

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

In the Name of the Father

by Mary E. Hunt

Some of the most virulent backlash in contemporary culture comes under the guise of fathers' rights. Whether religious arguments for reinscribing male God-language, custody battles that mothers no longer win easily, or social programs aiming money at men who do not support their children, it is a subtle problem that resists easy analysis. Complicated by white racism against men (and women) of color, and fueled by homophobic notions of how "real men" behave, the new fatherhood conversation begs for feminist theological attention. It has potential either to make a wonderful difference or to wipe out many gains of the past two decades. More active fathers, perhaps, but at what price, to whose benefit?

The conversation takes place at a time when record numbers of deadbeat dads leave women with the major share of both parenting and paying for children. Only one in four single mothers living below the poverty line receives any child support. Welfare benefits in the United States are ever more limited after so-called reforms. Many women will max out shortly. Then what?

Remarkably, legislation has been introduced to help non-custodial parents, mostly men, get job training even though there is not enough money to go around for women who

face loss of benefits when their eligibility is up. The theory is that when paid better, men will pay better, but tell that to women raising children alone. For example, one such program, Parents' Fair Share, failed to increase the incomes of non-custodial fathers. It did (by statistical fluke) show that these men increased their child support by the princely sum of \$4.20 per month, little more than a Happy Meal at McDonald's.

The dilemma has deep religious roots that feminist ethicist Beverly Wildung Harrison and others have probed. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man originated as more than linguistic forms of sexism. They were theological concepts used to baptize and confirm a market economy as God-given and good. To maximize profit, women were to labor at home, moving beyond the domestic sphere only when the system demanded: when war (always profitable for victors) raged, for example, taking men elsewhere. Otherwise, middle and upper strata white women were to manage the domestic economy, their choices circumscribed, their talents truncated, their power limited, while men, like God, ran the show. Poor women and women of color were to work everywhere.

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The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man originated as more than linguistic forms of sexism.



Mothers and sons: (l. to r.) Ana Caba Mateo with Alexander and Cynthia Lapp with Jamie, meet at WATER's program, "Re-threading Community among Maya Ixil Women in Guatemala."

Editorial

Millennial language is dubious at best. Who's counting what? Images of war and rashes of violence seem to be the self-fulfilling prophecy of those who predict the worst, come Y2K. Per usual, women and children are suffering disproportionately. Witness: re-fugee families leaving Kosovo led by intrepid women, and the raping of those women by soldiers on all sides. It is another morally hideous dimension to

a morally mixed up war.

The twentieth century was a time to shore up differences, carve out territory, even stake claims on the moon. The twenty-first century can be a time when we decide to do it differently, if we decide. Economic jubilee, supported earlier in these pages, is an idea whose time has more than come. But a wholesale change in attitude, from the big things to the small, seems in order if we are to begin

afresh with any hope of justice.

One small step would be a concerted effort to make many possibilities work simultaneously. Rather than insisting on only "the right way," however dear to one's heart, we might seek ways to make room for several options. If it works in flavors of ice cream, why not in matters of gender, race, nationality, religion? We can teach our children how to take pride in difference without needing to value one over another.

Imagine how thrilled they could learn to be if we enthused as much over those who are "not-us" as over our ancestors, if we praised for their integrity those with whom we disagreed. Imagine if they did the same for us.

Millennial language is a linguistic convention agreed upon for the sake of bookkeeping. But it can be made into an occasion for renewal and refreshment if the spirit is willing.



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WATER is a feminist educational center, a network of justice-seeking people that began in 1983 in 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 part of an inclusive church and society.

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What is at stake is not simply a change in name but a change in dynamic.

...Father

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In the early 1970s, Mary Daly published her famous insight that as long as God was male, the male would be God, debunking the theological notion of God the Father and inviting spiritual as well as social creativity. While her critique was too rich for the blood of many, she opened the way for a panoply of possibilities for naming the divine, one of which remains father but all of which are partial, metaphorical efforts that have concrete socioeconomic consequences. Those consequences, more than the language itself, are what matter.

