



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

Editorial

We smell hope. Just when it becomes obvious that justice is lacking, the wind begins to blow and hope springs up. The elections brought hope, not just in a new administration and more women, African Americans and Native Americans in high places, but dramatically increased voter participation. Hope smells like a fall fire, a little damp and tentative, but with urging it ignites. So, too, hope in our day, a bit of new energy for a flagging country. Election years can be like this, and this one is.

Women in England move their Anglican ordination question another step toward solution. Theresa Kane in the U.S. offers the best reason in the world: if churches are to be credible on any justice issue, they have to start at home. Simple but smart. A ray of hope.

The Women-Church Convergence and lots of women's groups around the country will sponsor a wonderful conference, "Women-Church: Weavers of Change," in Albuquerque, NM April 16-18, 1993. WATER invites you especially to be there with thousands of people seeking new ways to be spiritual and political, new energy for the justice work, and a good time. We'll look for you.

These are signs of hope, bursts of energy that will make a real difference. Even the Presbyterian Church's brutal rejection of the Rev. Jane Adams Spahr as co-pastor of a church to which she was called because she is an open and affirming lesbian woman has a hopeful side. The outcry and condemnation of the injustice is so loud and sustained, the scandal of exclusion so heinous, that Janie's case is sure to hasten the day when qualifications will be measured by training and call, not sexual orientation. Hope is hard at times.

We at WATER are proud to support and shape such efforts. We do it because you show by your support that it must be done if we are to live with religious integrity. There is more to do, but hope helps.



When There Is No Justice

by Mary E. Hunt

Finding justice when there is no justice is the greatest challenge we face as people of many faiths coping with AIDS. I write no novelty and I shatter no illusions when I claim that there is no justice about AIDS. Make no mistake, this is injustice personified. To imply anything less would be to offer false hope, to worship false idols, and to lie to one another through clenched teeth. Let us face this grim reality together, but face it honestly, confident that we are not alone but well accompanied by all who seek justice.

There is no justice in the deaths out of time that are endemic to AIDS. No quilt panel however beautiful, no quilt however huge and moving, will bring back the loved ones it represents.

There is no justice in the agony and suffering of women, men and children who move through

and marginalized in our society. No amount of media attention for one weekend will change that quickly, and all predictions are that globally the number of AIDS-related deaths will double in a few years.

There is no justice in the slow, tentative response of too many church-related people who still cannot bring themselves to deal with homosexuality as a healthy, holy way to love. No curses are strong enough to condemn the homo-hatred which has caused some people to drag their feet, to suggest that AIDS is God's wrath, to force lies and cover-ups about what one is suffering, how one died, whom one loved.

There is no justice in the fact that the week after thousands of people went to Washington for the Names Quilt display, when they all went back to their homes and places of work (if they

There is no justice in the fact that, while AIDS is an equal opportunity killer, the communities which are hardest hit by this disease are made up of people who are already hated and marginalized in our society.

the stages of HIV infection, diagnosis, treatment and, eventually, death. No amount of medical research has yet put a stop to this pandemic; no cure or vaccine is in sight.

There is no justice in the scandalous response of the current administration to the health care needs of millions of our citizens. No candidate for election deserves a vote if she/he does not make health care a right for all, not a privilege which some can buy.

There is no justice in the fact that, while AIDS is an equal opportunity killer, the communities which are hardest hit by this disease are made up of people who are already hated

have it), when the Quilt was safely back in its boxes and the volunteers had put their white outfits in the laundry, the work of feeding and nursing, of burying and grieving would go on as it did before. To be frank, most people are so busy making ends meet, finding or keeping work, that they simply do not have the psychic space to let in the enormity of the AIDS problem unless and until it strikes their loved ones. It will strike someone we all know in the next five years if it has not already, and there is even less justice in that.

Yet, incurable optimists that we are, we human
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WATER is a feminist 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, counseling and liturgical planning which have helped thousands of people to be part of an inclusive church and society.

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...No Justice

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beings, we seek justice where there is no justice. We always have. We always will. We make do. We make justice. We find a way "to keep hope alive." That is our common faith even though we express it in myriad ways. It's like when we're in the kitchen in the middle of preparing a meal and we run out of one ingredient so we substitute another, an extra carrot in place of zucchini in the soup, perhaps. The soup tastes a little different, but usually it tastes better. So, too, in our situation, when there is no justice we substitute love and lots of it. And life tastes better, not bitter.

