



water wheel

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

Editorially Speaking

Summer musings are just the antidote to the more frantic pace of the rest of the year. Yet what's happening is far from restful inside the Beltway and beyond. Religious feminists have several strong statements to make even though it is the season for iced tea and thick novels.

On the global front, Nelson and Winnie Mandela swept through the country like a fresh wind. Apartheid must go.

On the national front, the Supreme Court and the Louisiana legislature make a mockery of women's health and freedom. Discrimination must go.

On the local front, Mitch Snyder's tragic death focuses the need for affordable housing for all. Homelessness must go.

On the ecclesial front, Cardinal John O'Connor threatens excommunication, a Texas bishop excommunicates, and Cardinal Ratzinger would have Catholic theologians become parrots. Repression must go.

Rocking on the porch, day dreaming while watching Martina and Zina at Wimbledon, it is politically strategic to relax a little, to regroup for the next phase. We will need all the strength we can gather for elections, education and direct service. After all, changing the world is hard work.



Defining "Women-Church"

by Mary E. Hunt

The growing movement called "women-church" throughout the world conjures up various images. In Dutch the words convey something like a ladies' sewing circle; in Spanish the "church" part is hard for feminists to swallow. Definitions of women-church emerge from various women's experiences. I offer one which I was asked for at the Swiss meeting at Interlaken where over one thousand women gathered for celebration and discussion. It comes from my experience as a white, middle class, Catholic woman in the United States. I invite readers to shape their own, using my remarks as a springboard.

Women-church refers to the various expressions of women's religious agency in a patriarchal world. It is a phrase that describes our efforts to believe in the values of love and justice even though we receive contrary evidence from our churches. It is an affirmation of the need to act as people who have a significant contribution to make even though as women we have been told that we are at best assistants

are tolerated if they keep quiet. It is not the women's auxiliary of the larger church. Nor is it simply a place where women who have been wounded by patriarchy can find comfort.

My definition of women-church is a **global, ecumenical movement made up of local feminist base communities of justice-seeking friends who engage in sacrament and solidarity.** I will explain each element of this definition to provide an overview of women-church.

Women-church is a global ecumenical movement. While it is true that, like blue jeans and rock music, women-church was first articulated in the United States, it would be a mistake to confine the definition to that reality. Women-church is a religious expression of the historical stirrings of feminism and womanism (feminism coming from white women's struggle for rights, and womanism emerging from Afro-American women's struggle for survival) throughout the world. For example, women-church meets in Seoul, Korea where the Reverend Young Kim, an ordained Meth-

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who engage in sacrament and solidarity.*

in the work of the religious world. Women-church is a statement of our humanity as women and our share in divinity as church.

Defining women-church in the negatives, saying what women-church is not, will help to clarify what I mean. Women-church is not an organization with members, elected officials, even with its own clergy. It is not a club from which men are excluded and in which children

odist minister, leads weekly worship and reflection on scripture.

Women-church is ecumenical. For Catholic women it is a clear alternative to a church which is not a church for us. For Protestant women it is a way to challenge and expand the efforts of institutional churches, as in the case of the World Council of Churches' Decade in Solidarity (continued on page 2)



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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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...Women-Church

(continued from page 1)

ity with Women. It is a way for women who have no previous affiliation with church to join with other women in search of meaning and value.

Most of all, women-church is a movement, a growing, uncontrollable, unpredictable, spontaneous, faith-filled movement by those who have traditionally been the heart and soul of virtually every church. As such there is no headquarters, no president, no pope. There are simply many people who are sparking the spiritual creativity of women, plumbing the often hidden history of ourselves and our sisters, and organizing events which gather our communities.

Women-church is made up of local feminist base communities. While the expression of women-church differs according to cultures, there are certain common elements. There are local groups in which one participates; one cannot be women-church simply in one's imagination. Of course a group may not be available, but periodically one needs to gather with the community.

These groups are composed of individuals who form a movement, not simply as individuals coming together but as groups. Women-church is a relational reality, not a characteristic of a person. It is not that I am women-church but that we together are trying to be women-church.

sources include chants, songs, poetry, Goddess materials, eucharist, dance and many other creative expressions of women's spirits.

