

# water wheel

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

## Editorially Speaking --

The flow of information, requests and ideas through the WATER office is supposed to slow during the summer. Instead, ecclesial and political events, and above all, women's spiritual needs, have kept WATER at full power.

'Tis the season for denominational and congregational meetings, for women's institutes and gatherings at which WATER staff are frequently invited to be a challenging presence. Janet Kalven's article in this issue gives readers the flavor of WATER's summer institute.

We are learning that old denominational splits and lay/clergy lines are being replaced. Now the biggest tensions are between those who support the empowerment of women and other marginalized people, and those who think that religions ought to serve to legitimize structures of domination. These groupings cross denominational lines, almost as if that "oneness" we feel with some people who are quite different from ourselves is matched by the distance we feel from some of "our own" people.

We who believe that one of religions' major reasons for being is to foster community and lead the way for social change find ourselves well accompanied but ever in need of increased numbers. Supreme Court decisions on civil rights and reproductive options add to the chill wind blowing from the Vatican and some other religious centers. We need one another more than ever as we try to live with spiritual integrity in such a "kinder, gentler nation." Be assured that WATER is a part of efforts to make the empty words a living legacy.

*Note that this is Volume 2, Number 2, Spring-Summer 1989. Fall (Vol. 2, No. 3) and Winter (Vol. 2, No. 4) issues will put us on a January-December publishing schedule typical of quarterlies like WATERwheel. Enjoy.*



## Agents With Integrity

by Mary E. Hunt

What do these women have in common? Bishop Barbara Harris, my mother with her rosary, Muslim women who choose to wear the veil for political reasons, women praying at the wall in Jerusalem, Carmelite nuns barricaded in a convent in New Jersey, women-church adherents, ordained women pastors, Goddess worshippers and feminist pastoral counselors...

Disparate as their religious beliefs and practices may be, I suggest that they are all attempting to be religious on their own terms as women and to create for themselves a deeper, more satisfying relationship with all that we call spirituality. They are trying to be "religious agents" acting with "spiritual integrity."

The rush of religious consciousness that has characterized the late twentieth century is a source of excitement for me. I am intrigued by

First let me underscore the inherent problem in such an approach. Finding an umbrella concept may appear to homogenize differences, erase nuances. For example, women praying at the wall in Jerusalem where only Jewish men are allowed to pray is not the same as the election of Bishop Barbara Harris as the first female bishop of the Episcopal Church. Neither are efforts by African women to discuss the traditional practice of clitoridectomy on their own terms the same as Latin American women's discussions of reproductive choice. Nonetheless, similarities are sufficiently strong to compel me to resist charges of reductionism and outline these concepts of agency and integrity as common strands of a well woven rug. Let the differences reign, but let the common project emerge so that we can support one

*Many of us have never experienced five minutes of agency in patriarchal religious traditions.*

those circles where women, heretofore left out of the creation and development of religions, are taking the lead in forming new ways of being religious. I do not always agree with individual efforts; they may be too timid or partial, too fanciful or romantic for my taste. Still, I applaud every effort to find and claim one's religious voice as part of a community chorus.

I am always concerned with methods and structures, how we do things as much as what we do. Hence my search for a way to see the big picture of what women's entrance into various religious traditions means. I am convinced that structural solutions are necessary for political problems; put negatively, I do not believe that individual solutions will change structures.

My search has turned up certain lines of similarity in the various efforts to be what I now call "religious agents" acting with "spiritual integrity." Different as the content may be—a Buddhist woman criticizing behavior of a zen master, a Methodist woman seeking non-sexist hymns, a Pagan woman expressing her belief through chants—these efforts bond us together. Collectively we are "making a way where there has been no way" for women before.

another's efforts even when we disagree.

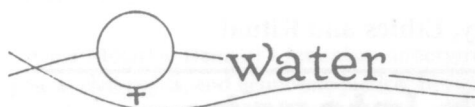
Ethicist Beverly Wildung Harrison in her landmark book **Our Right to Choose** used the terms women's "moral agency" and "bodily integrity". She stressed that women must make choices about reproductive rights both because we are legitimate moral agents, patriarchal patterns notwithstanding, and because there is an integrity to our embodied selves that is part of creation. Building on Beverly Harrison's insight, I see the widespread, wholesale efforts on the part of women in many religious traditions in many countries of the world as an effort to change religious institutions. It is the exercise of agency in search of religious integrity.

Agency, a peculiar word in English that reminds us of travel consultants and those who sell houses or ship goods, really means one who makes or does something on her/his own terms. The common thread in the many actions toward religious inclusivity on women's terms is that they are all exercises in agency.

