



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

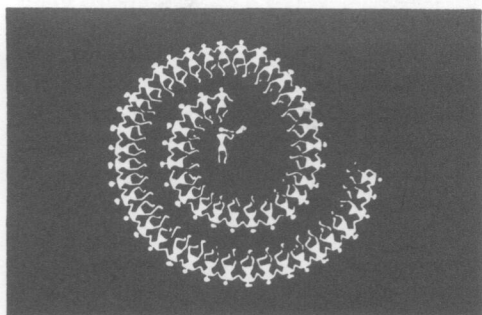
Editorial

The good news is that one war is over. Last year's Gulf fiasco has taken its place next to Vietnam in the history books. But the remains surround us. The war is over yet the "peace dividend" never came in the mail. Veterans got little more than dirty yellow ribbons to tie around their fingers to remind them of empty promises. The rest of us got disgusted.

A shopping cart piled with one couple's worldly possessions sits in our parking lot behind the WATER office. The couple lives in an old car with cardboard keeping the wind out of the broken windows. A soup kitchen with single room occupancy dwellings for now homeless people is moving to the building up the street from the WATER office where a thriving catering business used to be. Drug arrests keep the police in and out of the motel across the street. Increased theft has everyone just a little more careful in our building.

This is what "good" neighborhoods face in the nation's capital in 1992. Imagine the tough areas, and the plight of rural people who are poor.

It is an election year with, arguably, no immediately compelling candidates. It is a leap year with little bounce in our steps. It is a time when the bad news overwhelms, unless we weave the "tough spun web" (courtesy of Carolyn McDade) that will hold us in the very mean time. Here's weaving with you.



Trust Women

by Mary E. Hunt

Sabers rattle where speculums fear to tread. The abortion war is heating up as the Supreme Court whittles away at Roe v. Wade. Most people are plain tired of the whole thing. I, for one, want legal abortion and a whole new conversation where pre-drawn sides are passe. I want real grappling with real issues in a constructive effort to move this matter off the dime. Religious feminists/womanists have our hands full just keeping current against the backlash, but we are a capable lot and stand ready to turn the century with this matter settled, at least in the public forum. As a step in that direction, I offer the following suggestion.

A good place to start is obvious but overlooked: trust women to act morally under immoral conditions. Women have done it for a long time, with us, our ancestors and our children as proof positive of our collective trustworthiness. One would never know it to eavesdrop on

The central issues in the current debate are framed in a peculiar way. Reproductive choice is at best a poor "choice" of words. It sounds as if one were going into the proverbial candy store to decide whether to spend a penny on a handful of licorice or a few gum drops. Yes, "choice" is that outdated, better, inadequate, to convey the complexity of the reproductive maze for today's woman.

If she is white, upper middle class and insured, she has a range of real and imagined possibilities, from in vitro fertilization to international adoption, from female condoms to lesbian sex. If she is young, poor, often African American or Hispanic, then the paucity of possibilities is underscored by the lack of sex education, defunding for pre-natal medical care, and little aid for childrearing.

To label this mess reproductive choice is sinister. Nobody really chooses when there are few options. And an abundance of options

*...trust women to act morally
under immoral conditions.*

many contemporary conversations in which women are vilified for individual choices they make. Few such conversations include serious consideration of the pitiful social conditions which necessitate many abortions; fewer still look at the lack of social support for women to welcome children with open arms and ample incomes.

Social conditions are not trivial in the debate. Reproduction is a communal effort. Ok, no community gets pregnant, but every pregnant woman is part of a community which sets the conditions for her reproductive choices. The shift from privatized blame to socialized responsibility is the first move toward a new conversation, a move I recommend if we want to talk about other matters of portent any time soon.

skewed in the direction of those who can pay for them is a dubious luxury. So much for communal anything when the members of said community are so widely divided on a spectrum that gets longer every day. I seek action aimed at looking at the assumptions and priorities that have created this inequity and how we might restructure our thinking and our society to share the wealth.

Instead, focus is now diverted to the act of abortion: "To abort or not to abort" is not the question. Granted it is one of the myriad questions. But it is by no means the most interesting or useful one. I do not advocate backing off of it until abortion is legal, available, and economical around the world (i.e., in the foreseeable future), but neither do I advocate (continued on page 2)



ISSN 0898-6606

Vol. 4, No. 4, Winter 1991-92

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WATER is feminist 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 helps 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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Trust...

