



waterwheel

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

Editorial

A new study by the Pew Research Center proclaims "Religion is a strong and growing force in the way Americans think about politics." Election years are soul-stirring. The odds-on favorite can be the loser the day after the polls close. Prayer aside, the best person does not always win the office. But everyone wins if everyone votes. Consider it part of your spiritual practice. Take a friend to the polls. Heavens, make a ritual out of it if that will help! Just vote.

The United States continues to have one of the lowest voter participation records in the world, a painful irony when this country continues to have disproportionate influence around the globe. Young women need special encouragement to join in the political process. They see few people involved who look like them, especially if they are women of color. Hence, their participation is especially lacking and especially important, since the habit of voting is set early.

One day we will undoubtedly be able to vote on-line. But for now, the message is clear, bi/tri-partisan and urgent: get out and vote. Every vote counts. Trite, for sure, but just as true.

This Fall the results will reflect religious values as never before. If the vaunted separation between church and state is as precarious as reported, at least we can see to it that democratic, participatory, egalitarian values inform both. That is WATER's commitment.



Whither the Common Good?

by Mary E. Hunt

Let's cut to the chase. What seems to distinguish our time from earlier ones is a singular loss of the notion of the common good. The me-generation, the bottom line, and concerns for personal safety seem to have eclipsed any notion that when it comes to this boat called life, we are all in it together. I might consider the topic too myopic for this forum, a newsletter with international circulation, if it were not the case that such home-grown US cultural mores are exported like Coca Cola around the world.

Results are disastrous, especially for women with dependent children. Witness: welfare repeal, increased salary differentials between managers and workers, and the growing gap between those with investments and those without, those who cruise the information superhighway at will and those who don't have bus fare. How did we get here and how can we use feminist religious resources to recoup social concern and repair the grievous damage to the social fabric? Seeking the answers may prove fruitless, but it strikes

the factors are more complicated, but in broad outline this is a recognizable if regrettable encapsulation of US history.

Fear of communism was later so deeply ingrained in a generation that anything "communal" was suspect. From '60's communes to the common cold, virtually any notion that together we could be more than the sum of our parts was verboten. In the post-World War I and II periods, following years of a certain formula for success, we tried to dress in unique styles to counter the uniforms of old. We decorated our apartments and houses with ever more unique objects, making fashion statements as we went. Money talked. Cars became a way of saying who we are instead of how we get from point A to point B. Madison Avenue knew enough to emphasize the individual, tailoring countless consumer products to the whims of those who could buy. Buy they did, but not without a social calculus. Prices were dear for the common good.

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me as the centerpiece of the agenda for the next century for which an early start will not be lost.

Where has the common good gone? Founding government documents were infused with it. Though those who joined the indigenous people here centuries ago did so to escape religious persecution, they brought with them a sense of common purpose. The inevitable growth was held together by rhetoric and structures that took "for all" and "all men" seriously, until it came to people of color and women; later, people of diverse lifestyles; now, all who cannot pay their own way. The rhetoric thinned and the structures cracked as those who held sway in this kyriarchy,* both civil and ecclesial, perceived the implications of a common good in which their well being was not all that mattered. Of course

Yet it was a sense of the common good that fueled efforts to provide for everyone out of such plenty. More charity than justice, for sure, but from the Depression to the student movements, from civil rights struggles to anti-war efforts there was a commitment to the whole. Then the so-called safety net for those who could not buy began to unravel. It started with the Reagan-Bush trickle-down, smaller-government approach that made a virtue of individuality, baptized it the American way and called on the forefathers to bless it for the next century.

Propounders convinced the better part of a nation that what progressive economists rightly understood as a shrinking global pie was rather a redistribution in their favor, simply their due
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ISSN 0898-6606

Vol. 9, No. 3, Fall 1996

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Graphic Artists: Acknowledged when known, and always appreciated.

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, 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 forego 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 someone 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 \$10 per tape.

...Common Good?

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for hard work, creativity and good luck. Talk of the common good, concern for all of us rather than some of us, went the way of grandmother's hoop skirts. Like our foremothers who had little to say in the matter, we are the ones expected to hold it all together.

Some middle stratum people did not miss concern for the common good until they began to feel the pinch - a spouse out of work, children needing college money, health insurance hard to get because of a pre-existing condition. By then, it was too late for many of them because even the solutions to such problems were made to seem individual: how can she get a job, maybe he'll get a scholarship, the insurance came through albeit at an exorbitant premium. In fact, such episodic treatment of problems is typical. It deflects attention from the bigger picture, where the common good, the right to work, the right to higher education and health care are couched as privileges for those who are fortunate.

