

water wheel

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

The Editors Speak

The start of a new administration in Washington usually means fresh winds of change. No such luck this time. The Bush/Quayle years promise more, and more of the same. Heavy spending on the inauguration reflects a sinister sense of entitlement. Just outside the pomp and pageantry homeless, hungry people live in the capital of murder and drug addiction. This is the immediate context for our work as WATER.

We cannot create a liturgy, dream up a workshop, nor write a word without being aware that structural injustice undergirds U.S. society. We tremble at the thought of serious erosion of reproductive rights that looms large in the courts. We understand that the handling of the deficit in Washington will affect the lives of people around the world, hitting women and children especially hard. We see how racism continues to assure that people of color, especially Afro-Americans, will be discriminated against in all sectors of society.

Our work, far from being removed from the "big picture," isolated in a swirl of spirituality that lifts us beyond such pedestrian matters, is set smack dab in the midst of it all. That's where we should be. That's where we will stay. That's where change must take place.

In addition to strenuous efforts for change in this country, one way to counter the privatized approach that retards change is to form concrete working relationships with sister groups in other countries. Their insights help us to see our own situation differently. We share resources and build bridges that give us a concrete experience of new forms of human community in the meantime. We tell the story of "Women Crossing Worlds" in this newsletter.

"In Praise of Hands" is an example of shared prayer that can be adapted easily for many groups. We encourage you to begin, even in small gestures of letter writing and resource sharing, of prayer and celebration to extend your local work of concrete solidarity to include women's groups in other countries.

The face of "official Washington" will not change much in the next four (Goddess forbid, eight) years. But we can change our own faces by softening into smiles when we join our sisters from around the globe "making all things new" for our generation and for our children. This is WATER's hope as a new administration begins

Women Crossing Worlds-- A Feminist Model Of Mission

by Mary E. Hunt

Mission is a dirty word in progressive religious circles. It connotes imperialistic do-gooders transplanting their customs, beliefs and possessions to foreign soil in order to convert the natives to the right way of being religious. Granted, many good people have gone on mission with lofty ideals and deep respect. I think of the Maryknoll Sisters as the most consistent example of this. But the history of Christian mission, especially considering what happened to those to whom missionaries felt sent, is a source of embarrassment.

Instead of returning as an individual, I convinced some U.S. friends to join me for an annual sojourn of lectures, workshops, liturgies, interviews, visits, endless meals and late nights with women who are making feminist faith-filled inroads throughout the Southern Cone. We visit their homes and enjoy their favorite beaches. We work in their headquarters, join them at the prisons where dissidents have been held, and meet their colleagues in an effort to expand all of our horizons. We cuddle their babies, marvel at their art, and learn how

"Women Crossing Worlds" began, like most enduring projects, with a small circle of friends.

"Women Crossing Worlds" (cf. "WATER In The Southern Cone") is WATER's on-going exchange of people and resources with women's groups in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. After five years of this rich relationship, I begin to see the contours of a new feminist understanding of mission emerging. I share them in the hope that readers who are engaged in similar projects will join me in reclaiming the concept of mission into something personally vibrant and politically useful.

"Women Crossing Worlds" began, like most enduring projects, with a small circle of friends. My teaching and feminist activism in Argentina in the early '80's came to a formal end when my internship was over. But the personal ties to friends there were to be nourished far beyond what I ever imagined. Mabel Filippini of the Centro de Estudios Cristianos invited me to continue my work with women's groups for the next three years. Travel funds from the United Methodist Church made it possible, and off I went.

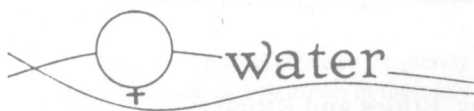
they see the world.

What had been person to person contacts have become, over time, persons to persons, eventually groups to groups. We discovered that other U.S. women were doing the same thing, for example, some Sisters of Charity with missionaries in Chile, a lawyer for battered women with Mexican feminists. We formed a loose U.S. based network to pool our resources and strengthen our efforts. We were all crossing into one another's worlds, a messy, sometimes tense, but always privileged way of being global women-church. It is in that context that I began to rethink mission.

