



# water wheel

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

## Editorial

People are amazing. The remarkable utterances that pass their lips, flow from their word processors and issue from their pulpits never cease to amaze. Election years bring out the vim and venom like no other season. This year's close presidential contest is no exception, except that the previous low points have been surpassed so early. Hence, we look at "rights and wrongs" since religion is so often invoked to legitimate the incredible.

Happily, voting is still the best response, SO VOTE!

Hurricane Andrew left no doubt about who's really in charge. It isn't the U.S. military, in the final analysis, but the forces of nature over which not even generals have control. One would think that such a sobering realization would be enough to soften some of the edges of prejudice, to encourage more hand holding than finger pointing. Or so we pray as we encourage one and all to lend a hand, check or box of goods. Mari Castellanos, minister of the Miami Metropolitan Community Church and longtime WATER supporter, is knee deep in disaster relief work and could use money and household goods for local residents: 7701 SW 76th Ave, Miami, FL 33143. Tell her you're also a friend of WATER.

Closer to our home, the boarder babies at the Chi Center in Washington, DC have captured the hearts of WATER supporter Carroll Saussy and co-director Mary Hunt. Chi is a friendly place established through support of an African American nurses' sorority to give children left to "board" in hospitals a home while awaiting foster care, adoption or return to families. The center goes through 23,000 medium and large diapers a year, and endless cases of Enfamil. We can't all join Carroll and Mary as volunteers who get to play with the kids, but a diaper/formula blitz from WATER friends would make a big difference. Send diapers/formula or donations to buy them to Chi Center at 1254 Meigs Place, Washington DC 20002, and tell them you're a WATER supporter.

Such is the work of religious people in an election year, amid natural disasters and a global depression. We do it with gratitude to you for making WATER possible.

## Religious Rights and Wrongs

by Mary E. Hunt

Red, white and blue bunting does not hide prejudice. Papal flags do not cover up hatred. "Traditional family values" meant to insult and impugn the vast majority of a country's citizens, all in the name of three letters, G-O-D, do not convince most of us that bigotry and exclusion will lead us from the serious economic, political, and, I would add, spiritual straits in which we find ourselves as the century turns. I wonder if people who watched the last century end faced such obstacles; I hope that people who

nists to note the impact we are having, albeit in dubious circles.

In the flurry of titters over such nonsense, and without wanting to reinforce it by drawing attention to such an intellectual embarrassment, I was stopped in my tracks, mouth agape, at the pernicious nature of cultural manipulation. When it is followed by claims that those who disagree are without religious base, myriad groups and individual examples notwithstanding, I am left to conclude that something terri-

*Something terribly important is at play  
for which only such desperate,  
doomed efforts can be justified.*

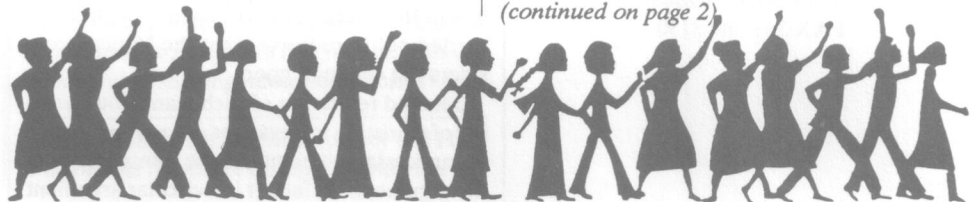
see the next one turn will thank us for calling the problems as we see them.

"Godless communism" has been defeated but new demons pop up wherever fear and uncertainty tread. The religious right, much in evidence if not in power at the 1992 Republican Convention, calls one such demon close to my heart "radical feminism." It was verified by Pat Robertson, who claimed the Equal Rights Amendment "encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." I think he forgot "cause the common cold and make men bald." While no thinking person would take the Rev. Robertson seriously as a scholar of these things, it is important to femi-

bly important is at play for which only such desperate, doomed efforts can be justified. This is a clear case of having to look behind the curtain for the wizard. Such ideological prominence, even if negative, reveals more than it conceals.

