



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

Editorial

Globalization keeps coming up as a prime topic of conversation among progressives in religion. Most of the time we bemoan it as one more way in which the gap grows between rich and poor, on-line and off-line. In many instances (for example, Nike, or substitute your favorite transnational) it means companies that have budgets larger than some developing countries. It usually cashes out, literally, to fewer people making more decisions for most of us. Neo-liberal economic policies that give globalization such stark definition require careful feminist theological exploration and critique. There must be better ways.

At the same time, our work becomes more and more global. We take advantage of air travel, e-mail and faxes, Web pages and an increasingly globalized mindset to carry out our mission. What is the difference?

Maybe we fool ourselves to think there is a difference. But as the Alliance grows, we find ourselves learning more and more about particular situations and cultures in which feminists do their work. That knowledge, and the relationships we build with colleagues around the world, change us, modify our methods, invite reconsideration of our long-held ideas.

They force us beyond the hegemonic use of English to the study of other languages, to budgeting for translation in meetings, to hearing each one not only into speech as feminist theological pioneer Nelle Morton would have it, but to speech in her own tongue as far as possible.

We learned this in our Shared Garden program this summer when thirty-five women from fourteen countries gathered for ten days of work to move "Beyond Violence" (see our upcoming Fall 1997 **WATERwheel** for details).

We also learned that such a program limited to "the Americas" was simply geographically too confining. Migration and work patterns are such that we were pleased to welcome a Chilean who has lived in Australia for two decades and an Irish woman who has been in Zambia for ten years. Justice-seekers know no bounds, a necessary aspect of globalization.

Pluralism, Oh Pluralism

by Mary E. Hunt

Fifteen years ago, when WATER began, we called it an ecumenical organization. In the 1980's, "ecumenical," meaning "of or from the whole world," was a common way of talking about groups, movements, theologies that included various Christian denominations in conversation with one another. We took seriously the importance of Jewish work as well, though with far less knowledge. But beyond that we did not think.

Times have changed, and we with them. Transformations in the religious landscape both in the U.S. and throughout the world at the end of this century invite a wholesale rethinking of our work. Here is an attempt to prod that process along among religious feminists.

Many feminist religious groups are undergoing this process, or, if they have not yet begun it, the time is ripe. Otherwise, we will find ourselves in the unhelpful position of looking, as feminists, at a world smaller than it really is. We risk becoming anachronistic, focused on one

Stuart conjectured that one reason why Sri Lankan Catholic priest/theologian Tissa Balasuriya was excommunicated is that the Vatican realized that his work raises the simple question of whether Catholicism, indeed Christianity, makes any sense in Eastern as opposed to Western categories. With this sort of reaction, it appears that women with seemingly less investment in the turf wars and business aspects of religions will have to lead the way.

Religious pluralism is a result of several factors - among them, a globalized economy and a proliferation of religious options, since capitalism makes ever more choices, regardless of quality, one of its hallmarks. In the U.S., what used to be a three-religion society - Protestant, Catholic and Jewish - is now a multi-religious country. There are more than 2,000 religious groups here, according to J. Gordon Melton, who directs the Institute for the Study of American Religion in California. Quantity alone is a measure of very little, but choice and the freedom to

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or two traditions but blissfully ignorant of the rest, and therefore out of touch with the needs and possibilities of many women.

Given that the macro-ecumenical movement is not making giant strides, our efforts are even more necessary. Indeed, one reason the movement is not thriving is that "ecumenism" among Christians has been reduced in many settings to Protestants speaking with one another, or to a few Catholics addressing Orthodox concerns, or, worse, to an occasional worship service with some borrowed prayers. Since when is "the whole world" Christian or even in touch with Christian ways of thinking? Who defined the parameters so narrowly as to keep the conversation under control? English theologian Elizabeth

express it religiously are important dimensions of a participatory democracy.

Add to these options the varieties and refinements of various traditions that immigrants bring with them, and the range of choices is dizzying. Throw in the permutations from base communities to mega-churches, i.e., small groups vs. one-stop spiritual shopping, and the religious picture becomes even more complex. This phenomenon has some particularly U.S. dimensions to it, but it is a trend in other countries as well. My concern here is how it shapes our work as feminists.

Diana L. Eck, Professor of Comparative Religions and Indian Studies at Harvard University, (continued on page 2)

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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, retreats, counseling and liturgical planning which have helped thousands of people to be a part of an inclusive church and society.

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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.

Pluralism...

