

waterwheel

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

Beauty in All Its Glory

By Mary E. Hunt

When the headlines are more than I can bear, I sometimes turn right to the arts section of the news-paper. Living in the Washington, DC, area is a privilege because there are rich and abundant artistic offerings every day that one can read about, if not always experience firsthand. Ditto for New York City, whose *Times* I read religiously.

Yes, religiously, as much for the arts and leisure news as for the often hard to digest "real" stuff. Small town papers have art sections, whether it is the report of the local garden club's meeting or a review of the high school play. I read those, too, when I have a chance because they connect me, like religion ought to do, with the whole of creation in all its glory.

endanger our grandchildren. Likewise, religious news is rarely good on issues dear to my heart. Word of priests sexually abusing nuns runs next to reports of religious groups excluding same-sex lovers from full membership. It is more than enough to try one's soul. People sometimes ask me how I stand it, what keeps me going. The short answer is beauty. Without beauty, I reply, what's the point?

I see beauty virtually everywhere. This is not some Pollyannaish reaction to the market's gyrations, or a spiritualized sense that even plastic and Styrofoam have their allure. Rather, it is a sense that the mill workers who praised "bread and roses" had their aesthetic houses in order. One without the other is empty. Both flourish in abundance when allowed to. Both need to be redistributed to

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had their aesthetic houses in order.
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The need to be connected to beauty in its myriad forms runs deep. Feminist theology, ethics and ritual, WATER's daily fare, can be hard on the soul. We need a new feminist aesthetic, a renewed appreciation of what makes life worth living.

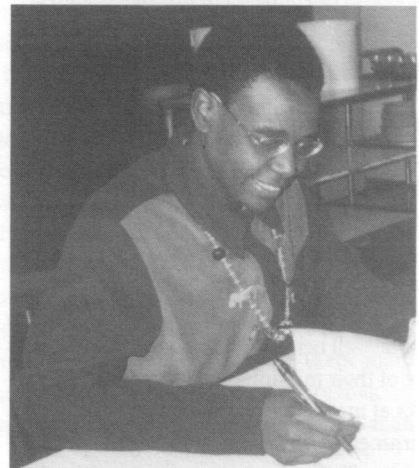
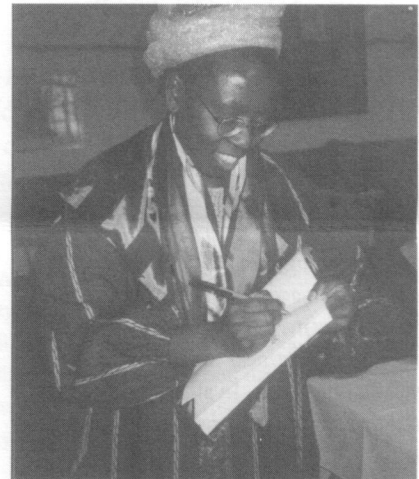
The second Bush administration policies are like a rerun of Ronald Reagan minus the Hollywood gloss. It seems clear early on that so many of the issues I care about are in trouble: tax cuts will benefit the rich; assaults on abortion rights will harm women; renege on environmental protection will

overcome the gross inequities created by cultures that see no problem when opulence is encouraged to the detriment of survival. Such is beyond ugly. It is sinister and evil.

When the Taliban in Afghanistan destroyed the Buddhist statues, global outcry was understandably loud. They countered with the notion that they were offended that outsiders would pay to protect the artwork but not to feed the children. Now the statues are gone and the children are still hungry. Collective insanity is in motion. The connection
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Signing their books for WATER's Carol Murdock Scinto Resource Center: (top) Musimbi Kanyoro, editor of *In Search of a Round Table: Gender, Theology and Church Leadership*; Nyambura Njoroge, author of *An African Christian Feminist Ethic*.

Editorial

The major religious news of the new Bush administration is the ill-conceived idea of the so-called faith-based initiatives. According to this scheme, religious organizations would be eligible for federal government money to carry out social programs for people who are poor, ill, drug addicted, imprisoned or needy.

