



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

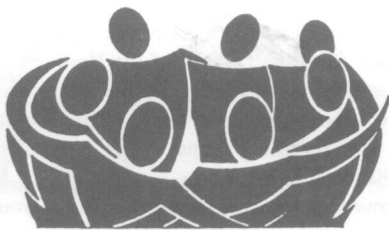
Editorial

Strides made by women in all religions are noticeable. For example, an outpouring of books this season by and about Buddhist women provides inspiration to all of us. There is now a good volume for young girls contemplating ministry as a vocational option, a book many of us needed growing up. These are the fruits of our collective labor and they help enormously.

Backlash is a measure of success in our circles. So it is interesting to watch the backlash in denominations and in the right-wing press against the wonderful "Re-imagining" conference held in Minneapolis in November 1993. It means some people did something right, and other people are noticing. Of course it also means that heads will roll and jobs will be lost, but results of the collective imagination are simply too powerful to be undone.

Likewise, we are delighted to see an increase in the number of people who use our Resource Center, attend programs, request information and join WATER's mailing list. The more the merrier, of course, including visitors to the office, interns, visiting scholars and people who seek our collaboration. As the Grail women, who are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Grailville, have long intoned, "Together, we are a genius."

The real challenge is to find ways to sustain our efforts over the long haul, to grow exponentially in the budget area as we grow in ideas and commitment. Perhaps the best clue comes from the donor who said, "I only wish it could be more because I believe so in what you are doing." We do too, but somehow, together, it is always enough.



Re-Imagining: I Wish You Had Been There

by Mary E. Hunt

Bless Sophia,
Dream the vision,
Share the wisdom
Dwelling deep within.

This beautiful Hawaiian chant resounded countless times in Minneapolis, November 4-7, 1993 during "Re-imagining," an historic conference that future generations will study like Trent and Chalcedon, times when new eras in Christian history open. The gathering was sponsored by a broadly based steering committee as the U.S. expression of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women. It was organized under the aegis of various ecumenical agencies in the Twin Cities and directed by a talented group of women.

You had to be there to appreciate the complexity, innovation and organization of the event—the art, music, speeches, meals, dance, discussion, exhibits all happening as a well choreo-

were turned away for lack of space, I predict that you will soon feel the positive impact of this marvelous undertaking. Fortunately, the 24 tapes of the sessions are available and highly recommended (\$5/tape or \$60 for all of them; order from: Re-imagining, 122 W. Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404). Like the weekend, these materials make a splendid course in the latest insights, dynamics and questions as women re-imagine things theological.

Re-imagining was an inspired theme which virtually every speaker took seriously and attempted to do. This was a conference where the sky was the limit and we were airborne most of the time. Participants sat at assigned tables for the entire weekend, where art supplies (crayons and markers) and ritual props (cups, herbs, egg-shaped noise makers) made full, embodied participation easy.

At day's end one's whole table moved to another spot in the room for a new perspective each day. The move brought participants closer to

*...what did we reimagine and
what difference did it make? Everything.*

graphed whole. A cavernous convention hall was filled to the fire regulations with more than two thousand participants, mostly women but including several dozen men. One third of the participants were ordained clergy. Every state except Nevada was represented, as well as twenty-seven countries, including Australia, New Zealand and Brazil (several of the international guests made WATER the next stop on their U.S. itineraries).

The majority of participants were from mainline Protestant denominations, with 243 Roman Catholics, one Buddhist and various other practitioners all engaged in the collective process of thinking anew about traditional topics.

Even if you were not there, and especially if you were one of hundreds of disappointed who

one of the giant works of art that were being created while we watched. Or, it took us farther from one of the music stages where choirs and musicians kept the room rocking, or, alternately, nearer to the center stage where speakers turned their bodies (and the plexiglass podium which held their notes) 360 degrees during the course of their remarks so that each corner of the room was able to see the speakers' faces. These dynamics were more than gimmicks. They were "re-imagined" ways of being many people in a large setting and giving priority to everyone.

Right-brain activities equalled left brain input for a refreshing change. But the art, movement and singing were facilitated with such
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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 doing programs, projects, publications, workshops, lectures, retreats, counseling and liturgical planning which have helped thousands of people to be a part of an inclusive church and society.

WATERwheel is published quarterly by the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual. Annual subscription, \$35. 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. Send inquiries and comments to:

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No need to give **WATERwheel** away, cut it up, copy it or forgo sharing. If you know someone with whom you'd particularly like to share this issue, just send us her or his name and address and we'll mail a complimentary copy direct. Better yet, send us a list of friends and relatives you'd like to acquaint with WATER, and we'll introduce ourselves.