Even efforts at social change became piecemeal. Each marginalized group was shoe-boxed into its own movement: women, African Americans, environmentalists, lesbian/ gay/ bisexual/ transgendered people all working feverishly for their rights with no one picking out the common

too high a price to pay. It may be too late to reassert this language set, or there may be a better one that awaits discovery. But for the moment, with the presidential elections looming and the vicious results of the last Congress evident in a deeply rent social fabric, I propose some resources from feminist religious work that may help. **In extremis** anything is possible, and we are in an extremely precarious situation, especially those of us who are poor, mentally and physically ill, old, unwillingly pregnant or otherwise discarded by a society which would let so many shift for themselves in the name of freedom.

While we who work in religion as feminists exhibit some of the same splintering along race/class/national/religious and other lines, I think we are in general agreement about three basics. First, we understand that however partial, limited and contextual our individual works may be, we are all approaching a common problem. That problem is the hegemony of attitudes, structures and practices which are founded on the notion that some people **deserve** more than others, rather than that the goods of this earth are meant to be shared. Ok, that is a bald assertion and needs discussion. But at base it is this fundamental premise of kyriarchy that we reject as *mujeristas*, feminists, womanists, whatever name we use.

Second, the resources of religion are not trivial

Religious feminists share the notion that the common good is finally not a political term but a religious one.

threads and weaving them all together into something capable of keeping out the cold chill of sheer individualism. Political parties missed the boat here; Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition got as close as anyone but they were hijacked by racism and thwarted by internal pressures. Third parties tended to build on special interests again; a proposed women's party just never got going.

Religions, the traditional loci of such concerns, were, sad to say, not much help. Most of them by mid-century had bought the corporate model. Father/minister/rabbi was the CEO; bigger was better, so growth and numbers took on real significance. The message had to be tailored to fit the cultural ethos in order to be understood. No sin that, but perhaps it contributed, albeit unwittingly, to the increased social fragmentation. Now some corporations are hiring their own clergy to work on factory floors and lines. I shudder to think of the theology of it all.

Few values are held in common any longer. While individual freedom has its own merits, the erasure of the common good is, I believe,

in the equation, indeed they are crucial. Religious feminists share the notion that the common good is finally not a political term but a religious one. That is, it is not a term primarily "concerned with the government or state." Rather, it is a religious term which compels us "to bind together" because we are part of one creation.

Religious messages which promote structures and practices of lordship, which suggest that some are saved and others lost, which exacerbate instead of celebrate difference, which judge and label as divine will people's misfortunes, are part of the apparatus necessary to dismantle the common good. Obviously they work, as the rise of right-wing Christianity and its ecumenical equivalents parallels the disintegration of the social fabric. Our shared hope, articulated variously, is that new language about the divine, inclusive models for theological and ethical reflection, revised roles for religious professionals without exalted status all contribute to the restitching of the common good.

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Feminist Pilgrimage

by Mary E. Hunt

Third, religious womanists have prioritized survival of women and dependent children as the litmus test of a good society. This insight is now normative among us. Proof of the evaporation of the common good is shown on the faces of the children of immigrants whose schooling and health care lie in the balance. Crack-exposed babies may not survive. It is not simply for children that we labor, but **because of** children that the intensity of our work has heightened.

Theological and ethical ideas, worship innovations and polity discussions all beg: What impact will this have on children? How can we explain it or dance it or paint it or write it so they will understand that they and **all** of their peers have the human right to live fully as part of an abundant creation?

The common good ahead begins with the survival of the children on the bottom of kyriarchy as a first step toward reorganizing society. Then in a generation or two, I predict, the repair to the common good will astonish even the most skeptical. Contrast this with today's fragmented common good and the choice seems obvious.

*Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza coined this illustrative word meaning "the rule of the emperor/master /lord/ father/ husband over his subordinates." Cf. her **Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet**, p. 14.