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directs an effort called the Pluralism Project. It is an effort to understand the phenomenon she describes as "World Religions in America." In a synthetic article entitled "Neighboring" (*Harvard Magazine*, September-October, 1996 pp. 38-44), she recalls her own shift from studying Indian religions in India in the 1970's to teaching the children of Indian immigrants in the U.S. in the 1990's.

The change was from going to a country in order to understand a tradition that is resident there, e.g., Hinduism in India, to staying at home and seeing how that faith takes root and is shaped in its new context by new adherents, e.g., Hindu students at formerly Protestant Harvard. In a country where, as she notes, "there are more Muslims than Presbyterians," feminist groups that focus on only one faith are soon to grow stale.

The challenge of "interreligiousness" is significant for feminists of all faiths. Many Christians feel we have our hands full dealing with problems within our own communities - deciding on ordination and styles of ministry and church, coping with racism and homo-hatred as they rear their ugly heads in our congregations. Others see religiously-related social change groups as charged with providing a safety net when government ignores the needs of people who are poor, and are willing to forgive some

the assumption that the Koran is implicitly sexist rather than interpreted in ways that are conducive to women's oppression. Just as Christian feminists disagree wildly over such matters in their circles, so, too, do Islamic women approach texts, practices and beliefs in a range of ways.

The point is to do this work cognizant of the diversity within faith traditions as well as among them, diversity that includes a range of ways to be feminist. Having done so, there is an intensification of the exchange which will lead, I trust, in the next century to a very different approach to feminist work, one which takes as axiomatic a more realistic, broadly based notion of ecumenism.

Pluralism requires not simply religious tolerance but "active seeking of understanding"

The religious tokenism that characterizes most contemporary ecumenical work done by predominantly Christian groups parallels the racial tokenism of most predominantly white groups. Just as white anti-racism education and action are at the top of most progressive groups' agendas, so, too, must active work to understand and incorporate religious difference be given primary attention. The ravages of anti-Semitism continue to erode whatever little progress we have made, and reckless charges of "fundamentalism"

The challenge of "interreligiousness" is significant for feminists of all faiths.

theological indicacies in order to keep up with the needs. But I think the next century will not offer such dubious luxuries as we become increasingly diverse and potentially more fragmented.

Diversity, Dr. Eck argues, is a given, but how do we achieve pluralism? Let me relate her three criteria to the work of feminists in religion:

Pluralism calls for "active engagement with that diversity"

We will need to rethink the whole basis of our work so as to incorporate ways to engage diverse traditions on their own terms. This will require a return to basics - respectful study of traditions about which many of us know very little. For example, if Islam is really eclipsing some Protestant churches in its reach in this culture, we at WATER will need to explore with Muslim women how they see the world, what they prioritize in terms of the "feministization" of their traditions.

Professor Riffat Hassan at the University of Louisville has begun this work by challenging

against all members of certain groups, rather than a considered analysis of the fundamentalistic potential in virtually all religious groups, are behaviors and strategies to eradicate.

Such work happens best over concrete issues. For example, the religious movements to prevent and overcome violence are increasingly interreligious. Likewise, gay/lesbian/bisexual and transgendered religious groups are finding common cause across religious lines with all of the time-consuming and patience-requiring actions necessary to accomplish such goals. These stand in sharp contrast to the implicitly Christian assumptions of the Promise Keepers, whose counsel to men to reclaim their "headship" reeks of the one-faith, one-country ways that predated even the three-religion context now so clearly outdated. In essence, the move toward pluralism is a way to embrace diversity in its many forms.

Pluralism is "an encounter of commitments... holding our deepest differences, even our re-

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... Oh Pluralism

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ligious differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another."

Such definitions are lovely, but the challenge of actualizing them, of breaking the isolation which is structured into everything from our ways of thinking to our places of worship, is staggering. Given how hard it is to do among people from the same faith tradition who are of different genders, different races, indeed different cultures, how much harder will it be to accomplish across those and other lines?

What is called for is nothing less than new ways to think, not simply new ideas, but whole new ways to think. For example, many people cannot imagine that their view and someone else's which is quite different can both be true and good. It is a stretch for many folks to think that people who do not express their faith by regular public worship but instead by private prayers, or indeed with no formal liturgical expression at all, are really religious. Likewise, when I do not understand all the ins and outs of a tradition, it is hard to trust that we are on the same wave length, the potential for corrupt, coopting schemes being what it is.