We have had a first round on all of this during the "dirty war" on abortion rights. Many activists have tried to pass over the deep attacks on our integrity, the fetuses in bottles at demonstrations, and the prayers unto harassment at clinics when pregnant women have gone to do what no woman ever hopes to have to do. It is time to call a halt to this business of religion buying supporters on the backs of young girls. No God I can imagine would espouse it, and if

(continued on page 2)





ISSN 0898-6606

Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer-Fall 1992

Editors: Mary E. Hunt, Diann Neu

Designer: Diann Neu

Editorial Assistant: Carol Scinto

Graphics: Credited when artist/source is known

Latin American Collaborator: Sara Newbery

Computer Consultant: Jessica Weissman

WATER is a 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:

Editors

WATERwheel

8035 13th Street

Silver Spring, MD 20910-4803 USA

Phone 301-589-2509

FAX 301-589-3150

## ...Rights and Wrongs

(continued from page 1)

so, forgive my unbelief. Those of us who are in the social justice arena as a life-long vocation get good at letting such things roll off our backs. But as I see colleagues burn out, deal with depression and seemingly high incidents of cancer, I begin to wonder if it isn't getting inside of us all the same despite what our brains say.

Another such show stopper was the recent statement from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled "Some Considerations Concerning the Catholic Response to Legislative Proposals on the Non-Discrimination of Homosexual Persons." Banner head-

ality is unnatural, therefore unholy. In fact, scientific evidence, both social scientific and biological, has shown homosexuality to be a perfectly normal, natural (whatever that is) way of relating for at least ten percent, and probably a bit more, of our population. Nature and nurture arguments still abound as to what causes heterosexuality, but experts agree that homophobia and heterosexism are preventable and treatable diseases which respond best to early intervention.

That the Vatican would unabashedly encourage such illness is easy to condemn out of hand, except that the high percentage of gay men in the Catholic clergy, whether sexually active or not being beside the point, means that such a

## *Experts agree that homophobia and heterosexism are preventable and treatable diseases which respond best to early intervention.*

lines said it all: "Vatican Urges Discrimination Against Homosexuals" since this is precisely what the remarkable document did. Be alerted that this translates into more religious right rhetoric against domestic partnership bills, equality in the military and more broadly based adoption options. In short, this document was not for Catholics only. One has only to think of how some Catholic church officials have postured on abortion and consider it practice for this round.

While this writer (and others) thought at first that the statement was a joke played on the media by certain more creative, shall we say, groups who like to "act up" in public, in fact even the clarification issued on the heels of outraged responses made it clear that the Vatican wasn't kidding. Indeed, in a rarely surpassed show of blaming the victim, the Vatican argues, and expects bishops to enforce, the notion that lesbian/gay/bisexual people who make our sexual orientation explicit should not be surprised at reprisals. More to the point, the Vatican will assure that we receive them by urging its middle managers to get involved in every social arena in which headway on lesbian/gay/bisexual civil rights has been made. Specifically, in adoption or foster care, in employment as teachers or athletic coaches, and in the military, discrimination ought to be carried out to preserve what the Vatican considers the common good.

Detailed refutation of such scandalous twisting of Christian imperatives of love and justice is unnecessary to point out the transparency of the argument. In fact, it is a circular argument based on a long outmoded idea that homosexu-

document is probably connected to plenty of self-loathing. This is heart-wrenching, as is sitting across from a bishop who is gay yet who cannot say so and thus stop the cycle of abuse. But it is the abuse in the name of religion that relativizes even these considerations, and it is the eradication of violence which is a necessary prerequisite to justice. Hence, my horror.

I submit that the new attacks by the religious right on feminism, advocates of responsible reproduction, and supporters of lesbian/gay and bi-sexual peoples' full human rights are proof positive of a major cultural shift that can only be named in retrospect, but that indeed has and is taking place. It is a shift for which feminist/womanist/mujerista theological work has been helpful, hence the special opprobrium we receive from the likes of Catholic bishops bent on penning a pastoral letter about us rather than developing a pastoral plan with us.

The shift at play is one from family as blood ties that sometimes bind to the point of constricting, to family as a social unit held together by mutual concern and accountability, shared resources as well as shared care. Family is the folks we spend holidays with and with whom we pay the mortgage; it is the ones we take responsibility for in youth, illness and old age, those with whom we talk politics and do the grocery shopping, those whose school work and job progress we monitor as our own. This is a shift that has taken place in all racial and ethnic groups, at all levels of education and income.

