



# waterwheel

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

## The Editors Speak

WATER and earth make a logical pair. At a time when most North Americans are paying more attention to the environment, we too salute efforts at ecology. But when fast foods companies get into the act by promising to use recycled products, there is reason for hope laced with healthy skepticism that this too will pass. We urge not simply one day on a bicycle but a lifetime of simple living, not hamburgers in recycled paper but soy products on washable plates; in short, new habits not hype.

Meanwhile, speaking of contradictions, the U.S. Catholic Bishops have come out with the second draft of their ill-fated pastoral letter on women. This time around, coupled with their unspeakable expenditure of \$5 million on a slick public relations firm to convince the American people to oppose abortion, they have condemned birth control and reiterated their opposition to women's ordination. Ho hum if they did not have such influence in the public sphere.

These days WATER is busier than ever. Is it any wonder as people seek more and churches provide less? We do the work of WATER because you want it done and you support our doing it. That process has integrity and is growing. Let the cry of spring 1990 be a shout of gladness, a song of thanksgiving for you, WATER's ecological treasure. Alleluia.



## Where Charity and Love Are Not

by Mary E. Hunt

Violence is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition. If "where charity and love prevail there God is ever found," what does it mean when charity and love are absent? This worries me not because the presence/absence of God is important in the face of so much social change work to be done, but because for many of us the motivation to do that work comes from a deeply rooted faith commitment. As the violence comes forth our motivation lags.

Three contemporary contextual matters bring Christian violence to the fore. This first is the murder of the fourteen women engineering students in Montreal. While not covered widely by the U.S. media for reasons that remain obvious, this murder jolted feminists. Just when some were writing the "requiem for the women's movement," and others were heralding the triumph of women priests, even a woman bishop, a man killed women because he considered them feminists.

But he spoke and acted for so many people who believe that feminism has ruined their lives.

In the Christian tradition feminism has made God into a Goddess as well, wives into persons, girl children into potential priests. One critic claimed in the *New York Times* that the *Inclusive Language Lectionary* was the "castration" of scripture. The movie version of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is reminiscent of the murders in Montreal. How important it is to insist on analysis, and how closely linked feminism and womanism are with questions of ultimate meaning and value, that is, with theology. Far from escaping such brutality in the library stacks or the pastor's study, feminist and womanist theologians work in the belly of the beast, perhaps at some peril.

The second clue about violence as central to the Christian agenda was the recent document published by the Catholic Bishops of Quebec, "Heritage of Violence." They acknowledge

### *Feminist and womanist theologians work in the belly of the beast, perhaps at some peril.*

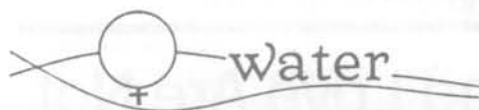
Innocent women gunned down because they were students in a traditionally male field gives a sense of how deeply rooted are prejudices, how they do not go away overnight or in one or two generations, and indeed how they are fueled by patriarchal religion. It is that final realization that makes the relatively paltry response by institutional churches to increasing violence so embarrassing. Twenty years of feminist and womanist work in theology should be enough to make this clear. Apparently it is not.

The deaths of the women in Montreal show that all women who claim humanity are subject to hatred. How blithely many of us use a word for which these women were killed. I talk about myself as a feminist theologian without looking over my shoulder. Maybe I should. The crazed gunman made his distaste for feminism clear.

some of the church's responsibility for domestic violence when married people who do not get along are urged to remain married. A feminist historian asked me to read it and give her a Catholic feminist theological analysis of the document. She was unable to believe that something so honest and forward looking could possibly come from the Catholic Church. Imagine, being in agreement with a church document for a change.

Another reaction came from the U.S. Catholic Conference Office of Information. This office had not heard of the Canadian piece even though "The Christian Century" had carried a short article on it. We are so used to violence in the churches we cannot imagine they would own up to the problem and begin to rectify it. Even when they do, it is not publicized.

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Editors: Mary E. Hunt, Diann Neu

Designer: Diann Neu

Editorial Assistant: Carol Scinto

Circulation Manager: Tish Jaccard

Computer Consultant: Jessica Weissman

WATER is an educational center, a network 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 and liturgical planning which have helped thousands of people to be part of an inclusive church.