If you or some you know would like to receive **WATERwheel** on tape, we will be happy to arrange for audio transcription of the issue(s) you desire. Contact WATER, 301-589-2509. Cassettes will be made by Volunteers for the Visually Handicapped at a cost of \$9 per tape.

Re-imagining...

(continued from page 1)

grace that those of us who do not excel at them (she stated honestly) were made to feel comfortable. We were made to feel right at home, following our floor leader and relying on the energy of the whole to carry us along.

Local women provided an unparalleled level of hospitality, down to the smallest detail, including a ready supply of mittens and scarves for those who braved Minneapolis from warmer climes. The Minnesota flavor ran throughout the event without overwhelming it, making it a local conference at which the whole world was welcome. Imagine it as a model that could be replicated elsewhere.

Concretely, what did we reimagine and what difference did it make? Everything. Here is a sample: Bernice Johnson Reagon, founding director of Sweet Honey in the Rock, sang the hard questions from the perspective of an African American ethnomusicologist, and answered them with creative challenges. Chung Hyun Kyung, Korean theologian, asked "What's God got to do with it?" and invited women to eat the apple of resistance. Delores Williams, Kwok Pui-Lan and Barbara Lundblad re-imagined Jesus brilliantly from their various perspectives at a conference later critiqued by the religious

an exhibit hall that was as educational as it was convenient for holiday shopping. Contemplate art exhibits including representations of Minnesota women who were victims of violence. Conjure up endless caucuses on every imaginable topic, and women with disabilities well integrated into the event. You begin to get the gestalt.

One breakthrough was an action by lesbian women, led by CLOUT (Christian Lesbians Out Together), who signaled the need to end homophobia in church and society. Out and proud lesbian women circled the center stage, and invited the assembly to stand and sing with us. A woman whose hand I held whispered, "I hope my ordination committee does not find out." The personal cost for some women reminded the assembled of how far we have come, but how far we still need to go.

The conference was not without its shortcomings. It was a missed opportunity to do the sustained anti-racism work that groups made up mostly of euro-american women need to do in this country. Another lack was simply the absence of some of the most significant players in the field, theologians who have made women's issues their life's work. Of course economics dictate such choices, but still they were missed. Another problem was the lack of concerted action for local and collective work after the meet-

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right as lacking recognizable Christian content.

Creation, family and sexuality, models of church and ministry, language, the arts and ethics were all reimagined in lively, participatory sessions. The tapes capture the essence and are invaluable for spreading this good news. The same process went on in workshops and over meals, fueled by decades of women's work and fueling decades of efforts to come.

Plenary sessions were actually extended liturgical events with lectures and table discussions interspersed with singing, prayer and sacrament. Every session began with meditation and/or music, hallowing the experience ahead as participants took each other and the act of reimagining seriously. The Hawaiian chant greeted each speaker as a blessing, and I had the sense that each woman literally gave her best because of it.

Imagine thousands of people sitting down to a Minnesota thanksgiving meal, complete with wild rice. Picture denominational dinners and

ing was over. But the accomplishments, especially the foretaste of what "church" might be like if the skills and talents of women, our theological and ethical priorities were taken seriously, gave hope that even these problems will be tackled in the near future.

By the end of the event I could feel both exhilaration and a certain dissonance rising. The exhilaration was obvious--this was a church conference at which justice, mutual empowerment and the holy were the agenda, rather than the mix of piety and infighting over an agenda set by someone else that has become typical. Some women from the Church of the Brethren, empowered by the assembly, announced that after years of wrangling over their patriarchal name, they were renaming themselves "Church of Reconciliation." Let it be so.

However, especially for some ordained women ministers, there was the inevitable and unenviable return to the churches from which they had
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Re-imagining...

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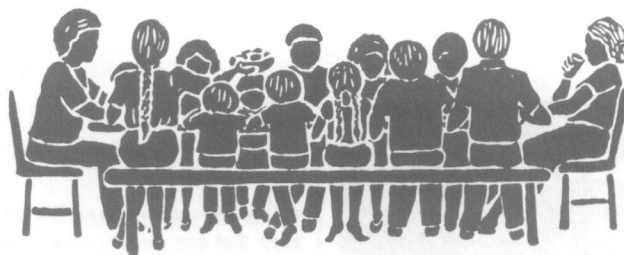
come. There was a sense that one would have to box up her reimagined faith and return to the "faith of our fathers" in order to minister in patriarchy. I got the impression that many women dreaded it, my signal that we need to name, develop and sustain feminist ministry so that the reimagined will become the norm. That will take hard work, but from the looks of "Re-imagining," women are more than up to it.

