

water wheel

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

Editorial

Trust took a body blow this season. The unprecedented spectacle at the hearings for Justice Clarence Thomas left many people, especially women, reeling with rage. Professor Anita Hill sat in the chair so many of us have occupied—disbelieved, dishonored and dismissed. The whole incident was an immorality play for the 1990's.

One dimensional responses to racism, sexism and class inequities in the 1970's became two dimensional strategies in the 1980's when backlash accompanied every effort. Now there is a three dimensional effort needed to confront issues, deal with backlash, and, as this sinister chapter revealed, cope with a third element, namely, secrecy and cynicism.

The operative metaphor is "Skull and Bones," the name of the secret society to which President George Bush belongs. Only in a Skull and Bones Era could two Afro-American people be pitted against each other in a hideous battle that was finally about power structures that neither of them created and that only the man will enjoy, maybe. Certain injustices defy words.

Our work of seeking meaning and value, of creating links between and networks among justice-seeking people, is complicated by the economic recession and this heinous sort of happening. Yet we realize anew how essential such work is, and we do it with added gusto because it builds trust.



Tears in Our Eyes

by Mary E. Hunt

Some women are experts on tears; some men are learning the fine art of crying. In a society in which tears are suspect—hysterical women and wimpy men cry—I am coming to trust tears, at least to take them seriously as a sign that something important is going on. I suspect that they, like friendship before them, are an overlooked source for theo-ethical work. Here's starting the task.

Tears are a physiological reaction caused by a range of reasons: deep pain and hurt, both personal and cosmic; profound joy and raucous humor, laughing until the tears roll; and also by boredom, that smothered yawn at a boring sermon or that collective, deep yawn at rehearsing yet one more time for the road the tiresome overworked issues of the day. All of these matters bring tears to our eyes. They alert us to something important, something ultimate about which we ask critical questions upon questions without end, what I call theologizing.

I learn something about people when I see them cry. Representative Patricia Schroeder

war, cried not for Iraqis who would inevitably be killed, but for U.S. soldiers who might lose their lives. I know Mr. Bush's values when I hear about his tears, and I do not share them.

My tears come from many sources. I cried when a 4-year-old child died of AIDS and a Catholic church would not permit a woman-church liturgy on its grounds for fear that the cardinal would be as upset as when a priest celebrated mass there without a proper chasuble. My tears were for the rank stupidity of the institution and the pain it brought on the child's parents.

I cried, following and preceding weeks of anti-war work, when I heard that the Gulf War had begun. I cried, shaking my fist at the television and cursing the bloody fools in charge, knowing that the lives of many in the Middle East were in the unequal balance.

I cried for joy when dear Swiss friends gave me a 100 year old Russian silver cup for my 40th birthday, a cup that belonged to their family. It meant that I was family to these friends, the

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cried when announcing that she would not run for President. Her tears were devalued in the press, taken as "I told you so, she'd be a wimp" in a campaign which featured the all-time cry-baby, George Bush. He wipes away tears and fights a lump in his gullet though his heart swells with pride over the fact that U.S. troops have buried people alive in the sand in Iraq. He cries not for the buried, but for the grave diggers. Mr. Bush cried telling the Southern Baptist Convention that he had prayed tearfully before giving the order to begin the air

wine I inaugurated it with running as deep as blood.

Think of your own tears. I suspect that more often than not your tears are connected to some outrage against those whom you love. I believe that your tears are a kind of cement in a love relationship which binds the common pores between human beings and that gives the lie to the notion of individualism, and fairly screams that we are connected whether we know it or want it or not. The paradox of tears is that what
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ISSN 0898-6606

Vol. 4, No. 3, Fall 1991

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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 and society.

WATERwheel is published quarterly by Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual. It is free to WATER donors. Address inquiries to the WATER office. Additional copies of this issue can be ordered for \$5 each. Complimentary copies are available on request for conferences, seminars, classes or discussion groups. Include street address and daytime telephone number of the person ordering materials. Please send inquiries and comments to:

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Tears...

(continued from page 1)

appears to be perfectly private, as individual as you can get, is really something deeply connected. Sometimes we cry and we do not know why: a poem moves us or a splendid landscape, a sublime symphony, a child asleep. Therapists spend their time and our money trying to figure it out. Of course there are many unconscious matters in all of our psyches that trigger tears. But despite the best efforts of therapists to uncover *why*, the reason sometimes is simply because, and because we are connected.

