



waterwheel

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

Faith-Based Inertia

By Mary E. Hunt

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said it for me: "I hate war." I love to go to his monument in Washington, DC, and read these and other inspirational words that take on more rather than less meaning over time. Good people disagree about the best tactics to deal with terrorism, global injustice and threats to the planet's well being. My approach is not uncritical pacifism, but more like the deeply analytic "no's" to more violence that drove feminist theological pioneers Anne McGrew Bennett and Nelle Morton to their principled stances.

Patriarchal religions play an enormous role in making war. Commentators reflexively jump to Islam, but I begin with Christianity. This war was foreshadowed in the U.S. by the yearlong struggle over so-called "faith-based initiatives." The basic move was for government to wean people away from the notion that it is responsible for the well-being of those who cannot take care of themselves, and gradually shift that burden to the religious

abide by certain restrictions and separate their proselytizing from the provision of services. No such legislation is necessary unless one wants to discriminate. This has led some to speculate that indeed faith-based legislation was meant as a way for fundamentalist religious groups to gain greater political ground, as well as more economic clout. It is a hard case to refute. Ironically, no additional moneys were offered, just another way to slice up a shrinking pie

The suspicions were only confirmed when the Rev. John Castellani, president of the drug treatment program Teen Challenge, testified in favor of the legislation before a House subcommittee. He boasted that some of his Jewish clients had become "completed Jews" in the process of their treatment. In his despicable lexicon, that means they had converted to Christianity. So much for interreligious respect.

Other religious conservatives started to jump ship for reasons of their own. Pat Robertson

Patriarchal religions play an enormous role in making war.

sector, especially the conservative Christian part of it. This arranged marriage of church and state appealed to the religious right.

Debate centered on whether religious groups could use federal moneys and still discriminate according to their religious beliefs. The proposed program would have permitted religious groups to engage in discriminatory hiring practices in the name of religion. A key case is that of a well-respected social worker from Kentucky who was fired for being a lesbian by a Baptist agency that receives most of its funding from state and federal monies.

Religious groups now can and do have access to federal and state dollars provided that they

and Jerry Falwell bailed when they realized they might have to watch Pagans, Wiccans and the Nation of Islam get federal money for social programs if they ran them well. Another irony: little reliable evidence could be found to prove that faith added much to the effectiveness of social service programs, but they can be good for business providing employment for believers.

African American clergy members were divided from one another on this question by Republican efforts to gain their support. Religious advisors to the administration's summit on the question included the Rev. Lou

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We appreciate the ongoing financial support of our friends, donors, and contributors. We wish you all Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year filled with peace.



(Middle) Sharifa Alkhateeb, President of the North American Council for Muslim Women, talks with Visiting Scholars, (l) Marli Wandermurem of Salvador de Bahia, Brasil, and (r) Sister Evelyn Vasquez of Guatemala, during WATER's Peace Program on Women and Islam.

Editorial

If any good has come from the hideous events of this fall it is the deepened reflections on issues of ultimate meaning and value. The upswing in religious participation after September 11 has not been sustained across the country. But people hug their loved ones a little tighter and ask hard questions they might have otherwise have ignored. Easy answers are few and far between. But a few clarifying power issues begin to emerge.

One is that religions, as many have argued with regard to Islam, are not monolithic. Most adherents of that faith do not share the interpretation of the Koran used by its religious right to justify violence. It is helpful to see that and acknowledge it as a dynamic of other religions as well. One can see the great variety of ways of being Jewish, Buddhist, Hindu, Pagan, Christian, among others, and realize that what is at stake is the power to interpret. Authority not orthodoxy is at play.

Another insight about power comes from the law. Deeply disturbing fallout of the current war is the presidential proposal to create military tribunals to deal with non-U.S. citizens suspected of aiding terrorists. What could be a more thorough defeat of democratic principles of justice, a more egregious way of ignoring the international dimension of our common life, a more telling way of proving correct those who critique U.S. ways in the world? WATER urges religious people of many stripes to join in a chorus against such a move and to work instead for international courts of justice to adjudicate the cases of those who perpetrate heinous acts.

