

Jan 1979

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# women and religion

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A Guide for Sponsoring an Introductory Conference on the  
1977 UUA General Assembly Women and Religion Resolution

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By: The UUA Women and Religion Committee

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## WAITING

by the Rev. Ms. Leslie Arden Westbrook  
UUA Minister for Women and Religion

Delivered at the 1978 UUA General Assembly  
Women and Religion Hearing

I have had a dream over the last couple of years, a dream of waiting. The setting of the dream is not Arlington Street Church, is not Jacksonville, Florida, is not the Unitarian Universalist Association--the three places I have served as minister. It is none of these places and yet it is all of these places. It is true my dream takes place in a church. But it also takes place in me. It is a dream of dominance and submission, of power and powerlessness, of excitement, expectation, disappointment, and anger. It is a dream about one woman and many women.

I want to invite you into the haze-filled, muffled world of my dream. People here move slowly. Their faces are not clear. Some have no faces. Instead certain qualities or traits stand out in almost grotesque fashion: the clothes a priest wears, the mustiness of a room, the patterns of light and dark as light filters in from high windows. Feelings surge through my dream and fill not only me but the room in which I move.

From somewhere through the haze a priest approaches me, a minister, a man who owns and works in the church. I know him not by his face. I know him by the detail of his robes. They brush the floor as he walks. He invites me to conduct a worship service for the church and I am excited! Yet, on examining the order of service, a long formal almost pretentious sheet of paper, I realize that I must find my place in the order of service; that I am not to conduct the full service, the sacred communion; that there is only one place that I, as a woman, can participate. I can write the sermon.

In this church, it is men with their long colorful skirts who officiate at the sacred gatherings of the religious community. It is men who swing the incense bulbs, light the candles, read the sacred texts, and say the prayers of petition and thanksgiving.

On examining the order of service, I search for a part that I can play, the part of the service that I can take responsibility for. Remember, no one has told me that I am restricted. I do it to myself. I vow that I will write the best sermon that I can--that it will be filled with personal testimony, written with intensity, and delivered with all the powers of persuasion I can muster. I struggle with my sermon. It is a statement of my religious convictions, of my spiritual journey.

On arriving at the church, I am ushered into a small waiting room. The room has no windows, is tall and dark. Its walls stand erect about me. I wait as I am told. There will be a knock on the door when my time in the service comes. I wait alone holding tightly to my sermon. There is no knock.

Finally, after what seems an interminably long time, I open the door and look out. As I do, I see the last of the church members leaving the chapel. The service is over. The community has worshipped and slipped away. I awake from my dream aghast.

The themes woven throughout my dream live with me daily as a woman. They live in many women.

What are the themes of my dream? Can you identify with them? Waiting, waiting for others. Waiting for a knock on the door, for acknowledgement, for permission to be. Accepting limits for myself, limits I simply know, things that I can and cannot do simply because I am a woman. The handing over of power. The young woman in my dream hands over to the priest the power to call her into the service. Feelings of helplessness, dependency, and anger result when we hand over to others power over our own lives.

As women we were taught to let others define our needs, describe our aspirations, give us our identities. Learning to create our own identities is a difficult process. We need now to have a religious perspective of our own. We need to see our religious institution respond to the new found identities that we have as religious women.

The task before us is enormous, but women are tired of waiting for a knock on the door. We are growing, and our religious institution must grow with us. The time for change has come.

## WOMEN AND RELIGION

WHEREAS, a principle of the Unitarian Universalist Association is to "affirm, defend, and promote the supreme worth and dignity of every human personality, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships"; and

WHEREAS, great strides have been taken to affirm this principle within our denomination; and

WHEREAS, some models of human relationships arising from religious myths, historical materials, and other teachings still create and perpetuate attitudes that cause women everywhere to be overlooked and undervalued; and

