



# waterwheel

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

## Editorial

The death of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis and the murders which O.J. Simpson is alleged to have committed raise the specter of legend. On the passing of "Jackie O," many a pundit proclaimed "the end of an era," Camelot redux. Some commentators waxed poetic about a woman whose charm, grace, privacy and ability to live her own life, regardless, made her a forerunner of feminism.

True enough. But like Eva Peron and other icons, Jacqueline (she said "Jock-leen") was as much a product of the media as of her own making even though she made herself unique. Her death out of time renders the legend all the more enigmatic. Respect dictates that we say "Jacqueline, we hardly knew you," and gratitude abounds to a woman who surpassed the confines of church and state to live her own life.

On the Simpson case the jury is not even out yet, but the handwriting seems to be on the wall. At the very least, we know that there is nothing mythical about domestic violence. People who engage in it also, and often, kill.

Media attention to "Reimagining" is, finally, a boon to all of us. It is an object lesson in how reality gets shaped, especially when WATER's phone rings with frantic producers looking for data. It means that our work is larger than we are, whether we like it or not, and that the face of religion is changing right before our very eyes. Heady stuff this, but opportunities to educate arise when one least expects them. Shakespeare had it right: "The readiness is all."

The glass ceilings and closed doors, the moats around the minds of some who refuse to entertain the notion of women as religious agents remain. Too many colleagues tell stories of jobs lost, tenure denied, pulpits off limits and articles unplaced because of ideological considerations over which they have no control. Tough luck, perhaps, but as Jacqueline Onassis proved, tough luck can be recast into outsized opportunity through hard work, commitment to principles and some good luck. Money does not hurt either, but in the last analysis what remains is more a model than a myth.



## Reimagining Reimagining

by Mary E. Hunt

It is official. Now that the *New York Times*, McNeill/Lehrer and Nightline have weighed in on the much-ballyhooed "Reimagining" conference in Minneapolis in November 1993, it really happened. Watching the aftermath of the landmark conference is as much a lesson in how the media creates reality as it is a theological learning experience. On we go.

Who among the 2300 participants coloring on newsprint and shaking egg-shaped noise-makers ever thought we would be the subject of such scrutiny, the objects of such attention, the theme of so many articles, discussions, e-mail postings and inevitable doctoral dissertations yet to come? So this is what those at Trent and Chalcedon felt like when history ran away with their party.

I purposely wrote a straightforward account of the meeting in these pages (cf. "I Wish You Had Been There," *WATERwheel*, Vol. 6 No. 4, Winter 1993-94). So little had been written

Christian faith, adopting ancient pagan beliefs, rejecting Jesus' divinity and his atonement on the cross." What conference did she attend?

What has emerged is such a caricature of the event that the conference I attended in Minneapolis has all but faded. Instead, the version which is fed to the public for feminists to defend is one of Sophia feasting on milk and honey, women carrying on without benefit of (male) clergy, and prayer about the "nectar between her thighs," which the lesbians gathered loved. To read the right-wing reports, one would think there may have been a heterosexual woman or three in attendance, but they too have faded. Even *Nightline* stooped to conquer by quoting the most salacious lines so far out of context as to be all but unrecognizable. In the cases of Dr. Delores Williams and the Rev. Melanie Morrison, poor quality audio tape excerpts were played to lend authenticity to the tale.

### *Most of those who write about and condemn the conference were not present.*

about what happened, and so much was being written about what it meant, that I thought a participant's view would be useful. Interestingly, neither the *New York Times* nor *The Christian Century* carried straight news on the event before the right-wing attacks began. Now what is news is the reaction, especially the threat to withhold money from denominations which sponsored it. Even that information is presented as if there were a cause and effect relationship between the two phenomena, rather than a complex of circumstances which make conservatives wary in some of the mainline churches.

The well orchestrated attack on the conference began in the pages of *The Presbyterian Layman* and the Methodist *Good News* publications. It is now obvious that the Institute for Religion and Democracy is in on the act. Susan Cyre, who sometimes works as a consultant for IRD, wrote the *Layman's* major article on the conference. It began, "Destroying traditional

Four important dynamics are obvious in the whole saga, which now includes the forced resignation of one conference organizer, Mary Ann Lundy, from her Presbyterian post, a sacrificial offering to the right:

1. Most of those who write about and condemn the conference were not present. They have only second, and in some cases third, hand data to draw on, and they use the audio tapes, themselves partial versions of the workshops, as if the words spoken existed outside of any larger conversation. In fact, most of those who are horrified are not really reacting to "Reimagining" at all, but to a version of it which has been concocted and disseminated by right-wing sources as if it represented what went on.