At first glance, the plan seems like a logical extension of current policy of government and religious cooperation. Groups like Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, United Jewish Communities and others have provided services for decades. But in fact it differs significantly. At least in the early drafts, it would allow religious groups to carry out their social work as well as their religious missions in ways that blur the lines of separation between religion and politics, formerly known as church and state.

The plan has been criticized from all sides. The religious right is afraid that the Hare Krishnas and Wiccans will get funded. Indeed some such groups already offer programs that, as the President puts it, "get results," thus they would be eligible. The religious left is concerned that discrimination in employment, for example, against gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender people will be paid for by government funds. A pending case of a lesbian fired in Kentucky by an agency that receives government funds seems a harbinger of things to come. Recent nastiness included Rev. Jerry Falwell dissing Islam. In all, there are many questions, few answers and a boatload of red flags.

What everyone misses in this discussion is what Carol Adams, in the struggle for respect for animals, calls the "absent referent." That refers to the obvious that no one sees. For hamburger eaters, the absent referent is a cow named Betsy, whom they see as lunch on a roll. In the funding case, the absent referent is government responsibility for the well being of its most vulnerable citizens.

Religious groups are not primarily social service providers. They are designed for the spiritual well being of their adherents. That some of their missions encourage concrete works of mercy does not mean that the government is exempt from being the primary provider. To the contrary, religious citizens of all faiths and of no faith can join together and insist that before any tax cut comes the common good. That would be a faith-based initiative of historic proportions.

*The challenge is finding room for more,
operating out of a model of plenty
and not scarcity.*

Beauty...

(Continued from page 1)

between art and politics is always tight, with religion often the glue that holds it together.

How many more flaps will we endure over images of the Virgin Mary and the guests at the Last Supper? It seems one can predictably rile the mayor of New York by exhibiting Mary in some less than blond-haired, blue-eyed form. He gets high marks for his histrionics and the art world gets some notice, but culturally it is another dead end. Religiously it is a disaster.

The beauty of beauty is our ability to project on paper, on stage, through the printed word, in prayers or dance, through the culinary arts or paper mache what enlivens our spirits, what we think of as good. Message art is still art, the medium sometimes playing second fiddle. But the common effort—whether in putting a nutritious meal on the table or painting a portrait, whether writing a sonnet or a love letter, whether putting the kindergarten painting up on the refrigerator or standing in line to view one more Impressionist extravaganza—lies in the desire to experience something beautiful. Good luck finding consensus, but there is no lack of effort. To encourage that effort is, to my mind, one of the cardinal points of a feminist religious aesthetic.

Another important feature is practicality, or art for more than art's sake. A recent exhibit at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, DC, showed African American women's quilts. It was breathtaking in the intricacy of the designs, the creativity of the colors, the imaginative use of form, and the practicality of the medium. I was warmed just seeing them hung, while surely these covers warmed some bodies in their day. Granted, every expression of beauty is not functional in this way—sometimes it warms only the heart—but when form and function meet, the genius of the human spirit shines more brightly.

Another development is explicitly feminist religious art. Virtually every religious tradition has its own aesthetic expression. This is beginning to emerge, albeit slowly and without much economic encouragement among my colleagues. Patronizing the arts is an old religious practice that we see too little of in the current cycle. I wish I had deep pockets so I

would not have to decide between donating to a campaign to end the death penalty or a fund to sponsor ballet for disadvantaged children. Without both neither makes sense.

I turn to trusted sources for some of these new aesthetic expressions. I look to the Grail, that intrepid women's community that prioritizes social justice and spiritual search. They have a long tradition of religious art, exhibiting things like weavings and pottery in their rural Ohio setting that would make big city museums green with envy. I look to my friend and spiritual guide Jeanette Stokes of the Center for Women and Ministry in the South, who has the grace to be able to paint as well as she writes. I read her articles like sacred text. I love her artwork. She assembled her own labyrinth, giving it her artistic seal like medieval women who pioneered such forms in their communities.

Likewise, in music, I turn to the San Francisco Women's Philharmonic for reliable and authentic music that a patriarchal culture buried. Their latest release, the symphonic work of African American composer Florence Price, shows that access is all. Who knew such beauty was cast aside in favor of some of the noise that passes for music today?

