Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1992

waterwheel

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

Editorial

White racism reigns in the United States. From cynical jokes to unjust verdicts, from unequal opportunities to vicious attacks, racism is a pernicious problem that threatens to undo the better parts of democracy.

The Rodney King case, its aftermath and the long hot summer it portends highlight the soft underbelly of prejudice that grounds U.S. society. How many cities will burn, how many people die before we admit that long-standing, irrational feelings about race and generations of discrimination remain to be undone? Otherwise, the circle of violence can become the self-fulfilling prophecy which took the life of another King.

Religious people are more than capable of racist behavior. But religious people are capable of much better, and feminist/womanist/mujerista religious people even more. WATER joins those who link arms for something new.

Many of us did this in the '60's but obviously it wasn't enough. Now, with women, and especially African American women, in the lead, this time, with more of us and plenty, we may get it right. There is no time to lose.



Let All People Say "Amen"

by Mary E. Hunt

Enough is too much. Racism has got to stop. Immediately and without excuses.

Easier said than done, but it is time for sleeve rolling and action, not more wishing to make it so. I take this to be the most urgent task of all feminist theology in the United States and I see this article as a nudge, unto a shove, to **WATERwheel** readers who, like me, sometimes wonder what to do and how to do it. I offer these suggestions as a way to explain to our children what went wrong, and what we have to do about it now. One Los Angeles riot is one too many.

There are some hard facts and soft features to this problem. The truth is that most Euro-Americans who look like me did not grow up with racial equality in our veins; we heard the dirty words and the stereotypes; we were exposed to the prejudice at home, at school and in the pulpit. If we grew up without such nonsense, we were probably not urged to racial inclusion, taught that African Americans were a proud and productive people who "made a way where there was no way." We were not fed the nourishing words of Sojourner Truth and Frederick Douglas; we were not brought up on the wisdom of Mary McLeod Bethune. But all of this means there is catch up work to do, summer institutes to attend and remedial history classes to take if we are to be citizens of an integrated country.

Meanwhile, as we grew up, laws were passed and efforts made at affirmative action. But they were cosmetic in comparison with the deep changes necessary. In addition, other racial/ethnic groups, especially Hispanic, Asian and Native American peoples, insisted on their rightful places in a society which made life difficult for their children. Again, the need for information, personal knowledge, and above all a deep sense of the equality of every human being and the unique contribution of every national group became urgent. Our society was simply not up to the task as it became increasingly "me" oriented, xenophobic, grandiose in its worldly importance, and arrogant in its power. I mist up for the National Anthem with the best of them, but let's be honest with ourselves and the children if we are to turn a legacy of racism into an inheritance of justice.

Racism has got to stop...
I take this to be the most urgent task
of all feminist theology in the United States...

Instead of government leadership in recent decades calling us to be a unified people, offering programs and incentives to level the playing field, we have seen a callous disregard for the objectives of the Great Society programs which began to move us in that direction. Coupled with a constricting of the economic, job and educational bases, and an upswing of "law and order" ideology, we have a lethal combination that has resulted in

(continued on page 2)

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ISSN 0898-6606

Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1992

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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 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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more and more marginalization of African American people. Such problems become monumental over time: disproportionate percentages of African American males are on death row; prison is too often their college; drug abuse is rampant and gang membership a way to survive. It can only end in violence, and it does, usually with genocide.

Religious people were in the forefront of the Civil Rights movement, but all too obviously we did not complete the job. I do not blame this on the sexism of the movement; it was sexist, all right, enough to prompt many women, white and black, to form a women's movement. But the deeply embedded racism in the United States remains for even more vicious reasons, the main one being the fact that white people, this author included, reap untold benefits from a system which, sometimes subtly and sometimes with a lethal injection, takes the lives of African American people, grinds them up and spits them out.

It is hard to live here and not feel ethically differently-abled when one's rage rises. Where are the churches when we need their moral authority? The white churches are busy being racist with the rest of the country; the black churches are trying to survive as one of the few black-owned institutions in this society. Many small base communities, women-church groups, progressive religious organizations and the like are not much further along this road. Why, we puzzle, when puzzling is not enough.