Tears reveal more than we are accustomed to looking for in their regard. They well up when least expected, a sign of serendipity or simply pre-menstrual syndrome. They can be repressed almost endlessly, as in the case of a man who had not cried for twenty years until at his sister's funeral when the floodgates opened and his dry spell was over. They can be the surest sign of anger, the tenderest gesture of love. But most of all they are unpredictable, a kind of sponta-



over water, is really made up of water itself. It is that kind of holistic thinking that opens new spiritual horizons.

The historical fact of having had no voice is a cause for collective tears. That is why I claim that the experiential starting points for the various new theological expressions—womanist, feminist, Afro-American, lesbian or gay, Latin American, to name some—is not simply in a particular experience of oppression, but in those experiences that promote tears. Tears signal

Tears reveal more than we are accustomed to looking for in their regard.

neous human physical reaction, shared equally by both sexes albeit controlled by reward and punishment differently in the public arena for women and men.

Tears are stereotypically female, but I know many men who have agonized over divorce, the loss of a lover who had AIDS, betrayal by a boss, or the shattering of a career dream in middle age, and cried about it. I know too many men who have wept for the death of a child or the end of a once bright friendship, or even at a sad movie to think that tears don't "work" for men, too.

Tears are a way to pay attention, a vivid and trustworthy reminder that there is meaning and value being revealed. Tears are a kind of litmus test of our common humanity, women and men, lesbian/gay and heterosexual, Christian, Jewish, post-Christian, Wicca. Tears are the unexplored connection, the place where people of diverse faiths meet people of good will, the place where nuance is subordinate to kleenex, where comfort outruns politics. I do not mean to overload the notion of tears, nor to romanticize it into an apolitical morass of emotions which are taken more seriously than hard thinking. To the contrary, I am grasping for relational straws in a world where rape, recession, war and want atomize us and drive wedges where bridges should be. Tears are a bridge, a flimsy one to be sure. But there is something exciting about thinking that the bridge, usually

the grounded, individual experiences that each member of the group shares, a helpful antidote to abstraction.

Tears rain down at the historical memory of Afro-American slavery, the rape and exploitation which are part of this country's racist history, a painful memory of people of common blood lines subjected to unspeakable treatment. Spirituals, powerful preaching and "making a way where there was no way" in Black churches and communities convey bitter tears. Afro-American sisters and brothers do theology on the basis of these tears so tears function as a powerful, reliable indicator of where to seek out ultimate meaning and value. Of course tears need not be public, and the choice to save one's tears for home is often wise counsel, but tears are serious.

The tears of an HIV-infected baby born into poverty in Latin America because church-influenced laws prohibited her mother from using birth control prompt anger. Incredible as it may seem, some Latin American women speak of hope bordering on gratitude for AIDS. They say that perhaps the risk of passing the infection via bloody sheets used for several abortions in clandestine clinics will prompt their governments to legalize abortion. This stupefyingly horrifying state of affairs produced by the church-state lock on ethics and economics prompts tears of impotence in the face of such evil. These people and groups have a "take" on

reality that is crucial for contemporary theologizing; without them theology is babble or worse.

Much that we have been taught about tears seems backwards. Far from being a sign of weakness and neurosis, tears in the instances I have named are an unmistakable sign of strength, of psychic health, an ethical response to injustice, a visceral recognition of our common humanity despite the successful efforts to divide and annihilate many of us. I suggest that one clue that theologizing is about to begin is crying, for which the wiping dry of tears is the first theological act. The second move is active engagement in transforming the structures which cause such pain to begin with, or enhance such structures that bring joy.

Tears come from another deep well, perhaps one which, understandably, given the pain in the world, is often passed over. It is the deep well of delight and joy. Who can witness the birth of a child without tears of gratitude, relief and even hope? Who can witness a wedding or covenant service without swallowing hard at the miracle of human love begging human help to deepen it faithfully over time? These are common human experiences for which tears are the signal that ultimate meaning and value hang in the balance. Our theological interpretations are welcome, nay necessary, if we are to make sense of the richness of creation and enhance our collective life. The various liberation theologies could usefully ponder our joys as we have pondered our sorrows in the doing of theology.

important. Tears of boredom come from tame theological tasks like serving on committees to belabor the obvious, such as the ordination of lesbian/gay clergy in certain denominations which have plenty of successful if closeted lesbian/gay clergy. Predictable worship encourages tears of boredom; many people stay home instead of wiping their tears away. Worship is a time we set aside to lift to public expression the crying, drying and preventing of tears because it is holy. We derive from it the strength to do the work and the confidence to cry anew.