The point is that reaction and taste, preference and enjoyment vary widely. The challenge is finding room for more, operating out of a model of plenty and not scarcity. After all, it takes the same critical ability to like something as to dislike it, to rave as to berate. Why not offer everyone the chance to express her/his creativity and see what shakes?

A feminist religious sense of beauty sometimes seems elusive. With all of the problems we face, some may think it elitist or at least morally mistaken to lavish attention on a well set table, a lovely flower arrangement, a simple wall adorned with a well chosen picture. It would be if the price were hungry children, mistreated animals, homeless families and a barren earth. But both go hand in hand, if we work at it.

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



Daughters Luki Mushala, Rachel Leader, Cecilia Lapp Stoltzfus, Elizabeth Yang Bouyea and Mary Osire prepare to be the next generation of women at work. (Photos courtesy of Christian Family Montessori School and WATER)

Take Our Daughters to Work Day

April 26, 2001

by Cynthia Lapp

Take Our Daughters to Work Day is the fourth Thursday in April each year. The MS. Foundation began this day of education for girls in 1993 to help girls ages 9-15 "stay strong and remain confident." Invite a girl in your life—she doesn't have to be your daughter—to go to work with you on April 26. You can help girls change the world. They are doing it anyway, but imagine what they will accomplish with a little help from their friends!

I have been blessed with two part-time jobs, both of which allow me to take my daughter (and son) to work with me. Many of you have read about Cecilia and Jamie and their adventures in the WATER office with WATER friends from around the world.

Cecilia celebrated her first birthday in the WATER office with Rosemary and Nyair from New Zealand. At 18 months, she splashed in her wading pool at the Washington, DC, Shared Garden with women from Latin America. Her second birthday was celebrated in a Mexican restaurant with a big sombrero, the WATER staff and Grace, an intern from Kansas.

Soon after that she began devoting her days to Christian Family Montessori School so she couldn't come to work much except on special occasions. Now that she is 5 years old she comes to WATER when she has a holiday. She works on the computer, peruses the children's shelf in the Carol Murdock Scinto Resource Center and makes art to help decorate the office. Sometimes she gets put to work licking stamps and sealing envelopes. As a small non-profit, WATER can afford to be family friendly in this way.

My other job, planning worship and leading music at Hyattsville Mennonite Church, has also been friendly to my children. The kids have accompanied me to committee meetings and know that when I am on the phone it is for "church work." Some Sundays, to my chagrin and to the delight of the congregation, one or both climb up on the chancel with me to help lead a song, pull on my clothes or show me the latest in church bulletin art.

My children are fortunate to have a father who is a librarian in a flexible enough workplace that they can accompany him to work, and

not only on the nationally designated day. Eric takes Cecilia or Jamie to work when I can not. At St. John's College they learn how a library works and how kind college students can be.

I admit that some days it is a challenge to have children at work. I am amazed I ever got anything done at WATER when my children were here. And it can be difficult to have a conversation with a parishioner while Jamie is clammering for cookies. But the rewards are greater than the regrets.

Taking our daughters to work is a nice idea for those of us who love our work. But what about those who do not enjoy their work, would not want their daughters to do the kind of work they do, who are not welcome to bring their children even for one day while they clean motel rooms or scour pots and pans? Enjoying work is a privilege that many women do not have. And in the US economy, even while the unemployment rate is low, there are plenty of women who are still unemployed with no job to go to alone much less with a daughter.

So let's not stop at work. Let's also take our children to the soup kitchen when we serve, to the post office when we mail letters to our legislators, to parades and protests when we join together for just causes. Taking our children to work is one way to teach them about what they can be when they grow up. But they can be more than workers. They can be companions in the struggle for justice—at any age. Happily, mine are.

Cynthia Lapp, MTS, is a staff member at WATER, music director at Hyattsville Mennonite Church and mother of two. She serves on the board of Christian Family Montessori School.