Let me hazard some concrete suggestions for families, communities, groups that want to make this different:

1. **Relearn History.** There is no way to appreciate what we don't know. Assume, unless you are ten years old, and even then, wonder, that your education did not include the kind of multi-cultural materials which are necessary to understand the many and varied groups that make up this country. Invite in experts to teach your Sunday School class or your women's group; seek out history books, magazine articles which overview these materials and begin afresh as if Columbus did not discover America. It is as simple as that.

2. **Relearn English, and while you are at it, try to pick up some Spanish, American Sign Language and other ways of communicating.** Language is a powerful tool of social control. It is time that we who speak and write the "master's" tongue take seriously that it is not the only way to make one's self understood. In the process of learning new modes, we can appreciate both the difficulty of not speaking the language and the need to broaden the normative view of how the language is used so as to include more people. Likewise, we can see that even in a huge country, the advantage of multiple languages is key to involving multiple peoples. After all, we do not simply live from Maine to Hawaii, but from one corner of the globe to another.

Assume that racism is a given since we have all been socialized in this society, and assume that it must be unlearned with deliberate attention to its pernicious nature.

3. **Learn Economics.** No one has a good answer to the question, "What do we do with the fact that a certain percentage of people must be unemployed for capitalism to work?" But it is a fact, and it must be dealt with if we are to build a sustainable economy in the future. Most middle, upper middle class white people do not want to hear the question; Enterprise Zones are not a sufficient answer. We have a systemic problem for which members of so-called racial/ethnic minority groups continue to pay the price. I do not have an easy answer to this, but I do know that acknowledging the problem is the first step toward resolving it. With the global decline of socialism, answers are even more illusive, but until we confront the need to share both work and profits, to factor in the social as well as economic value of work, we will continue to see racist economic stratification.

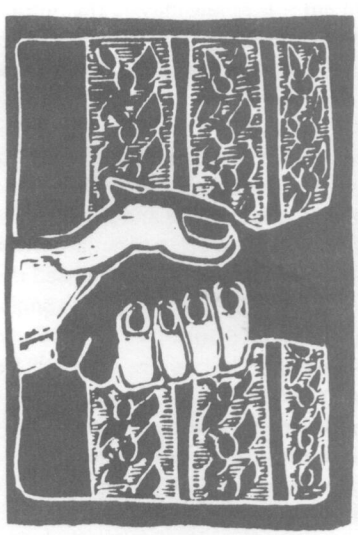
4. **Learn about Racism.** Assume that racism is a given since we have all been socialized in this society, and assume that it must be unlearned with deliberate attention to its pernicious nature. This means scrutinizing everything from attitudes and language to who our friends are and why some of us

have jobs and others do not. Learn about undoing racism and moving toward a non-racial society when differences will be descriptive and not value-related. Such a day is far off, but it will not come on its own without explicit education.

5. **Consider your religious setting a classroom.** Whether you belong to a parish, congregation, base community or coven, let it be the place where you make this anti-racism work a priority. It is not because I have such hope in religious institutions that I make this suggestion, but that I am so pessimistic about the rest of society. Schools, work places, clubs and stores are as much a part of the problem as churches, synagogues and New Age groups. But they do not pretend to be concerned with the quality of our individual and collective lives. They do not gather people for the express purpose of worshipping All that Is and us as a part of it. They do not focus on values and meaning as a reason for being. Religious groups do, and they can do better.

There is no magic here, only some first steps to get the job done. It is primarily a job for white people in this society, but it can equally be adapted as a game plan for those African Americans who want to make common cause with Koreans, for example, or those Mexican Americans who want to know more about their Jewish neighbors. It is not a recipe for a quick fix, but not doing something is a recipe for disaster. We have got to start somewhere, and eventually I pray that all people will say "Amen."

Mary E. Hunt, feminist theologian and ethicist, co-directs WATER.



Latest Pastoral--Less of the Same

by Mary E. Hunt

The third draft of the U.S. Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on women, "Called to Be One in Christ Jesus," is a theological embarrassment. Such a strong statement is imprudent if one wishes to engage in dialogue, continue the discussion, and/or encourage the bishops to develop a pastoral plan. I wish to do none of the above. Rather, I want to "speak the truth in all things," a goal that compels me to more than customary candor. The time has come to put an end to the polite nonsense which has characterized the entire exercise.