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

Study Questions

1. What aspect of the common good do you miss?
2. How is your community helping to remake the common good?

Georgia Harkness pioneered theology as a woman in Methodist and ecumenical circles before I was born. So when I saw that a summer excursion to the Adirondacks would take Diann Neu and me near Harkness, NY, I could not resist the temptation to make a feminist pilgrimage. It was a bit of a bus driver's holiday, but after all, Dr. Harkness wrote dozens of books, taught at several universities and retired in Claremont, CA, after a distinguished career at a time when women were far less welcome in theological circles than we are today. Rosemary Radford Ruether holds a chair named for Professor Harkness at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary in Illinois. If ever I would go on pilgrimage, this was the time. Besides, it was a gorgeous sunny day and the back roads beckoned.

Maps can be deceptive. Harkness looked to be right ahead. Per usual, it was hard to get there from here, even harder on country lanes not on the map. A local antique dealer we consulted was sure we were going to "the shrine." I was not aware that Methodists built shrines, so I assured him that we simply wanted to see the small Methodist church in Harkness, NY. He acted puzzled, undoubtedly having driven by it for decades, unaware of its place in the hearts of religious feminists. Seems the local Catholics have a shrine to Elizabeth Seton or the like, and we must have looked the part. No, I insisted, it was the Methodist church, having seen a picture of it in Rosemary Skinner Keller's fine biography, **Georgia Harkness: For Such A Time As This** (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992).

Many twists and turns later, we found the two roads that cross and are labeled Harkness, NY.

There stood the church, just like its photo: small, white and quite alone. Instantly, as if by grand design, a woman about my age bounded from the only house in sight. Did we want to enter the sanctuary, she asked, knowing without question that we were there to honor Georgia Harkness. The surprise and enthusiasm evident on our faces said it all.

Behind the dozen pews a glass bookcase displayed a familiar picture of Dr. Harkness on top, her various volumes inside. Up front rose the pulpit where she preached when she came home. The rest of the church was standard Methodist issue, plenty but not too many decorations, hymnals and Bibles, bulletins and flowers.

Our impromptu guide recalled her own childhood memories of hearing Dr. Harkness' sermons and realizing that this sometime visitor was part of the community yet beyond it. Graciously, our guide offered a tour of the rambling homestead where Harkness relatives still live. Then she took us to the cemetery where we paid our respects at the grave, so lovingly tended by our hostess' mother. Georgia Harkness is home, in Harkness and in the world.

Before we bid adieu we met several members of our guide's family who had run a store in their home for many years. The mother, now widowed, lives alone. Between thank you's, we tried to convey our respect for Georgia Harkness, this homegrown woman who led the way for us and so many religious feminists. They were pleased to hear of her impact, the many people of my generation and beyond who take inspiration from her efforts. But I had the impression that they already knew it. For once it seemed a prophet was valued in her own land.

In Memory of Her

From Alexandra Guliano, Milwaukee WI:

In memory of Sherri Daul, a close friend and minister. She stood for the cause of women and had a special ministry to youth. She will be greatly missed by many, but especially her partner, Roseann Geiser.

From Sister Miriam Bauerlin, Marlow Heights, MD:

To remember the 60th wedding anniversary of Gertrude and Alvin Morgenstern of Washington, DC.

You, too, can honor someone dear to you through a special gift to WATER. Just fill out the following, and send it with your contribution to the In Memory of Her Fund. Don't forget - words of praise and remembrance mean a lot to the living, too!

My name:

Address:

I wish to honor:

Address (if living):

My tribute as I would like it to appear in WATERwheel (no more than 40 words):

Please send additional copies of my tribute after it appears to:

Please publish my tribute, but don't mention my name. ____

No published tribute, thanks, but here's my special contribution. ____



The time November 25-December 10 marks 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence which is part of the Global Campaign for Women's Human Rights. Women and girls of all ages, classes, religions and cultures are at risk from sexual violence, harassment and abuse in the street, at work, at home and in churches, synagogues and mosques. Such violence has profound, long-term effects on the self-esteem of women and girls.

This ritual was first created and celebrated in London with a group of women who gathered for a weekend workshop on violence against women. It has been adapted many times since. Use it as a model for the one you and your group need to mark your commitment to women's human rights.

Preparation

Form a circle of chairs, one for each participant, around a circular table. Place on this altar a mound of scarves, one for each participant. On the floor near the table place four containers (shells or bowls) filled with oil.

Call to Gather

(One woman begins:)

Let us gather with women, men and children around the world to mark November 25 to December 10 as 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. Let us gather to remember all victims and survivors of violence, especially those who are women and children. Let us gather to recognize that violence against women is a human rights violation and must be stopped.