Women-church is made up of justice-seeking friends. While this is perhaps the most controversial aspect of the definition, it is for me the most compelling. Those of us who make up the women-church movement want to bring up our children with the values of love, justice and community. We do this best as justice-seeking friends.

In a patriarchal culture friendship has received a bad name. It has been privatized into a one to one relationship that makes us feel good without necessarily making change. I reject this notion as a pitiful projection of male experience. To the contrary, as women-church grows it becomes more and more obvious that the revolutionary power of women's friendship is at its heart. The political and theo-political call to go and make friends in all nations is an imperative. Oh that Israeli and Palestinian women can become friends and make peace, for example.

Our love for one another as women, something that we have been taught not to take seriously especially in its physical dimensions, is precisely the model of a "discipleship of equals" that Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza envisions as a model of church. To be friends is the ultimate political act. It is the deepest affirmation of human community. It is the foundation of women-church.

Women-church groups engage in sacrament and solidarity. Groups act according to their

...as women-church grows it becomes more and more obvious that the revolutionary power of women's friendship is at its heart.

Such groups are feminist. Of course "feminist" has many definitions, but at least they are feminist insofar as they recognize the historical and contemporary oppression of women, especially poor women and women of color and their dependent children. They seek to change social structures and personal attitudes to stop this oppression.

Women-church is made up of local base communities. The term base community has a Latin American ring to it for a reason. These are groups in which the deep unity of reflection and action, prayer and politics, or what I call sacrament and solidarity, is taken seriously. These groups gather regularly, usually with food and drink, to deepen ties and to work and worship as church. The worship varies but

own culture and the urgency of their own situations but the actions may be characterized as sacrament and solidarity if we wrest those concepts, a la Mary Daly, from their patriarchal context. Sacrament is a church word if ever there was one, a word that has served to divide life into the sacred and the profane. From a feminist perspective a sacrament is an act of lifting to public expression the everyday life of people because it is holy. This is what prayer is—momentary attention to the presence of the divine. Attention does not make the divine present, it simply recognizes what is so. This sense of sacrament comes, admittedly, from the Catholic experience. It is key because it breaks down the barriers between those who can celebrate and those who cannot, namely, women. It

emphasizes the importance of music, silence, incense, drums, gongs, chants, dance, oil, flowers, touch, candles and all the creative rituals that enhance the word traditions.

Solidarity needs to be expanded in meaning in much the same way. It must be taken from its linear patriarchal meaning and given a new richness in women-church. Political work for those of us in the north and west is at the heart of our responsibility for a just world. But it need not be guilt-induced, the product of a purely political agenda, nor humorless and militant.

Solidarity work that emerges from justice-seeking friendships is solidarity work with a human face, letting the most deeply affected set the agenda, telling the rest of us how we can be helpful and humane. It is work that includes hugs as well as legislation, watching one

We can and do participate simultaneously in our churches of origin as well as in women-church. We even use the money of those churches to make women-church happen; we use the buildings of the larger community for our worship.

We do not demand unilateral allegiance to women-church. Nor do we make it a practice of criticizing other churches. We are church. Our primary attention is on being church. The rest is detail. Women-church is not schismatic, it is a spiral expression of the deepest aspects of the Christian tradition.

Second, what is the theology of women-church? We do not seek a creed nor a set of dogmas. Such are meant to exclude and create a certain elite. Rather, with our feminist brothers and our children we seek to live out a theology of "mutual relation" (as Carter Hey-

Women-church is not schismatic, it is a spiral expression of the deepest aspects of the Christian tradition.

another's children grow as well as stopping nuclear war, attending to the environment as well as ending global conflict. Solidarity is just as spiritual as sacrament is political in women-church.

This four-part definition of women-church is not meant to limit other expressions but to encourage them. Two central problems abound which need to be addressed as such new definitions come forth.

First, what is the relationship of women-church to the larger church? Is women-church a schismatic movement, a new church, a new denomination? I say no to all of these options not because I am afraid of heresy, too timid to found a new church nor so uncreative as to imagine only a new denomination. Rather, I say no because women's infinite creativity and cleverness permit us to be many things at once.



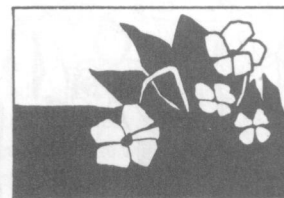
ward has called it) and a praxis of radical love.

