
Rain. After a lifetime of drought.
That finally cleanses the air.
The soot from our eyes.
The dingy windows of our western home.
The rooftops and branches.
The wings of birds.
The new light on a slant. Pouring.
Making everything new.

Chant: "The River Is Flowing" by Diana
Hildebrand-Hull, in *Songs of Earthlings*,
edited by Julie Forest Middleton, c. 1998.

The river is flowing,
flowing and growing,

The river she is flowing,
down to the sea.
Mother, carry me,
your child I will always be,
Mother, carry me, down to the sea.

Litany of Water

Wisdom-Sophia, the Source of Life, con-
nects with water to bless creation. Let us re-
member the presence of the Holy One
through water and respond: "Blessed are
you, Source of Life."

Your spirit moves over waters at creation.
Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
You form life in the waters of the womb.
Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
You renew the earth with winter snows and
spring rains.

Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
You share life-giving water with creation.
Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
You dance your people through water to
promised lands.

Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
You weep with us over the violence creation
experiences from abusers.
Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
You water our gardens to bring forth food.
Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.
What else do we want to bless? Tell us and we
will respond. (*Sharing*)

Response: Blessed are you, Source of Life.

Blessing the Water

(*One gestures for all to come to the well.*)
Let us each pour water from a pitcher into the
bowl (pool). (*Pouring*) We will bless this
water together. Extend your hands and pray
each line after me.

Blessed are you, Source of Life, Creator of
the Universe, Holy Water, (*Echo*)

For you give all creation water to make all
things new. (*Echo*)

Cleanse all waters. Multiply our water
sources. Bless the earth with water. (*Echo*)

Bless us with life-giving water. Refresh the
thirsty with safe water. Restore all waters.
(*Echo*)

Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So. (*Echo*)

Blessing Ourselves

Let us bless ourselves with water. Touch the
water. (*Pause*) Think of a part of the body
you would like to bless. (*Pause*) Let us bless
our bodies. (*The leader begins and ends the
blessing.*)

Touch your mouth and say after me:
Bless my mouth that I may speak truthfully.
(*Everyone echos what has been said. Repeat
this pattern for other body parts such as "Bless
my ears that I may hear water."*)

Let us face outward with our hands
extended to the world, saying: Bless the earth
with water. (*Echo*)

Let us bless one another, using a water
gesture like falling rain. (*Blessing*)

Song: "Come, Drink Deep" by Carolyn Mc-
Dade, from *Rain Upon Dry Land*, c. 1983.

Come drink deep of living waters,
Without cup bend close to the ground.
Wade with bare feet into troubled waters
Where love of life abounds.

I turn my head to sky rains falling,
Wash the wounds of numbness from my
soul,
Turn my heart in tides of fierce renewal
Where love and rage run whole.

Come rains of heaven on the dry seed,
Rains of love on every tortured land.
Roots complacent awaken in compassion
So hope springs in our hands.
Come drink deep.

Sending Forth

May Wisdom-Sophia, the Source of Life,
Heal and renew all water supplies.
May Wisdom-Sophia, the Source of Healing,
Send gentle rain upon dry lands.
May Wisdom-Sophia, the Source of Rest,
Return all life peacefully to the sea.
Our circle is now open.

Diann L. Neu, MDiv, MSW, co-founder and
co-director of WATER, is a feminist liturgist

In Memory of Her

From Mary Hunt and Diann Neu, Silver Spring, MD:

In grateful memory of Virginia Williams, SL, trusted leader in the women-church movement. Her insistence on reconciliation, her willingness to get the job done and her Girl Scout spirit of fun made Ginny an outstanding friend and colleague.

From Carol Murdock Scinto, Rockville, MD:

In memory of Bette Lou Maybee, dear friend of 55 years, confidante, companion, co-adventurer, whose sudden cruel illness and death stunned us. Your vivid spirit lives on in the hearts of those who knew you.