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Editors  
WATERwheel  
8035 13th Street  
Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA  
301) 589-2509, 301) 589-3150

## ...Charity *(continued from page 1)*

The third clue about Christian violence comes from the current religious controversies over homosexuality and abortion. Backlash is brewing against the three openly lesbian/gay Lutheran pastors ordained recently in San Francisco. The furor over the ordination of an openly gay priest, the Rev. Robert Williams in the Episcopal Church, and his subsequent controversial remarks, promise to divide and conquer lesbian and gay progress there. Regardless of how one views these instances, the engines of anti-gay/lesbian Christians are revving. Will there be more murders in cathedrals?

The major opposition to the preservation of legal abortion in the U.S. is religious, specifically Christian. Operation Rescue that positions people outside of abortion clinics to harass women who enter finds most of its adherents in the Christian pews, all too eager to take their god with them to the streets and literally beat women over the head with their crosses.

Most distressing to me is the escalation of such violence by the so-called non-violent left, many of whom oppose women's right to reproductive choice. One group focused on Seneca Falls, N.Y., famous for the Seneca Falls Convention on women's rights in 1848 and later the scene of the women's peace encampment near

much abuse in modern society when the dominant image of theology of the culture is of 'divine child abuse'—God the Father demanding and carrying out the suffering and death of his own son? If Christianity is to be liberating for the oppressed, it must itself be liberated from this theology." (p.26) They conclude with a list of new theological affirmations that go a long way toward reforming the Christian tradition. The real show stopper is at the end: "On Good Friday, the Resurrected One was Crucified." (p. 28) Imagine how different Christian practice would be if that were a normative Christian interpretation.

There is a paradoxical prevalence of violence in the Christian tradition. Recognizing this and calling it by name is a first step toward making intelligent judgments about one's relationship to a religious community that has this history.

The dominant images and symbols that are used to articulate the faith of most Christian people call for reform. Feminist theologians have long critiqued the patriarchal image of God the Father. But few, save Mary Daly who is no longer interested in the question, have really insisted on the problems that the defining characteristics of God, namely, omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent, present for Christian theology. The obvious question of whose projection such characteristics are, is easily answered by white, male and middle

## *There is a paradoxical prevalence of violence in the Christian tradition.*

the Seneca Army Depot. This group went from being arrested at an abortion clinic to being arrested at the army base, perversely connecting death by chemicals with a woman's right to choose. Women as moral agents capable of making good decisions in an admittedly very difficult area must be stopped like nuclear war. When such twisted logic is employed in the name of God to breed oppression against women, there are deep theological roots that need to be examined. While most of us affirm the need for pluralism and diversity of opinion in our churches, how far can we reach before we end up embracing that which would kill us?

Joanne Carlson Brown and Carole R. Bohn's collection *Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, helps in the discussion. The lead article, "For God So Loved the World?" by Joanne Brown and Rebecca Parker, deals with the doctrine of the atonement as a legitimation for child abuse, read: violence. The authors critique the normative assumptions of redemptive suffering:

"Christianity is an abusive theology that glorifies suffering. Is it any wonder that there is so

class—the only ones who would even imagine that knowing everything, being everywhere, and possessing all power was possible much less desirable.

Of more fundamental concern even than the critique of Father, Lord, Ruler, King (a la Anne McGrew Bennett) is the violent consequences that accrue to those who internalize the greatness of God ("How Great Thou Art") in exchange for a diminished self image, those who give over all power to "a Higher Power" without receiving a share in that power (here I am not so much critiquing Twelve Step programs as suggesting that shared power is a far healthier approach, after the fashion of Gail Unterberger's feminist reinterpretation of the twelve steps).

Jesus as Lord of Lords, King of Kings, son sacrificed by a willing father for the sins of the world, is an equally problematic figure. Ironically, the impact of a gentle-faced Jesus of renaissance art and the general late 19th century relegation of religion to the domestic sphere has caused a more violent Jesus to come into vogue theologically. Now it is fashionable

to talk of a bold Jesus who drove the money changers from the temple, a Jesus who was tough on his disciples when he said "follow me," a Jesus who may have been the Lamb of God but who was the lion of the synagogue when he preached against the evils of the world. This backlash against the 1970's "Jesus was a feminist" (Leonard Swidler et al) has created a certain macho Christianity that is at base what many of us fear, namely, the "soldiers of Christ" marching off to war on us, a kind of Crusades revisited and this time with the theological equivalent of nuclear weapons to be used. Annihilated are those who do not conform: feminist women and men, gay and lesbian people, those who have AIDS, those who favor reproductive choice.