From early feminist critiques of male language and imagery to recent decrees by Southern Baptists that wives should "submit graciously" to their husbands, it is clear that the power of the father has undergone erosion. There have come challenges to the hegemonic economic and political systems in which patriarchal power is so entrenched. With no necessary theological reason to image the divine as father, and good reason not to, given how maleness has been privileged, feminist theologians are promoting wholesale changes in the social order.

Backlash can be vicious. What is at stake is not simply a change in name but a change in dynamic. It is a move from automatic assumptions about who has authority to shared responsibility, from gendered roles to equal opportunity, from private accumulation to public accountability. This deep connection between language about the divine and structures of social order provokes conservative religious responses.

The patriarchal fatherhood movement includes Promise Keepers, who seek to return men to their "rightful place" as head of the family. They do so in the name of a laudable goal, getting men involved in raising children and paying a fair share of family costs, reasonable expectations when a man marries and has children. But their means are dubious, exposing another agenda.

It is no accident that participants meet in football stadiums, where men will feel comfortable; no small base groups at home for these fellows. Nor is it any coincidence that they choose biblical passages that emphasize

male headship and encourage adherents to reassert themselves at home. They offer control of women and a rejection of equal roles to right the balance they accuse feminists of upsetting. They miss the matter of who was providing for middle class families while these newly repentant men were out and about, who keeps most poor families going. Their nineteenth century fantasy of family with *pater familias* firmly in control is a reaction to responsible women doing the best they can under difficult circumstances.

Conservative theologians help out their cause. Austrian biblical scholar Michael Waldstein prevailed in debates over the latest revision of the Catholic Lectionary, the readings used for liturgies. In a spirited defense of androcentric language about the divine, he put forth the incredible argument that God gives but does not receive, utilizing a crude analogy to heterosexual intercourse. In serious discussion he asserted that "The absence of 'receiving' allows the term 'father' to be extended and to be used of God as a true analogy." One wonders what a false analogy might be.

Such biologisms are theologically embarrassing. But beyond simple gender considerations, this anti-relational model reinforces an image of power that maintains top-down control, that asks neither permission nor collaboration, that acts at will because "father knows best."

It would be easy to write off such thinking as the stuff of small minds. Meanwhile, another generation in the pews continues to be subjected to patriarchal language as normative. More to the point, Rep. Clay Shaw (R-FL) and others in Congress continue to introduce legislation that ties public funds to conformity with such a worldview. They push marriage (whether women want it or not) as the solution to the problem of poverty by linking entitlements to marriage licenses. If they only understood the root of the problem is the God Father of the Market and not people who will never own a share.

A worthy God, like a good father, recognizes the intrinsic worth of all women, especially the mothers of children and the daughters of creation.

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

Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network Update

Mark your calendar: the Network will meet on Friday, November 19, 1999, at the Bunting Institute in Cambridge, MA (34 Concord Ave.) from 2-4 pm. Then we will cross Cambridge Common to Harvard Divinity School (45 Francis Ave.) for a networking reception from 4:30-6 pm with the Womanist Consultation and the Women's Caucus of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature whose meetings begin the next day in Boston. The reception is envisioned as a way to bring three groups of women together to build a "sense of the whole" and share common agenda. All are welcome.

Radical feminist philosopher Mary Daly changed the world decades ago by declaring that there is life "Beyond God the Father." Now she is under attack by an aggressive, conservative law firm, the Center for Individual Rights, for refusing to admit to her Boston College Feminist Ethics class a young man who lacked clearly stated prerequisites.

Dr. Daly has long taught men and women separately, arguing that women need a women-only space as an optimal learning environment. Boston College, presumably fearful of litigation and aware of its own possible complicity in the case, ordered Mary Daly to admit the student. When she refused, she was offered early retirement and a gag order, a "choice" she rejected in favor of a leave of absence.

This is a complex case, raising a host of crucial issues around academic freedom, feminist pedagogies, Title IX and the corporate nature of private universities, among others. Regardless of what one thinks of Mary Daly's tactics, few will deny the power of her integrity and the usefulness of her on-going educational work, this time encompassing law and politics. The Mary Daly Defense Fund (P.O. Box 381176, Cambridge, MA 02238-1176, phone 617 552-3898 or you can e-mail mdaly-fund@aol.com) invites support.