Of course we need to articulate beliefs and a framework for action, but that will take place in local groups according to local needs. It comes later, after we have lived a little more in this new reality called women-church. It comes only when many can speak, when more can sing, when all can dance. It must be done by theologians and non-theologians alike.

Moving toward that day as women-church is the task ahead. As women-church we are well accompanied by one another in our local groups and around the world. This accompaniment is the source of our power. Blessed be. **Readers have suggested that questions accompanying these articles would make them even more helpful for group use. Here's a sample.**

1. What is your experience of women-church?
2. How do you see the women-church movement contributing to the feminization of denominations and congregations?
3. How can we share women-church informed faith with children?
4. What is the relationship between ritual and social change in your women-church group?

Mary E. Hunt, Ph.D., co-directs WATER.



In Memory of Her...

According to Mark (14:9), Jesus said of the faithful woman who anointed him "and truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." Church history has since conveniently forgotten her name.

Giving rightful name to women who have lived their love in spirit and deed, friends of WATER restore our past and our future through the "In Memory of Her" fund. If you would care to remember someone special to you, please write a brief tribute in the following manner and send it to the WATER office with your contribution.

From Helen Kauffman:

Dr. Myra Zinke, our Amazon warrior who has passed through our hearts again and again, your spear raised to the cosmos, pointing to our possibilities.

Myra, we give thanks for you.

From Marian Kelley:

Margaret Smith, your message was always love and hope.

Margaret, we give thanks for you.

From Nancy Nimmich:

Mary Flynn, your impression on our lives and souls marks us as truly blessed.

Mary, we give thanks for you.

From Nancy K. Swanborg:

Elnora Seitz, grandmother, your life resounds in me in the words of Emily Dickinson:

"This world is not conclusion;
a sequel stands beyond,
invisible as music, but
positive as sound."

Elnora, we give thanks for you.

From Catherine Krippner & Rose Mary Meyer:

Mary Fleming, you were gracious and fun-loving. The Thanksgiving dinners we shared with you leave us with happy memories.

Mary, we give thanks for you.

WATER, in turn, is deeply honored to have been remembered in Myra Zinke's will. We are indeed grateful for the loving support of friends like her forever and ever.



Background

When people move into a new house, they want it to be filled with good spirits. They often have an open house or a house warming party to introduce friends to their new living space and to bless their house by filling it with the warmth and laughter of friends.

In my childhood when my family moved to a new home, the priest came to bless our house. I remember thinking then of how this simple blessing connected my family with our parish church. When I moved into a new home I wanted my friends to bless it as a women-church house. Women-church continues the tradition of the early Christian community by meeting in homes as house churches.

This house blessing liturgy was used for the blessing of my house, for the blessing of a house church. Use it to bless a new home, to mark a significant anniversary of a house, or to bless a house as a house church.

Preparation

Invite friends to bring food for the meal. Gather incense, salt, a bowl of water and bough of evergreen, and a gift for each room of the house.

Procession

Invite friends to gather on the porch or in the front yard of the new house and process to the old house if the houses are nearby.

Call to Celebration

Welcome to this house blessing. We gather to begin a new year of our house church by blessing one of our homes. Women-church is a house church; our homes are sacred spaces.

We gather in this backyard of our former house church to remember the events that were holy for us here. Let's take time to remember together the community events we have celebrated here. Think of the events that have been significant for you and name them aloud for all of us to remember. (*Naming*)

These memories are unique to this place. Yet they remain with us beyond this place because they are ours as a community. To symbolize the sacredness of these memories for us and to show that they remain with us as we move to a

new house church let us dig up sage from the herb garden and transplant it to its new home. Sage symbolizes wisdom. We carry this wisdom with us as we process to our new space.

Procession to New Home

(The new owners ring chimes of welcome when all gather on the doorstep.)

Welcome to our new home. Welcome to our new house church. May it be for all of us a place of love and friendship, a place of healing and comfort. Let us gather round as we plant sage, the herb of wisdom.

Song: "Bless This House"

(adapted by Diann Neu)

Bless this house, O God we pray
Make it safe by night and day.

Bless the roof and chimney tall

Let thy peace lie over all.