The several right-wing journals and their followers have craftily latched onto a very public event which they neither paid for, planned, nor

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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 a part of an inclusive church and society.

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## Reimagining...

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norparticipated in, yet which they have pumped up in the public arena as a means to address the unstoppable changes which women as religious agents within and beyond Christian churches have made in the last three decades.

Reports are that the publications increased their press runs and sent their journals to many people in their denominations who were not subscribers. In retrospect this was a great business ploy, but in perspective it is clearly part of a strategy to discredit feminists. It is the shift from an all white male, top down, clerico-centric style of being church to a mixed race and gender, collective, community-centered approach which is at issue, not a relatively tame conference. That a few women like Ms. Cyre put forward the mangled views does not change the essentially anti-woman dynamic. If anything, it lends it more credibility, a strategy the Catholic bishops have adopted to vend their anti-abortion agenda with saleswomen.

The issues are theo-political not so much theological, that is, they are issues of power. At stake is not so much what we will name the divine, how we will shape the world and our relationships in it, but who will do the naming. The fact that new people are part of that process, specifically, women of a range of racial/ethnic and class backgrounds, is what has so jarred the right-wing. Add to this the fact that mainline church members, who were the vast majority in the audience, had a wonderful experience in Minneapolis and it is easy to see the source of

in our effort to eradicate racism and other forms of violence, provide jobs and economic stability, welcome immigrants and protect children. These are our priorities, although they take on different valences in different communities. This was the macro-agenda of the conference.

Efforts to make us debate Sophia, liturgical styles and lesbians are distractions from this agenda and need to be named as such. Every time a woman minister is made to say "I don't believe in Sophia" or a woman bureaucrat is forced to recant positions she never held in the first place, our agenda is trivialized by erosion.

Without ignoring the attacks, I suggest that we who "reimagine" a new form of Christian faith get on with the justice-seeking issues which frame our concerns. To reiterate, those areas include anti-racism work, the eradication of violence and the re-distribution of the goods of the earth. I thought this was akin to Christianity until the attacks from right-wing so-called Christians began. Now I am sure it is and wonder what they are about.

3. Another dynamic at play in this episode of church history is the use of the media as an educational tool. In Washington the saying goes "There is no such thing as bad press." I am a late convert to this approach, willing to use radio, television, print, e-mail, whatever it takes, for educational purposes. A mention in the major media has far more impact than most well written books. I suggest we use it.

I am not advocating the substitution of sound bites for solid analysis. To the contrary, well thought out ideas can be, and in our society must

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such angst by those who would like to keep the churches to themselves.

2. Feminist, womanist, mujerista and Asian theological perspectives are not fixated on the gender of the divine, the use of milk and honey rather than bread and wine, nor on the sexual integrity of those who call themselves church. That is a false rendering of the agenda of "Reimagining" and a bold attempt to set the agenda for future conversations. It will not work.

Conference participants were a diverse lot. We each have agenda which are set by the priorities of our respective people, but we coincide in our concern for people who are poor, for those with AIDS and other health problems. We are united

be, boiled down into useable, understandable information. Just as the religious right has learned to use media to its advantage, I submit that we who are reimagining have the right and responsibility to do the same. Granted who sets the agenda is key, we have a wealth of resources—beginning with people—which can be put to work to spread the good news of inclusive religious faith. Now that we have the media's attention, it is time to get the message out.

"Message" is a complicated notion when we try at the same time to portray the diversity, tentativity and processive nature of our work. However, by encouraging a variety of people to speak, by denying any one "spokesperson" for  
(continued on next page)

the movement, and by inviting readers to draw conclusions based on their own experiences, we too can use the media for education.

Who could pay for the coverage which has already brought "Reimagining" into the living rooms of millions of people? I like to imagine thousands of people, many of them in remote parts of the country who have only their local media to rely on for information. Despite the right-wing efforts, I picture them having their imaginations sparked, their religious faith rekindled by the good words of Rita Nakashima Brock, Tricia Farris, Delores Williams to

From my experience with the women-church conferences, none of which received institutional church support (though the support of Catholic women's religious communities was very helpful), it is clear that such events can happen without institutional money. Whether they should, and what happens when they do, are separate questions. But the point is that planners should not be daunted by the task. Besides, if there is no free lunch, there is certainly no free conference, as Minneapolis proved.

I can imagine a coalition conference, women-church people, "Reimagining" veterans, and oth-



## Women Crossing Worlds-- South to North

WATER's longstanding relationships with women's groups in Latin America, especially in Chile, Argentina and Uruguay, continue to deepen. This season a number of colleagues have visited our office:

**Cristina Grela** of *Catolicas para el Derecho a Decidir* in Montevideo, Uruguay is a frequent guest when her travels bring her to Washington. CDD does remarkable outreach around the region, emboldening people in countries where abortion is illegal to take a justice stand for women. It currently provides support for the decriminalization of abortion campaign which is being launched all over the continent.

