



# waterwheel

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

## Editorial

Mid-term elections do not a new world order make, but U.S. voters have certainly made known their desire to turn the ship of state to the right. This is not surprising, especially to progressive groups that have been the target practice for the newly powerful, but it does make religiously-based social change work far more challenging. The so-called Religious Right claims a certain measure of victory, hence our commitment, stronger than ever, to be religious in ways that are inclusive, justice-seeking, global and mutual. Otherwise we risk giving religion over to the right as one more tool to dominate.

There is good news on our front—more ally-ing done by our Alliance than ever before. Fax machines and e-mail notes, snail mail and the telephone hook up WATER people with increased regularity. Picture a fax from Dublin's finest, Mary Condren, Ph.D., who reported on the first event of the Irish Institute for Feminist Theology. WATER Visiting Scholar Anne Hall was there from Australia, also WATER friend Mercy Sister Mary Jo Sheehy now engaged in AIDS ministry in Ireland, all recommended to one another through our good offices.

Small achievements, perhaps, but in these troubled times finding and having one another for justice-seeking companions may be our best hope for the next few years as we continue our structural change work.



## The Urgency of Being Religious

by Mary E. Hunt

I do not recall a time when it was more important to be religious, nor a time when it was more difficult. The conservative mood of the country, the bellicose bent of the world, the shrinking economic base, and the lack of any common agreement on what it means to live together as a human community on a healthy planet converge on our lack of vision.

Religions provide visions, partial, mistaken or misshapen as they may be. They offer "a way out of no way," a direction to walk, a reason to go on and to go on together, the proverbial "hope against hope," all of which fit the prescription for what ails us today. Yet for feminists, and especially in my case as a feminist from the Christian tradition, it is hard to grab hold of the vision to which I have been accustomed.

That vision of love and justice, meaning beyond time, and an extra measure of support for the marginalized is increasingly being coopted by those who claim some pieces of its story in

Jonathan Mann, M.D., former head of the World Health Organization AIDS office and now Professor of Health and Human Rights and Professor of Epidemiology and International Health at Harvard School of Public Health, gave the 1994 Ingersoll Lecture on Immortality at Harvard Divinity School.

Dr. Mann offered a brilliant if depressing analysis of the AIDS pandemic: "The estimated global total of HIV-infected people has increased over 200-fold, from around 100,000 people in 1980 to a cumulative total of 23 million people today. The largest proportion—nearly 90 percent—of the world's HIV infected people are in the developing world, in sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean." He conjectures that by 1996, six million additional people will be infected, and by the end of this century there will be perhaps 40-100 million HIV-infected people.

While these are staggering numbers, the most stunning aspect is the fact that scientists no

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the name of homo-hatred, racism, misogyny, xenophobia and greed. Envisioning anew is tough work. So is renewing the vision. But that is what the doctors order when I am unwilling to deed my vision to its destroyers and equally unable to live without one. People from other religions report the same problem.

I have come to understand the urgency of this situation via the circuitous route of science and religion, the new vogue in theology. Ironically, in a postmodern age, science is increasingly willing to admit its collective limits and look expectantly toward religion to deal with the thorniest problems. HIV/AIDS provides a telling example.

longer think of HIV/AIDS as simply a virus for which they must find cause and cure. Instead, Dr. Mann argues, "the spread of HIV is strongly determined by an identifiable societal risk factor... in the scope, intensity and nature of discrimination that exists within each community or country." This is not primarily discrimination against people who are HIV-infected or have AIDS, though there is plenty of that. Rather, it is forms of discrimination which "antedated the arrival of the human immunodeficiency virus." These are the problems of racism, gender discrimination, economic injustice, homo-hatred, ageism. Sound familiar?

*(continued on next page)*

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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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If you or someone you know would like to receive **WATERwheel** on tape, we will be happy to arrange for audio transcription of the issue(s) you desire. Contact WATER, 301-589-2509. Cassettes will be made by Volunteers for the Visually Handicapped at a cost of \$10 per tape.

