

waterwheel

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

Religious Renaissance

By Mary E. Hunt

Young people are increasingly interested in religion. A recent *New York Times* article ("Matters of Faith Find New Prominence on Campus," Alan Finder, May 2, 2007, p. A14) indicated that religion is on the rise on many campuses. From Harvard to Colgate, from Madison to Berkeley, according to this report, young people are engaging in religious search with renewed vigor. Who knew? We at WATER have a few clues as our intergenerational efforts unfold. Young women's wisdom is essential to our work so we welcome this trend and seek to enhance it.

Why is religion on the upswing in generations that are allegedly so plugged into their iPods and so busy instant messaging that they cannot possibly be spiritual? I have a few theories though I think the framing of the issue needs polishing. I do not think that young people are that much more/less religious than their ancestors. Rather, I think many people have such a narrow understand-

I observe that the intensity of experiences brought home via technology and the media also shapes the religious need.

The shootings at Virginia Tech made this clear. The place is sufficiently remote from major media markets so as to delay the impact of the tragedy until we could "be there," effectively delaying our response. The World Trade Center collapse was shown virtually live, given its location in a media saturated market. That made the spiritual impact of that tragedy more immediate. The soul and psyche need time to process, for which we turn to religion whether immediately or not.

Second, a less laudatory reason for the so-called revival of religion has to do with its commodification. The *Times* piece talked about "gastro-evangelism," the fact that many college-based religious groups serve food, knowing that students are always hungry and that multi-tasking—eating and talking—makes

Why is religion on the upswing in generations that are allegedly so plugged into their iPods and so busy instant messaging that they cannot possibly be spiritual?

ing of religion that they do not recognize religious questions when they are asked. Listening to and working with young women in recent years, I have learned a great deal.

First, the increasing instability of a world we know increasingly more about is unnerving. It is amazing to be able to use mapping technology to hone in on a street in Baghdad. But it is frustrating not to be able to stop a government from bombing it. Up jumps the religious question "why" and the religious intuition to try to do something about it. This is not new. But

good organizing sense. I think there is something else going on as well, namely, the commercialization of spirituality.

Just as Americans can select from dozens of breakfast cereals, so too is there a dizzying array of religious options. On the one hand, this makes one's religious tradition more appealing because it is familiar and "true" in a sea of options. On the other hand, it tempts one to "shop around" a little before finding one that "fits." Both approaches have their

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Words from the Alliance...

We receive emails, letters, notes, and phone calls daily from WATER colleagues and friends around the world who support our work. Here is a sampling...



Every project of WATER, without exception, is worthwhile! To use your own words, "what a broad-based, diverse, and international alliance of feminists in religion" you are!!! Presently, I'm most interested in your projects: *Season of Survival: Prayers and Rituals for Women with Cancer*, and *Collaborating for Change*. Blessings on all you do.

Mary Ellen, Manchester, NH



I always love getting the *WATERwheel* and especially today, as we continue to cope with the effects of last week's October surprise storm in western New York. I look forward to reading it this evening. Peace in all!

Bea, Buffalo, NY



I never meant to let this connection lapse—"stuff" got in the way. I've missed *WATERwheel*! Thanks for all you do to keep those life-giving streams flowing.

Patricia, Nyack, NY



Thanks for the wonderful ritual making/ sharing you are doing. Feliz día de la Amistad a todos! Con paz,

Kitty, Matagalpa, Nicaragua



Editorial

Do clothes really make the woman? Or is there simply more sexism as women move into increasingly powerful positions? We suspect the latter given the countless instances of media concern with women's hair and outfits.

Political figures are used to it. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's gorgeous clothes are often cited in articles about her politics. Hillary Clinton's hair would be news even if she did not have any. Yet ten white male presidential candidates can line up on stage in almost identical outfits and no one but late-night comedians mentions that they all look like they are on the same sports team, not to say like the board of an exclusive country club.

When newly appointed Washington, DC, Police Chief Cathy L. Lanier was interviewed by a radio host she was asked, of all things, about her uniform. Did she really need the tie and the handcuffs? She replied that no such uniform was available for a woman and that she wanted to dress like the officers she led. Fair enough. But what accounts for the inquiry? Men have worn the same uniform, carried the same hardware for generations with nary a peep. Did the interviewer expect she would wear a bathing suit on duty, maybe a tutu, perhaps an evening gown? If clothes are gendered, are jobs? Did he mean to imply she was not qualified? Is this the new way to reinforce women's subordination?