**Ivone Gebara**, a Brazilian nun under fire from the Vatican (cf. *WATERwheel*, Vol. 6, No. 3 Fall 1993) for her position in support of the legalization of abortion, graced the office this summer and welcomed WATER staff in New York. Conversations are in progress on ways to cooperate in educational programs for North and Latin American women. Watch this space.

**Judy Ress**, a Maryknoll Associate and member of the editorial team for *Con-spirando*, an eco-feminist journal in Latin America, paid a call. She is also "conspiring" on educational programs with creative ideas and deep commitment. (Editor's note: WATER is now the U.S. distributor of *Con-spirando*, so contact us for subscription information and a sample issue.)

A warm welcome greeted **Caty von Hefty** from the Lutheran Church in Argentina. She is a long time friend in the Hungarian community there who has been active in ecumenical circles with women.

Mary Hunt will repay the visits with a month of teaching ethics at IEPGTCR, the Methodist seminary, through the women's group NETMAL in Sao Paulo, Brazil, August 1994, and with visits with colleagues in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Santiago, Chile.

*Rumor has it that plans for another conference are in the making. That sounds like a first-rate idea to me, and the sooner the better.*

whom they say "Amen," "I'm not crazy," "There are many of us asking these questions." After all, so many of us who have long held ideas about God, sexuality, women's roles, community and faith which are in sharp disagreement with those of our families of origin and/or faith had even less reinforcement before "Reimagining."

4. The flap over "Reimagining" will not die down until the threat to patriarchal religion is over. In short, this will be with us for a long time so we better start developing strategies for dealing with it. I offer a couple to spark our imaginations.

Rumor has it that plans for another conference are in the making. That sounds like a first-rate idea to me, and the sooner the better. This time, economic support from mainline denominations will be in short supply, but let us not overstate how much they gave for the Minneapolis meeting.

The fact is that the participants really pay for such a conference. It is not enough to look at \$66,000 of seed money from the Presbyterians (plus staff travel expenses which now pad the figures to make it seem that that denomination really paid a great deal for the conference), or even the staff salaries and other in-kind contributions which went into the event. This, out of millions that women collectively paid to make the conference happen, needs to be kept in proportion.

It is important to understand that bringing 2300 people together costs more than simply the \$180 or so registration fee per person. Calculate the airfare, hotel costs, food, childcare at home, and lost wages, and one sees readily that the costs of such conferences are borne not by denominations but by individuals who collectively spend the literal millions of dollars it takes to put on such an event.

ers who seek a new religiosity for the twenty-first century, coming together for an event that no major media will ignore in its happening and its impact. Perhaps regional meetings on a more modest scale are more feasible for now, but it is worth dreaming big given the scope of what we have to accomplish.

Regardless of when the next conference takes place, the rich and varied presentations of Minneapolis are available on tape for study groups, personal reflection and research. I invite all who wish to learn from our history to dig into this treasure trove of insight, information and imaginative activity. The music and liturgical innovations alone are worth the listening, not to mention the many and varied substantive talks with ensuing discussion which made the event participatory and empowering.

The unexpected fervor and mostly negative attention surrounding "Reimagining" prove that something very important went on. I contend that it was the fruit of at least thirty years of work on the part of feminists in religion. All that made it so newsworthy was that it happened under the auspices and with some seed money from churches which did not realize how helpful they were being. So alerted, we can expect change from them in the future. But so reinforced, I predict we will grow on quite ably despite them.

### Study Questions

1. How has the "Reimagining" conference provided you with new resources and energy for creative faith?
2. What issues are you and your community reimagining? What impact are these issues having on your work and on your spirituality?

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

## Background

All women work, whether outside the home, in the home or both. Work gives purpose and meaning to living. It is the way our talents and gifts are used for the betterment of society.

This ritual invites women to name the work that we do and to share how we sustain ourselves to do the work we want to do. Use it as a model for the ritual you and your group create to focus on women's work.

## Preparation

Gather twelve candles, multi-colored yarn, bread, wine and juice. Put them in the center of your circle along with objects that were created by women—for example, a family quilt, wood carvings, weavings, baskets, art work.

## Call to Gather

Tonight we gather to focus on women's work. We create our environment here with symbols that have been created by women's hands. Those who have brought them, tell the stories of the special items and place them around the room.

For our readings we will use a number of quotes about work written or spoken by women. We will pass these quotes around now, so we can each read one or several at the time of the readings. (Pass the quotes around the group.)