Think of the outpourings of love that have fueled our hope during the AIDS years. When we look back on this, when AIDS is a distant memory like the plagues of old—please God/

research and we must "act up" until we get a cure. We need more social services and health care for all, and we vote this year as if our lives depend on it because they do. We need deep changes in attitudes: a collective conversion from racism to respect, from homo-hatred to harmony, from sexism to security. But meanwhile, we need love to make up for justice lest we lose sight of our humanity and the share of our divinity.

We all pray for miracles whether we admit it or not. And right now a hint of justice feels like a miracle. But a ton of love will have to do in the meantime, in these very mean times. Literally making that much love is our task as people of faith, and the miracle is that we are more than up to it.

*So, too, in our situation, when there is no
justice we substitute love and lots of it.
And life tastes better, not bitter.*

ess make that day come soon—I guarantee that everybody will have a love story to tell: Frank and Alex died within hours of each other, lovers to the end; Karen worried more about how her kids would survive than about her own illness; Shawn generated more love in his five short years than most of us do in a hundred; Bob and Ken had a secret handshake which gave new meaning to the passion of safe, sensuous sex.

Think of your love stories, the many instances of pure, human love that are sewn together like the quilt pieces into a remarkable art piece that is the one people of one creation even in this, one of our most trying hours. Tell your love stories. Tell them over and over again. We need them to tide us over until justice comes.

The stories are endless. We weep at their power because we come from faith traditions which affirm that love triumphs even over death, that love lurks where justice fears to tread. Yes, when we're short on something essential we go next door and ask a neighbor to lend us a little until we can replace it. That is what our grandparents and great-grandparents did, and the system worked because they always replaced it with a little more than they borrowed. We're short on justice right at the moment. Instead, I urge us to go next door like our ancestors did and borrow a little love, then replace it with a little more until justice comes.

Substituting love for justice is not an excuse to forsake the struggle for justice. To the contrary: we need more money for AIDS

This article is adapted from a sermon delivered at the Interfaith Healing Service, the National Cathedral, Washington, DC, October 11, 1992.

Questions for Discussion

1. AIDS has become a symbol of discrimination, the Names Quilt a symbol of hope. How do you and your community respond to the need for social change in this regard, and for survival in the meantime?

2. AIDS, like all diseases for which there is no known cure, tests our ability to deal creatively with the unknown. How do you cope with that, and how do you explain it to children?

3. When AIDS is a memory and only love stories remain, what love story will you tell?

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





Songs Being Sung in a Foreign Land

by Margee Iddings

We are indebted to The Rev. Margee Iddings for these lyrical, impassioned, incisive words of wisdom she offered to introduce WATER's publication of Deborah's Sisters: A Directory of Women in Ministry in the Washington, DC Area, at a recent Women in Ministry Breakfast at the WATER office. Margee is pastor at Silver Spring Presbyterian Church in Maryland.

The ministry which women do is melodious. We women are singing a wide diversity of tunes and a significant number of texts. What clearly unites us, in my mind, is that our ministry has incredible passion that can only be truly expressed in song. Words alone would never be able to contain the force and power.

The ministry which women do is, for the most part, being done in exile. Though there are ever increasing numbers of women who perceive a "call" to be about the work of the Holy One, institutional land mines abound which keep most women incarnating their "call" through alternative institutional forms, or in "tent-making ministries," or in ways which are marvelously created by women themselves. Though what women end up doing in ministry is of critical importance to the church at large, it remains quite foreign to traditional, mainstream forms that are forever perpetuated by the patriarchal religious bodies from which we have all sprung.

There are some advantages to being in foreign territory, off in exile:

It is okay to develop a capacity for learning/teaching/acquiring a new language. Our language is inclusive in character, multi-cultural in origin, non-hierarchical in attitude, feminist in flavor. Many people, inside and outside the church, are learning this foreign language, almost in spite of themselves and are surprised when they find themselves back in home territory where the old home language startles and offends them.

It is appropriate, as our Jewish faith kin did in Babylon, to remember our heritage that might otherwise be forgotten. We are extremely conscious of the necessity of researching and writing down and celebrating the "lost" story of women in the Jewish and Christian lineages whose activity in ministry provides mentors for us today.

What are the songs being sung and who is singing them?

Most of the songs are being sung with significant volume and with gusto. In most situations, it is difficult not to hear the songs unless you have cotton in your ears or have your hearing aid turned off! It is just not possible to ignore all those women who are senior pastors or solo pastors of significant-size churches. It is

just not possible to tune out all the wonderful chaplains and pastoral counselors who are carrying out their ministry in hospitals and college campuses, prisons, counseling centers, etc. It is just not possible to ignore the incredible song that is being sung by women faculty in seminaries, and the echo that resounds from what now amount to the majority of seminary students, female in gender. It is just not possible to ignore the international song being sung by theological resource centers like WATER.