In memory of Ross McClain Murdock, little brother with a big, feminist heart, whose death has broken the circle of the Murdock Magnificent Seven. Volunteer firefighter, gifted tutor, contentious, tempestuous, generous, staunch and true, rest easy now on the slopes of your beloved Mount Rainier.

From Carmela Gentilesca and Martha DiDomenico, Oceanside, NY:

In loving tribute to Ross McClain Murdock. May he rest in peace.

Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion

Feminist research in religion, encouraging discussion among persons of differing feminist perspectives.

Subscription information:
JFSR Subscriptions • P.O. Box 15399
Atlanta, GA 30333-0399 USA
<http://scholar.cc.emory.edu/scripts/SP/ms/publication/JFSR.html>

Grieving a Grandmother

by Cynthia A. Lapp

There is no easy way to explain death and grief to a child. My mother recently died after battling cancer for two years. I have a hard time understanding this death myself and I have had the seminary class on dying and bereavement. How do I explain it to my three-year-old daughter? "Where was Nana when she died? Where did you put her?" We put her in the ground, remember? "But why weren't there any holes in the box so we could say good-bye?" Grief is a many splendored thing. I wouldn't choose it for anything, and yet I am learning about myself, about my daughter, about God in ways I would not have imagined.

Cecilia tries to understand what death means. "If Nana is in the ground then how can she be with God in the sky?" The part of Nana that was sick and tired and hurt is in the ground. The part of her that loves us and laughed and played "and cooked dinner" is with God. Cecilia still talks to Nana, in fact she prays to Nana. She scoffs at the idea of praying to God. She knows Nana is the one to understand her worries. "Nana, I am scared I will forget what you look like. But if I do I will ask

my mom and if she can't remember she will ask my dad. He will know so he will tell her then she will tell me then it will be okay."

Cecilia helps me find tears when I don't know how to cry. As she wondered again about death over breakfast one morning I asked her if she was sad about Nana. She stuck out her lower lip and said, "Yes, let's cry a little."

I learn from her as she explores what it means to relate to one who has died. One day before eating her lunch she declared she was going to bless Nana. She raised her hand in a priestly fashion and sang: *May the long time sun shine on you. All love surround you. May the pure light within you guide you on your way home.* And then the girl-priest ate her peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

My own grief and understanding of death is more philosophical but perhaps less practical. I am thankful every day for this child who guides and blesses me as I struggle to understand an untimely death.

Cynthia Lapp, MTS, is staff at WATER, music director at her church and mother of two.

Feminist Scholars and Activists in Religion January 6-9, 2000, Daytona Beach, Florida

WATER's Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network announces a gathering of "Study, Sun and Solidarity," January 6-9, 2000, in Daytona Beach, FL, at El Caribe Conference Center. This is a unique opportunity to spend time together in a relaxed and lovely setting, to engage in substantive conversation and collaborate across differences. It is intended for theologians, ministry professionals and social change agents who want to work together to bring feminist liberation theology to bear on contemporary issues.

Travel is easy - into Daytona or Orlando Airports, then cab or van to the El Caribe Hotel on Daytona Beach, a very pleasant oceanfront setting. The meeting begins Thursday evening, January 6, concludes by noon on Sunday, January 9. The group will convene in the morning and late afternoon, with time in between for informal conversation and enjoyment. A \$50 pre-registration fee holds your place. Space is limited, so best to pre-register now, or at least before July 15, so WATER can plan accordingly. Conference cost will include most meals; hotel arrangements can be made directly with El Caribe, identifying yourself as part of the FLTN group. Guests are welcome to come early for a little more r+r. Contact Mary Hunt at WATER for more information.

Registration Application

Please pre-register me for the FLTN conference January 6-9, 2000, in Daytona, FL.

Name _____ Profession _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip/Country _____
Phone _____ FAX _____ E-mail _____

Enclose \$50 pre-registration and send to WATER, 8035 13th Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Ashe, Kaye. **THE FEMINIZATION OF THE CHURCH?** Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1997 (172 pages, \$14.95).