Women-Church and Mission

Women-church is a movement of base communities of justice-seeking friends who live faithfully through sacrament and solidarity, putting women's well being at the center of our

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

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Women Crossing Worlds

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concern. Feminists of faith throughout the world are engaged in this process. It is as women-church that we are evolving a new model of mission, one that links us with the Christian tradition but takes the tradition some place new.

When we evaluated what we were doing, at first we shied away from saying that we were visiting friends. Ecumenical tourism is simply unjustifiable. We searched for bureaucratic language to justify what we do best. We deepen our ties through common work, shared resources and plain good hospitality. We make one another feel welcome in our respective cultures and interpret the events of the day (Argentine disappearances and U.S. Reaganism, for example) through each others' eyes. It is hard to write a grant proposal for such mundane activities, yet they matter as much as the lectures, press work and weekend workshops that we do which provide more easily understandable structures and vehicles for common work. We value all of these.

We insist that **both** those who go and those who receive are equally active. Imagine if we set up institutes to teach people how to receive people from the outside as well as those that teach people how to go abroad responsibly. Mission in this sense is based on the notion that we are part of a world church in which the content of the faith itself is shaped and molded by the people, customs, climate, geography, history, politics and, most of all, economics of a place.

The essence of what we have learned is that mission is not so much an activity as a relationship of accountability between and among people and groups. It is a way of guaranteeing continually fresh input to a community from people who come from outside. Doors need to be open and access to travel and the possibility of being away from home need to be socialized.

Mission means that the outsiders are welcomed and cared for while they are abroad, and just as intentionally they are sent home when the time comes. Those who do the receiving

The essence of what we have learned is that mission is not so much an activity as a relationship of accountability...

As women-church, northern and southern women have at least three things in common that influence our models of mission. First, we take religion seriously as an important dimension of our corporate life. At the same time we view it critically insofar as it has been deeply biased against women's well-being. Second, we seek to use the resources of our faith traditions in the service of structural change. This is a personal commitment and a political strategy. Third, we believe that communal celebration enhances the quality of life. We see celebration as a necessity not a luxury. These commonalities cut through doctrinal differences and motivate us to work together as religious agents, as women crossing worlds.

Mission, contrary to its bad rap, is the traditional dimension of the Christian faith that names this relationship. Mission in feminist terms means both going to another culture and being received by people there as friends. We have long since surpassed the notion of "reverse mission," an idea that has been in vogue theologically but still presumes that the active party is the one who goes and the passive partner is the one who receives even though they do change roles.

decide how long they will stay. Crossing happens in all directions, not simply north to south but east to west, rural to urban, Chile to Argentina, and so on. The one who goes, sees and is sent home has the obligation to communicate what she has learned to her own community of accountability in her own country. As lots of groups begin to do this we can foster a global church as women without any of us becoming gadflies.

Relationships of mission endure. As "women crossing worlds" we have "promised a permanent presence" in the Southern Cone. We are not about to switch to Zimbabwe, for example. We depend on others to relate there now so we connect with women-church groups that have similar commitments in different places. For example, we at WATER have limited ourselves for now to the Southern Cone, but we trust that our friends at the Quixote Center are in relationship with women in Central America and that our Grail friends are in relationship with South Africans. We cannot all take off for months or years abroad. So we rely on other members of our communities who can to foster the relationships in our names. Likewise, those of us who do engage in international living are ill advised to spend ourselves too thin.

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WATER In The Southern Cone

What do you do when you go to Latin America? Is it useful to visit for a few weeks rather than stay for a few years? Do you ever think about going back? These are questions we always hear when we return from our periodic trips south.

"Women Crossing Worlds" in Buenos Aires, Argentina means to...