It is no surprise then that some denominations which gave seed money and whose staff members were visible, notably the Presbyterians and Methodists, are hearing complaints from their conservatives. The conservatives got the message: churches and society are different, and will become even more different because thousands of people combine imagination and commitment to "make all things new," not just in Minneapolis but in myriad efforts all over the world of which this conference was but a sample. If that is worrisome to some, they might try the Hawaiian chant to calm themselves:

Bless Sophia,
Dream the vision,
Share the wisdom
Dwelling deep within.

Then they too can engage in the faithful task of reimagining Christian religious basics, a task which got such a strong push in Minneapolis.

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



The Church on the Hill

by Mary E. Hunt

Every June more than one hundred people crowd into the Kirkridge Conference Center for a weekend gathering of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Christians. Years of theological training and work in the field have left me mildly (sometimes violently) allergic to church. But "on the hill" every June I can't get enough. Something happens there that does not happen most of the time in church. People who have to explain, defend and literally beg for membership and ordination in mainline churches are church for a change. That fundamental unfairness accounts for my usual allergy, for why it is literally bad for my

people, humbled to be there, learning from each other even when we disagree, and rejoicing in the power of it all. I know I do. Women meet together and men meet together for one session, but most of the weekend is a mixed gathering where we see how different we are by gender, how much the same in hope.

Over the now seventeen years of this annual gathering, however, the highlight is always the Saturday evening fishbowl. A group of participants speak very personally about their lives, talking with one another in a small group while the rest of us gather around them to support and

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myriad ways in which fragile human spirits
triumph over the pernicious evils of homohatred.*

spiritual health to try to be church most other places, and why I long for the church on the hill.

The weekend is more than a nice get-away. It is a chance to meet and hear from a stunning diversity of people, admittedly more white than anyone wishes, but still a range of experiences and perspectives that is awesome. Closeted clergy go to Kirkridge to be themselves; people living with AIDS find a safe place. A lesbian couple pronounced their commitment at the closing liturgy one year; yes, Virginia, some people have met their mates there. But the real virtue of the experience is how it provides some glimpse of what it could be to be church if all were welcome.

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, evangelical feminist writer, and John McNeill, psychotherapist and author who was ousted from the Jesuits, provide solid, mature, inspirational leadership. I have been privileged to join them for several years, this year along with Bill Smith, a graduate student at Pacific School of Religion, a gutsy poet of a man living with AIDS. Janie Spahr and Coni Staff are on the June 9-12, 1994 schedule, along with John and myself.

Topics range from death to strategies, from truth to faith, from relationships to good sex. I notice that speakers bring our very best to our

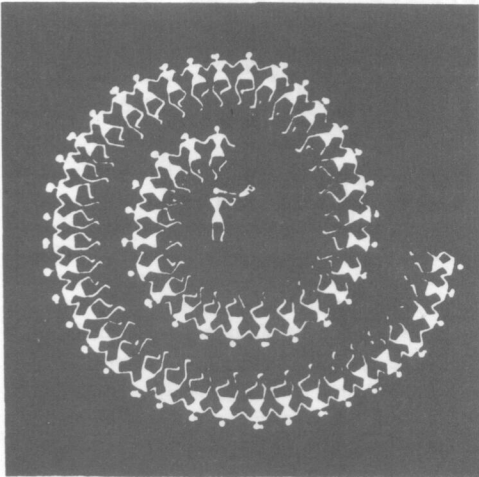
gain clarity from their conversation. Life does not get holier than this, as we sit, most with kleenex in hand, and listen to the myriad ways in which fragile human spirits triumph over the pernicious evils of homohatred. The closing eucharist is almost anticlimactic after this sacred sharing, but I would not miss it either since its fullness and authenticity linger with me over the months when I see it elsewhere so partial and profaned by prejudice and deceit.

Year to year a lot of the same people come back, but there are always dozens of new people too who dip into the church on the hill and go away cleansed of self-hatred and invigorated by community love. Some heterosexual people come, also some parents of lesbian children wanting to be church in this way. A cousin of mine is a regular participant, a talented gay man who works with people with AIDS. We cherish the chance to be together, to catch up on the family gossip and tighten our ties during these middle years when friends and elder relatives slip away. If we did not have Kirkridge, our family would be the poorer, and so would so many other families whether they know it or not. (For information and registration materials contact: Kirkridge, Bangor, PA 18013, 215/588-1793).



Celebrating

by Diann L. Neu



Background

Women are growing more powerful within ourselves, and in a society that would wish otherwise. We need to affirm women's power, acknowledge its roots and use it to transform society.