who plucked out their eyes and cut off their breasts rather than submit to the advances of men are lifted up as exemplars of Christian virtue. Where were those authorities who should have prevented the abuse in the first place? They, and not women who maimed themselves in order to avoid rape, are the ones who should be lifted up as role models lest we be left with the impression that defending one's so-called virtue in the name of God is more important than preventing such violence in the first place. Such moral contortions operate with impunity. They are so deeply rooted that they seem to be part of the logic of the Christian tradition. Even the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus instill a sense that the worse the death is the more salvific it is. The violent, bloody

## *The violence of sexual abuse is compounded by the loss of faith reported by many survivors.*

A second dimension of Christian hatred is the impact that such symbols and images have on the most marginalized people, especially women, children and the materially poor. The impact on powerful people has been to maintain their power. But the impact on the so-called "least of our brethren" is obvious in the images children receive and reflect back. They, like those who are materially poor, are most vulnerable to explanations for the chaotic world they encounter. Many poor women understandably cling to notions of a benevolent Jesus in the face of brutal men, to a God who will nurture and protect them against the concrete socio-economic problems they encounter. While there are classist and racist reasons for this (cf. Jacqueline Grant's White Woman's Christ, Black Woman's Jesus) it is important to ask whether such dependence isn't bred into those who, for sake of justice and change, would be better served by the righteous anger to which they have every claim.

What worries me are these habits of thinking that are fostered by Christianity. One such habit is created by the notion of an all-powerful God. This gives those in power something to strive for, a role model after which to pattern themselves. But it has an equal but opposite impact on those who are disempowered, disenfranchised, caught in the structural bind of either acquiescing to their fate as part of the divine plan, or rebelling against it and thereby committing the sin of disobedience for which the all-powerful will punish them. They are damned if they do and damned if you don't.

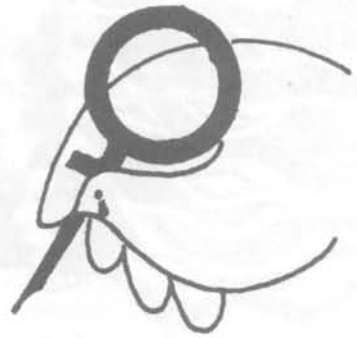
Another such dubious "habit of thinking" is that which is fostered by the glorification of martyrs. The blood of the martyrs is somehow seen as salvific instead of tragic. Women saints

death on the cross is seen as the paradigm of giving one's life for one's friends as if a quiet, calm, peaceful death would not be enough. The savior figure is larger than life in his death. It behooves us to think about the impact of this imagery on those who have little choice about their deaths; we should guard against any suggestion that martyrdom is preferable to natural causes.

A third clue about how the violence and hatred of Christianity permeate church and society alike is found in the disturbing news of sexual abuse by clergy. The work of Rev. Marie Marshall Fortune, Is Nothing Sacred?, shows clergy abuse in what can best be called Every Parish. While one is tempted to write off clergy sexual abuse, like priest pedophilia, as simply another example of the abuse of power by professionals, it calls for deeper analysis as to its theological consequences.

Clergy sexual abuse outstrips all of these cases (doctors, lawyers, teachers, counselors who overstep the boundaries of their professions for their own gratification) insofar as it trades on that which persons believe most deeply to be true, namely, their relationship with the holy. In addition to clergy members' status in the community, their access to intimate knowledge of persons and families and their perceived stature as "holy" people makes the transgression of sexual abuse take on even larger proportions. Children and young people are especially vulnerable to the role that the minister or priest plays, having learned at home a certain respect for such authority as mediators of the faith tradition.

The violence of sexual abuse is compounded by the loss of faith reported by many survivors, (continued on page 6)



## Argentina Update

Sara Newbery, WATER staff person in Buenos Aires, Argentina, reports on her activities:

. Formation of the Feminist Commission for the Twenty Years of the Second Wave of Feminism in Argentina

. March 8 International Women's Day demonstration in front of Congress with leaflets on the nascent campaign to legalize abortion

. National Assembly of Feminist Women held in April 1990

. Plans for the first women-church gathering in Argentina to be held in July

Diann Neu and Mary E. Hunt will join Sara in presenting an intensive course in feminist theology through the Centro de Estudios Cristianos in May 1990. It is for Argentine women in preparation for the Fifth Encuentro of Latin American and Caribbean Feminists where a session on religion and social change will be held. Viva las argentinas.







