



# water wheel

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

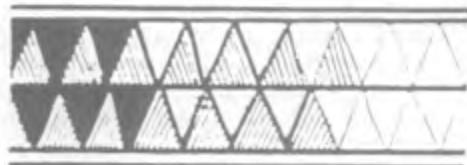
## Editorial

No one ever said that paradigms make noise as they shift. In fact, they seem to change quietly, almost imperceptibly, unless one is keeping more careful watch than most of us have time for. But change they do with little things being different, like another woman headed for the Supreme Court, an Episcopal woman elected full (not suffragan) bishop, a tiny (if long overdue) lifting of the ban on lesbian/gay people in the military, light at the end of the tunnel on clergy sexual abuse.

No one ever said that change comes quickly, either. When the Berlin Wall fell, some acted as if it had just suddenly toppled, but had they been paying attention it would have been obvious how many decades of struggle had dismantled it brick for brick. The fall was dramatic, but the dismantling was a tedious process. We at WATER are learning this, ten years into our efforts, with most walls still up for women but mortar being chipped away at a steady pace. Our chisels get a workout every day.

Summer is usually a time when we step back and assess, look forward and plan. But with interns and many colleagues available to work and needing resources, our summer season begins to feel like late fall with air conditioning. We monitor denominational meetings, provide input at conferences and workshops, teach classes and write.

What is amazing is how much interest there is in, indeed how many people there are who share our commitment to, developing, providing and using quality materials for inclusive, justice-oriented religion. Keep the lemonade cold. We need it. And take a well deserved break for a spell. We need that, too, to gain and keep perspective as the changes continue.



## Weaving Change with a New Loom

by Mary E. Hunt

The women-church movement took another step forward at the third gathering, "Women-Church: Weavers of Change," in Albuquerque, NM, April 16-18, 1993. Several thousand women, a few men and lots of children enjoyed Southwestern hospitality and learned from the mix of cultures that is New Mexico. International participants gave a special flair to the meeting, embodying the much larger throng of which U.S. participants are but a part.

The meeting was a stimulating mix of plenary sessions, liturgical events, exhibits and focus sessions. It was a convention of those who seek new ways to be religious which are politically and spiritually consonant, ways which invite participation, value diversity and make social change. That such a gathering would take place at all, given that the U.S. women-church move-

was not perfect. But undertaking the project, imagining that out of a diverse group could come something holy, something powerful, and then starting to learn how to do so is admirable in itself. Further, ambitious feminists always challenge ourselves to go another step, to do it differently, in this case to build the loom as well as weave the fabric. Shortcomings are to be expected, experimentation to be encouraged, and high standards maintained.

Critiques of the 1987 Cincinnati "Women-Church: Claiming Our Power" conference centered on the need for the movement which had started as white Euro-American, mainly Catholic women to become more diverse. Hence the conference planning committee, in concert with the goals of the Women-Church Convergence, put together a program of speakers,

*Weaving is an acquired skill  
after long, long hours of practice.*

ment has no headquarters or paid staff, and given that money is tight in a recessive economy, is a sign of how much adherents need such events to refuel.

Organizers chose weaving as the central motif which was carried out through the threads of various traditions and ritual events. The group of 2400 wove a huge basket which was later burned and returned to the earth. What we learned, as many before us who have tried their hands at the art, is that weaving requires hard work, some talent and even a little bit of luck. Weaving is an acquired skill after long, long hours of practice. Conference planning and even conference going require some of these same things. So any analysis of what went on and what can happen next must begin with a hearty thanks to all who worked to make the conference happen.

No one makes a perfect tapestry the first time up to the loom, and the Albuquerque meeting

workshops, exhibits, worship and entertainment to reflect the many different elements of the movement, and in so doing to invite increasingly diverse participation on its own terms. Such effort cannot undo centuries of racism and class division, ethnic strife and alienation, but it was and remains more than a good faith effort. It is an important commitment to change the power equation in the United States, indeed throughout the world, where such efforts are part of the agenda of religious feminists. It is a commitment which at Albuquerque resulted in underscoring the need for more and better efforts at inclusivity, as well as a firming of resolve to practice justice-making in every local setting.