Nine years into the process of writing a pastoral response to the situation of contemporary women, the bishops have failed once more to deal constructively with reality. It is time to stop the music, stop pretending that they are capable of the task outlined, admit that it is a contradiction in terms for male bishops who are hamstrung by the Vatican on ordination, birth control, abortion and homosexuality to write something that thinking Catholic women will appreciate. I shudder to consider the money wasted, the trees felled, not to mention the women duped into thinking that the bishops have our best interests at heart on a good day.

The proof is in the pudding, this season's offering a pale imitation of scholarship, an annoyingly coy tone (substantial disagreement is masked each time by a qualifying "some women"), and a grocery list of banal suggestions designed to toss stale crumbs that taste like stones to those who bake the bread.

The current draft reads like a soft spiritual sop. It is flawed with so many internal contradictions as to make the reader wonder if it were written by a junior seminarian rather than a trained theologian. A sampler of its failings:

--Sexism is a sin but somehow, mysteriously, to use the lingo, it does not apply to the ban on the ordination of women

--A change of heart is needed in society but not a change in the laws of the Church

--Jesus showed more respect for women than was customary; there is no hint of a suggestion that this principle might apply today

--Single people ought to be respected on their own terms but only when they engage in spiritual "maternity" and "paternity," a great display of what in Spanish is called erasing with the elbow what was given with the hand

--Women are meant to be taken seriously, consulted even, but not on questions of birth control or abortion where the overwhelming majority of women, even by the institution's own admission, live at odds with the teachings which are set in concrete

--Lesbian women ought not to be discriminated against, but the Church demands chastity of them, a clear cut case of discrimination if one ever existed

--Women in religious communities are, by any other name, still spouses of Christ

--Women can be judges in marriage tribunals but only one of three, the other two being men

--The Church must get its own house in order to have moral authority on equality, yet salary discrepancies, not to mention barred access to many church jobs, are legion.

It would be politic of me to praise the good parts. But the frank fact of the matter is that this time, in comparison with the earlier drafts, we are handed less of the same, emphasis on the "handed." Quoting church documents and limply insisting on gender complementarity is simply unacceptable as a method, dooming the document from the outset. Proposing that each diocese implement directives based on such faulty premises is frightening. The time has come to deep six the whole project, a suggestion that even a few progressive bishops have made to their brothers. Let common sense prevail and let women write our own letters.

Mary E. Hunt, Catholic feminist theologian and ethicist, co-directs WATER.

It is flawed with so many internal contradictions as to make the reader wonder if it were written by a junior seminarian rather than a trained theologian.

Re-igniting

by Diann Neu

Background

Racism challenges everyone: people from all races, ethnic groups, classes, and nationalities. It is a major evil taking us into the 21st century. Why create a liturgy around racism, some may ask. Because we need to integrate spirituality and reality. We must all focus our energy on interrupting racial injustice.

This liturgy challenges all people to work against racism. Use it as a model to create your own ritual for any gathering, for Black History Month, for Martin Luther King Day, for Ash Wednesday, or for any time people need to be reminded or supported to do the work of justice.

Preparation

Burn palm to make ashes. Gather four containers of ashes, a bowl of water and four towels. Provide a candle for each participant. Place them all on a table and put this altar in the center of a circle of chairs. Invite people to lead the different parts of the service including four people to bless the ashes. Provide a copy of the song words, Psalm 51, and the Community Response for each participant. Point out that during Psalm 51 half the group will respond as side 1 and half as side 2.

Naming

A city burns. Racism ignites the flames. What do you think and feel when you hear the word and experience the reality of "racism?" As we name ourselves, let us share an image we have when we hear the word "racism." *(Sharing.)*

Call to Gather

A city burns. Racism ignites the flames. The events in Los Angeles could be repeated in city centers and rural places across the United States. Racism continues to divide us--person from person, group from group, country from country--in many visibly obvious and invisibly subtle ways.

We must interrupt this oppression. We must unlearn layers of racism. We must rise from the ashes of destruction. We must re-ignite fires of justice.

Many events have raised public consciousness anew about racism in our society and about the realities that many African American people and people of diverse ethnic backgrounds live daily.