Tears help as an indicator of where to put energies for social change and how to prioritize the myriad matters that demand our attention. Whether working with homeless people, hungry people or HIV-infected people, the point is that what touches us compels us. While I cannot do it all, I trust that others who cry with the same frustration will take up other struggles just as I take up mine.

I wonder if God/ess cries. I hope so. I sense that the divine is closely allied with why we cry: because it hurts to see people treated unjustly and it is excruciating to be treated that way oneself; because it is delightful to find love, be in love, because rage rises when a child dies and frustration comes when we can't bring her back; because hurricanes capsize boats and because rainbows come all by themselves. The point is that these are real and they will not go away with or without God/ess, and because they are the cause of our tears, a cause for which words will never be enough. Theology is the effort to make sense of such words even while

In Memory of Her

When a card is not enough, when a hug is out of reach, when your heart longs to say more than words can carry—a contribution “In Memory of Her” offers permanent expression of your love and respect. With the holidays close at hand, take this opportunity to remember in a special way one or more of the women whom you hold dear. Send us your contribution along with a brief tribute in the following manner, to appear in a future issue of *WATERwheel*. Acknowledgement of your gift will be sent on request to those you name, followed by the issue in which your homage appears. (Please include necessary addresses.)

From Maria Harris, Montauk, NY

Margaret Costello Tunny, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt; early feminist; woman of wit, wisdom and courage.

From Joe and Carol Scinto, Rockville, MD

Kathleen Rager Boatman, dear young neighbor who struggled valiantly against implacable leukemia, you planted your garden with love for others to harvest. We treasure the seeds you gave us for sowing next spring.



*There is nothing wrong, better, everything right,
with the belly laugh unto tears
rolling down our cheeks
over the comic dimensions of human life.*

There is nothing wrong, better, everything right, with the belly laugh unto tears rolling down our cheeks over the comic dimensions of human life. Oh how the divine interrupts our seriousness, playfully seducing us to acknowledge its presence even in the midst of problems. This I have learned most effectively from my Latin American friends when a festive party occurs in the poorest *poblacion*, when the same women who have described their experiences of rape, incest and beatings turn their energies to music, dancing and the consumption of generous quantities of food and drink. There, too, I see the divine suffusing the scene with Her being as people cry from sheer relief at being well accompanied.

Likewise, boredom alerts us to something

acknowledging that ultimate sense eludes us.

Contemporary theology is a steady encounter with the diverse vagaries of life for which myriad explanations—read: religions—are constructed. Science comes into the picture, as do the many myths and stories that are used to explain the unexplainable. The reigning scientific notion is not relativity but chaos; mechanism has been replaced by the theory of chaos to explain physical reality. Small changes can make a big difference. Imagine the difference that tears make, cried on one part of the planet and felt in another, wiped away by one group of people in the name of all.

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

Ways To Remember WATER in your Will

Designate a specific gift of dollars or property for WATER.

Designate a specific percentage of your estate to WATER.

Designate the remainder of your estate to WATER.

Introduction

Seasonal changes of winter time are governed by the waning of the power of the sun. Each generation, each culture, celebrates calling the sun from the womb of night.

In the Northern hemisphere the Winter Solstice, December 21, is marked by many festivals whose imagery is light. This Winter Solstice ritual celebrates Chanukah, Kwanzaa and Christmas.

Variations on this ritual have been celebrated with groups in The Netherlands and the United States. Use it as a guide for creating one that meets your needs and those of your group.

Preparation

* Gather a Chanukah menorah, a Kwanzaa kinara, an Advent wreath, and a variety of candles. The chanukia is a special menorah for Chanukah with eight candles and a ninth for lighting, the shammi, which is usually placed in the tallest spot on the chanukia. The kinara contains three green candles, one black candle in the middle, and three red candles. The Advent wreath is a circle with four candles to represent the four Sundays of Advent. Protestants often use four white candles, and add a fifth candle in the center of the wreath as the Christ candle which is lit at Christmas. Catholics usually choose three purple candles and one pink for the Third Sunday, Gaudete.

* Have ready a cup with water for the libation.

* Bring instrumental flute music which invites reflection.

Invitation to Gather

Welcome to our celebration, "Winter Solstice: From the Womb of Night." What do you think of when you hear, "Winter Solstice: From the Womb of Night?" Share with us your name and your reflection.