Some of the songs are being sung softly. This subtle-toned music is sometimes hardly to be noticed in the midst of the din of the world's sounds. These songs tend to speak of revolution and transformation, of turning things upside down and inside out. They are the songs being sung by those who work with the outcasts of our society: persons who are HIV+, persons with serious mental illness, prostitutes, teenage mothers, abused women and children, aliens. They are the songs being sung by those who minister with the elderly, the forgotten, the crones.

Some of the songs are old tunes with new words. Can you imagine "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" with words that describe Diann Neu's gift for creating liturgy that nourishes and nurtures and calls for us to experience the richness of the feminine?

Some of the songs are old words with new tunes. Can you imagine "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" as interpreted in liberation and feminist theology by Mary Hunt?

Some are songs that have been crafted anew. Much of what was crafted in the patriarchal, hierarchical religious construct is simply useless to us and we have to begin fresh. These are difficult songs to learn and to teach. But many hammer away at the legitimacy of such a new creation and many respond with a hunger that is insatiable.

Some of the songs are laments. In this foreign land are those who would have us sing old songs which have lost their meaning; those who would have us sing traditional songs that offend us; those who would tell us to hang up our harps and not sing at all. It is hard to believe that we will ever be free, that we will ever be accepted, that we will ever be able to be ourselves, as the goddess created us to be!

Some of the songs are battle songs. Yes, we know about peace-making. But there are times when the battle lines are drawn and the wisest thing may be to withdraw and form a new church, a new nation, a new life! How long can we continue to have to listen to the damnable songs of the "fundies" who would prohibit singing about sexuality, same-sex love and commitment, justice love?

Some are songs that speak of long-held secrets. More and more, I believe because we have women in leadership positions in the church, we are uncovering the truth about long-term clergy sexual misconduct. Unfortunately, this song is being sung often and graphically and the one singing the song is often at great risk.

What other songs do you hear being sung? Who is singing these songs? Go back and identify persons for whom you give thanks who are singing loudly and with gusto, who are singing revolutionary songs, who are singing new words to old tunes, who are singing new tunes with old words, who are singing entirely new songs, who are singing laments, who are singing battle songs, who are singing about long held secrets.

What is the song that you sing? We give thanks to the Holy One for your song and pray that sustaining energy and an infusion of courage and a sense of the accompanying presence of the Holy One will be above you and beneath you, all around you and with you, empowering a song that is authentic and full of hope! May it be so!



a sing - er of songs, —

from Holly Near's "It Could Have Been Me,"

© 1974 Hereford Music

In Memory Of Her

from Elaine Brewer, Henning, TN:

The Rev. Martha B. Wagley, first woman District Superintendent on the Memphis Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, a woman of courage, perseverance and faith. May you continue to receive and read **WATER-wheel** for years to come.

from Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu:

Mary Louise Volk, longtime **WATER** supporter, enthusiast for women's issues in church and society, your spirit hovers near.

Sisters **Shirley Kolmer**, **Mary Joel Kolmer**, **Kathleen McGuire**, **Agnes Mueller**, **Barbara Ann Muttra** and missing Liberian novices, you, like so many missionary companions to people in struggle, inspire us to lives of justice. To your community, Sister Adorers of the Precious Blood of Red Bud, IL, longtime **WATER** supporters, goes our deepest sympathy.

Ken Cierpial, brother companion, proof that men can be feminists, requiem pacem.

Knowing the Background

For the past decade the reality of AIDS has haunted the world. Each of us must grapple with this epidemic and respond with love, compassion and support. The plague of our era is HIV/AIDS (Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome). The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt reminds us profoundly that we walk amid life and death daily.

World AIDS Day, December 1, offers an opportune time to plan this sacred event, which was created for a women-church group the week the Names Quilt came to Washington, DC. We named our beloved ones; told their stories; shed many tears; and shared our hopes. Use this ritual as a model for the one your group needs to share. Such an event may be the first time your community openly confronts the HIV/AIDS crisis and the issues it brings to the surface. Be sensitive, compassionate and bold.

Preparing to Celebrate

Gather a candle, a red ribbon and a pin for each participant; a larger candle, a loaf of bread, and a glass of water. Place them on a cloth that is significant for the occasion. (We used a blanket that belonged to our dear friend, Shawn Sheffield, who was born HIV+, lived with the AIDS virus, and died of AIDS at the age of five. On his blanket, we placed pictures of Shawn's quilt panel that several of us had helped create.)