Again, the concrete actions help: coalitions of religious people favoring housing and health care for all; diverse groups dedicated to providing help for drug addicts and women with dependent children. Such actions by coalitions of justice-seekers I trust, and the nuances of religious motivations will come later.

Fifteen years from now the religious landscape is sure to have changed some more. But before we begin to think about how to link up with folks on Mars, we will be kept busy with the extraordinary opportunities that accrue to those who are privileged to live in a pluralistic time here on Earth.

Study Questions

1. How is your group ecumenical?
2. With which faith traditions other than your own are you familiar?
3. What are feminists saying in these traditions?
4. How can we train children in "inter-religious education"?

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

At WATER

Frances Reed, a sophomore at Smith College, is a summer intern at WATER. She brings a keen interest in religion and women's issues as well as well-honed computer skills and a willingness to pitch in and get the job done.

Holly Shapiro, of the Life Experiences Activities Program, is performing her on-the-job training at WATER this summer. She is well on the road to the paid work force.

Solveig Boasdottr, doctoral candidate at the University of Uppsala in Sweden, is at the WATER office finishing her dissertation on religion and violence. She finds the Resource Center and the company conducive to her work.

Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfus astonishes the WATER staff with her language abilities. At 20 months she is capable of "tea time," "Fax, Mommy," and "Solveig from Sweden." She insists that the staff hold hands and sing grace before lunch, something our more studied casual approach to religion never included before.



In Memory of Her

From Srs. Mary and Tecie, Blauvelt Dominicans, NY:

In celebrating her birthday on April 18, Sr. Arlene Flaherty, OP, asked that in lieu of personal gifts a donation be made to WATER. We honor her - and all women - as we do this, and express our gratitude for all that you at WATER do for all of us.

From Carol and Joe Scinto, Rockville, MD:

Aunt Carmela's 94th birthday on April 18 called for a gift as lively and enduring as her spirit, thus this, our contribution yet again to the Mother's Fund, in honor of Maria Carmela Gentile. We wish her many more good times to come.

From Loretta Whalen, Baltimore, MD:

In memory of my beloved recently deceased Dad on his birthday.

Cecilia's World

by Cindy Lapp

This morning I had corn flakes for breakfast while Cecilia had her customary oat cereal. There were a few tense moments when she thought that I should have Cheerios, too. We love each other, sit at the same table and live in the same house so we should both eat the same breakfast cereal? This was a relatively simple problem to deal with. Cecilia understood after a few moments that I was hungry for corn flakes instead of Cheerios. She refused my offer of sharing the corn flakes so we had a pluralistic breakfast. What about the more complex issues surrounding pluralism that I face as a parent?

My husband and I are Mennonite. My family came from Germany to the U.S. in 1723 as Mennonites escaping religious persecution. A history like this is not easily discarded. I would like to hand on some of this tradition to Cecilia, but as in most faith traditions there are parts of the package that are precious and parts that I would just as soon deny. It is important to me to teach peace, to model non-violence in a violent world. I appreciate the emphasis that Mennonites have on community and extending the family beyond blood ties. I am angered by the years of exclusion when women cooked fellowship meals while men prepared and served the "communion" meal. I abhor the hatred that some Mennonite churches are showing to lesbian and gay people. I grow impatient with some old language, outdated doctrine and unimaginative worship.

Still, I want to pass much of the tradition on to my daughter. I also want to pass on the knowledge (which I learned all too late in life) that folks who aren't Mennonite are good people, too. There are many ways to understand God, many ways to find community, many ways to love.

Growing up in the city, and at WATER, Cecilia will have a chance to learn the wideness of the world and the wideness of God's love in ways that I did not. Her playmates at the playground are just like the song, "red, brown, yellow, black and white", her favorite neighbor a Jamaican man with a pet bird. Her "aunts and uncles" are Jewish and Christian, lesbian and straight. Sadly, they are not as "colorful" as her playmates. This is where I must work on pluralism, expanding my community and my world to new ideas and new people even as Cecilia helps to expand the world for me.

Cindy Lapp is Staff Assistant at WATER and a student at Wesley Theological Seminary.

Diverse communities that have not met together before can gather to celebrate their pluralism and expand their respective horizons. WATER has brought together several such women's base communities rooted in the Christian tradition to ritualize this liturgy and variations on it.

Preparation

Place a bowl of water representing a well in the center of a table and position around it statues of women water carriers from different countries. Put a basket of bread, carafe of wine and jug of juice on the table. Give each participant a copy of the Women's Creed.