(continued from page 1)

cate limiting our ethical gaze to what is *a priori* structured to elicit a yes or no response, and equally guaranteed to create disharmony. Falling into the "yes/no" framework is to miss the fact that access, not ethics, is in the balance.

To complicate matters, reproduction is now global business. One international conversation is on the new French abortion procedure RU 486/PG. RU 486 is the first of what are expected to be many antiprogesterin drugs which, when coupled with certain prostaglandins--PG--result in a pharmaceutically induced, rather than surgical, abortion. This difficult debate shows how very complicated medico-politics can be. Roussel Uclaf, maker of RU 486, refuses to release the drug for testing in the U.S. due, among other reasons, to the threat of right-wing backlash. A federal import ban keeps the FDA from testing it here.

abortion. That strategy misses the fact that abortion will continue, as it has throughout history, and their efforts will accomplish only further stratification of access to services. Pro-choice people want the probable bad news before the November 1992 elections so as to use the outrage expected from more anti-Roe rulings to help elect additional progressive law makers. Heightening the contradictions is a tried and true strategy. But there is something slightly slippery about encouraging, even allowing, more oppression in the name of overcoming it, since the people who pay are always the most vulnerable. But apparently it has come to that on the matter of abortion.

Large demonstrations on both sides keep media attention squarely on the poles/polls. Efforts to shift the conversation, not to a mythical middle ground but to more helpful questions, are greeted from both ends as bordering on betrayal. As a solidly pro-choice partisan prepared to march on April 5, I am happy to run

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that future chapters be written by women,
the prime users, talking with other women
whose contexts may be different
but whose health concerns and
right to access are the same.*

Pro-choice feminists are anxious to see it tested in the U.S. both for use in abortion as well as in treatment of breast cancer and other diseases. We are listening carefully to women--for example, some in Bangladesh, who are dubious that the "magic pill" will work in their context without damaging side effects. But we are listening with equal interest to the tens of thousands of French women who have had very positive experiences with RU 486/PG, hoping to glean from them insights for our own situation. The result is that a new chapter in reproductive history is being written, albeit slowly, and sometimes by the same men with their same quill pens who have written earlier chapters. The feminist/womanist bottom line is that future chapters be written by women, the prime users, talking with other women whose contexts may be different but whose health concerns and right to access are the same.

Both sides of the U.S. abortion debate want the Supreme Court to tip its hand, but for different reasons and with varying results. Anti-choice folks want Roe v. Wade overturned so they can return to notoriously more conservative state legislatures and systematically outlaw

the risk of such accusations. I think we have work to do while there is still some room and time to do it. Many people will only wake up and smell the burned-dry coffee pot the day they read about the overturn of Roe on the front page. Self interest makes effective political motivation, but the fact is that access to health care, including abortion, is already limited for most women, an issue that demands ethical attention now. Moreover, studies show that most U.S. citizens want abortion to be legal and discouraged. It is this seeming contradiction, this contradictory if logical approach, which religious feminists/womanists can help to explicate and bring into being.

We who profess an interest in things religious bring some useful insight to such a discussion. First, after the fashion of religious ethicist Beverly Wildung Harrison, we assume that women are "moral agents" whose "bodily integrity" is a fact of life. Simple as this sounds, the starting point for ethical appropriation on reproduction is with a deep and abiding trust in women's good judgement and women's right to exercise it. This does not mean that we will automatically agree with every choice every

woman makes, nor does it mean that mistakes will not be made. It does not mean that doctors, spouses/compañeros, family members and friends should not be part of reproductive decisions. What it does mean is that without such fundamental trust in women, especially pregnant women, well earned over millennia of successful reproducing, the discussion is hopelessly hamstrung. There is simply no other way to shift the balance in a patriarchal society so that women can exercise the appropriate agency.

A second feminist/womanist assumption, this time from the heart of womanist work, is that the survival of women and their dependent children is at the center of concern. Survival is far more serious and compelling than choice. There is nothing frivolous about it, no suggestion of simple self-interest or convenience.

Survival is communal, not individual. Alice Walker writes that womanists (feminists can learn from this) are: "Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female" (*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*, p. xi). Trusting women means believing that we are struggling for our collective survival and making reproductive choices accordingly. Such a posture means trusting that women consider men and children important; after all, pregnant women are the most obvious example of doing for the species what men cannot and children are the result! Such commonsense analysis is welcome and disarming in discussions which thrive on critiques of women's self interest.