## Urgency *(continued from page 1)*

For example, women in East Africa who are infected by their HIV+ husbands know about and have access to condoms. What they cannot control is their husbands' sexual demands. Nor can they divorce their husbands due to patriarchal laws and the resultant economic hardships that would leave them even worse off. This is part of why women and children comprise the cohort with the steepest rise in infection rates. Similarly, gearing educational programs to people who cannot read, to street drug users who have no fixed address at which to receive public health announcements, and to young gay men who feel hopeless about their future show the deadly impact of discrimination.

I believe that Dr. Mann is, as they say, "spot on" when he claims that HIV/AIDS in the late 20th century demands a two-part strategy: on the one hand, the scientific work of education, research and vigilance to keep the blood supply safe, stop spread through sexual contact and the like; and on the other hand, a specific focus on "underlying determinants of vulnerability to HIV" which he encapsulates as "lack of respect for human rights and dignity."

These are not problems that science can fix. Rather, they are issues that religious people address most effectively. It is religious language and imagery, religious emphasis on meaning and value, religious history, tradition and vision which provide the tools necessary to construct

religious feminist mount in the face of the same backlash. I focus on patriarchal Christianity, but feminists in Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and other traditions have similar experiences. It is not simply that women are excluded, trivialized and otherwise exploited, though that is clear in all patriarchal religions. It is that religious language is used to sell political concepts and made to appear to have one meaning, that religious conversations are coopted, that religious debate is shut off. To hear the right tell it, a "real" Christian hates gays, a "good" Catholic opposes abortion, a "devout" believer favors the nuclear family, a "faithful" person votes for school prayer. It is the same monolithic, top down, unilateral dynamic at play over and over until the pernicious agenda is accomplished, dicey stuff in a shrinking global economy.

An added problem is that religiously progressive people tend to be process-oriented, open to nuance and change, eager to consider and reconsider rather than nail down once and for all the many ideas, images and ideologies. We steer clear of definitions and avoid bottom lines. We pick and choose eclectically among the many and varied rich resources available to us in an increasingly diverse context, which diversity we value. Seemingly these methods collide: just when we need to counter the usurpation of religious symbols and images we shy away. But appearances can be deceiving, as I believe in this case they are.

The same push which inspires decisive action

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a humane society, before, during and after AIDS. This is made all the more critical by scientists' insight that developments in transportation and communication promise to accelerate the infection rates of still unknown viruses. AIDS will not be the last pandemic by a long shot.

I find it chilling to realize that at a time when science has accomplished such remarkable things--vaccines, computers, space travel, not to mention microwaves, velcro and e-mail--that scientists are acknowledging their limits and looking expectantly toward those of us who are religious. I never realized before just how important, how necessary, indeed how practical our work really is in the face of such problems. The mid-term elections and the repugnant move to the right--both in so many candidates elected with the help of the so-called religious right, and the vicious backlash against purported illegal immigrants in California's Proposition 187--up the ante.

But here is the rub: the difficulties of being a

for justice must be tempered with the recognition that religions connect--**ligare**--not coerce; that religions bind, not batter. It is not theological tit for tat, symbol for symbol, my God is bigger than your God that will help to rout discrimination. It is the joining of hands and hearts that religions invite, and the making of tough strategic commitments to overcome injustice that religions inspire which will be most helpful in these difficult times.

The collective ache to be religious among justice-seekers is not imagined or purloined. For feminists it borders on life or death, the meaningful or meaningless. It comes from the legitimate need to ground our visions in symbols and images which have sustained other people in even bleaker times than these. It is a dull ache, but it gets sharper before it gets over, and that is what makes it feel ever so urgent now.

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



## Tapping into WATER Resources

by Carol Murdock Scinto

Letters poured in. Initially they bore postmarks from the Great Lakes region, and mentioned seeing the article about WATER in the **Chicago Tribune** (August 14, 1994, bylined Glen Elasser). Then dozens more arrived, from Florida, California, Texas, Virginia, New York, Kansas, as other newspapers picked up syndication rights, friends sent clippings to friends, and the printed word spread.

Evidence mounts: WATER is indeed necessary for intelligent life on this planet.