Song Refrain: "Echo" by Sweet Honey in the Rock from **Breaths**, *copyright 1979, Songtalk Publishing Co.*

Echo...Echo...Echo
Nothing but an echo of the past (2x)



Headlines

Cries for justice are everywhere. They are echoes of the past and sirens of the present. Listen to the headlines that cry for justice:

Los Angeles: "City Awakens to Violence, Destruction"
Simi Valley: "Jury Was Asked to See Events as Police Did"
Los Angeles: "King Chokes Back Tears, Calls for End to Violence"
Washington, DC: "Barr Pledges to Push Civil Rights Inquiry"
Nairobi: "Africans Say Riots Taint Image of U.S."
CNN: "The Whole World Was Watching"
Los Angeles: "Searing Lesson for Children: How Hate Can Undo a World"
Brooklyn: "Students Confront Officials on Race, Anger and Rodney King"
Harlem and Bedford-Stuyvesant 1964, Watts 1965, Watts and 43 cities 1966, Newark and Detroit 1967, 125 cities 1968, Miami 1980, Miami 1982, Miami 1989, Washington, DC 1991, Los Angeles 1992: "When Racial Tension Has Boiled Over"
Washington, DC: "This Time America Must Learn the Right Lesson from the Rage in the Streets of Its Cities"

What other headlines have you read? Tell us now so we can hear the cries for justice. *(Pause for sharing.)*

Song: "Echo" by Sweet Honey in the Rock

Echo...Echo...Echo
Nothing but an echo of the past (2x)
The brothers you lynched a few years ago
The sister you raped just the other day
The babies you starve every day of the week
Nothing but an echo of the past (2x)
The sounds from the jail cells
of the Wilmington 10
Are echoes of a massacre
keeping Black freedom locked in
The sounds of struggle you hear
That are filling your world today
Are echoes of the voices your father killed
and smothered away
You can steal my tongue - go on
and try to hush my song
My scream of freedom will flood the air
of your children centuries unborn
Nothing but an echo of the past (2x)

Scripture

(Beat a drum using a plaintive solo rhythm.)
Leader: A reading from Psalm 51.
Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the drums
of freedom; sanctify a fast;
Call a solemn assembly; gather the people.
Sanctify the congregation; assemble the elders;
Gather the children and say,
ALL: Have mercy on us, O Holy One of Justice.
Have mercy on me, O Holy One of Justice.
Side 1: Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
Side 2: According to your abundant mercy
cleanse me from racism!
ALL: Have mercy on us, O Holy One of Justice.
Have mercy on me, O Holy One of Justice.
1: Create in me a clean heart, O God of Justice.
2: And put a new and right spirit within me.
1: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
2: And uphold me with a willing spirit.
ALL: Have mercy on us, O Holy One of Justice.
Have mercy on me, O Holy One of Justice.
(Beat a drum using a plaintive solo rhythm.)

Reading: "Ours Is a House Divided Against Itself" by Dorothy Gilliam excerpted from the **Washington Post**, May 6, 1992.

"Let's weep for Los Angeles, for Washington and New York--for all of us. After the outrage, the dead, the injured, the destruction, let's shed a tear for an America that is not united, not one country but several hostile parts. One is largely black, brown and poor; one white, privileged, insular and often powerful; another white, poor and disenfranchised; and still another is a group of "assimilated" black, brown and yellow people who share crumbs of the privileged world.

"In the week since the Rodney King verdict blew the lid off the chronic rage in Los Angeles and other cities, I have shared the shock, fury, horror and outrage of so many other people...

"If there's one lesson to come out of the riots, it is the wake-up call to the country that it should put to rest any illusion that justice is blind, that there is equality under the law or that minorities get a fair shake in our legal system...

"Let's weep...

"And when our tears are dried, let us resolve to give America's children the training, education, values and moral strength they need to bring about a world we have as yet been unable to accomplish."

Community Response

Let us respond together:
Weep, O my sisters and brothers,
Weep for innocent ones massacred;
Weep for those who are homeless;
Weep for those who are unemployed;
Weep for those who survive violence;
Weep for daughters and sons captured,
tortured, and disappeared;

Fires of Justice

Weep for mothers humbled and enslaved;
Weep for fathers killed;
Weep for..... *(Name what you weep for.)*
Weep, O my sisters and brothers,
Weep until wisdom arises
from fires of justice.
Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

Reading: "What Can the White Man...
...Say to the Black Woman?" by Alice Walker excerpted from her address to The National March for Women's Equality and Women's Lives as quoted in **The Nation**, May 22, 1989.

"What can the white man say to the black woman? Only one thing that the black woman might hear.

