

# waterwheel

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

## Cuba: So Near Yet So Far Away

By Mary E. Hunt

**T**hanks to the generosity of many WATER donors, our Women Crossing Worlds program extended to Cuba this spring in a follow-up to the Shared Garden project of several years ago. After our nearly 20 years of work in Latin America, it became obvious that we were missing a key ingredient in the long-term exchange of people and resources between WATER and sister groups. That missing link was Cuba, in reality our nearest Latin American neighbor.

In fact, Cuba is so far away because of unjust U.S. foreign policy that results in a costly blockade. It leaves ordinary Cubans without adequate fever-lowering drugs for children and sufficient scotch tape to catalogue library books, not to mention what the newly minted Quebec trade accords will do now that Cuba is excluded from hemispheric plans.

The history of U.S.-Cuban relations is complicated and disputed. But there are signs of thawing, like the recent meeting of

around the world, decided to have its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in Havana, it seemed the perfect entree for WATER. After all, I had begun my connections with Latin America as a Frontier Intern in Argentina (1980-82) and that was the catalyst for WATER's long-term involvement with women's groups in the south.

Diann Neu of WATER and Claudia Highbaugh, Disciples of Christ minister and Chaplain of Harvard Divinity School, joined me for a week in Matanzas where Clara Luz Ajo, who participated in two Shared Gardens in Chile and Brazil, is on the faculty and where Ofelia Ortega is the rector. Their warm welcome and insistence that we come and see for ourselves how women in theological education make their way in Cuba was all we needed to get organized.

The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas was founded in 1946 with Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopal roots.

*That missing link was Cuba, in reality our nearest Latin American neighbor.*

Bay of Pigs invaders with the invaded, mostly old men swapping war stories and marveling that they are all still around to tell them. This is not to suggest that Fidel Castro's endless, election-less reign and all that goes with it is acceptable. But it is to say that we as women who cross worlds to share resources and learn from one another can no longer be held back by fears and usually unenforced travel laws.

Hence, when Frontier Internship in Mission, a progressive Geneva-based study and leadership exchange program that sends young people to ecumenical movements

Now its 200 students come from a range of Christian traditions including Quakers, Baptists and Lutherans (so much for godless Communism) and include nearly equal numbers of women and men. The setting is gorgeous above the Bay of Matanzas where the San Juan and Yurami Rivers come together. Frequent liturgies take place in a breezy chapel under lush green trees. Most students live on campus with their families so there are more than forty children adding spice to the scene.

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Cuban and WATER women spiral dance and bless one another as connections deepen.

## Editorial

What are the limits of outrage? News of the rapes of Catholic nuns by Catholic priests in 23 countries qualifies as right up there. This horror was surpassed by two related matters, first, that the Vatican has been sitting on well-documented materials in this regard for several years, and second, that no one was particularly surprised by the news. After all, if religious officials could mistreat women in so many other ways, why should this come as such a shock?

Well, it does scandalize us at WATER. It makes us eager to double our efforts to eradicate the root causes of such crimes: sexism in all its forms; the mistaken notion that women are not full citizens and believers; structures that place some in higher positions and create impunity for such actions; ideas of divine that confuse abuse with legitimate power. There is work to do on many fronts.

Criminal behavior has consequences in civilized societies and this is no exception. It will take concerted efforts by women's groups, led in this case by Catholics for a Free Choice and supported by 8th Day Center for Justice, WOC, WATER, the Feminist Majority and other groups, to bring about change. But it will happen because there are limits.

## Feminist Liberation Theologians' News

Satoko Yamaguchi from the Center for Feminist Theology and Ministry in Japan writes: "Some of us are currently studying why God is so predominately and pervasively conceived as father in a church located in a culture of non-gendering language such as Japanese and how we can deal with the problem. I understand that among English speaking people there are various inclusive language programs for inclusive imagination of God. In our Japanese church we have always been using inclusive language, so to speak, since our language is non-gendering. However, we have the above-mentioned problem."

She invites WATER colleagues to send suggestions that will help the group "expand our questions and imaginations broadly to address the issue." It is a difficult matter to be sure.