## Name the Circle

To create our circle of workers, let us speak our names, say what we consider our work to be and tell what personal symbols we have brought or would have brought, given the opportunity. (Naming)

**Sing Together:** "Bread and Roses," sung by Judy Collins, c 1976 Farina Music, inspired by the 1912 strike of women textile workers in Lawrence, MA.

As we go marching, marching  
in the beauty of the day  
A million darkened kitchens,  
a thousand mill lots gray  
Are touched with all the radiance  
that a sudden sun discloses  
For the people hear us singing:  
bread and roses, bread and roses.

## Light the Candles

Let us light a candle in the name of women who cut a path for us to tread, women on whose shoulders we stand. Speak the woman's name, tell us something about her and light a candle in her memory. (Candle lighting)

**Sing Together:** "Standing Before Us," by Carole Etzler, c 1983.

These are the women who  
throughout the decades  
Have led us and helped us to know,  
Where we have come from  
and where we are going,  
The women who've helped us to grow.

(Refrain) Standing before us, making us strong.  
Lending their wisdom to help us along.  
Sharing a vision. Sharing a dream.  
Touching our thoughts, touching our  
lives like a deep flowing stream.

## Read Quotes from Women on Work

from **Feminist Quotations** compiled by Carol McPhee and Ann Fitzgerald, c 1979.

Women's work has been a topic for women writers. Read your quote when you wish. Listen to these women's words about work:

"I do not want to die until I have faithfully made the most of my talent and cultivated the seed that was placed in me until the last small twig has grown."  
from Kathie Kollwitz, **Diaries and Letters**

"Today a woman needs to forget that she's different or new to something. She simply needs to do what she does best."  
from Joan Deal quoted in **Real Estate Today**

"Only on the surface of things have I trod the beaten path. So long as I could keep from hurting anyone else, I have lived, as completely as it was possible, the life of my choice. I have been free...I have done the work I wished to do for the sake of that work alone."  
from Ellen Glasgow, **The Woman Within**

"Every woman is a human being—one cannot repeat that too often—and a human being must have occupation if she is not to become a nuisance to the world."  
from Dorothy L. Sayers, **Gaudy Night**

"A woman should be able to choose whether to work outside her home or in it, to choose whether she wants to care for her own children all the time or part-time. And the people who work in child care centers have to be paid decent wages or our kids won't get decent care."  
from Johnnie Tillmon, "Welfare is a Woman's Issue," **Ms.**, Spring 1972

"I recognize for myself no narrow sphere. Where you may work, my brother, I may work."  
from Lucy N. Coleman, **Women's National Loyal League**, 1863

# Our Work:

by Diann L. Neu

"The flour-merchant, the house-builder, and the postman charge us no less on account of our sex; but when we endeavor to earn money to pay all these, then, indeed we find the difference."

from Lucy Stone, **Women's Rights Convention**, 1855

"Too often we hear these women spoken of as if some perversity of instinct drove them to neglect their homes and go to work at the expense of their homes and children. It is for the sake of their children that they work, as mothers have done from time immemorial. The last penny of their earnings is absorbed by their homes."

from Katharine Anthony, **Mothers Who Must Earn**, 1914

"It would be well for a woman to feel that she has the whole of life to work in."

from Virginia Penny, **Think and Act**, 1869

"Whoever controls work and wages, controls morals. Therefore, we must have women employers, superintendents, committees, legislators; however girls go to seek the means of subsistence, there must be some woman. Nay, more; we must have women preachers, lawyers, doctors—that wherever women are to seek counsel—spiritual, legal, physical—there, too, they will



# Weaving Women Together

be sure to find the best and noblest of their own sex to minister to them."

from Susan B. Anthony, "Social Purity," 1875

"Work the object of which is merely to serve one's self is the lowest. Work the object of which is merely to serve one's family is the next lowest. Work the object of which is to serve more and more people, in widening range...is social service in the fullest sense, and the highest form of service that we can reach..."

from Charlotte Perkins Gillman, *Women and Economics*, 1898

## Sing Together: "Bread and Roses"

**Read:** from "To Be of Use," in *To Be of Use* by Marge Piercy, c 1969.

The people I love the best  
jump into work head first  
without dallying in the shallows  
and swim off with sure strokes  
almost out of sight.

They seem to become natives of that element,  
the black sleek heads of seals  
bouncing like half-submerged balls.

I love people who harness themselves,  
an ox to a heavy cart,  
who pull like water buffalo,  
with massive patience,  
who strain in the mud and the muck  
to move things forward,  
who do what has to be done, again and again.

I want to be with people who submerge  
in the task, who go into the fields to harvest  
and work in a row and pass the bags along,  
who stand in the line and haul in their places,  
who are not parlor generals and field deserters  
but move in a common rhythm  
when the food must come in  
or the fire be put out.

