

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

"Your Silence Will Not Protect You"

by Mary E. Hunt

Audre Lorde was right about silence, as about so many things. It saves no one when what is unspoken is true. So the current implosion of the kyriarchal Catholic Church is a cautionary tale for other religious institutions that would hide behind their ceremonial skirts.

Faith communities are human communities with all of the strengths and frailties implied. James Carroll noted in the *Boston Globe* that the "radioactive" nature of the pedophilia scandal in that city is due to the close ties between sexuality and religion. The Catholic Church, still a powerful institution in Boston, claimed to know what constitutes the holy and good with regard to sex, and to have some divine insight to boot. Yet its leaders acted and/or countenanced actions that were illegal by all standards and immoral by most, namely sex with underage persons and/or

the worst yet. When women and dependent children are taken seriously in their abuse and neglect, the iceberg will emerge where its tip is now peaking out. The number of people who have been victimized, the high percentage of priests involved, and the clerical culture that gives rise to such tragedy provide new meaning for the notion of mortal sin.

Religious progressives like myself are not chortling at the predicament of the Catholic Church, although we have been protesting its oppressive ways and creating life-giving alternatives to it for decades. Rather, we are using this opportunity to shine a bright light on the whole institution, and, by extension, other religious institutions that shroud their dirty dealings in pious language and sanctimonious simpering. Our analysis is not simply of the actions of a few, but of the structural and institutional forms and cultures that prevent

*The straw that broke the camel's back
was not sexuality, but silence.*

persons with whom priests were in positions of privileged trust. This happened over and over. It was covered by a trail of threats, settlements, and pay-offs that were official church policy.

Thanks to tough reporting, and despite stonewalling on the institution's part, truth is finally seeing the light of day. Problems have surfaced not only in Boston, but also in Catholic dioceses around the country (West Palm Beach, FL, and Cleveland, OH, for example) and indeed throughout the world (Ireland, Poland and Austria have egregious cases in progress). I expect we have not seen

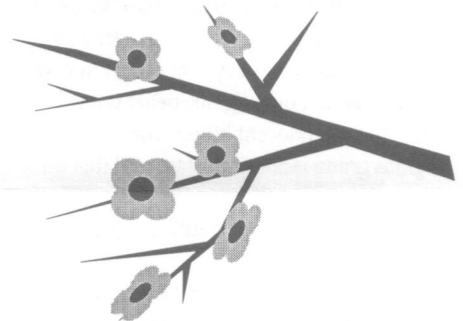
broad participation, democratic practices that would go a long ways toward preventing such behaviors. Not the least of this is the full participation of women in every facet of a renewed Catholicism, not the addition of tokens who will conform to a system that is dysfunctional.

Religions are non-profit organizations subject to the same legal and moral constraints as any other. If nothing else, this public crisis of giant proportions for Catholicism demonstrates the need to rethink the relationship between what we used to call

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Intern and Visiting Scholar Opportunities

WATER is accepting applications for Intern and Visiting Scholar opportunities for June-July 2002 and Fall 2002. For an application form, check our website www.hers.com/water or contact WATER at 301-589-2509. Help get the word out to students and seniors alike.



Presbyterian ministers meet with Maril Wandermurem of Sao Paulo, Brasil, at WATER. (l to r), Jeanne MacKenzie, Margee Iddings, Madeline Jervis, Peg True, Marli, and Laura Collins.

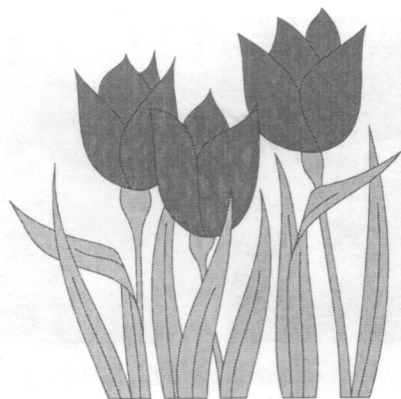
Editorial

At times it is almost morally embarrassing to be religious. This is one of them. As the war rages in the Middle East, religious conflicts lie at its heart. Suicide bombers and tank-driven troops kill one another and their children for reasons rooted in the faith of their fathers. Speaking of, as the accompanying article illustrates, the self-destruction of the kyriarchal Catholic Church is the faith of more fathers unleashed.

These circumstances beg critical feminist analysis, not least because they have such a deep impact on the lives of so many. At a time when greed runs rampant and environmental destruction deepens, religious values are more important than ever while some religious institutions have less credibility than ever. Luckily religious feminists and our organizations are hard at work.