Bless the windows shining bright
Letting in Thy heavenly light.

Bless the folks who dwell within

Keep them loving and blessed with kin.

Bless the friends who gather here
Bring us health and keep us near.

Bless us all that one day we

May be blessed eternally.

Blessing of Salt

(The blessing pours salt into the hand of each person.)

Salt symbolizes protection and healing. Let us create a circle of protection around this house. Circle the house, sprinkle salt as you go offer a prayer of protection, and return to the front yard.

Prayer from St. Joseph Daily Missal

The following is the traditional opening prayer for the dedication of a church. Please repeat each line after me:

How awesome is this place! (*Echo*)

This is none other than the House of God
(*Echo*)

This is the gate of heaven (*Echo*)

and it shall be called the special place of God.
(*Echo*)

How lovely is your dwelling place, O God of hosts! (*Echo*)

My soul yearns and pines for the special place where God dwells. (*Echo*)

Bless This House

Entrance Song: "Walk Through These Doors" by Marsie Silvestro

©1987 Moonsong Productions

Grandmothers whose names we call
Ancient ones whose spirits have flown
(*refrain*) Walk through these doors
with blessing

Walk through these doors with peace
Walk through these doors as holy ones
Enter the words we speak.

Children laughing in the day
Mothers crying in the night (*refrain*)

Lovers dancing like a flame
Women standing strong and free (*refrain*)

Reading from 1 Peter 2:4-9

Come to Christ, to that living stone, rejected by human beings but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones by yourselves built into a spiritual house...For it stands in scripture:

"Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in Christ will not be put to shame."

The honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner," and "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense" for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of God who called you out of the night into God's marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

Blessing Each Room

We begin the room by room blessing, using incense, gifts and water. Let us move into the living room first.

Blessing the Living Room

(Someone incenses the room.)

We pray, O Word Made Flesh, a blessing upon this living room, the place where we welcome friends, offer the warmth of our hearth, and share the many conversations that build our community as women-church. This is where we become strangers and aliens no

by Diann Neu

longer, but members of the household of a family of choice. We celebrate and bless that household of women-church, our sharing of stories and experiences, the times we reflect together on the Word of God, and the times that sharing passes over into warmth and welcoming of our fire and hearth. Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.

Our guests for tonight will sign and leave a guest book as our symbol of blessing. (*Someone sprinkles it and the room with water.*) Let us move to the bathroom.

Blessing the Bathroom

(*Someone incenses the room.*)

We pray a blessing, O Ever-cleansing Holy One, on the bathroom of this house and on all those aspects of our lives in need of cleansing. We remember the times our mothers scrubbed away our mud and dirt when we were young, and we recall the spiritual cleaning of baptism as living water passed over us. May our growth of women-church cleanse us of any unjust or unloving inclinations in our own lives, and may the community of women-church lend its hands to scrub away the mud and dirt of injustice and violence from our world. Let us all say: Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.

As a symbol of our blessing we leave this basket of special soaps. (*Someone sprinkles the room with water.*) Let us move to the bedroom.

Blessing the Bedroom(s)

(*Someone incenses the room.*)

We pray a blessing, O Loving God/ess, on the bedroom of this house and in so doing we recall first of all our need for rest and sleep as a source of new energy. We celebrate our bodies and our sexuality-- the fullness of our womanhood. We pray a blessing on all these wonderful bodies that give pleasure to, and receive pleasure from, those we love. We recall that our bodies have not always been so celebrated by our religious tradition, but in the name of women-church we bless them and the pleasure they give -- and we name them holy. Let us all say: Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.

As a symbol of our blessing we hang this picture. (*Someone sprinkles it and the room with water.*) Let us move to the basement.

Blessing the Basement

(*Someone incenses the room.*)

We pray, O Rock of Ages, a blessing upon this cellar used both to store the necessities and

tools of life and to keep trash and broken items from the sight of others. We pray a blessing on the "underground" of our lives -- especially those parts of ourselves that we keep hidden because we don't want to see them, or face them, or deal with them. We pray that our brokenness may be healed, that our mustiness may disappear, and that that which is buried within us may be the tools of life and love and community. May the "underground" of our lives be a support for the whole structure of women-church. Let us say: Amen. Blessed Be. Let it be so.