A useful analysis of what's happening for women in Roman Catholic circles. A prelude to the "feministization" perhaps. One wonders why the publisher needed to append responses, as if one woman's strong voice was too much.



Barb Wire Collective. **NOT ALL VIOLINS: SPIRITUAL RESOURCES BY WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES AND CHRONIC ILLNESSES.** Etobicoke, Ontario: United Church Publishing House, 1997 (216 pages, \$14.95).

A breath of very fresh air comes with this volume. Nine Canadian women of faith reflect on their varying physical conditions. A call to realism and compassion. A "must" read in the emerging literature on theology and disabilities.

Bounds, Elizabeth M. **COMING TOGETHER/COMING APART: RELIGION, COMMUNITY AND MODERNITY.** New York: Routledge, 1997 (184 pages, \$22.99).

A careful, suggestive study of the context in which we try to be religious and live together in an increasingly unjust setting.

Childers, Jana L. and Lucy A. Rose, eds. **THE ABINGDON WOMEN'S PREACHING ANNUAL, SERIES 1-YEAR A.** Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1998 (184 pages, \$16.95).

Creative, insightful treatments of themes and texts by such trustworthy preachers as Bear Scott Ride, Joanna Dewy and Edwina Hunter.

Esser, Annette, Anne Hunt Overzee and Susan Roll, eds. **RE-VISIONING OUR SOURCES: WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY IN EU-**

ROPEAN PERSPECTIVES. Ga Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1997 (213 pages, \$15).

Conferences of the European Society of Women in Theological Research are well documented in this form. Topics range from scripture to mystics, from praxis to poetry.

Keely, Barbara Anne. **FAITH OF OUR FOREMOTHERS: WOMEN CHANGING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.** Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997 (192 pages, \$15).

Lovely and insightful biographies of these foremothers - including Maria Harris, Nelle Morton, Letty Russell, Olivia Pearl Stokes - give the field of religious education its due in the feministization of Christian churches.

Kim, Jung Ha. **BRIDGE-MAKERS AND CROSS-BEARERS: KOREAN-AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE CHURCH.** Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997, AAR Series No. 92, (168 pages, \$19.95).

Hard data, hard questions and helpful insights give readers an overview of the situation and strategies of Korean-American Christian women who have suffered but not been defeated.

King, Karen L., ed. **WOMEN AND GODDESS TRADITIONS IN ANTIQUITY AND TODAY.** Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997 (450 pages, \$45).

A marvelous scholarly collection on a wide-ranging scope of interests in various Goddesses. Don't miss Emily Culpepper's creative suggestions on "middle age" and its goddesses.

Kirk, Pamela. **SOR JUANA INES DE LA CRUZ: RELIGION, ART AND FEMINISM.** New York: Con-

tinuum, 1998 (184 pages, \$34.50).

A good overview of the life of a remarkable 17th century Mexican nun whose kinship with contemporary feminist theology is increasingly clear. It is good companion to Sor Juana's own **THE DIVINE NARCISSUS** as translated and annotated by Patricia A. Peters and Renee Domeier, Albuquerque, NM, University of New Mexico Press, 1998 (202 pages, \$19.95).

Nason-Clark, Nancy. **THE BATTERED WIFE: HOW CHRISTIANS CONFRONT FAMILY VIOLENCE.** Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997 (185 pages, \$20).

The reality of violence in Christian homes is not a pretty picture. This book brings it up close and personal, a good start toward eradicating it.

Shiva, Vandana. **BIOPIRACY: THE PLUNDER OF NATURE AND KNOWLEDGE.** Boston: South End Press, 1997 (148 pages, \$13).

Clear, concise, compelling analysis of how the earth is being pillaged in the name of profit.

Stuart, Elizabeth and Adrian Thatcher, eds. **CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SEXUALITY AND GENDER.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/Gracewing, 1996 (478 pages, \$34).

A solid collection of some of the most persuasive writings about sexuality that are changing Christian theology and ethics.

For Children

Kent, Deborah. **DOROTHY DAY: FRIEND TO THE FORGOTTEN.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996 (157 pages, \$8).