Our job is not to clean up the mess. It is not to join the ranks in order to transform it from within. Too many women have tried those tactics on the domestic front and discovered just how fruitless they are. Our task is to make crystal clear that no religious belief is an excuse to take innocent human life, that no religious group is above the law, and that no religious leader can function with impunity. Our work is to re-imagine and recreate religious systems according to our various traditions that respect difference, invite participation, and model holiness.

Thankfully, there are groups doing just that. WATER is one of them. The Women-Church Convergence, a coalition of Catholic-rooted feminist groups, is another. The Women's Project of the Pluralism Project at Harvard University is an interfaith example. These groups are in conversation, and we are moving ahead with plans at a time when it has never been more obvious how important our efforts are to creating a just and peaceful world. Your participation is welcome, needed, appreciated.



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*The task now is to learn from this tragic debacle
how to be religious in healthy, open,
welcoming and legal ways.*

"Your Silence..."

(Continued from page 1)

"church and state" and now more appropriately call "religions and the common good." Duty to warn, the seal of the confessional, and basic common sense are all up for review. Every religious group will need to rethink its way of interfacing with the larger public.

The straw that broke the camel's back was not sexuality, but silence. Of course, the silence was about sexuality, just as rape is a sexually expressed crime of power. But at base the problem is institutionally sanctioned, indeed required, codes of secrecy and duplicity that permit no outside review, no checks and balances, no lay participation in what is mistakenly considered clerical business when, in fact, it concerns the life of a whole community. That unhealthy dynamic and not pedophilia is the prime issue at hand.

Obviously the heinous nature of the sexual crimes is not to be passed over. Pre-pubescent children are not fit sexual partners for anyone. Full stop. Teens may be willing partners in some few cases, but the impossibility of mutuality and true consent when the other person is an adult in authority (e.g., a priest or teacher) renders these situations wrong as well. One has only to listen to the survivors who have come forward in Boston to realize how deep the damage is, and how unspeakable the use of young people for whatever perverse pleasures may accrue.

Neither is the problem homosexuality. The high percentage of homosexual cases in the news raises the matter of sexual orientation, prompting one misguided Vatican spokesman to suggest that perhaps homosexuality is an impediment to ordination. Unless Catholic Canon Law changes, that is simply not the case. What is the case is that U.S. Catholics (perhaps others as well) are learning that a high percentage of their priests are not heterosexual and/or not celibate. Unfortunately, they have learned that because of criminal behavior, pedophilia, but the evidence has been there for decades for those with eyes to see.

Many jump to the causal connection that homosexuality causes pedophilia which is simply unwarranted. According to social scientific literature, the vast majority of pedophiles are heterosexual. Moreover, most gay priests are not pedophiles. What is warranted is truth-telling about sexuality, namely, that there is now more than sufficient evidence to claim that sexual orientation is morally neutral. But lying, and creating the conditions that make the truth too expensive to tell, is anything but. It is wrong, just as perpetuating outdated ideas about homosexuality is wrong and hurts good people who try to live virtuous lives in same-sex relationships. We do not condemn all heterosexuality because of rape, but we do condemn rape. The open secret is that lots of priests are gay. In a healthy context people would say, so what.

Celibacy comes under attack, and again the target is misplaced. There are loads of celibate people, not all of them priests or religious by any means, who do not engage in pedophilia. And most pedophiles are not celibate. The culprit here is not celibacy per se, but a system that mandates celibacy as a precondition for priesthood, that is, for decision making and sacramental ministry. It is now obvious that there is no necessity for celibacy—sexually active people do just as well as ministers/rabbis/priests—and even less need for mandating qualifications that have nothing to do with the job.

It is hard to fathom that intelligent people who run large religious organizations do not know these things. It is impossible to believe that male bishops who live in a homosocial clerical caste are oblivious to the obvious. Deliberate calculated silence reinforced by perks and privileges is as good an explanation as any. The task now is to learn from this tragic debacle how to be religious in healthy, open, welcoming and legal ways.

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

Marga Buehrig (1915-2002)



Swiss feminist theologian Marga Buehrig was a close friend and colleague, an enthusiastic and generous WATER supporter who attended Women-Church gatherings and visited the office on her several trips to Washington. She was the longtime director of Boldern Academy in Zurich, as well as the president of the presidents of the European lay academies. She was elected to the first presidium of the World Council of Churches that included women (Dame Nita Barrow of Barbados, Lois Wilson of Canada and Marga). Her special concerns were for women, dependent children and the earth, expressed in her leadership in the WCC's Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation program.