Naming the Circle

Welcome to WATER! Our gathering together symbolizes that there are a variety of ways to work, pray, enjoy and change our world. Let us give thanks for all of these as we introduce ourselves.

To create our circle of friends, share your name, give a hand to the woman next to you and say "Welcome" to her, then take her hand. [E.g. I am Diann. Welcome, Herta.] *(Sharing)* Let us sing about the connection we feel.

Song: "Women, Come," Traditional round

1. Women, come; Friends, come
2. Come and join our circle forming
3. Wisdom, beauty, truth abound
4. Sisters gather round

Invocation of Sophia-Wisdom

(Five women representing the five directions bless and pour water.)

Let us call upon the Holy Spirit, Sophia-Wisdom, to bless us in our days together. Let us receive the blessing of women water carriers around the world, and bless one another.

W: Blessed are you, Sophia-Wisdom of the West,
Cycle of Change,
bless us with your power.
(She pours water into the bowl)

N: Blessed are you, Spirit of the North,
Nourishing Earth Mother,
Bless us with your power.
(She pours water into the bowl)

E: Blessed are you, Amaterasu of the East,
Goddess of the Sun,
Bless us with your power.
(She pours water into the bowl)

S: Blessed are you, Madre de la Santa Tierra of
the South, Liberator of the Oppressed,
Bless us with your power.
(She pours water into the bowl)

C: Blessed are you, Wisdom of the Center,
Source of All Life,
Bless us with your power.
(She pours water into the bowl)

Blessing of Water

W: Arise! Come, let us gather around this well
as women crossing worlds together.

You who are thirsty, come to the water.

N: You who seek community, come to the
water.

E: You who search for spiritual roots, come to
the water.

S: You who are wise, come to the water.

C: You who need hospitality, come to the
water.

N: We have filled our water bowl with the
gifts of the Spirits of the West, North, East,
South and Center.

Come! Let us bless this water.

Extend your hands.

Blessed is this water which quenches our
thirst,

E: refreshes our bodies,

S: gives birth to our children,

W: heals our wounds,

C: washes our clothes and dishes,
and cooks our food.

Come! Let us bless ourselves with this
water.

Blessing of Ourselves

W: Put your hands in the water and touch your
heart, saying:

Bless my heart that I may be open to the
Spirit.

S: Touch your eyes, saying:

Bless my eyes that I may see clearly.

E: Touch your ears, saying:

Bless my ears that I may hear the wind.

N: Touch your mouth, saying:

Bless my mouth that I may speak words
of wisdom.

W: Touch your womb, or where your womb
used to be, saying:

Bless my womb that I may give birth to my
creativity.

S: Touch your feet, saying:

Bless my feet that I may walk the path of
justice.

E: Touch your hands, saying:

Bless my hands that I may touch carefully.

N: Touch and embrace the women around you,
blessing them in your own words.

Song: "We are a Wheel," Hildegard of Bingen,
Round

We are a wheel, a circle of life.

We are a wheel, a circle of power.

We are a wheel, a circle of light.

Circling the world this sacred hour.

Reading: A Reading from our sister, Elisabeth
Schussler Fiorenza, from **Discipleship of
Equals.**

The diverse women's movements in the churches must come together as the public forum and alliance of the *ekklesia* of women. As a 'rainbow' discipleship of equals we can voice and celebrate our differences because we have a 'common ground,' our commitment to the liberation struggle and vision of God's *basileia*, God's intended world and community of well-being for all. We are not the first to engage in this struggle for ending societal and ecclesial patriarchy. Nor are we alone in it. A 'great cloud of witnesses' surrounds us and has preceded us throughout the centuries in the *ekklesia* of women. We derive hope and courage from the memory of our foremothers and their struggles for survival and dignity, from the remembrance of our fore Sisters who have resisted patriarchal dehumanization and violence in the power of the Spirit.

Reflection

What does it mean to see ourselves as part of something far bigger than we are? Part of the global movement of those who engage in sacrament and solidarity; part of the women's community, women-church, women's spirituality? How would you like to build this movement? *(Sharing one to one if the group is large, or as a whole if the group is 8-10 people.)*

Prayers of the Faithful

Who are those who need our prayers this moment? Let us speak their names, hear their stories and pray with them, responding, "Be strengthened by our community."

of Communities



A Woman's Creed, written by Robin Morgan, in collaboration with Mahnaz, Diane Faulkner, Perdita Houston, Corinne Kumar, Paola Melchiori, Sunetra Puri, and Sima Wali at the Women's Global Strategies Meeting, November 29-December 2, 1994, sponsored by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and attended by 140 women from 50 countries. Reprinted with permission.