"Yes, indeed, the white man can say, Your children have the right to life. Therefore I will call back from the dead those 30 million who were tossed overboard during the centuries of the slave trade. And the other millions who died in my cotton fields and hanging from my trees.

"I will recall all those who died of broken hearts and broken spirits, under the insult of segregation.

"I will raise up all the mothers who died exhausted after birthing twenty-one children to work sunup to sundown on my plantation. I will restore to full health all those who perished for lack of food, shelter, sunlight, and love; and from my inability to see them as human beings.

"But I will go even further:

"I will tell you, black woman, that I wish to be forgiven the sins I commit daily against you and your children. For I know that until I treat your children with love, I can never be trusted by my own. Nor can I respect myself.

"And I will free your children from insultingly high infant mortality rates, short life spans, horrible housing, lack of food, rampant ill health. I will liberate them from the ghetto. I will open wide the doors of all the schools and hospitals and businesses of society to your children. I will look at your children and see not a threat but a joy.

"I will remove myself as an obstacle in the path that your children, against all odds, are making toward the light. I will not assassinate them for dreaming dreams and offering new visions of how to live. I will cease trying to lead your children, for I can see I have never understood where I was going. I will agree to sit quietly for a century or so, and meditate on this.

"This is what the white man can say to the black woman.

"We are listening."

Personal and Shared Reflection

We are called to fast from racism. We are called to weep for injustice. We are called to mourn with ashes. We are called to re-ignite fires of justice.

How are you working to overcome racism in yourself, in others, in your city or town, in this country, in the world?

Let's take a few minutes of quiet reflection. *(Pause.)* Let's share our reflections.

Ritual of Ashes

All major religions set aside a time for fasting, for asking forgiveness for evil. Jews have Yom Kippur. Moslems have Ramadan. Christians have Lent. Each group of people takes time in the calendar year to reflect and repent.

We need to repent now and forever for racism in this country and throughout the world. Ashes symbolize atonement for evil. Today we use ashes to remind us that we must atone for racism.

Blessing of Ashes

(Four blessers each pick up a bowl of ashes, and say in turn:)

1. Blessed are you, Holy One, Searing Fire, for reminding us that we must fast from racism in all of its forms.
2. Blessed are you, Holy One, Giant Tear, for calling us to weep for injustice done to innocent people.
3. Blessed are you, Holy One, Sorrowful Mother, for giving us these ashes as a symbol of our mourning.
4. Blessed are you Holy One, Future Hope, for urging us to re-ignite fires of justice.

Rite of Sharing Ashes

(The four blessers anoint one another's hands and forehead with ashes responding with "we rise again from ashes." They then put ashes on the participants.)

Chant: "The Fire Song" by Starhawk
from **Dreaming the Dark**
(Sing as all are signed with ashes.)
We can rise from the fire of freedom
Truth is a fire that burns our chains
And we can stop the fires of destruction
Healing is a fire running through our veins.

Ritual of Healing

We wear these ashes as a sign that brokenness, fragmentation, and disintegration exist within our world, within our country, within our cities, within us. We carry the ashes of ourselves and of those who have gone before us. Look around the room. Notice the ashes. Remember the evil in our society.

We must bring new life out of these ashes. Therefore, we not only put on ashes, but we also wash them away as a sign that we gather our wisdom together to overcome racism in all its forms. If you would like, invite one of the blessers to wash off your ashes and give you a candle. Respond with: **I will bring new life out of these ashes. I will re-ignite fires of justice.** Light a candle and place it anywhere singing:

Song: "This Little Light of Mine,"
Traditional Spiritual
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine,
Let it shine, (3x)
Everywhere I go...
Re-igniting fires of justice...

Sending Forth

Let us rise again from ashes,
from anger that we have felt,
from dreams we have not fully dreamed.
Let us re-ignite fires of justice.
Response: Let us re-ignite fires of justice.
Let us rise again from ashes,
from the good that we have not done,
from the pain and suffering we have known.
Let us re-ignite fires of justice.
Response: Let us re-ignite fires of justice.
Let us rise again from ashes,
from the narrow boundaries of our lives,
from the lies that have kept us divided.
Let us re-ignite fires of justice.
Response: Let us re-ignite fires of justice.
Let us rise again from ashes...How else shall we rise and re-ignite fires of justice? Tell us.
Let us rise again from ashes... *(Sharing.)*
Re-igniting fires of justice, let us go forth from this place to fast from racism, to weep for injustice, to mourn with ashes, to re-ignite fires of justice. Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

Song: "We Shall Overcome," Traditional
(Cross your arms, hold hands and link the circle. This is the traditional way this song was sung during the Civil Rights movement.)
We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome someday
Oh deep in my heart, I do believe
That we shall overcome someday.
The truth will make us free...
We'll walk hand in hand...