Mary Hunt delivered a eulogy at her memorial service at the Cathedral in Basel, attended by hundreds of her colleagues. An excerpt follows:

History records Marga Buehrig as one of the 20th century's ecumenical feminist pioneers. Indeed she was, as her curriculum and list of accomplishments indicate. She was a great deal more as a human being, and that, I believe, is how she would also like to be remembered.

I met Marga in the late 1970s when she and her two life companions, Else Kaehler and Elsi Arnold, journeyed to California as Visiting Scholars at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley to practice for Marga's impending retirement. They were welcomed immediately into the feminist theological community with the characteristic informality of Americans that Marga grew to appreciate.

She fell in love with California—its coastline, its wine, its flowers—and the progressive people who gave it its reputation. She visited often, loving Mendocino and Sausalito, the Redwoods and the city of San Francisco. It was a place of new ideas and different lifestyles.

Marga loved her friends above all, Else and Elsi particularly, and the many women and men who were her "tough spun web," after the American feminist song she cherished. She loved a good red wine in the evening, a crisp white depending on the food; she loved art and music, movies and television documentaries. She enjoyed a warm summer night in the garden; she exclaimed over the first spring flowers.

She despised injustice in any form—ecological, political, economic, gender and religious. She hated discrimination and she loathed hypocrisy. She held churches to an especially high standard that they might fulfill their stated mission to be a beacon of peace.

For the filming of a documentary on Marga's life two years ago ("Sottosopra" by Carac Films

of Bern, Switzerland) I had the privilege of accompanying her to Zurich. By clerical error, reservations were made for us at the wrong hotel in a seedy part of town; the right hotel had the same name and was in a nice section of the city. Marga suspected there was a problem, but in order not to embarrass her hostess decided we should simply stay in the red light district. I wondered, but assumed it was her decision. One didn't often second-guess Marga.

That evening as we strolled to find a restaurant for dinner, we passed drug addicts and prostitutes, ugly bars and strip shows. Marga said very plainly that this was a part of life to which we were not often privy. Rather than complain or criticize it, she allowed as to how it did us both good to be there for a change. Then we would know what we were talking about, what we needed to change in society as we wrote our theology and preached our words. Right she was, though the sight of the two of us must have turned a few heads.

Stories abound from women colleagues from Australia to Argentina, from all over Europe and the United States, who saw Marga as a fearless role model who always made a path for other women, who stayed critical to the point of discomfort. I like to think of her as a gentle giant.

Marga's advice was sought and taken seriously. Her prayers were frequent and heartfelt. She had full confidence that the movements for justice, peace, integrity of creation, for the rights of women, children, elderly and immigrants marginalized by society and mistreated by church would go on after her earthly efforts. We who remember her, and the hundreds of others who are with us in spirit, are living proof that she was right.

In Memory of...

From WATER:

Three marvelous feminist colleagues from religious communities have left this world of late. WATER is diminished by their passing, grateful for and enriched by their lives.

Delores Brooks, OP: A justice worker for local and global issues, Delores was a tireless advocate for peace and women's rights through the Chicago-based 8th Day Center for Justice.

Margaret Ellen Traxler, SSND: Tenacious in her efforts to gain respect and justice for poor women and children, Margaret Ellen was also a leader in feminist church reform though the Institute for Women Today and the National Coalition of American Nuns.

Pat Reif, IHM: Founding director of the Immaculate Heart College Center's masters program in feminist spirituality, Pat embodied the best of it. She worked for social change, educated for empowerment, and crafted a woman's life of integrity.

From Monica Maher, New York, NY:

In memory of my mother, **Helen Maher**, May 2, 1932-January 2, 2002, who died of breast cancer.

From Marti Scheel, Greenbelt, MD:

In thanks for/honor of my friend **Cindy Moe-Lobeda** for completing her Ph.D. at Union Theological Seminary.

From Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Hewitt, NJ:

In honor of **Ofelia Ortega**, Cuban ecumenical theological educator and who provides a warm and sincere welcome for all women.

From Jean Stokan, Hyattsville, MD:

To remember my Dad, **Michael Stokan**, in deep gratefulness.

From Diann Neu, Silver Spring, MD:

In memory of my uncle and god-father, **Edward L. Neu**. May you rest in peace with our ancestors.

From Renate Rose, Honolulu, HI:

Marga Buehrig, feminist friend of great encouragement, honest critique, loving hospitality, always ready to celebrate life in an exemplary way—a blessing to me and many others.