This liturgy celebrates women's power. Use it as a model for your group celebration or for personal reflection. The script you see here is a guide. Invite people who will lead the various parts to use their own words rather than read from a piece of paper.

Preparation

Create a circle of chairs, one for each participant. Place a kaleidoscope and a bowl of smoldering herbs (such as dried sage, cedar, pine) in the center of the circle. Give each of the four readers one of the symbols of power that corresponds to her reading: an egg, a felt or paper heart, a candle and matches, a tapestry of solidarity such as a weaving from another culture or country.

Name the Circle

Welcome to this celebration of women's power. Let us name our circle tonight by focusing women's power, passing a kaleidoscope around, looking into it, speaking our name, and sharing something about what we see as women's power. (Sharing.)

(If there are people in your group who do not see with their eyes, choose a symbol associated with touch that is appropriate such as a rock.)

Call to Gather

Women's power is all of this and more. Look at what we have seen as women's power. Imagine a world filled with women who believe in our power!

Tonight we gather to experience and affirm

our power as women. We gather to acknowledge that our power makes a difference in transforming ourselves, our relationships, our spirituality, and our society.

Let us celebrate women's power! Let us celebrate our power!

Sing Together

"Claim Your Power" from *Crossing the Lines*, by Marsie Silvestro, c 1987 Moonsong Productions:

(Refrain) Woman, let the spirit in your heart
Rise up (rise up) to claim your power (2x).

We are women gathered here
Bringing all our gifts we share
The truth has empowered us
We're working for justice
We are... We are women-church.
So... *(Refrain)*

We bring the wisdom of the old
While calling on what visions hold
We're making connection from all
earth's directions.
We are... We are women-church.
So... *(Refrain)*

Exorcise Abusive Power

In order to focus on constructive powers we must let go of abusive powers. The hurts, violations and disempowerment of each woman belong to all women. Women's power has been taken away by a sexist system that denies women's basic rights. From all of these we exorcise all women on this night.

We respond to each abuse of power by saying three times the words: "Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!" while adding a gesture using our arms, legs, bodies, heads to symbolize a casting off of the abusive power.

1. The fears women have of our own natural powers--
Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!
2. Believing women's bodies and souls are dirty, sinful and inferior--
Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!
3. The stereotyping of women that does violence to women, children, and society--
Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!
4. Jealousy and aggression that separate woman from woman, sister from sister--
Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!

5. Structures of racism and apartheid that separate women of various racial groups--
Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!
6. Chains of classism, sexism, heterosexism and ageism that bind women everywhere--
Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!
7. All forms of patriarchy that suffocate women's spirits--
Be gone! Be gone! Be gone!

Cleanse with Herbal Ashes

Let us cleanse this space so that good power can fill it. This smudging bowl is filled with sage and cedar. Sage represents wisdom. Cedar drives away unfriendly spirits. We will pass the bowl around and encircle each other with a cloud of power.

Let us stand. When you receive the bowl, breathe in its healing power. Turn to the person on your left and invite her to breathe in the healing power. Encircle her with healing by passing the smoke down the front of her, across her arms and up her back. Hand her the bowl and invite her to do the same to the woman on her left.

Sing Together

Hawaiian chant from "Re-imagining."

Bless Sophia,
Dream the vision,
Share the wisdom
Dwelling deep within.

Proclaim Sources of Women's Power

Tonight we proclaim four sources of women's power: ourselves, our relationships, our Spirit, and our work. Listen. Remember. Nurture your spirit. Be empowered.

1. Owning Self

(The reader puts the egg in the center of the circle and proclaims:) A reading from "Song of the Self: The Grandmother" by Alma Luz Villanueva, from *Life Span*, c 1984:

Surrounded by my shields, am I:
Surrounded by my children, am I:
Surrounded by the void, am I:
...Utter darkness I inhabit--
There, I watch creation unfold--
There, I know we begin and end--
Only to begin, again, and again--
Again. In this darkness, I am
Turning, turning toward a birth:
My own--a newborn grandmother
Am I, suckling light. Rainbow

Women's Power

serpent covers me, head to foot,
In endless circles--covers me,
That I may live forever, in this
Form or another. The skin she
Leaves behind glitters with
The question, with the answer,
With the promise:
"Do you remember yourself?"
"I am always a woman."

Song Refrain

"Voices" from *Singing for Our Lives*, by Holly Near, c 1981 Hereford Music, words adapted by Diann Neu for this ritual:

Listen to the power within yourself (2x)
Calling out the messages of the earth and sea.
Telling us what we need to know in order to
be free
Listen to the power within yourself.