Call to Celebration

This is the season of the Winter Solstice. December 21 is the longest night of the year, the night when darkness triumphs, and yet gives way and changes into light.

Winter Solstice in ancient times commemorated the birth of the sun goddesses Lucina and Athar. A yule log was lit and burned for seven days.

In Anatolia, an evergreen tree, symbol of life amidst apparent death, was hung with the fleece of a ram. The fleece contained fat, seeds of wheat and grapes. Prayers for health and abundance were said to the goddess Anat. Pine boughs have long been used during the solstice season, as have mistletoe, holly and ivy.

In Japan, Winter Solstice marks the return of the sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami from her cave retreat. She is lured out by an eight-sided mirror hung in a tree, where she sees her own image, thus the brilliance of the sun is renewed.

In early Rome, a woman-only festival for the Bona Dea ensured prosperity and well-being for the coming year. Bona Dea was a goddess of healing.

In Scandinavia, twelve days around solstice were the holiday of Hulda or Holle. She was the goddess associated with spinning, weaving and the cultivation of flax.

In the United States and in many other parts of the world, the Winter Solstice is marked by many festivals whose imagery is light. Tonight we name three of them: the communal festivals of Chanukah, Kwanzaa and Christmas.

We recall them to remember that generation after generation calls the sun from the womb of night. Let us take a moment to ready ourselves to tell Winter Solstice stories.

Gathering Music

(Play instrumental flute music.)



Telling The Chanukah Story

Chanukah is a feast of dedication that symbolizes steadfastness under oppression. It proclaims, "A great miracle occurred here."

The celebration has as one of its rituals the lighting of the eight-branched menorah, the chanukia. Each night another candle is lit until all are burning on the eighth night. The festival lasts for eight days to commemorate the eight days that the oil lamp burned to purify the temple after it was taken back by the Maccabees.

The reclaiming of the temple by the Jews meant that their other rituals could be celebrated. This ritual symbolizes the nature of faith—that it will grow as long as there are those who will remember the stories and dedicate themselves to God.

Kindling the Lights

Tonight we light one candle to anticipate the first night of Chanukah which is on the twenty-fifth day of the Hebrew month of Kislev, at sunset December 2, 1991. (Light the shammi and from it the candle(s) that are appropriate for the date of your celebration, adapting the words as necessary.)

I light this Chanukah candle to bring into this place the lights of Chanukah, the power of dedication, the hope that 1992 will be dedicated to peace.

Winter Solstice:

by Diann Neu

Blessing

Baruch atta hashem, elohaynu melek haolam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel Chanukah.

Blessed are you, Holy Creator, for you have given us this Chanukah light of dedication to guide our ways.

Song: "This Little Light of Mine," traditional

This little light of mine,
I'm gonna let it shine. (3x)
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Everywhere I go...
Throughout this solstice time...

Litany of Dedication

Let us recall the enlightenment gained through the lives of dedicated women.

Blessed is Ruth who dedicated herself to the God of Naomi, her mother-in-law.

Response: Dedicated be her life.

Blessed is Deborah whose dedication to God brought her to leadership as judge among her people.

Response: Dedicated...

Blessed is Hannah Senech who wrote, "Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame."

Response: Dedicated...

Blessed is the woman who relishes her own company.

Response: Dedicated...

Blessed are the old women who know the freedom of tears and the wisdom of laughter.

Response: Dedicated...

Blessed is the earth, the mother of us all.

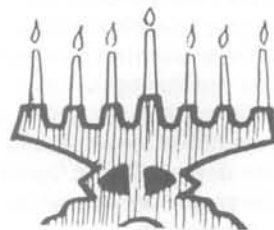
Response: Dedicated...

Blessed are... who else do we name? Tell us and we will respond.

Reflection

Let's reflect silently for a minute on the following question: To what do I dedicate myself?

Song: (Hum "This Little Light of Mine")



From the Womb of Night

Telling The Kwanzaa Story

Kwanzaa is a unique American holiday that pays tribute to the rich cultural roots of Americans born of African ancestry. It is celebrated from December 26 through January 1.

Kwanzaa comes from Kiswahili Kwanzaa which means first and refers to the first harvest celebrations in many African countries. This festival is based on seven fundamental principles which are referred to as the Nguzo Saba: Unity, Umoja (*U-mo-ja*); Self-determination, Kuujichagalia (*Ku-ji-cha-ga-lia*); Collective work and responsibility, Ujima (*U-ji-ma*); Cooperative economics, Ujamaa (*U-ja-ma*); Purpose, Nia; Creativity, Kuumba (*Ku-um-ba*); and faith, Imani (*I-mani*).