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*We were welcomed into the women's group, each of us telling a bit of our personal history and then adding a patch of cloth to the quilt-like fabric used at the women's services.*

## Cuba...

(Continued from page 1)

We offered insights from our respective fields in several classes: Diann on feminist liturgy, Claudia on womanist biblical studies and I on feminist ethics. Of special note was the interest among students in the African roots of theology. Claudia has already begun to facilitate visits by African American theologians to Matanzas. We were welcomed into the women's group, each of us telling a bit of our personal history and then adding a patch of cloth to the quilt-like fabric used at the women's services. Indeed we felt sewn into their midst, astonished at how warmly we were received even though as Yankees we come from a country that has so mistreated theirs.

The highlight of our exchange was an overnight retreat with 25 women from the seminary in the famous Cuban beach town of Varadero. The local Presbyterian Church, named for Dora Valentin, a well respected ecumenical colleague who passed away prematurely, has opened a Social and Educational Services Center, on the beach where Cubans can enjoy the sea without paying the exorbitant price of tourists. The house is beautiful; the staff create a welcoming space for prayer and camaraderie.

Our group focused on "Gender and Spirituality" with workshops and plenty of time to discuss how such issues play out in a Cuban context, especially for women entering what has been traditionally the male field of ministry. Some of our best conversations took place in the ocean where we spoke candidly about the contradictions we experience and the hopes we have for more coherence in our work. It was a first overnight away from the seminary for our colleagues, and seemed to breathe new life into their group as they struggle to cope with their respective denominations, some of which make ministry for women very challenging. Mujerista theologian Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz of Drew University was in Cuba when we were, teaching at Matanzas and visiting in Havana. Her experiences and expertise are invaluable as we learn our way.

Another taste of Cuba came in Havana where we met with the colleagues of the Study Center

of the Council of Churches to discuss ethics. It was a thoughtful exchange that will continue, as our bridge grows stronger. Ah, Havana, that city of movies and literature, site of struggles to keep a country afloat. Crumbling buildings are getting as much of a facelift as meager resources permit, but the spirit of Cuban independence is everywhere.

Frontier Internship's meeting included visits to schools and the Martin Luther King Center for social justice. We toured a naval academy recently converted into a medical school for thousands of young people from more than twenty countries, including the U.S. by special arrangement through the Congressional Black Caucus. The school plans to turn out doctors who will return to their respective homes—primarily those hard hit by HIV/AIDS and lacking in basic medical services, like the rural south in the U.S.—to practice a different brand of medicine, combining the most sophisticated techniques with the most traditional values of service.

The FIM meeting included 42 people from 18 countries, all looking ahead to the next 40 years of ecumenical work. Our colleagues, especially theologian Clara Ajo and her liturgy/dance team, led the worship all week, sharing Cuban culture, music and insight. It was as if FIM that launched my life-changing experience in Latin America is now benefiting from the same rich store of resources that WATER is in touch with in Cuba. There was a feeling of integration and a hope that nothing will stop us and our children from loving our neighbors better in the future.

Meanwhile, the needs are great for everything from computer disks to vitamins, from notebooks and legal sized file folders to books in Spanish and Portuguese, computer programs and blood pressure cuffs. We have committed to on-going support for our friends there, and with the continued generosity of WATER donors we will be able to provide some. For now, Cuba feels like it is right next door. And it is.

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

# Meeting Around a Multi-Colored Cloth and a Cuban Seashell

By Clara Luz Ajo Lazaro



From left to right: Claudia Highbaugh stitches her story into the cloth; Cuban and U.S. women on retreat together; Miriam holds the seashell as she tells her story.

A beautiful multi-colored cloth, candles and incense, and a big seashell from the warm blue waters that bathe our Cuban land filled the center of the room. Our group of women teachers and students from the Seminario Evangelico de Teologia de Matanzas, Cuba, gathers around these symbols often.

The tones and shades of the colorful cloth pieces reflect the history of each of us. These stories determine our subjects for discussion; they help us understand and look at our lives through the lens of gender analysis. They unite us as a group; they make us laugh and cry together. They teach us and feed us.