- give two lectures at Lugar de Mujer (a women's center) on women-church, feminist ethics and liturgical advances

- visit "Mitominas," a multi-media feminist exhibit aimed at overcoming prejudices and breaking taboos; this year's focus was on women and blood

- present a liturgy workshop at the local seminaria (ISEDET), including plans for liturgies for the loss of a child, adoption, moving to a new home

- meet with Grupo de Esperanza, an inter-faith women's group (including Orthodox women) to discuss feminist theology

- strategize with colleagues at Centro de Estudios Cristianos on exchange of support staff to spread computer knowledge

- consult with CEC staff on how to approach with church groups the ethical issues surrounding AIDS

- consult with Taller Permanente de la Mujer on future Latin American women's efforts to do justice from a feminist faith perspective

In Montevideo, Uruguay it means to...

- lecture for a group at PLEMU (the largest women's organization) on advances in feminist and womanist theology with thoughts about what a truly erotic theology would be

- celebrate a liturgy including the hand blessing with an eager group gathered, strategically, at a high school run by Teresianas

- give radio interviews; meet the press both secular and feminist for what turned into wonderful articles in major newspapers

- plan with the Ecumenical Women's Group for an upcoming course on feminist ethics

In Santiago, Chile, a bit of a stop over to greet friends and to...

- learn the progress of the Casa Sofia, a women's center in a poor barrio now specializing in mental health and literacy work

- pop into ISIS to see their incredible communications network with women all over the continent

- visit the Vicaria de la Solidaridad for more arpilleras that support craftswomen there and remind us of our part in international solidarity

All this in two weeks? You haven't heard the half of it. Nobody said it was a Caribbean cruise. But why not stay longer? We would if we could but we don't think we should. Our work in the U.S., especially in Washington where foreign policy decisions are made that affect the world, is an important piece of a concerted strategy for change.

Wouldn't you like to go back? Of course we would and we will. Plans are brewing to take a small group of women from the U.S. for an exchange program of a few weeks. And plans are nearly complete for CEC's staff person, Estela Furlani, to join us for a bit. Women keep crossing worlds with concrete results: new programs, deepened insights and stronger networks of friends engaged in social change.

Women Crossing...

(continued from page 2)

Mistakes in Mission

We have learned a great deal from our mistakes. Sometimes we are too enthusiastic about our own ideas. Listening skills are key. Other times we are so timid, so afraid of stepping on toes that we do not push hard enough on a concept or project that would really make a difference. The balance between cultural imperialism and passivity is delicate.

We have found, to no one's surprise, that feminist work in our various countries differs decidedly. Efforts to impose solutions on non-existent problems are doomed. For example, the ordination of women is not a concern everywhere just because we debate it.

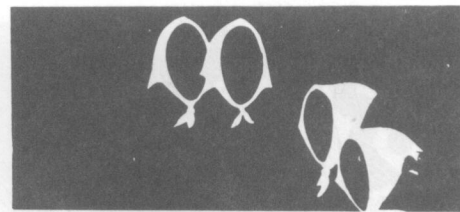
Language errors are legend. We have said we were pregnant when we meant that we were embarrassed! But the need to communicate in our hostesses' languages and not in English cannot be overemphasized. So we bumble

along...Still we cross worlds, confident that the crossing itself, sometimes flailing our arms, is worth the effort.

Onward

I do not expect that mainline denominations will drop their missionary efforts in response to WATER's implicit critique of their sometimes imperious styles. But I do know that we are well accompanied as women-church when our friends from the Southern Cone visit, work in our offices, live in our homes, and share our bread and wine. They do for us what we do for them when we visit. They bring new attitudes, fresh insights and strong faith. They make me think anew about the hows and whys of things I take for granted. Ours is a relationship of accountability that I cultivate with gratitude. I can only recommend it.

Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., feminist liberation theologian, is co-director of WATER.



Mary Remains A Powerful Symbol

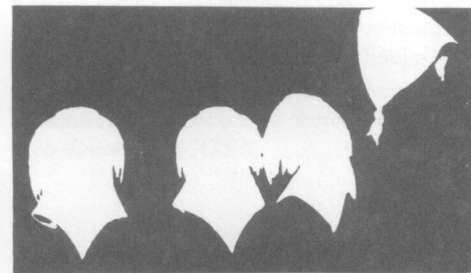
Two unrelated incidents regarding the Virgin Mary in Argentina gave feminists pause recently. On a Buenos Aires talk show, with the requisite obnoxious host, a writer made a crass remark about the Virgin Mary's anatomy. Smoke began to swirl as government and church officials rushed to her defense. Everyone from the president to the highest church officials deplored the remark and proclaimed that it showed the corruption of society.

