

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

Engaging Creative Feminist Ministers

Mary E. Hunt

If you want to engage in feminist ministry, you need education and training. WATER is developing just that thanks to the generosity and talent of leaders in the field and the well articulated needs of practitioners. This summer we began what we hope will be a series of offerings to socialize the resources and develop the skills of our colleagues. We are grateful to our funders who help to make such work possible.

Few if any seminaries or divinity schools provide more than a course or three on feminist anything, especially as budget cuts force them to pare their offerings. Our work is simply not a sufficient priority at most institutions. Claims that it is already woven into the core curriculum is hard to substantiate. Hence, if we want to function as well-prepared ministers who can engage knowledgeably and skillfully in the arts and sciences of pastoral work, we have to develop our own educational programs.

This summer WATER launched a series of workshops geared to the needs of feminist ministers as shaped by a meeting of colleagues who know firsthand what's what in everyday pastoral work. We had hoped to sponsor an in-person conference, but we ran up against the economic reality most women face: too few resources. Many churches and other religious groups that in the past have provided support for the continuing education of their leaders simply do not have the money to do so at this time. So

we embraced the wonders of technology and offered conference calls and video-taped sessions, all of which can be found on our Web site www.hers.com/water.

Our goal was to open important areas of inquiry and to open the table to all who want to join, whether in person, on the phone, or online. It was a successful first step.

We began with a session on "Dalit Feminist Hermeneutics and Four Gospel Women," the title of the Drew University doctoral dissertation of Surekha Nelavala from India. She and Catholic biblical scholar Mary Kate Birge explored Dalit theology as articulated through a feminist lens. While many in the West are unaware of this work (Dalits used to be called "untouchables"), it is a good entre to the multiple issues of class and race, colonialism and sexism, among others, that combine to form oppressive structures. What was clear in the analysis was that Dalit women have little to lose; their outsider status grounds their claims for justice. For feminist ministers to learn about a previously unknown perspective is good practice for seeing the many ways that texts, traditions, and situations can be "read" with a preferential option for those who are marginalized.

A small group of colleagues met in the WATER office to be part of the session. We were the live audience, as it were! We could ask questions and interact with

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The Fresh Look of WATER Online

Summer is a time of refreshment, and the online face of WATER has a fresh look!

Web Site: If you have not yet seen our new and improved Web site, take a look: www.hers.com/water. Or even if you have, we recently added a prayer calendar (under Resources), feminist ministry videos, and a shopping cart so you can easily order resources using a credit card or PayPal.

Email: Communication happens more and more by email. WATER now uses an online email program called Emma. It is more efficient, lessens our eco-footprint, and ensures that you do not receive duplicate emails from us—all the more reason to update us with your email today! (Go to www.hers.com/water, give us your info, and join our list.)

Blog: Our blog continues to buzz with WATER current events. Engage with us at www.watervoicesblog.blogspot.com.

WATER's tech upgrade is the fruit of many peoples' labor. Special thanks to Anna Roeschley for making it all happen. Danke to Zelinda Fouant for working with Anna and Diann Neu on Web Site design. She is the one who knows code!

Merci to B.K. Hipsher for making sure the audio and video portions of our Web site are up and running. B.K. has a way of making it all look easy and making others feel that they can do it too.

Editorial

Big gatherings of Christian groups are as much a part of summer in the United States as corn on the cob. This season, the Episcopalians approved same-sex clergy from priests to bishops, guaranteeing that their problems with the Anglican Communion will continue. They also acknowledged the fact that some dioceses are offering blessings to same-sex couples and agreed to look closely at them in preparation for an eventual policy and prayer book addition. With the Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori saying, "We will fail if we choose business as usual," who says women in religious leadership don't make a difference!

Pink Mennonites stood out at their General Convention. They organized and agonized as they strove to make their churches welcoming of all. The Hyattsville Mennonite Church in Maryland, led by WATER colleague Cindy Lapp, has lost its voting right in its conference because of its prophetic stand in favor of full inclusion of LGBTQ people. Lots of young people at the convention—including WATER's Anna Roeschley—made colorful and heartfelt witness to the importance of being open as they prayed, sang, and invited dialogue sporting pink paraphernalia. Good on them!