In fact, this is a shift for the better since, unlike the nuclear family, this new openness to many ways of being in relationship encourages rather than discourages, reinforces rather than

disregards human ties across the board. It also takes account of the fact that racism, sexism and heterosexism, not to mention rank economic differences pertaining to all of the above, force certain choices. It is difficult enough for a woman raising a child alone not to need the added weight of social sanction. To the contrary, every child deserves the resources for a healthy, stimulating life with education, medical care and adult supervision which the new forms of family must be designed to provide, and which, thankfully, many of them do.

New relational constellations abound: lesbian couples with children, religious brothers living with people with AIDS, blended and merged families not trying to exclude children, but struggling for how to be with them in new ways for which words like "stepmother" and "Mom's new husband" just don't say enough. In short, only about twenty-five percent of U.S. families now look like Ozzie and Harriet. The Simpsons, Waltons, Murphy Brown and her kid, Bill Cosby and his, even the Royals, for heaven's sake, can't keep everyone in lock step. People live longer than they did a century ago, but loyalty and commitment, the desire for connection and nurture, and the right to love and be loved come with a birth certificate. What has changed is not root values but the

kids, that they have a right to it, but so does everyone else. That is what it means to love one's neighbor regardless. That is what it means to say that we are part of divinity and she of us.

The religious right has been wrong on a range of matters. But one thing they do understand is that people want more than what the workaday (if they even have work) world offers. What else can explain the money and energy put into gardens, well prepared food and holidays? Advanced capitalism is of course a major player, but it would be cynical to miss the deep human desire for beauty and community which religions have taken seriously for generations. It is when these profound intuitions are manipulated in the service of oppression that we must speak out loudly and unequivocally in favor of a faith that does justice.

In previous times of economic shrinkage, of global depression such as we are now experiencing, unspeakable atrocities were perpetrated against scapegoats. There is no surprise in all of this, only the need from—Rostock, Germany, where skinheads attack immigrants, to Houston, Texas, where the police beat up people protesting the Bush administration's lack of support for people with AIDS—for strong, clear voices of protest with concrete alternatives to

*It is the job of religious professionals,  
indeed of religious groups, to make sense of  
such shifts, infuse meaning in the new,  
lead the way toward more inclusive people-  
and earth-embracing ways of living.*

hues and shades of the blossoms. The point is still to make sure that no one is alone, uncared for, left aside. Beyond that, I say enjoy the variety and don't forget to water the garden of life.

It is the job of religious professionals, indeed of religious groups, to make sense of such shifts, infuse meaning in the new, lead the way toward more inclusive people- and earth-embracing ways of living. Historical biblical faiths have done this in their finer hours; New Age groups have it as a goal, and feminists/womanists/mujeristas of faith have made it our reason for being. Now, more than ever in our scant thirty-year history, we need all the help we can muster to explain to people who are out of work, without health insurance, unable to afford college tuition, working several jobs to pay the bills, caring for an elderly parent at a distance, or just wanting a little more time to enjoy the

propose. Consider me one of them and watch this space for specifics.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Which of your religious values inform your way of acting politically?
2. How is your religious community, i.e., base community, congregation, women-church group, coven, parish, twelve-step group, involved in religiously motivated political action?
3. Given the backlash against progressive politics, what are some of the ways in which feminist/womanist/mujerista religious insights can be helpful in shaping new ethical norms?

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



## In Memory of Her

In memory of **Annie Stafford**, mother of WATER intern Kitty Stafford, a strong independent Irish woman who encouraged her five daughters to be self-reliant and to enable others to be the same.

## A Word of Welcome

**Lynn Shuppel** has taken on the WATER bookkeeping and related financial challenges. Keep her busy with your donations!

**Susan O'Brien** from Ireland and New York City is interning at WATER for a month this fall. She is Kitty Stafford's niece and a welcome addition to the scene.

## Adios Amigas

**Partners for the Common Good**, a socially responsible loan fund, has been sharing the WATER office this year. Director Carol Coston is moving the Fund to Texas where she will begin Sister Farm with Elise Garcia and Nancy Sylvester. We WATER staff will miss Carol and her assistant Sue Phillips, who have been fine neighbors. Mucha suerte to all.





## Knowing the Background

Changing seasons invite us to look at the transitions within ourselves, our spirituality, our relationships, our society. Change is a part of living as the seasons teach us yearly.