The host of the show was promptly punished and the station was prevented from accepting advertising money for a period as reparations for this "divine behind" incident. Religious feminists used the attention to press for respect for all women about whom such remarks are made constantly and with impunity. If it cannot be said of Mary, then it cannot be said of any woman.

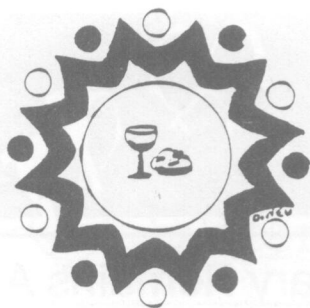
In the northern part of the country, a priest in the rural parish of Tilcara caused a stir by washing the feet of one of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo (mothers of the disappeared) on Holy Thursday. During the Good Friday liturgy he continued the connection by having a white handkerchief, the symbol of the Mothers, tied on the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The local bishop, to whose attention the acts were drawn by local conservatives, branded them unacceptable. The priest was ordered to leave the parish where he had been instrumental in building a strong Christian community.

The moral of these stories is that Mary remains a powerful symbol, especially in Latin America. Would that the respect accorded her be spread to all women. Would that her "preferential option for the struggling poor" were not so threatening. More power to her.



White-kerchiefed heads from logo of Madres de Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Feminist Liturgies Available

WATERworks Press offers three liturgy books that can help you and your group celebrate Lent / Easter / Passover.

Miriam's Sisters Rejoice

A Seder for Holy Thursday and Passover by Diann Neu, Tobie Hofman, Barbara Cullom, Mindy Shapiro

Complete 34-page script includes music and recipes, 1-2 copies / \$5 each; 3-9 copies / \$4.50 each; 10 or more \$3.50 each.

Women-Church Celebrations (in a new form) Feminist Liturgies for the Lenten Season by Diann Neu

Complete Scripts for Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, The Easter Vigil, including feminist music, poetry, readings and bibliography, \$8.

A Seder of the Sisters of Sarah

A Passover and Holy Thursday Feminist Liturgy

by Diann Neu and Ronnie Levin

Complete 24-page script includes music, 1-2 copies / \$3.50; 3-9 copies / \$3 each; 10 or more copies / \$2.75 each.

Please enclose payment with orders. Make payment to:

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In Praise of Hands

by Diann Neu

Background: This is a healing service which praises women's work by blessing women's hands. The liturgy works well as a gathering celebration, as the middle liturgy of a weekend meeting or a one-day conference, or as the closing of a time together.

Call To Worship:

Our hands are an important part of who we are. We use the symbol of hands to focus the work of women: our pain, our passion and our promise. *(Be aware of your group. If anyone in the group is without a hand or has differently formed hands, let your remarks reflect this and enable these people to be comfortable with the liturgy.)*

Let us reflect for a moment on four questions as we begin our liturgy:

Who have my hands touched today?
For what have my hands reached out?
With what have they been filled?
What have my hands revealed to me about life?

Instrumental Music:

Play a tape of instrumental music for centering and reflection. [Suggestion: classical music by Alicia de la Roca or music by Kay Gardner.]

Reading: "The New Woman"

Kurinji Nathan of Sri Lanka

Kurinji Nathan from Sri Lanka reminds us of the fullness of the work of our hands, the work for justice. She says:

The hands which gently tend the leaves*
Will now help to banish gloom;
They'll work hard to put down evil,
And to raise up for all, new life.

The hands which gently tend the leaves
Will help nourish all that is good;
They'll work hard to weed out poverty,
And bring in new culture and art.

The hands which gently tend the leaves
Will show new ways for humankind;
They'll work hard to build those structures
In which truth and right will be found.

*refers to the tea leaves on the bushes in the tea plantations of Sri Lanka, which are tended and plucked by Tamil women workers.