Diann Neu, feminist liturgist and counselor, co-directs WATER.



Internal Affairs

In Memory of Her

In memory of **Margaret Shorter**, mother of Kathy Shorter, a faithful woman whose life, as her death, was a blessing.

If you would like to honor someone special living or dead, send us the name and a brief tribute, along with your contribution (suggested minimum: $25) for publication in a future issue of WATERwheel.



Thank You! Thank You!

Beth Wheeler, thank you for your year as intern and semester as administrative assistant. You helped us expand space and staff.

Kitty Stafford, thank you for three months as an international intern. You connect us to missionaries in Peru, Ireland and Canada.

Dagmar Albert, thank you for your month as an international intern from Germany. You connect us to women in theology in Europe.

Sarah Fox and Kara Bishop, thank you for choosing WATER as a placement site for your theology class at Trinity College. You connect us to women in colleges.

Cara Vincent, thank you for fulfilling your action/reflection requirement for Wesley Theological Seminary with us. You connect us to seminary women in ministry.

To all of you who have visited our offices or taken part in WATER programs in the Washington, DC area, across the U.S. and in Europe and Latin America, thank you for joining with us to create a just world.

WATER and Me: 30 Days' Immersion

by Dagmar Albert from Bonn, Germany

I am a German theology student at the University of Bonn. I spent the month of April at WATER to do an internship. I did everyday office work and also took part in the general activities of WATER, e.g. the women-church celebrations and the breakfast for women in ministry.

An important reason for my stay in Silver Spring was to do some research for my exam paper in theology. The research center of WATER came in very handy. The weight of my bags when leaving the USA was nearly unmanageable!

The highlights of my time at WATER were the big march for women's reproductive rights on April 5 and the annual seder which took place on Holy Thursday (my last day, hence my leaving party in a way). What impressed me most about the big march was its many people and even more its age diversity. I thought it very important that women of all ages took part in it, even young girls. At the seder, "Together At Freedom's Table," I experienced a liturgy which was not only a celebration, but was actually fun, a connection I had not made before in any liturgy in quite the same way.

All in all, the experience at WATER was a very intense and rewarding one and I would have liked to have stayed longer than I did.

Editors' Note: Dagmar's month at WATER is typical of what we hope to accomplish in the exchange of work and resources as well as the deepening of international ties. She lived with Louise and Pat Kilpatrick, local WATER supporters, who gained a German friend.

Telling Time at WATER

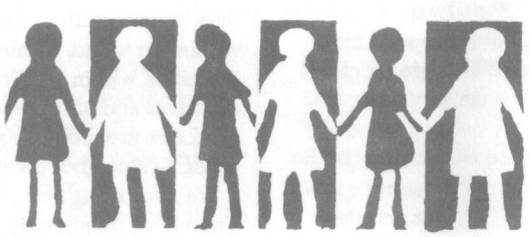
by Kitty Stafford, SSJ, from Peru, Canada and Ireland

In 1990, while planning a sabbatical year of study on women's spirituality to help me with my work in a women's center in Peru, I decided to divide my time between North America and Ireland, as I have lived parts of my life in both places. Irish friends told me of WATER and gave me a copy of **WATERwheel,** where I learned of the Intern Program.

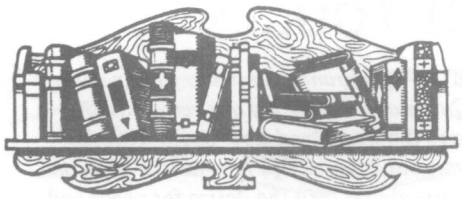
I was impressed by WATER's connections with the women-church movement, the Grail, feminist theologians, and its worldwide network of justice-seeking friends. I applied to intern for three months and was accepted. It proved to be a memorable, busy and energizing three months for me.