A third feminist/womanist insight that will help to move the conversation is that all life is sacred. This means trusting that people who are pro-choice do not play fast and loose with fetal life, nor do we fetishize it either. It means acknowledging that life is fundamentally relational and that relationships deepen in mean-

if it were. Here trust is crucial. We trust that such an analysis is right in the absence of the possibility of explicit scientific or theological proof. We trust that women mean what we say when we say that we do not abort lightly, and neither do we chose to give birth without trepidation.

Trusting women sounds slightly facile. But if the option is, as it is in a patriarchal society, to trust doctors, trust government, trust churches, trust drug companies, it sounds progressively better. It is not the full story, but it is a good first chapter in a new book on reproductive ethics that we are writing together.

A second chapter, which goes beyond the scope of this essay, is explicit attention to sex education and birth control, attention which speaks louder than any anti-abortion placard. It is the rank duplicity of churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church, that oppose birth control and stand in the way of public sex education that gives them the failing marks in ethics. Progress on birth control and innovative methods are few and far between. Twenty years ago the U.S. spent proportionately more on research and development in this area than it does now. Access is still a problem.

The newly minted women's condom is one of the few additions in recent decades. While it finally provides women with a reasonable barrier to sexually transmitted diseases (though its potential as a contraceptive is still unsure), like Norplant before it, the onus is once again on women to do the protecting. Maybe it is a sign, one of many we need, that women are finally being trusted. Too bad we have to carry the whole burden. But it is better that we be honest and consistent than pregnant and sorry.

Trusting women will be a stretch for many people including some women. But the time

Trusting women means believing that we are struggling for our collective survival and making reproductive choices accordingly.

ing and value over time. There is, after all, no such thing as a pregnancy; pregnant women exist within relational constellations, one dimension of which is a fetus. The false dichotomy, the Solomonic choice between the life of the pregnant woman (she is not a mother unless she has had previous children) and the life of the unborn fetus, is largely a media hype. Ask a pregnant woman the question "Your life or its?" and she will typically say "Both."

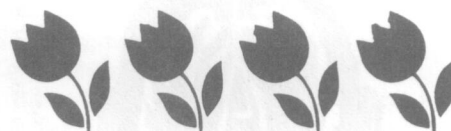
All life is sacred, especially human life. Fetal life is human life (i.e., it is not a rock or a leaf), but it is not a person and so it cannot be compared with the life of a pregnant woman as

has come to stop the drain of resources—both financial and emotional—that the abortion debate has cost. We need those resources for future generations and for millions of people among us who suffer. I trust women to put them to good use because among us nothing is ever lost.

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

Gracias Mil

A thousand thanks to stalwart WATER supporters **Terry and Maureen Donohue**. "The Sisters Donohue," as we call this lawyer-accountant combo, have kept WATER's records straight for years, handling bookkeeping, taxes and wayward forms with skill and style. We thank them profusely for their services, and wish them well as Terry takes over as the treasurer of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and Maureen continues her accounting career.



Welcome

Kitty Stafford, nine years a missionary in Peru, is WATER's latest intern. She is an Irish-born member of the Canadian Sisters of St. Joseph of London, Ontario. Kitty works in Zaña, Peru with an exciting women's center. The women are developing the infrastructure for tourism, opening a restaurant, bakery, guest house and five homes which will serve the needs of visitors to local ruins, including the remains of a 16th century Augustinian monastery.

At WATER, Kitty is learning the ways of a busy Washington office and teaching the ways of women's wisdom: patience, a sense of humor and a willingness to engage in life-long struggle for justice. Bienvenida.

Dara Dosik joins WATER from the LEAP program. She is a part of the office staff learning to handle mailings.

Catherine O'Connor of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Peace, another Irish-born WATER supporter, graces the office with her love for books and her organizing skills. Catherine keeps the Resource Center in tip top shape and adds her quiet, knowledgeable presence to the mix.

Lynn Shuppel takes over the WATER accounting tasks. Lynn is well known to us through her work with the Women-Church Convergence, her association with Baltimore Women-Church, and her connection with Dignity's Committee for Women's Concerns.

Cara Vincent, a Methodist seminarian at Wesley Theological Seminary, joins WATER for the spring semester. Work at WATER fulfills requirements for her action/reflection class which combines theology with experience. That's what WATER does.

Introduction

Healthy reproductive choice includes the best medical, psychological and social support available. It also includes spiritual support which we sometimes forget in making all-important decisions and events in our lives. We--friends, ministers, counselors--need to develop and celebrate liturgies that affirm women's reproductive choices.