The beauty of the universe surrounds all of humanity, especially during mid-spring. May festivals in the Northern hemisphere (November in the Southern hemisphere) celebrate this fertility. This month—for some dedicated to Mary the Mother of God, for others focused on May Day or Beltane—honors those who bring forth life. The Earth is warming again and the sun grows stronger. Beauty exists for all creation to notice, delight in and give praise to our Creator.

This ecofeminist liturgy gives praise for the beauty of the Earth. It invites participants to walk in beauty and to restore beauty to the Earth. The Earth needs our protection so that it can be beautiful beyond seven generations.

Preparation

Place a candle, bowl of water, feather, and plant on the central altar table. Around them put a variety of symbols that represent the Earth's beauty (i.e. shells, rocks, flowers).

Naming the Circle

Welcome to this liturgy, "Walk in Beauty." All of life is bursting forth in beauty these days—crocuses, daffodils, tulips, cherry blossoms, flowering trees. Let us speak our names and describe something of the Earth that is beautiful to us. (*Naming*)

Song: "For the Beauty of the Earth" by F. S. Pierpont (1864), in **Bring the Feast: Songs from the Re-Imagining Community**, c. 1998.

For the beauty of the Earth,
For the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies,
Source of All to you we raise
This our hymn of grateful praise.

Call to Gather

(Four different people standing at the four directions—East, South, West, and North—call participants to prayer. If appropriate and convenient, each caller interacts with the element s/he names.)

(The caller faces East and blows a feather.)
Spirit of the East,
Filled with the winds of the air cycle,
Breathing the universe in and out again,
Come, bring beauty to planet Earth.

(The caller faces South and lights a candle.)
Spirit of the South,
Filled with the power of the fire cycle,
Producing energy to warm cold bodies,
Come, bring beauty to planet Earth.

(The caller faces West, takes water from a bowl and sprinkles the gathered.)
Spirit of the West,
Filled with the flow of the water cycle,
Pouring moisture in, through and out of you,
Come, bring beauty to planet Earth.

(The caller faces North and touches a plant.)
Spirit of the North,
Filled with the creation of the Earth cycle,
Producing food to feed hungry creatures,
Come, bring beauty to planet Earth.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

(All pray in unison.)

Creator Spirit, Wisdom Sophia, we give you thanks and praise. You make all life holy and fill the universe with your goodness. Give us strength to understand and eyes to see all that you entrust to our care. Teach us to walk the soft Earth as relatives of all that live and inhabit your creation. We honor and praise You, now and forever. Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

Song: "Now I Walk in Beauty," recorded on **Fire Within**, by Libana, c. 1990.

Now I walk in beauty, beauty is before me,
Beauty is behind me, above and below me,
Around and within me.

(There is a lovely dance that goes with this song: line up, with your left hand on the shoulder of the person in front of you. Walk slowly, in time to the music, using your right hand.
"beauty is before me"
hand on person-in-front's right shoulder
"beauty is behind me"
hand on the hand on your left shoulder
"above and below me"
circle hand above and below
"around and within me"
circle hand side to side, then to your heart.)

Reading: Listen to the words of Hildegard of Bingen, from **Meditations with Hildegard of Bingen**, edited by Gabriele Uhlein, c. 1983.

Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars.

Gaze at the beauty of Earth's greeting.
Now, think.
What delight God gives to humankind
With all these things.

Hymn of Praise: "All Creatures of Our God," tune: Lasst Uns Erfreuen (1623), text: Francis of Assisi, in **Everflowing Streams**, edited by Ruth Duck and Michael Bausch, c. 1981. Lyrics and spoken text adapted from Ps. 148 by Diann Neu.