November 25 is International Day Against Violence Against Women, declared by the first Feminist Encuentro for Latin America and the Caribbean in 1981 (Bogota, Columbia). The day commemorates the Mirabel sisters, who were brutally murdered by the Trujillo dictatorship in the Dominican Republic in 1960. December 1 is World AIDS Day. December 2 marks the anniversary of four women martyrs of El Salvador: Ita Ford, Maura Clark, Dorothy Kazel, Jean Donovan. December 6 is the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre, when 14 women were murdered for being "feminists." December 10 marks the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed in 1948.

We gather with women, men and children around the world and commit ourselves to sixteen days and a lifetime struggle of saying "No!" to violence against women.

Prayer

Let us pray. Please respond to each invocation saying: "be with us now and always."

One: Compassionate One, you who feel our pain and cry with us in our anguish,

All: be with us now and always.

Two: Just One, you who rage with us against the injustices we experience,

All: be with us now and always.

Three: Loving One, you who shout with us "No!"

to violence in all its forms,

All: be with us now and always.

Break the Silence

(One woman walks to the altar, picks up a scarf, ties a knot in it, raises it high over her head, and shouts:) No! No! No!

(Another does the same:) No! No! No!

(And another:) No! No! No!

One: We are angry.

Two: We will not be reasonable any longer.

Three: We are breaking the silence.

One: We are screaming No! to violence.

Two: We are shouting No! to harassment.

Three: We are crying No! to abuse.

One: No! No! No!

Two: In churches, synagogues, mosques, ashrams, sweatlodes, meeting places.

Three: No! No! No!

One: In the streets, at work, at home.

Two: Think of the anger and pain you experience from violence. *(Pause)* Take a scarf and tie a knot in it to symbolize your "no" to violence. *(Pause)*

Three: We must be angry and scream "No! No! No!" to the violence women and girls experience. To each violent act you hear, shout out "No! No! No!" Let's stand. Raise your scarf high over your head.

One: To the men who harass women walking down the street,

All: No! No! No!

Two: To fathers, brothers, grandfathers and uncles who sexually abuse girl-children,

All: No! No! No!

Three: To husbands, lovers and partners who batter and rape their partners,

All: No! No! No!

One: To college men who rape women they date,

All: No! No! No!

Two: To women who abuse their female lovers or partners,

All: No! No! No!

Three: To the exploitation of women and children by pornography,

All: No! No! No!

One: To the forced prostitution of young women and men,

All: No! No! No!

Two: To religion that has been used to abuse women and legitimate violence,

All: No! No! No!

Three: To whom and what else do we say no? Tell us and we will shout,

All: No! No! No!

A Poem: "Come Gently to This Woman," by Fiona Wynne, c1992. Reprinted with permission.

Come gently to this woman's sorrow

Break the Silence

by Diann L. Neu

for a love ill sprung
young and fresh in springtime
but bleak now like the winter
she always knew would come
She has lost something of herself
never to be reclaimed
and there are spaces
where pain rings hollow
eerie like empty houses where memories still dwell

Come gently to this woman's anger
for the trust that is lost
Questions kneaded in her like dough
and her spirit whispering defiance
like yeast in bread that is rising
She feels a stranger to this passion uncontainable
A stranger to herself

Come gently to this woman's fear
for her heart that seems locked
behind a door with no key
She is the victim of a love
she let swallow her whole
But she did not die
Did not die
And this her Easter mystery may be
that after winter returns the spring

Commitment to Solidarity

(One woman begins to tie her scarf to the scarves of the people on either side of her. She motions for all to do the same. When the scarves have all been linked together, she puts her portion of the ring of scarves around her shoulders, motions for others to do the same, and begins singing:)

Song: "Singing For Our Lives," by Holly Near, c. 1979 Hereford Music, an adaptation.

We are a gentle, angry people
And we are singing, singing for our lives (2x)
We are shedding tears together
And we are crying, crying for our lives (2x)
We are women breaking silence
And we are shouting, shouting for our lives (2x)
We are women claiming power
And we are uniting, uniting for our lives (2x)

Global Solidarity

(One person declares:)

A Reading of the **International Actions to End Violence Against Women.**

The recognition of violence against women as a human rights violation, and the implementation of legal and policy measures to further enforce this recognition, have been pivotal goals of the international movement for women's human rights.



Since the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993), women have used the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994), the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen (1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), as arenas to gain visibility for abuses of women's human rights.