From the first day, January 6, in the WATER office, I was welcomed warmly by Mary and Diann. I was made to feel that the skills I had to offer were valued and needed and that every resource they had was available for my use. I also learned new computer and faxing skills (I have been in Peru with limited electricity and no phone for nine years). I participated in women-church rituals and programs offered by WATER; I gave talks on Peru. I read magazines, books and articles in Spanish and English and received many resources to help in my work and research. Above all, I made connections with other organizations and women who work with women.

My time at WATER was mind, heart and soul expanding. I studied various issues from different points of view. I made new and dear friends, and explored my own spirituality and depths and pushed my own boundaries to be wider and more inclusive. Now, as I continue my journey through this sabbatical year, I know the study of my Celtic roots and spirituality will be enriched and challenged by the time I spent as a WATER intern.



RESOURCES



The following titles are now in the WATER Resource Center. We recommend them for your reading.

Allen, Paula Gunn. GRANDMOTHERS OF THE LIGHT: A MEDICINE WOMAN'S SOURCEBOOK. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991 (272 pages, $19.95).

A controversial opening of parts of the Native American world to all readers, a bold act brought on by the wealth of women-centered stories channeled through a learned writer.

Blaka, Christie and Andy Rose. TWICE BLESSED: ON BEING LESBIAN, GAY AND JEWISH. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989 (305 pages, $15.95).

Being lesbian/gay is surely a blessing, for we who are, those we love and even for those who would reject us. This collection makes the point eloquently, thoroughly and spiritually.

Blood-Patterson, Peter, ed. RISE UP SINGING: THE GROUP SINGING SONGBOOK. Bethlehem, PA: A Sing-Out Publication, 1988 (281 pages, $14.95).

Hundreds of traditional songs, properly inclusive in most instances, which will keep the folk tradition alive.

Campbell, Joseph, Riane Eisler, Marija Gimbutas and Charles Muses. IN ALL HER NAMES: EXPLORATIONS OF THE FEMININE DIVINE. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991 (177 pages, $17.95).

New mythologies and old provide still more ideas about who/what divinity might be. This eclectic volume opens some doors.

Comstock, Gary David. VIOLENCE AGAINST LESBIANS AND GAY MEN. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991 (319 pages, $35).

An excellent study of the growing phenomenon of gay/lesbian bashing, shown to be done mostly by adolescent males whose own position on the social ladder is low.

Couture, Pamela D. BLESSED ARE THE POOR? WOMEN'S POVERTY, FAMILY POLICY AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991 (224 pages, $14.95).

Women and children reap the risks of a society in which self sufficiency is prized. Especially in a recession, this should be making the rounds in churches.

Davis, Susan E. and Eleanor H. Haney, eds. REDEFINING SEXUAL ETHICS: A SOURCEBOOK OF ESSAYS, STORIES, AND POEMS. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1991 (381 pages, $14.95).

One of the most useful books of the year with essays by thoughtful women and men that gives this reviewer hope for future generations. At least the sensible, sensitive voices can be heard by those with ears to hear.

Felder, Cain Hope, ed. STONY THE ROAD WE TROD: AFRICAN AMERICAN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991 (260 pages, $15.95).

New questions and new ways of raising questions mark this collection as a unique contribution to biblical studies. Of special interest are Renita Weems' "Reading **Her Way** Through the Struggle: African American Women and the Bible," and Clarice J. Martin's "The **Haustafeln** (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation: 'Free Slaves' and 'Subordinate Women'."

Froehle, Virginia Ann, rsm. CALLED INTO HER PRESENCE: PRAYING WITH FEMININE IMAGES OF GOD. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1992 (133 pages, $9.95).

For those who have not prayed with female models, this graceful introduction is an invitation few will be able to resist. Good for even the most resistant, who might try it and like it.

Golden, Renny. THE HOUR OF THE POOR, THE HOUR OF WOMEN: SALVADORAN WOMEN SPEAK. New York: Crossroad, 1991 (201 pages, $19.95).

Crossroad Women's Studies Award winner, this volume brings the lives, voices and struggles of Salvadoran women to public attention. It will encourage involvement, open minds, stir action.

Hirsch, Marianne and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds. CONFLICTS IN FEMINISM. New York: Routledge, 1990 (385 pages, $15.95).

A good way to catch up on the latest issues, arguments and insights.

Jacques, Andre. MADELEINE BAROT. Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches, 1991 (88 pages, $8.95).