# Weaving the Threads

by Diann Neu

## Background

*Weaving is a universal symbol for integrity. It is an ancient art and yet a popular symbol in our time because people yearn to weave and mend and create wholeness out of fragmentation. Weavings, symbols of intertwining our lives together and supporting one another, are appropriate for groups in most cultures.*

*When I am in a Latin American country or in a justice center I often invite people to bring weavings and tell a story about them. Many people wear woven clothing and/or have weavings in their homes.*

*This liturgy works well in many cultures. I have used variations of it for small groups, international meetings (especially in Latin American countries), larger conferences, and jubilee/anniversary celebrations.*

## Preparation

Gather weavings from many cultures and several balls of yarn. Invite people to be readers and leaders for each section.

## Forming the Circle of Sacred Space

To center ourselves, and to show our solidarity with women around the world, we have chosen the theme of weaving for this liturgy. Cultures have different forms of weaving, but women are the primary weavers in most, if not all of them. Women spin fibers and weave threads. They create wholeness out of fragmentation, order out of chaos, a beautiful creation out of individual pieces. Women make connections.

To form our circle we say in our own language, "My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a weaver" and give our hand to the person next to us as a way of promising our support to one another and weaving the circle with the threads of our own lives.

**Song:** "Weaving Wonder," a round  
by Colleen Fulmer from *Her Wings Unfurled*.

Spirit on your loom we're weaving,  
Lives entwined a tapestry of grace.  
Spirit by your love creating  
A world of peace and harmony.

## Recognizing Our Sacred Space

We have each received a beautiful object woven by women. Let us be reminded of the work of women's hands. Let us think, too, of how each object is different, unique, just as our lives are different. But each is beautiful and necessary for the fullness of creation. Let us place all of the weavings in the center of the circle to create our sacred space. Let us design an artistic picture as we place the weavings in relationship to one another.

(Weavings from many cultures could be used here. Be sure to tell where they are from and why they are special. Then place them in the center of the circle.)

## Celebrating Women's Work

All Voices: Let us pause to remember that women have always been weavers...

- Voice 1: Women have woven yarn  
into tapestries.  
Women have woven grass  
into baskets.
- 2: Women have woven threads  
into clothing.  
Women have woven words  
into poetry.
- 3: Women have woven friends  
into families.  
Women have woven voices  
into song.
- 4: Women have woven vines  
into shelter.  
Women have woven prayers  
into action.

All Voices: Let us follow the woven path, as we weave for those yet to come.

**Reading:** "Indian Tapestry" by Julia Esquivel from *Threatened With Resurrection*.  
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When I go up to the HOUSE OF THE OLD WEAVER,  
I watch in admiration  
at what comes forth from her mind:  
a thousand designs being created  
and not a single model from which to copy  
the marvelous cloth  
with which she will dress  
the companion of the True and Faithful One.

Men always ask me  
to give the name of the label,  
to specify the maker of the design.  
But the Weaver cannot be pinned down  
by designs,  
nor patterns.  
All of her weavings  
are originals,  
there are no repeated patterns.

Her mind is beyond  
all foresight.  
Her able hands do not accept  
patterns nor models.  
Whatever comes forth, comes forth,  
but she who is will make it.

The colors of her threads  
are firm:  
blood,  
sweat,  
perseverance,  
tears,  
struggle,  
and hope.  
Colors that do not fade with time.

The children of the children  
of our children  
will recognize the seal  
of the Old Weaver.  
Maybe then  
it will receive a name.  
But as a model,  
it can never again  
be repeated.

Each morning I have seen  
how her fingers  
choose the threads  
one by one.  
Her loom makes no noise  
and men  
give it no importance,  
None-the-less,  
the design  
that emerges from Her mind  
hour after hour  
will appear in the threads  
of many colors,  
in figures and symbols  
which no one, ever again,  
will be able to erase  
or un-do.



# of Women's Lives



**Song:** "I Am The Weaver Woman," by Marsie Silvestro from Crossing the Lines.

Refrain: I'm weaving—I'm a weaver  
I'm weaving—I'm a woman

I am a woman weaver  
Pulling all the threads.  
Weaving the names of women,  
Voices in my head.  
And I shuttle out their wisdom;  
and I gather all their grace.  
As I unravel here before me  
this woman-loving lace. (refrain)

I am a woman weaver  
Pulling all the threads.  
Weaving the pain of women,  
some now living—some now dead.  
And I shuttle out their teardrops.  
And I latch-loop all their cries.  
As I entwine the threads of suffering  
Colored patterns tell me why. (ref.)