This feast is "a time, a chance and challenge to turn inward and then outward to enjoy in still another way the beauties of being together, in the same group, extended family and organization, sharing the same values, interests and aspirations, engaged in a commitment to the same struggle" (United Black Community of Washington, DC).

One of the rituals of Kwanzaa is the lighting of seven candles on successive evenings, beginning with the black candle, then alternating lighting from left to right. Each candle represents one of seven principles which are the foundation of African-American life.

Kindling the Lights

Tonight we light one candle to anticipate the first night of Kwanzaa which is December 26. (*Light the candle(s) appropriate for the date of your celebration, adapting the words accordingly.*)

I light this candle to bring into this place the lights of Kwanzaa, the power of community, the hope that in 1992 we will overcome racism.

Song: (*Listen to "Seven Principles" by Sweet Honey in the Rock from B'lieve I'll Run On..., See What The End's Gonna Be*)

©1978 Bernice Johnson Reagon BMI
Umoja--Unity that brings us together
Kuujichagalia--We will determine who we are
Ujima--Working and building our union
Ujamaa--We'll spend our money wisely
Nia--We know the purpose of our lives
Kuumba--All that we touch is more beautiful
Imani--We believe that we can

Sharing of Libation

It is tradition on all special occasions to pour a libation in remembrance of the ancestors. Tonight we pour water, which holds the essence of life, from our communal cup in the direction

of the four winds: south, east, north, west. (*The leader pours the water*). Please say after me our Libation Litany:

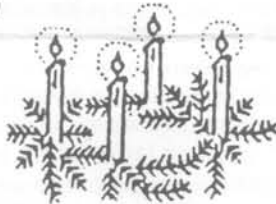
For Africa, cradle of civilization. (*echo*)
For the ancestors and their courageous spirits. (*echo*)
For the elders who teach wisdom. (*echo*)
For the young who are the promise of tomorrow. (*echo*)
For those who work against racism. (*echo*)
For Umoja, the principle of unity. (*echo*)
For the Creator who provides all things. (*echo*)

Let us sip from this cup, remembering. (*Pass the cup of libation around the group.*)

Reflection

Let's share with another person how we participate in the African-American struggle for liberation.

Song: "We Shall Overcome," traditional
(*Remember to cross your wrists, right over left, and hold the hands of the people next to you as you sing.*)



Telling The Christmas Story

Christmas celebrates the coming of God into human history. Each December 25th Christians proclaim the birth of the God of Peace. The lessons from the Scripture readings for this season are filled with visions of the establishment of justice and right relation on earth.

Advent, a time of anticipation and preparation for the birth of light, precedes Christmas. Advent means "coming." Starting on the Sunday nearest to November 30th and containing the four Sundays before Christmas Day, it marks the beginning of the church year. Each of the four weeks of Advent is signaled by lighting another candle on the Advent wreath.

Kindling the Lights

Tonight we light one candle on the Advent wreath to begin a new year. (*Light the number of candles that are appropriate for the date of your celebration, adapting the words accordingly.*)

I light this Advent wreath to bring into this place the light of Advent and Christmas, the flames of justice and right relation on earth, the hope that 1992 will be a year of world peace.

Song: "Rejoice! Rejoice!," words adapted from the traditional by Diann Neu
O Come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel.
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until a Liberator is near.
(*Refrain*) Rejoice! Rejoice!
Our freedom is at hand.
The Dawn of Justice shines upon the land.

O Come, dear friends, Advent time is here;
It's time to cast out doubt and crippling fear--
For presently, before our wondering eyes,
This season will bring forth its own surprise.

Reading: author unknown

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the wise women and men are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart.

Song: "Rejoice! Rejoice!"

O come, O Wisdom, sister of us all,
Prepare our ears to hear a wondrous call.
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in your ways to go. (*ref*)

Let us together ponder how we may
Initiate a new and better day.
In numbers we are strong, our faith is great;
No more delay lest justice come too late. (*ref*)

Reflection

Let's share a Christmas concern or wish with one another.

Telling Our Story

There are other candles around this room.
Tell us stories that celebrate Winter Solstice and kindle the lights.

Blessing of One Another

Gathered in the womb of this night, let us form a close circle. Close your eyes and feel the power of the darkness around us and within us. Call forth from within you your creativity, your healing powers. Filled with the power of the Winter Solstice let us bless one another.