Major strands included Hispanic, Native American, Euro-American, Asian American, African American and Lesbian-Bisexual, a move that led some media pundits to suggest that

*(continued on page 2)*



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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 doing 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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diversity and not the divine was to be worshipped and adored. To the contrary. For example, panelists from each of the strands speaking on spirituality gave gentle answers to hard questions about how we use the resources which come from a particular tradition in another setting, e.g. how Native American women's spirituality can be used and not abused by other women. How do we pass on to our children our faith traditions as the content and dynamics of our involvement are changing? Far from divinizing diversity, women-church is about diversifying divinity. That, after all, is the most fundamental shift in power possible, a shift which is a constituent part of social change. But it is a shift that is taking place too slowly for the tastes of many women-church people, and meetings like the one held in Albuquerque speed it along.

More needs to be said about these and other tough topics, but Albuquerque provided a chance

a loom, and get on with using it to full advantage for social change and spiritual renewal.

Clarity did emerge from lectures, focus groups, caucuses and workshops where women exchanged information and experiences on education, health, theology, politics and economics. Exhibits reflected the organizations, change movements and art forms that provide a framework for the movement between conferences. What was obvious is that women-church continues to be a movement committed to global justice and the empowerment of those who have been left aside. That spirit of women-church permeated the many special interest events, like the Women's Ordination Conference awards banquet and the informal meeting of international friends. Both, and many other confabs like them, were occasions to see the breadth and depth of where religious women are who claim ourselves church on women's terms. They were occasions for greeting old friends, meeting people whose

*...women-church continues to be a movement committed to global justice and the empowerment of those who have been left aside.*

to start some conversations. More important perhaps, it was a chance to meet and be with other people who are asking similar questions, people who do not shirk from controversy or conflict, but continue together to push the horizons of hope. This is part of what it means to be religious, to be people who pay attention to meaning and value, and to do so in coalition.

Worship experiences, both in the whole using Native American bowls, and in subgroups with varied content from passing the pipe to passing the peace, from whirling dance to silent meditation, were occasions for women-church in the U.S. to feel its collective way toward comfort with spiritual diversity. This is not a cheap or easy task. One person's appreciation of silence can and will inevitably clash with another's need for chanting, but there is wisdom in the mix and freedom in the options which are all part of the weaving process. It remains to be discussed and clarified what differentiates "women-church" from "women spirit," this gathering from other feminist conclaves.

Likewise, we need to talk about what various forms of worship mean to us, how they define and energize our faith and what we do when we do not find them meaningful. But those are more intricate weavings than were possible this time through with a new loom which was, like a green stick, flexible if fragile, promising but not yet seasoned. We who are women-church were that loom, still new to our insistence on being many ways in the world but not yet sure what it is we want to do together. Rather than critiquing ourselves for what we are not yet, I suggest we give thanks for the fact that we have and are

work we have known from afar, and generally recharging the batteries which keep the low-tech loom moving.

A mark of maturity in the movement was the frank way in which disagreement was articulated at Albuquerque. In the closing session, which left some women confused about what they had experienced and which, in my opinion, could have been better conceptualized in the overall program for deeper learning, women spoke of racism, ableism, class and ethnic differences, the invisibility of lesbians and other problems which were manifest at the conference since, they are part of our common life. Most instructive was not so much the legitimate and important critiques, though they were real and taken seriously by all, but the eloquent response of theologian Dr. Jamie Phelps on behalf of the program committee which itself sought to reflect the racial-ethnic diversity of the movement. After hearing the critiques, her response, "We have heard your critique and we are grateful," set a tone and an agenda for the movement and for future conferences.

There is plenty more work to do, but the women-church movement is exciting because it is attempting to replicate the art form called life on a loom it is just learning to use, indeed on a loom it has built itself. I can only imagine how beautiful the tapestry will be several generations from now. Meanwhile, the learning continues, the threads tighten and the design looks more appealing than I ever thought possible. Weave on, Women-Church, weave on.

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

# Who Came Out of the WATER?

by Helena Johannson

Dedicated to the WATER staff, whom I promised to write a book. This is the one!