WHEREAS, children, youth and adults internalize and act on these cultural models, thereby tending to limit their sense of self-worth and dignity;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the 1977 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association calls upon all Unitarian Universalists to examine carefully their own religious beliefs and the extent to which these beliefs influence sex-role stereotypes within their own families; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly urges the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association to encourage the Unitarian Universalist Association administrative officers and staff, the religious leaders within societies, the Unitarian Universalist theological schools, the directors of related organizations, and the planners of seminars and conferences, to make every effort to: (a) put traditional assumptions and language in perspective, and (b) avoid sexist assumptions and language in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly urges the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association to send copies of this resolution to other denominations examining sexism inherent in religious literature and institutions and to the International Association of Liberal Religious Women and the IARF (International Association for Religious Freedom); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly requests the Unitarian Universalist Association (a) to join with those who are encouraging others in the society to examine the relationship between religious and cultural attitudes toward women, and (b) to send a representative and resource materials to associations appropriate to furthering the above goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the General Assembly requests the President of the UUA to report annually on progress in implementing this resolution.

The above resolution was passed unanimously.

*Ithaca, NY 1977*

## A Guide for Developing a Women and Religion Event

by Billie Drew

This guide describes how the 1977-78 Lexington, Massachusetts-based UUA Presidential Task Force on Women and Religion designed and executed a one-day event which focussed on the Women and Religion resolution. It is offered in the hopes it will inspire you to create a Women and Religion event of your own.

Our process was smooth and exciting: we discovered a lot about ourselves, we clarified our opinions, and we learned and assessed each other's life experiences so that we could efficiently utilize each other's leadership abilities. We wanted something from our conference attendees; hopefully, they would receive something of value from us. Spending time together with the common goal of staging an event that would give us information that we could, in turn, give to the denomination, helped to generate enthusiasm and momentum beyond the event itself. We developed the commitment within our group to implement the resolution.

### In a Nutshell

In planning and executing our Women and Religion event, we followed some traditional steps in designing a conference. We:

1. Selected a planning committee from people with a wide range of interests and from many age groups;
2. Stated our goals for the event clearly and concisely;
3. Set a date and place for our event and started initial advertising;
4. Established a tentative agenda; invited keynote speakers and special guests and established who would chair or moderate the event;
5. Finalized the schedule by establishing sub-goals for each part of the program and making sure all parts related to the overall goal of the day and established sub-schedules for some parts of the program;
6. Assigned areas of responsibility for the program and for the mechanics of conducting the event;
7. Maintained the momentum of the event, but also continuously collected as much feedback as possible through report-backs after each part of the program;
8. Conducted an evaluation after the event, established what was particularly successful and what was not and why, and included suggestions for changing less successful parts of the event; and
9. Fed back some of our evaluation to attendees during the event and produced a souvenir report after the event for the attendees.

In the rest of this guide, each of the steps listed above will be described in more detail. If you want to help in implementing the Women and Religion resolution, events such as ours will

- (1) generate specific ideas for implementation of the resolution; and
- (2) raise the consciousness of all participants, i.e. the relationship of sexism and religious mythologies will become more clear to participants.

### What Are We Going To Do And Who Are 'We'?

In December, 1977, I was asked by UUA President Paul N. Carnes to convene an ad hoc committee of UU women who would deal with the Women and Religion resolution. He requested two specific things:

- (1) ideas of how the UUA can implement the resolution;
- (2) participation at the local level and district level in exploring the meaning of the resolution and disseminating it.

President Carnes wanted a report from our committee detailing ideas and actions, past or contemplated, by April 1, 1978. It seemed that a conference or event would indeed serve these dual purposes: grassroots involvement in implementation of the resolution, and fertile, creative thinking about how it can be implemented.

It has been my experience that it is important to have a planning committee with as wide a base of participation as possible. The wider the base, the more potential you have to attract an even larger audience for your event. I culled names of individuals from eastern Massachusetts from the Women and Religion Task Force interest sheets signed at the 1977 UUA General Assembly. With only a general idea of how I would proceed, I spent most of January calling and writing follow-up letters to people who would work on this project. Many individuals agreed to be on the planning committee, especially when they knew the time frame for their participation and their commitment. When you know the extent of the time that you are asked to dedicate, you can more easily make a decision to be involved. There were fifteen of us on the ad hoc planning committee.