Religions are symbol laden and vexed. How we look, what choices we make about covering and adorning ourselves are symbols in that they say things about us for which words are unnecessary. Our right to choose in this instance may not include the right not to be criticized. But such comments say more about the speaker than the spoken about.

Just as we teach children not to point at people who are different, it is time to teach the media to pay attention to what matters—ideas, commitments, actions—and to ease off of comments on women's bodies. It is a short step from the seemingly innocent questions to the Don Imus-style offenses. Enough already.

Pass It On

If you know someone (or have a list of friends and relatives) with whom you'd like to share this issue, send us name and address and we'll mail a complimentary copy. For anyone who would like to receive *WATERwheel* on tape, we can arrange for audio transcription of the desired issue(s) with Volunteers for the Visually Handicapped at \$10 per tape. Contact WATER, 301-589-2509.

Young people learn this from their elders, but some elders need to relearn it from the young.

Religious...

(Continued from page 1)

advantages and disadvantages but they are all shaped by the market in ways that religion in centuries past was not.

Virtually everything can be bought and sold in this eBay world. Whether it is pagan rosary beads or a trip to one of the holy sites, whether it is a plastic model to make an imprint of the Virgin Mary on your breakfast toast or the latest aromatherapy product, religions are endlessly available. Relics and medals may be passé, but Podcasts and video footage make worship portable these days. Religious music ranges from chant to hip-hop, all downloadable. Rave masses and other techno modes convey the traditions. Is it any wonder young people are finding religion so fascinating? In addition to the age-old questions, the media by which religion is conveyed are trendy. This is as it should be. Radio and television made their contribution so it is time for new modes.

Third, I think religion is experiencing a sort of renaissance because some religious practices just make good sense. For example, attention to food and friends, to sharing and solidarity improve the quality of our personal and collective lives. Taking Sabbath time and retreat weekends, fasting and feasting by turns all add texture and layers to life that break the monotony of the daily routine. Young people learn this from their elders, but some elders need to relearn it from the young.

It is a truism that young people generally leave their faith traditions as teens only to return again when they partner and/or welcome children into their families. But if this new trend really pans out it seems that this

pattern may be disrupted. It may be that we can expect more young people to take a higher profile role in their religious communities than in recent generations. I would welcome that and also need to adjust to it.

It is easy to get complacent about religion—used to the symbols and cycles without paying them much heed after a while. But a probing conversation with a young person who has made a lot of money in a short time and now wonders if that's all there is was sufficient to make me rethink my own faith. A good chat with a student who is struggling to find her/his way in graduate school reminds me that religions are dynamic activities. They rely on their adherents to keep them fresh and relevant. Religions are what we make of them, not simply what we inherit, reject and/or embrace. That is not an insight for young people only.

I admire and participate in several efforts to mentor women—like the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Women's Caucus and Status of Women in the Profession Committee's annual mentoring lunch and the Society of Christian Ethics' efforts to make senior volunteers available to newer colleagues. But I propose that we continue this work with a turn of the tables.

Let's ask young people to mentor those of us who are more seasoned. Let's listen to their views not only on career-related issues but on their religious faith and practice. Let's let go of the religious reins long enough to be led by our children and theirs. There is no telling what power may be unleashed.

Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., is cofounder and codirector of WATER.

In Memory of Her

From JANE THOMEY ROESCHLEY, Graymont, IL: In honor of *Anna Beth Roeschley's* graduation from Bluffton University, May 2007.