Still another insight into power is how much we need one another to keep our peace-making efforts viable. We at WATER bid adieu to our dear colleague, Cindy Lapp, six years and several children later. She came looking for information one day, became an irreplaceable intern, and later joined our staff. Her solid Mennonite peace principles, her warm and intelligent ways, her pastoral skills and professional singing ability, all shared liberally with WATER, enriched us. Accepting war is simply not part of her tradition.

Our collective thank you to Cindy is coupled with our assurance that she will remain an active part of the Alliance as she moves into pastoral ministry. Let it be an occasion to thank all who give of themselves to make this organization one sign of resistance to war and one public commitment to seek better ways of handling conflict.

*Then came September 11,
the war in Afghanistan and the end
to any such discussion, at least for now.*

Faith-Based...

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Sheldon, who has been known to compare homosexuality to alcoholism. The thirty Catholics consulted on the matter were called "a cross section of Catholic leaders nationwide," when in fact they were mostly very conservative folks. Not surprisingly not invited were the women-church movement to which I belong and the Catholic reform group Call to Action. So much for diversity. The handwriting was pretty clear.

As luck would have it, the Bush Administration was left holding the bag on this legislation when their appointed director, John Dilulio, resigned for personal and health reasons. He was never replaced and the legislation languished. The current watered down proposal would allow those who do not itemize on their tax returns a modest deduction for charitable giving, and establish a still-nebulous compassion fund for religious charities, a far cry from the original.

Then came September 11, the war in Afghanistan and the end to any such discussion, at least for now. The domestic agenda has shifted from social services to anthrax and smallpox vaccines, from a faith-based to a "homeland" focus. I see them as synonyms. Some of the same dynamics hold sway in the power and priorities that are emerging during the war years for which the Bush push for faith-based initiatives can now be read as a dress rehearsal.

Religion continues to be a major theme, an all-purpose cloak for many other commitments, especially economic. While the President invokes his childish images of the Evil One in his morally embarrassing notions of good and evil, I detect a faith-based agenda now in full flight.

This was clear at the allegedly "interfaith" religious service held at the National Cathedral the week after September 11. The President issued what amounted to a call to war from the pulpit, followed, in case anyone missed the point, by the singing of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Despite the claim to be interreligious, I am told by reliable sources in Washington that one Christian leader, a Bush favorite, was given two parts in the service as

the price for an Imam appearing at all.

The Rev. Billy Graham's sermon was full of Christian-specific concepts and images as if he were preaching in his home church, not to a religiously diverse nation. So much for ecumenism when the chips are down. The only woman in the service was Episcopal Bishop Pro Tem of Washington, Jane Holmes Dixon. It is doubtful that even she would have been included had she not happened to be the ranking person at the Cathedral. Not to mention that National Public Radio referred to her as "James"...

For all their rhetoric, this seems like a right-wing Christian White House waging its Crusade. Heaven help us. This kind of religious expression denies the reality of our contemporary pluralism and reinforces the white, male, moneyed and militarized ruling class.

How many times must "God Bless America" before U.S. residents wake up to the fact that we live in an increasingly diverse country and world in which belief in God can not be taken for granted, much less belief in any one sort of God? When will people realize the extraordinarily privileged role certain forms of religion enjoy in public life to the exclusion of others? By that I mean the ones that have paid military chaplains, for example, versus those that do not, those who are allowed to provide counseling in public institutions and those who are barred. After all, the official policy of this country is religious neutrality, not a kind of rugged Texas Christianity around which all the other faiths of the world may constellate if they do so politely. Pass the etiquette book.

Hard issues are at stake here. I believe that it is the job of the government, not of religious groups, to provide for the well being of its citizens, beginning with its most vulnerable. Religious groups, by contrast, function primarily for the spiritual and moral well being of their people. Insofar as some religious groups have as part of their expression of faith certain forms of charity, what we have come to call social service, fine. But while it is devoutly to be encouraged, let us not confuse that with the role of government. This not so-subtle point was obscured in the faith-based debate. Perhaps it was left aside purposely and well-

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...Inertia

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intentioned religious people were encouraged to fight among ourselves while the government continued to back away from responsibility.

That is precisely where we are now that the war-based economy is channeled once again toward defense spending and away from social programs. Religious groups will once again be asked to pick up the slack. It is considerable and growing as unemployment rises especially in the service sector and welfare cuts take effect. Women and children bear the brunt once more.