The work of the world is common as mud.  
Botched, it smears the hands, crumbles to dust.  
But the thing worth doing well done  
has a shape that satisfies, clean and evident.

Greek amphoras for wine or oil,  
Hopi vases that held corn, are put in museums  
but you know they were made to be used.  
The pitcher cries for water to carry  
and a person for work that is real.

## Reflect Together

"The pitcher cries for water to carry and a person for work that is real." The quotes help us

focus women's work, our work. And now we ask: What is your heart's work? And how do you sustain yourself to do it at this time?

Think about these questions for a minute in silence, and then we will share with the group. (*Silent reflection*)

Let us share with the whole group what we wish. What is your heart's work? How do you sustain yourself to do it at this time? (*Sharing*)

## Pray for Women Workers

Let us pray with all women workers around the world. Let our response to each petition be, "May your work make you strong."

We remember women who labor for the daily survival of themselves and their children. In particular, women in Rwanda, Bosnia and Somalia, and homeless women of the United States.

*Response: May your work make you strong.*

For women who, for whatever reason, cannot do the work of their hearts. (*Response*)

For mothers who struggle to understand their children's choices for work. (*Response*)

We remember the women who are forced by economic necessity into labor that is unhealthy, unsafe, and exploitative. (*Response*)

We honor and give thanks for pioneering women who risk their lives and careers to speak out on behalf of themselves and others, and so forge a path for other women. (*Response*)

We give thanks for women whose depth of understanding connects them compassionately with all women. (*Response*)

## Bless Bread

*(The blessing takes the bread into her hands and says:)*

Come, put your hands on this bread and remember women's work that makes us strong. Women are the bread bakers and nurturers of the world.

Blessed be this bread and blessed be the women who do the daily work... child care workers, homemakers, domestic workers, lawyers... doctors, healers, secretaries, teachers... writers, artists, seamstresses, florists... farmers, gardeners, theologians, therapists... (*Name others.*)

Blessed are you, Holy Worker, for this bread of our labors, symbol of women's daily work. (*She begins to break the bread and invites each woman to do the same.*)

## Bless Wine and Juice

*(The blessing takes the glasses of wine and juice into her hands and says:)*

Come, put your hands on this fruit of the vine and remember women's work that makes us strong. Women bring passion to the world.

Blessed be this fruit of the vine and blessed be the women who are energized through their work... friends who laugh with us and warm us like seasoned drink... daughters, nieces, students who share their creativity... women whose muscle and mind move our world... women whose sweat and toil bring liberation and equality... (*Name others.*)

Blessed are you, Passionate Worker, for this fruit of the vine, symbol of women's creative energy. (*She drinks from the cup and invites each woman to do the same.*)

## Bless One Another

Let us bless one another by weaving ourselves together. Pull out a piece of yarn, throw the ball of yarn to someone whose work connects with yours, and name that connection. (*Weaving*)

**Sing Together:** "Strands of Common Thread," by Pat Humphries, c 1986.

In a many colored garden  
we are growing side by side.  
We will rise all together, we will rise.  
With the sun and rain upon us,  
not a row will be denied.  
We will rise all together, we will rise.

(Chorus) We will rise like the ocean,  
we will rise like the sun.  
We will rise all together, we will rise.  
In our many colored fabrics,  
made from strands of common thread.  
We will rise all together, we will rise.

## Send One Another Forth

Work has woven us together. As we unravel ourselves so we can be about the work we must do, we take with us from this time together new meaning about work. Take the scissors, cut some of the strands of our common threads, and take them with you as a reminder of women's work.

Let us go forth strengthened by our work.

Let us go forth convinced that we must do our heart's work.

Let us go forth committed to joining our work with the work of those who bring about justice for all.

Amen. Blessed be. Let it be so.

*Diann L. Neu, M.Div., STM, LGSW, feminist liturgist and therapist co-directs WATER.*

# Stonewall 1994



## In Memory of Her

*From Ginny, Kate, Lisa, Christine and Nancy of the Mautner Project for Lesbians with Cancer, Washington, DC:*

This contribution to WATER is in honor of **Diann Neu** for facilitating our bereavement group. *Lisa writes:* Your participation in this process of grieving, loving and leaving has been so helpful to me. I've had a constant trust in the ways in which you gently hold all of us. *Kate writes:* Of all the gifts in life, I believe that there is not one more precious than the gift of someone who stands, with an open heart, next to a heart split open by love and loss. You have done that with us, Diann. *Ginny writes:* Thank you very much for your kind, loving and compassionate support during these past few months.