The following liturgies celebrate women's spirituality by affirming the integrity and holiness of their decisions. These liturgies can be used alone or shared with a partner, friends or family. Women may need encouragement to consider celebrating such a liturgy because traditional churches and society do not provide them.



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Seeking Wisdom

Background

When a woman discovers she is unintentionally pregnant, she experiences a variety of emotions and may feel that no one shares or understands her experience. She needs to seek her own wisdom so she can make a choice about her pregnancy.

This liturgy will help her decide whether to bring her pregnancy to term or to have an abortion. I have used it with women in counseling and in long distance telephone conversations.

It can be used in the quiet of one's own room or with a trusted friend. I have written it to be used with a friend so women will know they are not alone.

Preparation

Gather a candle, paper and pencil, favorite instrumental music. Choose a comfortable spot in a favorite place.

Centering

Play soothing instrumental music quietly in the background.

Candle Lighting

Light a candle, absorb its power, pray.

Prayer

Gracious and loving Holy Wisdom, fill _____ (name of the woman) with wisdom that she may know clearly the choice that she needs to make. Bless her and comfort her with your Spirit.

Guided Imagination

Guide the woman through this visualization. _____, (name of the woman), close your eyes, take a deep breath, and feel your body begin to relax. Imagine yourself walking on a path through the woods. You are walking into the future, your future. At the end of this path imagine yourself in ten years if you decide to bring this pregnancy to term. Take three minutes and listen to yourself. . . .

Now begin again. (Pause fifteen seconds.) Imagine another path through the woods. Walk along this path. At the end of this path experience yourself in ten years if you do not bring this pregnancy to term. Take three minutes and experience what this is like. . . .

After you have visualized these two pathways, think of your favorite place where you feel most comfortable, and imagine yourself there now. Take a deep breath, let your body relax, and think about what you have experienced. Take as long as you like. . . .

Reflection

Sit and watch the candle burn. Write down or draw your thoughts in a journal, dance your feelings, and/or share your insights with another. Reflect for as long as you like. . . . Blow out the candle when you are finished.

Closing

(When closure is appropriate.)

Wisdom comes when we reflect on our life and make choices based on honesty and truth. Wisdom lives within us. Listen to her. Trust her. Talk with her whenever you need to. She is your friend. She is god and goddess who is with you always. Seek to find wisdom and love her fiercely.

Song: "i found god in myself"
from Colored Girls

i found god in myself, i found god in myself
and i loved her fiercely, i loved her fiercely,
i found god in myself.

Afterwards

_____ (name of the woman), do something comforting now. Drink a cup of tea, take a warm shower, listen to soothing music, take a walk in the garden.

Affirming A Choice

Background

This liturgy affirms that a woman has made a good and holy decision. It provides strength and healing after making a difficult choice. It brings closure to an often intense and emotional process. It is intended to be celebrated with friends.

You Are

by Diann Neu

Preparation

Place on a cloth in the center of the circle: oil, symbols such as flower petals or dried flowers, and a bowl that will be given to the woman as a gift. Invite her to choose a favorite song, poem, reading or scripture verse for the ritual.

Invite the woman who has made the decision, if appropriate her partner, and supportive friends to gather for affirmation.

Gathering

Welcome. Let us gather to affirm _____ (name of the woman). She has made a difficult choice and she needs our support.

Song

Play or sing a favorite, comforting song, one that the woman likes.

Prayer

Let us pray. Blessed are you, Holy Wisdom, for your presence with _____ (name of the woman). Praised be you, Mother Goddess and Father God, that you have given your people the power of choice. We are saddened that the life circumstances of _____ (woman's name

or, if appropriate, woman's name and her partner's name) are such that she has had to choose to terminate her pregnancy. Such a choice is never simple. It is filled with pain and hurt, with anger and questions, but also with integrity and strength. We rejoice in her attention to choice.

Our beloved sister has made a very hard choice. We affirm her and support her in her decision. We promise to stand with her in her ongoing life.

Blessed are you, Sister Wisdom, for your presence with her.

Reading

Choose a poem, reading, or scripture verse that captures the message of the liturgy.

Sharing

The celebrant invites the woman (and her partner) to speak about her (their) decision to have an abortion. If there is a symbolic gesture that expresses her (their) feelings, such as sprinkling flower petals, burning a rose, or sharing dried flowers, invite her (them) to incorporate it into the sharing.

Blessing of _____ (name of woman)

_____ (name of woman), we love you very deeply. As a sign of our affirmation of you and of your choice, we give you this bowl and this oil. Oil soothes bones that are weary from

Not Alone

making a difficult decision. Oil strengthens and heals. Oil...(add sentences that reflect what the woman spoke in her story.)