It all started as an informal meeting. We felt the need to gather, to share, to talk about our lives. "Women talk!" as some of our male students used to say and still say. They are suspicious of our group as if we are a subversive group whose objective is to displace them. But really! We have never thought about such a ridiculous thing! As women students and professors we have a lot to talk about among ourselves. We have experiences to share that make us reflect on our actions as women in a Cuban society, on our role as Christian women, on our different jobs and responsibilities in our Churches. We also talk about forms and methods we can use in the academic environment to carry out biblical-theological reflection from the gender lens.

We started meeting informally just to share. Our meetings were very pleasant. They became a space and a moment that we all looked forward to. Gradually the subjects came up: domestic violence, limitations imposed by our culture and tradition, the patterns into which the gender roles place us, the element of liberation that we find in the Gospel message, and above all, the role that our Christian tradition and our Cuban Church has played in the exclusion of women.

The moment came when we felt the need to

organize ourselves better, to develop and go deeper into new ways to continue to have as a base our own experiences and points of view, reflections and analysis from a gender perspective. The idea of making our "quilt" emerged from our life stories. It started to take shape with episodes, important moments, stories and anecdotes. Each story unites us in a new experience and through them we learn from each other.

Our meetings do not follow the methodology of the traditional meetings of any other social group. We like formality within informality and the spontaneity that stimulates creativity and gives new enchantment to our meetings.

The most important activity this year was spending two days together in a beautiful place near the ocean. Three of our North American friends, Mary Hunt, Diann Neu and Claudia Highbaugh, were with us on this occasion. They are theologians with whom we shared experiences and reflections about ethics and sexuality, liturgy from a feminist perspective and Biblical hermeneutics from a womanist perspective. This friendly visit opened the group to the opportunity to exchange experiences with the women from WATER. It gave us also the opportunity to connect with black students from Harvard Divinity School.

One of our projects for this year is to start a small newsletter that we could share with students (male and female) that would contain interesting elements, anecdotes, comments, stories, reflections and subjects that may be of interest and would transmit the colors which make up our quilt, and the incredible and beautiful forms of our Seashell.

Clara Luz Ajo Lazaro, Ph.D., is a Professor at the Evangelical Seminary at Matanzas, Cuba. Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., was on her doctoral committee. Cecilia Alava, WATER volunteer, translated this article from Spanish.

## FIM 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Statement on the USA Embargo on Cuba

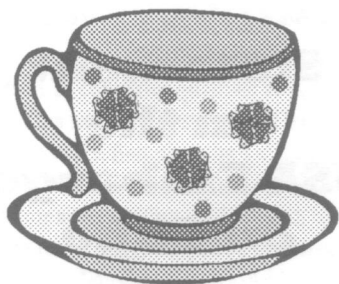
(excerpted)

Havana, April 3, 2001: Forty-two participants, representing 18 countries in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and North America gathered at the National Hotel in Havana, Cuba, for the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting of the Frontier Internship in Mission (FIM). Through Bible studies, worship, deliberations, exposure trips to local situations and interaction with Cuban brothers and sisters, the participants were made aware of the complex realities of the Cuban situation and witnessed first hand the sufferings of its people as a result of the U.S. economic embargo and the policy of political isolation imposed by the U.S. government.

Frontier Internship in Mission was established around the time when the embargo on Cuba was imposed. Four decades later, as we celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and look at the challenges of the present time, we deeply feel that the alienation between the peoples of Cuba and the United States has lasted too long and must end. In this respect, we strongly call for the cessation of the USA embargo against Cuba as a first and critical step to the removal of hostility, mutual suspicion and prejudices, and to pave the way for friendly relationships among neighbors.







Friendship is a gift that is available to each of us. Our friends connect us to ourselves and expand our horizons. Friends are more precious than gold. Some are with us for a lifetime; others come in and out of our lives; some we know briefly. We need to mark the anniversaries of our friendships and celebrate their life-giving and life-transforming power.

This liturgy honors women friends. It was planned with one woman who gathered her friends for a festive meal and liturgy before she retired to another area of the country.