Religious people, progressive as well as conservative, must see that our role, unlike that of the government, is to offer possibilities of meaning and value, community and critique to citizens, who, in turn and according to their lights, offer it to their government. As long as we allow the government to usurp this role from us and have us do its job, we are without portfolio and remain, as most have in the current conflict, silenced by those who profit from our reticence.

Of course it is more convenient to keep religious people busy providing meals, housing and medical care for those who are made poor by greedy, bellicose priorities. Then they will have no energy or resources to bring the insights of their faiths to bear in public debate against such injustice. I call this faith-based inertia. I worry about it as much as I did faith-based initiatives.

The religious voices that raised questions about the faith-based programs need to regroup on the matter of war, and bring the same critical discernment to bear. Religious groups, especially feminists, need to question and critique public policy not simply in the domestic sphere but in the international sphere as well. I suggest we begin by parsing a long-outdated "just war" theory and insist on creative alternatives to bombs. Otherwise, our inertia could be fatal this time.

These are complicated matters in treacherous times. But correcting basic confusions about our respective roles and encouraging people of diverse faiths to act, will I believe, hasten the day when we might point to a different kind of faith-based initiative and call it peace.

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

Farewell, WATER, And Thank You

By Cindy Lapp

For seven autumns WATER has been my home across town. Now it is time for me to move out on my own, take with me the feminist skills I have learned and apply them to church ministry.

My introduction to WATER came when I was a student at Wesley Theological Seminary. I was looking for books on the bible and women's life cycles, not the kind of information one generally finds in a seminary library. Mary and Diann directed me to a number of resources in the WATER library. What I found was invaluable.

WATER has indeed been a welcoming place for many and it has been my privilege to share the welcome that I was so warmly given with amazing women from around the world. As a home should be, WATER has been a safe place where I could bring my children to the office on a regular basis and work the flexible hours that all working mothers deserve.

As I prepare to leave this wonderful place, I look back and wonder how I will manage without these caring colleagues to help me through some of the struggles that seemed so daunting early on. While juggling children and career these 6 years, I also juggled working for a Mennonite church and working for an organization which makes it a point to critique patriarchal religion.

Over the years there have been more questions than answers. How will my church make room for women who have a strong critique of patriarchy, who want the church to be inclusive and who want women to have a voice all year long, not just on Mother's Day? How will an organization such as WATER continue to be a space for women who have sons and husbands they want to bring into the promised land of justice and equality?

How is the gap between the church and feminism bridged? Does WATER flow there? How do I bridge the divide over and through the rushing river of creativity that is WATER? I have found ways to bridge the gulf, if only by being the bridge myself, with commitments to a local community of faith and a local community



of faithful feminists. Yet being a bridge is not without its hazards. Some days it feels like my body and my theology might break as I stretch across the rift.

But I am not only a bridge. I also have a need to be baptized in the river that flows between for it is not as dangerous as some would have us believe. This river of creative imagining, of the merging of theology, ritual, body and culture is where we splash, play and receive refreshment for the work of building bridges and navigating difficult terrain on either side of the gulf.

To try and understand this internal and external battle is a luxury in which a white, middle class, middle aged woman with two part time jobs has time to engage. Still, I imagine for a fair number of us, this reality is one that we work hard to make sense of and to define.

As I leave WATER to birth a third child I wonder how I will continue to straddle these two worlds. Without the weekly influence of feminist theologians from around the globe, what will it look like for me to maintain myself as a feminist in the faith tradition? Will I become a flabby churchwoman? After three children I am entitled to a little extra girth but can I avoid the theological flab? From now on my involvement in this community of faithful feminists may look more like that of many of you: a virtual community on the internet, participation in local programs, enrichment through the WATERwheel and financial contributions to make sure that the struggle continues.

Leaving home is not easy, but I know that there will always be a place for me at WATER, just as there is for women from around the globe, whether their stay is for afternoon tea or an

extended study. Blessings and thanks to all of you that I have met through the mail, internet, phone and in person. Special thanks to Mary, Diann, "Grandma Carol" Scinto, the many Visiting Scholars, Interns and volunteers for seven autumns of learning, laughter and lively conversation at WATER.

Blessed are we when we make peace. Peacemakers are prophets who are central to every generation. After September 11, what kind of peacemakers do we need? Where are they? How will we know them? Now more than ever, we must call one another to be peacemakers.