Women, men and children are breaking silence and speaking out about the abuse they have experienced from clergy and religious leaders. These truth-tellers need people of faith to walk with them as they journey toward healing and call religious leaders for accountability.

This liturgy was first created with the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women of the Methodist church. Use it as a model for the service you need to bring healing to your community.

Preparation

Gather herbs and four containers of oil and place them on an altar table. Invite five storytellers and four blessers.

Naming the Circle

The newspapers and media reports are filled with clergy sexual misconduct these days. We gather to walk with truth-tellers. What do you think of when you read about sexual abuse and pedophilia by clergy? Let us create our circle here by saying our names and sharing a word or phrase about our reflections. (*Sharing*)

Call to Gather

Leader: From city center and country corner, from office and home, from different ethnic and class backgrounds, we gather to walk with truth-tellers. Please respond.

All: We gather to walk with truth-tellers.

Leader: They and we have been hurt, betrayed, abused, scared.

All: We gather to walk with truth-tellers.

Leader: Our communities have been hurt, betrayed, abused, scared.

All: We gather to walk with truth-tellers.

Leader: What happens to one of us affects us all. We need communities of solidarity for healing.

All: We gather to walk with truth-tellers.

Song: "Comin' Out of Exile," by Carolyn McDade, from *Songs for Congregational Singing*, c. 1991.

We are comin' out of exile, comin' home.
We are comin' out of exile, comin' home.
We are comin' out of exile, comin' out of exile,
We are comin' out of exile, comin' home.

Out of wilderness we come, comin' home...
Sister, come and take my hand, comin' home...
All together we come, comin' home...

Creating A Safe Place

Walking with truth-tellers requires us to create safe places where we can talk truthfully about the needs of our communities. Please respond to each phrase with, "**We need safe places.**" Because violence exists in the world,

Response: We need safe places.

Because women and children have been violated, **Response:**

Because in the U.S. a woman is battered every fifteen seconds, **Response:**

Because a rape is committed every six minutes, **Response:**

Response:

Because one woman in four will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime, **Response:**

Because half the victims of sexual abuse are under age eleven, **Response:**

Because one of every seven married women is the victim of marital rape, **Response:**

Because 25% of college women experience rape or attempted rape, **Response:**

Because clergy sexual misconduct takes place within our churches, **Response:**

Why else do we need safe places? Tell us and we will respond, "**We need safe places.**"

Prayer: "Survivor" by Martha Popson, from *Daughters of Sarah*, July/Aug. 1987.

God i keep saying God
i can't do it not this time
the pain the pain

sure you can
honey she says
you can
I know you can

but God i don't know
this time the pain
the pain can't be hidden

honey I won't leave
God says and wipes
my brow
and kisses me
even though she didn't
have to
God i keep saying God
i hurt

and she says oh honey
I know you do

Creating A Safe Place

People who hurt need safe places. Wounded healers and communities need safe places. Let us take herbs, symbols of healing, and place

them somewhere in the room to make our space a safe one.

Song: play music for "Comin' Out of Exile"

A Reading from Judges 11:39b-40

So there arose an Israelite custom that for four days every year the daughters and sons of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephtha the Gileadite.

Telling the Stories: from *Victim to Survivor: Women Recovering from Clergy Sexual Abuse*, edited by Nancy Werking Poling, United Church Press, c. 1999.



Walking with

By

In this safe place, listen to the stories of women recovering from clergy sexual abuse. They are stories of women and children in every city, country, ethnic background and class in the world. Listen and weep.

Song: "Listen" by Paramahansa Yogananda from *Cosmic Chants*.

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x)

Melinda's Story

My understanding of justice has drastically changed. Justice would be for the abuse never to have occurred. But once abuse has taken place, it cannot be undone. No restitution can take back the evil inflicted. My life can never go back to what it was before I experienced the pain of twenty-five years of betrayal and abandonment. I wanted the church, the seminary, the bishop, and others to make it right, yet I had no clue that I was asking the impossible. No one could take back what I had experienced and turn it into a just situation.

Song: "Listen"

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x).

Et Al's Story

When I say the Lord's Prayer, I am overcome by pain, and stumble over the word "father." I beg God for answers to the question of why I was damaged. I question the scriptures that interpret suffering as punishment, then wonder what sin I must be atoning for. Where is the miracle to replace the carnage of my life?



Truth-Tellers

Diann L. Neu

Song: "Listen"

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x).