Dignity, the Catholic LGBTQ group, celebrated its fortieth anniversary with the theme of "Together We Will Reach the Promised Land." WATER's Mary E. Hunt gave a keynote talk about how "faithful and fabulous" the organization had been against the great odds of institutional Roman Catholicism. Given the moral, spiritual, and in some instances financial bankruptcy of the kyriarchal church, she urged the membership to let the needs of the world and not the failings of the church set the agenda for the decade ahead. May it be so!

How exciting to know that feminist work in religion is making many real differences, with WATER women on the forefront. There are many more issues that need and deserve our attention: racism, economic injustice, war, reproductive health care, and the like. We pledge our strength there too. Onward!

One intriguing issue was the use or not of online education.

Engaging...

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the speakers. Eventually we hope to set this up so that those online can see, hear, and participate. But we need to work more with our electronics guru, B.K. Hipsher, a feminist minister with multiple talents, as we come of age technologically.

After a pleasant and renewing lunch, the office group (including ministers, students, and activists) gathered around a speakerphone to be part of the first Feminist Ministry conference call. Emilie Townes, womanist theologian, ordained Baptist minister, and associate dean of academic affairs at Yale Divinity School led a discussion on "Theological Education for Feminist Ministry." She sketched out the big picture of seminaries and theological education, observing that in many schools the median age has returned to the post-college years rather than the older students we have been seeing for several decades. This has potentially negative implications for more mature women getting scholarships and other support when they decide to go back to school for a second career. She told about the work of the Fund for Theological Education and its excellent efforts to offer mentors and others ways to share the common wisdom in the field. Emilie stressed the importance of developing one's own spirituality sufficient to sustain one for the rigors of ministry.

More than twenty-five women signed up for the call. Discussion was lively, especially through the presence of such experienced hands as Barbara Brown Zikmund, retired from the presidency of Hartford Seminary Foundation, and Shannon Clarkson, who with the late Letty Russell coordinated the International Feminist Doctor of Ministry Program at San Francisco Theological Seminary. They shared their enormous wisdom and experience in feminist ministry and theological education generously.

One intriguing issue was the use or not of online education. Emilie said that YDS is just now offering some evening courses with no thought, and perhaps some institutional disdain, for online work.

Other places, like Pacific School of Religion, for example, are offering creative work online. Does this portend a two-tiered system? Should women take such courses or will doing so "mark" their transcripts in negative ways? These are issues we need to explore further.

A second video session featured two feminist ministers, Cindy Lapp and Mari Castellanos, discussing the real-life, on-the-ground challenges feminists face in ministry. Cindy is the pastor of the Hyattsville Mennonite Church in Maryland, which has been prophetic in its welcome and acceptance of LGBTQ persons. This has earned it the opprobrium of the local conference but the respect of the rest of us. Mari is on the staff of the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries, with special concern for immigration and environmental issues.

They spoke candidly about what it means to work in institutions that often promise more than they deliver in terms of inclusion. They spoke of the need for doing justice regardless of the cost, and of being well accompanied by colleagues and friends, family and partners in the process. They served as sterling examples of what feminist ministers can accomplish and of how important it is to take care of oneself along the way.

Again, the in-office group had a chance to interact with the speakers. Since isolation is the major complaint of most feminist ministers, we encourage local groups to gather as we did for these sessions. We suggest sharing food and drink, taking time to talk together about the content, using these offerings for continuing education as well as local networking. The results are rich and bountiful.

Our second conference call featured Marie Marshall Fortune, founding director of the FaithTrust Institute in Seattle, WA, and an ordained United Church of Christ clergywoman. Marie is recognized around the world as the leading expert on religion and sexual/domestic violence, especially clergy sexual abuse. We wish we did not need her expertise, but with so many women entering ministry, her work is even more important than ever as

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...Feminist Ministry

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survivors come forward to seek pastoral care from women in ministry.

Marie encouraged a variety of forms of advocacy including providing resources and referrals to victims/survivors, speaking publicly on behalf of them, and offering pastoral and spiritual care. She emphasized the ubiquitous character of violence, making it clear that all of us have one way or another been subject to some form of it. She remarked that all of us live with fear of and/or memory of violence. This alone makes FaithTrust Institute www.faithtrustinstitute.org so important.

The question of men arose and Marie cited the Decatur, Georgia, group Men Stopping Violence as a good example of how men can be helpful. Experience shows that some men get involved in the issue of violence prevention so as to cover their own perpetration, yet another hard problem in the field. Lively conversation continued throughout the hour, making clear that this is an area we need to revisit as well.