2. Relating Intimately

(The reader puts a heart in the center of the circle and proclaims:) A reading on the imperative of intimacy from *Cries of the Spirit* by Marilyn Sewell, c 1991:

Women value human closeness. Though drawing near puts one at some risk, to be sure, it is in the touching of one with another that we become most fully ourselves. And the strong, sure presence of someone else warms the chill of the night.... [I]ntimacy may exist between friends or between lovers or within the family, but at its best it includes a radical respect for the other and the willingness to be vulnerable.

Song Refrain

Listen to the power of intimacy...

3. Nurturing the Spirit

(The reader puts a lit candle in the center and proclaims:) A reading from *Beyond God the Father*, by Mary Daly, c 1973:

Why indeed must "God" be a noun? Why not a verb--the most active and dynamic of all? Hasn't the naming of "God" as a noun been an act of murdering that dynamic Verb? And isn't the Verb infinitely more personal than a mere static noun? The anthropomorphic symbols for God may be intended to convey personality, but they fail to convey that God is Be-ing. Women now who are experiencing the shock of nonbeing

and the surge of self-affirmation against this are inclined to perceive transcendence as the Verb in which we participate--live, move, and have our being.

Song Refrain

Listen to the power of the Spirit...

4. Working in Solidarity to Transform Society

(The reader puts the tapestry, such as an arpillera from Chile, or some other symbol from another country, in the center of the circle and proclaims:) A reading from "Working in Solidarity to Transform Society," by Mary E. Hunt, from *WATERwheel*, Summer 1990.

Solidarity work that emerges from justice-seeking friendships is solidarity work with a human face, letting the most deeply affected set the agenda, telling the rest of us how we can be helpful and humane. It is work that includes hugs as well as legislation, watching one another's children grow as well as stopping nuclear war, attending to the environment as well as ending global conflict. Solidarity is just as spiritual as sacrament is political in women-church.

Song Refrain

Listen to the power of solidarity...

Reflect Together

Women are powerful! We are powerful within ourselves, in relating with others, through our spiritual connections, and in our solidarity work.

What is the source of your power? How do you nourish it? And how do you celebrate it? Think about these questions for a moment and then share your reflections so that we can get a glimpse of women's power. *(Sharing.)*

Sing Together

Hawaiian chant from "Re-imagining:"

Bless Sophia,
Dream the vision,
Share the wisdom
Dwelling deep within.

Bless Bread and Drink

Touch this bread and drink. *(The blesser holds them toward all gathered.)*

Blessed are you, Holy Source of Power, for creating powerful women. Feed us this power

of inner connection and outer strength. Through this bread and drink, fill us with energy to encourage ourselves, each other and those we meet to know our power and to use it for justice. Let us receive power by eating and drinking. *(Sharing of bread and drink.)*

Bless Our Power

Let us acknowledge our power. Touch one another and please respond: We are powerful!

Blessed are we when we discover our strength, accept our power, and make choices out of the integrity of our deepest spiritual impulses. **We are powerful!**

Blessed are we when we respect the other and are willing to be vulnerable in an intimate relationship. **We are powerful!**

Blessed are we when we participate in transcendence, nurture our spirits and make known the Holy One. **We are powerful!**

Blessed are we when we engage in solidarity and justice work to transform all oppression. **We are powerful!**

When else are we powerful? Tell us in the form "Blessed are we when..." and we will respond with "We are powerful!"

Send Forth

Filled with power and affirmed in it, let us send one another forth to be powerful. Let us strengthen one another by embracing one another and saying, "You are powerful!" *(Greeting.)*

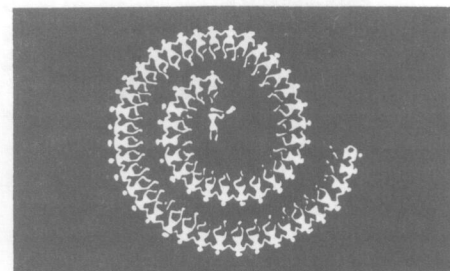
Sing and Dance Together

"Claim Your Power" by Marsie Silvestro:

(Refrain) Woman, let the spirit in your heart
Rise up (rise up) to claim your power (2x).

We are women gathered here
Bringing all our gifts we share
The truth has empowered us
We're working for justice
We are... We are women-church.
So... *(Refrain)*

Diann L. Neu, M.Div., STM, is a feminist liturgist and therapist who co-directs WATER.



Where WATER Staff Work

In Memory of Her

from Julie F. Parker:

In honor of my beautiful baby girl, **Marisol Grace Parker Crawford**, who is hope for all.

from Linda F. Weber:

In memory of **Erickson Ficklin**, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, cousin, woman of love.

from Margee Adams Iddings:

In memory of **John Connelly**, father of **Pat** and **Alice Connelly**, a devout Catholic father who encouraged his daughter to become a strong lay leader and his son to be a faithful friend of mine.