Efforts around the world to advance women's human rights have secured many concrete gains:

- the acknowledgement in the **Vienna Declaration** that violence against women is a violation of human rights, whether perpetrated by public or private actors (June 1993);

- the adoption of a **UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women** (December 1993);

- the adoption of the **International Conference on Population and Development** in Cairo, the **InterAmerican Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women** (April 1994);

- the recognition in the **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** of the obligation of governments to pursue and punish perpetrators of rape and sexual violence against women and girls in situations of armed conflict as a war crime (September 1995).

Call to Commitment

It is our job as a community to see that all women and girls are safe from violence. We must call for an end to violence against women and girls.

What are you and your community doing to break the silence about violence against women? How are you making the world safe from violence against women?

Take a moment to make one commitment to end violence against women. *(Pause)* Let us share our commitments. *(Sharing)*

Now, let us make our commitment happen. Then we can all go home safely and a lot of prayers will be answered.

Blessing with Oil

(Four blessers walk to the center, pick up containers of oil, and stand at the four directions of the room, saying together:)

In solidarity with women and girls around the world, we call upon our Sisters of the North, East, South and West to bless and heal us.

One: Blessed are you, Enduring Spirit of the North, for soothing us with oil when cold winds chill us to the bone.

Two: Blessed are you, Comforting Sister of the East, for refreshing us with oil when we need strength to renew our lives.

Three: Blessed are you, Gentle Wisdom of the South, for warming us with oil and caressing us with cool breezes.

Four: Blessed are you, Healing Power of the West, for easing our hurts and bruises with oil when we need to keep open to life's changes.

Anointing with Oil

One: Come,

Two: Receive this oil.

Three: Reclaim your healing powers

Four: For yourself and for others.

(The four blessers anoint each woman as is appropriate for her healing: face, hands, feet, heart, head.)

Chant and Spiral Dance: "The River Is Flowing," traditional.

The river is flowing, flowing and growing,
The river is flowing, down to the sea.

Mother Earth carry me,
your child I will always be
Mother Earth carry me, down to the sea.

Interfaith Prayer from the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

Let us stand and pray together:

We gather in sorrow as we recall so many women among us who have suffered rape, battering, harassment and abuse.

We gather in anger that these things continue with no end in sight.

We gather in hope that our commitment and our actions will matter.

We come acknowledging that we have not always heard, we have not always acted; sometimes we have turned away rather than stand beside a woman who has been victimized.

Hear the cries of those who have been harmed, O God. We are here today and in every religious assembly throughout our land. Call to account those who have caused harm. Rebuke their careless and exploitative acts. Help us to teach them a better way.

Enlighten those who are called upon to help - judges, police officers, doctors, clergy, legislators, therapists and others - so that their decisions and actions will bring forth justice and healing.

Send us forth as witnesses, renewed in our commitment to stand in solidarity with every woman who has been harmed by abuse and violence, encouraged in our efforts to comfort the afflicted and confront the assailants, and emboldened to speak out in our own communities so that silence may no more mask the injustice of violence against women.

We pray for God's love and justice to heal our hurt and to bring us to that day when women no longer live with fear in their homes, their workplaces, their religious assemblies, or their communities. Amen.

Sending Forth

Let us go forth in peace
To bless and change the world.

Song: "Blessing Song" from **WomanSong** by

Miriam Therese Winter, c 1987.

May the blessing of God go before you.

May Her grace and peace abound.

May Her Spirit live within you.

May Her love wrap you 'round.

May Her blessing remain with you always.

May you walk on holy ground.

Greeting of Peace

Let us greet one another with the strength of peace.

Diann L. Neu, M.Div., MSW, feminist liturgist and therapist, is co-director of WATER.

Richard's Almanac

by Richard Russell

Being the first man to intern at WATER was a proud and blessed privilege for me this summer. How invigorating to find a place to enact and embody the principles of feminist theologies I studied in seminary, to find a home that always gives first place to the struggles against injustice and inequality in churches and in the world at large. It was a challenging opportunity to attend to the urgent need to find financial resources for this kind of work and to learn about various strategies for funding a small, religion-focused non-profit organization. And spending time in the WATER offices proved to be its own enormous reward. Our lunchtime gatherings were, for me, the best of feminist theology *in practice*; they are church.

Such privilege has its responsibilities, too: to help develop the resources of WATER so they can be available to all.

I finished my time here with a wish list for WATER: first, an equipment upgrade. Second, and even more compelling, an outpouring of support to make WATER's intern and visiting scholar programs increasingly diverse and affordable to all.