### Preparation

Invite friends to a meal and ask them to bring a special food. Share the meal together and then celebrate this liturgy. Give twelve women each a quote from the "Words about Friendship" section. Make a song sheet for each participant. Place a bowl of water and a vase of flowers in the center of the group. Have a gift for each person, i.e., a shell or rock with the word "friend" on it. Prepare tea and have a tea cup for each friend.

**Gathering Song:** "My Friend You Are A Miracle" by Marsie Silvestro, from *Circling Free*, c. 1983.

In the early morning time,  
When the sun begins to shine  
I see myself in the mirror of your eyes.  
And all the stories shared,  
Exposing what we dare  
Seem to fade into our souls.

**Refrain:** My friend, you are a miracle,  
A song of beauty and of light.  
My friend, you are a miracle,  
The promise of day in my night.

In the early evening time,  
When the sun begins to die

You see yourself in the tears that I cry.  
And all the moments shared,  
Revealing that we care  
Gently fade into our souls. (*Refrain*)

(*Coda*) In the early morning time,  
In the early evening time,  
My friend, you are a miracle,  
A miracle, a miracle, my friend.

### Naming the Circle

Welcome to this liturgy, "Honoring Women Friends." Today we gather to celebrate women's friendships, especially our justice-seeking friends who know us so well.

Who are we here? Who are our friends?  
(*Pause*) Let us introduce ourselves and our friends. Speak your name, and the names of one or two of your justice-seeking friends, then close with the words, "I am a justice-seeking friend." For example, "I am Diann Neu, friend of Mary and Agnes, and I am a justice-seeking friend." (*Naming*)

### The First Sip of Tea

Let us drink tea together, savor the gifts of friendship, and honor our friends. (*Pour the tea*) Let us take this first sip of tea in praise of our community of friends. (*Drink*) Together, let us give thanks for our friends. Please say after me:

Blessed are you, Creator of Friends, (*Echo*)  
For you give us friends who love us fiercely and tenderly, (*Echo*)  
And you delight us with friends to love. (*Echo*)

**Song:** "Make New Friends," Traditional Round.

1. Make new friends, but
2. Keep the old
3. One is silver and the
4. Other gold.

### Call to Friendship

As old and new friends, our lives cross along many paths: home, faith community, work, prayer groups, vacations, children, family, books, professional organizations... We chat, call, write, listen, mentor, guide, pray, sing, laugh, hug, are present, chide and cheer one another. We witness life changes in one

another and are steadfast when lives feel chaotic and unsure. We comfort one another in pain, sorrow and uncertainty. We celebrate life choices, new jobs, special events, births, retirements, deaths.

We are friends as we partner, raise children, divorce, go to school, graduate, start businesses, get promoted or not, resign, change jobs, retire, volunteer, donate, pray and work for social justice.

Each of us is a friendship "home." We cherish in memory our friend's voice, the way she moves, how she dresses, how she looks. Just being who she is—being present in person, by letter, by telephone or e-mail—brings comfort, safety and joy.

### The Second Sip of Tea

Let us dedicate the second sip to ourselves. We give thanks for the qualities we have that make it possible for us to be friends with ourselves and others. Take a few minutes while

# Honoring W

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you sip tea to think of qualities you bring to friendship. (*Pause*) Name one of them. (*Sharing*) Let us give thanks for our friendship qualities, saying:

Blessed are you, Holy Friend, Wisdom Sophia, for creating us to be friends. (*Echo*)

**Words about Friendship:** Most quotes are from *The New Beacon Book of Quotations by Women* by Rosalie Maggio, c. 1996.

Let us listen to what women have said about friendship. Several of you have quotes. Read them in any order you wish. After each four we will sing.

**Song Refrain:** Friend, I will remember you,  
Think of you and pray for you.  
When another day is through  
I'll still be a friend with you.



True friends are those who really know you but love you anyway. Friends are the family we choose for ourselves.

Edna Buchanan, **Suitable for Framing** (1995)

Friendship is the bread of the heart.