These programs, initial forays into the provision of education and resources for feminist ministry, are a welcome next step in WATER's offerings. We have learned from them. For example, we will try to have a common reading before the phone calls to provide additional focus on wide topics. We will work with tech people to improve the quality of our video resources. We will encourage the formation of small watching/listening communities so that participants can get maximum use out of our programs.

As resources permit, we hope to have an in-person gathering to share the insights and next steps that emerge from this work. For now, we are deeply grateful to all—speakers, participants, tech helpers, funders, and staff—for getting this project off to a running start. Watch our calendar for monthly feminist ministry conference calls that are now being scheduled through December 2009. You are welcome and your feminist ministry will benefit.

Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., feminist theologian, is cofounder and codirector of WATER.

WATER's Creative Feminist Ministers Institute, Summer 2009

(l) Emilie Townes led a discussion on "Theological Education for Feminist Ministry."

(r) Marie Fortune focused the conversation on "Feminist Ministry and Sexual Violence."



(l to r) Surekha Nelavala and Mary Kate Birge explored "Dalit Feminist Hermeneutics and Four Gospel Women." Mary Hunt facilitated.



A group led by Mary E. Hunt met in the WATER office to interact with the speakers and talk with one another over lunch.



(l to r) Emily McNeill engaged Mari Castellanos after Mari and Cindy Lapp's discussion of "Challenges for Feminist Ministers."

(l to r) Sister Hope Bauerlin and Arienne Johnson shared notes on what they heard the speakers and participants say.





(l to r) Participants in the Feminist Ministers Institute: Fanny Geymonat-Pantelis, Orelia Busch, C

Feminist ministers work daily to bring about the kin-dom of God, the Holy One, Divine Wisdom Sophia. Bless you, my sisters! This liturgy blesses feminist ministers and celebrates feminist ministry. Use it in your parish or congregation, for your women's group, or at a religious gathering, conference, or seminar. Adapt it to your needs and the needs of your community.

Preparation

Put a flask of oil, a bowl, and a cloth on the altar.

Call to Gather

Today we gather to bless feminist ministers. They are inspired by Divine Wisdom and image her. Feel the power of Divine Wisdom with us. We are here to bless N (name of person), to praise feminist ministers, and to reclaim feminist ministries for ourselves and for all religions. We come here from many places and many spaces. We come with hopes and doubts, with creativity and pain.

Let us begin by speaking our name and sharing an experience of feminist ministry. An example is: I am Diann, a feminist minister who creates liturgies and counsels the broken-hearted. (If you are blessing one feminist minister, use: Let us begin by saying our name and offering a word of blessing for N. An example is: I am Diann. I bless you, N, for consoling me when my mother died.)

Song: "Guide My Feet," Spiritual.
Guide my feet while I run this race. (3x)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.
Hold my hand...

Remembering Feminist Ministers

(Adapt these names for your tradition.)
O Divine Wisdom, Sophia Spirit, Womb of Life, we remember today women ministers, named and unnamed, who throughout time have used their ministry to bring justice to the world. We call upon these foresisters to

help us discover within ourselves your power and ways to use it for healing. Our response to each name is: "We proclaim your feminist ministry."

Eve and Lilith, you reached for knowledge and found that it was good.

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Sarah, Hagar, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, you answered the call of Divine Wisdom and put faith in a covenant with the Holy One.

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Mary, you were mother who listened, pondered, and birthed Jesus, Sophia's prophet and Miriam's child.

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Mary Magdalene, you announced Jesus' resurrection and became the disciple to the disciples.

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Phoebe, you presided at a local church;
Prisca, you supported yourself as a minister;
Junia, you were imprisoned for your beliefs;
Thecla and the other women leaders of the early house church movement, you were called to a discipleship of equals.

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena, Doctors of our Church, you challenged the corruption of the institutional church.

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Feminist Ministers and Theologians, you speak out against all forms of oppression.

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Let us speak aloud the names of **other feminist ministers**. (Add other names.)

R: We proclaim your feminist ministry.

Song: "Guide My Feet," Spiritual.
Stand by me while I run this race. (3x)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Blessed / A Blessing for F Dic

Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4.