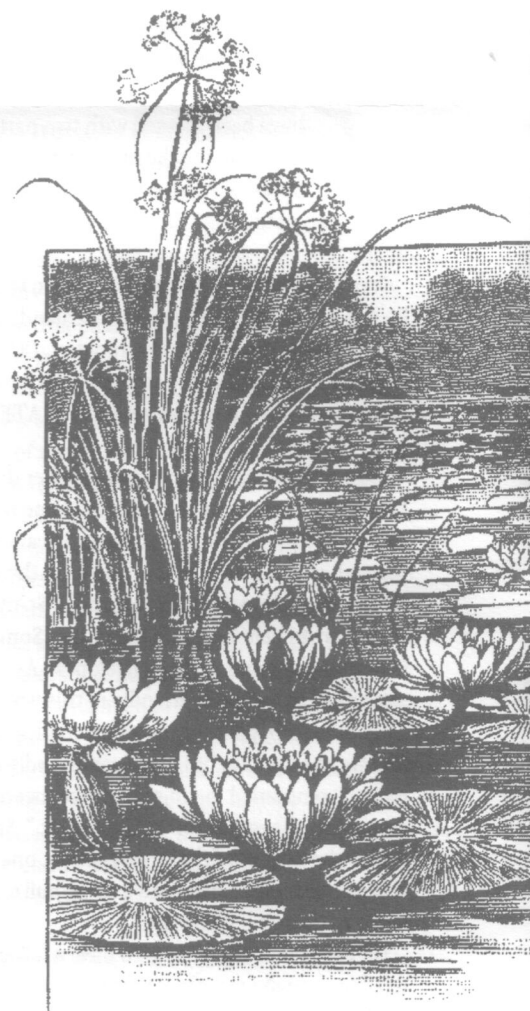
(One voice proclaims the spoken part. All sing.)

Spoken

Praise God you holy ones.
Praise Creator Spirit, all shining stars.

Walk in

By Dia



Sung Response

All creatures of our loving God,
Lift up your voice with praise and laud:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
You burning sun with golden beam.
You silver moon with softer gleam!
O praise God! O praise God!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Spoken

Praise Creator Spirit, highest heavens.
She established you forever and ever.

Sung Response

You rushing wind, air, clouds and rain,
By which all creatures you sustain,
Alleluia! Alleluia!

n Beauty

n L. Neu



You rising morn, in praise rejoice,
You lights of evening, find a voice
O praise God! O praise God!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Spoken

Praise Wisdom Sophia all the Earth.
Storm winds that fulfill God's word.

Sung Response

You swirling water, flowing clear,
Make music for your God to hear,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
You glowing fire who lights the night,
Providing warmth, enhancing sight.
O praise God! O praise God!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Spoken

You mountains and all you hills.
You creeping things and flying birds.

Sung Response

Dear gentle Earth, who day by day
Unfolds your blessings on our way,
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Let all on Earth our Creator bless,
And praise our God in holiness,
O praise God! O praise God!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Spoken

Let God be praised by all the faithful ones,
By the women of (*name your group*).

Reading: Listen to the words of Julian of
Norwich, from **Meditations with Julian of
Norwich**, edited by Brendan Doyle, c. 1983.

Be a gardner.
Dig a ditch,
toil and sweat,
and turn the earth upside down
and seek the deepness
and water the plants in time.
Continue this labor
and make sweet floods to run
and noble and abundant fruits
to spring.
Take this food and drink
and carry it to God
as your true worship.

Sung Response

O praise God! O praise God!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Reflection

The Earth is full of beauty. We walk in
beauty daily. What beauty did you notice
today? What beauty do you wish for this
season? How will you work to restore beauty
to the Earth? (*Sharing*)

Blessing the Earth's Beauty

In front of us are beautiful gifts from the
Earth. Take one with which you have a kinship
right now. Listen to the message the symbol
has for you. (*Pause*) Let us bless these
symbols of the Earth's beauty. (*Participants
offer blessings in their own words.*)

Greeting of Beauty

Filled with the beauty of the gifts of the Earth
that we have blessed and with the beauty of
one another, let us offer one another a greeting
of beauty by exchanging our symbols with one
another and saying, "You are beauty for our
world." (*Greetings*)

Song: "Wings Unfurled" by Colleen Fulmer,
from **Her Wings Unfurled**, c. 1989.

You are fashioned in my image.
You are woman, radiant Glory.
Spirit rising, wings unfurled;
You are beauty for our world.

I am fashioned in God's image.
I am woman, radiant Glory.
Spirit rising, wings unfurled;
I am beauty for our world.

We are fashioned in God's image.
We are women, radiant Glory.
Spirit rising, wings unfurled;
We are beauty for our world.