The Celebration

Naming the Circle

(One person begins:) Welcome to this place of remembrance. During this time together we will focus on "Telling Love's Story: Remembering and Responding to AIDS." Think of those you know who are living with HIV and AIDS, those who have died of AIDS-related causes, those who have been affected by HIV and AIDS. Let's create our sacred circle by sharing our names and the names of those we remember, and then honoring them by pinning ourselves with a red ribbon. (Naming).

Calling to Gather

(Continue by lighting the larger candle and saying:) These beloved ones are with us in this circle now. Remembering them reminds us that we are all people living with AIDS—those we have just named, those who have lost loved ones, those who care for them, and every one of us struggling to eradicate this disease. AIDS has changed our lives.

Our beloved friends carry or carried in their bodies this debilitating disease. Some have been discriminated against; most have been loved deeply. Each has surely felt anger and pain, hope and fear, support and loneliness.



Telling Love's Story:

by Diann Neu

They are here with us now reminding us that we must respond to AIDS: with love, tears, rage, compassion and hope.

One response is The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt that has blanketed malls, fields, and gymnasiums across the United States with thousands of fabric coffin-size panels, each bearing the name of someone who died of AIDS. The Quilt is a monument to those we have loved and lost. It is a monument to show leaders of every government that they must respond to AIDS by granting money for research. It is a monument to show people of every nation and neighborhood that we must unite, remember and respond now.

How are we responding to AIDS? Our gathering tonight is one response. Let us quiet ourselves and remember.

Singing Together

"They are Falling All Around Me"

by Bernice Johnson Reagon

from *B'lieve I'll Run On...*

copyright 1975 Bernice Johnson Reagon BMI.

They are falling all around me (3x)
The strongest leaves / of my tree.
Death comes and rest so heavy (3x)
Your face I'll never see / never see no more.

But you're not really going to leave me (3x)
It's your path I walk
It's your song I sing
It's your load I take on
It's your air I breathe
It's the record you set that makes me go on.
It's your strength that helps me stand.
You're not really going to leave me.

I will try to sing my song right (3x)
Be sure to let me hear / let me hear from you.

Listening to a Reading

"Face of AIDS" from *A Shadow Pool of Time*
by Fran Peavey, a woman living with AIDS.

I see the face of AIDS
in my world on every continent
in my country in every state
in my city in each neighborhood

I see the face of AIDS
It is a face contorted in fear
a deep fear
of blood, of sex, of death, of homosexuals
fear of Africans and Haitians
fear of people different from the self.

Plague in our times, In our family
Can you believe it?

I see the face of AIDS,
it is a face thin, old, worn before its time
eyes receding in their sockets
staring beyond the thin veil of present reality
seeing a life beyond and unsure of the route.

I see the face of AIDS
a baby born of a virus-infested woman,
a baby needing love
yet abandoned by a mother too ill to care.
But of course mothers are never too ill to really care
about losing life
their babies'
or their own....

I see the face of AIDS
in my neighbor who comes home from the hospital
in an ambulance
to the arms of his lover who carries him into the house
like a bride
They live out their lives in quiet retreat together
sleeping in the same bed
each terrified of going on alone....

I see the face of AIDS everywhere now on the streets of my world
because I see it in myself
one of the worried well.

Sharing a Response

(Another person says:) Let us respond together.
All: We know the face of AIDS. We are here, right here in your midst.

(Left side:) We are friends, partners, lovers, family, neighbors. All: We know the face of AIDS. We are here, right here in your midst.

(Right side:) We are caresharers, justice workers, health care professionals, social workers, ministers. All: We know ...

(Left:) We are students, teachers, parents, sisters and brothers. All: We know ...

(Right:) Some of us are wise elders; some are caring adults; some are searching youth; some are wonder-filled children. All: We know ...

(Left:) Some of us are lesbian; some of us are gay; some of us are straight; some of us are bisexual. All: We know ...

(Right:) Some of us have or might get AIDS. All: We know ...

(Left:) Some of us feel angry and sad, fearful and fragile, vulnerable and alone. All: We know...

(Right:) We are multi-colored and many cultured people: black, brown, yellow, white, red. All: We know ...

(Left:) All of us are people of faith, awaiting the day when AIDS is a distant memory. All: We know ...

Remembering and Responding to AIDS



(The person who began this litany says:) What else shall we add to this litany? Tell us and we will respond....