We bless you with this oil. Come, friends, take oil from the bowl and massage _____'s (the woman's name) hands, face, feet, neck, shoulders and head. Close your blessing by embracing her.

_____ (name of woman), the bowl is a tangible symbol of this day. When times are difficult--and such days come to each of us--look at this bowl and remember our love for you. We bless you, _____ (name of the woman), and promise to be with you on your way.

Closing Song

Close the liturgy with a blessing song like the following "Blessing Song" by Marsie Silvestro. copyright 1982 by Marsie Silvestro

Bless you my sister, bless you on your way.
You have roads to roam before you're home
And winds to speak your name.
So go gently my sister let courage be your song.
You have words to say in your own way
And stars to light your night.

And if ever you grow weary,
And your heart song has no refrain.
Just remember we'll be waiting
To raise us up again.

And we'll bless you our sister,
Bless you in our way.
And we'll welcome home all the life
you've known and softly speak your name.
Bless you our sister, bless you on your way.

Awaiting the Birthing

Background

The transition into motherhood is an important life stage that needs to be marked. This liturgy celebrates preparation for birthing. It could replace the traditional baby shower. The best time for the celebration is as close to the woman's due date as seems appropriate. Don't wait too long!

Preparation

Invite women friends to gather at the woman's home on the designated evening (you may want to include the prospective father and other men, too). Ask them to bring a candle and a piece of fruit symbolic of a blessing for the woman. Place several special objects in the center of the circle on a cloth or small table: an egg-shaped candle,

an egg-shaped loaf of bread, a pitcher of milk, a glass and the woman's favorite flower floating in a bowl of water. Choose vessels for the milk and bread that will be given to the woman as a reminder of this occasion.

Gathering and Candlelighting

The pregnant woman lights the egg-shaped candle. Either she or a friend welcomes people. The friend continues.

Welcome to _____'s (name of the woman) home, a home that will be filled with new life very soon. We've gathered to be with her to mark her transition into motherhood with this child. She and we are awaiting the birthing.

This special time invites us to recall our own birthing lines. Think for a minute about your matrilineage. (Pause) Let us create our circle by speaking our names, reciting our matrilineage, lighting our candle, and passing the flame on to the person next to us. (Naming)

Prayer

Our circle is filled with the birthing power of women. Let us extend our hands with our candles in them. Pray after me.

Blessed are you, Mother Goddess, for bringing us to this joyous moment. (echo) Blessed are you, Sister Wisdom, for your presence with _____. (echo) Blessed are you, Source of Life, for blessing us with life. (echo)

Compassionate Creator Mother, protect _____ (name of the woman) that she may be healthy of mind and body. May she give birth to her child safely and in good health. May our foremothers sustain her through her time of danger. May her waters and birth canal open so that her child is born safely and with little pain. May her recovery be quick, easy and comfortable. May her child be a blessing.

Blessed are you, Mother Goddess...(as above).

Song

Let us encircle this birthing home with candlelight. Place your candle where you wish as we sing. "As We Bless" by Faith Rogow.

copyright 1990 by Faith Rogow

As we bless the Source of Life
So we are blessed. (2x)
And the blessing gives us strength,
And makes our visions clear
And the blessing gives us peace
And the courage to dare.
As we bless the Source of Life
So we are blessed.

Sharing of Fruit

We have each brought fruit to symbolize a blessing for _____ (name of the woman). Let us speak about the wishes for her symbolized in the fruit which we have brought. As you share, put the fruit in the basket. (Sharing)

May our wishes empower you, _____, as your day of giving birth draws near.

Sharing from the Pregnant Woman

The woman speaks about her fears and hopes on becoming the mother of this child. Others in the group share as they wish their experiences of motherhood, childhood and caring for children.

Blessing of Milk, Bread and Fruit

One woman, pouring milk into the glass, prays: Mother's milk of union,
Earliest sacred communion.

Let us together touch and bless this life-force.

Blessed are you, Source of Life, for you desire health, safety and well-being for your offspring.

Another woman takes the bread and prays:

Bread of life,
Nurturing, sustaining, Grandma's life.
Touch and bless this common thread.

Blessed are you, Bakerwoman Goddess, for you give your loved ones food for the journey.

Another woman takes the fruit and prays:

Fruit of blessing,
Patience, strength, love abounding.
Touch and bless this desirous food.