Mary Russell Mitford (1853), in the Rev. A.G. L'Estrange, ed., **The Life of Mary Russell Mitford**, vol. 3 (1870)

In each friendship we are brought face to face with ourselves, with one another and with a larger world in which the mysterious forces of attraction work beyond our ultimate control.

Mary E. Hunt, **Fierce Tenderness** (1991)

My friends are my estate.

Emily Dickinson (1858), in Mabel Loomis Todd, ed., **Letters of Emily Dickinson**, vol. 1 (1894)

## Women Friends

Diann L. Neu

**Refrain:** Friend, I will remember you,  
Think of you and pray for you.  
When another day is through  
I'll still be a friend with you.

There are people whom one loves immediately and forever. Even to know they are alive in the world with one is quite enough.

Nancy Spain, **Why I'm Not a Millionaire** (1956)

She is a friend of my mind. She gather me. The pieces I am, she gather them and give them back to me in all the right order.

Toni Morrison, **Beloved** (1987)

Each friend represents a world in us, a world possibly not born until they arrive, and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born.

Anais Nin (1937), **The Diary of Anais Nin**, vol. 2 (1967)

Where you go I will go, and where you live I will live. Your people will be my people and your god my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried.

Ruth 1: 16-17

**Refrain:** Friend, I will remember you,  
Think of you and pray for you.  
When another day is through  
I'll still be a friend with you.

A friend can tell you things you don't want to tell yourself.

Frances Ward Weller, **Boat Song** (1987)

Friendship with oneself is all-important, because without it one cannot be friends with anyone else in the world.

Eleanor Roosevelt, "How to Take Criticism," in **Ladies' Home Journal** (1944)

There was a definite process by which one made people into friends, and it involved talking to them and listening to them for hours at a time.

Rebecca West, **The Thinking Reed** (1936)

A friend is one who knows all about you and loves you just the same.

**The Book of Proverbs**

**Refrain:** Friend, I will remember you,  
Think of you and pray for you.  
When another day is through  
I'll still be a friend with you.

### The Third Sip of Tea

Let us drink this third sip and ask ourselves: What difference have women friends made in my life? Think for a minute. How have women friends invited me to new understandings and commitments in a world so often fraught with injustice? What ways have I helped my friends to see an issue or concern, another person or world affair in a new light? How do I signal to children how important friends are to me? (*Pause*) Let's share our thoughts with one another. (*Sharing*) Let us celebrate these friends, saying:

Blessed are you, Holy Friend, Wisdom Sophia  
For creating many ways to celebrate  
friendship. (*Echo*)

### Prayers for Friends

Let us remember now friends who need our prayers. Speak her name, offer your prayers, float a flower in the water, and we will all respond: "We remember N."

**Refrain:** Friend, I will remember you,  
Think of you and pray for you.  
When another day is through  
I'll still be a friend with you.

### Sending Forth

Today we have gathered as friends, and celebrated women's friendships.

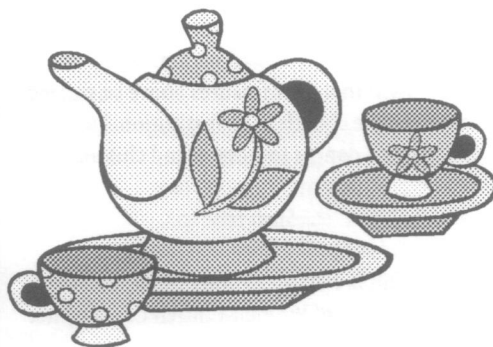
Let us go forth treasuring our friendships.  
Let us go forth remembering justice-seeking friends.

Let us go forth and make friends in all nations.

**Song:** "We Are Friends," text by Diann Neu, music Traditional Round, "Hey, Ho! No-body Home."

1. Friend, Friend, Friend, Friend,
2. Sisters we are made to be friends.
3. Friendship links us one to another,
4. We are friends.

Diann Neu, M.Div, STM, MSW, is co-founder and co-director of WATER.



## Dear Bishops of the World,

On behalf of the Women-Church Convergence, a coalition of thirty-two autonomous Catholic-rooted feminist organizations in the United States, we are outraged by the sexual abuse and exploitation of our sisters by priests around the world.