Our litany of love and thanksgiving for inimitable women, children and men in our lives continues to grow. New names will be published from time to time in **WATERwheel**. What better springtime gift for a loved one than to make a contribution "in memory of her" to WATER's special commemorative fund? Be sure to send a brief expression of your special regard of the one you honor.

Fall and winter are busy times for WATER staff who work as much outside the office as inside. One person who introduced Mary Hunt as a speaker referred to her as "ubiquitous," which is another way of saying, "we're busy."

Mary lectured on feminism and science at the **Parliament of the World's Religions**, a rollicking event held in September 1993 in Chicago, the centenary celebration of a similar event which introduced eastern religions to the U.S. in the last century.

She spoke on women-church and religious anti-violence work at the **Call to Action** meeting in Chicago, and addressed feminist ethics at **Loyola University** through the **BVM Women's Network** in the spirit of Mundelein College.

It was a college season, with Mary also lecturing on religious violence at **Central Michigan University** and at the opening of the academic year at **Immaculate Heart College Center** in Los Angeles. Lesbian, gay and bisexual concerns were the focus of a weekend of lectures for the **Bay Area Lesbian Gay Ecumenical Association** which Mary shared with Irene Monroe.

At the annual **American Academy of Religion**, Mary Hunt finished her term as co-chair of the **Women and Religion Section**, lectured on the religious right, and responded to the work of Sallie McFague.

Diann Neu continued course work toward a Masters in Social Work, for which she is the clinical social work intern for the **Mautner Project**, a Washington, DC area support network for lesbian women with cancer. She facilitated a weekly bereavement group for women who are surviving the death of their partners, and she counselled women who are living with cancer.

Diann did a workshop for the **Holy Cross Sisters** in Baltimore entitled "Harvesting Women's Gifts for Social Justice." She put her liturgical skills to use working with couples to create a wedding and a commitment ceremony. She created a ritual for the **Women's Ordination Conference** planning meeting for their 1995 conference. She facilitated the work of Presbyterian leaders at the organizing weekend of the **National Presbyterian Lesbian/Bisexual/Gay Movement**.

Diann, along with Chris Coughlan of Dignity and Ethel Dignan of the **BVM Network for Women's Issues**, is on the newly named coordinating team for the **Women-Church Convergence**. WATER is delighted to be a part of the Convergence, and to see it taking a new lease on its collective life.

These exciting projects, and others too numerous to mention, keep WATER staff well connected with the larger movement of women's spirituality and social change. Is it any wonder that the Alliance is growing?

E-mail Evolution

The advent of e-mail is upon us. Some greet it with disdain, wanting that lacy Valentine or that ugly bill to come via the postperson's pouch. But we at WATER think e-mail is yet another way to communicate efficiently, economically and, above all, speedily with our Alliance colleagues and others.

We are investigating a way to set up an on-line conversation among us, a feminist theology, ethics and ritual board which we could use to distribute information, discuss issues, strengthen our networks. It may be simply a mailing list to which we would send periodic notices. What do you think? If you would be interested in this, perhaps one day even receiving this newsletter on-line instead of on a piece of a tree, let us know, electronically.

You can reach us via Internet: Mary.Hunt@His.Com. Note that one does not choose one's e-mail address, but in this case it stands for Heller Information Services in the Communications section. Thanks to Jessica Weissman, our computer consultant, for steering us in the right direction.

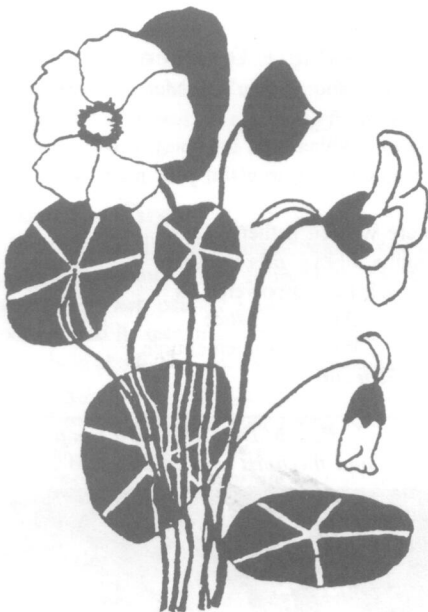
Office Notes

Visiting Scholar **Mary Shanahan**, staff to the Network of Ecumenical Women in Scotland at Dunblane, spent a month in the office researching religious violence and feminist spirituality.