The spirit of Divine Wisdom is upon me,
Because she has anointed me
To bring good tidings to those who are afflicted,
And has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
To proclaim the year of Divine favor,
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn;
To grant to those who mourn in Zion
To give them a garland instead of ashes,
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,
The mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit;
That they may be called oaks of righteousness,
The planting of Divine Wisdom, that she may be glorified.
They shall build up the ancient ruins,
They shall rise up the former devastations;
They shall repair the ruined cities,
The devastations of many generations.

Reflection

We have proclaimed the ministries of our foresisters; we have been challenged by the words of Isaiah; now we ask ourselves, "How do I exercise feminist ministry?" Let us take a few minutes for quiet reflection; then let us share our experiences of feminist ministry (or, if blessing one person, say: our experience of N's feminist ministry.)

Song: "Guide My Feet," Spiritual.
Search my heart while I run this race. (3x)
For I don't want to run this race in vain.

Affirming Feminist Ministries

(Use the following format for a group



ly Lapp, Anna Roeschley, Surekha Nelavala, Diann Neu, Mari Castellanos, and Emily McNeill.

re You... minist Ministers

n L. Neu

affirmation. Personalize it if you are blessing one minister: I bless you, N, for the feminist ministry that you do, especially....)

Let us call forth the many ministries among us. When you hear your ministry called, stand as you are able for an affirmation. You may stand as many times as you wish.

Let us call forth those among us who are in **political ministries**: peace workers; those who work with immigrants, trafficking, and domestic violence; grass-roots organizers; lobbyists; housing advocates; those who hold political office; marchers and protesters; those who vote. Let us extend our hands to those standing and say: "Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!"
ALL: Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!

Let us call forth those among us who are in **ministries of feminist theologies**: parents, mentors, writers, religious educators and artists, teachers, feminist theologians.
ALL: Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!

Let us call forth those among us who are in **healing ministries**: prayers, preachers, liturgy planners, Eucharistic celebrants, dancers, musicians, spiritual companions, counselors, those who use massage or reiki.
ALL: Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!

Let us call forth those among us who work in **gender and racial justice ministries**: those who work for racial inclusivity, justice in reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, and eradication of heterosexism and ageism.
ALL: Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!

Let us call forth those among us who are in **community building ministries**: those who sustain and nurture religious communities, those who raise future generations of feminists, those who work with women and children in shelters, and in partnership with women across religious traditions.

ALL: Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!

Let us call forth those among us who are in **leadership and organizational ministries**: community leaders, fundraisers, pastors, bishops, rabbis, imams, directors of justice organizations, elected officers, team leaders.

ALL: Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!

Let us call forth the many feminist ministries of the discipleship of equals.

ALL: Wisdom's power to you in your ministry!

Blessing the Oil

Oil is the sacramental symbol that strengthens us for feminist ministry. Let us bless this oil by sounding together. One person hums a tone and others join in harmony for about one minute.

Anointing with Oil

Let us anoint one another with this holy oil. (The minister pours oil into the bowl, anoints the person next to her, and invites this person to anoint the person next.)

Music: Play or hum "Guide My Feet" during the anointing, then transition into "Blessing Song."

Song: "Blessing Song" by M.T. Winter, from *Songlines* ©1987.

May the blessing of God go before you.
May Her grace and peace abound.
May Her Spirit live within you.
May Her love wrap you 'round.
May Her blessing remain with you always.
May you walk on holy ground.

Commissioning of Feminist Ministers by Diann L. Neu

Take the blessing of feminist ministers to the city streets and country roads of every neighborhood!

Let us go forth in all directions of the universe to bless and to embrace,
To forgive and to heal,
To welcome and to sanctify.

Let us go forth to the homeless and to the hospitable,
To the hungry and to the full,
To the thirsty and to the justice-seekers.

Let us go forth to the elderly and to those who seek wisdom,
To the exiled and to those who understand freedom,
To the hopeless and to those who see visions.

Let us go forth to religious leaders who are unable to perceive the needs of others,
To government officials who ignore the cries of the poor,
To world leaders who reject the movements for peace.

Let us go forth to the women and to the men of every race and place,
To the young and to the old of every neighborhood,
To the next generation and to their children of every nation.

Let us go forth in the name of Divine Wisdom, Sophia Spirit,
The God of love and liberation,
The Holy One of power and justice.

Let us go forth to proclaim feminist ministries!
Let us go forth to heal the world!

Song: "Blessing Song" by M.T. Winter

© Diann L. Neu, DMin, is cofounder and codirector of WATER.