Since we had a due date for our report to President Carnes, we had to set the date of our event early enough to leave sufficient time to process the results. From the inception, we were cautious to call what was to happen an "event", to avoid possible negative feelings about a "conference". We did not want people to feel that they were coming to 'just another conference'. This gathering was important! If we needed a month to process the results, we found that we had a little less than a month to plan and hold our event. The tight dates helped to expedite the planning process.

### Spreading The Word

Even before we had our first official ad hoc committee meeting, we had a title (Women and Religion), goals (to implement the resolution), and a focus ("to examine the W & R resolution and its significance to us--individuals, families, churches and communities--and what we can do to implement it"). We requested the use of the church for our event, thus establishing a date: February 25, 1978. When we had our first area committee meeting, we had already mailed out a flyer (sample enclosed) to all the churches in the Massachusetts Bay District, and to many other churches in our immediate New England neighborhood outside of the district.

We did not wait to decide specifically what we were going to do at our event before sending out publicity. We planned the tentative schedule of the day, while the word was spreading that something was happening in our district.

### Who Does What

As a committee, we knew that the purpose of our event was to explore and expand individuals' understanding of the resolution. We hoped that participants would begin to develop specific programs of art and worship, that they would begin to study the relationship of language and sexism, that they would reevaluate sex-role stereotypes in their homes and churches, and that they would begin to examine religious myths and effects of those myths on their own development. We worked out a tentative schedule:

9:30-10:00	Coffee and registration
10:00	Circle seating arrangement
10:00-10:05	Opening, welcome, explanation of goal of the day
10:05-10:30	What is happening to women:
	a. In secular society
	b. In religious society
	c. In our denomination
10:30	A personal religious experience with visual illustration
10:45	Break into groups to explore and relate personal realities and religious myths
12:00-12:30	Report of groups
12:30- 1:00	Lunch
1:00- 1:10	Setting of UUA and religious myths
1:10- 2:30	Workshops:
	a. Religious beliefs and sex-role stereotypes in family and church
	b. Language
	c. Art and Worship
2:30- 2:45	Summary of Workshops
2:45	Introduction to Meditation
2:50- 3:30	Meditation

We decided who to ask to be keynote speakers and who personally to invite to the event. We then thought of responsibilities we would each take. The committee agreed that one person should chair or moderate the event, being sure to keep the program moving (dedicated clock watching). We also had to make sure that we had definite goals for each segment of the program.

### Finalizing The Schedule

We carefully finalized our schedule. We changed the tentative schedule keeping in mind:

- (1) the time it takes to get from one part of the church to another;
- (2) the personal needs of the attendees;
- (3) our desire to end the conference on time; and
- (4) our plans to relate each part of the program to the overall goals of the day.

Our goal for the morning was to work toward a better understanding of the resolution, and explore how it addressed our personal experience. Our

goal for the afternoon was to determine how we could personally implement the resolution at the district, local and continental levels. We also decided that we wanted an egalitarian structure. We, therefore, planned to have people sit in a circle on the same plane in the large and small meeting rooms, and we planned to make the leadership for each part of the day as diverse and varied as possible.

Specific goals for each part of the schedule were developed:

- Opening - To help people feel personally involved in the conference topics and process;
- What's Happening to Women - To provide a broad social and religious background against which to analyze the resolution;
- From Myth to Reality - To help people think about how myths influence their behavior and thus control them; to explore the significance of myths in determining the quality of one's spirituality;
- Small Group Discussions - To help people explore and share how their personal lives are influenced by religious myths;
- Report-back from Small Groups - To share with the total group what people have been discussing in the small groups;
- Where in the Myth are We - To introduce the workshops on implementation; to reiterate the importance of religious myths in shaping human behavior;
- Workshops - To explore the 'resolves' of the resolution; to respond to the needs of attendees to return home with specific ideas for action in implementing the resolution. (In fact, one of the afternoon workshops produced the outline of our final report to President Carnes.)
- Summary of Workshops - To help participants feel a part of the large group; to provide the opportunity for all to contribute to the large group discussion;
- Brainstorming - To generate ideas for implementation of the Women and Religion resolution;