This liturgy calls the gathered to be peacemakers. Use it where and when your community needs to call forth the peacemaking qualities in its members. January 1 is World Day for Peace.

Preparation

Gather three candles, pita bread, glasses of wine and juice. Place them on a table centered in the middle of a circle of chairs. Prepare participant sheets that include the music, the community affirmation and the prayer for peace.

Call to Gather

We gather tonight in a world at war. We come not to debate politics but to pray for peace, not to create military strategies but to open our hearts to the Spirit of Mercy and Justice and be part of the force that creates peace. We gather to call forth peacemakers. *(Light a candle)*

We gather in the spirit of those who have died—may they rest in peace. We gather in the spirit of those who are making decisions, hopeful that our prayers will warm their hearts and open their minds to a moral creativity that will bring peace without bombing and killing. We gather in the Divine Spirit who calls us to peace from generation to generation. We gather to call forth peacemakers. *(Light a candle)*

We gather because we must. We can't keep from praying for an end to violence and the beginning of a new day for our children's children and us. We gather linked in a special way to our sisters in Afghanistan, praying for their safety and hoping with them that this war will end faster than it started. We gather to call forth peacemakers. *(Light a candle)*

Naming the Circle

Let us create a circle of peacemakers here. When you hear the word "peacemakers," what comes to you mind? Speak your name, share a phrase or sentence of what peacemaker means to you, and end with the words, "I am a peacemaker." *(Sharing)*

Chant: "Paz, Queremos Paz," Traditional.
Paz, queremos paz, y libertad en este mundo.
Peace, we want peace and freedom in this world

Prayer

All merciful God of Many Names,

Yahweh, Allah, Holy One, Wisdom-Sophia,
Your power and grace, not ours,
sustain the universe.
Teach us to hallow your names
throughout the world.

Response: In your mercy, grant us peace.

You chose Abraham, Sarah and Hagar
to birth many nations.
And you continue to speak through prophets
and peacemakers in every land.
Forgive us, their offspring, for our wars and
misdeeds toward one another.
Save us from further terrorism and destruction
that all children may live in peace.

Response: In your mercy, grant us peace.

Compassionate and merciful God,
Change the hearts of extremist organizations,
hate groups
And those who turn to violence as a solution.
Help us find together a way to peace that serves
each nation and its people.

Response: In your mercy, grant us peace.

Guardian of all life,
Guide the leaders of the United States and its
allies,
Guide the rulers of Afghanistan and the Middle
East
To act responsibly to bring peace and welfare to
humankind.

Response: In your mercy, grant us peace.

God of Peace and Justice,
Guide all religious communities around the
world
To work for peace with justice
So that all may have food, housing, prosperity
and peace.

Response: In your mercy, grant us peace.

Chant: "Paz, Queremos Paz," Traditional.

Reading 1: The Beatitudes, Matthew 5: 3-10

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs in the kin-dom of God.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are those who are meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who are merciful,
for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they shall see God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice,
for they shall inherit the land.
Blessed are the peacemakers,

for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted for
righteousness' sake,
for theirs is the kin-dom of God.

Chant: "Dona Nobis Pacem," 16th Century,
Anonymous.

Dona nobis pacem pacem,
Dona nobis pacem.
Give to us peace...

Reading 2: Thich Nhat Hanh, September 20, 2001

"Responding to violence with violence resolves
nothing; it only escalates violence, anger and

Blessed Are 7

By Dia

hatred. It is only with compassion that we
can embrace and disintegrate violence...

"The violence and hatred we presently
face has been created by misunderstanding,
injustice, discrimination and despair.
We are all co-responsible for the violence
and despair in the world by our way of
living, of consuming and of handling the
problems of the world..."

"If we look and listen deeply we can see that
when we pray for the victims, we must also pray
for the attackers. They are also victims of confu-
sion and violence. If as a nation, America wants
to be safe and secure, it has to help other nations,
other peoples, feel safe and secure. I have a
conviction that America possesses enough
wisdom and courage to perform an act of
forgiveness and compassion and I know that
such an act can bring great relief to America and
to the world right now. Such an act could be a
statement of the willingness to embrace all
suffering inside and outside the nation, to look
deeply in order to understand better the cause of
the suffering and to act according to that insight.