We deplore the culture of death that permeates our clergy through acts committed against our sisters: rape, coercive abortion, infection with HIV/AIDS, and abandonment of children. We condemn the secrecy, hypocrisy and racism of the institutional church as evidenced in its cover-up of such violations against women's human rights reported to have happened in several African nations, among 23 countries, where such atrocities have been alleged. Covering up such crimes against humanity reflects the worst of Western paternalism, the deadly danger of patriarchy.

You as bishops, "Shepherds of the Flock," are responsible for the actions of your priests. In order to bring justice to the women and children who suffer at the hands of your clergy, we demand the following reparations:

- Money, health care and counseling for the women and children devastated by these crimes,
- Reinstatement of nuns who lost their positions or were dismissed from their religious congregations for speaking out against such injustices and/or for being pregnant,
- Severe sanctions against all perpetrators through criminal prosecution and dismissal from their dioceses and congregations,
- A commission of clergy, religious and laity to examine with open dialogue human sexuality, the sin of sexism and the negative impact of compulsory celibacy as a condition for ordination.

We insist that the measures above be carried out until the church in its institutional form is no longer a danger to women and children.

Sincerely,

Diann L. Neu

Amy Golm, BVM

Co-ordinators of Women-Church Convergence

## Women & Religious Pluralism

By Mary E. Hunt

The Pluralism Project at Harvard University under the direction of Diana Eck has spent a decade studying the changing religious landscape in the U.S. Their conclusion is that diversity is a fact now that we are well beyond the three-religion culture of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and into a multireligious landscape. But pluralism, the engagement and encounter with different beliefs, is something we will need to work at to achieve.

To that end, they have sponsored consultations with support from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. The most recent brought together representatives of "Women's Networks in Multireligious America" at which I represented WATER. It was a stimulating weekend with twenty-five women leaders from Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, Christian and other groups brought together for sharing, networking and mutual education.

The Consultation was designed to elicit basic information on membership, structures and activities of our respective groups, from the huge Hadassah with 300,000 members to the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance with its innovative programs. I came away with the sense that so much of U.S. religious life is made up of women—our presence, our energy, our talent—that the default expectation that religions are men's domain is erroneous. I was impressed by the range and depth of our commitments, and how in every tradition there is as much diversity within the group as between it and those who are outside of it.

The tone of the weekend was respectful. Together, Islamic women in veils alongside a Catholic nun sans and Protestant women bureaucrats, we struggled with the contemporary problems of interfaith work, education, women in religious leadership and domestic

violence. In virtually every case the discussion was concrete and action-oriented, not ideological and theoretical. It was based on Muslim women who are disadvantaged in marriage when the Imam does not register their commitment with the state, Catholic women who struggle with their church's reproductive health policies, Orthodox Jewish women who are barred from leadership in their tradition. A celebratory dinner and generous breaks during the two days allowed us to get acquainted, a *sine qua non* for such work.

Whenever such organizers get into a room a policy statement is not far away. This group tackled the question of faith-based initiatives, drafting a public statement insisting that government take increased responsibility for the needs of the poor and disenfranchised, that more money and not simply a new faith-based division of the old pie be secured, and that women leaders be an integral part of the public conversation. I was impressed that as we hammered out this quite spontaneous piece, each one was able to maintain her religious integrity. It was an object lesson in working together.

The Consultation will be followed by another in the fall. To monitor progress, check [www.pluralism.com](http://www.pluralism.com). For more information on the Pluralism Project, there is a multi-media CD-ROM, "On Common Ground" that introduces the basic issues. To really find out what is happening, reach out to women in your locality. Perhaps sponsor a similar mini-consultation to discuss how women from various faith traditions can do what mostly male ecumenical leaders have failed to do, namely, to move from diversity to pluralism with respect, celebration and integrity.

### In Memory of Her

*From Pat Bonneau-White:* In tribute to my mother, **Dorothy Bonneau**, of Las Cruces, NM, former resident of Milwaukee, WI, for her prophetic and heroic fight against air pollution in the 60s and 70s, for linking pollution to the health concerns of her daughters, and for being the role model of womanhood and faith she still is at age eighty-one.