## Chapter 1

### The art piece

A piece of art hanging from one of the walls in the office has been puzzling my mind since I stepped into WATER. It says "WHO CAME OUT OF THE WATER?" The text is cut out of black paper against a white and pink background. It was done by Sr. Corita Kent.

## Chapter 2

### Nancy

I left Sweden in the beginning of February; flew in over Manhattan, totally amazed by the lights that covered seemingly all of this part of the world; took ground in Baltimore and was picked up by Nancy. Since I was busy pinching myself to see if this was real, I was almost numb during the ride to Silver Spring. Obviously worried about the lack of conversation, Nancy told me over and over again that everything was going to be fine, that I would have a wonderful time and never would want to go back to Sweden again. How could you know all this, Nancy? Later I learned that the office "could not turn" without this wonderful woman, nor would the staff have learned this expression without her.

## Chapter 3

### Transitory human experience

Ash Wednesday I had my first experience of a WATER feminist liturgy. Asked to share something about what we wanted to pay attention to at this point in our lives, one of the women uttered a sentence which added the next piece to the puzzle in my mind: "transitory human experience." Could you repeat that, please? Thank you, Diann Neu, for your way of creating liturgies that let the sacred happen!

## Chapter 4

### Tears in our eyes

(Title of chapter stolen from Mary E. Hunt, WATERwheel, Fall 1991)

During my first weeks "the jury was still out" (I was told). Mine came in with salt water in her eyes, convinced about the good work going on,

and the concern and generosity that met me. Thank you, Mary E. Hunt, for sharing your experience and knowledge, and for your struggles to make my thesis a reality!

## Chapter 5

### The Montgomery college swimming pool

(Where I learned to swim like a fish and survive in the WATER.)

## Chapter 6

### The feminist baptism

The double symbolism of water, death and life, is constantly breaking down the walls at WATER. (Trying to stand upright in this flood for four months, I am now a bit exhausted!) Outstanding Swedish poet Karin Boye says, "The faith that is to come is not a new faith, it is only what is alive liberated from the dead." (Free translation by me.)

## Chapter 7

### Berkeley Springs

Berkeley Springs seemed like the perfect place to rest for a (re)tired WATER intern. Could I have been more wrong? The time had come to give birth to my offspring of WATER. In the beautiful mountains of West Virginia (thank you, K and K!) the springs rose from the depths, the water broke and out came ... ?

## Chapter 8

### So, who came out of the water?

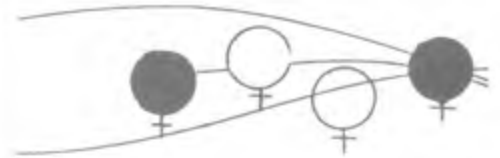
Back to the art piece on the WATER wall. In the background, written like seen in a mirror, I finally was able to read "LIFE."

## Chapter 9

Love and thanks to you all in the WATER! Thank you, Diann, Mary, Nancy, Carol, Marilyn, and all who make WATER possible. Keep swimming!

Helena returned to Sweden in July.

Note: If you are interested in doing an internship at WATER write: Internship, WATER, 8035 13th Street, Silver Spring MD 20910.



## Comings and Goings

**Tisa Anders**, seminary intern for fall 1992 was recently ordained in the Disciples of Christ denomination.

**Kelly Cregan**, a teacher in a Catholic high school in Cleveland OH, is interning for the summer with keen interest in feminist theology.