Listening to a Song

(Another says:) Let's listen to "The Letter" by Ruben Blades, sung by Holly Near on Sky Dances. copyright 1988 Ruben Blades Prod.

I got the word on the street, from people we never liked.

They told me that you were sick, and they think you're going to die.

And although I was surprised, I didn't act sorry then

'cause you've led the kind of life that feels good, right through the end.

How lucky those fools would be to have friends like you and me.

I went to my home and sat and waited for tears to come.

But suddenly, I changed my mind, got up and played my favorite songs.

I wanted to show myself that death could not take my heart;

that I'd rather celebrate all the good days that we had.

That nothing can stand between two good friends like you and me.

Didn't sleep that evening. I stayed up till the morning, thinking

how things we take for granted can go wrong. Wished you would have told me instead of

finding out from strangers

I never was ashamed to be your pal.

So I'll visit you when I can and bring you the things you want.

And if the day when you leave I'm not around to say goodbye,

remember to take my love,

remember the laughs we had,

and how lucky two fools can be to be friends like you and me. Take care.

Listening to a Poem

(Another person says:) "The Concert" by Ken Cierpial who died of AIDS October 23, 1992.

for my soulmate, Bob Canavella

I have learned how to learn,

How to read,

How to practice.

But today, I am getting ready for my life's performance

By forgetting everything I know

And letting everything go.

Look! How I am now dancing between the notes

Of the music that my soul plays!

Sharing Together

(After a pause, someone says:) AIDS affects all of us and takes us to places where we would dare not go. How are you affected by AIDS? What love story do you tell? What would you want on your quilt panel when you die?

Let's reflect with these questions for a few minutes ourselves in silence. (Pause.) Let's gather with two or three others to share our reflections. (Sharing.)

Let's close our sharing now by bringing ourselves back to the larger circle.

Prayers of the Faithful

(Another prays:) Compassionate Holy One, open our hearts and minds and hands so that we may connect ourselves to the global community of others responding to AIDS as we pray:

We remember all those women, men and children in this country and around the world who are living with AIDS. Please respond: Justice demands that we remember and respond.

We remember all who care for people living and dying with AIDS in their homes, in hospices and in support centers. Response:

We remember all who are involved in research and hospital care that they may respect the dignity of each person. Response:

We remember all partners who are left mourning for their beloved ones. Response:

We remember all parents who learn the truth of their children's lives through their process of facing death. Response:

We remember... Please finish the sentence and we will respond.

Sharing of Bread and Water

(One person picks up the bread, another the water, saying:) We remember by blessing bread and water, symbols of nourishment and thirst-quenching. Let us stand and place our hands on this bread and on this water.

Blessed are you, Nourishing One, for giving us bread to strengthen us for the long journey. May its healing power rise within us.

Blessed are you, Thirstquencher, for giving us water to keep us alive in the desert. May its life-giving power flow through us.

As we eat and drink let us remember. (Eating and drinking.)

Lighting Candles

(One person takes a small candle, lights it from the large one, places it starting a circle around the large one and says:) I light a candle of _____ i.e. hope. Come, take a candle, light it saying, "I

light a candle of _____ i.e. forgiveness, thanks, sorrow. (Candle lighting and sharing.)

Praying a Prayer of Hope

(When all candles are lighted, she continues:) We bring together many candles, many lights.

As those who keep the night watch await the dawn, we remain vigilant,

Until a cure for AIDS is found,

Until those dying with AIDS are comforted,

Until truth sets us free,

Until love drives out injustice.

We shall not give up the fight.

Singing and Spiraling Together

"We Shall Not Give Up the Fight,"

South African Freedom Song

We shall not give up the fight.

We have only started (3x).

Together we'll have victory,

Hand holding hand (3x).

Never, ever put to flight,

We are bound to win (3x).

We shall not give up the fight ...

Greeting of Peace

Not giving up is hard and exhausting work.

We need all the hugs we can get. Receive an embrace for all that may be required of you in remembering and responding to AIDS. Let's hug one another. (Hugging).

Sending Forth

Let us open our circle of support and compassion now.

Let us take our candles with us and use them this week in the candlelight memorial march against AIDS.

Let us go forth to bring love where there is no justice. Amen, Blessed Be, Let It Be So.

Diann L. Neu, feminist liturgist and therapist, co-directs WATER.



How Do We Do It?