The initial lengthy feature, complete with four-color photos of co-founders and co-directors Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, dominated the front page of the Trib's "Tempo" section. It detailed the premise, function and aims of this organization launched in 1983 against the prevailing tide of conventional wisdom (E.R.A. is dead, consequently all women's issues are moribund) and in the teeth of an economic freeze (when money is tight, who's going to support a feminist think-and-do tank addressing ethical, liturgical and theological concerns, for heaven's sake?).

Still afloat and growing, sustained by individual contributions, WATER delights in correspondence like this follow-up to the Tribune article:

From a parochial school teenager in Chicago, writing initially for information for a course on religion, but going the next step: "By the time you get this letter, I will have probably finished the assignment, but I am asking you to send me more information about WATER...I must say that delving into a feminist stance has opened my eyes tremendously...Hearing about WATER is a new thing for me..." (P.S. Her teacher asked to be included on our mailing list, too.)

From a teacher and minister of Christian education at an Episcopal church in Tidewater Virginia: "I especially appreciated your positive and constructive emphasis as opposed to an angry and reactive one. There were many ideas that excited and intrigued me in this article...I am most interested in learning about ways to help bring about change in attitudes of inclusivity so that the talents and creativity that exist among so many men and women can be realized."

From a social worker in Florida who left her Catholic religious order: "Because of the patri-

archal structure of the Catholic Church and several of its most recent decisions regarding the status of women, I could not, in truth, remain an active participant. My current experience is one of 'hopeful exile' as I search for ways to incorporate my vision in my therapeutic work with women."

From an incest survivor in Illinois: "I was delighted to read the article about WATER...and am especially interested in the work you have done in designing rituals for women who have been violated or abused...I have often been angered by the offers, especially from the Church, of easy answers or shortcuts to healing."

From a member of the United Church of Christ in California: "...[M]embers of my local congregation and an Episcopal congregation are beginning a new women's spiritual growth and development group...Thank you for your help and for your work."

From a woman in Texas: "I am particularly interested in materials you may have available for adult study programs."

From a man in Tidewater Virginia: "[I]t was refreshing and inspiring to read about your group, because there is so much in religion...that is detrimental to women. The recent World Conference on Population and the Vatican's rigid stance at it is an example of what I mean."

From a pastor of a Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Kansas: "How excited I became in reading the article 'Women's Rites' sent to me by a former seminary professor...[W]e are mainly a rural farming community. Of course the culture is highly male-oriented and the church is the typical model of hierarchy in spite of the many qualified women who could be in leadership."

The letters, a fat folder-full by now, recount a telling saga of people as glad to find WATER as we are to connect with them. One missive came directly to the point: Following a list of 21 names and addresses, the writer briskly requests us to send these friends information about WATER, as they are "quite interested in the network." Done.

Next?

*Carol Scinto, Editorial Assistant, is a dedicated supporter of WATER and a regular volunteer in the office.*

## In Honor of Her

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, long an inspiration as well as staunch contributor to WATER, is the first recipient of the newly instituted \$10,000 Continuum Book Award for her recently published **Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology**. In announcing the prize at the AAR/SBL annual meeting in Chicago in November, the Continuum Publishing Group hailed the book as a worthy sequel to her earlier scholarly work, **In Memory of Her**, which has to date been translated into eight languages.

The award honors the book "for its scholarly depth, interdisciplinary breadth and humanist vision." Harvey Cox, Professor of Divinity at Harvard, calls it "surely the best case yet for reconstructing christology along the lines of Sophia tradition which she argues persuasively may be older than the Father-Son christology."

In her words, this is not "another book about the historical Jesus, the exclusivist male hero and Christian divine man whom scholars fashion in their own image and likeness" but rather focuses on "repressed politics of meaning that informs malestream scholarship."

Hurrah for Elisabeth--and herewith her own set of keys to WATER where her folding chair awaits.