Sending Forth

Beautiful women,
Let us go forth to walk in beauty.
May beauty be within us.
May we call forth beauty wherever we are.
May beauty be ours in eternal life.

Let us open our circle.

*Diann L. Neu, M.Div., STM, MSW,
theologian, liturgist and psychotherapist, is
co-founder and co-director of WATER.*



WATER

Making Its Mark

Networking

The onset of e-mail has facilitated communication among WATER colleagues. If you are not on our e-mail list, water-l, please feel free to sign up. Send a message to *majordomo@hers.com* with the words "subscribe water-l" (that's water-hyphen-letter "l", NOT number 1) in the body of the message.

Much more happens from the hub that is WATER than makes it on our e-list. What follows is a sample of events, people and publications that make up this remarkable network. We share them to give other local groups ideas for programs and priorities, as well as to suggest reading and discussion topics for your use.

A Philadelphia group, led by **Gaile Pohlhaus** of **Villanova University**, started a local WATER discussion group. They kicked off their meeting by reading the "Madeleva Manifesto," a document written by a number of Catholic feminist theologians.

Massachusetts Women-Church is deep into the question of archives, an issue we at WATER have ahead of us. Where to put one's papers, indeed where to house the materials that belong to public organizations, is a matter for serious consideration for every responsible group if we are to make our place in history. One archive of note in this regard is part of the **Ann Ida Gannon Center for Women and Leadership at Loyola University** in Chicago where the **Women-Church Convergence** archives are located. Another is the newly energized **Archives of Women in Theological Scholarship at Union Theological Seminary** in New York City. They are set up "to serve as the living memory/documentary repository for materials pertaining to Christian women's movements for progressive social change, ca. 1960 - the present, by identifying, preserving and making available for use the movements' permanently valuable records."

Mary E. Hunt taught a course on "Gender and Religion" to Latin American colleagues in

Sao Paulo, Brasil through CESEP, a longtime social change and educational center. It was wonderful to work with dozens of women (and a few men) from **Colombia, Spain, Chile, Argentina, Ecuador and Brasil**, who are giving concrete expression to these issues in their ministry.

Mary met with **Unitarian Universalist** women and men in NYC for a workshop on "Spirituality in a Social Justice Key." She did an in-service event for the national staff of the **UUA in Boston** on "How Liberal Religion Can Turn Conservative: The Dilemmas of Marriage and the Military." **Diane Miller**, longtime WATER colleague and director of ministry, is running for president of the UUA. Our best wishes to her.

Dr. Hunt participated in a panel of alumnae/i at the **Graduate Theological Union** in honor of the presidential inauguration of **James Donahue**, her GTU classmate. The panel looked at "Religion, Power and the New Economy" from a variety of critical starting points.

Marsie Silvestro and **Robin Anasazi** run **Rainbow Light**, a Gloucester, MA, center for spirituality and the arts. **Jean Gallo** and Mary Hunt led a thoughtful evening on what's ahead with the Bush administration's policies. This followed Marsie's successful concert weekend, proving that beauty and politics are one.

Diann Neu offered a workshop at **Episcopal Divinity School** entitled "Breaking Silence: Healing from Violence—Emancipatory Liturgies for Social Change." Her liturgical gifts were utilized by the **World YWCA** when, during her Doctor of Ministry studies in Geneva, Switzerland, she was asked to facilitate that staff's mourning of their colleague, **Marie-Jo**.

Publishing

WATER staff write on a range of topics in many places. Recent publications include:

Ecumenical Review, Vol. 53, No. 1, January 2001, (pp. 86-89).

In an issue on women changing churches, **Mary Hunt's** piece, "WATER: Necessary Along the Way" provides an overview of this organization and its place in the larger movement for social and religious change.

CONCILIUM 2000/5, IN THE POWER OF WISDOM, edited by **Maria Pillar Aquino** and **Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza**.

This marvelous issue includes a wonderful introduction by Elisabeth, "Walking in the Way of Wisdom," (pp. 7-10) and a powerful conclusion by Pilar, "Towards a New World in the Power of Wisdom" (pp. 129-136). See also Mary Hunt's "Sophia's Sisters in Struggle: Kyriarchal Backlash, Feminist Vision," (pp. 23-32) and Diann Neu's "A Voice of Wisdom-Sophia: Feminist Therapy/Spiritual Direction" (pp. 43-54).