Intern-alizing WATER

Susan O'Brien, born in Ireland and lately of New York, spent a month's "working retreat" at WATER this fall. Susan returned to the New York Society Library but watch this publication for an index of the first five volumes of **WATERwheel** which she compiled with skill and care. Adieu and blessed be. Her brief reflections follow:

Before I arrived there, I thought of the time I would spend at WATER as a kind of "time-out;" this I now realize was inappropriate as it implies an isolated experience. I now see my time at WATER as part of my coming-out process this year as an Irish Catholic Lesbian. It is important for me to say this as I discover that these aspects of myself are not, after all, irreconcilable.

After experiencing reactions ranging from rejection to silence, I give thanks for Mary, Diann, Tisa, Carol, Marilyn, Amy and Monica for making me feel welcome, whether it was appreciating work done, as company on the AIDS candlelight procession (a highlight) or sharing meals and wit. Thanks also to Louise and Pat Kilpatrick for their hospitality and to my aunt, Kitty Stafford, for introducing me to WATER (even if I did spend my time in her shadow, it's a wonderful shadow).

I left after four short weeks with a much stronger sense of my spiritual self. And believing that spirituality primarily involves forming relationships. I hope my time at WATER will be a case of "short term visit, long term commitment."

Wonderful people, wonderful place... go visit.

Tisa Anders, a Disciples of Christ seminarian from Iliff Theological Seminary in Denver, is at WATER this fall as part of the National Capital Semester for Seminarians program of Wesley Theological Seminary. She is learning the nuts and bolts of a small but active organization in a fast town. A thousand welcomes.

We're happy to involve interns in the life and work of the organization. If you or anyone you know is interested, please write for details about our internship program.

A word about the ins and outs of WATER provides hints for similar groups about programming and organization. People say "How do you do it?" meaning, it seems, how does so much activity go on in such a concentrated way, how do so many disparate people come together and find ways to connect with resources, other people and networks. The "it" is programs, projects and publications. A reprise of recent ones follows:

Women in Ministry Breakfast—if it didn't exist we'd have to invent it—including Sr. Kitty Stafford on "Women's Empowerment in Peru," a first-hand report on development activities by rural Peruvians. The Rev. Elizabeth Carl recounted her experiences as "Just Another Lesbian Priest," the story of ministry well done in the Episcopal Church that benefits from her presence.

Prof. Diana Hayes offered "Black Womanist Musings," an inspirational and insightful talk on a central concern. Dr. Emma Lou Benignus of the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging asked: "Longevity: Bane or Blessing?" and provided a lively, wise answer. The Rev. Darlene Garner of the Northern Virginia Metropolitan Community Church explained that denomination's history and current struggle to gain admission to the National Council of Churches.

We tried tea one time and it worked just as well. Moral: fit the format to your group, but consider developing such a group as a way to bring your local ministers together. We all need it, the work to make it happen is minimal

and results are a strong network.

Was there a time before WATER's Women-Church group? Liturgies of late have included "Deep Peace of the Changing Seasons To You;" "The Earth Is Our Mother;" "Celebrating Women's Power;" "We Are All Daughters: Healing the Daughter and Mother Relationship;" "Women's Knowledge of Holy Mysteries;" and "The Beauty of New Life." Ash Wednesday is ALWAYS popular; the Seder draws a crowd each year.

Tell us what else you'd like to see happen and don't be surprised if your ideas are implemented. That's part of how an Alliance works.

Our Resource Center gets a great deal of use. Sure, we staff people are our own best customers, always chasing a footnote or looking for stimulating ideas. But local professors send their students and, increasingly, come themselves. Ministers use our books for sermon preparation; folks bent on a renewed spiritual life browse. All because publishers send us review copies, we mention them in this publication and then they (and many more that we don't have room to cite) go onto the shelves. This is a win-win-win for everyone, something that can be adapted to your group or center's possibilities.

We launched a directory of local women in ministry in the DC area, **Deborah's Sisters**, this season. 677 women from 23 denominations are listed. We await clones from other areas until all women in ministry are connected. Go to it in your area and send us the result.



"Y... Dios creo a la mujer"

La mujer en la iglesia y en la sociedad

The twelfth Theological Congress in Madrid, Spain, sponsored by the John XXIII Association of Theologians and myriad other progressive Catholics groups, provided WATER with new colleagues in Europe. Addressing the subject of women and religion, Mary E. Hunt spoke on the North American experience, Maria Pilar Aquino the Latin American, Margarita Pintos the European and Kayba Petronille the African.