A Hand Blessing

Look at your hands. Notice their power and gentleness. Let us bless these hands together. I invite you to say each phrase after me.

Blessed be the works of your hands,
O Holy One. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have touched life.
[echo]
Blessed be these hands that have nurtured
creativity. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have held pain.
[echo]
Blessed be these hands that have embraced
with passion. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have tended
gardens. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have closed in
anger. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have planted new
seeds. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have harvested ripe
fields. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have cleaned,
washed, mopped, scrubbed. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have become
knotty with age. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that are wrinkled and
scarred from doing justice. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that have reached out
and been received. *[echo]*
Blessed be these hands that hold the promise of
the future. *[echo]*
(add others)
Blessed be the works of your hands,
O Holy One. *[echo]*

Massage:

With the power of these hands we now reach out and offer a healing back rub. Let's make a circle. Put your hands on the back of the person to your right. Let your masseuse know if you have any sensitive areas that she should be mindful of.

Firmly begin to massage the back of the person. Don't be afraid to apply pressure. Take a deep breath. Send your breath into the person's hands on your back. You are your own healer. Your breath is your life force.

Move your hands up and down the person's back. Give special attention and pressure to the shoulder area. This is where we hold our anger.

Form a fist with your hands and pound lightly on the person's back. Let's respond with the sound, "Ahhhhhh....."

Scratch the person's back from the neck to

the waist. Respond with "Ohhhhh...."

Gently rub your hands from her spine outward. Respond with "Uhhhhh...."

Lay your hand on her neck. Feel for any knots and gently massage them away.

Lay your hands on her head. She won't care if her hair is messed a little. Use your finger tips to give her a firm massage.

Let your hands rest on her head. Breathe into these hands and offer a silent blessing.

Lay your hands on her shoulders. Breathe into these hands and offer a silent blessing.

Lay your hands on her back. Breathe into these hands and offer a silent blessing.

Carefully take your hands off of the person's back and let your hands rest at your side. Shake out your hands and arms. Take a deep breath.

Turn to the center of the circle. Look around the circle and notice the beautiful people who have shared and received healing.

Poem: "Bakerwoman God,"

by Alla Bozarth-Campbell

(let the words of the poem break the silence)

Bakerwoman God,
I am your living bread.
Strong, brown, Bakerwoman God,
I am your low, soft, and being-shaped loaf.
I am your rising
bread, well kneaded
by some divine and knotty
pair of knuckles, by your warm
earth-hands.
I am bread well-kneaded.

Put me in fire, Bakerwoman God,
put me in your own bright fire.

I am warm, warm as you
from fire, I am white
and gold, soft and hard,
brown and round.
I am so warm from fire.

Break me, Bakerwoman God!
I am broken under your caring Word...
Bakerwoman God, remake me.

Song: "Let The Women Be There"

by Marsie Silvestro

Let the women be there
Let the women be there by my side.
And I in turn will be for them.



Photo courtesy of The Deaf Way, Gallaudet University, Washington, DC.

Process Reflection:

I first wrote the hand blessing for a liturgy class that I was teaching. It was an example for my students of how to create a blessing.

Then I created the liturgy of which it is now a part. This service has been reformed and reshaped many times. It has been used in a variety of places such as the Paulist Center in Boston; Lugar de Mujer, a women's center in Buenos Aires, Argentina; with women's groups in Montevideo, Uruguay; and Dignity Women's Group.

In each group, many women, including those who do massage, have responded that they had never had their hands blessed. How ordinary yet how extraordinary it is to bless hands!

Most churches divorce the body from worship. A symbol of sexuality, the body is seen as evil. In this liturgy, as in most feminist liturgies, the body is holy. Sexuality and spirituality are integrated.

The liturgy begins by inviting people to reflect on four questions about their hands and their lives. Instrumental music facilitates the reflection.

The reading of "The New Woman" by Kurinji Nathan of Sri Lanka reminds us of the fullness of the work of our hands, the work for justice. These hands will work hard to put down evil, and to raise up new life for all. They will work hard to weed out poverty and bring in new culture and art.