## In Memory of Her

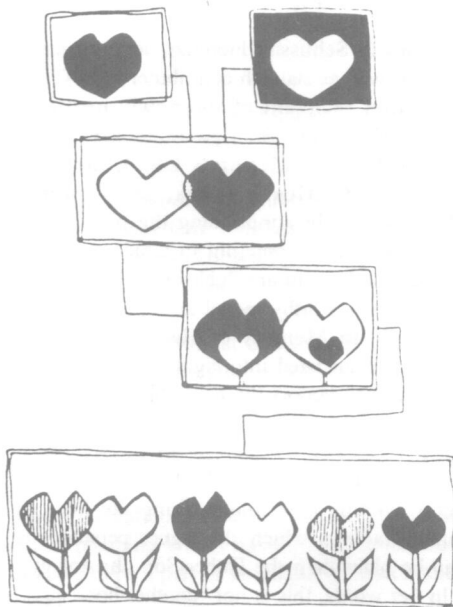
*From Gwenth Lewis, Berwin, PA:*

In celebration of **Kitty Bennett**, her courage and joy in choosing to take this new road in her journey.



# Liberating Love

by Diann L. Neu



## Background

Love and justice go together like water and gardens. Yet so often we focus on social justice and pass over the importance of social love. This liturgy invites participants to remember how they love one another as they work together. It was planned for and celebrated at a National Women's Ordination Conference retreat on Valentine's Day. Use this ritual for Valentine's Day or for any time your group wants to focus on the urgency of being religious.

## Preparation

Place an altar/table in the center of a circle of chairs. Identify names of women who are significant for your group, write these names on large cards and place them on the floor around the altar. Gather bread, wine, juice and roses for the readers and blessers. (You may want a rose or flower to give to each participant during the Greeting of Peace.) Invite a few participants to bring special vessels and cloths for the table.

## Call to Gather

Welcome to our Eucharist. Our table will be set with special symbols today. Tell us about them, you who have brought them here. (At the initial celebration, one woman baked the bread, another shared a goblet that a woman priest had given her, one brought a cup and pitcher

that she had made and used at a friend's funeral, the fourth covered the altar with a cloth her grandmother made and her family used when she celebrated her grandmother's anointing. After each woman shared her symbol, she gave it to one of the four readers who were sitting in the circle of participants.)

These symbols remind us that love offers us an age-old, yet ever refreshing theme. They focus this liturgy, "Liberating Love for Justice."

If love and justice are friends, and we are involved in social justice, then where are we with social love? As I look around this room, I suspect most of us have dedicated our lives to various social justice causes. And what about social love?

It's good to pay attention to and notice love. It's good to say and hear "I love you." Today let's begin by noticing the liberating hearts in this circle. Look around, catch someone's eye, and silently share a loving smile. (*Sharing with smiles.*)

**Chant:** "We Are A Wheel," words by Hildegard of Bingen, a round in four parts, from *Sing Green* by Betty Wendelborn, c 1988 Wendelborn.

We are a wheel, a circle of life;  
We are a wheel, a circle of power;  
We are a wheel, a circle of love;  
Circling the world this sacred hour.

**Reading:** "Noticing the Liberating Hearts," by Diann L. Neu.

(Four readers stand at the four directions of the room: North, East, South, and West. Each holds a symbol: bread, wine carafe, juice pitcher, roses.)

**Narrator (North):** A reading from the gospel of our lives.

The church was reluctant to notice the liberating hearts, yet still the Spirit loves those who are wise. And this Holy One continues to give Her promises today:

**E:** I will share my Spirit, my liberating hearts, with all people of every nation.

**S:** You, sisters, and your daughters and sons and friends, shall prophesy my gracious love.

**W:** Your elders shall inspire dreams of healing for our wounded world.

**N:** Your youth shall effect visions of justice with peace.

**ALL:** Come, Loving Spirit, continue your passionate love through us, your liberating hearts.

**E:** I will give my Holy Spirit, Sophia-Wisdom, to women and you shall prophesy compassion.

**S:** And these friends, faithful to the covenant, pray to this Everlasting Spirit of Profound Love.

**ALL:** Come, Loving Spirit, continue your passionate love through us, your liberating hearts.

**W:** Lover of Our Lives,

**N:** Wise One of Those-Who-Have-Gone-Before-Us,

**E:** Most Beloved Friend,

**S:** Refill our people with gifts of your Spirit again and again.

**N-E-S-W:** Breathe our sacred names. Empty us of angry fears. Crumble ancient walls of hatred. Recreate your love through us.