*From Jim Clay:* In memory of my mother, **Elizabeth "Muz" Clay**, whom we lost on

September 19, 2000. With the absence of our beloved Muz, this Mother's Day was a sad one for our whole family. Our lives and world were blessed especially in having her with us just a month shy of 88 years.

*From Rose Mary Meyer, Mary Hunt and Diann Neu:* In memory of **Slim Farrell**, the quiet and loving father of Carolyn Farrell, BVM, who was proud of his daughter's pioneering leadership in politics and education.

# Resources

Abramovitz, Mimi. **UNDER ATTACK: FIGHTING BACK: WOMEN AND WELFARE IN THE UNITED STATES.** New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 2000 (182 pages, \$15).

A thoughtful approach to one of the most vexing expressions of conservative politics that is destroying whole generations of families.

Asociacion de la Mujer Maya Ixil, New Dawn and M. Brinton Lykes. **VOICES AND IMAGES: MAYAN IXIL WOMEN OF CHAJUL.** Chajul, El Quiche, Guatemala, 2000 (112 pages, \$25 c/o EPICA, epicabooks@igc.org.)

These valiant women used photo taking as a creative way to respond to war and violence. Their PhotoVoice project is a model for use in other such situations.

Davis, Amelia. **THE FIRST LOOK.** Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000 (87 pages, \$16.95).

These pictures of women living with breast cancer are a moving reminder of strength, resiliency and hope.

Dube, Musa W. **POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE.** St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000 (221 pages, \$32.99).

The task of biblical interpretation is made even more complicated, and potentially more useful, by this challenging approach to its decolonialization. The author interrogates feminist interpretations to reveal their tendencies toward imperialism, however unintentional such may be.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. **JESUS AND THE POLITICS OF INTERPRETATION.** New York, NY: Continuum, 2000 (180 pages, \$22.95).

Elisabeth cuts through the popular resurgence of books on Jesus to lay out how so many contemporary approaches do injustice to women, Jews and Jesus. Her scholarly work invites reconstructive creativity.

Fiorenza, Elisabeth Schüssler. **SHARING HER WORD: FEMINIST BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION IN CONTEXT.** Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1998 (222 pages, \$25).

Feminist biblical interpretation needs to be done in communities of struggle. It is those communities that give shape and meaning to the task at hand.

Goldstein, Rabbi Elyse. **THE WOMEN'S TORAH COMMENTARY.** Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000 (215 pages, \$29.95).

Women rabbis including Rebecca Alpert, Sally Priesand, Laura Geller and Sandy Sasso contribute their insights to the 54 weekly Torah portions.

Isherwood, Lisa, ed. **THE GOOD NEWS OF THE BODY.** Sheffield, England: Academic Press, 2000 (230 pages, \$18.50).

This collection of essays unpacks some of the stickiest wickets of power, pleasure and injustice in sexuality as the search for better sex continues.

Isherwood, Lisa and Elizabeth Stuart, eds. **INTRODUCING BODY THEOLOGY.** Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000 (164 pages, \$16.95).

These introductory works provide the basics of the field, sound bibliography and a smart overview of the most significant work. Body is surely the starting point of much feminist work in religion.

Katsuno-Ishii, Lynda and Edna J. Orteza, eds. **OF ROLLING WATERS AND ROARING WIND: A CELEBRATION OF THE WOMAN SONG.** Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications, 2000 (152 pages, \$16.50).

Prayers, music, poetry and readings to keep the ecumenical community moving toward justice.

Kramerae, Cheris and Dale Spender. **ROUTLEDGE INTERNATIONAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN: GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES AND KNOWLEDGE.** NY: Routledge, 2000 (2285 pages, \$495 Introductory price; \$695 after June 2001).

Obviously a library purchase, so tell your library to do so now. Mary John Manazan is the religion editor.

Contributors include Martha Ackelsberg, Carol Adams, Carol Christ, Mary Condren, Marie Fortune, Mary Grey, Mary E. Hunt, Lisa Isherwood, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Elizabeth Tapia and Linda Thomas, among many others.