Mary E. Hunt and Emily Culpepper have organized a session for the upcoming American Academy of Religion annual meeting in November in Boston which will be dedicated to the matter of "Feminist Pedagogies and Academic Freedoms." Speakers will include thea/ologians Emily Culpepper, Mary Daly and Sharon Welch, and attorneys Diane Maleson and Gretchen Van Ness. Mary E. Hunt will preside.

Registrations for the January 6-9, 2000, "Study, Sun and Solidarity" gathering in Daytona, FL, are still being accepted. Contact WATER for more information.



Location, Location, Location

by Mary E. Hunt

In real estate parlance, location is everything. A small house near the Metro in Washington can be more expensive than a large house out in the suburbs. Apparently in theology, too, location is all. Or so Bernard Cardinal Law of Boston appears to think. He has forbidden the Massachusetts Women-Church group, ten active members led by women of wisdom and grace, to meet on property that is under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Boston. For good measure he also included the Diocese of Worcester as part of no-women's land.

Egregious errors in this case are legion. For starters, there was no adult conversation, dare one suggest dialogue, about the problems at hand. In fact, when invited to meet with Bishop William Murphy, Moderator of the Curia, the women maturely agreed but proposed common territory, the Jesuit Urban Center, that is well and truly under Archdiocesan control (see below). The bishop's response was negative. Apparently he does not venture beyond his office to meet with such women. Besides, this was simply to tell them, not discuss with them, that they were hereafter *personae non gratae* on church property.

To add insult to injury, the very Jesuits with whom the women had been in dialogue, a process sparked by the Society of Jesus' strong statement on women which was passed (under papal approval) at their most recent General Congregation, lacked the courage of their convictions. The Jesuit Provincial's reaction to the Cardinal's dictum made clear that the members were to comply pronto. While some Jesuits may continue to meet with their women colleagues (could they be friends and treat them this way?) it seems that they may give renewed meaning to the word Jesuitical by meeting with them off church property. But that is to miss the point entirely.

Such properties are exempt from taxes because they belong to a whole religious community, in this case all Catholics, not simply the Cardinal and those who agree with him. Banning the women is tantamount to building the proverbial tree house and putting up the "No girls allowed" sign. It is so sad that these tactics are the best that men in power can muster after decades of efforts to work toward equality. There must be a better way to deal with deep disagreements than to violate the fundamentals of hospitality over which one might presume agreement.

What happens next? Many are scandalized by the high-handed actions of the Cardinal. In fairness, surely some are also put off by the women's views in favor of the ordination of Catholic women. But why not split the difference and continue to meet, discuss, celebrate and disagree **at home**, on the property that the grandparents of all involved scraped and saved to build and buy? Why not show children that there is dignity in disagreement, power in listening and justice in sharing? Is that so much to ask while a war rages and kids are killing one another at school? In that big picture it can only help.

June is the month of Father's Day. Being a daughter, and having a father, is an experience common to women of all classes, races and nationalities. A father, even if absent, is inevitably part of forming who we are. We each need to take time to integrate a relationship to him in our lives.

This ritual focuses on the daughter and father relationship, which can include pain, conflict and tears as well as love, care and closeness. Adapt it for a father/son relationship. Shape it to meet your needs and those of your community.

Preparation

Gather handkerchiefs, more than one per participant, and pile them on one side of a central altar table. On the other side, place a plate of watermelon pieces. Put two distinctly different candles in the center. Give each participant a quote about fathers that they will read during the ritual.

Call to Gather

This season of Father's Day reminds us that we are all children. The father/daughter relationship is one that we have all experienced through presence or absence. We each have or had a father. This common bond is filled with a variety of memories and emotions: love and pain, expectations and hurt, pride and disappointments. Today, we use handkerchiefs as a symbol to help us talk about the love and conflicts in this relationship. We want to integrate this relationship so that when our parents have died, we may "go out full grown."

Let the memories of your father rise within you today. Make peace with them, let go of what you need to and hold onto the loving times.