People are invited to look at their hands. For many this is the first time they have received

this invitation in a prayer context. The blessing is repeated by all after they hear the leader say the words. This way people can be freed from papers and can focus on their hands. Of course, the blessing could be read by one person, but it is much more empowering when everyone has an active role.

Invite people to add their own blessings. The leader signals closure for the blessing with the same words that opened it, "Blessed be the works of your hands, O Holy One."

The massage part of the liturgy is a real treat. Don't be shy and exclude it. The script given here is a guide. Invite someone who can be spontaneous to lead this part.

The massage is energizing and healing. When I lead a weekend conference I often use this liturgy on the morning of the second day. It refreshes people and creates a bond. It is also a fitting closure for an evening meeting. People go home renewed and full of energy.

The liturgy can close with the final words of the massage that invite people to notice those who have healed them and been healed by them. Or, it can close with a reading or a song. "Let the Women Be There" affirms the bonds of sisterhood and works well. I have also closed with the poem, "Bakerwoman God." In creating and celebrating liturgies, let us remember the power and holiness of our own bodies.

Diann Neu, M.Div., STM, feminist liturgist,
is co-director of WATER.

WATERmarks

by Carol Scinto

An Intern's View of WATER

by Sue Phillips

Working at WATER, I have experienced Peru, Argentina, Uruguay, Nepal, the Southern U.S., the Pacific Coast, and the Midwest—all without leaving the office. Such is the geographic diversity of WATER constituents and colleagues. This diversity represents at once the breadth of the need for resources, and depth of the commitment to assemble and disseminate them.

The diversity of the work and the chance to provide specific information to so many women have drawn me to WATER during every available break from school for the past two years. The sheer volume of information that flows in and out of the office sometimes seems overwhelming, but it is always educational. Letters, calls, and visits from women across this and other countries continue to refresh and amaze me.

Despite my rather serious account of WATER activities, I would never want to give the impression that the WATER office is filled with very busy, but reverently silent women. Laughter frequently drowns out even the ever-present noise of computer printers, as we delight in one another's company and attend to the tasks at hand.

I am constantly encouraged through my work at WATER by the amount of work being done to promote women's religious agency. But I am also reminded of the amount of work left to be done by others of us who are now studying theology. Perhaps the greatest gift that WATER gives me is the knowledge that this work does not happen in a vacuum. It happens in the vibrant and celebratory company of, as a colleague would say, justice-seeking friends.

Sue Phillips is an M.Div. student at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA.

Where and When

As Diann and Mary etch ever-longer vapor trails across blue skyways, one may wonder: do they ever stay at home? Yes. Sometimes. Profoundly. And the world is always welcome at the WATER office.

REMEMBER? Three at-home programs during Advent refreshed souls, raised sights in the metro-Washington area: Ronnie Levin joined Diann in conducting **Women Celebrating Light: Hanukkah** in December, with a delightful show of men, children, and interfaith couples adding to the glow; Mary Collins brought new purpose to old habits in a winter program illuminating the power of **Women at Prayer** (also the title of her new book); and Joe Scinto's homemade full-of-love-and-calories cheesecake gave extra dimension to WATER's incomparable **Winter Solstice Holiday Party** for merrymaking friends.

REMEMBER! February 8 (Ash Wednesday) Water's Lenten series begins with new flowers, not dead embers, in celebration of spring; February 17-18 brings a close look at **Feminist Theology for the 90's**; **March 10-11** Elisabeth Schussler-Fiorenza joins us for a weekend "But She Said..." (Mark 7:28): Women, Scripture and Church. **March 23** invites all Miriam's sisters and brothers to rejoice in a Seder/Holy Thursday ceremonial supper. And interspersed, on Tuesdays (February 14, 21, 28; March 7), Diann and Ronnie Levin will give a course in Feminist Liturgy and Ritual at a local synagogue.

Going to be in Washington? Wish to attend? Or care to follow suit in your own bailiwick (and need guidelines)? Call or write the WATER office for particulars.