Blessed are you, Sweet Friend, for you empower birthing sisters with blessings.
Let us eat, drink and celebrate together.

Blessing of the Pregnant Woman

Let us close this time together by blessing our beloved pregnant sister and blessing the fruit of her womb. _____, come and sit in the center of the circle so we can lay our hands on you in blessing. Let us each offer a word of blessing... _____, take these vessels used for the milk and bread as a reminder of this occasion.

Closing Song: "As We Bless" (as before)

As we bless the Source of Life...



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

Women Continue Crossing Worlds

Women-Church Conference Announced

The Women-Church Convergence announces the third international meeting to be held April 15-18, 1993 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The meeting, in line with the historic gatherings in Chicago in 1983 (Woman Church Speaks) and Cincinnati in 1987 (Women-Church: Claiming Our Power) will be a time for the growing women-church movement to coalesce around common themes, assess progress, and gather insights for future actions.

The Convergence hired Roz Ostendorf of Des Moines, Iowa as the conference coordinator. Ms. Ostendorf has years of experience in organizing and brings ecumenical, rural background to the event.

These exciting plans were concretized as part of the semi-annual Women-Church Convergence meeting held in San Diego, California in February 1992. The Convergence is made up of representatives of the thirty-six member groups, including WATER.

A delegation of Convergence members met with women's groups in Tijuana, Mexico as part of a border crossing educational tour. The U.S. groups will provide Spanish language materials for women's social and religious work in Mexico, and receive same from the Mexican women. This exchange is an example of the kind of commitment to diversity and mutual empowerment that the women-church movement promotes.

Hasta Albuquerque!

MUJER-
IGLESIA



WOMEN-
CHURCH



...In The Southern Cone

Sara Newbery, WATER's Argentine staff person, reports that she has added WATER to the "Multisectorial de la Mujer," a coalition in Buenos Aires opposing the regulation of prostitution.

The analysis is clear: such a move by the government would serve to augment the exploitation of women. The group proposes an end to police edicts which permit the detaining of women prostitutes. It calls for investigation of crimes against prostitutes and the creation of health centers to provide for their needs, as well as the creation of jobs so that women prostitutes have other work options.

Elena Aguila, Chilean collaborator in women's efforts to develop a network for the promotion of eco-feminist liberation theology, filed a poetic report on her encounter with other Latin American women at the Fifth Encuentro of Latin American and Caribbean Feminists. We excerpt from it since it captures so much of our common experience:

"We feel marked radically by the experience of having come to know women who for us constitute a new frame of reference which nourishes us to go even further in the 'depatriarchalizing' of our own lives. For us, who do not come from any active involvement in a church or any religion, it was very illuminating and exciting to observe the possibility of expressing a spirituality that we share, discovering a previously silenced dimension, negated even by us, of our lives. We believe that the feminist perspective brought to the spiritual dimension of the human experience opens, as has happened in other parts of the culture, a source of power and pleasure for the women which can help us in a very significant way to heal the hurts and assuage the pain. It helps us to deal with being women in a patriarchal culture."

...In The WATER Office

Open its unpretentious blue cover, and WATER's international guest book spills forth an exotic array of names linking us with far away places. Visitors from Ireland to Argentina, Canada to Peru, Switzerland to Japan, and points between, have enlivened the WATER office in the past year, giving colorful testimony to the world-wide connections women are fashioning so adroitly.

Among our guests since last spring have been:

Marga Buhrig, Else Kahler, and Elsi Arnold from Switzerland, in April;
Christina Grela from Uruguay, in May;
Elaine Willis and Alison Webster from England, in June;
Ann Louise Gilligan and Katherine Zappone from Ireland, in July;
Barbara Ruch, Lisianne Enderli and Rachel Schiepp from Switzerland, in August;
Peg Moran and Monica Hingston from Chile, in August;
Marita Tennissen, Edith Sachs, Ursula Dinges, Monika Liebhen, Pebva Budevath, Kathrin Thiele, Alvira Bublitz, Helga Borgschilze, Marion Christ, Alexandria Roth, Esthal Rheinland, Gudrum Finke, Monika Siegfanz, Birgit Kampmeyer and Martina Schneider from Germany, in August;
Ada Campione and Georgio Otranto from Italy, in October;
Margarita Marroquin from El Salvador, in November;
Elena Tchalidy from Argentina, in November;
Shelly Finson from Canada, in December;
Noriko Okada from Japan, in February;
Christiane Luckhardt and Christine Van Metzsch from Germany, in February.