Candle Lighting

We light two candles: one for daughters, one for fathers. (*Lighting*)

Naming the Circle

Let us think of the men in our families and name ourselves accordingly. For example, I am Diann, daughter of Frank Bernard Neu, granddaughter of Frank Joseph Neu and

Max Rawlings, great granddaughter of John Bernhardt Neu, Louis Mueller, Peter Hinz, and Luther Rawlings. (*Naming*)

Song: "Here's A Hand," by Sarah Pirtle, from *Songs of Earthlings*, 1998.

Here's a hand pulling you on.
Here's a hand pulling you on.
Loving you weak, loving you strong.
Here's a hand pulling you on.

Here's a heart loving you on...
Here's a soul blessing you on...

Remembering the Relationship

The daughter/father relationship is an intense one that can include treasured memories we want to pass on, and it can contain pain and hurt we want to eliminate. Listen to the experiences of these women (from *Quotations by Women*, by Rosalie Maggio, Beacon Press):

The history, the root, the strength of my father is the strength we now rest on.

Carolyn M. Rodgers, "For Our Fathers," *how I got ovah* (1975)

We criticize mothers for closeness. We criticize fathers for distance. How many of us have expected less from our fathers and appreciated what they gave us more? How many of us always let them off the hook?

Ellen Goodman, *At Large* (1981)

Father. I write all my poems so I may bury you more kindly. Father. I write all my poems to keep you alive.

Deborah Keenan, "July Twenty-Seventh, Nineteen-Seventy Nine," *Household Wounds* (1981)

Old as she was, she still missed her daddy sometimes.

Gloria Naylor, *Mama Day* (1988)

How I miss my father. I wish he had not been so tired when I was born.

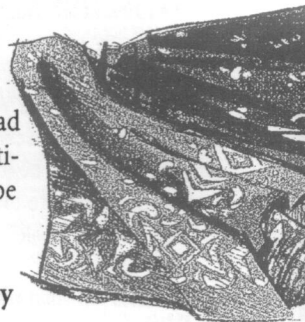
Alice Walker, "Poem at Thirty-Nine," *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* (1979)

I wanted him to cherish and approve of me, not as he had when I was a child, but as the woman I was, who had her own mind and had made her own choices.

Adrienne Rich, "Split at the Root," *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (1986)

Like all children I had taken my father for granted. Now that I had lost him, I felt an emptiness that could never be filled.

Benazir Bhutto, *Daughter of Destiny* (1989)



Daughters and Ties that

by Diann

Song: "Trouble and Beauty" by Carolyn McDade, from *This Tough Spun Web*, c. 1984.

By these laboring wings we have come
thus far
To this place in the wind where we see
Trouble and beauty,
We see trouble, we see beauty,
And that far wandering star still calls us on.

Chorus: It's the star will rise and shine,
Rise and shine.

It will rise and shine when earth's
People all are free.

It calls to you, it calls to me,
Keep your laboring wings till all are free.

Reflection

As we think about our relationships with our fathers, many stories come to mind. We have probably experienced every kind of emotion in this daughter/father relationship. What stories do you remember most about your relationship with your father? Take a moment and think about them, legacies you want to renounce and ones you want to reclaim. (*Reflection*)

Releasing Father's Legacy

Some spirits of our fathers we need to renounce. Think of a time with your father that brought pain, conflict and tears. Remember something that tied you in knots. Perhaps something that

you want to let go.

(Pause) Take a handkerchief and tie a knot in it as you tell the story. (Sharing)

These individual stories are tied to the patriarchy; therefore, let us tie these handkerchiefs together and

Dad Fathers: Bind

L. Neu

place them in the center. (Pause) Let us exorcise negative patriarchal power we have experienced and learned from our fathers. Respond, "Be gone, Be gone, Be gone," shake your hands, kick your legs, move your body; bodies carry these memories.

The negative effects daughters and father have experienced from "Father knows best."

Be gone, Be gone, Be gone.

The control from our fathers that has kept us from expanding our wings.

Be gone, Be gone, Be gone.

The hurt and pain we live with when our fathers do not accept our choices of partners, lifestyles, work.

Be gone, Be gone, Be gone.

Male images of God that reinforce the idea that male is God, fathers are God.

Be gone, Be gone, Be gone.