Volunteer **Christine Weber** is a new face at the computer, making sense of the data. Christine lives and works with mentally differently-abled adults when not at WATER.

Caroline Smith is WATER's latest on-the-job trainee from LEAP, a local program for people with disabilities. She is the cheery voice on our phone, a welcome addition to the office staff.

Carol Scinto, conspicuously absent from these pages for a time, is reveling on the beaches of New Zealand with husband Joe where they are on sabbatical. She will be back by popular demand in her capacity as editor by Fall 1994, kiwis in one hand, red pencil in the other.



Resources



Adams, Carol J., editor. *ECOFEMINISM AND THE SACRED*. New York: Continuum, 1993 (340 pages, \$24.95).

Cross-cultural and interfaith perspectives on ecofeminism establish it as a resource for justice and peace. This stellar collection is skillfully edited to make it a first rate text.

Angelica, Jade C. *A MORAL EMERGENCY: BREAKING THE CYCLE OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1993 (169 pages, \$10.95).

A welcome start on a tough topic. Stories and statistics suggest strategies and evoke urgency.

Brasfield, Alice and Elisabeth Lunz, editors. *VOICES OF EXPERIENCE: LIFESTORIES OF CLERGYWOMEN IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)*. Louisville, KY: Women's Ministry Unit, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (200 pages, \$5.95).

These are wise women worth listening to as they trace the history of ordained women in ministry and hail their accomplishments.

Brereton, Virginia Lieson. *FROM SIN TO SALVATION: STORIES OF WOMEN'S CONVERSIONS, 1800 TO THE PRESENT*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991 (176 pages, \$10.95).

How interesting to see the ways language and commitment work for women from becoming a Christian to coming out as a lesbian.

Buehrig, Marga. *WOMAN INVISIBLE: A PERSONAL ODYSSEY IN CHRISTIAN FEMINISM*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993; originally published in German, 1987 (126 pages, \$11.95).

A wise introduction to the field of feminist theology by a well respected practitioner.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schussler. *BUT SHE SAID: FEMINIST PRACTICES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992 (272 pages, \$24).

Like *IN MEMORY OF HER*, this is an abso-

lute must for feminist biblical work. Elisabeth sets the pace and style for future work with her creative erudition, proving once again that ideas are essential to the praxis of liberation.

Herd, Gilbert and Andrew Boxer. *CHILDREN OF HORIZONS: HOW GAY AND LESBIAN TEENS ARE LEADING A NEW WAY OUT OF THE CLOSET*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993 (290 pages, \$25).

A new generation adds its style, struggle and savvy to being out in an unfriendly society. There is much to learn from these new experiences, as well as to learn what needs to be taught.

Isherwood, Lisa and Dorothea McEwan. *INTRODUCING FEMINIST THEOLOGY*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993 (158 pages, \$14.95).

A good guide for the uninitiated to the basic contours of Christian feminist theology, already needs updating to include womanist, mujerista and other efforts that are shaping the conversation. These authors are among the editors of the journal, "Feminist Theology," available from the same press for \$21 per year.

Luczak, Raymond, editor. *EYES OF DESIRE: A DEAF GAY & LESBIAN READER*. Boston: Alyson Publications, 1993 (314 pages, \$9.95).

If coming out as a hearing person is tough, coming out as a deaf person is even tougher. Stories in this important anthology reveal the courage, humor and daring of an important sector of the lesbian/gay/bisexual movement.

McRae-McMahon, Dorothy. *BEING CLERGY, STAYING HUMAN: TAKING OUR STAND IN THE RIVER*. Washington, DC: The Alban Institute, 1992 (73 pages, \$10.95).

Hurrah for common sense. Couple it with well thought through boundaries, and one can have a satisfying and productive ministerial career, and a full personal life.

McGrath, Ellen, Gwendolyn Puryear Keita, Bonnie R. Strickland and Nancy Felipe Russo, editors. *WOMEN AND DEPRESSION: RISK FACTORS AND TREATMENT ISSUES*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 1990 (123 pages, \$19.95).

With so many women being treated for depression, this is a useful overview of what it is, who suffers and what to do. Bibliography is especially welcome as helping professionals seek better information.

Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey, editor. *WOMEN OF FAITH IN DIALOGUE*. New York: Crossroad, 1990 (195 pages, \$9.95).

This compact volume should not be missed

when seeking sensible questions and reliable answers on the impact of feminism on many world religions.

Morrison, Eleanor S. *HONORING THE GIFTS OF WISDOM AND AGE: THE CRONING CELEBRATION FOR OLDER WOMEN*. 1993 (40 pages, \$5). Available from Leaven, Inc., P.O. Box 23233, Lansing, MI 48909.