(Each woman reads one paragraph or sentence. All read bold-faced sentences.)

We are female human beings poised on the edge of the new millennium. We are the majority of our species, yet we have dwelt in the shadows. We are the invisible, the illiterate, the laborers, the refugees, the poor.

ALL: And we vow: No more.

We are the women who hunger - for rice, home, freedom, each other, ourselves.

We are the women who thirst - for clean water and laughter, literacy, love.

We have existed at all times, in every society. We have survived femicide. We have rebelled - and left clues.

ALL: We are continuity, weaving future from past, logic with lyric. We are the women who stand in our sense and shout Yes. We are the women who wear broken bones, voices, minds, hearts - but we are the women who dare whisper No.

We are the women whose souls no fundamentalist cage can contain.

We are the women who refuse to permit the sowing of death in our gardens, air, rivers, seas.

We are each precious, unique, necessary. We are strengthened and blessed and relieved at not having to all be the same. We are the daughters of longing. We are the mothers in labor to birth the politics of the 21st Century.

We are the women men warned us about.

ALL: We are the women who know that all issues are ours, who will reclaim our wisdom, reinvent our tomorrow, question and redefine everything, including power.

We have worked now for decades to name the details of our need, rage, hope, vision. We have broken our silence, exhausted our patience. We are weary of listing refrains on our suffering - to entertain or be simply ignored. We are done with vague words and real waiting; famished for action, dignity, joy. We intend to do more than merely endure and survive.

They have tried to deny us, define us, defuse us, denounce us; to jail, enslave, exile, gas, rape, beat, burn, bury - and bore us. Yet nothing, not even the offer to save their failed system, can grasp us.

For thousands of years, women have had responsibility without power - while men have had power without responsibility. We offer those men who risk being brothers a balance, a future, a hand. But with or without them we will go on.

For we are the Old Ones, the New Breed, the Natives who came first but lasted, indigenous to an utterly different dimension. We are the girlchild in Zambia, the grandmother in Burma, the women in El Salvador and Afghanistan, Finland and Fiji. We are whale-song and rainforest; the depth-wave rising huge to shatter glass power on the shore; the lost and despised who, weeping, stagger into the light.

All this we are. We are intensity, energy, the people speaking - who no longer will wait and who cannot be stopped.

ALL: We are poised on the edge of the millennium - ruin behind us, no map before us, the taste of fear sharp on our tongues.

Yet we will leap.

The exercise of imagining is an act of creation.

The act of creation is an exercise of will.

All this is political. And possible.

Bread. A clean sky. Active peace. A woman's voice singing somewhere, melody drifting like smoke from the cookfires. The army disbanded, the harvest abundant. The wound healed, the child wanted, the prisoner freed, the body's integrity honored, the lover returned. The magical skill that reads marks into meaning. The labor equal, fair, and valued. Delight in the challenge for consensus to solve problems. No hand raised in any gesture but greeting. Secure interiors - of heart, home, land - so firm as to make secure borders irrelevant at last. And everywhere

laughter, care, celebration, dancing, contentment. A humble, earthly paradise, in the now.

We will make it real, make it our own, make policy, history, peace, make it available, make mischief, a difference, love, the connections, the miracle, ready.

ALL: Believe it. We are the women who will transform the world.

Blessing Bread, Wine, Juice

(Women from different communities bless each element using their own words.)

Honoring the Community

In Her name, we greet the presence of Sophia, Holy Wisdom, in one another. Let us stand in a circle with open hands and touch each other's palms, your right palm down and your left palm up. Feel the energy and power of this diverse community flowing through you.

Please repeat what you hear now:

I reverence the presence of Sophia, Holy Wisdom, within you. *(Echo)*

I honor you for sharing your talents. *(Echo)*

I praise you for the work that you do. *(Echo)*

I honor you for belonging to a community of justice-seekers. *(Echo)*

What else do we want to reverence, honor, praise in one another? Tell us and we will echo you... Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

Our names are sacred words. Speak your name. We will collectively say it after you. *(Naming)*

Song: "Blessing Song," by M.T. Winter from Woman Prayer, Woman Song, 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

Grateful for this time together, let us go forth respectful of our diversity, thankful for the varieties of works and strategies that we do and use, and committed to work together that justice and peace may come for us and for our children.

Let us greet one another with this commitment and with this peace.