My sojourn at WATER passed too speedily — a sure sign both that I was happy to be here and that there is much work to be done.

Creative Giving

Innovative ways of giving can enrich both donor and receiver. WATER has been blessed recently with several such offerings from imaginative contributors.

One generous gift-giving idea capitalizes on making most effective use of extra resources. From a retired couple with private means comes an endearingly precise amount — a Social Security check for one month — as a way of sharing this family's extra bounty. "Your organization doesn't fall into the usual category of people we normally send this check to," the accompanying note advises, "but when I think of the patriarchal structures which make up our society I think your group of prophetic women deserves a little help."

From overseas comes a similar windfall. "As I had a pleasant financial surprise because of remittance of taxes," explains the donor, "I preferred to share this advantage with you...I always follow your circular letter and admire your commitment and creativity."

Would you care to share your wealth — of funds or funding ideas — in innovative ways? WATER welcomes word from you.



1996 Fall Programs at WATER

Feminist Liturgy Group

Thursdays, 6:30-8 pm; October 10, November 14, December 12

Liturgist: Diann L. Neu, MSW, M.Div., STM

The group meets for inclusive rituals from a feminist perspective. All welcome. Donation \$10+/-

Feminist Spirituality Group

Wednesdays, 6:45-8:15 pm; Oct. 2, 16, 30, Nov. 6, 20, Dec. 4, 11

Facilitator: Diann L. Neu

The harvest season is a good time to pay attention to spiritual life. This group for women will address prayer, integrating spirituality/sexuality, inheriting a spiritual legacy, relationships, images of God/Goddess/Sophia, and relating to religious traditions. Group limited to 8 women who will attend all 7 meetings. Donation \$35+/- per person, per session. Fee may be reimbursable by insurance. To reserve a place, call Diann.

Feminist Theology Class

Wednesdays, 6:30-8 pm; October 9, 23, November 13, 27, December 11

Professor: Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D.

Designed for a dozen women who want a serious and seasoned introduction to a burgeoning field, this class responds to a need we hear often for a basic introduction. We will read important works in the field, get acquainted with journals, and lay the foundation for future courses in womanist and mujerista theologies, feminist ethics and scripture. \$125 tuition. To reserve a place, call Mary.

Feminist Ministry Workshops

Thursdays at tea time, 4:30-6 pm; October 3, 10, 17, 31

Professor: Mary E. Hunt

The demands of ministry in a parish or institutional setting prevent many ministers from bringing feminist ideas, perspectives and practices to bear. This series is intended to help people do just that by offering both theoretical materials and practical strategies on four focused areas of ministry. It is intended not only for parish ministers, but for all who seek to minister in new ways. Join us for a cup of tea and a stimulating time. Tuition: \$100; \$30/session. To reserve a place, call Mary by the Tuesday before each session.

Oct. 3: What distinguishes **feminist ministry** from other styles, and how can we develop our ministries accordingly?

Oct. 10: New **feminist** resources in **pastoral counseling** will be reviewed, and cases will be evaluated in feminist terms

Oct. 17: **Feminist preaching** seems a contradiction in terms for some, but join this discussion to look at what makes a feminist sermon and how to deliver one

Oct. 31: How to be a **feminist minister** in a kyriarchal church without being considered a witch is today's timely topic

Celebrate the publication of the *Dictionary of Feminist Theologies*

Wednesday, 5-6:30 pm; November 6

Join local contributors Kelly Brown Douglas, Associate Professor, Howard University; Mary E. Hunt, co-director, WATER; Sharon Ringe, Professor, Wesley Theological Seminary; Gail Unterberger, Pastoral Psychotherapist; Katharina von Kellenbach, Assistant Professor, St. Mary's College. Copies of the **Dictionary** will be available at the party for a discount! RSVP by Nov. 1.

Girls' Spirituality Group

Mondays, 5-6:30pm; Nov. 4, 11, 18, 25, Dec. 2, 9

Facilitators: Ann E. Gordon and Diann L. Neu

This weekly spirituality group for girls aged 10-12 will focus on creating rituals related to the challenges of pre-adolescence such as self-confidence, the self-in-relationship, gender issues, and healthy body image. Group open to 6-8 girls. Call Ann or Diann to reserve a place: 301-589-2509.

Adams, Carol J. and Josephine Donovan, editors. **BEYOND ANIMAL RIGHTS: A FEMINIST CARING ETHIC FOR THE TREATMENT OF ANIMALS.** New York: Continuum, 1996 (216 pages, \$24.95).