**The Rev. Dr. Alberta French** has been helping out in the WATER office, dispensing her wisdom generously.

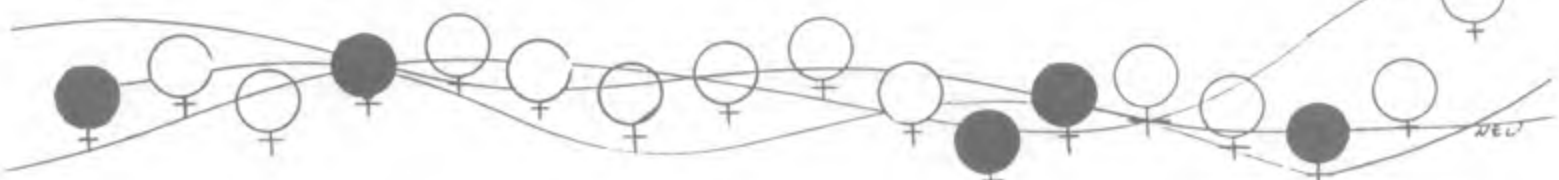
**Mary E. Hunt**, WATER co-director, spent the spring on the college circuit: St. Mary's College of Maryland, Smith College, Penn State, Hollins College, Catholic University of America, lecturing on a range of theo-ethical issues.

**Helena Johannson**, Swedish theological student and now longest lasting WATER intern on record, returns to Stockholm and Uppsala to complete training for ordination. Her English is peppered with office slang, her thesis on women-church is nearing completion, and the Swedish scene will never be the same. Skol, Helena.

**Diann L. Neu**, WATER co-director, adds a social work internship at the Silver Spring Mental Health Center to her tasks. Diann's Masters in Social Work will add depth to WATER's counseling and social service outreach, readying us for groups and more individual therapy.

**Margaret Sequeira** joins the WATER volunteer brigade as the designer of the newsletter. She commands PageMaker with ease and adds readability to our prose. Welcome and thanks.

**Naqueeta Wortham** is the latest in a series of Life Experiences Activities Program (LEAP) clients who do on-the-job training at WATER. LEAP people play an important part in WATER's administrative life, and so it is with 'Keeta.



# From Developing Girl to Changing Woman:

by Diann L. Neu



## Background

Transformation can be so ordinary that its very familiarity renders it invisible. This is often true of menstruation. Girl children experience first menses. Women know the full meaning of this passage to womanhood. Every girl who so wishes needs to have a celebration of this special time in her life.

This ritual invites women to share with the next generations the treasures of womanhood. Use it as a guide to create the celebration that you and the women in your life need. You may wish to create a ceremony for one or for several girls who are passing into womanhood at approximately the same time.

## Preparing the Ritual

Buy a tambourine, red ribbons, a decorative egg, a ring and herbs that will be given as gifts. Place a red candle, a green one and a purple one in the center of a circle of chairs. Put a basket of red fruits and pitchers of red drinks along with them.

## The Ritual

### Welcoming the Participants

Welcome to this celebration for \_\_\_\_\_ (name of girl passing into womanhood). We gather today to welcome you, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), to womanhood. You are a symbol of the passage to womanhood that each of us here and women of every culture experience. We gather today to honor menarche. We gather today to reclaim our sacred power as women.

Our flow of blood represents our life-giving powers. As changing women, we celebrate the transmission of our fertility, our creativity, our spirit and our intuition. As changing women, we dedicate the fertility of our life force to the next generations.

### Naming the Circle

Let us begin by naming our circle here. Think of what the time of first menstruation means to you, what it did mean to you or what it will mean to you. (Pause).

Let us create our circle by speaking our names, sharing a word or phrase that comes to mind when thinking of menses, and giving a hand to the person on the right saying, "I am a woman" or "I will be a woman." (Sharing). [i.e. I am Diann. I reclaim women's sacred powers.]

### Blessing

(The woman who started the naming completes the circle by raising the joined hands and saying:)

We are women together and our life-giving circle is sacred. May we be blessed beneath the wings of Shechina. May the Holy Source of Life wrap us in the mantle of Her love and protection. May \_\_\_\_\_ (name of girl passing to womanhood) be blessed with the power of women's energy. May we each be blessed with the power of \_\_\_\_\_ (name of girl passing to womanhood).

Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.  
(The namer begins a swaying movement joining hands as the singing starts. When the song ends, everyone lets go of hands.)

### Song

"Womanriver Flowing On" by Carol Etzler  
copyright 1977 Sisters Unlimited

Womanriver flowing on,  
Womanriver flowing on and on (2x)  
Womanriver flowing on.

Womanriver, how you comfort me,  
Flowing on through every century  
Flowing on to what is yet to be,  
Womanriver flowing on.