Kwok, Pui-lan. **INTRODUCING ASIAN FEMINIST THEOLOGY.** Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000 (136 pages, \$16.95).

The perfect text book to use to introduce the major contribution of Asian feminists to the field. Written clearly and with authority.

Raines, John C. and Daniel C. Maguire, eds. **WHAT MEN OWE TO WOMEN: MEN'S VOICES FROM WORLD RELIGIONS.** Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2001 (303 pages, \$19.95).

Temptation is to answer "everything" and get on with it, but this collection features serious discussion of the question with tradition-specific answers. The perfect discussion starter for men's groups, starting in seminars.

Raphael, Melissa. **INTRODUCING THEOLOGY: DISCOURSE ON THE GODDESS.** Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000 (181 pages, \$16.95).

A compact way to learn about Goddesses and their impact on feminist work in religion.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. **CHRISTIANITY AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN FAMILY.** Boston, MA: Beacon, 2000 (294 pages, \$28.50).

With characteristic comprehensiveness, Rosemary puts to rest the myth of the God-ordained patriarchal family and shows the many expressions that have been functional through history. A must for those who pretend that patriarchy is a given.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. **INTRODUCING REDEMPTION IN CHRISTIAN FEMINISM.** Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000 (134 pages, \$15.95).

An overview of the ways redemption

has been understood, this volume includes Rosemary's own perspective on the Great Matrix of Being, the source and destiny of human life.

Shaw, Risa, ed. **NOT CHILD'S PLAY: AN ANTHOLOGY ON BROTHER-SISTER INCEST.** Takoma Park, MD: Lunchbox Press, 2000 (156 pages, \$14.95).

A painful but necessary look at a difficult topic. Survivors and therapists alike will find insights here that will help to prevent further occurrences. The move from shame to action is made easier with this collection.

Shuman, Carrie V. **FAVORITE DISHES: A COLUMBIAN AUTOGRAPH SOUVENIR COOKERY BOOK.** Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of IL Press, 2001 (210 pages, \$35).

Recipes from the Midwest in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century add to our understanding of culinary and women's history.

Soelle, Dorothee. **AGAINST THE WIND: MEMOIR OF A RADICAL CHRISTIAN.** Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999 (171 pages, \$16).

This prolific, prophetic theologian spells out her life in short chapters full of insight, passion and self-knowledge. A powerful read.

Wooten, Janet. **INTRODUCING A PRACTICAL FEMINIST THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP.** Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2000 (145 pages, \$16.95).

A good start on how to create worship that works whether in an institutional setting or well beyond.

## Children's Books

Sasso, Sandy Eisenburg. **GOD SAID AMEN.** Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2000 (32 pages, \$16.95).

Any book that ends "And God smiles and says amen." is a good bet for interfaith use with children. Sandy Sasso does it again with a good story and a useful lesson.





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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 theological, ethical and liturgical development for and by women. We work locally, nationally and internationally doing programs and projects, publications and workshops, counseling, spiritual direction and liturgical planning which help people actualize feminist religious values. WATER helps develop inclusive religious and social communities, and focuses feminist faith on bringing about social justice. If you would like to subscribe for weekly updates from the office and occasional news from colleagues in the field, send a message to [majordomo@hers.com](mailto:majordomo@hers.com) with the words "subscribe water-I" (that's water-hyphen-letter "I", NOT number 1) in the body of the message.

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*Clockwise from top left: Clara Ajo, Professor at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Matanzas, holds the main course for the seminary women's group gathering; Rector Ofelia Ortega invites a girl child to be the first to enter the newly renovated seminary building; Claudia Highbaugh, Chaplain of Harvard Divinity School, receives the gift of a shell bracelet at the women's retreat; the seminary librarian at Matanzas receives WATER's gift of books courtesy of our Mother's Fund; Alice Hageman and Nacyra Gomez Arce exchange ideas; Mary Hunt chats with Margaret Flory, founding director of Frontier Internship in Mission; Center: the women's retreat group gathers in a circle at the beach to end a festive and bonding workshop.*