SOAR: Sharing Our Academic Resources

Feminist work in religion is being done worldwide. However, the ability to access tools and resources that make this work possible is not equal or just. A group of feminist scholars, clergy, and activists identified this need at the Summer Forum 2008, "Feminist Theologies: Heritage and Future" sponsored by WATER and Feminist Studies in Religion, Inc., and now seek to meet it with the creation of SOAR: Sharing Our Academic Resources.

SOAR enables colleagues around the globe to share resources and seeks to ensure that the right tools are in places where they are needed most. SOAR facilitates the exchange of recent books and periodicals from the U.S. and Canada to feminist institutions that do not have them, and similarly, the donation of work from feminist scholars in other countries, such as India, to WATER. With these resources housed at an educational center like WATER, they will be more accessible to scholars in North America.

To make these important exchanges possible, we need your help in sharing your academic resources. SOAR seeks new or used books (books with some highlighting, underlining, and noted margins are welcome); copies of contemporary periodicals in the fields of women's studies, feminist and womanist theology, gender and religion; classic texts from non-Christian traditions in theology, religion; and women's studies; journal subscriptions for print copies of periodicals.

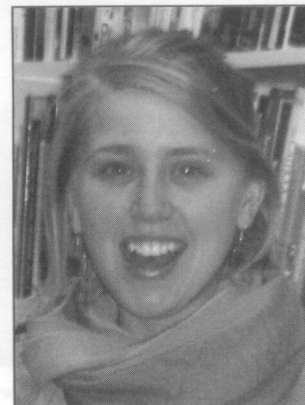
Donation information: If you wish to donate a subscription, please contact Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar of United Theological College in Bangalore, India, at utcevangeline@gmail.com. All other donations can be sent to SOAR, 1713 Pontiac Trail, Ann Arbor, MI 48105.

(Media Mail through the U.S. Postal Service is the least expensive way to send books within the U.S. For this rate, you may only send books, journals, or electronic media.) SOAR will take care of shipping the books to India through the Theological Book Network in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

SOAR committee: Dr. Evangeline Anderson-Rajkumar, United Theological College; Rabbi Dr. Julia Watts Belser, Missouri State University; Rev. Dr. Deborah Greenstein, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations; Ms. Stephanie May, Harvard Divinity School; Dr. Judith Plaskow, Manhattan College.

A Place Like WATER

Anna Beth Roeschley



If there is a place where hard work is sustained by
hard laughter, hard play,
I have found it at WATER.

If there is a space created and cultivated for women to make waves in religion,
I have dug it deeply at WATER.

If there is an energy sparking from the fingertips of an 84-year old Sister,
I have touched it at WATER.

If there have been voices speaking truth to power,
I have spoken—sometimes loud, sometimes silent—with them at WATER.

If there is a sacred patch of grass where intergenerational bodies align with the full
moon,
I have spurred their rhythm at WATER.

If there are days where I wonder what bulk mailings, Australian *panforte* (fruitcake),
and online spy bars have to do with feminist work in religion,
I have questioned—and answered—this at WATER.

If there is a faith community that keeps justice at its heart,
I have pulsed among them at WATER.

If there is an organization where feminist methodology is not only the goal of the
work but also how the work gets done,
I have collaborated as such at WATER.

If where even our honest and best efforts to be feminist can be critiqued,
I have been here long enough to offer mine at WATER.

If there are women whose commitments to dismantle sexism reach from the
hegemonies of the Catholic Church to the back alleyway,
I have joined these dissidents at WATER.

If there is a web that spans language and country, age and faith, profession and
perspective,
I am "once connected, always connected" with WATER.

Merci, Gracias, Obrigada, Danke

Anna Roeschley finishes two years as a WATER staff person as part of the Mennonite Voluntary Service program. We are deeply in her debt for her many and varied contributions: Web site makeover, lovely music, Moon Sisters gatherings, Summer Forum tech support, endless emails, Feminist Ministry video and audio, outreach to sister groups, staff work on myriad projects, Intergenerational program work, and the fruit of her "Our Whole Lives" training. The list goes on and we panic imagining how we will do without her. Perhaps five interns will magically show up at the door the day Anna leaves. We will keep them all busy with what she has been doing.