Katy's Story

Pastor Cool thought he could cure me of my lesbianism. My encounter with him did result in a cure of sorts. Had he not abused me, I never would have addressed my issues the way I did, never would have had the opportunity to talk with other victims, and never would have had the money to escape the prison of the small town I lived in. Now I am able to set limits and to recognize when someone is trying to use me. And I no longer suffer from the low self-esteem that made me believe everything was my fault. Successful today in both my personal and my professional life, I know I can do anything I want to, because I have the will and I have control of my will like never before. Yes, the experience of confronting his abuse changed my life drastically.

Song: "Listen"

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x)

Hope's Story

I was tired of patting myself on the back because I hadn't committed suicide. I was tired of protecting my abusers and feeling all the guilt and shame. I wanted to give my children more, and I wanted to protect them from being victimized someday. I decided to deal with the issue head-on. Being a survivor wasn't enough for me anymore. I wanted to thrive.

Song: "Listen"

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x).

Mikki's Story

Yes, there is life after confronting an abuser and an abusive system. Yes, there is healing. Yes, there is opportunity to use one's gifts. Yes, there is opportunity to grow. But all these blessings that I embrace with gratitude do not make up for the losses. I am no less thankful, simply aware that I am not the same person I was. The abuse and my naming it have changed my life. The damage has been done, and I continually have to fight with myself not to be defined by the damage. I have had to come to terms with the fact that not all the holes in my heart will be filled.

Song: "Listen"

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x).

Lindsey's Story

The church, founded upon the Rock and called to do justice, did its job and did it well. My hope is that by telling my story I will help others within the church to respond to the cries of those abused by clergy.

Song: "Listen"

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x).

Reflection

All of what we have heard and more happens to women and children, and affects our communities. We need to participate in healing. What have you heard in these stories? What is one thing that you heard that challenges you? Turn to someone next to you and share your thoughts and actions.

Song: "Listen"

Listen, listen, listen to my heart song (2x)
I will never forget you,
I will always be with you (2x).

Blessing the Oil

(Four blessers walk to the center, pick up a container of oil, and stand at the four directions of the room, saying together:)

In solidarity with women and children around the world, we call upon the Spirits of the North, East, South and West to bless and heal us.

One: Blessed are you,
Enduring Spirit of the North,
For soothing us with oil when cold winds chill us to the bone.

Two: Blessed are you,
Comforter of the East,
For refreshing us with oil when we need strength to renew our lives.

Three: Blessed are you,
Gentle Wisdom of the South,
For warming us with oil and caressing us with cool breezes.

Four: Blessed are you,
Healing Power of the West,
For easing our hurts and bruises with oil when we need to keep open to life's changes.

Anointing with Oil

One: Come,
Two: Receive this oil.
Three: Reclaim your healing powers
Four: For yourself and for others.
(The four blessers anoint each participant.)

Song: "Guide My Feet," African American spiritual

Guide my feet while I run this race. (3x)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Hold my hand... Stand by me... Search my heart

Sending Forth

Filled with the stories of truth-tellers,
Anointed with oil,
And called to be a cloud of witnesses
Let us go forth to make all places safe.

*Diann L. Neu, D.Min. candidate, MSW, is
Co-founder and Co-director of WATER.*



WATER. A Space of Possibilities

By Marli Wandermurem

Some time ago when I heard Mary Hunt lecture at the Methodist University in Sao Paulo, I had the opportunity to speak with her about being a Visiting Scholar at WATER. For me, the possibility of being at WATER for a time was a hope that I cultivated, but I saw limited possibilities to make it happen.

However, this hope was concretized over time through conversations with Sandra Duarte de Souza, a colleague from NETMAL, the Nucleus of Women's Studies in Latin America at the Methodist University of which I am a member. The hope grew until it came to fruition on October 31, 2001, the day I arrived at WATER to spend three months.

My fears about being in this strange country with my deficiency in the language left me feeling dislocated. But to arrive at WATER and be welcomed with hugs from Cindy Lapp and Diann Neu gave me the impression that my time would be very well spent. Not only the warmth of the women, but also the place itself has a very agreeable ambience.

For me, WATER for these three months was a space of possibilities, not only for the present

but also for the future. As a Black Latin American woman, I am part of a group that confronts many difficulties in academic formation. For this reason, I am extremely grateful to WATER for this possibility.

I can affirm that my objective was met. Access to WATER's library was essential to conclude the work for my dissertation. I was able to get all of the materials I needed. What really helped me to achieve my goal was the aid and incentive of Mary, Diann and Cindy, who provided me with the setting in which my learning and production would be realized day by day.