A biography for young readers (ages 10-14) about a powerful woman. Black and white photos

from the archives bring it alive.

Kroll, Virginia, with illustrations by Nancy L. Clouse. **PINK PAPER SWANS.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994 (30 pages, \$15).

A delightful story of a little girl and an older woman who become friends making origami. Instructions on how to make paper cranes included!

Wilson, Lois Miriam. **WOMEN IN THE BIBLE: MIRIAM, MARY AND ME.** Kelowna, BC, Canada: Northstone Publishing Co., 1996 (256 pages, \$11.95) and **STORIES SELDOM TOLD: BIBLICAL STORIES RETOLD FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS** (192 PAGES, \$14.95)

A trusted church feminist takes on the Bible for adults and children alike. Good solid work written with a light pen.



Liturgy Resources

BRING THE FEAST: SONGS FROM THE RE-IMAGINING COMMUNITY. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1998 (144 pages, \$16.95).

Many songs made popular at Re-Imagining events are now available for general use. From "Bless Sophia" to "You Call Us," these tunes enliven worship and empower worshippers.

Linda Haydock, Kathy McFaul and women of **WEAVERS** (Women's Experience and Voice Expressed in Ritual and Story). **WE ARE SISTERS, PRAYER AND RITUAL FOR WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT.** Seattle, WA: Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center, 150 12th Ave. #3, Seattle, WA 98122, (\$15 book, \$8 tape of music).

Good music makes good worship. These creative people model how to put rituals together.

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual
8035 13th Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910-4803 USA

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Did You Know?

World Water Day, March 22



Celebrating 16 Years!

Donors to WATER receive WATERwheel free.

WATER Spring Programs: Focus on Community

Re-threading Community Among Maya Women in Guatemala

Tuesday March 30, 5-6:30pm. **Isabel Ana Laynez Caba, Anna Caba Mateo, Brinton Lykes.** Three women working on a community photography project will share images that tell their story and help them to envision an alternative future. **Co-sponsors:** Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, Guatemala Partners, National Coordinating Office on the Refugees and Displaced of Guatemala, Guatemala Human Rights.

Feminist Spirituality Group

Wednesdays, March 17, 24, 31, April 7, 14, 21, 5:30-7pm. Facilitator: **Diann Neu, MDiv., MSW, Licensed Psychotherapist.** Participating women will address themes on which the group chooses to focus. Possible subjects in-

clude feminist prayer, names of the Holy, community, dreams, relationships, healing. Group limited to 8 women who will commit to attend all six meetings.

Inclusive Music for Worship

Saturday, April 17, 10am-12n. **Cindy Lapp, MTS.** Looking for music that speaks to the masses but doesn't offend feminist sensibilities? This music reading session will feature songs for the Pentecost season.



Feminist Mothering-Saturday, May 8, 10am-12n. Cindy Lapp.

How does one integrate feminism, religion and child-rearing? How does mothering affect your experience of God? How do you learn from and with children about the divine, feminism and mothering? Give yourself a Mother's Day gift and join the conversation. Infants welcome.

Feminist Religious Communities: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Tuesday April 20, 5-6:30 pm. **Dorothy Vidulich, Srs. of St. Joseph of Peace; Diana Hayes, The Grail; Ruth McDonough Fitzpatrick, Loretto; Mary E. Hunt, WATER.** Many women try to live out feminist religious values in a communal context. To do so successfully, with integrity and satisfaction, is increasingly difficult, given patriarchal religions and a trend toward more individualized and privatized ways of being.

Seasonal Feminist Liturgies

Gather with women's prayer, liturgy and spirituality groups for DC area community-wide liturgies. Children and men welcome.

Pentecost: Come Sophia-Wisdom, Sunday, May 23, 5-7pm;

Summer Solstice: Honor the Sun, Sunday, June 20, 5-7pm.

WATER Community Services

Please call if we can help you or your community with lectures, workshops, psychotherapy, spiritual direction, resources, liturgies, Internship and Visiting Scholar opportunities.