AGENDAWOMEN AND RELIGIONFEBRUARY 25, 1978

- 9:30 - 10:00 Coffee and registration - Parker Hall
- 10:00 Circle seating arrangement - upstairs Vestry
- 10:00 - 10:05 Opening in Vestry. Welcome by Billie Drew.  
Explanation of goal of the day.
- 10:05 - 10:20 What is Happening to Women:
- a. In Secular Society - Sue Holton
  - b. In Religious Society - Elizabeth Alcaide
  - c. In our Denomination - Doris Pullen
- 10:20 - 10:45 Women & Religion, The Resolution From Myth to Reality  
- Lucille Schuck
- 10:45 - 12:00 Small groups to explore and share personal realities and religious myths.
- 10:50-10:55 Write down the myths you were exposed to as you grew up (Key words OK)
- 10:55-11:45 Discussion:
- a. Share myths
  - b. Focus on religion
    1. Whether or not there was a common theme of the related myths
    2. Do they represent your present situation
    3. How do they legitimize a group's form and structure (i.e., government)
    4. How would they strengthen a group's values, beliefs and way of life.
- 12:00 - 12:30 Report of groups - Vestry
- 12:30 - 1:00 Lunch - Beverages supplied - Parker Hall
- 1:00 - 1:10 Where In the Myth Are We? - Billie Drew
- 1:10 - 2:25 Workshops
- a. Resolve #1. How can the UUA help families explore the connection between the male-female relationships as portrayed in religious literature and as practiced in their own families? - Jean Zoerheide
  - b. Resolve #2. How can various individuals and departments within the UUA put traditional male-oriented assumptions and language into historic perspectives and what kind of guidelines can we suggest to the UUA to assure that language and assumptions referring to both men and women will be inclusive of both?  
- Sue Holton
  - c. Resolves #3 & 4. How can the "Women and Religion" resolution be publicized and implementation promoted in the church, the district, across the continent and in the larger community? Who--organizations and individuals both in the secular and religious communities--should receive copies of the W & R resolution? What should an accompanying letter say?  
- Edith Fletcher

AGENDA (continued)

2:25 - 2:40 Summary of Workshops  
 2:40 - 2:50 Brainstorming Implementation - Sue Holton  
 2:50 - 2:55 Introduction to Meditation - Arlayne Peterson  
 2:55 - 3:30 Meditation and Worship (Music for part of the  
 Meditation and Worship by Steve Vorenberg)

- Meditation/Worship - To close the day with a feeling of being unified as women; to focus on our spirituality. (Meditation was with silence and music; worship, through prose, poetry and art, evoked expressions of the meaningfulness of the day. We closed with a hymn.)

Speakers and group facilitators were given the freedom to develop their segments of the schedule in their own personal style.

## Nuts, Bolts and Safety Pins

As well as taking a share of the responsibility for the programming for our event, all the committee members took responsibility for one or more mechanical or administrative details. Specific tasks included:

- (1) decorations and definition posters;
- (2) chairs, tables, set up areas, etc;
- (3) beverage makers and servers;
- (4) child care persons;
- (5) photographer;
- (6) resource materials (copying necessary materials and providing a resource literature table);
- (7) registration persons, name tags and greeters;
- (8) treasurer;
- (9) small group discussion facilitators;
- (10) afternoon workshop facilitators;
- (11) brainstorming facilitator;
- (12) meditation/worship facilitator;
- (13) clean-up persons.

With so many jobs available, we had to go outside the committee for some assistance and double up on some jobs. Going outside the committee increased participation and interest in the event.