**ALL:** Come, Loving Spirit, continue your passionate love through us, your liberating hearts.

**N:** This is the word of the Spirit of Love. And we are the embodiment of this Sophia-Wisdom. (*She places the bread on the altar.*)

**E:** Amen. (*She pours wine into the goblet and places the carafe on the floor.*)

**S:** Blessed be. (*She pours juice into the cup and places the pitcher on the floor.*)

**W:** Let it be so. (*She puts the roses in the vase on the altar.*)



# for Justice

**Sing a Response:** "Sing A Blessing," by  
M. T. Winter from **Woman Prayer/Woman  
Song**, c 1987 Medical Mission Sisters.

Sing we, sing of a blessing (2x, echo)  
A blessing of love (echo)  
A blessing among us (echo)  
Love will increase (echo)  
A blessing of peace (echo)

Share now, share in a blessing (2x, echo)  
A blessing of love (echo)  
Now and forever (echo)  
Love will increase...

## Community Prayer

Come, Spirit of the Loving One, bless our community of love and justice. Refresh us for the work that must be done, fill us with compassion for others, keep us tender and strong in our care for one another, and strengthen us to be faithful to the commitments we have made. We know that:

Those who work for change encounter resistance,

So keep us strong.

Those who chart new paths feel alone,

So strengthen our networks.

Those who challenge unjust systems arouse anger,

So grant us inner peace.

Those who love encounter hatred, misunderstanding, betrayal,

So deepen our friendships.

What else do we know? Share your prayer with us now. (Sharing.)

Loving Friend on the Journey, we bless ourselves as we share bread, wine and juice.

## Blessing of Bread

Come, extend your hands and touch this bread and drink. (The blessers hold the bread, wine and juice as participants touch one of them.)

Blessed are you, Gracious and Loving Holy One, for this Eucharistic love feast. We take, bless, break and eat this bread in thanksgiving for the love we have known, in thanksgiving for the love we have received, in thanksgiving for the love we have given.

May our love increase.

## Blessing of Wine and Juice

Blessed are you, Holy One of Joy, for creating this fruit of the vine. Young wine reminds

us of new love; aged wine, growing richer and fuller, symbolizes long-lasting love. We take, bless, and drink this fruit of the vine and recall the lasting love of beloved partners and dear friends. May our love increase.

Let us share the bread and drink saying:  
May your love increase. (Sharing.)

## Sending Forth

Nourished with eucharistic food, blessed with liberating love, and strengthened for the work of justice, we are coming home. Let us send one another forth, remembering.

**Sing:** "We're Coming Home," by Carolyn  
McDade, c 1991 Carolyn McDade.

(Refrain)

We're coming home to the spirit in our soul.  
We're coming home and the healing makes us whole.

Like rivers running to the sea,  
We're coming home, we're coming home.

As the day is woven into night,  
As the darkness lives within the light  
As we open vision to new sight,  
We're coming home, we're coming home.  
(Refrain)

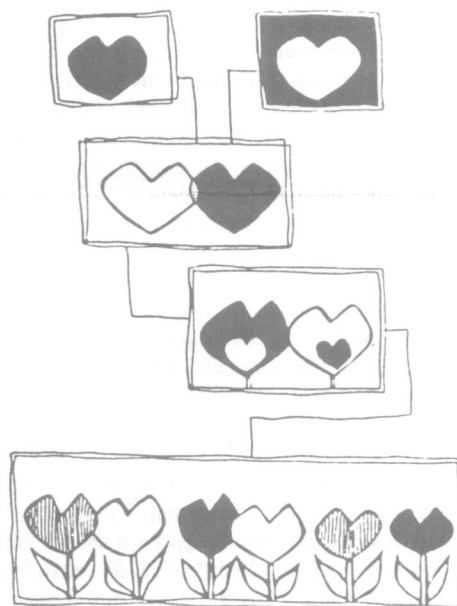
Bearing words born new unto each day,  
Speaking bold where only silence lay  
As we dare to rise and lead the way,  
We're coming home, we're coming home.  
(Refrain)

To create a world of joy and peace  
Where the power of justice does release  
Love abounding, wars forever cease.  
We're coming home, we're coming home.  
(Refrain)

## Greeting with Peace

Love, like the divine, is very hard to get a handle on. It is tough to name. And what we name sometimes isn't really love. But despite ambiguities, uncertainties, doubts, it is good to say "I love you." Today let's greet one another with an embrace of love. (Hugging and sharing roses.)