OUT AND ABOUT: Betimes, the WATER directorate sails forth—Mary participating in a "Nevada Desert Experience" with seminarians and theology students protesting nuclear weapons testing on February 10-12; jetting on to Bucknell University for a **Religious Forum on Women's Spirituality** on February 13-14; swooping in for a **tri-state Women-Church conference**, "Becoming What We Are," in Portsmouth, NH, on March 31-April 1. Diann, in turn, guest-speaking on "Women's Celebrations" at a symposium on **Women and the Gospel Traditions** at Nebraska Wesleyan University on April 20-22. Mary and Diann are both due in Europe as guest sparks at a Pentecost weekend, "Women of Fire," at the Grail's De Tiltenberg, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, May 12-14, after which they will embark on "WomanBoat" in Basel, Switzerland, for a theological workshop afloat on the Rhine May 15-21, running parallel to the **World Council of Church's** gathering on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. They will both return in time to present lectures at the workshop on "Spirituality and Women's Experience" in DC, May 25-26.

Carol Scinto is a volunteer at the WATER office who helps edit the WATERwheel.



New Resources

A word about RESOURCES... Many readers indicate that this section helps them to plan curricula, orient their own reading and keep current. We receive more review copies than we can review in this space. But we do evaluate them and lend them to our donors through our Resource Center.

Allison, Caroline **"It's Like Holding the Key to Your Own Jail": Women in Namibia.** Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1986.

The heroic struggle of women in Namibia comes alive in this powerful witness of repression and war. Media silence on this situation makes this book an important read.

Bishops Watch Report, Catholics for a Free Choice **All Work and No Say** Washington, DC: CFFC, 1988 (1436 U. St. NW 20009).

An excellent study that documents that women are underrepresented in virtually all U.S. Catholic arenas including those that do not require ordination.

Bowman, Meg **Readings for Women's Programs and Memorial Services for Women.** San Jose, CA (P.O. Box 21506): Hot Flash Press, 1984/1986.

These volumes contain useful resources for liturgy, especially for feminist farewells.

Byrne, Lavinia **Women Before God: Our Own Spirituality.** Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988.

The development of feminist spiritualities to accompany feminist theologies continues apace in this modest volume. The approach is tentatively feminist, perhaps a useful introduction for those who have not considered such issues before.

Brock, Rita Nakashima **Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power.** New York: Crossroad, 1988.

Erotic power and divine love are starting points for a new understanding of Christology based on relationships.

Cannon, Katie G. **Black Womanist Ethics.** Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988.

Katie Cannon's thorough, scholarly and insightful work lays the foundation for a new ethical method. Using the life and work of Zora Neale Hurston (as well as Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King, Jr.) she constructs an ethic from Afro-American women's experience that deserves widespread attention.

Carmelites of Indianapolis **The New Companion to the Breviary: Advent Scripture Readings. Seasonal Supplement with Special Feasts and Commemorations.** Carmelite

Monastery, 2500 Cold Spring Road, Indianapolis, IN 46222, 1988.

These various resources make traditional materials come alive with inclusive language and imagery. Highly recommended for those who wish to upgrade their liturgical life!

Fischer, Kathleen **Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1988.

At last an attempt to explore the nature of spiritual guidance from a feminist perspective. Some helpful suggestions for ways to reorient this relationship in an egalitarian way.

Gjerding, Iben and Kinnamon, Katherine **Women's Prayer Services.** Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988.

A useful introduction to the concept of feminist liturgies including litanies, readings, blessings and ways of handling scripture. Originally published in 1983 by the World Council of Churches as **No Longer Strangers**, it retains a kind of power as part of our history. Ideal for parish groups that are just beginning their explorations.

Ice, Martha Long **Clergy Women and Their World Views.** New York: Praeger, 1987.

A sociological study of the world views of clergywomen gives some clues to how women might change the churches if given a chance. This study reads like a dissertation (which it is), but is useful for those who want to know if women minister "in a different voice."

Johnson, Buffie **Lady of the Beasts.** San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988.

A rich collection of illustrations, photographs and commentary on Goddesses by a major artist. Together with David Kinsley's **The Goddesses' Mirror: Visions of the Divine from East and West** (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988) it helps clear up confusion about just who are Isis, Inanna, Athena, Lakshmi and Durga. The combination provides a visual as well as discursive approach.