The heart of the meeting was, per usual, in the corridors where one could almost see walls breaking down. Solidarity groups with poor people in Latin America, married priests, those who had lived to tell the Franco tales, were

gathered to deal with the unfolding of women's participation in the church. It all seems so tame yet there was a kind of electricity in the air as panelists spoke on sexuality—a lesbian activist, a sex educator and a nun who works with prostitutes.

In the first eleven congresses combined there were not a half dozen women speakers. And in this event ALL of the speakers were women. Men came in the usual large numbers—more than 1500 people attended—and liturgies were mostly women-led as well. With Spain on the move in a feminist direction, this reporter can't help but wonder if Rome won't be next.



Resources

Bingle, Mary Louise. **THE GOD OF THINNESS: GLUTTONY AND OTHER WEIGHTY MATTERS.** Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992 (171 pages, \$13.95).

A theological treatment of anorexia and bulimia was inevitable; this is a bit of a start with more and deeper still to be said.

Eisenstein, Hester. **GENDER SHOCK: PRACTICING FEMINISM ON TWO CONTINENTS.** Boston: Beacon Press, 1991 (138 pages, \$18.95).

A little gem of a book full of insights on how feminism is lived both in the U.S. and in Australia. Instructive for a U.S. audience is the treatment of femocrats, feminists who are part of the Australian bureaucracy.

Ernaux, Annie. **A WOMAN'S STORY.** New York: Ballantine Books, 1991 (90 pages, \$8).

The death of one's mother is always a significant life passage because "The last bond between me and the world I come from has been severed." Prepare for a quick, powerful read.

Farmer, David Albert and Edwina Hunter. **AND BLESSED IS SHE: SERMONS BY WOMEN.** San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990 (247 pages, \$18.95).

A rich collection of historical and contemporary sermons by women who articulate their faith with style, including Georgia Harkness, Olympia Brown, Toinette Eugene, Carter Heyward and Ella Mitchell.

Mollenkott, Virginia Ramey. **SENSUOUS SPIRITUALITY: OUT FROM FUNDAMENTALISM.** New York: Crossroad, 1992 (204 pages, \$12.95).

This is the framework for a new spirituality for the 21st century articulated by a trusted religious leader. Committed Christians will find a familiar vocabulary; innovative believers of other stripes will find a great deal of resonance with the basic ideas. Such is the stuff of a religious classic. Don't miss it.

Noren, Carol M. **THE WOMAN IN THE PULPIT.** Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991 (175 pages, \$12.95).

Some useful insights on the transformation of the pulpit as women increasingly answer the call to preach. Concrete suggestions for how to improve delivery and content.

Pratt, Minnie Bruce. **WE SAY WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER.** Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1985 (reprinted 1992), (112 pages, \$8.95).

Released again after the Lamont Poetry Prize for **Crimes Against Nature**, this brilliant, courageous work deserves wide reading. Ditto for her new, welcome collection, **Rebellion: Essays 1980-1991**, also Firebrand Books (248 pages, \$10.95).

Randive, Gail. **WRITING RE-CREATIVELY: A SPIRITUAL QUEST FOR WOMEN.** Mt. Vernon, VA 22121-0153: The Columbine Press, 1992 (95 pages, \$9).

A good way to refresh along the way. These short exercises include a range of options that focus energies and renew resolve.

Thistlethwaite, Susan Brooks and Mary Potter Engel, eds. **LIFT EVERY VOICE: CONSTRUCTING CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIES FROM THE UNDERSIDE.** San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1990 (330 pages, \$15.95).

Another good text for introductory use on the globalization and contextualization of contemporary Christian work.

Throckmorton, Burton H. Jr., translator/editor. **THE GOSPELS AND THE LETTERS OF PAUL.** Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1992 (247 pages, \$12.95).

More of the common readings are now translated in an inclusive text. Add this to the three lectionaries and the Psalms in the same series for more effective worship and preaching.

White, Erin and Marie Tulip. **KNOWING OTHERWISE: FEMINISM, WOMEN AND RELIGION.** Brunswick, Victoria, Australia: David Lovell Press, 1991 (182 pages, No price listed).

The women-church movement is growing world-wide as this book proves. It is hardly monolithic as the varying interpretations of issues and ideas reveal.

Winter, Miriam Therese. **WOMANWITNESS: A FEMINIST LECTIONARY AND PSALTER (WOMEN OF THE HEBREW SCRIPTURE: PART II).** New York: Crossroad, 1992 (372 pages, \$16.95).