Timbrel, Mennonite Women's magazine, January/February 2001 carried an excerpt from **Cindy Lapp's WATERwheel** article "One in a Million," Summer 2000.

Conspirando, December 2000, No. 34 features **Diann Neu's** article "El empoderamiento de las mujeres a traves de los rituales feministas" (pp. 3-5).

Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge, edited by Cheris Kramerae and Dale Spender (NY: Routledge, 2000, 4 volumes, \$495) includes a section on religion edited by WATER colleague **Mary John Mananzan**. Mary Hunt's entry on "women-church" (pp. 1129-1130) is a helpful introduction.

See Resources (p. 7) for **GOOD SEX** and **GOD FORBID** volumes featuring writings by many WATER colleagues.

Alpert, Rebecca T., ed. **VOICES OF THE RELIGIOUS LEFT: A CONTEMPORARY SOURCEBOOK.** Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2000 (294 pages, \$27.95).

At your fingertips, the issues and articles that prove that there is a left left. Includes Rosemary Ruether on family, Mary E. Hunt and Frances Kissling on the *New York Times* ad and Rita Brock on re-imagining God.

Andrew, Elizabeth J. **SWINGING ON THE GARDEN GATE.** Boston, MA: Skinner House Books, 2000 (200 pages, \$14).

A gripping memoir of a religious bisexual woman who speaks her truth with power.

Boulding, Elise. **CULTURES OF PEACE: THE HIDDEN SIDE OF HISTORY.** Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000 (347 pages, \$24.95).

Wisdom, action and urgency describe this collection by a longtime peace activist whose insight has grounded many a movement.

Davis, Patricia H. **BEYOND NICE: THE SPIRITUAL WISDOM OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS.** Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001 (131 pages, \$15).

Our young women have much to teach. This is a useful start that points out the need for an interfaith collection on the same topic.

Geitz, Elizabeth Rankin, Marjorie A. Burke and Ann Smith, eds. **WOMEN'S UNCOMMON PRAYERS: OUR LIVES REVEALED, NURTURED, CELEBRATED.** Harrisburg, Pa: Morehouse Publishing, 2000 (370 pages, \$23).

Not all inclusive in language/imagery, these prayers nonetheless show the wide variety of reasons to pray. A good start with more to come.

Jantzen, Grace. **JULIAN OF NORWICH.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000 (230 pages, \$16.95).

A new edition with a postmodern introduction to a classic study of Julian. Grace Jantzen brings a 14th century anchoress to contemporary life.

Jung, Patricia Beattie, Mary Hunt and Radhika Balakrishnan, eds. **GOOD SEX: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES**

Resources

FROM THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001 (220 pages, \$20).

Challenging, coherent essays by eleven scholar/activists from eight countries and six religious traditions, this collection is intellectual material with practical results. The Introduction describes this kind of global feminist collaboration as a model for future work. Writers include Judith Plaskow, Grace Jantzen, Rebecca Alpert, Wanda Deifelt among others.

Kogawa, Joy with artwork by Lilian Broca. **A SONG OF LILITH.** Vancouver, BC: Polestar Book Publishers, 2000 (110 pages, \$16.95).

Why Lilith? This powerful, lyrical, imaginative, provocative, inspiring book will provide some answers in stirring poetry and beautiful illustrations. Be enriched by it.

Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. **OMNIGENDER: A TRANSRELIGIOUS APPROACH.** Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2001 (192 pages, \$18).

Trusted evangelical feminist sister Virginia Ramey Mollenkott opens a new chapter in religious gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender history. Binary categories are over. Renewed openness to human diversity is called for in this smart, courageous, forward looking text.

Rose, Emilie P. **REACHING FOR THE LIGHT: A GUIDE FOR RITUAL ABUSE SURVIVORS AND THEIR THERAPISTS.** Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1996 (241 pages, \$14.95).

The problem of ritual abuse is more common than many pastoral agents think. Here is a way to learn and approach it with sensitivity and skill.