Women religious agents do three things: we name experiences on our own terms; we make decisions on the basis of these experiences; we

*(continued on page 2)*

# European WATER Ways



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WATER is an educational center, a network of justice-seeking people that began in 1983 as a response to the need for serious theological, ethical and liturgical development for and by women. We work locally, nationally and internationally on programs, projects, publications, workshops, retreats and liturgical planning which have helped thousands of people to be part of an inclusive church.

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**WATERwheel**

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Spring found WATER staff Diann Neu and Mary E. Hunt gleaning tulips in The Netherlands and stepping aboard the Women's Boat in Basel, Switzerland. Hardship posts...

The women of the Grail, an international women's community, sponsored a Pentecost weekend at De Tiltenberg, just outside Amsterdam, entitled "Women of Fire." The group considered "Passion, Pain, and Politics" in discussion, lectures and creative celebrations. A wonderful Sunday liturgy began in the woods (Passion), moved to the chapel (Pain), the library (Politics), the dining room for a shared meal (Party). Grail members Carol White and Mimi Marechal organized this event.

While in The Netherlands WATER staff met with twenty-five women theologians in Tilburg for a fascinating conversation on strands of feminist theology emerging throughout the country. Politics and spirituality seem disparate at points, but many women hold them together.

On to Basel, Switzerland, where the Conference of European Churches and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences co-sponsored a large gathering on "Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation." Local women decided

that a "Women's Boat" was necessary to complement the traditional model of conference and give visiting women a place to gather for workshops, music, drama and celebration.

The boat, docked in the river in the middle of town, was festooned with flowers and filled with people. Programs were stimulating, everything from the lives of gypsies to how to compost, from women-church to bible study. WATER staff were invited to give a workshop on women-church and to work with local women to plan a feminist liturgy for 400+ people. The highlights were informal times, especially a memorable picnic with feminist theological pioneers Marga Buhrig, Else Kahler, Catharina Halkes and Madeleine Barot.

WATER staff also visited and gave a workshop at the Casa Romero, a Catholic study center in Luzern, where a group of women and men discussed feminist theology, liberation theology and women-church.

Rich conversations and the chance to meet friends, old and new, gave us a renewed sense of how important the movement for religious agency and spiritual integrity is worldwide.

## Agents...

(continued from page 1)

form communities of accountability in which our decisions are critiqued and supported

Many of us have never experienced five minutes of agency in patriarchal religious traditions. As a Roman Catholic woman I cannot think of an instance where my religious agency has been respected within the institutional framework. However, as a participant in the women-church movement I feel empowered all the time to follow the path to spiritual integrity. In fact I feel obligated to do so by virtue of my association with other women who are doing the same thing. I can imagine that this same dynamic prevails for other religious women regardless of the content of their faith.

The common goal of religious agency is the achievement of spiritual integrity. While amorphous in concept, spiritual integrity means: taking religion seriously as our foremothers did; adapting the religious traditions from which we come to the needs and challenges of our own day; passing on a faith perspective to our children that provides them with reference points for living in right relation and for respecting the divine among us.

This spiritual integrity is thwarted at many turns. For example, when we are forced to listen to language or to look at religious objects that pass over our female, black and/or Buddhist beings we are prevented from achieving any sense of spiritual integration. When we are prohibited from worshipping as we wish, with a

woman priest or with African chants and dances, our spiritual integrity is compromised. Eventually our faith is taken from us. We do not leave our religious traditions, they leave us.

Sometimes expressions of religious agency and attempts to develop spiritual integrity come into conflict. For example, ordination of women in mainline Christian denominations is a mixed blessing: it empowers some women while perhaps creating a gap between clergy and laity. Or, forming women-only base communities seems to run counter to empowering men and children as religious agents when in fact it is a way station toward such communal empowerment. Nevertheless, seeing the many ways in which agency and integrity are lived out will help us to appreciate and respect one another's efforts even when we disagree.

The primary shift in the 1980's for religious feminists has been the effort to widen the circle of religious agents. No longer are we content to ordain a few women or encourage a few scholars. The survival needs of poor women with dependent children, indeed of all of us under nuclear threat, are simply too great to permit such a narrow focus.

I envision and encourage the move into the 1990's as that of proud, energetic women with multiple symbols, circling one another as we do the work of justice. Religious agents, young and old, will seek deeper spiritual integrity that only such diversity can contain. Join the circle.

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



# A Week With Women-Church

by Janet Kalven

"Women Are Church"—that theme drew twenty-seven women together at Ilchester Conference Center, between Washington and Baltimore, for a week-long WATER Institute in June. We eyed each other a bit warily that first night, but by the end of the week we had bonded as women engaged in a common struggle despite our diversities. And we were quite diverse: from our 20's to late 70's; Catholic, Protestant, Jewish; married, single, celibate, lesbian, physically handicapped; lay, ordained, nuns; homemakers, educators, organizers, volunteers. All of us identified in some way with women-church. We had come together to explore the origins, present state and future of this growing, amorphous movement.