Chant: "Dona Nobis Pacem"

Reading 3: excerpts from "A Call for Moral
Creativity" by Mary E. Hunt, WATERwheel,
Vol. 14, No. 3, Fall 2001

"New horrors require new moral creativity.
The tragic events of September 11, 2001,
challenge people of good will, especially religious
people, to find new ways of handling conflict and
dealing with difference.

"Moral creativity requires the deepest



resources of our various religious traditions and the most profound human insights we can muster. It is a process that prioritizes careful listening over reactive speech...

"Moral creativity is needed to produce responses that will stop the terrorists without falling prey to their logic. This is the task to which we need to set our hearts and minds. Let all people of good will, especially religious people, exercise our moral imagination to create sustainable, feasible alternatives to saber rattling and war. If we can send people into space and create the Internet, surely we can pool our intelligence of many sorts and find a solution.

Peacemakers

Diann L. Neu



"Now is the time to ask critical questions of our countries and of our selves. It is time to learn about religions and nations that, until now, have simply been words to us. For example, Islam no more teaches its adherents to strive toward martyrdom by killing people than does Christianity or Judaism. For those in the U.S., it is time for a frank assessment of our place as a rich, over-consuming nation in a world where so many have so little to lose. Only then can we begin to consider what strategies might get to the roots of the problem."

Chant: "Dona Nobis Pacem"

Sharing

How are you feeling about what you have heard in these readings? What does "responding with moral creativity" mean to you? How are you called to be a peacemaker? (*Sharing*)

Litany of Peacemakers

Let us remember those who have worked for peace. Let us ask them to pray with us for peace at home and in the world.
Buddha, Jesus and Mohammed, pray for peace.
Abraham, Sarah and Hagar, pray for peace.
Anne Frank and Rabbi Heschel, pray for peace.
Mary of Nazareth and Francis of Assisi, **R:**
Martin Luther King and Mary McLeod Bethune, **R:**
Pope John XXIII and Dorothy Day, **R:**
Oscar Romero, Ita Ford, Dorothy Kazel, Maura Clark and Jean Donovan, **R:**
Black Elk and Mahatma Gandhi, **R:**
Please share the names of other peacemakers, R:

Chant: "Dona Nobis Pacem"

Community Affirmation: *A version of this affirmation was used in Washington, DC, on Pentecost in 1982 for a Peace Witness sponsored by the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.*

Let us say together that we will work for peace with justice:
We, who live in the shadows of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon,
We, who remember the mushroom cloud of Hiroshima and Nagasaki,
We, whose very lives are threatened by the aftereffects of terrorist attacks,
Today declare our hope in the future and commit our lives to peacemaking.
From the diversity of our heritages,
We renew our belief in the holiness of the earth and the sanctity of all life.
We declare we are at peace with all people of good will.

We affirm that our earth's security rests not in retaliation, but:
In the justice of adequate housing and food,
In the justice of meaningful education and work,
In the justice of an economic order that gives everyone access to the earth's abundance,
In the justice of human relationships, nourished by cooperation.
In the justice of safe, clean, renewable energy instead of in the perils of nuclear power and war.

We affirm people over property, community over privatism,
Respect for others regardless of gender, race, sexual preference, religion or class.
We choose to be friends of the earth and of one another,
rather than exploiters and destroyers.
We choose to be peacemakers rather than peacekeepers,
We choose a nuclear-free future,
And we will settle for nothing less.

We unite ourselves with women, men and children the world over,
To join together in communities of resistance to terrorism, war and the nuclear threat.
We unite ourselves with trust in the Spirit of Life;
Justice and love can overcome the machines of destruction.
Before us today are set life and death,
We choose life, that we and our children may live.

Song: "And Everyone 'Neath the Vine and Fig Tree," (Micah 4: 3-4) Hebrew Folk Melody

Chorus: And ev'ryone 'neath the vine and fig tree
Shall live in peace and unafraid, (2x)
Plowshares beat out of swords and guns,
And we will study war no more! (2x)

Blessing the Bread

(The blessing picks up the bread and prays)
Blessed are You, Peaceful and Merciful God of Many Names, for you give us this daily bread to nourish us as we work for peace. As we eat this bread, fill us with strength that eases our fears and deepens our resolve to create peace.