This liturgy focuses on spiritual change, inviting participants to name what centers them spiritually. It is powerful during harvest or transition times. Use it as a model for the liturgy your group needs to celebrate. Enjoy the changes!

## Preparing to Celebrate

Gather three candles, corn bread, wheat bread, cider and wine and place them on a harvest cloth intertwined with harvest symbols in the center of a circle of chairs, one for each participant. Involve as many people as possible in leading various parts of this liturgy.

## Naming the Circle

To begin, let's give one another a glimpse of who we are by saying our names and speaking a word about changes we notice at this season, changes or transitions inside of us or around us.

## Calling to Gather

Fall is a season of change. The shifting patterns are imperceptible to some, and blatantly obvious to others. Tonight we will reflect together on our changes, what we inevitably give up to make room for the new; what we store up for the winter when we'll need something extra. We often have the tendency to think we can just add on or pile up, but the fact is that we have to let go in order to make room. We trim back the branches, plow under the vegetation that will renew the soil for next year. We stock shelves of the pantry at this season in order to use the fruits of the harvest for the winter. We store up in order to use what we need. So the paradox—harvesting only to use.

Our interest in this fall season of transition is looking at our spirituality, what grounds us as we move through the cycle. For many of us, the "faith of our fathers" is not the faith of our future, nor is the faith of our great grandmothers really ours either: patriarchal Christianity and romanticized matriarchies don't fully satisfy us. But what replaces all of this? What is the real content of calling ourselves women-church? Are there certain things we can say and do together that give spiritual shape to the movement and spiritual grounding to our lives?

This liturgy is not an effort to write a common creed, but it is a time to assess, reassess, where we are individually and as a group, in what we believe. This is a time and a place to be safe, to explore, to be confident that regardless of our changes the divine love which holds us all will prevail. Let us center ourselves to celebrate "Deep Peace of Changing Seasons To You," a symphony in three movements.



## First Movement

### Chanting Together

"Sure As the Wind" round by Terry Dash  
from *A Circle Is Cast* by Libana

Sure as the wind my sisters and sure as the rain,  
Sure as the sun does shine, we will raise our  
song again.

### Lighting the Candles

from "Candles" by Caly Domitila Cane'k

Caly Domitila Cane'k was born in Guatemala. A social worker, catechist and teacher of literacy in her Indian community, she also coordinated a Catholic radio program in Cakchiquel, her native language. She came to the United States as an exile after three of her brothers, one fourteen years old, were killed or disappeared by the military.

Lit candles  
light new candles.  
Extinguished candles  
still will light new candles.

Thus is struggle:  
candles that light  
and fade.  
(The reader lights a candle.)

### Listening to a Reading

from *After Patriarchy* (eds. Cooley, Eakin, McDaniel), "The Spiritual, Political Journey" by Emily Culpepper

"We were discussing the issue of connection to one's religious past. Knowing I no longer identified as Christian, one of the women asked, 'But you do draw on it in some ways still, don't

# Deep Peace of

by Diann Neu

you? Would you speak of it as your roots?' I paused, searching for words. That phrase has never felt quite right to me. From the root springs the tree; they are a continuous growth. The ecology of my spiritual life is more complex than that, with moments of radical discontinuity and continuity. 'Compost,' I heard myself say. And again, with an increasing sense of satisfaction that at last I had found the apt metaphor, 'Compost. My Christianity has become compost.' It has decayed and died, becoming a mix of animate and inanimate, stinking rot and released nutrients. Humus. Fertilizer. The part of organic life cycles with which everyone gets uncomfortable and skips over in the rush to rhapsodize growth and progress and blossoms and fruition and rebirth. But in between is the dark, rich mysterious stage, when life decomposes into soil. It is a sacred time—like the dark no-moon new-moon in my meditations, that liminal stage and dangerous essential passage between the last slender waning crescent and the first shred of a shining waxing new one. Compost. A pile of organic substance transforming into a ground, a matrix into which we must mix other elements for the next seeds to sprout. Other vital forces must wet and warm the matrix. And additional deaths, so inevitable in changing/living, will need to feed this ground. Humus. It is from this that we are named, human, to acknowledge our connection to the earth, the place where we stand in the vast living universe. If our traditions and symbols are truly part of living, then they are organic and will have rhythms of living and dying."