What other powers do you want to release? Speak about them now and, if you wish, untie the knots in the handkerchiefs. (Sharing)

Prayer

God who loves us and our fathers, be with us as we release ourselves from the pain, hurt and disappointment we have known in the daughter/father relationship. Free us and our fathers to heal. We ask this in your name. Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

Song: "Trouble and Beauty"

By these hearts of rage we have come thus far

To this place in our love where we dare Trouble and beauty,

We dare trouble, we dare beauty,

And that far wandering star still calls us on (Chorus)

Reclaiming Father's Legacy

Some spirits of our fathers we need to reclaim. These handkerchiefs also represent love and healing. They can be offered lovingly for comfort, to wipe away tears or bandage a hurt knee. When I was a child we always gave Dad handkerchiefs for Christmas. Come, take a handkerchief and tell whatever loving Dad story you want to share, or just take the handkerchief silently. (Sharing)

Song: "Trouble and Beauty"

By this rainbow, my friends, we have come thus far

To this place in our lives where we live Trouble and beauty,

We live trouble, we live beauty,

And that far wandering star still calls us on. (Chorus)

Reading: "My Father's Death" by May Sarton, from **May Sarton: Collected Poems (1930-1973)**, c. 1974.

After the laboring birth, the clean stripped hull

Glides down the ways and is gently set free,
The landlocked, launched; the cramped made bountiful

Oh, grave great moment when ships take the sea!

Alone now in my life, no longer child,

This hour and its flood of mystery,

Where death and love are wholly reconciled,

Launches the ship of all my history.

Accomplished now is the last struggling birth,

I have slipped out from the embracing shore
Nor look for comfort to maternal earth.

I shall not be a daughter any more,

But through this final parting, all stripped down,

Launched on the tide of love,

go out full grown.

Song: "Tell Me Why," Traditional.

Tell me why the stars do shine,

Tell me why the ivy twines,

Tell me why the sky's so blue,

And I will tell you just why I love you.

Because God made the stars to shine,

Because God made the ivy twine,

Because God made the sky so blue,

Because God made you that's why

I love you

Sending Forth

Let us go forth from this place with the blessing of daughters and fathers.

Please say after me:

Blessed be all the daughters of fathers.

Blessed be all the fathers of daughters.

Let us go forth from this place integrated in our relationships with our fathers.

Let us go forth committed to being "full grown," now or someday.

Greeting of Peace

Let us hug one another to seal this commitment. (Hugging)

Sharing Food

Watermelon reminds me of summer, of Father's Day parties, of sweetness on the inside. Join me in tasting watermelon as we continue sharing sweet times we have had with our fathers.

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

Mothers' Fund Keeps on Giving

When Carol and Joe Scinto started the Mothers' Fund in 1993 in honor of their mothers, they stipulated that it was "intended to provide small but strategically focused grants to women seeking individually or through organizations to effect social change." They and others have subsequently donated additional sums so the Fund can continue to make periodic disbursements to women who are committed to making a difference.

This year, books have gone to Costa Rica for the new library of the world-changing women theological students at Latin American Biblical University. Viva those women who, with the leadership of Elsa Tamez and the collaboration of thousands, have built their own educational setting! Books have also gone to the library at St. Scholastica College in the Philippines, where Sr. Mary John Mananzan and colleagues run a fine women's studies program in theology.

A Cuban doctoral student in Brazil needed funding to ship her feminist book collection home. Thanks to the Mothers' Fund, the Loretto Community and some WATER friends, the transfer was accomplished and a seminary on that island now has access to plenty of feminist "Good News."

Likewise, a Chilean doctoral student in Brazil who is moving right along on her program has received help from the Fund.

Your donations, perhaps in memory of your mother, aunt or friend, for Mother's Day or just because, will enable The Mothers' Fund to keep on giving. Send your check to WATER, marked "Mothers' Fund."

Mothering Matters

by Cynthia Lapp

The Saturday morning before Mother's Day, six women gathered in the WATER office to speak of mothering, feminism and God. Three were accompanied by their 7 month old daughters. One was 7 months pregnant. One left a young daughter and son at home. One is not a mother. Together we created laughter, prayer, mother's milk, tears, questions.