WATER welcomes international visitors and is happy to connect them with other Washington area groups. Advance notice is always helpful, but if you're in the neighborhood feel free to drop by.

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

Anderson, Shelley. **OUT IN THE WORLD: INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN ORGANIZING.** Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1991 (56 pages, \$4.95).

It is exciting to see lesbian organizing documented with addresses and resources in many countries. An important organizing tool for religious lesbians who seek solidarity around the world.

Bryne, Lavinia, editor. **THE HIDDEN TRADITION: WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL WRITINGS REDISCOVERED.** New York: Crossroad, 1991 (198 pages, \$14.95).

Collected in one place, a series of inspirational writings by insightful women: Dorothy Day, Edith Stein, Mary Ward, Clare of Assisi, among many others.

Cooley, Paula M., William R. Eakin, Jay B. McDaniel, editors. **AFTER PATRIARCHY: FEMINIST TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS.** Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991 (169 pages, \$16.95).

A wonderful new collection including Emily Culpepper's notion of "Christianity as compost" and Delores Williams' stimulating womanist essay.

Downing, Christine, editor. **MIRRORS OF THE SELF: ARCHETYPAL IMAGES THAT SHAPE YOUR LIFE.** Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc. (284 pages, \$12.95).

Archetypes have their limits, but essays by Adrienne Rich, Esther Harding, Mary Hunt, Robert Bly, and others show some of their usefulness.

Fortune, Marie Marshall. **VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY: A WORKSHOP CURRICULUM FOR CLERGY AND OTHER HELPERS.** Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1991 (288 pages, \$19.95).

This comprehensive resource, including rich content and dynamic process, should be in every church/synagogue library and used early and often to eradicate the growing problems it addresses.

Hooks, Bell. **YEARNING: RACE, GENDER AND CULTURAL POLITICS.** Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990 (224 pages, \$10).

This comprehensive, crystal clear reaffirmation of African American women and men is essential reading for all feminists. The conversation with Cornell West is particularly vital post Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill. A stellar book.

Levine, Elizabeth Resnick, editor. **A CEREMONIES SAMPLER: NEW RITES, CELEBRATIONS, AND OBSERVANCES OF**

Resources



JEWISH WOMEN. San Diego: Woman's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education, 1991 (127 pages, \$9.95).

Loads of ideas on ceremonies for everything from giving birth to becoming a vegetarian. Detailed directions and useful readings.

Lorber, Judith and Susan A. Farrell, editors. **THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER.** Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991 (374 pages, \$18.95).

A comprehensive collection of essays on the social, structural dimensions of gender, including Susan Farrell's insightful "It's Our Church, Too!" Women's Position in the Catholic Church Today."

Meehan, Bridget Mary. **EXPLORING THE FEMININE FACE OF GOD.** Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1991 (120 pages, \$8.95).

A practical primer for moving from male to female imagery of the divine, including exercises and illustrations to pave the way.

Nuth, Joan M. **WISDOM'S DAUGHTER: THE THEOLOGY OF JULIAN OF NORWICH.** New York: Crossroad, 1991 (217 pages, \$24.95).

A good book of the kind of theology that has remained obscured for centuries by sexism.

Saussy, Carroll. **GOD IMAGES AND SELF ESTEEM: EMPOWERING WOMEN IN A PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY.** Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991 (183 pages, \$9.95).

What every woman needs and few women have is what Carroll Saussy provides: insight into how to live with confidence and integrity as a woman in what is still (and Anita Hill proved) increasingly a man's world and church.

For Children

Blos, Joan W. **THE HEROINE OF THE TITANIC.** New York: Morrow Junior Books, (40 pages, \$14.95).

"The Unsinkable Molly Brown" is a warm and witty story about the famous survivor, a role model for young girls and a wonderful character.

Ingram, Robert D. **WHO TAUGHT FROGS TO HOP? A CHILD'S BOOK ABOUT GOD.** Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990 (32 pages, \$4.95).

Lots of questions and one stock answer which is never given make this a fun and challenging book to use with children.

Newman, Leslea. **BELINDA'S BOUQUET.** Boston, MA: Alyson Publications, Dept. H-98, 40 Plympton St. 02118, 1991, (24 pages \$7).

A little girl who thinks she's fat is assured by one of the moms of her friend Daniel that people, like flowers, come in all shapes and sizes. Contact the publisher for their catalogue of super children's books featuring kids lucky enough to have several parents (often of the same sex) who love them.