A useful resource for worship services and personal reflection on women in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Other Useful Materials

CRAFTING A BETTER WORLD: A PEACE AND JUSTICE PERFORMING ARTISTS DIRECTORY. A booklet from the Office on General Education of the National Council of Churches, 1992 (28 pages, \$2.50).

A unique listing of musicians, dancers, storytellers etc. who focus on justice themes in their work. Great for program planning.

Of Interest

The **JOURNAL OF WOMEN AND RELIGION** published by the Center for Women and Religion at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, has issued a special double issue, Vol. 9-10, 1990-91 on "The Intersection of Racism and Sexism: Theological Perspectives of African American Women," which is excellent. Irene Monroe is the editor, and her own work stands out as well.

TU Y YO—A BOOK TO HELP YOU READ, SPEAK AND WRITE SPANISH. Order by title from the Loretto Motherhouse, Nerinx, KY 40049. \$23.

A group of grassroots women, with Mary Peter Bruce of the Loretto Community, put together this useful text.

CALENDAR OF HOLY WOMEN 1993. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press (12 months, \$9.95).

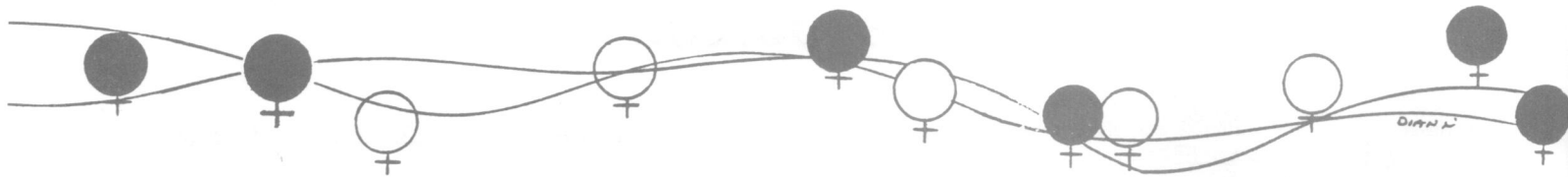
A unique resource including a woman for every day whose words and deeds provide inspiration.

Worship Resources

McDade, Carolyn. **SISTER, CARRY ON.** PO Box 510, Wellfleet, MA 02667. (\$10 plus \$2.50 postage and handling for first tape; 50 cents for additional tapes). Songs for community singing in Carolyn's unique and inviting style.

SONGS FOR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING. (\$7 plus \$2.50 postage and handling; lower rates for bulk orders). Carolyn's earlier popular music is now in one lovely booklet for group use.





Reluctant No More

by Mary E. Hunt

There was a time when I did not like fund raising, when I dreaded asking for money. I thought of it as a distasteful job, rather like going hat in hand begging, or selling Girl Scout cookies to neighbors who buy because they are friends of the family. But, I have changed my tune. Don't panic that you will be receiving even more requests for money from WATER. Rather, rejoice that I have learned, albeit late, what social change agents need to know about an essential part of our business.

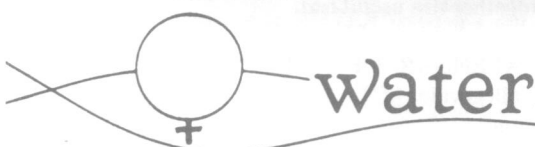
I credit Kim Klein and her **Grassroots Fundraising Journal** with a good part of my education. She writes consistently about the importance of asking people for money because they—in this case you, the reader—believe in and want to be involved in the work that we are doing yet cannot or do not do it themselves.

Donors of large and small amounts alike give to make their dreams and hopes come true through the efforts of non-profit groups. It makes good sense and your responses make me realize finally that my role in asking for and channeling the funds to this good work is essential, not obnoxious, that we are doing our work together.

Another smart professor in this school is Anne Firth Murray, president of the Global Fund for Women. She has raised and distributed lots of money to women's groups all over the world. Anne remarked wisely that money is but one ingredient in what it takes to get the job done, for which local women's groups have all of the other ingredients. That could not be more true than in our case.

We have the skills and experiences, the human resources and contacts, the passion and where-withal to have an impact on social and ecclesial policies from a feminist religious perspective, to put on programs, do counseling, write articles, make rituals, consult, cajole and consider. But we simply cannot do any of it without your financial input. And, with all due respect, your money without our efforts would be equally static. Together we can make it happen. How simple and sensible. What a marriage made in heaven.

You'll note my new attitude in WATER's forthcoming appeals. And we will continue to appreciate, deeply and beyond words, the part you play in making the wheel turn. Thanks for asking us to ask, and for giving what you give.



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