Diann L. Neu, MDiv, STM, MSW, feminist liturgist and psychotherapist, is co-founder and co-director of WATER.

WATER Work

Are the WATER co-founders and co-directors ever at home? Do they ever sit quietly at their desks and just read? Well, they contemplate retirement in the next life, but for now they are busier than ever, and enjoying it enormously.

Mary Hunt upped her frequent flyer miles this spring. She and Diann Neu were at the thrilling presentation of the Women-Church Convergence archives to the Gannon Center for Women and Leadership at Loyola University in Chicago. Archives keep women's work alive. Mary stayed on to lecture at Gannon on "Women's Leadership in the Catholic Church" and meet with colleagues there.

A stimulating trip to Brazil found Mary in the Northeast of that huge country with IHM sisters Ann Nett and Dorothy Diederichs near Recife, then in Joao Pessoa with women who had been at the Shared Garden program in Santiago, Chile. She went on to Rio de Janeiro to visit friends and present a workshop on "Religion and Homosexuality" to a group of Afro-Brazilian women and their friends called Agar, named for the biblical figure, Hagar. Then it was on to Sao Paulo where Mary joined feminist theologian Ivone Gebara who was recently returned from kyriarchically-imposed exile in Belgium. Together at the Pontifical Catholic University they lectured on Catholic women's leadership to a huge crowd welcoming Ivone back home where she belongs! In Sao Paulo, Mary offered a weekend workshop sponsored by the Brazilian group, Catolicas Pelo Direito de Decidir, on reproductive health ethics.

'Tis the conference season. Mary spoke on "Obstacles to Our Call" at Dignity's national gathering and on "Women's Contributions to Religion" at the E Pluribus Unum conference for graduating high school students from Jewish, Protestant and Catholic groups. She was the conference theologian for the National Catholic AIDS Network which met in Chicago, and lectured at the annual "Lesbian, Gay, Christian"

weekend in Kirkridge. Diann consulted with Pax Christi USA for their National Assembly, "Proclaiming the Peace of Christ: The Pilgrimage Continues." She worked with NETWORK to design the Women of Justice Awards Ceremony for their 25th Anniversary Celebration, "People-Power: Politics for the 21st Century."

Classes anyone? Diann lectured on "The Feminist Spiritual Side of Private Practice" for the graduating MSW students at The Catholic University of America. She taught a Feminist Liturgy class at WATER to liturgically talented women from diverse traditions and backgrounds who spent the semester focusing on creating feminist liturgies; life cycles and the sacred; prayers of lament, anger, exorcism and purification; table feasts and feminist Eucharists; and feminist liturgical communities. Mary taught two courses at Georgetown University: Feminist Ethics and Introduction to Women's Studies. Diann facilitated a feminist spirituality group at WATER for women who addressed prayer, integrating spirituality/sexuality, inheriting a spiritual legacy, relationships, images of God/Goddess/Sophia, and relating to religious traditions.

Feminist liturgies continue to be celebrated at WATER and elsewhere. Diann created and celebrated the closing liturgy, "Sent Forth to Heal" for the Parish Nursing conference at Holy Cross Hospital. She gathered the WATER monthly liturgy group to liturgize Lenten Spirituality, Women Mystics, Welcome Spring, Daughters and Mothers, Daughters and Fathers, and the Summer Solstice.

Diann increased her language skills by studying Spanish in Chile and then continuing classes at home for the semester. *Ahora, ella habla un poco mas...!* And as you read this, Diann and Mary are in Germany studying German. Thanks to Charles Heinle for donating to WATER the Spanish and German Pimsleur Tapes which are keeping WATER staff and friends moving beyond English.

How Books Appear Here

Readers and publishers alike sometimes ask how we choose the books and other materials we cite in the Resources section of this newsletter. It is quite simple.

We request review copies of books and other materials (videos, tapes, etc.) related to feminist theology, ethics and ritual. When we began, we scrambled to find fifteen or so publications to fill our bill. Now, happily, our shelves overflow with useful works. We cannot acknowledge them all with reviews, but we add many to bibliographies for courses, suggest some to colleagues, and otherwise cycle and recycle them into the mainstream.

Each resource that arrives is read/heard by someone at WATER (usually Mary Hunt, who is rumored to eat books for breakfast). A decision is made as to whether it will be of interest to our readers. If so, a short blurb is written to appear in an upcoming issue of the newsletter. If not, we inform the publisher that the item will be available for the borrowing in our Resource Center, where now more than 4000 books and tapes await you.