Audio-Visuals

HEARTS AND HANDS: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY WOMEN AND QUILTS. Produced and directed by Pat Ferrero, Ferrero Films, 1259-A Folsom Street, San Francisco, CA 94103; available for purchase or rental in 16mm and video.

A wonderful way to connect with women from the past century through their beautiful, functional art, and their political efforts to abolish slavery and achieve universal suffrage.

HALF THE KINGDOM. Produced by the National Film Board of Canada; available from Direct Cinema Limited, P.O. Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069, (213) 396-4774.

An insightful, inspiring documentary on the "feministization" of Judaism, including rituals and stories that prove that real change is happening. Naomi Goldenberg is outstanding in her incisive commentaries; Esther Broner is lyrical and committed. Women praying at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem evidence the courage it takes to change a faith tradition.

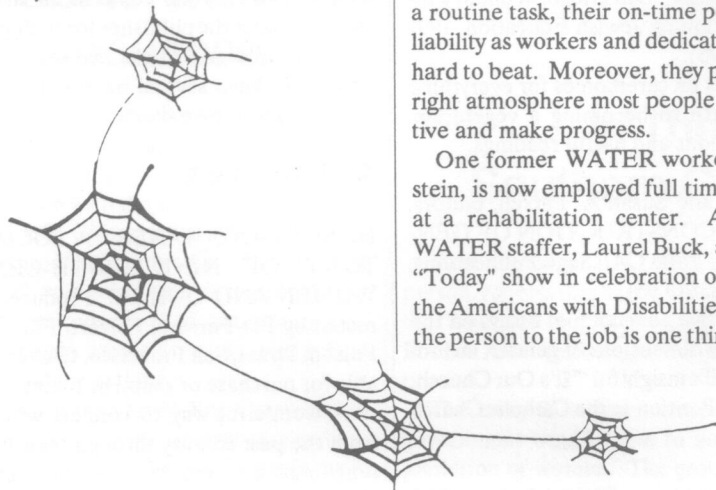
GODDESS REMEMBERED. Produced by the National Film Board of Canada. (See above.)

Traces the archeological evidence and the contemporary manifestation of Goddess worship. Carol Christ and Starhawk, among others, offer informative observations.



In a Different Style: Job Training at WATER

Visit the WATER office and you will meet some stylish people. Nicole, Dara, Kate (before them Laura, Laurel, April, Lori, Alexandra) work hard at a range of office tasks: stuffing newsletters, entering computer data, stamping and taking mail to the post office, answering the phone, sorting mail, watering plants, logging in checks, generally carrying out the day to day tasks which keep WATER going. They do so in their own style.



They come from LEAP, the Learning Experiences Activities Program, in Silver Spring, MD. LEAP prepares for jobs people with learning disabilities, head injuries or emotional problems. With help from their friends and good training, they are ready for employment.

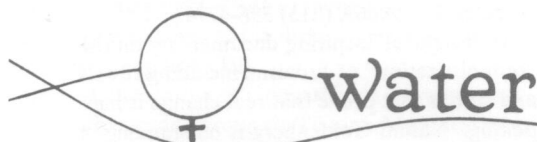
These women, and several men who have come from the Pathways School, need good supervision and care like any other employee. While it may take them a little longer to learn a routine task, their on-time performance, reliability as workers and dedication to the job is hard to beat. Moreover, they prove that in the right atmosphere most people can be productive and make progress.

One former WATER worker, Laura Bernstein, is now employed full time on computers at a rehabilitation center. Another former WATER staffer, Laurel Buck, appeared on the "Today" show in celebration of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Matching the person to the job is one thing, but finding a

job in tough economic times is the problem. Still, we have hope when we see these workers begin to supervise each other, actually participating in the training of their replacements.

WATER is proud to model how non-profit organizations can be part of a national movement to empower people with disabilities. At a time when jobs in the private sector are at a premium, training there is virtually non-existent. Large corporations--hotels, restaurant chains, factories--that used to include such people in their ranks are no longer able to handle extensive training programs. Thus, the non-profit sector is especially important for future skills building. Small non-profits, crunched by the same economic problems, face staff cuts so extra hands in the office are helpful. Our LEAP friends have become so much a part of the picture at WATER that it is hard to imagine life without them.

WATER staff members are happy to discuss plans for similar training programs with other non-profit organizations. The move to empowering women who learn and work "in a different style" is another step in the direction of substantive structural change. We do it because it is good business as well as good fun. Our style is changing for the better.



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WATERwheel Winter 1991-92