Throughout the week, we made effective use of feminist method: reflecting, analyzing, linking our particular personal stories with a broader context. Thus, with Mary Hunt, we shared our experiences of women-church. With Diann Neu, we looked at the liturgies we had known in the decades of our lives. With Cheryl

particular moment. Just as we women can do theology, so can we do liturgies, not paraliturgies, but the real thing, the energizing, transformative contact with the holy. I see two new notes in this feminist approach to liturgy. First, the community: "Women-church is made up of groups of friends." Being acquainted with one another rather than standing in a crowd of strangers gives feminist liturgies a special vitality and depth of meaning. Second, the understanding of sacrament: "Friends in women-church engage in sacrament," understanding the holy not as something coming down from above through a few privileged symbols but rather as welling up from within the community whose daily life is already holy.



*...we made effective use of feminist method: reflecting, analyzing, linking our particular personal stories with a broader context.*

Sanders, we explored the roots of womanist theology. With Mary Lou Randour, we shared our childhood images of God. With Mary Collins, we experimented with visual and verbal texts for prayer. With Carol Coston, we shared our knowledge of alternative economic enterprises. With America Sosa, we learned of the plight of Salvadoran refugees.

Mary Hunt's description of women-church as "a network of feminist groups of justice-seeking friends who engage in solidarity and sacrament" set the theme. I found particularly useful her formulation of women-church as women claiming our power as religious agents at all levels: as theologians, celebrants, spiritual guides, ethical decision-makers. No longer do we accept definition as perpetual minors, followers, needing the guidance of "objective" male reason. Rather we are claiming for ourselves the initiative, the agency, that the patriarchs have hitherto reserved for themselves, which perhaps explains the anger aroused by issues like ordination and abortion.

Our agency manifested itself all week long in our liturgies, sensitively planned by and for this particular group. "Liturgy belongs to the community," Diann insisted. We have the power to gather our collective energies to celebrate a

We had the luxury as a small group to meet each other personally, develop a depth of relationship and an ability to process issues, to celebrate, to empower each other in specific ways that cannot occur among the hundreds and thousands that throng large conferences. In the last session, as we shared our hopes for the future, it was clear that almost everyone was going home with a definite, new project and with the resources needed to carry it out. The week was rich in resources, those generously supplied from WATER's files plus many additions by resource persons and participants—books, pamphlets, articles, bibliographies, tapes, videos, T-shirts, tote bags, sheet music.

What is the future of women-church? Will it last? I cannot say. But so long as institutionalized churches fail to provide nourishment and leadership, women-church offers a way for women to be church, a way that is not perfect but is feasible, creative, empowering and faithful to the call to love and justice.

*Janet Kalven represents the Grail Women's Task Force on the Women-Church Convergence. She was a participant in WATER's Women-Church Institute.*

## Vigil With Co-Madres

Co-Madres, mothers of political prisoners and disappeared of El Salvador, invited WATER to join with them for their first protest in Washington. "A Vigil for Peace and No Military Aid to El Salvador" was held in front of the Capitol on a very rainy Good Friday.

Diann Neu, Co-Madres board member, made the following statement of support and solidarity. She and the others gathered wore black dresses for the pain and loss of those assassinated and disappeared, white scarves for peace; each carried a lighted candle as a beacon of hope for a society without war.

WATER stands in solidarity with Co-Madres, our friends and sisters. With the mothers of El Salvador, we, too, search for justice on behalf of the 70,000 assassinated, 7,800 disappeared, those captured daily and those who are victims of torture.

WATER is concerned with the spiritual needs of all peoples. We understand the piercing ache of loss—the loss of loved ones, friends and family. This inhuman killing of our sisters and brothers in El Salvador is evil.

On this Good Friday, we of the Christian faith focus on death—the death of Jesus. Death will come to all of us some day. But the violent death of murder, rape, assassination or genocide should NEVER come to any of us. With our Salvadoran sisters and brothers we say: *Basta! Nunca Mas!*

As U.S. citizens standing in front of the Capitol, we challenge our government—the Bush administration and Congress—to stop military aid to El Salvador in all of its forms.

We call upon the U.S. government to form a policy that supports a political solution in dialogue and negotiation, not a military solution of exploitation, invasion and intervention.

On this Good Friday, let today's rain be a symbol of the tears of the Salvadoran people. Let today's rain water the seeds of justice. Let today's rain be a sign of hope bringing new life to weary roots.

As Guatemalan poet Julia Esquivel said: "May we all be threatened with resurrection."



**Background:** This liturgy was celebrated with the Women-Church Convergence at the time of "Women's Equality, Women's Lives," the 1989 march in Washington, D.C. that gathered 600,000 women, men, and children. As reproductive rights continue to capture public attention, it is important to be aware of our own choices, of those of our friends, and of those of others in our community and around the world.