Blessing the Wine

(The blessing picks up the wine and juice and prays)
Blessed are You, Peaceful and Merciful God of Many Names, for you give us this fruit of the vine to ease our spirits as we work for peace. As we drink, fill us with strength that eases our fears and deepens our resolve to create peace.

Communion

(The blessers pass the bread and drink around the group for all to share.)

Greeting of Peace: The Prayer of St. Francis

Let us pray together:
All merciful God of Many Names,
Yahweh, Allah, Holy One, Wisdom-Sophia,
Make us instruments of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let us sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
And where there is sadness, joy.
Grant that we may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Let us exchange a greeting of peace with one another. (*Peace greetings*)

Sending Forth

May the God of Many Names fill us with peace.
May our peace radiate to loved-ones, family, friends, colleagues and all we meet.
May the peace of this circle touch communities around the world
So that all may live in peace forever. Amen.

Diann L. Neu, M.Div., STM, MSW, feminist liturgist and psychotherapist, is co-founder and co-director of WATER.

An Open Letter to the Leaders of Our Country

As members of Women-Church Convergence, a national coalition of 31 groups representing some 35,000 women of faith, we are deeply distressed by the response of our government to the tragic events of September 11, 2001. We find the present policies morally repugnant and practically unwise.

We urge you in the strongest possible terms to do everything in your power

1) *To stop the bombing in Afghanistan.* We are killing innocent civilians; we are creating thousands of refugees; we are terrorizing the people of Kabul and Kandahar. Is this course of action likely to win the friends we need among the Afghans to locate and apprehend the terrorists? A police and legal action rather than this full-scale war is both more justifiable morally and more likely to have practical success.

2) *To aid the relief agencies in delivering food supplies into the country instead of making their work impossible and bombing their storage facilities.* Unless massive supplies are delivered before the weather closes all roads, millions of Afghan people will die of starvation this winter. In the face of this reality, dropping 35,000 meals a day is an empty gesture.

3) *To turn over any suspected terrorists apprehended to the international tribunal in the Hague for trial.* We must not only act justly, we must be seen as just by the rest of the world. Neither persons nor nations should act as judges in their own case.

4) *To protect the basic human rights of the women of Afghanistan and insure that they have full representation in any body that plans for the future of the country.* The women of Afghanistan are among the most oppressed people on this earth, suffering indescribably brutal and inhumane treatment under the Taliban. They must have a voice in their country's future.

5) *To protect the civil rights of U.S. citizens and legal immigrants here at home.* We cannot save civilization and democracy by undermining our own constitutional rights.

The present policies are unworthy of a great nation dedicated to democracy, justice and freedom under God. An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind. Violence begets violence and creates more hatred and more terrorists. This is a time for justice and compassion.

Sincerely,

Diann L. Neu

Amy Golm, BVM

Co-ordinators

In Memory of Her

From Tracey Weis and Tom Ryan, Lancaster PA: In gratitude for **Gretchen T. Shaffer** (a.k.a. Sister Fire) for her lifetime commitment to justice and joy (on the occasion of her 65th birthday).

From Miriam Bauerlin, *osf*, Marlow Heights, MD: To honor **Isabella Rose** born November 4, 2001 in Thailand, daughter of **Jenifer Buzy Bardon** of the U.S. and **Sebastian Bardon** of Australia, grand-daughter of **Peg Buzy**, a long time friend of WATER.

WATER in Action

Try a week at WATER for a quick overview of what's what and who's who in feminist work in religion. A sample of this season's activities includes people and events that form an active gestalt of justice-seekers.

Sharifa Alkhateeb, President of the North American Council for Muslim Women, led a stimulating evening on Islamic women. It was a chance to dispel myths, gain feminist insights and plan for future cooperative work between our groups.

The movie "**My Journey, My Islam**" (available from Women Make Movies in New York) sparked good discussion on the complexity of Muslim women's lives. Immigration, intergenerational differences and country-specific expressions of faith are central to the lives of the women whose journey is shaped by Islam.

Peace liturgies, "**Harvesting Peace**" and "**Thanksgiving for Life**," and a **women's support group** to cope prayerfully with the aftermath of September 11 added a measure of spirit to the season. We recommend it.

Marli Wandermurem, an ordained Presbyterian minister, is spending the fall at WATER working on her doctoral dissertation. What a time for a first visit to the United States! She will teach in a feminist theological program in Salvador de Bahia in Brasil when she finishes her work on violence in the books of Samuel and Kings.