Sands, Kathleen M., ed. **GOD FORBID: RELIGION AND SEX IN AMERICAN PUBLIC LIFE.** New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000 (269 pages, \$35).

A powerful collection by progressives who prove that the Religious Right has no monopoly on religious discourse. Judith Plaskow's essay, "Decentering Sex: Rethinking Jewish Sexual Ethics" is

worth the price of the book. But don't miss Rosemary Ruether, Rebecca Alpert, Mary Hunt, Traci West, Rita Brock, Janet Jakobsen, Daniel Maguire and Kathleen Sands, among others. Taken with **GOOD SEX** (above), a discussion group would have material for months.

Tanenbaum, Leora, Claudia R. Chernov and Hadasah Tropper. **MOONBEAMS: A HADASSAH ROSH HODESH GUIDE.** Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000 (227 pages, \$20).

A practical guide for women engaged in textual study and monthly gatherings. Helpful bibliography and creative suggestions for living out the faith.

THE INCLUSIVE HEBREW SCRIPTURES; VOLUME I: THE TORAH. W. Hyattsville, MD: Priests for Equality, 2000 (327 pages, \$24.95).

Another good effort at rendering sacred texts readable for postmodern people.

Waun, Maurine C. **MORE THAN WELCOME: LEARNING TO EMBRACE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDERED PERSONS IN THE CHURCH.** St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999 (153 pages, \$15.99).

A solid treatment of just how to be welcoming to those who have been left aside. Now no one can say, "We just don't know what to do."

Webb, Val. **WHY WE ARE EQUAL: INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST THEOLOGY.** St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999 (164 pages, \$14.99).

A nice, smooth introduction for people who are new to the field and coming from a fairly conservative starting point. Helpful study questions included.

Weissler, Chava. **VOICES OF THE MATRIARCHS: LISTENING TO THE PRAYERS OF EARLY MODERN JEWISH WOMEN.** Boston: Beacon Press, 1998 (288 pages, \$28.50).

Tkhines are women's devotional prayers in the vernacular. They reveal a great deal about Askenazic women's spirituality.

Wood, Jamie and Tara Seefeldt. **THE WICCA COOKBOOK.** Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2000 (199 pages, \$19.95).

Good Gumbo and Witch's Brew, Hot Cross Buns (for Ostara celebrations, the cross signifying balance) and Beltane Oatcakes make for good eating and fascinating spiritual reading. Yum.

Music

Henkes, Lea. **LIKE AN EMPTY BOWL: MUSIC FOR PRAYER AND REFLECTION.** Cresco, IA: FSPA, 1999 music book \$12 and CD \$15 plus p+h: contact: Prairiewoods, FSC 120 East Boyson Road, Hiawatha, IA 52233-1277; 319-395-6700.

Music that can be used effectively for rituals, with good instruction on how to incorporate it for effective prayer.

For Children

Bea, Holly. **WHERE DOES GOD LIVE?** Tiburon, CA: Starseed Press, 1997 (32 pages, \$14).

Marvelous pictures and prose. Perfect for children whose adults want them to grow up with an inclusive faith.

Wildsmith, Brian. **A CHRISTMAS STORY.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 1989 (24 pages, \$17).

A delightful tale of the little donkey and his friend Rebecca who are part of Jesus' community.

Video

Chaya, Miriam and Judith Montell. **TIMBRELS & TORAHs.** El Cerrito, CA: Joy of Wisdom Productions, 955 Galvin Drive, mirchaya@aol.com, 2000 (VHS, 36 minutes, \$65).

A groundbreaking film documenting Simchat Hochmah — a new rite of passage marking the journey from midlife to the elder years.



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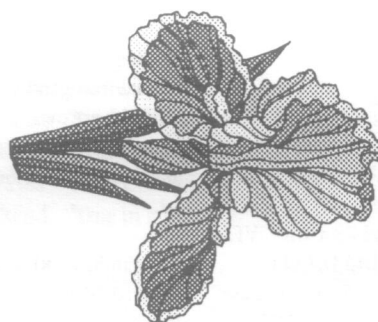
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