I am a woman weaver  
Pulling all the threads.  
Weaving the names of women,  
Voices in my head. (refrain)

## Reflection

The colors of the threads of the weaver are firm: blood, sweat, perseverance, tears, struggle and hope. These colors do not fade with time.

Each culture and tradition has its own weavers. Each weaver has her own threads. These threads are similar in color to those of her sister weavers, yet each is unique.

Think about the tapestry of your life for a moment and ask yourself these questions:

What threads of life are part of my culture and tradition?

How are the threads of my life woven together with those of women from many cultures?

How am I passing on the tapestry of solidarity to the coming generations?

(After quiet reflection, depending on the size of the group, invite people to share one to one, in small groups or in the large group. To close the reflection, begin humming "I Am The Weaver Woman" or "Weaving Wonder.")

## Prayer

Let us pray together:

O God of many colors,  
you are like a Weaverwoman in our lives.

Out of the energy of the universe  
you have spun each one of us  
into a unique, colorful strand  
with our own special hue and texture  
and have woven us together  
into your human family  
that blankets the globe.

Many times our choices  
have severed us from your loom of life  
and created rents in the whole  
of our human fabric.

Our earth is scarred.  
Your people are aching.  
We need to weave new tapestries.

O Weaverwoman God,  
open our eyes to the mystery and power of your Spirit.

Refresh us with the light of your vision  
so that we may once again recognize  
the beauty and wonder  
of the specially spun strands  
that we are  
and the splendor of the one colorful  
cloth of humanity.  
Reattach us to your loom  
so that your vision may radiate  
through us.

O God of many colors and designs,  
together let us weave threads into clothing  
to warm our old people.

Together let us weave vines into shelter  
to house our homeless women, men  
and children.

Together let us weave friends into families  
that offer healing love to our sisters  
and brothers hurting from violence.

Together let us weave prayers into action to  
heal our scared earth.

Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

## Weaving the Threads

We live in a world where war and violence are familiar, more in some countries than in others. But we dedicate ourselves to peace, hoping that in time we can weave the peace necessary to banish war and violence forever. It is this peace which centers our efforts at justice.

Let us now create a litany of connection. As we do so we toss the balls of yarn from one part of the circle to another in order to weave a web together. One person holds the end of the ball

of yarn and makes a statement about her connections with others in the world such as "I am grateful for women's cooperatives. Our lives are woven together" or "I am thankful for Christina of Argentina who wove this shawl for me." She then throws the ball to someone across the circle who holds the strand, makes a statement and throws the yarn to someone else. This continues until all are woven together. (pause) Entwined in our newly created web which connects us to one another and to people everywhere we dare to sing.

**Song:** "This Tough Spun Web" by Carolyn McDade from This Tough Spun Web.

We are the forest of ten thousand seeds  
in shades of green that hold the sun  
With mingled roots our limbs together lean  
we are the many and the one

We are the waters each small drop of rain  
lifespawning ponds and streamfilled sea  
We run the blood that flows in living veins  
to live and die that all be free

Chorus: This circle opening moves with  
deepened faith  
our lives to birth a living dawn  
As love renewed turns in our  
common way  
creating hope we carry on.

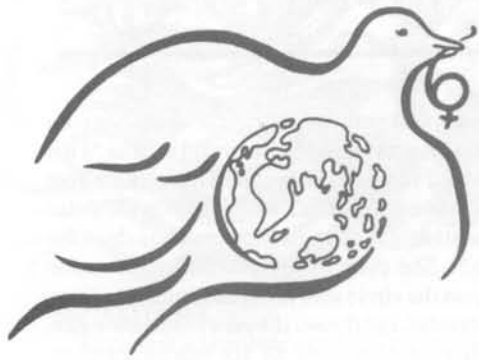
Our healing love, our hands reach out and touch  
the cherished body, the quivering mind  
Our lives like grass, like bread, like falling rain  
the ordinary, our sublime.

Hold true this tough spun web as hard times come  
and much be lost or taken away  
We struggle not for things that best be gone  
integrity reweaves our way. (chorus)

## Final Blessing

We are literally woven together. We are connected in new ways to one another. Let us remember this feeling when hard times come, when fragmentation overwhelms us. For this time, we are connected. Let us carefully place our web on the ground and greet one another in the peace that is our care for one another.