## THE BIG EVENT

Although we tried to stress pre-registration, the committee did not know whether to expect twenty-five (the actual number of pre-registrants) or three hundred people. We were all very anxious that morning. Fifty-five people came from nineteen of the area churches, a good size group.

As always, newsprint proved to be one of the most valuable assets of the day. We recorded the small group discussions in the morning, the workshop discussion, and the brainstorming session all on newsprint. Art, poetry, and prose from the meditation/worship were written or drawn on 8½ X 11 inch paper.

# WOMEN AND RELIGION

an all-day event at First Parish in Lexington  
4 Harrington Rd. Lexington MA.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, '78 <sup>9:30 AM</sup> <sup>to 3:30 PM</sup>

to examine the Women and Religion resolution  
passed at the '77 GA, and its significance  
to us (individuals, families, churches, and  
communities) and what we can do to implement  
it. Come & bring your lunch.



send registration to Billie H Drew, 549 Marrett Rd.  
Lexington, MA 02173 or call 862-5062 to make  
reservations. There will be a \$1.50 registration  
fee to cover publicity, duplication, and beverages.

name \_\_\_\_\_ address \_\_\_\_\_  
phone \_\_\_\_\_ society \_\_\_\_\_

Later these pages were collected and made into a souvenir brochure mailed to all participants.

#### FOLLOW-THROUGH AND EVALUATION

Since the goals of our area ad hoc committee were intimately tied to the goals of our event, a rigorous evaluation and follow-through was performed. Often, once an event has taken place, a group feels their work is completed. They then overlook one of the most important parts of the conference process: evaluation. Although we had only met officially as a committee three times before the event, we held six meetings to process and evaluate the materials which came from the event, to prepare our report to President Carnes, and to prepare souvenir brochures for the participants of the event.

As we evaluated, reviewed and shaped the material we gathered at the conference, we found our insights deepening and new ideas surfacing. We added to and expanded some of the ideas fed to us from the conference and produced a 13-page list of implementation suggestions for President Carnes, dividing the recommendations into the specific resolves of the resolution and indicating the level at which they can be implemented: UUA, district, societies, and the larger religious community beyond the UUA. We also prepared a 10-page souvenir brochure for participants.

#### AND NOW IT'S UP TO YOU

You will not be able to duplicate the program design of the 1977-78 Massachusetts Bay Women and Religion Task Force. Nor do you want to simply recreate what another group has done. The presentations given in 1977 are now outdated--and they were too personal to share with people in other districts. The presentations you prepare for your event will have to be timely, and they will have to be the stories of the women who tell them. The worship, too, should reflect the needs and the ideas of your own planning committee. Now, it's up to you.

Good luck with your program.

Billie H. Drew  
Lexington, Massachusetts  
January 1979

January, 1979

A Women and Religion

COMMUNICATION MODEL

By Joan Mendelsohn

(At the turn of the New Year, Joan Mendelsohn sat, snow-bound, in Chicago, waiting for the moving van that would move her and Jack's belongings to their new home in New England. Because of her disrupted schedule, the following material is from a phone conversation I had with her, in lieu of the written statement she has hoped to include in this packet. Leslie)

The first task I faced as convenor of the 1977-78 Central Mid-West District Women and Religion Task Force was to gather people together. I wanted to draw women together from as many different kinds of Unitarian Universalist societies as possible. I selected fifteen women to serve on the task force. They were from inner city, suburban, and rural UU societies in the district. They all held in common a deep concern for the Women and Religion resolution and its implementation.

By the time we held our first meeting in January, we faced a spring time schedule similar to the one the UUA Women and Religion Committee is asking all district Women and Religion chairpersons to follow this year: committee formed in January, district event organized and held in February, March and April, and report completed and submitted in May.

The Women and Religion Task Force held five meetings between January and April. At the initial meeting in January, we discussed our task, worked out a time schedule, and asked each woman to return to her home UU society and consult with other women about the resolution. The Task Force decided it was important to include every UU society in the district in our process, however, and so we sent a letter and a copy of the Women and Religion brochure to every society in the district (to ministers, directors of religious education, board presidents, and alliance presidents). In the letter we asked the leadership of the society to draw together a cross-section of women to analyze the resolution and recommend action on it. A series of questions to help them begin to think about the meaning of the resolution was included in the letter. We asked for a response from them, in written form, by the end of March. A copy of the letter is attached.