The **women contributing editors of The Witness** magazine graced the office for their meeting. A group of **Presbyterian women ministers** met with Marli for international sharing, and the **Washington DC area Women-Church** gathered for strategizing.

Sister Evelyn Vasquez who lives in Guatemala told of her amazing ministry there. Her cassette tape of liturgical music in Spanish, "**Cantos de Vida y Verdad**" is available for purchase (\$10+\$2 p+h) from WATER.

Sisterspace Bookstore, an African American women's cultural center, invited WATER to co-sponsor popular writer **Melody Beattie** who drew a large downtown audience to discuss healing.

Mary E. Hunt lectured at Bates College at the invitation of WATER colleague **Kerry Maloney**, the College Chaplain. Mary joined **Wanda Deifelt**, **Patricia Beattie Jung** and **Judith Plaskow** for a panel on the **Good Sex** book (available from WATER for \$20) at Harvard Divinity School with a reprise including **Ayesha Imam** at Loyola University in Chicago. Mary also made several presentations at the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting where she joined colleagues to discuss books, reflect on faith-based initiatives and plan scholarly activism.

Diann Neu was invited by long-time WATER colleague **Gale Yee** at Episcopal Divinity School to give a workshop there on how to use liturgy and ritual as part of healing from family and congregational violence. Diann is readying her liturgy book, **Return Blessings: Ecofeminist Liturgies Renewing the Earth**, for spring publication with The Pilgrim Press. Of course it will be available at WATER!

Resources

Abu-Lughood, Lila, ed. **REMAKING WOMEN: FEMINISM AND MODERNITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.** Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998 (300 pages, \$18.95).

Middle East Studies from a feminist perspective is welcome as readers sort out the strands of meaning and custom. Postcolonial approaches that focus women's well being are useful tools.

Adams, Carol J. **MEDITATIONS ON THE INNER ART OF VEGETARIANISM: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES FOR BODY AND SOUL.** New York, NY: Lantern Books, 2001 (383 pages, \$15).

A vegetarian daily reader that invites reflection and encourages vegetarian living in practical terms.

Agosin, Marjorie, ed. **WOMEN, GENDER AND HUMAN RIGHTS: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE.** Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001 (339 pages, \$25).

Human rights are defined broadly and analyzed deeply. A valuable collection with health and legal concerns.

Atlee-Loudon, Jennifer. **RED THREAD: A SPIRITUAL JOURNAL OF ACCOMPANIMENT, TRAUMA AND HEALING.** Washington, DC: The Ecumenical Program on Central America and the Caribbean (159 pages, \$13.95).

So many "gringas" have given great years of their lives to Central American struggles. This journal is one woman's story, but expresses so much that is common in solidarity work.

Bednarowski, Mary Farrell. **THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION OF AMERICAN WOMEN.** Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999 (240 pages, \$15.95).

Good survey information and useful notes make this a valuable study.

Black, Kathy. **CULTURALLY-CONSCIOUS WORSHIP.** St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000 (153 pages, \$19.99).

Liturgical planners will welcome this volume as an expanded "how to" that lays out the basics on multicultural, multi-faceted worship.

Borosan, Martin and Christopher Gilvan-Cartwright. **BECOMING ME: A STORY OF CREATION.** Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2000

(32 pages, \$16.95).

Lovely illustrations with a slightly abstract text. Kids will need to read it twice, but they love that anyway!

Bunge, Marcia J., ed. **THE CHILD IN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT.** Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001 (513 pages, \$24).

At last a collection of essays outlining how children are treated in the Christian tradition. Marvelous work by Christina Traina, Marcia Riggs, Mary Ann Hinsdale and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, among others.

Carlstrom, Nancy White. **GLORY.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2001 (32 pages, \$17).

Guess what? All creatures praise their creator just by being, not by doing anything. That includes humans. Wonderful illustrations and a girl protagonist for a change.

Claussen, Janet and Marilyn Kielbasa, eds. **LISTEN FOR A WHISPER: PRAYERS, POEMS, AND REFLECTIONS BY GIRLS.** Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2001 (192 pages, \$9.95).

A wonderful project to emulate. Strong, powerful results in strong, powerful girls.