## Call To Celebration

We come to this liturgy with our questions, our concerns, our stories about making reproductive choices. We come to this liturgy remembering the women who have made choices about reproduction—our mothers, our sisters, our friends, our relatives, unnamed women, women from every race and culture, ourselves.

Today we place this loaf of 7 grain bread and these carafes of wine and juice in the center of our circle to represent for us women's lives, women's choices. (*Two women place the bread and drink on the table.*)

Let us stand together as women who choose.

**Song:** "Stand Together" by Marsie Silvestro

copyright ©1983 by Marsie Silvestro

Come to me now, women spirit.  
Come to me now, sister of life.  
Come to me now, mother of my being  
and sing in me a melody of love.

Stand together my sisters,  
stand together again.  
Stand together in a circle.  
Stand together as friends.

## Prayer

Praised be you Mother and Father God, that you have given your people the power of choice. Open our hearts that we listen compassionately to one another. Fill us with insight that we may choose wisely. Strengthen us with gratitude for the choices that we have made.

## Introduction to Stories

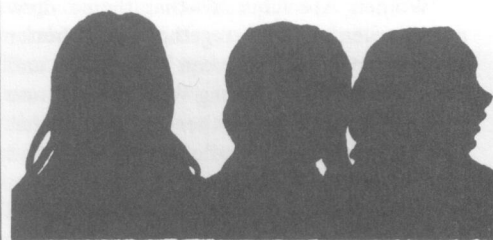
The following stories celebrate women's spirituality by affirming the integrity and holiness of women's decisions. Listen to each woman's story as if she were someone very close to you. She is your sister. These daffodils, beautiful and plentiful at this time of year, symbolize these women who are everywhere. (*Place a vase of daffodils on the table.*)

**Song:** Listen, listen, listen to my heart song,  
(2x) I will never forsake you, I will always be with you (2x)

**A story from Margaret Sanger:** Pregnancy was a chronic condition...Then one stifling mid-

# Standing With Women

by Diann Neu



July day of 1912 I was summoned to a Grand Street tenement...Jake Sachs, a truck driver scarcely older than his wife, had come home to find the three children crying and her unconscious from the effects of a self-induced abortion...

When the doctor came to make his last call, I drew him aside. "Mrs. Sachs is terribly worried about having another baby."

"She well may be," replied the doctor, and then he stood before her and said, "Any more such capers, young woman, and there'll be no need to send for me."

...She hesitated as though it took all her courage to say it, "What can I do to prevent it?"

...Picking up his hat and bag to depart the doctor said, "Tell Jake to sleep on the roof."

We simply looked at each other, saying no word until the door had closed..."He can't understand. He's only a man. But you do, don't you? Please tell me the secret, and I'll never breathe it to a soul. Please!"

The telephone rang one evening three months later...Mrs. Sachs was in a coma and died within ten minutes from the same cause....

*from Mother To Daughter, Daughter To Mother  
by Tillie Olson*

**Response:** Praise our choices, sisters,

for each doorway open to us was taken by squads of fighting women who paid years of trouble and struggle, who paid their wombs, their sleep, their lives that we might walk through these gates upright.

*Marge Piercy, "Sabbath of Mutual Respect,"  
The Moon Is Always Female*

**Song:** Listen....

**A story from Eileen:** We had four children in five years, the last one slightly retarded. I had nightmares. Were we going to have eight in ten years, twelve in fifteen? I had myself fitted for a diaphragm. Only then did I tell my husband. I expected an argument. I was wrong... he wouldn't discuss it. He saw me as a failure for not being able to practice rhythm. I was violating our church's teachings and he didn't want to get involved.

*from Coles and Coles, Women of Crisis, Part II.*

**Response:** Praise our choices....

**Song:** Listen....

**A story from Leslie:** When Christina was born, I held her as much as I could for those two days we were together in the hospital. I drank her in, pressing her image on my heart and soul. It wasn't enough. When I said goodbye to her, I felt choked with grief and pain...I wanted her to have the best, but I really wanted her to have

the best and me at the same time. Not many people understood how I felt. Most assumed that I must be glad to be "rid of" [her.] It was my choice to release her, but not to be rid of her. God, how I hate those words!

**Response:** Praise our choices....

**Song:** Listen....

**A letter from Connie Chan:** Dear Mom, Dad, and Tom (better to write to all three at once, that way every one in the family knows the same thing:)

I am writing to you because I need your love and support. After much discussion and thinking, Barbara and I have decided to raise a family together...We have decided to give birth to one child each and to raise the children together as brother and sister.

We are getting pregnant through "alternative insemination" of sperm—from anonymous donors.