Women and Religion  
COMMUNICATION MODEL  
by Joan Mendelsohn

Fourteen societies responded each indicating that this subject was the focus of a variety of gatherings. A great deal of good discussion was stimulated and we received the results of brainstorming and consciousness-raising meetings. The Women and Religion Task Force culled together the various suggestions and ideas for implementation of the resolution. It was an enormous task. If we were faced with this task again, most of us think it would be better if we suggested headings or areas in which suggestions might be made, so that our task of summarizing reports would be simplified. Areas or headings which we used in our final report were: (1) language; (2) sexuality; (3) education/sexism; (4) history/herstory; and (5) leadership.

We were proud to send the results of our work to the President of the Unitarian Universalist Association. A quote from that report gives a flavor of the inspiration and hope we felt while fulfilling our task:

"The letters we received from our women were superb, an outpouring of feeling and concern and hope for new denominational and ecumenical leadership. We heard women reminding us not to forget the single, or the married, or the gay, or the old, or black and chicano among us. In short, I sense that these issues we have begun to shake up can help us crystallize our thinking and take some important actions... the women on the task force and I will be looking for more activity by the UUA."

Shalom!

The 1977 General Assembly passed a resolution on Women and Religion and asked the President of the UUA to report annually on implementation of it. I have been asked by Paul Carnes, President of the UUA, to assist in generating ideas from our district on how the denomination can best carry out the intent of this resolution. I have gathered some women in the Chicago area to help me with this task.

What we really want is a district-wide response. With this letter, we are sending you a UUA pamphlet on Women and Religion, which includes a copy of the resolution. (This mailing is going to lay leaders, ministers, RE directors, and women leaders in every CMD society.) We want your society to be aware of the resolution and urge your leadership to discuss it. Furthermore, we need your ideas on implementation within a few weeks.

To enable this process, I hope your congregation will immediately choose a leader to draw together a cross-section of women to analyze the resolution and recommend action on it. The suggestions of your society's general leadership are also welcome.

The Chicago group has been considering the following questions, among others, in its own explorations of where we are as UU religious women today--questions that may be useful to you in stimulating discussion or in leading to the development of other questions and answers:

1. What is a WOMAN? (as distinct from a man, perhaps?)
2. When did you become a WOMAN in your mind?
3. What validates you as a WOMAN?
4. What puts you down as a WOMAN?
5. What does it mean to be a religious person?
6. What does it mean to be a religious WOMAN?
7. What would you want from a religious community of WOMEN?
8. What kinds of things are you doing, personally and in your society, that you are proud of and want to share with other UU groups on this issue?
9. What does your society need in order to address the concerns of WOMEN that you cannot supply yourselves? That you want the denomination to supply?

Your people may find that they wish to continue the dialogue on these issues on a regular basis. That's great! But to meet the time constraints of reporting to the 1978 UUA General Assembly, I must have your group's thoughts and ideas by March 20, so that I can include them in the final report from our district by April 1.

Sincerely yours,

  
Joan Mendelsohn

Send your reports to me at:

1201 East 56th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1977 GENERAL ASSEMBLY WOMEN AND  
RELIGION RESOLUTION: AN AGENDA FOR US ALL