Closing Song

Medley of holiday songs that are familiar to your group.

Diann L. Neu, co-founder and co-director of WATER, is a feminist liberation liturgist.



Water In Argentina

by Sara Newbery

(Translated from Spanish by Mary E. Hunt)

The visit of eight U.S. women to the Southern Cone in the spring was a way for Argentine women who believe that all Yankees are alike and look down on Latin Americans to learn that there are women in the U.S. who look at us as equals and come to learn from us. It was interesting in Villa Hidalgo, a poor barrio outside of the city of Buenos Aires, when the visitors gathered around the table and ate the *asado* using their hands just like their hostesses. They listened to the women and felt very much at home. I believe that such visits should be repeated in order to create a network of friends in the south and the north.

I represented WATER at a meeting condemning clandestine abortions at the Ghandi Forum as part of the celebration of Abortion Day in Latin America (September 28, 1991). Experts from various disciplines spoke: doctors and nurses, social workers. I spoke on the theological implications of the legalization of abortion.

WATER in Argentina recently organized a day long workshop on lesbian issues held at the Taller Permanente de la Mujer. Women from the various lesbian groups, as well as unaffiliated lesbians, were invited to participate. The fifty-five women who engaged in dialogue with feminist theologian Mary E. Hunt on "Friendship, Tears and Ethics" found it a stimulating day. Most important, they felt empowered to think seriously about key issues.

WATER is also involved in the meetings, demonstrations, and passing out leaflets against the efforts to establish rules and regulations regarding prostitution in Argentina. This legal move will make slaves of the prostitutes and help only the pimps and panderers.

We await the next visit from women in the north whom we will welcome as part of our ongoing exchange.

Sara Newbery is WATER's Latin American Collaborator, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

WATER Making a Splash

by Carol Scinto

Word from, and about, WATER spread through such variegated channels as these in the past year: The American Medical Women's Association, Branch I, noted in its summer newsletter that WATER offers "another approach to women networking...The newsletter is a thoughtful educational addition for women." The *Washington Post* featured WATER in an article appearing April 28, and Mary Hunt was quoted in both *The Nation* (Annette Fuentes' article, "Equality, Yes--Militarism, No," October 28) and *The Guardian* (Alison Webster's article, "Separatism Is Not a Sin for Feminist Theologians," January 28).

Jane Redmont quotes Diann Neu in "Communities of Service, Families of Faith" appearing in *Progressions: A Lilly Endowment Occasional Report*. Diann's prayer, "Bless These Eyes... Bless These Ears," opened the meeting in July in El Salvador of the Iniciativa de Mujeres Cristianas (IMC), while her "Liturgy from a Feminist Perspective" provided the basis for follow-up reflections. Her "In Praise of Hands" appeared in the September issue of the newsletter of Evangelical Lutheran Women, and "Liturgy of Naming" was used for a Women in Leadership Conference in November in Seattle, WA. *Daughters of Sarah* printed Diann's "Celebrations in a Different Key: Feminists Transform Liturgies" in its November/December 1990 issue, followed by "Blessing of Many Breads" in March/April 1991. In addition, work by Diann appears in two recent books: *Earth Prayers from Around the World*, edited by Elizabeth Robert and Elias Amidon, (Harper San Francisco, 1991) and *Birthings and Blessings* by Rosemary Mitchell and Gail Ricciuti, (Crossroad, 1991).

Articles by Mary were published in *The Christian Century* ("Feminism and Ecumenism: Models of the Mainstream," October 30), *Conscience* ("Packaging Feminism for the Abortion Debate," July/August), *South of the Garden* ("Sex Is as the Spirit Does," May/June), *Preaching in a Global Context* ("Giving Out of Our Abundance," June 30), *More Light Update* ("A Four Word Letter, Not To Be Confused with a Four Letter Word," August), *Grailville Newsletter* ("Holy Impertinence Revisited," May), *Communication* ("Suffocate or Smile," June/July), *Miriam's Song* ("Waging War at Home: Christianity and Structural Violence," June), *The Witness* ("Ecumenical Encounters of a Feminist Kind," January, and "Medals on our Blouses?," March). Her work also appeared in *Sermons Seldom Heard* edited by Annie Milhaven, Crossroad ("Overcoming the Fear of Love"); *Listen to the Stories: Gay and Lesbian Catholics Talk About Their Lives and the Church*, by Raymond Holtz, Garland Publishing, and *Women and Church: The Challenge of Ecumenical Solidarity in an Age of Alienation*, edited by Melanie May, Friendship Press ("The Challenge of 'Both/And' Theology"), as well as the *More Light Prayer Book* ("God Laughing Out Loud"). Her book, *Fierce Tenderness*, was reviewed during the year in *Christianity and Crisis*, the *ISCS Bulletin*, the *National Catholic Reporter*, and the *Windy City Times*, among other publications.