...We have thought about this and planned it for a very long time. We feel emotionally and financially ready to have children at this time. I hope you will join with us in accepting two new little ones into our family.

Love, Connie

*Connie Chan, "Journal Entries: Baby Log,"*

*We Are Everywhere*

**Response:** Praise...

**Song:** Listen...

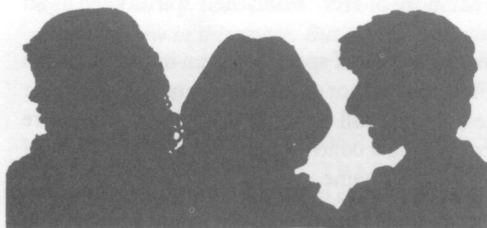
**A story from Beth:** I went to some Catholic right-to-life place. And a woman there said to me, "God won't hate you for the first one because you're scared. He gets mad when you use abortions as birth control." I wanted her to give me a decision. She told me to read the scriptures. She said, "God will forgive you." That really made a lot of sense.

My sister made an appointment for the abortion clinic. I needed someone to talk to who wouldn't drill into my head, "You've got to do this, you've got to do that." I was thinking, at the abortion clinic, "This is all right." But I started crying. And the woman there said, "No, Beth, you're not ready right now. Go home and think about it."

They were so understanding in the clinic. They knew I was scared. Then I thought, "I'm not a



# Making Reproductive Choices



bad person. God doesn't hate me." God was right there...showing me that people are not all bad and that they're scared too. I thought, "I'm not alone. Finally, I am not alone."

*from My Conscience Speaks, Catholics for a Free Choice*

**Response:** Praise...

**Song:** Listen...

**A story from Nancy Gieseler Devor:** "You're our friends," she began. Would you help us to do a memorial service for Isaac--the child we will never have?"

As long as the four of us have been friends, their hope--their longing--to have a child has been a part of our friendship. It began with a simple operation...that had to be performed a second time. Tests that followed tests. Consultations with specialist after specialist. Long discussions of whether to adopt. Barriers of age...Visits to Resolve, the national support organization of infertile couples. Visits to adoption seminars. Finally, self insemination. Times of tears. Five years in all.

In August they told us that the self insemination program...hadn't worked...They spoke of the relief at letting go their continuous roller-coaster of emotions, of an end to counting the sad waiting for signs that never came, nurturing hopes that were never fulfilled.

*The Christian Century, "A Service for Isaac," April 20, 1988*

**Response:** Praise.....

**Song:** Listen...

## Reflection

We have just heard stories of some of the reproductive choices that women make. And there are many others. Women have many choices available around reproduction.

What choices have you made or not made around reproduction? How do you enable other women to claim their power in their choices? Let us share our reflections.

## Blessing of Bread

This seven-grain bread symbolizes all our sisters around the world who decide for themselves when and how and how many children to have. Let us bless it in their names:

*(Seven women bless the bread. Each one uses her own gesture for the blessing, starting with the words "We bless this bread in the name of...")*

**Blessor 1:** ...women of the Middle East, who make their choices in the context of ethnic and religious struggles, in refugee camps, in ongoing struggles for justice.

**Blessor 2:** ...women of sub-Saharan Africa, who make their choices in the context of drought and famine, of struggles against apartheid and continuing effects of colonialism.

**Blessor 3:** ...women of Asia, who make their choices in the context of growing populations, limited resources, economic exploitation.

**Blessor 4:** ...women of the Pacific rim, who make their choices in the context of continued health problems from nuclear testing and of the plundering of natural resources.

**Blessor 5:** ...women of North America, who make their choices in the context of racism, sexism and heterosexism, of a growing gap between rich and poor, and the threat of criminalization of women who choose abortion.

**Blessor 6:** ...women of Latin America and the Caribbean who make their choices in the context of class struggle and intervention by foreign powers in their quest for liberation, economic security and peace.

**Blessor 7:** ...women of Europe, who make their choices in the context of the super-power struggle, of long-range missiles, nuclear warheads and army bases located on their lands but not under their control.

Let us extend our hands, palms out and touch the palms of the person on either side of us. In silence let us bless this bread as the bread of solidarity and friendship, in praise of women's bodies, in praise of women's choices.

**Song:** "Let the Women" by Marsie Silvestro  
*copyright ©1987 by Marsie Silvestro*

Let the women be there,  
let the women be there,  
Let the women be there by my side,  
and I in turn will be for them.

## Blessing of Wine and Juice

When you receive the carafes and cups, speak a word of solidarity with our sisters as you pour

some juice or wine into the cups. *(Pass carafes and cups around. If the group is large, pass several carafes and cups around at the same time. The people who end up with the cups raise them and offer the blessing.)*

We bless this drink in the name of all women whose blood has been shed in their quest to remain true to themselves through their reproductive choices.