Ministry and Leadership

1. (A) Implementation of the Women and Religion Resolution should be promoted by the UUA President, Staff, Board of Trustees, District leadership and leadership in local societies.
- (B) A person should be appointed at the UUA to serve as consultant and coordinator of the work of implementation.
- (C) Commission on WOMEN AND RELIGION
2. An Affirmative Action Program for women ministers and women theological students should be developed by the UUA and the UU theological schools.
3. Conferences for settled women ministers, for women theological students, and for women lay leaders should be developed, supported and encouraged.
4. Male ministers, members of the UUMA and LREDA, and male students being interviewed by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee and Accreditation Committee should be educated about the relationships between religious myths and sexual stereotypes and the deleterious effects of sexist language.
5. The President should contact all UUA department heads, UUA committees and affiliated UU organizations.
6. The UUA should appoint a staff using affirmative action guidelines.
7. UU theological schools, in their curriculum, faculty and structure, should reflect the increasing number of female students, their interests, their talents and their perspectives.
8. All materials distributed through the UUA Section of the Ministry should be revised to reflect the changing population of our ministry.

Education and Program

1. Educational materials for children, youth, and adults, (including teachers and parents) should be developed.
2. A Clearinghouse on Women and Religion should be established.
3. The UU WORLD should carry stories and educational articles on the Women and Religion program.
4. A new degenderized Hymnbook should be developed.
5. Materials previously distributed by the Worship Arts Clearinghouse should be degenderized and new materials developed should be sensitive to the issue of language and sexism.
6. The UUA should design educational programs on the Women and Religion Resolution which will reach individuals and groups outside our denomination.
7. Materials on sexuality should be developed and collected, including the acceptance and celebration of women's sexuality as a part of human experience.

1977-78 Women and Religion Task Force Convenors

Drucilla Cummins, Edina, MN  
 Billie Drew, Lexington, MA  
 Marn Hogan, Hamburg, NY  
 Rosemary Matson, Berkeley, CA  
 Janet May, Willowdale, Ontario

Joan Mendelsohn, Chicago, IL  
 Janet Osborn, Port Washington, NY  
 Bea Robbins, Silver Spring, MD  
 Jody Schilling, Berkeley, CA

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST WOMEN'S FEDERATION  
25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Religious Communication

Image: A mental representation of something not actually present to the senses; a revival of previous experience or feelings.

Sign: An emblem which represents or points to an idea.

Symbol: That which stands for or suggests something else by reason of a relationship or association; also it participates in that which it suggests.

Traditional: Following or conforming to order, code or practice accepted from the past.

Myth: Derived from the Greek word "mythos" or "stories of the Gods." A story, the origin of which is forgotten, that supposedly relates to historical events as well as to Gods or divine beings, and which serves to explain some practice, belief, institution or natural phenomenon.

Worship: Literally "worth-ship," an act or attitude of courtesy and reverence paid to that which is of ultimate worth or merit.

Ritual: A form of conducting worship, especially long-time, as established by tradition or priestly prescription.

Liturgy: The rite, ceremony or form of conducting public worship; made up of a variety of elements which may include hymns, sacraments, prayer, readings, meditation, benediction, affirmation, etc.

Patriarchal: From the Latin "patri" meaning "father." Of or pertaining to the patriarch(s), that is the father, founder, ruler of a family, tribe, country, or such.

Religion and Human Dignity Resolution (UUWF)

Myths: See glossary above.

Generic language: Language which literally stands for only a portion of a genus (as humanity), but which has come to be used as a general term representing the entire genus. Particularly the use of male pronouns, nouns and derivations ("man" "he" "mankind") to stand for all human beings, including women.

Cultural model: That which serves as an example for imitation, and which derives from the beliefs, traditions and modes of a particular culture or society.

Self-worth and dignity: Having a deep inner sense that one's own self is of value and merit, and to feel that one is accorded the honor or esteem appropriate to this intrinsic value.

Image of women: A generalized idea or mental representation of the role and worth of women in general.

Unwarranted assumptions: Things or ideas taken for granted without proof, good reason or sufficient grounds.

Religious belief: A trusting assent to religious truths based on conviction and assurance; a state or habit of mind in which confidence and reliance is placed in something (or one) religious.

Religious expression: The act of representing, manifesting, symbolizing or communicating one's religious convictions and beliefs.

Sexist manner: A mode or method of doing things which by its very nature either elevates the status of one sex over the other, or degrades one of the sexes, or does both simultaneously. May be intentional or unintentional.