### Reflecting Together

How do you describe your connection to your religious past, to your spiritual future? Think for a moment, then turn to someone next to you and share your reflection. (Sharing.)

## Second Movement

### Chanting Together

(Repeat "Sure As the Wind" by Terry Dash)

### Lighting the Candles

(Repeat "Candles" by Caly Domitila Cane'k)

### Listening to a Story

Demeter is the Greek Goddess of agriculture, the giver of crops; her daughter Kore, or Persephone, is the Grain-Maiden, the symbol of new growth. Each year after the harvest



# Changing Seasons To You

Demeter lets go of her daughter, who goes beneath the Earth to rule the Underworld. Demeter grieves at the separation, wanders the land searching for her daughter and declares that nothing will grow until Kore returns. And each spring, when Kore comes back, abundance and fertility return to the Earth.

## Reflecting Together

What are you letting go of, what are you grieving separation from? Think for a moment, then turn to another person and share your reflections. (*Sharing.*)

## Third Movement

### Chanting Together

(Repeat "Sure As the Wind" by Terry Dash)

### Lighting the Candles

(Repeat "Candles" by Caly Domitila Cane'k)

### Listening to a Reading

from **No Turning Back** by Hopi teacher  
Polingaysi Qoyawayma

"Mother Corn has fed you as she has fed all Hopi people, since the long, long ago when she was no longer than my thumb. Mother Corn is the promise of food and life. I grind with gratitude for the richness of our harvest, not with cross feelings of working too hard. As I kneel at my grinding stone, I bow my head in prayer, thanking the great forces for provision. I have received much. I am willing to give much in return, for as I have taught you, there must always be a giving back for what one receives."

## Reflecting Together

What have you received spiritually that you are grateful for? Think for a moment and share with everyone. (*Sharing.*)

The changing season calls us to stand in a circle, put our arms around one another, create our community to acknowledge that we are coming home to ourselves and one another as we change.

## Singing Together

"Coming Home" by Carolyn McDade  
copyright 1980 Surtsey Publishing

We're coming home to the spirit in our soul  
We're coming home  
and the healing makes us whole

Like rivers running to the sea  
We're coming home, We're coming home.

As the day is woven into night  
as the darkness lives within the light  
as we open vision to new sight  
We're coming home, We're coming home.

## Blessing and Sharing of Breads and Drinks

(*Invite one person to bless corn bread and wheat bread, and another to bless cider and wine. These blessings will be spontaneous and flow from the movements of the liturgy.*)

## Greeting of Peace,

adapted from the Gaelic by Mary Rogers in  
**Earth Prayers** (ed. Roberts and Amidon)

Echo me when I gesture to you with my hand.  
(*The reader gestures on the first and last line of each stanza for participants to echo her.*)

Deep peace of the running wave to you, (*echo*)  
of water flowing, rising and falling,  
sometimes advancing, sometimes receding...  
May the stream of your life flow unimpeded!  
Deep peace of the running wave to you! (*echo*)

Deep peace of the flowing air to you, (*echo*)  
which fans your face on a sultry day,  
the air which you breathe deeply, rhythmically,  
which imparts to you  
energy, consciousness, life.  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you! (*echo*)

Deep peace of the quiet earth to you, (*echo*)  
who, herself unmoving, harbors the movements  
and facilitates the life

of the ten thousand creatures,  
while resting contented, stable, tranquil.  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you! (*echo*)

Deep peace of the shining stars to you, (*echo*)  
which stay invisible till darkness falls  
and discloses their pure and shining presence  
beaming down in compassion  
on our turning world.  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you! (*echo*)

....Add your own wish for deep peace.

Filled with this deep peace, let us bless one  
another with hugs and kisses of peace.

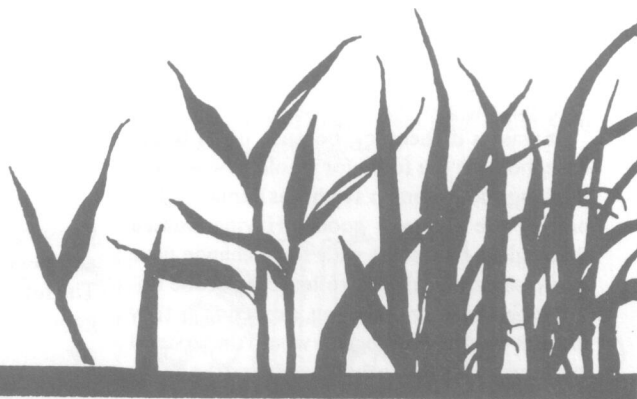
## Singing Together

(Repeat "Coming Home" by Carolyn McDade)

We're coming home to the spirit in our soul  
We're coming home  
and the healing makes us whole  
Like rivers running to the sea  
We're coming home, We're coming home.