Diann L. Neu, M.Div., STM, MSW, feminist  
liturgist and therapist, is co-director of WATER.



## E-mail Made Easy

WATER's e-mail list is perking along nicely. Every week we post a notice with the latest info, suggested books to read, office and alliance-related happenings, and provocative questions for discussion.

Meeting one another face to face is an added plus, but meanwhile, and with enthusiasm, we continue to build and use our network. **National Catholic Reporter** included us in its article on religiously-related groups so we're growing daily, from the original two of us (Jessica Weissman helped get the project started) to now nearly 100 of us, literally around the world. There are other feminist theology lists out there as well, and with postage climbing all the time why use snail mail when you can e-mail?

Here is a sample of what you could receive every Friday on your own computer:

WATER Update 11/11/94

Greetings and best wishes in the wake of very important mid-term elections.

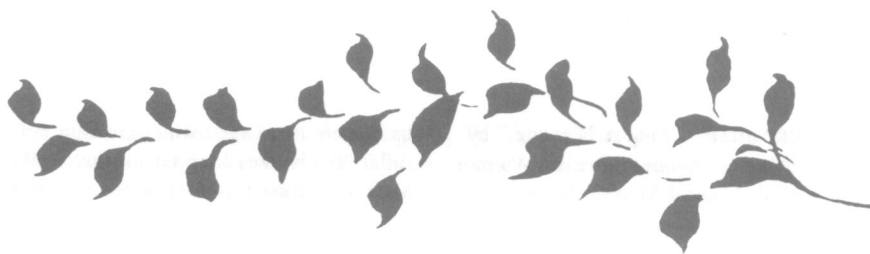
-- WATER e-mail breakfast held at the Call to Action meeting last weekend in Chicago was an enjoyable event. Such small gatherings at conferences are valuable for networking and generating new ideas. There is talk of doing one at the AAR/SBL next week in Chicago. Is someone organizing it?

-- One suggestion was that we might choose a book to read and discuss on-line. Any proposals for one which might appeal to a wide spectrum of people and generate some focused discussion? [Editor's note: We're settled on the **Concilium** volume 1994/1 on women edited by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Shawn Copeland since it is available in many languages and countries, to be followed by Elisabeth's new Continuum prize-winning book **Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology**.]

-- WATER staff will be giving a day on new models of church in Philadelphia, Saturday, November 12, 1994, 9 AM-5 PM. Contact the office for directions and details.

People respond to such missives, add their own concerns and questions. We've unearthed information for UNICEF on religious perspectives on breast feeding, located a place for one member to worship in Florida over Thanksgiving, and even linked up roommates (English and Irish, no less) for the AAR/SBL meeting in Chicago. The possibilities are endless, as is the need to use technology to strengthen our bonds and diversify our groups.

If you are interested and not yet connected, send your name and e-mail address to: [waterrequest@his.com](mailto:waterrequest@his.com) with the word **Subscribe** in the first message line. It is as easy and as efficient as all that.



## Fall Frenzy

WATER's fall activities outpaced even our legendary ability to do ten things at once. This snippet will give you the flavor. Stop by for the full plate.

Diann's therapy and spiritual direction clients increase and multiply. She is now the Weaver and chair of the liturgy committee for the Women's Ordination Conference 20th anniversary gathering, "Discipleship of Equals: Breaking Bread/Doing Justice," planned for November 10-12, 1995 in Washington. Make your reservation early for what promises to be a landmark conference with emphasis on shared feminist ministry in egalitarian communities.

In preparation, Diann and Mary offered a workshop sponsored by the Southeastern Pennsylvania WOC group on new models and means of being church. Participants heard Mary's analysis of "Feminist Ministry for a Whole Church" as well as experienced and participated in Diann's workshop on creating feminist liturgies.

Mary lectured on connections between religion and violence at the Call to Action Conference in Chicago. She discussed the pros and cons of same-sex unions for Washington's One in Ten organization, and participated in a panel on the use of video to oppress by the so-called religious right at the American Academy of Religion meeting.