Clifford, Anne M. **INTRODUCING FEMINIST THEOLOGY.** Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001 (287 pages, \$21)

This useful introduction is great for beginners and a good brush up for those with a casual acquaintance with the field. Pictures and study questions make it inviting for classroom use.

Cohen, Debra Nussbaum. **CELEBRATING YOUR NEW JEWISH DAUGHTER: CREATING JEWISH WAYS TO WELCOME BABY GIRLS INTO THE COVENANT.** Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001 (232 pages, \$18.95).

Brilliant! A great gift to new parents of many traditions who can learn from this wise approach how to value and celebrate our girls. Especially useful, obviously, for Jewish families who can find model liturgies and readings for their celebrations.

Corrall, Jill and Lisa Miya-Jervis, eds. **YOUNG WIVES' TALES: NEW ADVENTURES IN LOVE AND PARTNERSHIP.** Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 2001 (287 pages, \$16.95).

A savvy WATER intern called it "great, witty." Hard questions are answered but happily answers are not generalized. A twenty-first century approach to age-old challenges.

Duck, Ruth C. and Patricia Wilson-Kastner. **PRAISING GOD: THE TRINITY IN CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.** Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999 (207 pages, \$22).

Reliable feminist guides offer creative suggestions for worship committees as they deal with the complexities of the Trinity.

Gould, Jean. **HOT FLASHES FROM ABROAD: WOMEN'S TRAVEL TALES AND ADVENTURES.** Seattle, WA: Seal Press, 2001 (224 pages, \$16.95).

Travel vicariously through these enjoyable essays. Note how older women are often the most adventuresome!

Hess, Carol Lakey. **CARETAKERS OF OUR COMMON HOUSE: WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNITIES OF FAITH.** Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press (291 pages, \$19).

Much has been written on girls' development and how it is truncated in patriarchy. Carol Hess applies much of it in a theological context with helpful results.

Kalechofsky, Roberta. **VEGETARIAN JUDAISM: A GUIDE FOR EVERYONE.** Marblehead, MA: Micah Publications, 1998 (246 pages, \$15.95).

The call for a "pro-vegetarian bias" in the Bible is responded to with theory, recipes, menus, blessings and smart ideas. No need for chicken soup when vegetable broth is around.

King, Karen L., ed. **IMAGES OF THE FEMININE IN GNOSTICISM.** Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998 (455 pages, \$30).

A broadly based volume with articles and responses by leaders in the field.

this would be a sophisticated introduction but well worth the effort.

King, Karen L., ed. **WOMEN AND GODDESS TRADITIONS IN ANTIQUITY AND TODAY.** Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997 (450 pages, \$40).

Solid scholarship that answers a range of basic and oft-asked questions.

Lehr, Valerie. **QUEER FAMILY VALUES: DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF THE NUCLEAR FAMILY.** Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1999 (212 pages, \$19.95).

Reframing the "family" debate is welcome from a glbt perspective. A call for creative thinking about how to meet human needs without reinforcing the stereotypes of patriarchy.

Lemert, Charles and Esme Bhan, eds. **THE VOICE OF ANNA JULIA COOPER INCLUDING A VOICE FROM THE SOUTH AND OTHER IMPORTANT ESSAYS, PAPERS AND LETTERS.** New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1998 (357 pages, \$15.95).

The writings of this influential African American activist make for powerful reading.

Maguire, Daniel C. **SACRED CHOICES: THE RIGHT TO CONTRACEPTION AND ABORTION IN TEN WORLD RELIGIONS.** Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001 (140 pages, \$13).

For those who thought their respective faith traditions did not approve of birth control and abortion, ethicist Daniel Maguire has news. The product of a scholarly circle's common wisdom, this book makes the case for responsible reproduction in the major world religions. A study group's dream.

MacKinnon, Mary Heather, Moni McIntyre, and Mary Ellen Sheehan, eds. **LIGHT BURDENS, HEAVY BLESSINGS: CHALLENGE OF CHURCH AND CULTURE IN THE POST VATICAN II ERA.** Quincy, IL: Franciscan Press, 2000 (389 pages, \$30).

These essays in honor of Margaret R. Brennan, IHM, provide new insight into the Catholic Church and its religious communities' efforts to provide spiritual nurture in the late 20th century. Would that the institution had been as successful as Margaret Brennan and her sisters.



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