To reclaim the thinking of our minds  
Leaving shackles lying far behind  
Bearing hope for every soul confined  
We're coming home, We're coming home.

Diann Neu, feminist liturgist and therapist, is  
co-director of WATER.



# Women Crossing Worlds

## Theology and Reproductive Rights in Brazil

Brazilian women's groups, including Christian Women in Theology, Catholics for a Free Choice, Sos Corpo, and NETMAL (a Latin American group of women in theology), held their first national meeting on religion and reproductive rights in Sao Paulo in May 1992 supported by the Global Fund for Women. Thirty-five movers and shakers spent an intense weekend in debate, discussion and strategizing with the hope that effective, affordable birth control and legal abortion will eventually become the norm.

Social scientists made it clear that the health situation for many Brazilian women is grave, and that the churches, especially the Catholic Church, are a major stumbling block to justice. Brazil, like the United States and unlike some other Latin American countries, requires extensive racial and class analysis on all social issues in order to craft legislation and affect public policy.

WATER co-director Mary E. Hunt, sponsored by CFFC, joined Brazilian theologians Ivone Gebara and Wanda Deifelt in sketching the theological dimensions of responsible reproduction. [Editor's Note: This same threesome spoke to an afternoon crowd of 250 people at the Paulist Bookstore celebrating the Portuguese translation of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's *In Memory of Her*. Dr. Hunt lectured in two Catholic seminaries, providing the fundamentals of feminist theological ethics.] It was edifying to see the tremendous interest in things theological. Activists, medical people and students queried everything from the role of the Virgin Mary to the latest in feminist/womanist/mujerista analysis, from the difference women pastors make to new trends in sexual ethics. All of this set the stage for the tremendous social upheaval necessary to shift from patriarchal to women-connected medical care, but the group made real progress.

It was as if theology, because of its broad base, became the focus for whole new ways of thinking about women's rights as human rights, part of the common good. Having women theologians to discuss with for a change gave participants permission to leave no stone unturned in their own thinking, expecting as they did that women theologians would understand and be sympathetic to their needs and the needs



of their constituents. Such discussion is key to discharging old religious baggage and using the impetus and creativity of women's spirituality to fuel change.

Brazilian women know how to party—which they did with abandon—as well as how to organize. Community groups, clinics, publishing houses and even churches to which participants returned will feel the impact of this powerful first meeting to be followed up by a second gathering in Spring 1993 in Recife. WATER will continue its involvement through “Women Crossing Worlds” exchanges of information and personnel with women's groups in Brazil. The future of reproductive rights in Brazil is in good hands.

## Women Uniting Europe

Treaties and votes over common currency rightfully occupy center stage in Europe. But women in religion could teach their sister/brother citizens a thing or two about networking. When WATER staff members Diann Neu and Mary Hunt ambled about the British Isles and the Continent this summer there was networking aplenty, not to mention gracious hospitality, great food and drink, and far more fun than work.

Alison Webster of the Institute for the Study of Christianity and Sexuality, London, sponsored a weekend workshop to discuss issues related to women and violence for which WATER provided resourcing.

Alexina Murphy of Catholic Women's Network in England hosted a women-church liturgy coordinated by Diann Neu, and a party where some women arrived fresh from the first British Irish Summer School in Feminist Theology. (The lectures from that conference can be found in the new journal, *Feminist Theology*, Sheffield Academic Press, 343 Fulwood Road, Sheffield S10 3BP England to be published three times a year; \$21 individuals, \$40 institution, beginning September 1992. Watch for the vote in November on Anglican women priests.)

Feminist theologians in Ireland (no, it is not a contradiction in terms, Cardinal Ratzinger) Anne Louise Gilligan and Katherine Zappone run a marvelous women's training center, *The Shanty*, just outside of Dublin. They hosted a four-day gathering with feminist theologians, psychologists and other healers. Praxis makes perfect in this case. 'Tis a grand life when Mary Condren herself, author of *The Serpent and the Goddess*, leads the way to Goddess sites at New Grange and Knowth.