We leave our "sacristy items" here -- oil, incense, candles, musical instruments, cloths -- as our symbol of blessing. (*Someone sprinkles the water.*) Let us move to the kitchen.

Blessing the Kitchen

(*Someone incenses the room.*)

We pray, O Nourishing One, a blessing upon this kitchen where food is prepared with great and loving care. We know this room in a special way since generations of women before us have been the food-gatherers and food-preparers of our world. And so we bless that memory; we celebrate the unrecognized years of loving physical labor; we bless the culinary creativity.

As we do, we are painfully aware that this room meant isolation and aloneness for many of our foremothers. For too many, it was a place of social segregation. But we also know that many women have worked together in the kitchens of our world where they have bared their souls and shared their secrets as they peeled and cut and diced and strained and heated and poured. And so tonight then we pray an end to the aloneness and segregation of women's traditional work, while we bless and celebrate the community women have created in the kitchens of the world. And we say: Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.

We leave herbs here as our symbols of blessing. (*Someone sprinkles the room with water.*) Let us move to (name the next room, leaving until last the room where the food will be served.)

Blessing Other Rooms

(Follow the same pattern using your imagination and special circumstances to suit your particular house. Possible themes: study - ideas, insights; guest room - hospitality, sanctuary; porch - outlook, openness; family room - common interests, tasks, goals; hallway - passages of time, place, people.)

Blessing the Dining Room (or Table)

(*Someone incenses the room.*)

We pray, O God/ess of thanksgiving, a blessing upon this dining room, the place where we

share both nourishment and community. It is here that we share together the meals that have been handed down to us -- by our families, by our friends, and by our religious traditions. It is here that we bless and break the bread, and bless and share the wine which has been left to us by Jesus and his friends -- both women and men -- who have celebrated this meal of thanksgiving for centuries.

And so we extend our hands, palms up, and bless this our bread and wine as a community called to "royal priesthood." We bless as well the food which we brought to share as nourishment for our bodies. And in so doing, we remember the great women who worshipped in Spirit and in Truth in centuries of house churches: Mary, Mary of Magdala, Lydia, Priscilla, and the thousands whose names we will never know. It is their legacy we claim and pass on tonight as we bless and celebrate this sacred space and sacred meal. With hands joined we say: Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.

Our food and song are our symbols of blessing. (*Someone sprinkles water around the room.*)

Song: "Song of Community" by Carolyn McDade © 1981 Surtesy Publishing

We'll weave a love that greens sure as spring,
then deepens in summer to the fall autumn brings

Resting still in winter to spiral again
together my friends we'll weave on,
we'll weave on.

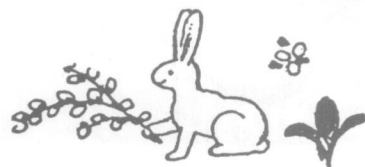
A love that heals friend, that bends friend,
that rising and turning then yields friend,
like mountain to rain or frost in the spring
or darkness that turns with the dawn
It's by turning, turning, turning my friend,
by turning that love moves on.

Blessing of Peace

Our love continues to move on as we come together as a community and as we move away from this place to create community with others. Let us bless one another with hugs before we share in the feast that we have prepared.

Sharing of the Meal

Diann Neu, co-director of WATER, is a feminist liturgist. Special thanks to Maureen Fiedler of SAS, our local women-church group, for her housewarming gift of the blessing prayers.



Summer Reading Pleasure

Argentina (and WATER) Prepare for Encuentro

WATER staff Diann Neu and Mary E. Hunt offered a series of introductory courses in feminist theology in May 1990 to women's groups in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Montevideo, Uruguay; and Santiago, Chile, in preparation for the Fifth Encuentro of Latin American and Caribbean Feminists to be held in November 1990 in San Bernardo, Argentina.

Participants in the three courses, representing the Centro de Estudios Cristianos in Argentina, Mujer-Iglesia in Uruguay, and the Centro Diego de Medellín in Chile, will attend the Encuentro and bring feminist religious perspectives to bear on political and personal issues. The Encuentro will feature speakers and workshops on a variety of feminist themes.