Our conversation was personal and political. We despaired of the patriarchy that reigns in the churches. We reflected on the violence so prevalent in a child's world, and on ways to teach peace. There was surprise that feminists have taken so many years to work constructively on the subject of mothering. We wondered aloud about the connections between racism and sexism, the language we speak and the models we show children.

One woman shared Julian of Norwich's image of heaven as a gift to give our children. Another told the story of witnessing a young child

praying at his own altar table in his bedroom. A third spoke of the transformation of the Christmas story when told to children from the perspective of Mary and Elizabeth rather than the shepherds and kings. One read aloud a mother's prayer for a nursing child. We were reminded that the multiple images we have of God are ours for sharing with children, family, and community.

There is no magic way to combine mothering and feminism. There remain more questions than answers. Each of us continues the task of creating a home that respects children. We carry on the struggle of countering a culture and church that would prescribe roles to women and children rather than allow us to choose who we are and want to become.

Cynthia Lapp, MTS, is staff at WATER, music director at her church and mother of two.

Hearing 'Voices'

by Kate Holbrook

Wisdom surrounded me through the words and actions of wise women in worship, workshops, plenary, and social time. As a young Presbyterian, I was privileged to attend the fourth annual Voices of Sophia Conference held in Chevy Chase, MD, May 13-17. Here I came to better understand the legacy I have: rich stories of resistance to injustices, not only within society, but within my own denomination. Being in a strong, supportive, justice seeking group of beautiful people made me very grateful for the hard work these women and men have done (and continue to do) to make the Presbyterian Church (USA) a inclusive, justice seeking, creative, engaging, women affirming, loving community of faith.

Hearing the many voices of Sophia calling me to celebrate the diversity of gifts, theologies,

and truths that women and men of various backgrounds bring to the church has reinforced for me the importance and need for inclusive, questioning, women-affirming communities of faith that embrace a spirituality of resistance, that seek to transform the church into a place of just and right relations. I left the conference with the words of Sophia, spoken through feminist ethicist Beverly Wildung Harrison, urging the work of individuals and communities to revolutionize and mutualize power.

If you are interested in learning more about the organization, contact Voices of Sophia, 223 Choctaw Rd, Louisville, KY 40207.

Kate Holbrook is a WATER summer intern and will be a senior at Bates College in Maine.

In Memory of Her

From Mary R. Tanney, Philadelphia, PA:

In memory of my mother, **Thirza Lambert Tanney**, who was the heart and soul of our family. May our mother's love of family be our consolation and challenge to live our lives as she lived hers.

From Kelly Cregan, Silver Spring, MD:

In memory of my Godmother (and Great Aunt) who died six years ago this July after a year-long battle with ovarian cancer. **Elizabeth Grieco**, ("Zizi," her nickname means "Auntie" in Italian) is a woman who would support the work of WATER and the empowerment of women. I am donating a portion of her bequest to me to honor a foremother.

From Diann L. Neu, WATER:

In grateful memory of **Harriett Mae Neu Pierle**, beloved aunt and stylish matriarch. Your courageous choices and faithfulness touched many who will never forget you. Thanks for teaching the next generations about the family furniture business. May you rest in eternal peace with Uncle Jones and all our ancestors.

Adams, Susan and John Salmon. **THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON: THEOLOGY FOR POSTMODERN CHRISTIANS.** Aotearoa- New Zealand: Women's Resource Centre (Private Bag 11903 Ellerslie, NZ), 1996 (202 pages, \$27NZ).

How some creative, justice-oriented Christians in Aotearoa-New Zealand are making sense of the world makes for provocative, challenging reading.

Chittister, Joan D. **HEART OF FLESH: A FEMINIST SPIRITUALITY FOR WOMEN AND MEN.** Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1998 (187 pages, \$20).

An introduction that even the most resistant will admit is gentle and inviting.



Daly, Mary. **QUINTESENCE... REALIZING THE ARCHAIC FUTURE: A RADICAL ELEMENTAL FEMINIST MANIFESTO.** Boston: Beacon Press, 1998 (228 pages, \$24).

The title says it all. Mary Daly continues to a-maze, this time with a book set in 2048 complete with commentaries by Anonyma (Annie) about how choices we make today influence future events. This is a very readable, challenging volume by one of the century's great minds.