From HOPE BAUERLIN, osf, Silver Spring, MD: In memory of *Jo Anne Scott*, 62, inspiring teacher of Breastfeeding who died Sept. 18, 2006. She dedicated the later years of her life to establishing world

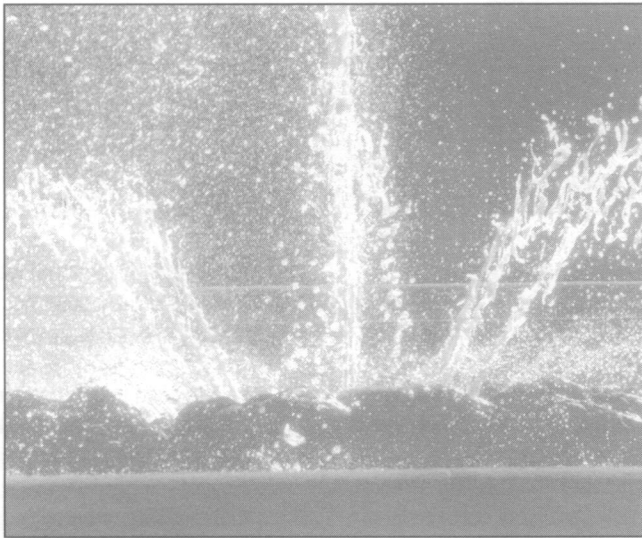
wide standards for licensing of Breastfeeding specialists. As someone said of her, "...No one has come close to her ambassadorial skill and global diplomacy."

From CAROLYN MOYNIHAN BRADT, Verona, WI: In honor of *Margaret Johnson* and her work as a Jesuit Volunteer.

From BETTY B. HOSKINS, Worcester, MA: In memory of *Joan W. Goodwin*.

From GLORIA CORDOVA, Los Alamos, NM: In memory of her deceased mother, *Cora (Carmona) Cordova*.

From DIANE RAPOZO, BVM, Dubuque, IA: In memory of the tenth anniversary of her *Mom's* death.



WATER Always Quenches the Thirst

By Shelley Seyler

I first stumbled upon the WATER Web site about two years ago, added it to my "favorites," and hoped someday I would be able to be involved with their work. What struck me most was the role of religion in their work. With religion as my minor, I was thirsty for a way to use this passion in the work environment. WATER was the best way for me to quench my thirst.

As a young woman, I knew I wanted to work for justice issues involving women. Again, WATER fulfilled this curiosity of mine. The many avenues through which they touch women continued to impress me as my journey with the office marched on. There is always a project in the works that serves the needs of women in some fashion. As a young woman engrossed in one of the most political colleges in the country, it was interesting for me to realize I was a bit of an anomaly: many of my friends do not consider themselves feminists. More consider themselves spiritual. In the beginning, it was unclear what I was searching for but I knew something was missing from my college experience. I needed to see how religion and feminism could be intertwined to make this world a better place; however, I did not know this was what I was searching for until I found WATER.

Religion and feminism all in one office? It seemed too good to be true. The energy in the office has a way of emboldening its participants. Nothing is expected of you except what you can conceivably do. Exposure to the various tasks of the office is never-ending, and the surprises that often creep up are always good ones: "Can you

write a summary of this cancer project?" Of course! Another way to learn about religion's role for women on the healing journey and participate in its exposure: just another day in the life of a WATER intern.

The latest event that I was privileged enough to help organize was Nicole Sotelo's discussion of her new book *Women Healing From Abuse, Meditations for Finding Peace*. This book is truly a gift for women victims of abuse as it fills a void in the books that strive to serve a similar audience. It was the consensus at the discussion that there is a need for a spiritual guide for women in their healing journeys. It was powerful to be able to witness the direct role of religion in helping women at such a difficult time in their lives. The two passions I came to WATER in search of filling were brought together in one night: a spiritual way to help women heal from the injustices they have faced.

When I proudly tell people where I intern, they listen intently to the name and say, "That is so perfect for you!" And it was. I am sad that the time has come to a close but know that I will take the grace and love that are within its walls with me as I proceed into the next adventure of my educational journey. I only hope that someday I can serve the world of religion and women with the same amount of acceptance and caring that WATER has shown me.

Shelley Seyler interned at WATER for 2006-7, graduated from American University, and begins a masters at the London School of Economics.

Re-connecting to Heal: Nicole Sotelo at WATER

By Shelley Seyler

In her new book *Women Healing From Abuse, Meditations for Finding Peace* (Paulist Press, 2006, 112 pages, \$10.95), Nicole Sotelo of Call to Action seeks to provide women with a spiritual path toward healing. On Monday, March 12th, Nicole graced the WATER office for a book reading and discussion on the topic. Aisha Taylor from the Women's Ordination Conference's Young Feminist Network co-sponsored the event.