The challenge of intercultural theological work is the need to share information without losing the uniqueness of the cultural context from which it emerges. Feminist theology is emerging in a uniquely Latin American way, providing North Americans with challenges to our usual ways of looking at issues. For example, new understandings emerge about "popular religion," how celebration figures in the doing of theology, and images of the divine that work in agriculture-based societies.

Such is the nature of "encounter" that will continue when WATER staff return as participants to learn at the Fifth Encuentro.



Summer is a time to catch up on all of the reading set aside during the year. The following are available at WATER for local borrowers.

Chittister, Joan, **JOB'S DAUGHTERS: WOMEN AND POWER.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1990 (83 pages, \$3.95).

A cry for the return of Job's daughters: peace, development and equality by a popular religious writer. This latest installment in the Madeleva Lectures in Spirituality would have pleased Sr. M. Madeleva.

Condren, Mary, **THE SERPENT AND THE GODDESS: WOMEN, RELIGION, AND POWER IN CELTIC IRELAND.** San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989 (268 pages, \$13.95).

The substance of Mary Condren's devastating case against patriarchy is outdone only by the wit and erudition that ground it. The Irish case is illustrative of many cultures, hence the Irish solution points the way toward change.

Gateley, Edwina, **I HEAR A SEED GROWING.** Trabuco Canyon, CA: Source Books, 1990 (260 pages, \$12.50).

A moving memoir by a woman of insight and integrity. This is a hopeless and at the same time hopeful story of the work of Edwina Gateley, the founder of the Volunteer Missionary Movement and of the Genesis House for women in prostitution.

Hildegard, Saint, **HILDEGARD OF BINGEN.** Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1990 (545 pages, \$17.95).

This translation is a valuable volume for those who want to read the classics for themselves rather than rely on snippets that have made Hildegard popular.

Hynes, H. Patricia, **THE RECURRING SILENT SPRING.** Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1989 (215 pages, \$10.95).

A brilliant analysis of the impact of Rachel Carson's **SILENT SPRING** on science, feminism and the future. While one may not agree with all of Patricia Hynes' ideas on new reproductive technologies, her exposition of the impact of Rachel Carson's life and work on the struggle of women in science is marvelous.

Jeanson, Sharon Pace, **THE WOMEN OF GENESIS.** Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1990 (143 pages, \$9.95).

Introductory explorations of eight scriptural figures found in Gen. 12-50 point toward the importance of women in Hebrew Scriptures.

Kaye/Kantrowitz, Melanie and Irena Klepfisz, **THE TRIBE OF DINA: A JEWISH WOMEN'S ANTHOLOGY** (Revised and Expanded Edition). Boston: Beacon Press, 1989 (360 pages, \$12.95).

A classic collection to stir and challenge. Well worth buying the revised edition to see how Jewish women are dealing with recent events in the Middle East. Essays, poetry and pictures can be used widely for study, worship and dialogue.

Kirkpatrick, Bill, **AIDS: SHARING THE PAIN.** New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1990 (145 pages, \$9.95).

A cut above the spate of AIDS care-giving books, this volume is informative, realistic and supportive of families, friends and persons with AIDS. Give it to your pastor.

Kus, Robert J., **KEYS TO CARING: ASSISTING YOUR GAY AND LESBIAN CLIENTS.** Boston: Alyson Publications Inc., 1990 (362 pages, \$12.95).

Give this collection to your doctor, lawyer, therapist and other professionals who should know more about lesbian and gay people than most do. A wonderful collection covering all the basics including Mary E. Hunt's "Gay and Lesbian Roman Catholics."

Love, Susan M. with Karen Lindsey, **DR. SUSAN LOVE'S BREAST BOOK.** Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1990 (454 pages, \$18.95).

Breast cancer strikes about one in nine U.S. women making it a serious health concern. Susan Love, in a compassionately written book, provides everything you ever wanted to know about your breasts. A reference to have handy for information, reassurance and general education. No feminist household should be without it.

Mananzan, Sr. Mary John, OSB, editor, **WOMAN AND RELIGION.** Manila: The Institute of Women's Studies, St. Scholastica's College, 1988 (207 pages, \$10).

Asian women doing theology with deep faith and equally profound political commitments make this must reading for North American feminists. Innovative liturgical ideas and first person accounts add richness to this collection.