Galland, China. **THE BOND BETWEEN WOMEN: A JOURNEY TO FIERCE COMPASSION.** New York: Riverhead Books, 1998 (344 pages, \$25.95)

This autobiographical epic leads the reader from India to Argentina, through Brazil and back to California on a road women build as they go, making justice and making sense. The story of many women's religious wisdom found in the nexus of "fierce compassion."

Hampson, Daphne. **AFTER CHRISTIANITY.** Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996 (326 pages, \$25).

The author argues for spirituality based in God without the baggage of historical traditions. See also **SWALLOWING A FISHBONE? FEMINIST THEOLOGIANS DEBATE CHRISTIANITY**, London: SPCK, 1996 (186 pages, 13 pounds sterling), in which a group of English feminist theologians react and respond to Hampson's challenges to their ways of being Christian and feminist. Some bracing exchanges.

Louden, Jennifer. **THE WOMAN'S RETREAT BOOK: A GUIDE TO RESTORING, REDISCOVERING AND REAWAKENING YOUR TRUE SELF.** San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997 (323 pages, \$17).

What contemplative religious people have known for centuries, New Age folks are just finding out as if discovering it for themselves. Time away to rest and relax, reflect and renew is healthy for everyone. Try it (getting away, that is), you'll like it, especially if you can afford it.

Maitland, Sara and Wendy Mulford. **VIRTUOUS MAGIC: WOMEN SAINTS AND THEIR MEANINGS.** New York: Continuum, 1998 (392 pages, \$29.95).

Feminist hagiography with a literary tilt, these revisionist sketches of important women of faith will invite a new look at the whole enterprise of saint-making.

McCoy, Edain. **CELTIC WOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY: ACCESSING THE CAULDRON OF LIFE.** St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1998 (328 pages, \$16.95)

A compendium of Celtic lore,

with some suggestions for how to make use of it.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. **WOMEN AND REDEMPTION: A THEOLOGICAL HISTORY.** Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998 (366 pages, \$19).

On this tour through the history of Christianity and its more recently articulated global particularities on the matter of redemption, Rosemary Ruether lays out the contours and helps to illuminate their meaning.

Saussy, Carroll. **THE ART OF GROWING OLD: A GUIDE TO FAITHFUL AGING.** Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1998 (176 pages, \$14).

The inevitable, aging, need not be dreaded or rejected but embraced, and welcomed. Carroll Saussy's message makes a lovely gift for people of all ages who seek the "wisdom and grace" to age faithfully.

Storch, Walburga, ed. **THE WINDS OF FAITH: PRAYERS OF HOLY HILDEGARD.** Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997 (103 pages, \$13.95).

Beautifully translated by Linda M. Maloney, these prayers make a nice source of meditation 900 years later.

Tepedino, Anna Maria and Maria Pilar Aquino. **ENTRE LA INDIGENACION Y LA ESPERANZA: TEOLOGIA FEMINISTA LATINOAMERICANA.** Bogota, Colombia: (Indo-American Press Service Ltda. Apartado Aereo 53274-Chapinero, Sanate de Bogota, DC, Colombia, 1998 (211 pages, \$8).

A useful cross-section of contemporary Latin American feminist theological writings.

Wade-Gayles, Gloria. **NO CRYSTAL STAIR: VISIONS OF RACE AND GENDER IN BLACK WOMEN'S FICTION.** Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1997 (251 pages, \$18.95).

This reissued classic is improved by a new introduction in which womanist work in religion finds its place.

Wainwright, Elaine M. **SHALL WE LOOK FOR ANOTHER: A FEMINIST REREADING OF THE MATEAN JESUS.** Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998 (178 pages, \$18).

Biblical studies can change the way people live. This one will when the implications of "another" view come into focus.

YWCA Melbourne. **WHY DOES HE HUG US SO TIGHTLY? SEXUAL ABUSE IN MINISTERIAL RELATIONSHIP.** Melbourne: YWCA (489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, Vic. 3000 Australia, fax 03 9328 2931), (29 pages, \$5).

A good resource to have on hand for ready reference when these dreaded situations occur. Order in bulk for the whole congregation.



Zagano, Phyllis. **ITA FORD: MISSIONARY MARTYR.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1996 (64 pages, \$5.95).