Beloved church leader and feminist mentor Eva Renate Schmidt gathered a group of colleagues with WATER staff in her newly built retirement home in Wittnau, Germany for a day of socializing and strategizing. Herta Leistner of the lay academy in Bad Boll brought news of extensive women's activities there.

The Basel, Switzerland women-church group met at the home of Marga Buehrig, Else Kaehler and Elsi Arnold. Discussion on violence and a liturgy of hope reinforced how certain common concerns link us all.

Would that political leaders would consult these and other women in religion for efficient, enjoyable ways to connect.



## Resources

*The following resources are now in WATER's Resource Center. We recommend them for your reading.*

Boylan, Esther, ed. **WOMEN AND DISABILITY**. London and Atlantic Heights, NJ: ZED Books, 1991 (111 pages, \$15.95).

A comprehensive approach with a global perspective on the double discrimination confronting women with disabilities and the need for creative solutions to bring about justice. **WOMEN AND HEALTH**, edited by Patricia Smyre and published by ZED, is also excellent.

Chinicci, Rosemary. **CAN WOMEN RE-IMAGE THE CHURCH?** New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992 (110 pages, \$6.95).

Whether we can or not, we should, and this book is a useful tool for starting that process. Recommended for church study groups and support communities where such important work can happen.

Deat, Richard, ed. **AMBASSADOR OF RECONCILIATION: A MURIEL LESTER READER**. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers, 1991 (220 pages, \$14.95).

This feminist pacifist was a spiritual agent for non-violent social change. How nice to make her acquaintance.

Finson, Shelley Davis. **WOMEN AND RELIGION: A BIBLIOGRAPHIC GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN FEMINIST LIBERATION THEOLOGY**. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991 (207 pages, \$70 Canadian).

An invaluable resource, especially for libraries and women's centers, which includes all of the major sources. Well indexed and accessible to the general user.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. **REVELATION: VISION OF A JUST WORLD**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991 (150 pages, \$8.95).

Feminist biblical scholarship at its best. This comprehensive treatment handles text, context and implications with theo-political savvy in a remarkably accessible way.

Gimbutas, Marija (edited by Joan Marler). **THE CIVILIZATION OF THE GODDESS: THE WORLD OF OLD EUROPE**. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991 (529 pages, \$60).

A treasury of pictures, drawings, essays, lore to deepen contemporary knowledge of highly developed Goddess-centered civilization.

Glaz, Maxine and Jeanne Stevenson Moessner. **WOMEN IN TRAVAIL AND TRANSITION:**

**A NEW PASTORAL CARE**. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991 (225 pages, \$10.95).

Women's reflections on pastoral theology are new and welcome. This is uneven unto timid in places, but hopefully foreshadows deeper work to come.

Harris, Maria. **THE FAITH OF PARENTS**. New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991 (106 pages, \$7.95).

A lovely start to thinking about feminist faith sharing with children. Elegant in its simplicity, up to date in its theology.

Kanyoro, Musimbi R.A. and Wendy S. Robins. **THE POWER WE CELEBRATE: WOMEN'S STORIES OF FAITH AND POWER**. Geneva, Switzerland: World Council of Churches Publications, 1992 (112 pages, \$9.95).

A Lutheran World Federation contribution to the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women, this varied collection of stories is ideal for local study groups looking for international content.

Koontz, Christian, ed. **THEA BOWMAN: HANDING ON HER LEGACY**. Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1991 (116 pages, \$8.95).

This contemporary prophet who even "made the bishops dance" is remembered by friends and co-workers in powerful tributes to her life and accomplishments.

Kuhn, Maggie with Christina Long and Laura Quinn. **NO STONE UNTURNED: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MAGGIE KUHN**. New York: Ballantine Books, 1991 (234 pages, \$18).

From the YWCA to the Presbyterian Church to the Gray Panthers this inspiring woman rooted in Philadelphia has brought a world of change on issues of aging and justice. *Ad multos anos*.

O'Neill, Craig and Katherine Ritter. **COMING OUT WITHIN: STAGES OF SPIRITUAL AWAKENING FOR LESBIANS AND GAY MEN**. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992 (236 pages, \$10).