Dr. Hunt keeps a close eye on the U.S. Catholic bishops whose annual meeting she always attends as press. This year she noted that the bishops were increasingly persuaded of the normativity of feminism as the most adequate way of understanding justice for women. However, their new tactic is to divide and conquer by distinguishing between good feminists and bad feminists, i.e., those who simply see gender justice as important in a still patriarchal setting and those who make deep, systemic change toward inclusive, feminist models a must. The pitiful statement on women which the bishops approved begins by affirming the latest Vatican ban on women's ordination, as well as on discussion of the topic. Not. Is it any wonder that WATER and other women-church groups are so busy?

Carol and Joe Scinto's Mothers Fund gave its first grant--loads of books--to our colleagues at

Con-spirando in Santiago, Chile. Mary visited that center while in the Southern Cone this fall and strengthened the link between sister organizations. We hope to offer joint theological education, south-north styles, in the future. Stay tuned.

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza graced the WATER office for breakfast with an eager crowd. She discussed her new books, **Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Feminist Christology**, and the edited second volume of **Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary**. Solid analytic grounding for our work is deeply appreciated, as is Elisabeth's longtime friendship and support. No wonder she announced how at home she feels at WATER!

Visitors abound from other small, independent centers, such as Maureen Gallagher from Mary's Pence in Chicago, a fund to redirect Catholic giving to women's groups; Eleanor Rae from the Center for Women, the Earth, the Divine in Connecticut; Helen Hill from an Australian women's group preparing for Beijing; Lanell Dike, a former intern and recent graduate of San Jose College.

We begin to think that if WATER did not exist, someone would have to invent it.

## Who?

Check the address label on this issue of **WATERwheel**. Do you recognize yourself? If we seem to have taken liberties with your name--i.e., omitted part of it--please let us know! In changing our mailing list data base program, we adjusted the way our computer prints out labels--and it balked. Although we tried to catch all omissions before posting this issue, we won't be sure until you verify. So write, call, fax or e-mail WATER attention: Diann.

# Resources

Barstow, Anne Llewellyn. *WITCHCRAZE: A NEW HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN WITCH HUNTS*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994 (256 pages, \$25).

Reads like a novel, teaches like a text book. Anne Barstow corrects the record and intensifies the analysis of "Racism, neocolonialism, and misogyny..." as they relate to witches.

Busby, Margaret, editor. *DAUGHTERS OF AFRICA: AN INTERNATIONAL ANTHOLOGY OF WORDS AND WRITINGS BY WOMEN OF AFRICAN DESCENT FROM THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN TO THE PRESENT*. New York: Ballantine, 1994 (1093 pages, \$18).

The title is modest compared with the riches in this landmark collection. A "must" for every library. Consult, savor and learn from a remarkable collection of women whose names are legion and whose wisdom is fresh.

Clark, J. Michael. *BEYOND OUR GHETTOS: GAY THEOLOGY IN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1993 (128 pages, \$9.95).

In a move beyond concern for lesbian issues, Michael Clark contributes valuable insights for action and reflection.

Douglas, Kelly Brown. *THE BLACK CHRIST*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994 (134 pages, \$12.95).

A useful review of the history of the Black Christ with the beginnings of a womanist theology on this and related themes.

Eck, Diana L. *ENCOUNTERING GOD: A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY FROM BOZEMAN TO BANARAS*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993 (266 pages, \$24).

A seamless read, incorporating personal experience, historical and theological data, and a riveting, life-long encounter with other faith traditions.

Erickson, Victoria Lee. *WHEN SILENCE SPEAKS: FEMINISM, SOCIAL THEORY, AND RELIGION*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993 (219 pages, \$17).

An initial step toward a feminist sociology of religion, which leaves the reader wanting more.

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. *RIGHTEOUS DISCONTENT: THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN THE BLACK BAPTIST CHURCH, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993 (306 pages, \$34.95).

Black church women were second to none in their insistence on human rights, their champi-

oning of justice. Nannie Helen Burroughs and company led "a tireless crusade against worldliness, ignorance, and indifference..." A stellar book, a gratifying read.