One of the great ecumenical leaders of our time is chronicled from her work in occupied France, her decades of refugee work and her remarkable engagement with global struggles for justice.

Jagger, Alison M. and Susan R. Bordo. GENDER/BODY/KNOWLEDGE: FEMINIST RECONSTRUCTIONS OF BEING AND KNOWING. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989 (376 pages, $16.95).

The best collection of feminist body-thought, including clear presentations of the sometimes difficult French feminists.

Loades, Ann, ed. FEMINIST THEOLOGY: A READER. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990 (340 pages, $16.95).

Most of the U.S. contributions are familiar but Janet Morley, Ursula King and other British writers provide new material.

Modleski, Tania. FEMINISM WITHOUT WOMEN: CULTURE AND CRITICISM IN A "POSTFEMINIST" AGE. New York: Routledge, 1991 (182 pages, $13.95).

Popular films make some of the most telling cultural statements, according to Tania Modleski, and the news isn't good for feminism.

Penelope, Julia. SPEAKING FREELY: UNLEARNING THE LIES OF THE FATHERS' TONGUES. New York: Pergamon Press, 1990 (281 pages, $16.95).

Linguistics is political. The "Patriarchal Universe of Discourse" controls society. Knowledge of how language works is a prerequisite for making it work for all.

Quinonez, Lora Ann and Mary Daniel Turner. THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC SISTERS. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992 (206 pages, $13.95).

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious is one player in the transformation of the Catholic Church in the United States. This report of its history gives a glimpse of its problems and possibilities.



Thinking of You...

Jotted on the flap of a contribution envelope, penned in a poetic Spanish greeting card, scribbled on scratch paper, inscribed with measured hand on classy letterhead, letters from friends recall pleasures great and small and heartaches,too. A sampling of our mail in recent months:

Pat Reif, Los Angeles, CA, writes, "No time to write a decent letter... The fires and looting were all too close to IHCC and my apartment--like three blocks. We're alive and well, but those of us with cable (needed to get a decent image) had no TV from April 30 - May 4; we had sirens and helicopters day and night for three or four days, and on the 30th, there were so many fires along Vermont between Beverly & Wilshire that it became difficult to breathe. I grew up in Watts, and am still sick at heart..."

Rosemary Sullivan, cmi, St. Michaels, AZ, writes, "You must know how important WATER is to desert dwellers like me. If you still have a copy of the TEA RITUAL, I would dearly like to have it since I misplaced mine in packing. Also I was wondering about the music that is suggested in the many beautiful prayer services. I am miles and hours from stores which would have such tapes, do you stock any of them? If not, could you in giving the sources also indicate the tape or recording company. That would facilitate my trying to track them down." *(Editor's note: Great idea, now in the works.)*

Joey Noble, Silver Spring, MD, writes, "Your presentation at our group last Sunday morning was superb! I really appreciate your bringing so many resources--and giving us the feminist liturgies and celebrations. They have already been 'checked out'--your words spoke deeply to several women."

Susan Schnurr, New York, NY, writes from **Lilith**, the Jewish Women's Magazine, "We love the tea bag. The response here had to do with feeling loved--who sits down and actually sips (as opposed to standing/ gulping) hot (not cold) tea? We felt grateful to get such a loving piece of mail."

Alma Rodriguez, Montevideo, Uruguay, writes in a card bearing the word of Liber Falco (who, she explains "is (was) a Uruguayan poet very free, sensible and loved by all"), !"*Que grande el mundo y que pequeno! !Que lejos los amigos y que cerca!"* (How large the world, and how small! How far away our friends, and how near!) With our hearts always, and the desire for peace and love among all people, we salute all our friends at WATER."

Dirkje Donders, Nijmegen, The Netherlands, writes, "I hope that you can continue with all your inspirational work with and for women. Here, we still speak about the great weekend we had with you. So do come back."

Mary Louise Volk, Maryhurst, OR, writes "Just talked with Winnie Bew from Forest Grove--we talked of you, of WATER, and of tears. Tears of sadness, anger and even joy have been a constant part of my living with cancer. Life is to be lived and tears are my irrigation for living these days. I look back to the marvelous retreat on Vashon Island and count it as a great moment in my life--have never had a Pentecost like it. Am glad that Women-Church will BE in convergence once again. If my persona is here I shall be there, if not then in spirit."

water

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