A wonderful resource for planning a croning ceremony. Includes a description of four cronings plus ideas for music, meditations, readings.

O'Connor, Sr. Francis Bernard, C.S.C.. *LIKE BREAD, THEIR VOICES RISE! GLOBAL WOMEN CHALLENGE THE CHURCH*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press (208 pages, \$9.95).

The book, and accompanying video "Crums from the Table" (50 minutes, \$29.95), make a persuasive case for the ordination of Catholic women priests. Women in Bangladesh, Brazil, Uganda and the U.S. represent the voices of millions on an idea whose time has more than come. But, will women be able to reshape priesthood enough to want it?

Purvis, Sally B. *THE POWER OF THE CROSS: FOUNDATIONS FOR A CHRISTIAN FEMINIST ETHIC OF COMMUNITY*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993 (128 pages, \$14.95).

Problems with the cross are legion for feminists. Dr. Purvis tries to solve some of them with a well thought out critique of power and a less than persuasive argument for a "cruciform community."

Saracino, Mary. *NO MATTER WHAT*. Minneapolis, MN: Spinsters Ink, 1993 (240 pages, \$9.95).

Mom falls in love with a priest; Dad is an abusive, religious fanatic. The children's feelings and experiences make this novel a compelling read about dysfunctional dynamics and their impact on generations to come.

Roscoe, Will. *THE ZUNI MAN-WOMAN*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991 (302 pages, \$12.95).

Berdaches are persons who combine aspects of both women and men. This story of We'wha, a Zuni berdache, reveals the respect accorded these people in Pueblo culture, with plenty of lessons for other societies. Conclusion: gender bending is not new.

Stortz, Martha Ellen. *PASTORPOWER*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993 (143 pages, \$10.95).

Reflections on the power of powers, a step in the direction of responsible care.

1994 Spring Programs at WATER

WATER is well known for lectures, workshops, publications and organizing throughout the U.S. and around the world. At home in the Washington DC area we offer you the following programs:

WOMEN-CHURCH LITURGY: This group meets the third Tuesday of the month 7-8:30pm at WATER with Diann Neu for inclusive, feminist rituals. **March 15, April 19, May 17, June 21.**

SEDER MEAL: TOGETHER AT FREEDOM'S TABLE: **March 31,** 6:30pm, Holy Thursday and Sixth Night of Passover, Pot Luck. **Reservations required by Tuesday March 29, 1994.**

WOMEN'S BREAKFAST: This breakfast, the third Thursdays of the month, 8-9:30am, includes a short presentation, support and networking, a healthy meal.

March 17, "Maybe We're Talking About a Different God." Video and discussion of the case of the Rev. Jane Spahr and other clergy.

April 21, "Re-imagining." A report and discussion of the landmark conference November 1993 in Minneapolis in celebration of the Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women.

May 19, A Summer Reading List. We will provide suggestions for ten books to keep you up to date. You bring a title to recommend.

WEDNESDAY READING GROUP:

This monthly reading group is great for sermon preparation, class work, personal growth. The group will meet at WATER on the fourth Wednesday of the month, 7-8:30pm.

March 23, Discipleship of Equals by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza.

April 27, Sisters in the Wilderness by Delores Williams.

May 25, Outercourse by Mary Daly.

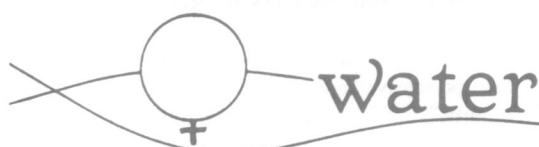
SATURDAY SEMINARS: These popular events include a great deal of content in a short time. Registration is limited to 20 people for a day of theological updating and challenging discussion, 9:45am-3pm:

April 16, I Am Not Sure What I Believe Anymore. Mary Hunt will lead a day of input and discussion on the impact of the latest feminist theology on our personal belief systems. What do we believe and how do we act as the ground shifts?

May 7, "Coyote (Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics)" And Replace Them With New Feminist Thinking. Mary Hunt will explore the rapidly changing ethical landscape—ecofeminism, models of family and violence—in an effort to reshape religious ethics based on integrity.

FEMINIST MINISTRY SUPERVISION GROUP:

Some feminist ministers have requested an interdenominational group in which to focus on issues particular to the needs of women who minister in churches. Issues like spiritual refreshment for ministers, working with special populations, feminist ministry in patriarchal churches, and discussion of particular cases will make this professional support group a source of personal enhancement. The group will be limited to 7-10 women with its initial meeting on Monday, April 11, 4-5:30pm at WATER.



Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual
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