One of those rare books that has multiple uses in counselling and social change. Everyone experiences change, loss and new starts; everyone seeks mental and spiritual health. Lesbian/gay experiences become a model that can be generalized instead of always finding it the other way around.

Reis, Patricia. **THROUGH THE GODDESS: A WOMAN'S WAY OF HEALING**. New York: Continuum, 1991 (235 pages, \$24.95).

New religious insights, for that matter revivals of old religious traditions, are as powerful as they are useful. This book shows how Goddess images and insights can help in healing.

Reynolds, Margaret. **EROTICA: WOMEN'S WRITINGS FROM SAPPHO TO MARGARET ATWOOD**. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1990 (362 pages, \$20).

A revolutionary collection in which the erotic is redefined on women's terms. Jeanette Winterson writes: "We don't want men to package us but we must have the freedom to describe ourselves."

Sauro, Joan. **WHOLE EARTH MEDITATION: ECOLOGY FOR THE SPIRIT**. San Diego, CA: LumaMedia, 1992 (95 pages, \$9.95).

A lovely read, a beautiful presentation, an insightful view and an artistic eye add up to a good book.

Sewell, Marilyn. **CRIES OF THE SPIRIT: A CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY**. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991 (311 pages, \$16.95).

This anthology provides much grist for the sermon/liturgy/ritual mill. It is a collection of readings that touches on themes for ceremonies as diverse as friendship, menstruation, alienation and images of the divine by poets, theologians, writers and activists.

Soelle, Dorothee. **THINKING ABOUT GOD: AN INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY**. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990 (208 pages, \$11.95).

Finally, a text for introductory theology classes that includes both North American and European feminist sources in a well developed historical framework.

Souhami, Diana. **GERTRUDE AND ALICE**. London: Pandora Press, 1991 (300 pages, 19.99 pounds sterling).

This reviewer's favorite of the year, a delicious biography of two of literature's most unique and celebrated women. This chronicle of their lives and loves leaves little doubt as to their genius and their style.







*The Third  
Women-Church  
Convergence  
Conference*

*Albuquerque, New Mexico*

*April 16, 17, 18, 1993*

## Women-Church:

In Chicago, almost a decade ago, women spoke—from generation to generation. In Cincinnati in 1987, we gathered by the thousands to claim our power. We will come to Albuquerque this Spring—to raise our voices, to proclaim our power, to celebrate Women-Church!

### **Come, join the Weavers of Change:**

...the artist will be there...and the thinker...the peacemaker...the activist...the dreamer...the rebel...the organizer...the ritual-maker...the rememberer, she is coming, and the lover, and, of course, the truth-teller. The fearful may come, and the weary, but the courageous will be there, too. The singer

and the voiceless, the builder and the homeless, they are coming.

**Will you join us?**

**Women-Church: Weavers of Change** convenes to provide an opportunity for women to deepen our understanding of the richness and depth of the diversity of women's experience.

Women's racial, cultural, ethnic, sexual, economic, class, and spiritual diversity, unified by our sense of the Sacred, can be the starting point of collective reflection and action for personal and structural transformation in religious and other institutions.

## Weavers of Change

Recognition of the experience of the holy and the sacred in each cultural group can lead to the discovery of a basic human unity or harmony as both source and goal of social action.

### *For further information contact:*

*Women-Church Conference, PO Box 1025,  
Melrose MA 02176, (617) 662-2102, or (617)  
524-7030, or FAX (617) 662-7706.*

If you are a WATER supporter, your conference flier is in the mail. Be sure to take advantage of early registration--before October 15, 1992--as part of WATER.



# Water

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual  
8035 13th Street, Silver Spring, MD 20910, USA

**Address Correction Requested**

## Inside

Editorial, 1  
Religious Rights and Wrongs, 1  
In Memory of Her, 3  
A Word of Welcome, 3  
Adios Amigas, 3  
Deep Peace of Changing Seasons To You, 4  
Theology and Reproductive Rights in Brazil, 6  
Women Uniting Europe, 6  
Resources, 7  
Women-Church: Weavers of Change, 8

Donors to WATER receive WATERwheel.

## Complimentary

To Share with a friend

Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Silver Spring, MD  
Permit No. 1701