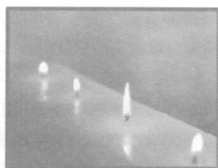
At the gathering of about fourteen women, Nicole shared some of the meditations and scripture included in the book. The discussion touched on various aspects of this issue but all women praised Nicole for her ability to seek healing through a faith perspective. It was something she identified as missing from the market and sought to fill it. The book began as her dissertation in graduate school and has become an important outlet for women healing from abuse.

Diann L. Neu of WATER said that this was a long over-looked aspect for women healing from abuse. Mary E. Hunt of WATER made the point that the book is accessible to women healing from different kinds of abuse and can therefore touch a greater audience.

There was a consensus that Nicole's book is a much needed resource to reconnect the woman with God, the Divine, or however one is able to relate. This is an intrinsic part of the healing process that is too often overlooked. This disconnect can come as a direct result of the abuse, making it that much more important that the woman be able to reestablish this connection.



Prayer is back, or has it ever left? We, our friends, family, and colleagues need prayers — for healing, solidarity, gratitude, peace, living. The following prayers were written for a variety of situations. Pray one for yourself, send the energy to someone you know who needs it most, or create your own prayer.



Grant Me Healing

O God! Grant me healing.

Healing in my eyes, healing in my ears;
Healing on my skin, healing in my blood;
Healing in my bones, healing within me;
Healing on my tongue, healing in my feet;
Healing in front of me, healing behind me;
Healing above me, healing below me;
Healing on my left, healing on my right.

Wisdom Sophia! Grant me healing.

Healing in my hands, healing on my face;
Healing in my breasts (or where they were);
Healing in my ovaries (or where they were);
Healing in my womb (or where it was);
Healing in my lungs, healing in my heart;
Healing in front of me, healing behind me;
Healing above me, healing below me;
Healing in my body, healing in my soul.

Companion on the Journey! Grant me healing.

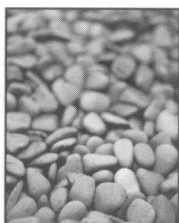


Breath of Life

Breathe in healing.
Breathe out pain. (3x)

*Blessed are you, Breath of Life,
For you give me life,
And you will take it away some day.*

Breathe in healing.
Breathe out pain. (3x)



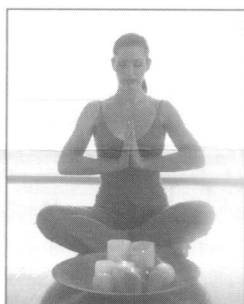
A Healing Stone

Pick a stone, or ask someone to give you one.

In Celtic mythology, stones have healing qualities. They activate the power of holy wells.

Let this stone symbolize your healing powers and the healing powers of your community of medical personnel, family, friends, and colleagues.

Hold this healing stone when you need healing — going into surgery, facing a painful situation, remembering past hurts.

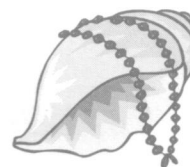


Prayer / Energy Chain

Ask a friend to create a prayer chain for you to help you through a need. She can contact friends who agree to pray at specific times of the day and even locate a few self-described insomniacs who can volunteer to pray during the night.

Knowing that you are receiving constant prayer can fill you with relief and gratitude. Be blessed and deeply comforted knowing that you are being remembered in prayer at all times of the day and night. You will know, beyond a doubt, that you are never alone.

Let loved ones know the day and time you need their presence. Ask them to remember you then. You could request that they pray a favorite prayer, sing a special song, have 5-15 minutes of silence, visualize your favorite flower, hold a special stone or shell, light a candle, and send you healing energy.



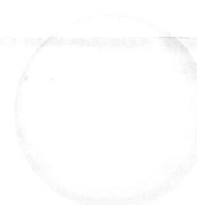
Beads of Solidarity

Invite friends to gather with you to create beads for a specific situation like an anniversary, a surgery, a special event.

Ask each to bring a bead, add it to a communal string, and say a vocal prayer for you.

Wear this necklace or bracelet as a tangible reminder that your friends are with you.