### Lighting the Candles

We light three candles today to capture our experience as women. The red one is for those who are fertile, those who bleed each month. (The young woman honored in the celebration lights the red candle.)

The purple is for the wise women who have passed beyond the biological capacity to give birth and have channeled their energies through their whole bodies: mind, spirit and body. (A menopausal woman lights the purple candle.)

The green is for the young girls who will soon pass into womanhood. (A young girl lights the green candle.)

### Reading

Today as we celebrate menses let's listen to this reading, "Marvelous Menstruation Moments," by Ntozake Shange from *Sassafrass, Cypress & Indigo*:

(As Told by Indigo to Her Dolls as She Made Each and Every One of Them a Personal Menstruation Pad of Velvet)

When you first realize your blood has come, smile; an honest smile, for you are about to have an intense union with your magic. This is a private time, a special time, for thinking and dreaming. Change your bedsheet to the ones that are your favorite. Sleep with a laurel leaf under your head. Take baths in wild hyssop, white water lilies. Listen for the voices of your visions; they are nearby. Let annoying people, draining worries, fall away as your body lets what she doesn't need go from her. Remember that you are a river; your banks are red honey where the Moon wanders.

### Sharing

We women are rivers of life. Today we celebrate that life as it is flowing on to another generation. Mother(s), what do you want to pass on to your daughter(s)? (Pause.)

Let this tambourine represent our voice and let these ribbons represent our blessings for \_\_\_\_\_ (the girl). As we pass the tambourine around the circle, hold it, attach a ribbon, and share what you want to pass on to \_\_\_\_\_ (the girl) who embodies the next generation of women. (Sharing begins with the biological mother.)

### Song

"Womanriver Flowing On" by Carol Etzler

Womanriver flowing on,  
Womanriver flowing on and on (2x)  
Womanriver flowing on.

Womanriver, flowing free  
I feel you moving in the heart of me  
Womanriver flowing on.

### Giftgiving

\_\_\_\_\_ (name of young woman), we have gifts for you to remind you of this special day. (The biological mother gives her daughter a ring saying:) \_\_\_\_\_, you traveled the road from nursing in my arms as a baby to maturing into a young woman. I bless you for these and all

# A Celebration of Menses

the seasons of your life. Take this ring as a symbol of the passage well done.

(The godmother gives her godchild an egg, saying:) \_\_\_\_\_, womanhood means that you have the power to give birth. Use this awesome power maturely and lovingly. Protect yourself from dangerous pressures to misuse this power. I bless you for using your reproductive years wisely. Take this egg as a symbol of your reproductive powers.

(Another friend gives her the tambourine, saying:) \_\_\_\_\_, this tambourine represents our vision of womanhood. Treasure it and add to it your own wisdom. Keep your body sacred. Don't use it as a plaything. Preserve your reproductive power for the time when you are fully prepared to take responsibility for another life. We bless you for becoming the woman you will be.

(Another friend gives her herbs, saying:) \_\_\_\_\_, don't be angry with your body for sometimes not letting go of blood. Take these herbs for soothing cramps and calming irritations. I bless you for caring for your body.

(Other gifts are shared.)

## Blessing of Selves

Filled with the fullness of Spirit-Wisdom we take time to bless ourselves and one another. To embody our prayer we use an ancient tradition, the laying on of hands.

*Touch your eyes and echo these words:*

Bless my eyes that I may notice  
the beauty of women.

*Touch your ears, saying:*

Bless my ears that I may hear women's  
voices of wisdom.

*Touch your heart, saying:*

Bless my heart that I may be open to loving.

*Touch your mouth, saying:*

Bless my mouth that I may speak my truth.

*Touch your body over your womb, or where your womb used to be, saying:*

Bless my womb that I may give  
birth to my creativity.

*Touch your feet, saying:*

Bless my feet that I may walk the  
path of justice.

*Touch your hands, saying:*

Bless my hands that I may touch  
myself and others tenderly.

*Touch and embrace the women around you and bless them with your own words.*  
(Embracing.)