Martz, Sandra, editor, **WHEN I AM AN OLD WOMAN I SHALL WEAR PURPLE: AN ANTHOLOGY OF SHORT STORIES AND POETRY.** Manhattan Beach, CA: Papier-Mache Press, 1989 (181 pages, \$10).



Beautiful, inspiring, insightful, and other accolades belong to this book on ageing. Stand out contributions include "Two Willow Chairs" by Jess Wells, and "A Woman at Forty" by Enid Shomer. The photos alone are worth the price of the book.

May, Melanie, **BONDS OF UNITY: WOMEN, THEOLOGY, AND THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH**. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989 (196 pages, \$12).

The many strong voices of women in the ecumenical movement are heard loud and clear here. Unity is still distant but women surely promise more than institutional churches for achieving it.

Peavey, Fran, **A SHALLOW POOL OF TIME: AN HIV+ WOMAN GRAPPLES WITH THE AIDS EPIDEMIC**. Santa Cruz, CA: New Society Publishers, 1990 (155 pages, \$11.95).

A gripping journal by a politically and spiritually savvy feminist activist and comedian. This is a powerful read by a San Francisco-based commentator on AIDS who discovers that she too is HIV+. The best book on AIDS from a woman's perspective that this reviewer has seen. Informative, engrossing, tragic.

Pratt, Minnie Bruce, **CRIME AGAINST NATURE**. Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1990 (128 pages, \$8.95).

A well deserved Lamont Poetry Selection, this moving collection is the story of a lesbian mother wrestling with the demons of injustice and the right to be human. Brilliant, sensitive, hopeful.

Riley, Maria, **TRANSFORMING FEMINISM**. Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1989 (136 pages, \$8.95).

An introductory analysis of feminism and Catholic social teachings. Useful for study groups that seek to incorporate feminism into their justice concerns.

Schneider, Robert C., editor and compiler, **THE OPEN HAND COOKBOOK: GREAT CHEFS COOK FOR FRIENDS**. New York: Pocket Books, 1989 (304 pages, \$18.95).

A succulent treasure for cooks and eaters. California cooking at its best with recipes from Alice Waters, Wolfgang Puck, et al. In addition to being a gorgeous book, part of the proceeds go to Project Open Hands, an organization that supplies nutritious meals for people with AIDS and AIDS-related conditions who cannot cook for themselves. Food and Friends (P.O. Box 70601) in Washington, D.C. 20024 is another such organization.

Spiegel, Marcia Cohn and Deborah Lipton Kremsdorf, **WOMEN SPEAK TO GOD: THE PRAYERS AND POEMS OF JEWISH WOMEN**. San Diego, CA: Woman's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education, 1987 (90 pages, \$8.95).

A useful collection of worship materials by authors from Miriam to Marcia Falk. A companion volume of equal value is **ON OUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY: A CREATIVE SHABBAT SERVICE** by the same publisher.

Starhawk, **THE SPIRAL DANCE**. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989 (288 pages, \$12.95).

The tenth anniversary edition of this feminist spiritual classic is well worth reading. The introduction chronicles Starhawk's development; the rituals and exercises are still fresh.

Tuana, Nancy, editor, **FEMINISM AND SCIENCE**. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989 (242 pages, \$12.95).

Outstanding collection of essays that raise the fundamental questions of gender in what we have been taught are objective sciences. More myths bite the dust as critical and creative theories emerge.

Turpin, Joanne, **WOMEN IN CHURCH HISTORY**. Cincinnati, OH: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1990 (175 pages, \$6.95).

An inspiring story from each of the first twenty centuries of Christian history: from Prisca the Evangelist to Jean Donovan, from Perpetua of Carthage to Elizabeth Lange.

Underhill, Evelyn, **THE WAYS OF THE SPIRIT**. New York: Crossroad, 1990 (240 pages, \$19.95).

Handwritten retreats by this spiritual leader make interesting reading in the history of women's spirituality. Topics are a bit esoteric—adoration, election and the communion of saints—but the content is intriguing.

Ussher, Jane M., **THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE FEMALE BODY**. London and New York: Routledge, 1989 (166 pages, \$12.95).

Womb to grave, the female body is subject to cultural interpretation. The author argues that biology is not only not destiny but that reproduction is power. Excellent bibliography.