Prayers for By Diana

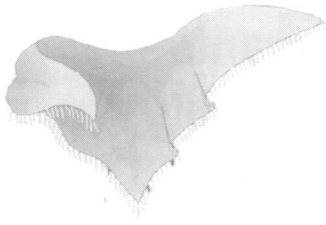


A Ball of Healing Energy

Imagine a ball of healing energy—perhaps a white light—forming somewhere in your body. Close your eyes and “see” this ball. Breathe in, and blow the ball of energy to a part of your body where you feel pain, tension, stress, or discomfort such as nausea. Breathe out, and blow the ball of energy away from your body, taking with it your feelings of pain, tension, stress, or discomfort.

Continue to picture the ball moving toward you and away from you as you breathe in and out. The ball may get bigger and bigger as it takes away more and more pain and tension.

When you are ready to end, count to three slowly, breathe in deeply, open your eyes, say to yourself, “I feel alert and relaxed.”



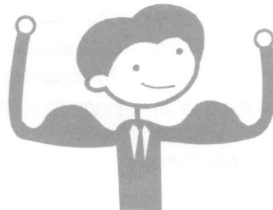
Prayer Shawl

Ask a friend or your community to make you a prayer shawl, or give you one. Or choose one you already have.

Put it on when you are cold, when you need the comfort of loved ones, or when you want to pray and do, or do not, have words.

The Worry Box provides you with a concrete way of saying, "Enough! I want to live my life and make the most of each and every day."

*Compassionate Holy One,
Take my worries
That I may live
And make the most
Of each and every day.*



Relaxation for Your Muscles

Lie down in a quiet place. Take a slow, deep breath. As you breathe in, tense a muscle or group of muscles. For example, make a fist. Hold your breath and keep your muscles tense for a few seconds. Breathe out, release the tension, and let your body relax. Repeat the process with another muscle or group of muscles. For example, tense your back or squeeze your eyes shut.

Try this variation. Tense and relax your toes on your left foot. Working upward, tense and relax all the muscles of your left leg. Do the same with your right toes and leg. Tense and relax the muscles of one hand, then another... stomach... arms... back... shoulders... neck... face... head... scalp... all muscles and muscle groups. Remember to hold your breath while tensing your muscles and to breathe out when releasing the tension.

ailments. Water is a healing and regenerative force. It facilitates life. It is spoken of as the source, the healer, the transformer, the spring of ancient wisdom.

Look at the well. Visualize the healing powers of the water. Visualize your healing powers.

Visualize sitting under a waterfall in Hawaii, or your favorite place.

Visualize the water flowing over you

and washing away _____.

*Water... Flowing... Flowing over me.
Washing... Washing away _____
Breathing in ... Peace... Calm... Healing.
Breathing out... Negativity... _____
Water... Flowing... Flowing over me.*

For Living L. Neu

*My sister,
snuggle into your prayer shawl.
Hold it close.*

*Know that we love you,
And that we are with you
as you deal with ____.*

You are never alone.

We are holding you close, always.



The Worry Box

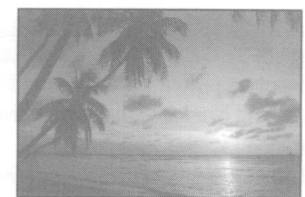
Worrying about your decisions.... Worrying about the impact of all that has happened on your family.... Worrying about the future.... Worrying about your children.... Worrying about _____.... Worrying about EVERYTHING....

Find a box. Decorate it (for example, glue colorful scraps of wrapping paper on the top). Inside it, each morning, tuck handwritten notes about your worries and fears. Then close the lid and go on with the rest of the day—walk in the woods, listen to music, go to work, go grocery shopping, pay bills, cuddle with your child to read a book....

Visualization with Water

Fill your favorite bowl with water to represent a sacred well.

Holy wells through the ages have been believed to have healing powers that cure



Gratitude for Today

Counting three blessings each night as you lay down contributes to your well-being.

*As I end this day
Before I go to sleep
I am grateful for three blessings.*

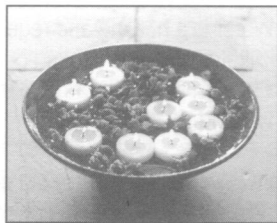
(Name them. Write them in a 'grateful journal'.)



Blessing for Peace That I May Sleep

May peace be within me.
May peace be around me.
May peace be mine in eternal life.

Diann L. Neu, D.Min., LGSW, is cofounder and codirector of WATER.