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



## Schweizer Frauen-Kirchen-Fest

A thousand Swiss women converged on Interlaken, in the shadow of the Jungfrau, for their second women-church gathering in late March 1990. WATER co-director Mary E. Hunt spoke on women-church at a day-long celebration that included panels, workshops and liturgy.

The picture postcard town was full of women of all ages and spiritual persuasions hurrying to workshops on inclusive language, body work, lesbian and heterosexual women, political work, worship resources and much more. What was remarkable was the diversity, and the large numbers in such a small country. Clearly the need for new ways of being spiritual coupled with renewed political expression provide the impetus.

Gongs announced the closing worship where music and silence grounded the day's events. The bread and water sharing was supplemented by the last bottle of wine from the U.S. "Women-Church: Claiming Our Power" conference held in Cincinnati in 1987. Dinner and dancing took Swiss women (and one North American) into the night. It is one movement, many expressions, many bodies, one spirit.



## "Stones of My Country are Holy"

A Palestinian folk song captures the current mood where young people are losing their lives and limbs in the *intifada*, the uprising of Palestinians against their Israeli occupiers. The young people throw stones at well armed Israeli soldiers and pay a dear price for their liberation. Still the young people sing and dance, confident that "the stones of my country are holy." Into this complicated context a dozen liberation theologians from around the world, including WATER's Mary E. Hunt, were invited in March 1990 to join Palestinian Christians as they write their theology of liberation.

The conference included learned papers by academics whose universities are closed, powerful papers by women who have lost their children. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Marc Ellis, Christian and Jewish liberation theologians respectively, provided important leadership in the ecumenical event, sponsored in part by the Middle East Council of Churches and held at Tantur.

It was a serious effort to confront the meaning of faith, God and politics in a setting where no established categories fit, where promised land, chosen people and exodus take on new

meaning when seen through Palestinian eyes. This is a setting where traditional female customs are, of necessity, passing away. What will replace them is not clear.

Future plans for liberation theology depend on how the complex political web will be woven. But for now, like the beautiful tapestries that the Arab women make, one can only imagine the intricate work ahead. As always, the most important "work" of the conference was the building of relationship between and among women who welcomed the visitors to their homes and provided insights into the political situation. The women's remarkable courage made it clear where the young people got theirs, and their hope.

The situation begs the kind of support that Israeli Women in Black and other peace groups provide. Rosemary and Herman Ruether's *The Wrath of Jonah* is a good introduction to the complex problems that face all peoples of the Middle East. Up until now theology seems to have hindered rather than helped. The holy places are anything but. Maybe liberation theology, especially feminist liberation theology, will make a difference. It can not hurt.

## ...Charity (continued from page 3)

the extent to which they were robbed not only of their human dignity but of their most deeply held beliefs. That is a theological hate crime, something that takes the essence of one's life and uses it as an unarticulated or acceptable reason for violence. Like hate crimes against lesbian and gay people, against Jews and Blacks, such theological hate crimes go virtually unreported.

In light of all this, what do we do where charity and love are not? The easy answer is, move, in the case of the Christian tradition, go elsewhere, find another path, develop another practice. It is not as easy as it sounds to turn off the deepest, most inspiring aspects of one's history, tradition, of the religious heritage that is practically genetic insofar as it has such deep roots in family and community. Further, if faith is a motivator for much-needed social justice work what will replace it?

Second, just leaving one church or moving into another part of the Christian tradition is hardly a full solution because the corruption is so widespread. The images and symbols of Christianity find increasing resonance in cultures where "the poor you will always have with you" is a truism. Perestroika with its impact in eastern Europe finds no equivalent in the U.S., especially in the churches, a logical consequence of the allegedly unchanging nature of "Christian truth."

New theological assumptions are imperative.

Asserting them is key to taking control theologically. A sample of what may stimulate your own work:

1. I believe that life, pleasure and justice are to be valued equally, that the God of creation is at the same time the Goddess of pleasure and the spirit of justice.
2. I believe that the historical Jesus, like each of us, lived in a context in which free decisions must be made that enhance or diminish human freedom and the harmony of the created order.
3. I believe that people who are marginalized have a special claim on the resources of a society unto the sharing of what belongs, finally, to none of us.