While we will miss Anna's work, we will really miss Anna. We will miss her daily

ritual of coffee making, her bike and garden, her Mennonite House friends and Pink Menno colleagues, her live music parties and her bar/barista skills. She has become friends with so many people from the local farmer to her favorite octogenarian nun that she has deepened WATER's roots and increased our output. Of course she comes from a wonderful Mennonite family of corn farmers in Illinois who know how to do just that.

We are confident that Anna will continue to be a leader and collaborator wherever she goes. Like so many of the growing community of WATER women—former interns and visiting scholars, staff and volunteers—she will make the world a far better place. So thanks, Anna. Go well and come back often.

Resources

Beavis, Mary Ann with Elaine Guillemain and Barbara Pell. **FEMINIST THEOLOGY WITH A CANADIAN ACCENT: CANADIAN PERSPECTIVES ON CONTEXTUAL FEMINIST THEOLOGY.** Toronto: Novalis, 2008 (408 pages, \$34.95).

This is a welcome addition to the scholarly literature by women whose voices deserve amplification. There is much to learn from Canadian approaches to feminist theology: attention to Native women's issues, appreciation of the particularity of culture, an ecofeminist commitment, and the integration of linguistic and cultural variety within a country. The hegemonic neighbors to the south will do well to listen and learn.

Berryman, Jerome W. **TEACHING GODLY PLAY: HOW TO MENTOR THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN.** Denver, CO: Morehouse Education Resources, 2009 (revised version) (160 pages, \$25).

Not especially feminist, this is still a great resource for thinking about how to share feminist faith with children. It is part of a larger series that this volume encapsulates.

Bieler, Andrea and Luise Schottroff. **THE EUCHARIST: BODIES, BREAD, & RESURRECTION.** Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007 (196 pages, \$18.99).

A must-read on Eucharist by trusted feminist scholars, this book will surely raise a lot of points for discussion. Rarely do the historical and contemporary sources find such skillful interpreters.

Bowman, Thea. **IN MY OWN WORDS.** Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications (110 pages, \$14.95).

These quotes from an African American Franciscan woman inspire. Then read **THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE: LESSONS IN LIVING FROM SISTER THEA BOWMAN** by Michael O'Neill McGrath (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008; 95 pages, \$20) which includes gorgeous paintings depicting her life. The power and courage of Thea Bowman jump right off the page.

Burrill, Melany. **ALL GOD'S CHILDREN: TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER DIVERSITY.** Fort Wayne, IN: LifeQuest (an imprint of Christian Community, Inc.), 2009

(20 pages, \$7 plus shipping).

Teaching sex and gender as fluid, graced aspects of our being is important for children. It heads off the later-in-life problems of discriminating and stereotyping. It invites everyone to be who they are even as they change and especially if they do not conform to oppressive images.



Dreyer, Elizabeth A. **MAKING SENSE OF GOD: A WOMAN'S PERSPECTIVE.** Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2003 (92 pages, \$11.95).

A gentle, firm, and insightful jumping off place for spiritual reflection, this book is a good one to take on retreat. Or, pick it up and use the wisdom right at home. It is part of a series that promises many such gems.

Goldstein, Rabbi Elyse, Editor. **NEW JEWISH FEMINISM: PROBING THE PAST, FORGING THE FUTURE** (403 pages, \$24.99).

The triumph of early Jewish feminists is manifest in this collection. Some of them, mainly younger colleagues, reprise the progress and project next steps. It is a great book to use for a course on Jewish feminism or for a workshop on creative feminist thought.

Henry, Kathleen M. **CRITICAL MASS.** Bloomington, NY: iUniverse, Inc., 2008 (109 pages, \$10.95).

Written in an inviting, challenging style, this fictional book traces four women's Catholic lives as they twist and turn with a church in turmoil. The women begin in 1910, 1955, 1998, and 2000 such that context is all. Ironically, things haven't changed much, or have they?

Joh, W. Anne. **HEART OF THE CROSS: A POSTCOLONIAL CHRISTOLOGY.** Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006 (164 pages, \$24.95).

A new generation of Asian feminists is building on the work of Kwok Pui-lan and others to develop their own post-colonial insights. This important Korean contribution highlights hybridity and clarifies the place of love and power where the cross can be found.

Parker, Jacqueline K. **THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY TOWARD A DANUBE 7 ORDINATION.**

Washington, DC: Constellation Press, 2007 (126 pages, \$14.95).