WATER Works

WATER works with many other organizations, following the wisdom of the Grail that insists that "together we are a genius." No need to reinvent the social justice wheel, and every reason to work together on common projects. A few examples of recent collaborations illustrate how effective "we" can be:

- Mary's Pence (www.maryspence.org) funds women's projects; Diann Neu serves on their board.
- The Women-Church Convergence (www.women-churchconvergence.org) is a coalition of 36 Catholic feminist groups; Mary Hunt and Diann Neu are working on program and liturgy for the 25th anniversary Conference (see below).
- The Religious Institute on Sexual Morality, Justice and Healing (www.religiousinstitute.org/) convenes religious leaders to speak in one voice on critical issues; Mary Hunt added her views to a statement on sexual diversity.
- The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies in Religion and Ministry (www.clgs.org/) is the go-to place in its field; Mary Hunt took part in their think tank on the future of gay studies co-sponsored with Emory University.
- Lots of work is needed on reproductive justice for which the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (www.rcrc.org) is a hub; Mary Hunt shared with their board her analysis of the new conservative strategy to use some women's "regrets" about their abortions as reasons to overturn Roe v. Wade.
- RCRC's Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom (<http://www.rcrc.org/programs/syrf.cfm>) has a phenomenal campus outreach; Mary Hunt joined their interreligious teams for panels at American, George Washington, and Harvard Universities.
- The Indiana RCRC (www.ircrc.org) is an active local group; Mary Hunt's lecture on being "Catholic, Pro-Choice and Optimistic" is available on WATER's Web site.

We value this collaborative work and look forward to more of it. We take Bernice Johnson Reagon's words to heart: "If you're in a coalition and you're comfortable, you know it's not a broad enough coalition." Stay tuned for more.

Bi-National Servants— A Global Community

By Mary E. Hunt

Some ideas are so smart I wish I had thought of them myself! The Bi-National Service Program (www.binationalservants.org) is one of them. It is an ecumenical covenant community founded in 1970, related to the Presbyterian Church (USA) through the Worldwide Ministries Division. Through annual Weeks of Work, economic sharing, and networking Bi-Nationals, of which I am now one, commit ourselves to engage in peace and justice work in local settings throughout the world.

BNS is often referred to as another brainchild of the indomitable Margaret Flory. Margaret retired decades ago from the Presbyterian Church (USA) after a distinguished career that included sparking programs such as Frontier Internship in Mission and Junior Year Abroad and encouraging the World Student Christian Federation. She was of an era when women in church bureaucracies were unsung but endlessly creative! Now in her nineties and still active, Margaret's work with inclusive forms of mission led her to appreciate the need for follow-up for people whose lives were changed by international experiences. Her many connections to people around the world and her commitment to global justice helped shape this creative group of people whose lives have been transformed permanently by living in cultures other than their own. The vision was that people be able to rely on one another as resources, as eyes and ears on the ground in places where solidarity is needed. Bi-Nationals make global community concrete.

A recent Week of Work in Washington, DC, brought several dozen colleagues from around the world for two days of sharing, briefings, and prayer, followed by a weekend at the

Ecumenical Advocacy Days (www.ecumenicaladvocacydays.org), an annual gathering of religious peace and justice workers. BNS people invited Jennifer Butler of Faith in Public Life (www.faithinpubliclife.org) to talk about her new book, *Born Again: The Christian Right Globalized*, adding experience and analysis to her insightful volume.

It all sounds rather vague until you meet the people. BNS folks include Chess and Gary Campbell, back from decades in Mexico and Nicaragua; Leon Howell, an eminent religious journalist; Ann-Cathrin Jarl, a priest who is chaplain to the Archbishop of Sweden; Ajit Abraham, an Indian graduate student in ethics at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley; Alice Hageman, a lawyer in Boston who concerns herself with international human rights; and Mary Jane Patterson, a retired church bureaucrat whose theo-political savvy rivals all, among many others.

To attend a BNS meeting is to be moved by the deep commitment of people who continue their activism throughout their lives; not a fair weather radical in the crowd. To read the annual reports each one files and to receive periodic updates on activities and calls for collaboration is to be reminded that this is a good model for others to consider. As "bi-national" quickly becomes "global," and as "Christian" organizing quickly gives way to "multi-faith" justice work, I hope others, beginning with women who have had such life-changing experiences as working in another country, can—will—organize themselves into similar communities. If globalization is to have any positive aspects it is going to be in the ways in which we reconfigure the world from the ground up. Bi-National Service is a good first step.