## Song

"Blessing Song" by Marsie Silvestro

Bless you my sister, Bless you on your way  
You have roads to roam,  
Before you're home  
And winds to speak your name.  
So go gently my sister,  
Let courage be your song  
You have words to say, In your own way  
And stars to light your night.  
And if ever you grow weary  
And your heart song has no refrain  
Just remember we'll be waiting to raise you  
up again  
And we'll bless you our sister,  
Bless you in our way  
And we'll welcome home all the life  
you've known  
And softly speak your name.

## Sharing of Fruit, Wine and Drinks

Red is the color of women's life source. Red is the color of women's passion. Red is the color of women's creativity. We eat and drink of food that is red to remind us of women's life-giving energy. (Women hold up the food and drink.)

Blessed are you, Life-giving Holy Source, for ripening fruit on the vine and for weaving women's energy into a generational tapestry. Bless us as we eat and drink, remembering our life cycles. (Sharing the food and drink.)

## Sending Forth

We have welcomed our sister and daughter, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), into womanhood. We have remembered our journeys to womanhood. We have praised women's powers. Let us open our circle now in song, remembering that we will be there for one another.

## Song

"Let the Women Be There" by Marsie Silvestro  
from *Crossing the Line*, MoonSong Productions.

If ever I give birth to another person  
Or create a work with my mouth,  
my eyes, my hands

Let the women be there (2x)  
Let the women be there by my side.

If ever I should cry from the pain of injustice  
Let the tears I cry run down like a river  
and set us free. (refrain)

And when I am walking,  
Spirit's breath last journey,  
Let the wisdom I carry be the vision  
I'm passing on. (refrain)

Diann L. Neu, M.Div., STM, is a feminist liturgist and therapist who co-directs WATER.





## In Memory of Her

from *WATER*, Silver Spring, MD:

*Margaret Crow*, a creative, brilliant, if sometimes crazy woman who pushed the churches beyond where they wanted to go, though she never got there herself. Rest in well deserved peace.

from *Trish Kaspar*, San Jose, CA:

*Sara Elizabeth Carlson*, in honor of this young woman's graduation from Davidson College, Davidson, NC, a contribution for *WATER*'s continued refreshment of women's lives throughout the world.

from *Gail Demaria*, Fairlawn, NJ:

*Rita Moffett*, a woman of energy, wisdom, integrity, risk and great vision, who opened doors for many others to enter. Rita, committed to truth in the church and a love of the mystery of God in our lives, we say ... god speed.

## And in Memory of Mothers

from *George and Lila Anastas*, Roseville, CA:

Our mothers, too - *Leila Hurliman Larimore* and *Kinna Popadoplou Anastas* - exhibited indomitable spirit and perseverance and set a hallmark for being a "mother". Best of luck to *WATER* and the Mothers Fund.

Plus this welcome note from *Judy Ross*, Santiago, Chile:

Just finished reading your latest (spring) *WATER*wheel ... I was so impressed with the newsletter, your journeys (esp. to Australia to visit Peg and Monica), the "Flo and Jo" fund (wonderful!!!) -- feel very very connected ... we are trying to do what you are doing there at *WATER*.

## Begone, Religious Violence

The big religion story this year is violence, not just denominations speaking out against it, but churches and synagogues dealing with their own cases. This is not a new problem for the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence in Seattle, WA (1914 N. 34th Street, Suite 104 98103; phone 206 634-1903) founded fifteen years ago and directed still by the Rev. Dr. Marie M. Fortune, widely recognized as the country's expert on these matters.

"Called to Make Justice" was the Center's landmark conference this spring in Chicago, a bi-national, interreligious effort which brought together activists and analysts to craft solutions to pernicious problems. *WATER* staff member Mary E. Hunt spoke on a panel about theological deficiencies which encourage violence, institutional duplicity and analytic disinformation (read: lies and cover ups) which have kept the problems of clergy sexual abuse, priest pedophilia, and more under wraps. Intern Helena Johansson took findings back to Sweden.

Women are most often affected by sexual and domestic violence, but what this conference proved is that women, and especially religious feminists, are in the forefront of eradicating the problems. Many participants and speakers

were ordained rabbis, ministers, church bureaucrats, active lay leaders in their respective traditions. It became obvious during the conference that the empowerment of women as religious agents, ordained or not, was the single most important factor for bringing these matters to light. Catholics were in scarce supply at the meeting, with the institutional Roman Catholic Church conspicuous by its absence among sponsoring denominations. It has been suggested that it is time to ordain Catholic women for the children's sake...