*From Marilyn Schultheis, Evansville, IN, on behalf of parents, sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews, in-laws and friends:*

In memory of **Margaret Habig**. There are many paths to God... and Marg's path was certainly shaped and formed and nurtured by her own personal experience, her continuous education, her many travels, her generous counsel... her family, her friends. We hate that she is gone, but we must love that she died peacefully, calmly and comfortably... On Tuesday she said "I want to go home." We are honored that Marg wanted to come home to us—to the Habig Lakehouse, to her family, to comforting memories.

Twenty-five years ago in late June 1969, a group of lesbian and gay people fought back when police raided a gay bar, Stonewall, in New York City. Since then the world, or at least a part of it, has changed so that same-sex relationships are increasingly acceptable, indeed celebrated in some circles. The changes in religion have been some of the most slow and difficult, but also the most promising; as religion goes, so goes the nation to a considerable degree.

WATER joined in this year's festivities in NYC. Mary E. Hunt spoke on a panel with theologians John McNeill, Liz Stewart and Guy Menard on the topic "Freed by the Gospel." Dr. McNeill emphasized the changes in the very heart of the churches, while Dr. Menard spoke of his experiences in religious life and theological writing. Dr. Stewart discussed her view of ecclesial politics, and Dr. Hunt suggested that perhaps the Gospel had not only freed but also constrained.

The Metropolitan Community Church, founded since Stonewall by the Rev. Troy Perry, sponsored a colorful demonstration at the Interchurch Center, 475 Riverside Drive, popularly known as the God-box, the headquarters of the National Council of Churches. "Hands-Around-the-God-Box" was an ecumenical event (WATER was among dozens of co-sponsors) which focused attention on the recalcitrant policies of many of the mainline Protestant denominations, and especially the refusal of the NCC to admit the MCC to membership. Following prayers, music and stirring words by the Rev. Nancy Wilson, hundreds of supporters encircled the building and tied a thin rainbow ribbon around it.

Virtually every denominational and ecumenical group had a special event in New York where the Gay Games were also in progress. It became like a spiritual marathon to attend lots of religious meetings. Diann Neu and Mary Hunt joined the CLOUT, Christian Lesbians Out Together, meeting where several dozen members gathered. They enjoyed a moving liturgy sponsored by the Conference for Catholic Lesbians (CCL) which involved women from around the country.

Then it was on to Dignity's candlelight protest in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral. The church was sealed off by dozens of New York's blue best. Hundreds of Dignity members stood across Fifth Avenue in a steady drizzle, singing and praying especially for those who had died of AIDS. A wreath with a large pink triangle was placed in front of the church. The hideous fact that gay and lesbian Catholics cannot wor-

ship in the churches their parents and grandparents built stood out this weekend like a sore thumb while people from virtually every other denomination could.

Dignity rented St. Bartholomew's church for its mass where WATER's Mary Hunt preached a rousing sermon. She concluded:

"As a person of faith, I look forward as well as backward. I like to look ahead and picture the 50th anniversary of Stonewall because it is the surest sign that the legacy lives. The pagantry and solemnity, the seriousness and respect accorded to the veterans of D-Day a few weeks ago provide me with a model.

"I imagine that on our 50th anniversary, though we will all undoubtedly be living in cyberspace, and virtual reality will be a virtual reality for us, I imagine there will be an international, indeed, an intergalactic celebration. TV anchors and Internet highway guides will be interviewing us about what it was like before the Pope and her girlfriend turned the Vatican into a beautiful hospice for elderly and dying people, before the bishops gave up their vestments and rings and began to pressure the government for more money for AIDS research, before the priests cast off their clericalism for social work, before women and men were equal partners, and before lesbian/gay/bisexual and transgendered people were looked upon as the experts in how to love under duress.

"On that last Sunday in June 2019 we will line up and march, even somehow those of us who will be long dead, with our pink and red ribbons, our pink triangles and our friends at our sides. Bread and wine, and milk and honey, and bagels and cream cheese, tofu and cappuccino will flow in abundance. Rainbow flags will wave around the world on that day, and the children will lay flowers on our resting places, awed by our adventures, inspired by our courage, and respectful of our choices. Boy and Girl Scouts will parade in thanksgiving for their ancestors—for us, grateful that we were who we were. Even the birds of the air and fish of the sea will give thanks for the energy we have passed on.

"The world will not be perfect then, but the eucharist celebrated on that day twenty-five years from now at St. Patrick's Cathedral will link us as this eucharist does today with the Jesus movement, and all movements for liberation before and since in a legacy of love. The round table will overflow with the abundance of our freedom. I plan to be there, and we will be expecting you because your love will make it possible."

It was a graced weekend in New York City.

Blumenthal, Warren J., editor. **HOMOPHOBIA: HOW WE ALL PAY THE PRICE.** Boston: Beacon Press, 1992 (318 pages, \$17).