We understand that listing books is a service to everyone: the reader who gets a heads up on a new resource, the publishing company which gets its output publicized, and WATER, which grows, volume by volume. So we choose carefully, looking for innovative scholarship, attentive to inclusivity of concept and language, diversity of topics, and pertinence to a justice-seeking approach to religion. We are especially vigilant in children's materials and liturgy/ritual resources, anxious that they carry these qualities. Listing a resource is not tantamount to granting a feminist imprimatur (heaven forbid), but with limited space we have to make prudent choices.

Readers sometimes alert us to books we should know about. Publishers now send many unbidden. We only wish we had more space - here and on the shelves - to share the wealth.

Independent Bookstores

Women-friendly independent bookstores are high on WATER's list of favorite places. One such in the Washington DC area is Lammas, recently relocated to new quarters at 1607 17th St NW. For those who can't visit in person, there is a toll-free number for contacting a most accommodating staff: 800-955-2662 or 202-775-8218.

If you would like a list of WATER's publications from WATERworks Press, please write us.



Resources

Agosin, Marjorie. *TAPESTRIES OF HOPE: THE ARPILLERA MOVEMENT IN CHILE 1974-1994*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996 (160 pages, \$39.95).

WATER "trafficked" in arpilleras during the Chilean dictatorship so this marvelous collection - both stories and photos - has special meaning. The women who wove their lives into the colorful cloths are contemporary heroines.

Baker-Fletcher, Karen. *A SINGING SOMETHING: WOMANIST REFLECTIONS ON ANNA JULIA COOPER*. New York: Crossroad, 1994 (215 pages, \$19.95).

Such foundational work introduces important figures in religious history to a broad audience.

Gnanadason, Aruna, Musimbi Kanyoro and Lucia Ann McSpadden. *WOMEN, VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENT CHANGE*. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 1996 (158 pages, \$16.59).

The universal effort to stop violence proceeds from many particular experiences. This collection brings some of them together.

Graham, Elaine. *MAKING THE DIFFERENCE: GENDER, PERSONHOOD AND THEOLOGY*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995 (260 pages, \$19).

The debate goes on in the social sciences, and theologians need to stay updated on it.

Hayes, Diana L. *AND STILL WE RISE: AN INTRODUCTION TO BLACK LIBERATION THEOLOGY*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996 (219 pages, \$12.95).

A primer on an important theological movement from a Catholic womanist perspective.

Hidalgo, Hilda. *LESBIANS OF COLOR: SOCIAL AND HUMAN SERVICES*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 1995 (106 pages, \$9.95).

Useful insights for self-understanding and/or counseling.

Hogan, Linda. *FROM WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE TO FEMINIST THEOLOGY*. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995 (192 pages, \$19.95).

A careful look at the pluses and minuses of experience-based work in theology provides good data for future work.

Kellenbach, Katharina von. *ANTI-JUDAISM IN FEMINIST RELIGIOUS WRITINGS*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994 (173 pages, \$17.95).

An important issue well articulated in both deconstructive and constructive modes.

King, Ursula, ed. *FEMINIST THEOLOGY FROM THE THIRD WORLD: A READER*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994 (434 pages, \$19.95).
A handy collection for survey use.

King, Ursula. *RELIGION AND GENDER*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995 (324 pages, \$21.95).

Gender can usurp or augment feminist work in religion. Parts of the debate unfold here.

Kolbenschlag, Madonna. *EASTWARD TOWARD EVE: A GEOGRAPHY OF THE SOUL*. New York: Crossroad, 1996 (144 pages, \$15.95).

A short trip to Japan stimulated the author to look eastward from a changing west.

Lindley, Susan Hill. *YOU HAVE STEPPED OUT OF YOUR PLACE: A HISTORY OF WOMEN AND RELIGION IN AMERICA*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996 (500 pages, \$35).

A good overview text for introductory courses.

McKenzie, Vashti M. *NOT WITHOUT A STRUGGLE: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN MINISTRY*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996 (160 pages, \$15.95).

This is a rich resource: a how-to book that is grounded in strong analysis, a clear-eyed history, and the assurance that African American women's ministry is a resource for the whole church.

McKinley, Catherine E. and L. Joyce DeLaney. *AFREKETE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF BLACK LESBIAN WRITING*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995 (317 pages, \$14).

Buy it. Read it. Discuss it. Respect it. A marvelous collection.