Let us extend our hands, palms out and touch the palms of the person on either side of us. In silence let us bless this fruit of the vine as the drink of solidarity and friendship, in praise of women's bodies, in praise of women's choices.

**Song:** Let the women....

## Sharing the Bread and Cups

This bread, wine and juice represent women's lives. Let us pass the baskets and cups around our circle. Let us eat and drink remembering these choices.

## Blessing

Blessed are you, Holy Wisdom, for giving women the power of choice. We sing women's praises. Please echo after me.

Praise women for our wisdom. *(echo)*

Praise women for our power. *(echo)*

Praise women for our mighty acts. *(echo)*

Praise women for our faithfulness. *(echo)*

Praise women for..... *(add others, echo)*

Let all that has breath praise women for our choices. *(echo)*

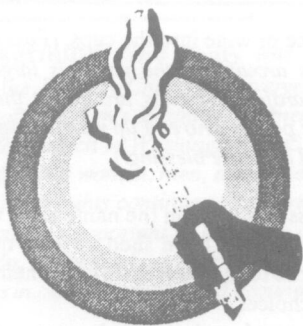
## Sending Forth

Filled with the strength and power of women's choices, let us go forth. May our evening be restful and peaceful. May our burdens be lightened because they are shared. May our work transform injustice. May our wisdom deepen until we meet again.

**Song:** "Woyaya," traditional South African  
*(This song works well as a spiral dance.)*

We are going, Heaven knows where we are going we know within  
And we'll get there, Heaven knows how we will get there. We know we will.  
It will be hard we know, and the road will be muddy and rough  
But we'll get there, Heaven knows how we will get there. We know we will.

*Diann Neu, feminist liberation liturgist, is co-director of WATER. This service is adapted from one she planned with Barbara Cullom and Sarita Hudson, members of SAS, a D.C. area women-church base community.*



## 10th Anniversary of Nicaraguan Revolution

Diann Neu worked with the Nicaraguan Embassy and other friends in the D.C. area to plan an Interfaith Celebration for the 10th Anniversary of the Nicaraguan Revolution.

The following fragments of a letter from Nicaraguan revolutionary Idania Fernandez were written to her small daughter Claudia one month before Idania was killed in battle, April 16, 1979. The letter, dated March 8, was one of the readings in the service. It captures the spirit of the revolution.

Dear Claudia,

...I hope that someday, not too far off, you may be able to live in a free society where you can grow and develop as human beings should, where people are brothers and sisters, not enemies. I'd like to be able to walk with you then, holding hands, walk through the streets and see everyone smiling, the laughter of the children, the parks and rivers. We ourselves smile with joy as we see our people grow like a happy child and watch them become new human beings, conscious of their responsibility toward people everywhere...

You must learn the value of the paradise of peace and freedom you are going to be able to enjoy. I say this because the best of our brave people have given their precious blood, and they've given it willingly, with great love for their people, for freedom and for peace, for generations to come, and for children like you. They've given their lives so our children won't have to live under the repression, humiliation and misery so many men, women and children have suffered in our beautiful Nicaragua.

I'm telling you all this in case I'm not able to tell you personally or no one else tells you these things. A mother isn't just someone who gives birth, and cares for her child, a mother feels the pain of all children, the pain of all peoples, as if they had been born of her womb...

*from Women Brave in the Face of Danger  
by Margaret Randall*

## In Memory of Her...

All women leave their special mark on the world. They are remembered in various ways by friends and family. Through donations to WATER's "In Memory of Her" Fund their spirits keep us all moving.

WATER held its first of a proposed annual commemoration of special women in our lives with a program in March at which Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, author of *In Memory of Her*, was guest speaker. Diann Neu's liturgy included these names; the roll call of honor will continue in future issues of *WATERwheel*. You may add to the list by making a contribution to the "In Memory of Her" Fund and including a brief tribute to the woman you name.

**Elisabeth and Chris Schussler Fiorenza**, mother and daughter, friends, women-church present and future, sister spirits,  
we give thanks for you.

**Tish Jaccard**, WATER's first, most faithful and competent volunteer, a behind the scenes person who empowers others,  
we give thanks for you.

**Gladys Baldwin**, early mentor, lasting friend, whose sudden death came as a sharp reminder not to hold back our living remembrance of wonderful women in our lives,  
we give thanks for you.

**Maria Rosa Gentilesca**, unassuming, always in the kitchen, your stroke-imposed silence before you died spoke to our hearts of the need to hear one another, and your spaghetti sauce still reigns supreme,  
we give thanks for you.

**Florence Blythe Murdock**, 91 years old, you literally went down on your knees 50 years ago to scrub other people's floors in order to support the seven children upraising and celebrating you now,  
we give thanks for you.

**Mary Flynn**, therapist, professor, social worker, sister, mother, WATER supporter and mentor,  
we give thanks for you.