A very useful volume on how homophobia works and how to get rid of it, step by step, workshop by workshop, insight after insight, though never fast enough.

Butler, Johnella E. and John C. Walter, editors. **TRANSFORMING THE CURRICULUM: ETHNIC STUDIES AND WOMEN'S STUDIES.** Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991 (341 pages, \$19.95).

It is time to base curricular reform on competence and not politics. We are a giant step closer with this resource.

Caron, Charlotte. **TO MAKE AND MAKE AGAIN: FEMINIST RITUAL THEALOGY.** New York: Crossroad, 1993 (257 pages, \$19.95).

Liturgy and ritual play a key role in changing consciousness and conveying the changes to many people. This Crossroad Women's Studies Award winning book helps to show how and why.

Coll, Regina. **CHRISTIANITY AND FEMINISM IN CONVERSATION.** Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1993 (224 pages, \$14.95).

An easy introduction to a crucial conversation, a good text for adult education classes.

Exum, J. Cheryl. **FRAGMENTED WOMEN: FEMINIST SUB(VERSIONS) OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVES.** Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993 (223 pages, \$14.95).

Taking women seriously in and beyond texts is a necessary first step toward useful feminist biblical criticism. This study offers insights and heightens expectations for more.

Forsey, Helen, editor. **CIRCLES OF STRENGTH: COMMUNITY ALTERNATIVES TO ALIENATION.** Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1993 (127 pages, \$11.95).

A range of ways to build successful communities in an age of increased isolation.

Kaufman, Gordon D. **IN FACE OF MYSTERY: A CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY.** Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993 (509 pages, \$39.95).

Gordon Kaufman attempts the imaginative construction of mystery with a humble, interreligious and scientifically-informed perspective. A formidable effort sure to shape the course of our common religious future.

McFague, Sallie. **THE BODY OF GOD: AN ECOLOGICAL THEOLOGY.** Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993 (274 pages, \$12.95).

Sallie McFague's insightful work invites rich reflection on body as a metaphor for the divine.

## Resources

Parker, Julie F. **CAREERS FOR WOMEN AS CLERGY.** New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 1993 (176 pages, \$13.95).

What every young woman needs to know about a career in the ministry. Emphasis is on paying attention to a call to serve and to make a difference, with a realistic treatment of how hard and rewarding it can be.

Proctor-Smith, Marjorie and Janet R. Walton, editors. **WOMEN AT WORSHIP: INTERPRETATIONS OF NORTH AMERICAN DIVERSITY.** Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993 (241 pages, \$18.99).

A useful addition to the fast-growing literature on worship which arises out of women's perspectives. Mary Collins, Diann Neu, Annie Ruth Powell and Delores Williams make especially insightful contributions.

Randour, Mary Lou, editor. **EXPLORING SACRED LANDSCAPES: RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES IN PSYCHOTHERAPY.** New York: Columbia University Press, 1993 (217 pages, \$40).

A helpful collection by writers who take religion and psychotherapy seriously enough to explore their mutual implications.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. **GAIA AND GOD: AN ECOFEMINIST THEOLOGY OF EARTH HEALING.** New York: HarperCollins, 1992 (310 pages, \$22).

Rosemary Ruether takes her characteristic broad and deep sweep through history for an ambitious assessment of the impact of cosmologies on creation. Her focus on Christianity's complicity in eco-destruction as well as its possible contribution meets the urgency of the moment with constructive suggestions for change.

Soelle, Dorothee. **ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN: A LIBERATION SPIRITUALITY OF SHARING.** Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993 (100 pages, \$8.95).

Ever insightful, Dr. Soelle combines narrative and dialogue for an accessible, uplifting approach. Her **STATIONS OF THE CROSS: A LATIN AMERICAN PILGRIMAGE**, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993 (146 pages, \$ 8.95) includes vivid stories of poverty, hope and struggle. Wade-Gayles, Gloria. **PUSHED BACK TO STRENGTH: A BLACK WOMAN'S JOURNEY HOME.** Boston: Beacon Press, 1993 (256 pages, \$20).

A sweeping reflection on one African American woman's experience which contains the history of civil rights, as well as the story of three generations of women stepping along.

Webb-Mitchell, Brett. **GOD PLAYS PIANO, TOO: THE SPIRITUAL LIVES OF DISABLED CHILDREN.** New York: Crossroad, 1993 (200 pages, \$21.95).

Children with disabilities teach the rest of us a great deal. Read this book to appreciate the religious stories of some of them, and use it as a way to access their wisdom.

Weems, Renita J. **I ASKED FOR INTIMACY: STORIES OF BLESSINGS, BETRAYALS AND BIRTHINGS.** San Diego, CA: LuraMedia, 1993 (128 pages, \$11.95).