WATER is also highlighted in the summer issue of *Open Hands: Reconciling Ministries with Lesbians and Gay Men*. (Vol.7, No.1).

Carol Scinto is WATER's Editorial Assistant.

Program Hints And Glimpses

Readers tell us that they wish they lived closer to Washington to attend local programs. We recommend using some of our local program ideas in other areas.

For example, *Women in Ministry Breakfast* is a simple format that works: good food, time to be together, crisp format with short, lively input. This fall Sally Timmel of Church Women United discussed women's efforts on Capital Hill; Cheryl Anderson of Grace United Methodist Church and Gail Unterberger of Wesley Seminary shared insights on their visit to the Philippines; Cheryl Sanders of Howard University School of Divinity discussed womanist theology and its relationship to ministry. Just keep the time short, the coffee hot, and the welcome warm, and you, too, can build a network.

Women-Church Liturgies are opportunities for people to experiment with various worship formats and find a community of faith doing justice. *Sharing Feminist Music* is a way for people to learn women's music and have fun in the process. An *Ethics Reading Group* is a good way to encourage people to struggle with tough issues: assisted suicide and abortion discussions were lively at WATER.

Many people find it hard to get out at night; try a Saturday or Sunday afternoon for programs. Keep costs modest and goals sharp. There is endless variety, not all of it happening inside the Beltway. Let us know your program successes so that we can try to pass the word along.

Resources



Try some of the following new resources. All of these titles are now in the WATER Resource Center.

Albrecht, Lisa and Rose M. Brewer. **BRIDGES OF POWER: WOMEN'S MULTICULTURAL ALLIANCES.** Santa Cruz, CA: New Society Publishers (Phone 800-333-9093), 1990 (244 pages, \$16.70).

Essential reading for feminists struggling to build networks that work.

Bach, Alice, editor. **THE PLEASURE OF HER TEXT: FEMINIST READINGS OF BIBLICAL AND HISTORICAL TEXTS.** Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990 (148 pages, \$11.95).

New scholarship, uneven but intriguing, on texts that can be handled from a number of feminist perspectives.

Borrowdale, Anne. **DISTORTED IMAGES: CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES TO WOMEN, MEN AND SEX.** Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991 (160 pages, \$11.95).

Part of the growing biblical criticism in the feminist tradition. A useful approach to violence and some suggestions for how to handle it in texts and praxis.

Cocks, Joan. **THE OPPOSITIONAL IMAGINATION: FEMINISM, CRITIQUE AND POLITICAL THEORY.** New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1989 (241 pages, \$14.95).

A useful look at difference and power that will stimulate many difficult but inevitable questions.

Darr, Kathryn Pfisterer. **FAR MORE PRECIOUS THAN JEWELS: PERSPECTIVES ON BIBLICAL WOMEN.** Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991 (211 pages, \$15.95).

A welcome introduction to several women in the Hebrew Bible made valuable by the careful use of critical scholarship.

Duck, Ruth C. **GENDER AND THE NAME OF GOD: THE TRINITARIAN BAPTISMAL FORMULA.** New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1991 (192 pages, \$16.96).

A critical look at how the "Father, Son and Holy Spirit" came into being, and how to move well beyond it. A good example of feminist revisioning, both its possibilities and limits.

Eclipse. **THE MOON IN HAND: A MYSTICAL PASSAGE.** Portland, ME: Astarte Shell Press (P.O. Box 10453 04104), 1991 (160 pages, \$12.95).

A beautiful volume, lovely to hold and leaf through, useful to apply, challenging to imagine how the Wheel of Life might turn next.

Hahn, Celia Allison. **SEXUAL PARADOX: CREATIVE TENSIONS IN OUR LIVES AND IN OUR CONGREGATIONS.** New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1991 (244 pages, \$14.95).

The effort to resolve gender-related issues is complicated. This book, geared to parish life, provides a starting point.

Holtz, Raymond C. **LISTEN TO THE STORIES: GAY AND LESBIAN CATHOLICS TALK ABOUT THEIR LIVES AND THE CHURCH.** New York: Garland Publishers, 1991 (249 pages, \$37).