Isasi-Diaz, Ada Maria. *EN LA LUCHA/IN THE STRUGGLE: A HISPANIC WOMEN'S LIBERATION THEOLOGY*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993 (226 pages, \$13).

Written with Ada's characteristic clarity, this is essential reading to understand the unique contribution of Hispanic women to the whole field of theology.

Jung, Patricia Beattie and Ralph F. Smith. *HETEROSEXISM: AN ETHICAL CHALLENGE*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994 (234 pages, \$18.95).

This is a helpful way of reframing the argument so as to invite more discussion by those who see homosexuality as a problem.

Kabilsingh, Chatsumarn. *THAI WOMEN IN BUDDHISM*. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1991 (113 pages, \$12).

This Asian feminist perspective on Buddhism offers unique insights into the discrimination nuns and other Buddhist women face.

Keller, Rosemary Skinner, editor. *SPIRITUALITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: VOCATIONAL VISION OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED METHODIST TRADITION*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993 (336 pages, \$18.95).

What a proud tradition of women who coupled their faith with concrete, often controversial social action. Women from history and contemporary writers highlight their memories which form a firm foundation from which to respond to conservative Christian attacks.

Kitzinger, Celia and Rachel Perkins. *CHANGING OUR MINDS: LESBIAN FEMINISM AND PSYCHOLOGY*. New York: New York University Press, 1993 (216 pages, \$14.95).

A tough argument against psychology as a whole, including feminist therapy, suggesting that it does not function in the best interests of lesbian women. Controversial and challenging.

LaCugna, Catherine Mowry, editor. *FREEING THEOLOGY: THE ESSENTIALS OF THEOLOGY IN FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco (266 pages, \$18).

Following the foundational work of Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Rosemary Radford Ruether and other pioneers, ten Roman Catholic theologians survey the changes in theology as women's voices are begun to be taken seriously.

Lerner, Gerda. *THE CREATION OF FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS: FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO EIGHTEEN-SEVENTY*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993 (395 pages, \$27.50).

This opus covers 1200 years of women's unheralded and usually unappreciated shaping of western culture.

MacKinnon, Catherine A. *ONLY WORDS*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993 (152 pages, \$14.95).

With the 1st and 14th Amendments seemingly in conflict, MacKinnon provides a challenging solution.

Meehan, Bridget Mary. *DELIGHTING IN THE FEMININE DIVINE*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed and Ward, 1994 (142 pages, \$9.95).

Exercises to internalize and externalize female language and imagery about the divine. A good starting point for those who may not be convinced.

Members of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession of the American Academy of Religion. *GUIDE TO THE PERPLEXING: A SURVIVAL MANUAL FOR WOMEN IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992 (106 pages, \$14.95).

If you are teaching in the religious academy, or are a graduate student in religion, get this excellent "inside" story of how things work, how they should work, and how to get along, indeed to thrive, in the meantime. A book whose time has more than come. {Editor's note: Kudos to the Committee.}

Morris, Jenny. *PRIDE AGAINST PREJUDICE: TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES TO DISABILITY*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1991 (208 pages, \$12.95).

A book that does what it says it will do. Readers are hard pressed to go away from this without a new, more inclusive, feminist perspective on people with disabilities.

Schottroff, Luise. *LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE: FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991 (208 pages, \$17.99).

A social-historical look at Christian scripture with emphasis on all that women did to "let the oppressed go free," themselves included. Important for U.S. audiences to learn from one of Germany's most important scholars.

# WATER Honored for Outstanding Service

LEAP, the Life Experiences Activities Program of the Greater Washington DC area, recently presented WATER with an award for outstanding service through our "In a Different Style" project.

The award recognizes our efforts to provide practical training and support for women and men who are differently abled. We work with LEAP participants to develop their job skills, self-esteem and abilities to cope in an office environment.

This newsletter was bulk-mailed to you by people in the LEAP program.

The handsome plaque depicted with this article was awarded at a breakfast ceremony at which Mary Hunt, Diann Neu and then-trainee Lourdes Batista (since "graduated" from WATER's tutelage) were guests of honor. Lourdes, from the Dominican Republic, gained office experience at a rapid pace.

We are grateful to LEAP for the citation, in which we take deep pride and pleasure.



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