A new generation of religious leaders, including Emilie M. Townes, Carol Adams, Julie Spitzer, Rita Nakashima Brock and Marie Fortune herself, among many others, has made the epidemic of religious violence their concern. Backlash is to be expected, and it is virulent among those who claim such efforts are veiled anti-sex moves. But a close reading of the materials reveals how sadly off the mark this is, as life and sex-affirming people in Chicago sought only justice. Men's efforts to break the cycle of violence and replace male privilege with human caring lent further credence to the notion that anti-violence work is an ecumenical religious imperative.

## Cancer in Two Voices

by *Mary E. Hunt*

I hated this book, *Cancer in Two Voices* by Sandra Butler and Barbara Rosenblum (San Francisco, CA: Spinsters Book Company, 1991). Actually, I hated that it had to be written. I hated that these two women lived such pain. I hated the medical world that made a major mistake which could have been avoided. I hated the cancer that took Barbara's life even though I never knew her. I hated the whole process of dying which was catalogued with such care. I recommend this book that I hated.

The authors find ways to love, deepen and support one another despite the illness. They are like me and so many of my friends, busy with the career demands of middle age, flying here and there enjoying the good life that our education makes possible, oblivious, until we are confronted, to those dimensions of our mortality which we would just as soon ignore.

Breast cancer affects one of nine women. Women who do not have children before the age of thirty are said to be at higher risk, lesbian women and nuns right up there as the epidemic among my friends seems to bear out. But every case does not turn into the death out of time and an elderly mother forced to witness the demise of her first born as in this case. Such sins should not be committed by nature, but they are, nature untamed by even the most sophisticated medicine money can buy.

What struck me most in this story was ritual, the couple's move to have a commitment service a year before one dies, the dying woman's return to the rabbinical faith of her childhood, planning her memorial to coincide with what her aged, observant parents would want. I kept coping with this incongruity: will I, too, return to the "faith of my father" when push comes to shove? Will I, too, seek the public commitment I have avoided to these many years, a gesture of solidarity, a desperate effort to keep some of what has been a very public life private? Perhaps, but for equally good reason...

The book demands engagement like few I have read. Maybe it is simply coping with the news of another friend being nursed by her partner for which my tears streamed. Maybe it is instead really a great book, hidden on the book shelf with the other cancer manuals, most readers unaware of how normal it is for two women to love and lose just like everybody else.

Critical analysis eludes me; it is hard to type through tears. Thanks, Barbara. Thanks, Sandra.

*Editor's note: Victoria Rue, doctoral candidate at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA has adapted this book for the stage in a version she calls "CancerBodies." It is a brilliant performance, well suited for theological and ethical discussion.*

# Resources

Bayler, Lavon. **FRESH WINDS OF THE SPIRIT, BOOK 2: LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR YEAR A.** Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992 (331 pages, \$12.95).

There are now several options for inclusive language and imagery. This is a good one, putting to rest the excuse "But what do you say instead?"

Caldwell, Elizabeth. **A MYSTERIOUS MANTLE: THE BIOGRAPHY OF HULDA NIEBUHR.** Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1992 (146 pages, \$12.95).

Religion must have been a dominant gene in the Niebuhr family as this portrait of the sister of the famous Reinhold and H. Richard shows. She was a notable professor of religious education in her own right, leaving little "mystery" about the sexism that has kept her from our attention all these years.

Cruikshank, Margaret. **THE GAY AND LESBIAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT.** New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1992 (225 pages, \$14.95).

Just the ticket to learn the history of the contemporary movement that has extended "family values" beyond "Leave it to Beaver."

Goldenberg, Naomi. **RETURNING WORDS TO FLESH: FEMINISM, PSYCHOANALYSIS, AND THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.** Boston: Beacon Press, 1990 (260 pages, \$19.95).