Along with my studies, I could share in meetings and studies carried out by other WATER colleagues. For example, the staff arranged for me to meet with some Presbyterian pastors to discuss the lives of women in the context of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

I owe thanks to WATER also for the great luck of having pleasant housing with Barbara Cullom [editor's note: a biblical scholar, United Church of Christ minister who is now engaged in hospice ministry]. I was able to feel part of an extended family during this time, especially on

important occasions like Thanksgiving.

When January 31 arrived, the day of my return to Brasil, homesickness came over me. I could affirm what Ruben Alves said that homesickness exists where there is love and distance. I felt it especially when a new little one arrived to become part of the picture at WATER. Catherine Fei Min (Mary and Diann's daughter) is a pretty Chinese girl who won my heart with grace.

I return to Brasil with one certainty: WATER will always be a space that I can count on. It is a space that is part of my memory and my formation. Thanks be to God that WATER exists, that so many women can pass through there and encounter the same warmth and possibility that I found. Thanks for Mary, Diann, Cindy, Carol, Marge, Barbara, Catherine who make possibilities happen. [Translated by Mary E. Hunt.]

Marli Wandermurem is a Presbyterian minister and doctoral student at the Methodist University in Sao Paulo. She spent three months at WATER writing her doctoral dissertation on women and violence in the Bible. She is now teaching in Bahia, Brasil.

From WATER to Wilderness

By Lora Nafziger

Northern Manitoba, where I am currently working with Mennonite Central Committee, is in many ways another world than the one I experienced during my WATER summer internship. However, the lessons I learned and the skills that I take from my internship at WATER are relevant.

I am told it was an unusual summer at WATER, quieter than most with Diann Neu away on study leave and Cindy Lapp working as a pastor. As far as I was concerned, all was normal in the WATER office. The flow of people through the door may have been slower, but the flow of things to be done in the WATER office did not dwindle. The water kept running.

Among other projects, WATER was involved in efforts to expose and eradicate sexual abuse of nuns. So I received my "Catholic education," as Mary Hunt affectionately called it. Before stepping into the WATER office I had never met a nun, I did not know who or what the Holy See was, and I had never heard of Catholics for a Free Choice. I soon became acquainted with

these, and the titles for various people in the Catholic hierarchy. I even spoke on behalf of Sisters Against Sexism (SAS) at a protest at the Vatican Embassy in New York City.

Because the summer was so "unusual," I got to spend time alone in the office with Mary or Diann (while the other was gallivanting to some other part of the country). With each I had many opportunities for conversations over tea, lunch, and just in casual passing. Diann and I even did a feminist critique of the movie *Shrek*. In organizing Mary's copious writings I had the chance to read her articles. We talked about her work and the changes in it over the years.

I discovered abundant resources, community within communities at WATER, people longing for connections, people making connections. I discovered again what a privileged life I have led to have the opportunity to spend my summer learning, exploring and doing a lot of reading.

Currently, I am living and working in a small town in northern Manitoba (population 500). Here some days it seems as if life is about

survival more than it is about reflective action or politics. But working with aboriginal high school students, I realize that, like any marginalized group, people here face issues that are very political. They struggle to recover from a system of political oppression that denied them culture, language, and the ability to function as a community, and thus as individuals within a community.

Here in the relative wilderness, with a small rural library, I continue attempting to grasp the privilege, love and support that fills my life. I try to work here with the same passion and revolutionary excitement that is so apparent at WATER even during a relatively quiet summer.

Lora Nafziger is currently completing a two-year voluntary service term with Mennonite Central Committee in Cranberry Portage, Manitoba. She is a student support worker in the residence of a high school that serves over twenty-five remote northern communities.



Resources

Alpert, Rebecca, Sue Levi Elwell and Shirley Idelson, eds. *LESBIAN RABBIS: THE FIRST GENERATION*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001 (224 pages, \$24).

"Lesbian rabbis are creating a new rabbinate." This marvelous collection shows great women living good lives engaging in excellent ministry.

Bodde, Ree, ed. *KEEPING OUR HEADS ABOVE WATER: REFLECTIONS ON THE ECUMENICAL DECADE OF CHURCHES IN SOLIDARITY WITH WOMEN*. Ellerslie, New Zealand: WRC and CCN, 1998 (161 pages, \$29.95).

These candid reflections add a great deal to our knowledge of what works and what does not. A reader is grateful for their insight and courage in success and failure.

Dube, Musa W. *POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000 (221 pages, \$32.99).