A compelling history of the death and life of one of the four North American women murdered in El Salvador.

JOURNAL OF WOMEN AND RELIGION, Vol. 14, Center for Women and Religion, Berkeley, CA, 1996 (80 pages, \$10) is entitled "Bringing Beijing Home," edited by Sheri Hoestetler and Victoria Rue. A fine issue.

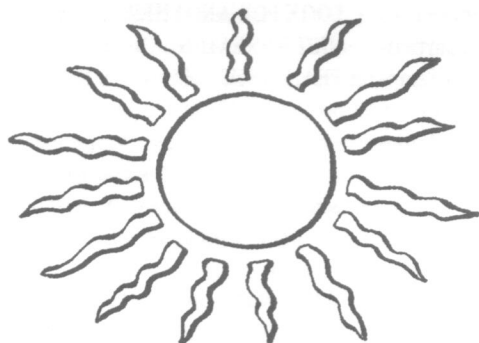


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Celebrate the Solstice, June 21



*Summer, Northern Hemisphere
Winter, Southern Hemisphere*

Celebrating 16 Years!

Donors to WATER receive WATERwheel free.

Spring programs and new people keep this Alliance flowering. With a focus on community this season, we welcomed **Isabel Ana Laynez Caba** and **Ana Caba Mateo** from the Association of Maya Ixil Women-New Dawn in Chajul, Guatemala, for "**Re-Threading Community among Maya Ixil Women in Guatemala.**" They described the difficulties in their village, which was burned during military occupation. With **M. Brinton Lykes** from Boston College and other colleagues, they are engaged in "fotovoz," an innovative empowering technique to encourage women to tell their stories through photographs. The group at WATER found their stories compelling and their work inspiring.

Activist par excellence **Ruth McDonough Fitzpatrick** of the Loretto Community, theologian **Diana Hayes** of the Grail, and journalist **Dorothy Vidulich** of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace and the Loretto Community opened an on-going conversation on "**Feminist Religious Communities.**" They shared their own commitments and insights with a group of people who made clear that this was only a first meeting. The hunger for community - ways to connect with one another that are egalitarian, par-

ticipatory and justice seeking - continues to be a major spiritual and practical reality. WATER will offer a fall followup conversation.

Kate Holbrook joins WATER as a summer intern. She is a junior at Bates College in Maine, where she lives in the Community Service

WATER at Work

House. As a member of the National Network of Presbyterian College Women, she attended the women's festival of the World Council of Churches in Harare, Zimbabwe. During studies in New Zealand, she visited our sister group, the Women's Resource Centre in Auckland. No wonder she is with us! Kate brings solid energy and a deep interest in "spiritual geography."

WATER was graced by a visit from **Abida Mohamed Ali**, an attorney, and **Fatma Sheikh-hayah Yusuf**, a public relations professional, from Nairobi, Kenya, as part of the U.S. Information Agency's International Visitor Program on "Religious Diversity in the U.S.," with hospitality offered by the Africa-America Institute. Their goal is to promote more active participation by Kenyan Muslim women in all aspects of their community's life, helping them move be-

yond traditional restricted roles. In visiting groups like WATER, they probed how other women strive for this goal and what resources might be shared.

Women-Church Convergence met in Sanibel, FL, for its semiannual gathering. Its Oral History Project got a boost when **Janet Kalven** read from her forthcoming book, Women Breaking Boundaries, a history of the Grail movement in the United States (Albany NY: SUNY Press, Nov. 1999). **Diann Neu** designed the memorial service that the group celebrated for the life of **Virginia Williams, SL**, a longtime Convergence activist who died this year. Women-Church Convergence sent a letter of support to protestors denouncing the School of the Americas. It formulated letters of protest to President Clinton regarding the bombings in Kosovo and to Bishop Elio Sgreccia of the Papal Academy for Life concerning his insistence that UN medical kits not contain the "morning after" pill for women raped in war.

WATER gathered DC area communities for a Feminist Pentecost Liturgy: "**Come Sophia-Spirit.**" We felt the energy when more than twenty base communities, women's prayer circles, women-church liturgy groups and justice groups danced, sang and prayed together.