Kolbenschlag, Madonna **Lost in the Land of Oz.** San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988.

Myths and stories that we have internalized give clues to how things might be but also keep us distanced from making them so. The author explores the '80's through the lens of the spiritual orphan seeking wholeness.

Robins, Wendy S. editor, **Through the Eyes of a Woman: Biblical Studies on the Experience of Women.** London: World YWCA, 1986. An international drafting group put together this useful collection of bible studies. Resources for programs, hints on organizing and facilitating the studies make this a good "how to" book for groups.

Stimpson, Catherine R. **Where the Meanings Are: Feminism and Cultural Spaces.** New York and London: Methuen, 1988.

These essays in feminist theory and criticism by one of the leading writers and activists in the women's movement are an important contribution to our history. From some of her classics like "Women's Liberation and Black Civil Rights" to her recent "Nancy Reagan Wears a Hat: Feminism and Its Cultural Consensus" this is a collection rich in wisdom and savvy.

Snyder, Mary Hembrow **The Christology of Rosemary Radford Ruether: A Critical Introduction.** Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1988.

This analysis of Rosemary Ruether's Christology is a useful introduction to her thought. No substitute for reading Ruether's own accessible texts, Snyder's comments describe Ruether's life, commitments and methodology. Can a volume on her ecclesiology be far behind?

Soon, Cho Wha **Let the Weak Be Strong: A Woman's Struggle for Justice.** Bloomington, IN: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988.

Rev. Soon, a Korean Methodist minister, tells her life story of pain, boldness and faith in a compelling voice. Minjung theology, usually written by men, is deeply enriched by this story of courage, honesty and commitment.

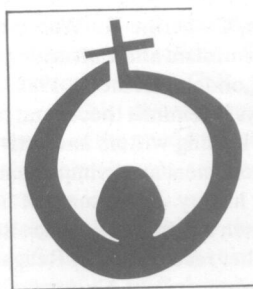
Spelman, Elizabeth V. **Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought** Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1988.

A thoroughly brilliant analysis of how much contemporary feminist theory is based on white middle class women's experience taken as normative. Until such privilege is given up and heterogeneity (not difference) taken as the norm, we will repeat the mistakes of male thinkers. Spelman is at her best when she illustrates how one can use gender as a category of analysis and still lift up the diversity of women's experiences. An important read.

Directories in Process

Women-Church Groups

People call the WATER office so frequently asking for a women-church group in their city that we decided it is time for a directory. We have more than a hundred groups on record thanks to Episcopal Divinity School intern Sue Phillips' computer skills. Let us know if your group or a group you know needs the survey form. Watch for the directory this spring.



Women In Ministry--DC, Maryland and Virginia

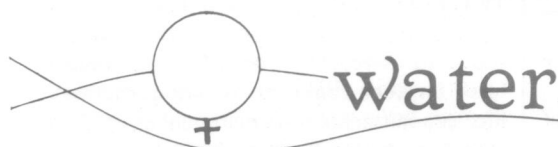
Local women in ministry, especially in large cities, have a hard time finding one another. We need interdenominational directories. Most denominations do not keep a separate list of women ministers. Some do not recognize women in ministry, and some just have not thought about it yet. That is what we have learned by calling around our local area.

Forthcoming, thanks to Howard University Divinity School intern Joan Scott, is a listing of D.C., Maryland and Virginia women in ministry. If you would like your name or that of a woman you know to appear in this directory, contact Joan Scott at the WATER office, 589-2509.

How about you? If you have such a directory of women in your local area we would be happy to send WATER information to those listed. Just send us the directory. And if you don't have one, how about compiling one so that we can strengthen our networks?

Women Crossing Worlds

Groups in Latin America that work on issues of women and religion are growing. They too need to be linked both for continental sharing and for interchange with sister groups from other continents. We have begun a modest resource for this as well. It will be great for travel planning, networking and resource sharing. If you know a group that should be included, let us know. Watch for ordering information in the next WATERwheel.



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