**Rosie Ronk**, Sister of Mercy, leader of justice-seeking women, creative change agent and friend to many, especially Lois Morrissey,  
we give thanks for you.

**Sharon Anderson**, writer, lover, you create joy in the midst of pain,  
we give thanks for you.

**Joan Hope Stewart**, beloved sister of Ann Hope, wife, mother and teacher, your loving concern for the poor, refugees and exiles rippled with laughter as you unmasked the pomposity of the powerful,  
we give thanks for you.

**Eleanor Walker**, amazing pioneer, member of the Grail, radically open to accept new truths, vulnerable spiritual woman who died of cancer, you were able to respond to the best in people,  
we give thanks for you.

**Mary Brigid Nyland**, gracious enabler, warm and welcoming woman, brave in times of misunderstanding,  
we give thanks for you.

**Elizabeth Reid**, storyteller from Australia, founder of the Grail in India, you inspired people and captured their imagination,  
we give thanks for you.

**Joan Overboss**, courageous and creative Grail pioneer finding new paths, building new structures, far ahead of your contemporaries,  
we give thanks for you.

**Elizabeth Mvungi**, beloved Tanzanian Grail sister, your spontaneity and enthusiasm brought new hope to many overworked women farmers,  
we give thanks for you.

**Josephine Nakawesi**, first of Anne Hope's Ugandan students to join the Grail, so warm, so responsible, so badly missed when you were killed in a car crash at age 22,  
we give thanks for you.

**Doris Vera Thompson**, inspiring headmistress, pioneering new patterns of education in South Africa in the 40's, building strong and confident women, open to people of all races,  
we give thanks for you.

**Lilian Ngoyi**, great South African pioneer, you who led 20,000 women to see the Prime Minister in 1955 protesting pass laws for women, you who spent many years banned and in prison, you who helped to found the South African Federation of Women and to prepare the women's charter,  
we give thanks for you.

**Claire Weissman**, truly a woman of valor, whose children rise up and call you blessed, we miss you to this day and  
we give thanks for you.





## New Resources

*Many readers tell us that this section helps them to plan curricula, orient their own reading and keep current. We receive more review copies than we can review in this space. But we do evaluate them all and lend them to our donors through our Resource Center.*

Allen, Paula Gunn, **SPIDER WOMAN'S GRANDDAUGHTERS: TRADITIONAL TALES AND CONTEMPORARY WRITING BY NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN**. Boston: Beacon Press, 1989 (\$19.95, 242 pages).

These stories are a powerful expression of Native American literary art. A welcome addition to the growing body of work by women whose grandmothers and great grandmothers kept alive tribal customs for their daughters' daughters to carry on.

Capek, Mary Ellen S., editor, **A WOMEN'S THESAURUS**. New York: Harper and Row, 1987, (1052 pages, \$37.50).

Move over, Roget, to make room for this hefty index of language about women. A great help to those who struggle to be linguistically correct.

Dreyer, Elizabeth, **PASSIONATE WOMEN: TWO MEDIEVAL MYSTICS**. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989, (88 pages, \$3.95).

The 1989 Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality focuses on Hildegard of Bingen and Hadewijch of Antwerp, case studies of women's ability to love well. An admirable job of bringing them to life and exploring passionate love.

Froehle, Virginia Ann, rsm, **IN HER PRESENCE: PRAYER EXPERIENCES EXPLORING FEMININE IMAGES OF GOD**. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1987 (2 tapes, \$18.95).

Audio tapes of guided images and paraphrased psalms invite the listener to experiment with new images for the divine. Presentation is simple and direct, useful for parish groups or individual meditation.

Gray, Elizabeth Dodson, **SACRED DIMENSIONS OF WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE**. Wellesley, MA: Roundtable Press, 1988.

A collective effort by women who see the value of spirituality and attempt to give it the widest possible interpretation. A good primer for groups that wish to spark their own creativity.

Hallman, David G., **AIDS ISSUES: CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGE**. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989 (\$12.95, 315 pages).

Papers from a bi-national religious consultation on AIDS. Includes essays on the social, medical and sexual issues by Mary E. Hunt, Kevin Gordon, Cecile De Sweemer, et al.

Excellent for a panorama of the AIDS situation from a religious perspective.

Hooks, Bell, **TALKING BACK: THINKING FEMINIST, THINKING BLACK**. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1989 (184 pages, \$10.00).

Indispensable resource for understanding feminism from an African American perspective. Insightful treatments of self-recovery, homophobia, men, militarism and pedagogy. The controversial chapter on "black women and feminism" deserves widespread debate.

Lester, Bonnie, **WOMEN AND AIDS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THOSE WHO HELP OTHERS**. New York: Continuum, 1989 (\$15.95 143 pages).