A clear feminist treatment of central issues in psychology and religion by a writer whose important insights are well worth pursuing.

hooks, bell. **BLACK LOOKS: RACE AND REPRESENTATION.** Boston: South End Press, 1992 (200 pages, \$12).

"Fierce critical interrogation..." is the author's goal, one which she achieves with style and broad-based cultural knowledge.

Irigaray, Luce. **JE, TU, NOUS: TOWARD A CULTURE OF DIFFERENCE.** New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1993 (136 pages, \$13.95).

The clear voice of a complicated thinker makes this introduction a welcome volume to those wading through French feminism.

Jordan, Judith V. et al. **WOMEN'S GROWTH IN CONNECTION: WRITINGS FROM THE STONE CENTER.** New York: The Guilford Press, 1991 (310 pages, \$18.95).

Some of the best of the new feminist psychological writing. Issues like anger and dependency get another definition from women's experiences.

Lieblich, Julia. **SISTERS: LIVES OF DEVOTION AND DEFIANCE.** New York: Ballantine Books, 1992 (318 pages, \$20).

The four women portrayed here are agents of their own religiosity, no easy job in a patriarchal church. A good look at them provides a glimpse into the other 99,000 U.S. nuns who are changing as they help change the Catholic Church.

Maggio, Rosalie, compiler. **THE BEACON BOOK OF QUOTATIONS BY WOMEN.** Boston: Beacon Press, 1992 (336 pages, \$25).

5700 quotes by more than 1300 women on topics as diverse as laughter and superiority, meetings and magic, make a treasure trove.

Nelson, James B. **BODY THEOLOGY.** Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992 (216 pages, \$12.99).

A good man's start at the hard work of transforming body-hating Christianity into body-affirming faith.

Simonds, Wendy and Barbara Katz Rothman. **CENTURIES OF SOLACE: EXPRESSIONS OF MATERNAL GRIEF IN POPULAR LITERATURE.** Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992 (288 pages, \$34.95).

So many women experience losses in pregnancy--stillbirth, miscarriage, etc.--all of which cause grief and require solace. This is a first-rate, up-front, learned approach.

Spiegel, Marcia Cohn and Deborah Lipton Kremsdorf. **WOMEN SPEAK TO GOD: THE PRAYERS AND POEMS OF JEWISH WOMEN.** San Diego: Women's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education, 1987 (91 pages, \$8.95).

These prayers can be used by themselves or as models for writing one's own, all part of an effort at inclusivity and empowerment of women as religious agents.

Tracy, Denise D. **WELLSPRINGS: SOURCES IN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FEMINISM.** Oak Park, IL: Delphia Resources, 1992 (195 pages, \$14.95).

A good measuring stick for UU's to see how far they have come; a helpful collection for other denominations to imitate.

Vander Vort, Kay, Joan H. Timmerman and Eleanor Lincoln. **WALKING IN TWO WORLDS: WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL PATHS.** St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, Inc., 1992 (208 pages, \$14.95).

The range of women's spiritual experiences and the commonality of struggle to find meaning and wrest insight from a patriarchal world make this an insightful, if uneven, volume.

## For the Children

Gaudrat, Marie-Agnes. **WHAT IS GOD LIKE?** Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992 (4 volumes, \$14.95).

These lovely little books are generally inclusive and delightful.

## En Espanol

LA MUJER EN LA IGLESIA. Madrid: Editorial Popular, Nos. 178/179, 1991.

Essays by Maria Pilar Aquino, Margarita Pintos, Mercedes Navarro, etc. make a valuable resource.

## Other Gems on Tape

Bolen, Jean Shinoda. **WISE WOMEN ARCHETYPES: MENOPAUSE AS INITIATION.** Boulder, CO 80302: Sounds True Recordings, (735 Walnut St.) 1991 (60 minutes, \$9.95).

A wonderful presentation on menopause, palatable even to those who usually gag on the Jungian pabulum.

Medicine Heart Woman. **THE MEDICINE LAND: GIFTS FROM THE EARTH MOTHER.** Ellisville, MO 63021: The Sacred Tree Foundation (115 Carmel Woods), 1991 (60 minutes \$10.98 + \$1.50 s+h).

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