Celebrating Catholic Feminist Ministries: A Women-Church Forum

August 17 -19, 2007 * Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago

The member groups of Women-Church Convergence invite you to a weekend of sharing, worship, exploration, and festivity! Join us for our 25th anniversary! Come experience the power of Divine Wisdom-Spirit in our midst!

www.women-churchconvergence.org
wccconference2007@yahoo.com
 415.381.7144

Ackerman, Denise M. *AFTER THE LOCUSTS: LETTERS FROM A LANDSCAPE OF FAITH*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003 (180 pages, \$21).

Want to read something smart? Try these letters (to her mother, children, friends) by a South African feminist theologian who handles the "big questions" of theology in the context of post apartheid South Africa. A wonderful genre and some fabulous insights.

Bizk, Bonnie A. *CHRISTINE DE PIZAN AND BIBLICAL WISDOM: A FEMINIST-THEOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2005 (202 pages, \$23).

Fifteenth century writer Christine de Pizan made Sophia Wisdom a subject of central concern. The insights help contemporary efforts to revitalize this way of naming the Divine.

Block, Jennie Weiss. *COPIOUS HOSTING: A THEOLOGY OF ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES*. New York: Continuum, 2002 (183 pages, \$19.95).

Religious groups need remedial help on being inclusive of people with disabilities. This book is a good primer.

Coleman, Monica A. *THE DINA PROJECT: A HANDBOOK FOR CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSES TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004 (177 pages, \$23).

An important voice in the discussion, Monica Coleman lays out the hard problems of rape, what to do to prevent and deal with sexual violence.

Davis, Tom. *SACRED WORK: PLANNED PARENTHOOD AND ITS CLERGY ALLIANCES*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005 (245 pages, \$24.95).

The untold story of religious leaders supporting choice through secular organizations is all the more important as the Supreme Court erodes choice. Tom Davis tells it like he lived it with care, compassion, and urgency.

Goldstein, Elyse. *THE WOMEN'S HAFTARAH COMMENTARY: NEW INSIGHTS FROM WOMEN RABBIS ON THE 54 WEEKLY HAFTARAH POTIONS, THE 5 MEGILLOT & SPECIAL SHABBATOT*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2004 (499 pages, \$39.99).

Women rabbis from Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist movements bring their various perspectives to bear on these texts.

Resources

The imagery is amazing and the insights gleaned for living in right relation make this an important volume.

Hinston-Hasty, Elizabeth L. *BEYOND THE SOCIAL MAZE*. New York: T & T Clark, 2006 (167 pages, \$40).

This learned look at the life and work of Vida Dutton Scudder introduces her to a broader audience. Scudder was a professor of English at Wellesley for many years, but distinguished herself as an Anglican practitioner of the Social Gospel at a time when women's roles were circumscribed.

LaRue, Cleophus J. *THIS IS MY STORY: TESTIMONES AND SERMONS OF BLACK WOMEN IN MINISTRY*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005 (203 pages, \$24.95).

Thirteen African American women each tell their stories and share a sermon. The combination demonstrates how experience plays out in preaching in powerful ways.

Levine, Amy-Jill. *A FEMINIST COMPANION* Series. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, various years (various lengths, \$21 per volume).

This unique series of commentaries (one each on Matthew, Mark, Luke, Paul, Acts of the Apostles, Catholic Epistles and Hebrews, Deutero-Pauline Epistles, New Testament Apocrypha, and Mariology) is a valuable resource for feminist biblical studies. Each volume contains a dozen or so essays by world class scholars who probe the texts for feminist significance.

Livingstone, Glenys. *PAGAN COSMOLOGY: RE-INVENTING EARTH-BASED GODDESS RELIGION*. New York: iUniverse, 2005 (339 pages, \$23.95).

These pagan insights and rituals have transfer value to many Earth-based traditions. The scope is extensive and the research thorough.

Murray, Anne Firth. *PARADIGM FOUND: LEADING AND IMAGINING FOR POSITIVE CHANGE*. Novato, CA: New World Library (256 pages, \$14.95).