Feminist and postcolonial critiques make for a new chapter in biblical criticism. How the Bible can be used to oppress, is a thought-provoking read.

Furlong, Monica. *THERESE OF LISIEUX*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001 (144 pages, \$16).

A welcome new biography of a popular saint, this book is written to explain her unique spiritual approach for post-modern followers.

Glaser, Chris. *REFORMATION OF THE HEART: SEASONAL MEDITATIONS BY A GAY CHRISTIAN*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001 (297 pages, \$14.95).

Gracefully written Advent and Lenten reflections from a gay Christian life.

McAvoy, Jane. *THE SATISFIED LIFE: MEDIEVAL WOMEN MYSTICS ON ATONEMENT*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2000 (140 pages, \$15.95).

The controversial atonement theory gets another look through the eyes of women mystics like Julian of Norwich, Mechtilde of Magdeburg and Hildegard of Bingen.

McFague, Sallie. *LIFE ABUNDANT: RETHINKING THEOLOGY AND ECONOMY FOR A PLANET IN PERIL*.

Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001 (251 pages, \$18).

A challenging approach to big questions. Dr. McFague revisits the Christian basics but offers new and ecologically sensitive answers.

Moltmann-Wendel, Elisabeth. *REDISCOVERING FRIENDSHIP: AWAKENING TO THE PROMISE AND POWER OF WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS*. Grove City, OH: Augsburg Fortress, 2001 (127 pages, \$15).

A Christian view of friendship that posits Mary Magdalene as a model friend from a feminist perspective.

Nussbaum, Martha C. *WOMEN AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH*. New York, NY: 2001 (312 pages, \$19.95).

A valuable new feminist theoretical approach that focuses on concrete justice struggles of women around the world. This has much in common with politically oriented feminist/womanist/mujerista theologies.

Oduyoye, Mercy Amba. *INTRODUCING AFRICAN WOMEN'S THEOLOGY*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001 (132 pages, \$19.95).

Essential reading to learn what African women are saying. Written in an inviting style with hospitality as the cornerstone of this creative theology.

Paterson, Gillian. *STILL FLOWING: WOMEN, GOD AND CHURCH*. Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 1999 (124 pages, \$9.95).

The painful and fruitful results of the Churches' Decade in Solidarity with Women are recorded here. A story of compromise, betrayal, women's strength and hope.

Phelan, Shane. *SEXUAL STRANGERS: GAYS, LESBIANS, AND DILEMMAS OF CITIZENSHIP*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press (179 pages, \$18.95).

The contradictions of fitting in and changing society make for tough legal and moral decisions. How to be a full citizen without reinscribing the worst forms of citizenship is difficult to do.

Raines, John C. and Daniel C. Maguire, eds. *WHAT MEN OWE TO WOMEN: MEN'S VOICES FROM WORLD RELIGIONS*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2001 (303 pages, \$19.95).

The answer might best be "everything." Male scholars from diverse religious traditions learn from women and feminist literature how to reconceptualize what men need to do to live with women in this world with mutuality and justice. A welcome volume.

Schaper, Donna E. *RAISING INTERFAITH CHILDREN: SPIRITUAL ORPHANS OR SPIRITUAL HEIRS?* New York, NY: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999 (156 pages, \$16.95).

Practical advice and respectful suggestions for dealing with an increasingly common experience.

Schroer, Silvia. *WISDOM HAS BUILT HER HOUSE: STUDIES ON THE FIGURE OF SOPHIA IN THE BIBLE*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000 (175 pages, \$24.95).

Sophia is increasingly popular in theological literature, inspired in large measure by the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. This collection of essays lays out some basics in a scholarly but accessible way.

Smith, Christine M. *RISKING THE TERROR: RESURRECTION IN THIS LIFE*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2001 (124 pages, \$14).

Resurrection takes many forms. Chris Smith preaches skillfully, persuasively on a variety of them.

Thatcher, Adrian. *MARRIAGE AFTER MODERNITY: CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE IN POSTMODERN TIMES*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999 (329 pages, \$19.95).

A first rate companion to Rosemary Radford Ruether's *Christianity and the Making of the Modern Family*. A sensible, open and generous approach.

Turner, Mary Donovan and Mary Lin Hudson. *SAVED FROM SILENCE: FINDING WOMEN'S VOICE IN PREACHING*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice

Press, 1999 (168 pages, \$17.99).

A patriarchal culture robs women of their voices. Finding one's voice in preaching, as in teaching, writing and the arts, is a crucial step toward wholeness.