A lot to think about, this proverbial "slim volume" probes the boundaries of relationships in an honest and courageous way. A thought-provoking read, a welcome invitation to much-needed discussion.

Weisman, Leslie Kanes. **DISCRIMINATION BY DESIGN: A FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF THE MAN-MADE ENVIRONMENT.** Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992 (190 pages, \$24.95).

A perfectly wonderful study of the social impact of design. Imaginative in conception, political and practical in application, this valuable book opens the reader's eyes to new options.

Young, Serenity, editor. **AN ANTHOLOGY OF SACRED TEXTS BY AND ABOUT WOMEN.** New York: Crossroad, 1993 (452 pages, \$40).

An excellent reference volume for every library, these texts can be selected for study, compared on particular issues, and taken together as testament to women's religious significance.



### Journals

**REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH MATTERS**, a new journal edited "from a women-centered perspective" by Marge Berer on crucial issues related to every woman's reproductive health. Available by subscription: Reproductive Health Matters, 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9SG, England, \$30-\$60/year, 2 issues per year.

**U.S. CATHOLIC HISTORIAN**, Vol. 11, No. 4, Fall 1993 focuses on "Grailville: Women in Community, 1944-1994." Guest editors Mary Jo Weaver and Debra Campbell bring sharp analysis to complement on-the-scene reports of Janet Kalven et al. Available from **Our Sunday Visitor**, 200 Noll Plaza, Huntington, IN 46750, \$10.

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## On Reflection: WATER

Visiting Scholars and Associates enriched WATER this summer. **Coralie Ling**, pastor of the Fitzroy Uniting Church in Melbourne, Australia, spent a month at WATER in preparation for her Doctorate in Ministry program in feminist theology at San Francisco Theological Seminary. She writes: "Dignified with the title of Visiting Scholar, I spent four weeks pursuing my program of research into the spirituality of healing from various kinds of abuse, and guiding principles for doing feminist rituals and liturgy.

"The people and resources, including unpublished manuscripts and tapes, were just what I needed. The experience at WATER was never boring—from shared lunches to seminars, breakfasts with Janet Kalven, empowering rituals, and visits to cuddle 'boarder' babies. A rich time!

"WATER will continue to enliven my spirit, be a well to draw on, and a meeting place for strong and vulnerable women. As an Australian, I appreciate the goals of WATER and hope that we may establish a similar billabong." [Editor's note: *Billabong*, though not found in the *Wickedary*, means "a backwater channel that forms a lagoon or pool; a river branch that re-enters the main stream."] ]

**Anne Hall**, a social activist and Good Shepherd sister from Melbourne, Australia, also

found a home at WATER as a summer Visiting Scholar. Her reflections follow:

"What do you do at a watering hole/billabong in summer? You drink deeply! My time at WATER has been rich with women's cutting edge energy, celebration, and creativity. The wealth of resources and women's wisdom was mind blowing, a powerhouse of energy for me, a weary activist fighting for women's human rights. I loved the stimulating conversations and rituals that gathered women together, validating and honoring women's experiences and wisdom.

"I journey back to Australia knowing that I have many companions that link me to women's liberation worldwide. Thank Godde for women of vision and courage, like Mary and Diann, and all those who dare to risk being fully alive!"

Visiting Associate, **Anna Mae Mayer**, Catholic Campus Minister at Dartmouth College writes: "What is so great about WATER that I would spend five weeks last summer and another four weeks this summer in a steamy, congested city instead of in the placid, cool mountains of New Hampshire? One need only spend a day or two at the office to answer that question. Let's start with the people who populate that place and who pass through those doors. Mary Hunt and Diann Neu direct the goings-on

with the charm of country inn-keepers, the pace of the New York Stock Exchange, and the unpredictability of a three-ring circus. In short, there is never a dull moment.

"Others, like myself, who have been fortunate enough to do a stint (of two) at WATER, come from all parts of the U.S. and the world. It is a unique privilege to work side by side with these women, to discuss issues political and spiritual, personal and public, to laugh raucously about the absurdities of life, and to absorb endless streams of new information, all while examining and re-evaluating the meaning and reason we either stay plugged into the jobs and lives we currently lead, or decide that it is time to move on.

"As I walked out of the WATER office on my last day, a lump in my throat and tears stinging my eyes, I left stronger than I had come, with a measure more of courage to face the tough issues, a greater ability to do so, and supreme confidence that the people I have come to call friends are doing the same. Perhaps that is the ultimate gift that WATER has been to me: a network of friends who are in the struggle toward a just world and who approach that task with intelligence, dedication, humor and a great measure of love.



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### Complimentary

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