Edited interviews with a range of Catholics who prove how ordinary and empowering it is to be lesbian/gay. If only everyone were free to use her/his own name...this book would not be necessary.

Huckle, Patricia. **TISH SOMMERS, ACTIVIST, AND THE FOUNDING OF THE OLDER WOMEN'S LEAGUE.** Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991 (282 pages, \$28.95).

A lovely treatment of a woman whose inspiring life was as complex as her commitment was clear. Tish leaps off the pages.

Kalechofsky, Roberta. **HAGGADAH FOR THE LIBERATED LAMB.** Marblehead, MA: Micah Publications (255 Humphrey St.), 1988 (70 pages, \$14.95).

Finally, a vegetarian seder, tastefully presented and deliciously creative.

Mitchell, Rosemary Catalano and Gail Anderson Ricciuti. **BIRTHINGS AND BLESSINGS.** New York: Crossroad, 1991 (191 pages, \$12.95).

A gentle way to incorporate feminist liturgy into mainline churches.

Roberts, Elizabeth and Elias Amidon, editors. **EARTH PRAYERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.** San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991 (451 pages, \$12.95).

A wonderful collection of ecologically correct prayers, poems and invocations by a wide range of authors, including Julian of Norwich,

Diann Neu, May Sarton, Pablo Neruda and dozens more.

Rosenthal, Evelyn R. **WOMEN, AGING AND AGEISM.** Binghamton, NY: Harrington Park Press, 1990 (160 pages, \$14.95).

New studies on issues we all face as we age: friendship, work, health and freedom.

Rothschild, Joan. **TEACHING TECHNOLOGY FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE.** Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1988 (171 pages, \$17.95).

A useful jumping off point for feminist theologians who want to move into "science, technology and society" work.

Schneiders, Sandra M. **BEYOND PATCHING: FAITH AND FEMINISM IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991 (136 pages, \$6.95).

A gentle if cursory introduction to feminist ideas from a Catholic perspective. Church officials cannot say it was not made obvious for them.

Spretnak, Charlene. **STATES OF GRACE: THE RECOVERY OF MEANING IN THE POSTMODERN AGE.** San Francisco: Harper-SanFrancisco, 1991 (337 pages, \$21.95).

A comprehensive new analysis of the earth, its culture and its human relationships informed by a range of wisdom traditions. This book is suggestive in its scope, if variously attentive to the nuances of its many elements.

For the Children

Poling, Nancy Werking, with illustrations by Gloria Claudia Ortiz. **MOST MINISTERS WEAR SNEAKERS.** New York: Pilgrim Press, 1991 (32 pages, \$9.95).

Get this for the children in your life if you want them to grow up with an appreciation for the range of people in ministry.



Internships At WATER

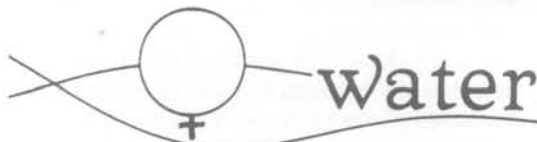
Internships are a Washington mainstay, a way for people to get experience and to meet others in their field, as well as a way for busy offices to get help with work. WATER arranges internships on an individual basis.

Two recent interns, Marie Therese Martin and Beth Wheeler, made significant contributions to the organization. Marie Therese came from Worcester Connection, a women's center in Massachusetts, where she had extensive experience on social as well as theological issues related to women. Marie's sabbatical year, part of which was spent with the WATER delegation to the Southern Cone, included time to explore Washington using WATER as a base. In house, she extended the arms and legs of the staff in many directions, including providing a seminar for the Life Experiences Activities Program (LEAP) whose students train at WATER.



Beth Wheeler used her intern year to learn the runnings of a small non-profit, skills she later put to use as a member of the staff in the fall of 1991. Beth, too, was attracted by the Latin American connections; she attended the Encuentro of Latin American and Caribbean Feminists, as well as participated in the WATER delegation.

Interested women are welcome to apply. WATER does not provide stipends, but we can help with finding affordable housing and other practical details. Internships are arranged for six weeks to a year; optimum stay is nine months, with September through May the best time. Work includes routine office tasks, special projects and programs, computer data entry, research and writing. Interns develop new skills, participate in WATER programs and share in the creation of more opportunities for women's empowerment. Are you interested?



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WATERwheel Fall 1991