Vidal, Kim S. *MOON UNDER HER FEET: WOMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2001 (123 pages, \$14).

A nice, simple model for using biblical texts to elicit more insights. Good worship and teaching materials as well as study questions.

Watson, Natalie, Hanna Strak and Brigitte Enzer-Probst. *THE WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN YEARBOOK*. Norwich, England: The Canterbury Press, 2001 (300 pages, 6.99 pounds).

A palm-sized calendar featuring vital information on women's organizations. This year's theme is healing, so there are plenty of useful resources on that as well.

Williams, Rosemary and Joanne Kabak. *A WOMAN'S BOOK OF MONEY AND SPIRITUAL VISION: PUTTING YOUR FINANCIAL VALUES INTO SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE*. Philadelphia, PA: Innisfree Press, Inc., 2001 (219 pages, \$15.95).

A workbook that outlines how to deal with money while practicing a spirituality of compassion. Good for seeing family patterns and feminine conditioning on financial matters.

THE MYSTIC'S WHEEL OF THE YEAR: A MULTIFAITH CALENDAR REFLECTING ECO-EGALITARIAN SPIRITUALITY. Washington, DC: Page Two, Inc. (PO Box 77167, Washington, DC 20013, 800-821-6604), 2001 (\$12).

A year's worth of Gods and Goddesses from a wide range of traditions. This calendar provides resources to overcome sexism and bring about world peace through attention to mystical themes of unity and inclusivity.



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WATER is a feminist educational center, a network of justice-seeking people that began in 1983 in response to the need for theological, ethical and liturgical development for and by women. We work locally, nationally and internationally doing programs and projects, publications and workshops, counseling, spiritual direction and liturgical planning which help people actualize feminist religious values and bring about social change. If you would like to subscribe for weekly updates from the office and occasional news from colleagues in the field, send a message to majordomo@hers.com with the words "subscribe water-l" (that's water-hyphen-letter "l", NOT number 1) in the body of the message.

Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, co-founders and co-directors

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WATER staff are active this spring. Pilgrim Press will release Diann

Neu's book, *Return Blessings: Ecofeminist Liturgies Renewing the Earth* in June. It will be available from WATER shortly. *Women's Rites: Feminist Liturgies for Life's Journey*, the next volume in WATER's new series with Pilgrim, will be due in the Fall.

Mary Hunt lectured on "Exercising Moral Creativity: Feminist Ethics in the War Years" for the Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center in New York City. She also lectured for the Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities in Minneapolis, MN, looking at "Religious Maturity: A Catholic Feminist View." She met there with the local Dignity chapter, as well as with an energetic group of Sisters of St. Joseph and School Sisters of Notre

Dame from Mankato. She also offered a workshop on RU-486 at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York.

Diann met with the Feminist Liturgy section of the American Academy of Liturgy and spoke about "Feminist Liturgies in a Global Context." She spent two weeks in Ghana, Africa, studying with Mercy Amba Oduyoye, Elizabeth Amoda and the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians for her Doctorate of Ministry in International Feminist Theology directed by Letty Russell and Shannon Clarkson. Diann participated in the panel discussion "Changes in Rituals of Passage: How is Feminism Impacting Religious Ritual?" sponsored by Auburn Theological Seminary in New York.

WATER staff lend their expertise to various boards. Mary Hunt is on the National Advisory Board of the Pacific School of

Religion's new Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. She is part of the Advisory Committee of the Gay and Lesbian Religious Archives, a project starting in Chicago. Mary is on the Steering Committee of the Progressive Religious Partnership that seeks to bring such values to public policy. She is an active member of the Clergy Advisory Board of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights. These cooperative efforts enrich all of us.

Diann is planning the liturgies for the July 2002 Federation of Christian Ministries conference in Orlando, FL. She coordinates the Women-Church Convergence.

WATER co-sponsored with All Souls

WATER at Large

Unitarian Church and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congrega-

tions' Washington Office for Faith in Action a reading by Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker from their new book

Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering and the Search for What Saves Us (Beacon, 2001). It makes a good read for study groups and classes wishing to wrestle with the implications of Christian Atone-ment theology. See Mary Hunt's interview with the authors in the April 2002 issue of *The Witness*.

Marge O'Gorman, a Franciscan Sister of Mary from St. Louis, is spending four months of her post-leadership sabbatical at WATER. Her tireless chasing of footnotes and data base update help enormously.

To invite WATER staff to help with your projects or to volunteer your skills to help the WATER community, call 301-589-2509 or email water@hers.com.