Leaving animal rights and welfare arguments to liberals, this collection of essays proposes how care can work for animals' well being and for humans' integrity.

Berlet, Chip. **EYES RIGHT: CHALLENGING THE RIGHT WING BACKLASH.** Boston: South End Press, 1995 (398 pages, \$17).

Timely and tough, inclusive and interdisciplinary, ideal for study action groups.

Berneking, Nancy J. and Pamela Carter Joern. **RE-MEMBERING AND RE-IMAGINING.** Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1995 (246 pages, \$15.95).

The conference was so distorted in the media that this book provides a much needed antidote. Commentators such as Jeanette Stokes, Janet Kalven, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Mary E. Hunt, Kittredge Cherry and dozens more prove that the conference made a positive difference.

Cannon, Katie Geneva. **KATIE'S CANON: WOMANISM AND THE SOUL OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY.** New York: Continuum, 1995 (191 pages, \$19.95).

Dr. Cannon covers a great deal of ground: theology, biblical studies, family history, major figures in her community, literature and ethics in a text as rich as the fabric displayed on the cover.

Duck, Ruth C. **FINDING WORDS FOR WORSHIP: A GUIDE FOR LEADERS.** Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995 (147 pages, \$16.99).

A much-needed resource that shows how to do the hard work of "getting inclusive" in church.

Graff, Ann O'Hara, editor. **IN THE EMBRACE OF GOD: FEMINIST APPROACHES TO THEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY.** Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995 (234 pages, \$19).

A primer on feminist theology which will be very useful for introductory classes and those seeking to understand the groundings of an exciting field.

Grigg, Richard. **WHEN GOD BECOMES GODDESS: THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN RELIGION.** New York: Continuum, 1995 (155 pages, \$22.95).

A challenging approach to whether and how theism can survive in a postmodern culture. Feminist theologies to the rescue.

Hinsdale, Mary Ann and Phyllis H. Kaminski. **WOMEN AND THEOLOGY: THE ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE COLLEGE THEOLOGY SOCIETY, Vol. 40.** Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995 (274 pages, \$20).

Resources

Some contemporary Catholic womanist/feminist/mujerista work that will provide a useful introduction as a college text.

May, Melanie. **A BODY KNOWS: A THEOPOETICS OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION.** New York: Continuum, 1995 (131 pages, \$17.95).

A disturbing story of one woman's struggle for health turned into a courageous faith.

Ormerod, Neil and Thea. **WHEN MINISTERS SIN: SEXUAL ABUSE IN THE CHURCHES.** Cincinnati, OH: Seven Hills Books, 1995 (178 pages, \$12.95).

This difficult problem needs tough, thoughtful and just treatment. This book proposes it in a useful way.

Procter-Smith, Marjorie. **PRAYING WITH OUR EYES OPEN: ENGENDERING FEMINIST LITURGICAL PRAYER.** Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995 (176 pages, \$10.95).

An innovative approach to the problem of prayer: "Given women's dangerous knowledge of violence and abuse and oppression, what forms of prayer are possible, what forms are necessary?"

Pui-lan, Kwok. **DISCOVERING THE BIBLE IN THE NON-BIBLICAL WORLD.** Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995 (136 pages, \$17).

A wonderfully creative approach to the question, "What price have you paid in your study of the Bible?" as well as a clear outline of the central critical questions for biblical studies.

Riley, Dorothy Winbush. **THE COMPLETE KWANZA: CELEBRATING OUR HARVEST.** New York: HarperCollins, 1995 (387 pages, \$23).

A valuable resource book on a new and increasingly popular celebration. Literally soup to nuts (recipes and all) on the week of celebration and what it means all year long.

Rosoff, Ilene, editor. **THE WOMAN SOURCE CATALOGUE AND REVIEW: TOOLS FOR CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY OF WOMEN.** Berkeley: Celestial Arts, 1995 (490 pages, \$19.95).

A remarkable compendium of information which ought to be in every library; wide-ranging materials in spirituality and religion.

Sullivan, Mary C. **CATHERINE MCAULEY AND THE TRADITION OF MERCY.** Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1995 (420 pages, \$32.95).

A new look at the foundress of a large religious community. Such careful work helps fill in the blanks in women's history.

Whittier, Nancy. **FEMINIST GENERATION: THE PERSISTENCE OF THE RADICAL WOMEN'S MOVEMENT.** Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995 (309 pages, \$18.95).