Young, Pamela Dickey, **FEMINIST THEOLOGY/ CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY: IN SEARCH OF METHOD**. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990 (127 pages, \$7.95).

The search goes on even after this book, but there are some useful questions at play here even if the answers are tentative.

Additional Resources...

MEDIA AND VALUES: A Quarterly Resource for Media Awareness. Order from Media and Values, 1962 Shenandoah, Los Angeles, CA 90034 (\$4 for single copy; \$14 for annual subscription).

This provocative journal has a two-part series on gender and the media. "Redesigning Women" is of special interest, including "Prime-Time Girls Just Want to Have Fun" and "No News is Women's News." Coupled with "Men, Myth and Media" this makes a nice study group/workshop resource.

NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, **FACTS ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS: A RESOURCE MANUAL**. New York: NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, 99 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013 (16 fact sheets, \$16.95).

Invaluable resource in changing times on Supreme Court cases, costs of child bearing/rearing, the impact of AIDS and other timely subjects. Excellent model of clear and concise public education.

"The Journey Is Home" available from EcuFilm, 810 Twelfth Ave., S. Nashville, TN 37203 800-251-4091.

A wonderful film about Nelle Morton, pioneer feminist theologian. A first rate resource with compelling commentary on contemporary life by this church woman who shaped so many feminist theologians by her charming yet insistent ways. Study manual helps groups use this wisely. Nelle would love it.



FYI: A Taste of Local WATER

WATERwheel readers who live outside the Greater Washington, D.C. area often pine wistfully about missing local programs. Hence we offer a synopsis, encouraging other local groups to develop their own programs, perhaps invite some of our speakers.

Mary Lou Randour and Diann Neu of **WATER** offered a day on "Integrating Images of God," a participatory approach to exploring what images of the divine we have been given and what we would like to develop. Mary Lou followed it up with a four week seminar on "Psychotherapy and Spirituality" for mental health professionals and ministers.

Kelly Brown of Howard University School of Divinity brought "Womanist Perspectives on Spirituality" to an appreciative **WATER** group. Her focus on Christology served to highlight the signal contribution of womanist thought to contemporary religion.

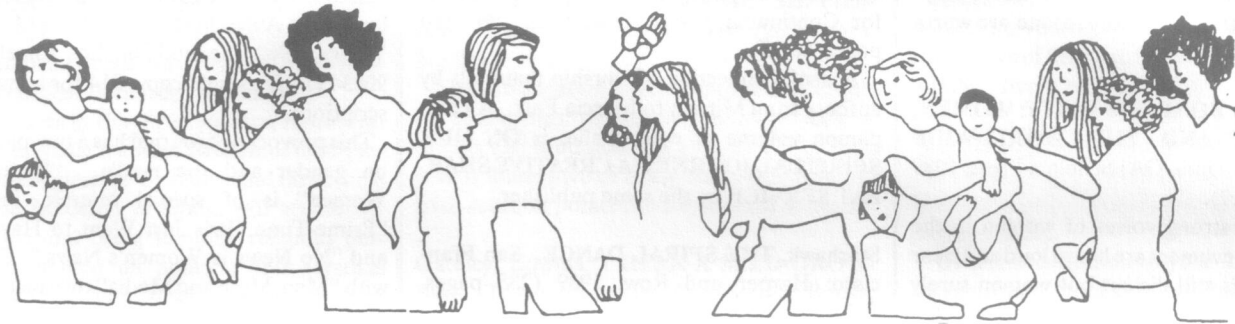
Gail Unterberger of Wesley Theological Seminary hailed "Giving Up on Giving Up for Lent" as a fine idea for personal health. Her study of women's usual self-sacrificing has led her to suggest alternatives for healthy self love and communal giving.

Ash Wednesday and Seder events were well attended and lively as ever. The changing face

of the globe makes such times of prayer and refreshment a helpful way to re-anchor ourselves.

During a brief visit, Sister Mary John Mananzan, osb, Dean of St. Scholastica's College and Chairperson of **GABRIELA**, graced **WATER** with witty, insightful remarks about women's work in the Philippines.

More of the same is guaranteed for the coming year. A delightful afternoon of planning with some area women in ministry generated plenty of new ideas. Bottom line: keep it coming.



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