This oral history describes how women will eventually achieve equality and justice in the Catholic tradition by joining forces. Dagmar Celeste's ordination is one example of how the process works as told in the women's own words. Well accompanied by friends and family, Dagmar Celeste proves that no one acts prophetically alone.

Redmont, Jane. **WHEN IN DOUBT, SING: PRAYER IN DAILY LIFE.** Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 1999 and 2008 (406 pages, \$18.95).

Jane Redmont knows prayer. She's a gifted writer, a priest, and a theologian all in one delightful package, just like this book. Read it for nourishment.

Ronan, Marian. **TRACING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS: SEXUALITY, MOURNING, AND THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN CATHOLICISM.** New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009 (147 pages, \$40).

Marian Ronan adds her voice to Catholics James Carroll, Mary Gordon, Donna Haraway, and Richard Rodriguez to think through the complexities of contemporary Catholicism. Fascinating company.

Rose, Margaret, Jenny Te Paa, Jeanne Person, and Abigail Nelson, Editors. **LIFTING WOMEN'S VOICES: PRAYERS TO CHANGE THE WORLD.** New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2009 (384 pages, \$25).

A wonderful collection of prayers that come from around the world. Dip in and select ones according to theme. Know that all are geared to further the Millennium Development goals to change the world.



Ryan, Maura A. and Brian F. Linnane, SJ, Editors. **A JUST & TRUE LOVE—FEMINISM AT THE FRONTIERS OF THEOLOGICAL ETHICS: ESSAYS IN HONOR OF MARGARET A. FARLEY.** Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007 (479 pages, \$45).

Margaret Farley's students and colleagues honor her in this volume with their wide-ranging essays on feminist approaches to issues Margaret cares about: sexual abuse, contraception, hospitality, same-sex love, and more. Read it in conjunction with her own book, **A FRAMEWORK FOR CHRISTIAN SEXUAL ETHICS** (New York: Continuum, 2008, 322 pages, \$19.95) for which she received the Grawmeyer Prize. This is a study in

careful, critical, feminist thought.

Scholz, Susanne. **INTRODUCING THE WOMEN'S HEBREW BIBLE [INTRODUCTIONS IN FEMINIST THEOLOGY 13].** London, England and New York, NY: T&T Clark (a Continuum imprint), 2007 (126 pages, \$29.95).

Susanne Scholz does an admirable job of bringing the rich and complex scholarship about the women's Hebrew Bible to a general audience. Her own story is woven throughout—making the ancient text come alive anew.

Schori, Katharine Jefferts. **GOSPEL IN THE GLOBAL VILLAGE: SEEKING GOD'S DREAM OF SHALOM.** New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2009 (181 pages, \$20).

It is easy from these sermons and essays to see why the Episcopalians elected Katharine Jefferts Schori as their Presiding Bishop. She speaks directly using everyday language and images to draw a wide audience. There is strength in her prose, spirit in her prayers.



Schiess, Betty Bone. **WHY ME, LORD?: ONE WOMAN'S ORDINATION TO PRIESTHOOD WITH COMMENTARY AND COMPLAINT.** Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003 (152 pages, \$29.95).

The voice of an experienced woman priest is welcome. Betty Bone Schiess is wise enough to realize that women's ordination is but the beginning, if that, of the substantive change needed to overturn kyriarchal structures.

Stokes, Jeanette. **HURRICANE SEASON: LIVING THROUGH A BROKEN HEART.** Durham, NC: Words & Spirit, 2008 (246 pages, \$18.95).

Jeanette conveys that the best medicine for a broken heart is good friends, cups of tea, and a willingness to love some more. It is a lesson learned the hardest way. This is the stuff of a mature, well digested, carefully reflected upon life. Readers will come away satisfied and wiser.

Tanenbaum, Leora. **TAKING BACK GOD: AMERICAN WOMEN RISING UP FOR RELIGIOUS EQUALITY.** New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009 (350 pages, \$27).

A great writer takes on a big subject and produces a valuable book. It is amazing to see someone pull together Jewish, Muslim, and Christian histories and get so much of it right. Leora has done us all a major service.



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Insights from WATER's Creative Feminist Ministers Institute

Justice

**is the centerpiece of what it means to be feminist
and what it means to be religious.**

— Mary E. Hunt, Cofounder and Codirector of WATER

Justice

**is what we need to be about...that's who we are.
[We need] to keep articulating it for the next generation."**

— Cindy Lapp, Pastor of Hyattsville Mennonite Church

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