These beliefs, and the formation of a community in which to live them out where charity and love prevail, are claims about what is ultimately meaningful and important. What does your spiritual integrity permit and demand? Who is part of your community? One clear benefit of such spiritual integrity is unity with those people—religious and not— from a variety of traditions who seek peace and empowerment especially for those who have been left aside. Such beliefs are affirmation that divine-human cooperation is possible, peaceful and even poetic.

Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., M.Div., feminist liberation theologian, co-directs WATER.





# New Resources for Spring Reading



Andrews, William L., editor, **SISTERS OF THE SPIRIT: THREE BLACK WOMEN'S AUTOBIOGRAPHIES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986 (244 pages, \$14.95).

Autobiographies of Jarena Lee, Zilpha Elaw and Julia A.J. Foote, preachers and teachers of the Christian Gospel. An important source of information and inspiration on black women's religious leadership.

Barciauskas, Rosemary Curran and Debra Beery Hull, **LOVING AND WORKING: REWEAVING WOMEN'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIVES**. New York: Crossroad, 1989 (213 pages, \$14.95).

A theology of work needs women's input and this collaborative book is just that. The balance between family, job, private time/space and public vocation is a delicate one that these authors illuminate.

Beck, Evelyn Torton, **NICE JEWISH GIRLS: A LESBIAN ANTHOLOGY**. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989 (332 pages, \$12.95).

An updated and revised version of this classic is well worth rereading. In addition to the wonderful essays, photos and poetry, the new edition includes inspiring, optimistic views on changes that have come about for Jewish lesbians. After the Reagan years and during the Bush reign this is a miracle.

Bohler, Carolyn Stahl, **PRAYER ON WINGS: A SEARCH FOR AUTHENTIC PRAYER**. San Diego: LuraMedia, 1990 (135 pages, \$10.50).

Feminist theology has had an impact on this approach to prayer. Lots of suggestive options are laid open for the taking.

Braude, Ann, **RADICAL SPIRITS: SPIRITUALISM AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA**. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989 (268 pages, \$24.95).

Fascinating study of a short-lived religious movement that made women's rights a religious priority and preached equality of the sexes long before it was theologically fashionable. Feminist history made intriguing.

Brock-Utne, Birgit, **FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON PEACE AND PEACE EDUCATION**. New York: Pergamon Press, 1989 (192 pages, \$14.95).

An intellectually satisfying approach to peace, devoid of cliches and easy solutions, but practical. The author locates her feminism on the broad scale between radical and socialist, leaving room for other approaches as well. Children of the future need teachers like this.

Carden, John, compiler, **WITH ALL GOD'S PEOPLE: THE NEW ECUMENICAL PRAYER CYCLE**. Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1989 (389 pages, \$25).

A wonderful way to pray for and with the people of each country with effort made to make it linguistically inclusive. Educational as well as inspiring. Wouldn't it be nice to have a women's version next time.

Day, Peggy L., editor, **GENDER AND DIFFERENCE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989 (202 pages, \$14.95).

Redefinition of biblical scholarship on the basis of gender attentive scholarship receives a boost from this volume. How did women experience the ancient world? How do we hold together imaginative reconstruction and scholarly rigor?

Diamond, Irene and Lee Quinby, editors, **FEMINISM AND FOUCAULT: REFLECTIONS ON RESISTANCE**. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988 (233 pages, \$14.95).

Sex, gender, rape and power all elicit continual feminist definition and redefinition. These essays weave appreciative if critical readings of Foucault into the fabric of feminist analysis. Technical but rewarding.

Donnelly, Doris **MARY, WOMAN OF NAZARETH**. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989 (188 pages, \$9.95).

Conference papers from a Marian year symposium show how new images for Mary are emerging even as tired old ones persist. Uneven essays but excellent bibliography in the notes for those who want to push marian horizons on their own.

Donovan, Mary Ann, **SISTERHOOD AS POWER: THE PAST AND PASSION OF ECCLESIAL WOMEN**. New York: Crossroad, 1989 (130 pages, \$16.95).

Women in religious communities are undergoing fundamental shifts in identity and lifestyle. This study points out some of the historical reasons for the shifts and begins to suggest some ways in which these women will reshape their own future. Brief but instructive.



Duck, Ruth C. and Maren C. Tirabassi, editors, **TOUCH HOLINESS: RESOURCES FOR WORSHIP**. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1990 (257 pages, \$12.95).

Excellent resource for inclusive language/imagery keyed to common lectionary readings. Proof positive that creative, useful worship materials do not have to read like grocery lists.