Miller-McLemore, Bonnie J. *ALSO A MOTHER: WORK AND FAMILY AS A THEOLOGICAL DILEMMA*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994 (215 pages, \$19.95).

How motherhood fits into and also reshapes feminist work in theology is an important and overdue concern.

Palmer, Susan Jean. *MOON SISTERS, KRISHNA MOTHERS, RAJNEESH LOVERS: WOMEN'S ROLES IN NEW RELIGIONS*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press (287 pages, \$24.95).

Would that the picture were more promising, but this volume provides a realistic view.

Paterson, Gillian. *LOVE IN A TIME OF AIDS: WOMEN, HEALTH AND THE CHALLENGE*

OF HIV. Geneva: World Council of Churches Publications, 1996 (130 pages, \$11.50).

The long ignored situation of women with HIV/AIDS finally sees the light of church attention around the world. A painful but necessary read.

Patrick, Anne E. *LIBERATING CONSCIENCE: FEMINIST EXPLORATIONS IN CATHOLIC MORAL THEOLOGY*. New York: Continuum, 1996 (176 pages, \$24.95).

If Catholic theology is ever to emerge from its current state of malaise, feminist works like this will be the reason.

Pearson, Anne Mackenzie. "BECAUSE IT GIVES ME PEACE OF MIND:" *RITUAL FASTS IN THE RELIGIOUS LIVES OF HINDU WOMEN*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996 (315 pages, \$24.95).

A refreshingly new topic with much to ponder for people of all faiths that include fasting.

Pharr, Suzanne. *IN THE TIME OF THE RIGHT: REFLECTIONS ON LIBERATION*. Berkeley, CA: Chardon Press, 1996 (122 pages, \$10.95).

A prophetic voice spells out the economic and political scene with chilling clarity and savvy strategies.

Ragsdale, Katherine Hancock, ed. *BOUNDARY WARS: INTIMACY AND DISTANCE IN HEALING RELATIONSHIPS*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996 (264 pages, \$15.95).

The conversation, heaven forbid not a war, continues on boundaries in professional relationships. Some combination of connection and caution seems to be emerging as a useful next step.

Ritter, Kathleen and Craig O'Neill. *RIGHTEOUS RELIGION: UNMASKING THE ILLUSIONS OF FUNDAMENTALISM AND AUTHORITARIAN CATHOLICISM*. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Pastoral Press, 1996 (212 pages, \$17.95).

Religion links, but it does not bind. This book helps people know the difference and act accordingly.

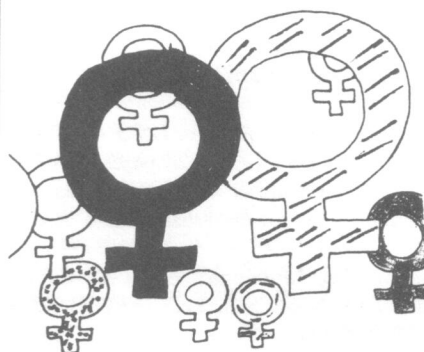
Vaid, Urvashi. *VIRTUAL EQUALITY: THE MAINSTREAMING OF GAY AND LESBIAN LIBERATION*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995 (440 pages, \$24.95).

A cautionary tale by a committed activist: either we struggle for global liberation or the best any of us can hope for is "virtual equality." Smart, self-critical insights into why another movement for justice is stymied by internal and external factors.

International H2O

At latest count, **WATER**wheel ships out to 46 nations around the world as well as all fifty states of the Union and the District of Columbia. It is mailed to addresses from Fiji to Finland, Germany to Guatemala, Iceland to India, Ireland to Israel, Jamaica to Japan, Kenya to Korea, Malaysia to Mexico, New Zealand to Nicaragua, Scotland to Sierra Leone. It wends its way to Thailand, Uruguay, Australia, Sweden and two dozen other countries as well.

Do you have a friend at home or abroad (wherever that is from where you are) who would welcome a quarterly infusion of **WATER**? Send us names and addresses and we'll make the introductory connection from the wellsprings in Silver Spring.



Feminist Theologians to Meet at AAR/SBL

The second meeting of the Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network is set for Friday, November 21, in conjunction with the AAR/SBL annual gathering in San Francisco.

Time and place of the meeting have been confirmed: 3:45 to 6:15 p.m. at the Hilton Hotel, Union Square, 4. All interested parties, please note on your calendars now.

The Network first convened at the Women's Ordination Conference Twentieth Anniversary gathering. It is up and running, with seed money from the Loretto Community and the School Sisters of Notre Dame.



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