A wonderful antidote to feminist backlash literature. Well argued, focused on Ohio and not the usual hotbeds, a convincing and encouraging approach.

Wilson, Nancy. **OUR TRIBE: QUEER FOLKS, GOD, JESUS AND THE BIBLE.** New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995 (292 pages, \$15).

A clarion call for sabbath time to think about what we will pass on to the next generation. Nancy includes insightful stories about the ecumenical "tribe" growing up.

In Spanish

Ress, Mary Judith, Ute Steibert-Cuadra and Lene Sjørup. **DEL CIELO A LA TIERRA: UNA ANTOLOGIA DE TEOLOGIA FEMINISTA.** Santiago, Chile: Sello Azul, Editorial de Mujeres (Casilla 291-12, La Reina, Santiago), 1994 (540 pages, \$12 plus \$8 postage).

A wonderful collection of basic writings by feminist theologians such as Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary Daly, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Mary Hunt and others.

Videos

EVE'S DAUGHTERS. Leonardo's Children, Inc., 26 Newport Bridge Road, Warwick, NY 10990 (27 minutes, \$32.35).

Euro-American Christian lesbian women in California reflect on their experiences and their hopes. A talented and committed resource pool that churches would do well to notice.

M.F.K. FISHER: WRITER WITH A BITE.

A delicious introduction to a notable writer, or a long cup of tea with an old friend, depending on where one is with relation to a foremost food writer of the Twentieth Century. Available from Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, Suite 506, New York, NY 10019.

THE PRESENCE OF THE GODDESS. Balcorman Films, 202 Meda Lane, Mill Valley, CA 94941 (\$39.95 plus \$5 shipping).

A lovely introduction to goddess religions, narrated by Isabel Allende and featuring archeological and historical materials.

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Order your free catalog of books and music about women, theology, spirituality, creativity, and more. Words & Spirit, 1202 Watts Street, Durham NC 27701, 919-683-1236, stokesnet@aol.com

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Projects in Progress

WATER projects perk along, thanks to creativity, participation and funding. Among the vital ones this season are:

A Shared Garden

Latin American women and a few from the north will gather in Santiago, Chile, for a two-week seminar (January 27-February 8, 1997) on "Beyond Violence: Solidarity and Ecofeminism." Representatives of the many groups with which we have worked in Latin America are making plans to join WATER staff, Con-spirando staff and Brazilian colleagues including Ivone Gebara for the event.

There are spaces for several North Americans, so contact WATER immediately if you would like to participate. Cost is \$200 plus travel, housing and food. A bit of scholarship help is available. Working language will be Spanish.

The US component of the program is planned for June 16-27, 1997, at WATER. After evaluating the January program, we will concretize the schedule. We expect to bring together a similar group, this time mostly North Americans connected with organizations with which we col-

laborate, with a few Latin American colleagues as well. The same teaching team plus other US colleagues will deal with the subject of religion and violence. Contact WATER for an application form.

Global Network of Feminist Liberation Theologians and Ministers

Response to our invitation has been heartening. More than 150 women are now on the list. The Network is already in touch with at least five other such groups around the world so it is clear that the need we identified is pressing.

Funding requests have gone to several groups for seed monies to get this project up and rolling. By spring, 1997, we intend to have a functioning e-mail list as well as some plans for a working meeting. Your suggestions are welcome. We do not intend to duplicate anyone else's efforts, but to make this a resource for support, education and theo-political work for justice.

Girls' Spirituality Group

A long-awaited group comes into Be-ing at

WATER this fall. A weekly spirituality group for girls aged 10 through 12 will begin in November and run weekly through mid-December. Its purpose is to encourage and empower girls to create and utilize rituals, stories and symbols which will help them cope in a healthy way with the many challenges facing them as they move into adolescence. These challenges include loss of self-confidence and self-trust, gender conflicts, peer pressure to conform, under-achievement, negative body image and the cultural emphasis on physical appearance.

The group will be facilitated by Ann E. Gordon and Diann L. Neu. Ann, a clergywoman in The United Methodist Church serving a local church in Baltimore City, is a Visiting Scholar at WATER and will be the first to receive continuing education credits through WATER. She has a strong interest in developing age-appropriate worship rituals for girl children. Diann, co-founder and co-director of WATER, specializes in spirituality group formation and liturgical development. To reserve a place in the group, call Ann or Diann: 301-589-2509.



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