Fabella, Virginia and Dolorita Martinez, **THIRD WORLD WOMEN DOING THEOLOGY: PAPERS FROM THE INTERCONTINENTAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, OAXTAPEC, MEXICO, DECEMBER 1-6, 1986**. Available from EATWOT, c/o Teresa Okure, SHCJ, Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 499, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

This valuable collection of essays by Asian, African and Latin American women theologians provides an overview of new models, methods and materials in the field. Worth the effort to locate it just for the sections on spirituality and women in the church.

Fabella, Virginia and Sun Ai Lee Park, editors, **WE DARE TO DREAM: DOING THEOLOGY AS ASIAN WOMEN**. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990 (156 pages, \$12.95).

The important contribution of Asian women to theological conversations is typified by the essays in this collection. Of special note are the work on Indian feminist theology (Aruna Gnanadason), on Asian consciousness (Kwok Pui-lan) and on religious commitment in the Philippines (Mary John Mananzan).

Forman, Frieda Johles with Caoran Swoton, **TAKING OUR TIME: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON TEMPORALITY**. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1989 (202 pages, \$10.95).

The time is now, or was it then, to explore feminist approaches to temporality. This collection of essays is sparked by poems and photos as well as by piercing pieces like Meg Fox's that captures the essence of child bearing: "Birth is not only release, it is recurrence and return."

Gadon, Eleanor W., **THE ONCE AND FUTURE GODDESS**. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989 (405 pages, \$22.50).

It is impossible to ignore the importance of the Goddess if one wishes to explore feminist possibilities in religion. This comprehensive volume, including wonderful photos and illustrations, is a good place to start.

# "Queremos Paz" (We Want Peace)

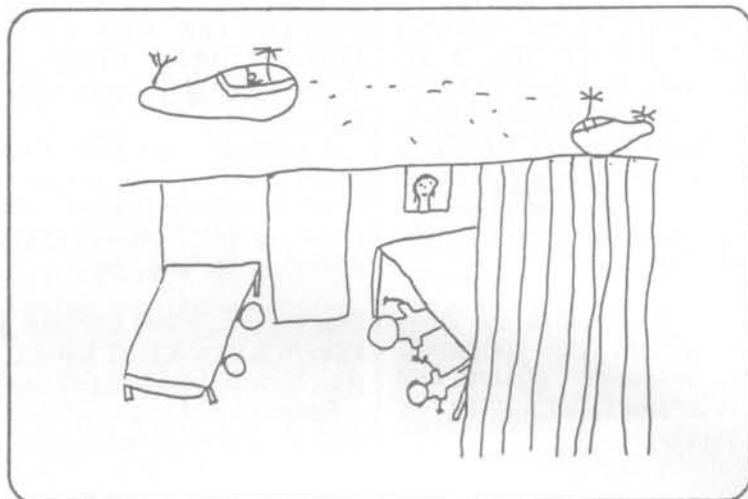
by Diann Neu

A child gave our delegation this picture when I, as a member of the board of Co-Madres, was in El Salvador in February. The drawing tells the story of present day life in El Salvador where war abounds.

A decade of tragedy and hope for the Salvadoran people is at an end. The ten year war has snuffed out the lives of some 75,000 women, children and men. It has sent two million Salvadorans into exile; it has brought fear and boldness to many still living there.

One Co-Madre gave this testimony: "Do you think we're in this struggle just to be in it? No. Our fight is one of conscience, and until they return our children, our families, we will not stop shouting in the streets. The government wants us to be quiet, that we not do anything. Everything is fine and dandy for the government if we keep quiet and cower under its will. No. We must lift our voices... Why? For our disappeared children..."

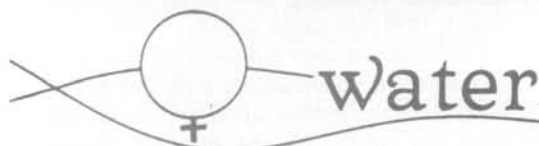
"Our struggle is immense—it will be until death or until we see our families."



The objective of our delegation was to explore the human rights situation through extensive interviews with officials and members of labor and human rights organizations, churches, the Salvadoran Armed Forces and a spectrum of political parties. Everyone we

talked with said the U.S. Congress must stop the aid to the Salvadoran government and army.

I keep this child's picture near my desk so that I will not forget what needs to be done. She and the Co-Madres give me hope.



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