An excellent guide for both women and men who are concerned with the hidden population of women with AIDS. After reading this book there can be no mistaking AIDS as a gay-male disease. Rather, there will be increased sensitivity to all who suffer and concrete suggestions for how to be helpful.

Maggio, Rosalie, **THE NONSEXIST WORD FINDER: A DICTIONARY OF GENDER-FREE USAGE**. Boston: Beacon Press, 1988 (\$9.95, 210 pages).

This handy reference helps to keep language smooth and politically correct. Lots of good background on how to make language inclusive.

Martin, Emily, **THE WOMAN IN THE BODY: A CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF REPRODUCTION**. Boston: Beacon Press, 1987 (\$11.95, 276 pages).

A medical anthropological analysis of how women are taken for granted in the reproductive process when in fact women are the only constant in the ethical morass of fetuses, embryos, neonates.

Murray, Pauli, **PAULI MURRAY: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BLACK ACTIVIST, FEMINIST, LAWYER, PRIEST AND POET**. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1989 (\$16.95, 451 pages).

This brilliant autobiography originally published as **SONG IN A WEARY THROAT** chronicles the journey of an outstanding black woman who was lawyer and priest, justice worker, poet, professor and writer. A thoroughly engaging read by a foresister in feminist theological/ministerial circles.

Norris, Jane, **DAUGHTERS OF THE ELDERLY: BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN CAREGIVING**. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Daughters tend to do the caregiving and mothers tend to live longest—a recipe for hard work in patriarchy. This collection names the problems and provides sound suggestions.

Pharr, Suzanne, **HOMOPHOBIA: A WEAPON OF SEXISM**. Inverness, CA (P.O. Box 101): Chardon Press.

The best treatment this reviewer has seen on a pressing social and personal issue. Highly recommended for all who seek to understand the relationship between homophobia, sexism/racism and other forms of oppression. Strong, clear analysis, good suggestions and plenty of common sense.

Plaskow, Judith and Christ, Carol P., **WEAVING THE VISIONS: NEW PATTERNS IN FEMINIST SPIRITUALITY**. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989 (\$12.95, 356 pages).

This book represents the diversity, depth and direction of feminist/womanist theology/theology as we all move into the 21st century. With authors like Dolores Williams, Nelle Morton, Audre Lorde, Starhawk and many others this is a must for any feminist theology library.

Schaffran, Janet and Kozak, Pat, **MORE THAN WORDS: PRAYER AND RITUAL FOR INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES**. Oak Park, IL: Meyer Stone Books, 1988 (revised) (\$7.95, 180 pages).

Thirty multi-cultural liturgies are a good start for communities that want to connect justice and spirituality in an inclusive style. Introductory materials on symbols and pluralism that will help groups branch out on their own and create new models.

Smith, Christine M., **WEAVING THE SERMON: PREACHING IN A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1989 (\$15.95, 164 pages).

Smith uses weaving as the metaphor for preaching, detailing the way in which feminist theology, psychology, anthropology and related sciences have had an impact on women's styles. The sermon becomes a process by which the whole community integrates its faith with common needs and symbols. Attention to the global dimension of church life is refreshing.



# New Publications of WATER Staff

## From Woman-Pain to Woman-Vision

### *Writings in Feminist Theology*

Anne McGrew Bennett  
Edited by Mary E. Hunt  
Fortress Press

Anne McGrew Bennett's feminism undergirded decades of work for peace, civil rights, and economic justice. In feminist theology her other work found root and flower, and in the late 1960's she began the analysis, questioning, and rethinking that shape these landmark writings. Bennett, who died in 1986, has been deeply influential on the present generation of feminist thinkers. This volume of lectures, essays, and poems was selected, edited, and introduced by Mary E. Hunt.

*"Anne McGrew Bennett was a strong and beloved foremother of the present generation of Christian feminist theologians and activists. Mary E. Hunt has done this generation a great service in making sure, not only that her memory continues to be cherished, but that her voice continues to be heard."* Rosemary Radford Ruether

Available October, 1989 from WATER for \$10.95 (Canada, \$13.95)

## Women and the Gospel Traditions

### *Feminist Celebrations*

Diann Neu  
WATERworks Press

Diann Neu's liturgies take women's experience to the center of religious celebration. Her moving evocations—in music, movement, setting as well as words—of the power and purpose of meaningful prayer ceremonies give this booklet rare value for both large gatherings and small circles of friends. Indeed, they are inspirational reading when you are all alone! These five liturgies complete with music are adapted from a series Diann wrote and presented on "Women and the Gospel Traditions" sponsored by the Women's Institute for Theology and Nebraska Wesleyan University. Her preparatory remarks encourage further adaptation and refinement to suit specific needs.

Available through WATER for \$8 (Canada, \$10)

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