The creation of the Global Fund for Women was a collective task. But Anne Firth Murray's vision and leadership were indispensable. She shares

the "inside story" here—inside her warm, insightful self, inside a now flourishing 21st century women's organization, and inside the non-profit world where it is all too easy to let a patriarchal corporate mindset derail feminist values.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *FEMINIST THEOLOGIES: LEGACY AND PROSPECT*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007 (175 pages, \$20).

The end of the Center for Women and Religion at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley and the beginning of a proposed gender studies program occasioned this symposium on feminist theology. These essays shaped the dialogue on the history of the field and its contemporary challenges. A good collection for classes and groups wishing to get the big picture as well as a very specific slice of one organization's life.

Schottroff, Luise. *THE PARABLES OF JESUS*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006 (288 pages, \$18).

Parables read through a feminist lens with attention to the literary and social contexts come alive with new meaning for solidarity. Useful for preachers as well as scholars.

Shepherd, Loraine MacKenzie. *FEMINIST THEOLOGIES FOR A POSTMODERN CHURCH*. Washington, DC: Peter Lang, 2002 (252 pages, \$29.95).

A good introduction to the use of critical, liberative feminist work (Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Kwok Pui-lan, and Kathryn Tanner) to develop theological methods adequate for contemporary faith and practice.

Smith, Andrea. *CONQUEST: SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND AMERICAN INDIAN GENOCIDE*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005 (246 pages, \$18).

Brilliant scholarship, insightful analysis, painful reality, and pragmatic suggestions make this a watershed book in Native American Studies. Andrea Smith shows how violence against Native women erodes community and contributes to social and environmental degradation. Read it and weep, then do something!

Ulterioro, Gloria. *DRAWING FROM WISDOM'S WELL*. Notre Dame, IN:

Ave Maria Press, 2002 (223 pages, \$17.95).

Feminist scriptural scholarship is reflected in these creative liturgies. Wisdom's well is a rich resource for critique of institutional churches and creation of supportive prayer forms.

See also her *WALKING WITH WISDOM'S DAUGHTERS: TWELVE CELEBRATIONS AND STORIES OF WOMEN OF PASSION AND FAITH*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2006 (224 pages, \$19.95).

This collection includes liturgies focused on Lydia, Catherine of Siena, Brigit of Ireland, etc., giving new ideas to worship groups that want to expand their repertoires. The one on resisting violence is strong and clear; the one on the 4 U.S. women killed in El Salvador reminds us that exemplary women live in all times including our own.

Vermot-Mangold. *1000 PEACE-WOMEN ACROSS THE GLOBE*. Zurich, Switzerland: Scalo Verlag, 2005, (2208 pages, \$33, see <http://www.1000peacewomen.org/>).

Biographies of these 1000 women would make good daily reading for three years. *WATER* colleagues Dorothy Rupert, Anne Firth Murray, Maria Jose Rosado Nunes, among others, grace this inspiring compendium of women peacemakers.

Watson, Natalie K. *FEMINIST THEOLOGY*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2003 (110 pages, \$15).

The title is a bit misleading as this is really a Christian compendium of sources (including an annotated bibliography) for the beginner in the field. But it serves as a welcoming introduction that can be built upon.

Weinberg, Janet Amalia. *STILL GOING STRONG: MEMOIRS, STORIES, AND POEMS ABOUT GREAT OLDER WOMEN*. New York: Haworth Press, 2006 (293 pages, \$22.95).

Delightful essays and poetry about women growing older with wisdom, grace, and pluck! May their numbers multiply.

For Children

Brooks, Jeremy with illustrations by Elena Gomez. *A WORLD OF PRAYERS*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books, 2004 (34 pages, \$16).

A lovely first prayer book with offerings from around the world. For example, from China: "Each time we eat, May we remember God's love."



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**"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth
find reserves of strength that will endure
as long as life lasts." —Rachel Carson**



This is the 100th anniversary of Rachel Carson. Born 27 May 1907 and a resident of Silver Spring, MD, she is considered the founder of the contemporary environmental movement through her landmark book, *Silent Spring*.

**WATER invites you and yours to take time
to contemplate the beauty of the earth
and to work for its survival.**

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