January 1979

## BEYOND THIS TIME

A friend and I went to Cape Cod in late April. We slept under the stars wrapped in coats, wool caps, mittens and sleeping bags--the night being clear and cold. Rising early, I walked through the scrubby woods to the beach. As always my first sight of the ocean gave me the briefest moment of total hush and then I was filled with a feeling so expansive I would not dare try to name it. It was startling and sweeping. The sand stretched out on either hand to rounding bends in the shore, the high bluff rose at my back and the ocean spread out before me--more magical, more symphonic, more exciting, personal and universal than any memory I had of her.

I was thrilled with the excitement of a centered peace, my vision felt as clear as the day, and a love swelled inside me like a child racing toward birth. Within weeks I would be going with many others to the peace demonstration at the United Nations, scheduled as the special session on disarmament began. Seabrook, slightly north and washed by these same waters would in June be the site of a possibly illegal occupation by people seeking to call attention to the dangers of nuclear power and the promise of alternative sources of energy. The delays in the ERA were an increasing and inexcusable affront to women. I sorrowed that in our humanness, so magnificent and soaring, we can still risk so divine earth and ignore the rights of her people.

This song was born as I walked there, knowing it is not enough to love--we must also protect and confront, plan and prepare, stretch our intellect with love, and work. Then only will we be able to leave an earth that is beautiful, accessible, and free of spirit, that is cherished and lovingly tended, in which all people and our children beyond us may live decent lives, granted full dignity and access to fulfillment.

At such times I feel very much a woman--a universal woman--close to the earth and to life. I want the freedom to be my most decisive and powerful self, my most spiritually centered, that I might take this trust and tend it with all my imagination and skill and love. The freedom to do this is the meaning of the Women's Movement to me.



Carolyn McDade

# Beyond This Time

Words + Music By Carolyn McDade  
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Handwritten musical score for the song "Beyond This Time". The score is written on six staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes, and chords are indicated above the staves. The lyrics are: "Al - le - lu - jah This is our time for liv - ing - En-trusted now with life of ages old - Like rain we come and go yet leave the green fields Grow - ing - our work of hands and minds to go be - yond this time Al - le - lu - jah hand in hand my friend Al - le - lu - jah hand in hand my friend hand in hand - hand in hand -".

Chorus: Allelujah, this is our time for living  
Entrusted now with life of ages old  
Like rain, we come and go yet leave  
the green fields growing  
Our work of hands and minds to go  
beyond this time

Allelujah, hand in hand, my friend  
Allelujah, hand in hand  
Allelujah, hand in hand, my friend  
Hand in hand, hand in hand

Allelujah, side by side, my friend . . .

Allelujah, to dance and sing, my friend . . .

STATEMENTS ON THE MEANING OF THE RESOLUTION, WOMEN AND RELIGION

Theologians in Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups have initiated a search for the roots of patriarchy in their traditions with the purpose of encouraging the expression of women's spirituality. They do this in the belief that women and men will come into new relationships based on equality, and their lives will be made whole by the incorporation of women's values and experiences into their religious traditions.

Unitarian Universalists are now undertaking such a search with the passage of a resolution on Women and Religion. Our action is unique in being initiated by a group of lay women and in calling on an institution with its affiliates and members to question their myths.

Member of the Lexington, MA Committee, Jean Zoerheide

In the "Women and Religion" resolution we are called upon to go beyond the requirements of legalistic equality to examine what goes on in our heads that makes sexism so much a part of what we consider "normal" in human relationships. We are asked to examine our traditions, our mythology, and our language which have set limits on our images of self worth and dignity.

Since we believe that the Women's Movement is the most important change that has taken place in our society in the last century, and since I believe that it is in trouble and needs support now when it appears to have made so many gains, I can assure you that we will implement this resolution with eagerness.

Paul Carnes, President UUA, UU WORLD, July 15, 1977

In its many forms, a myth serves to express and strengthen a group's values, beliefs and way of life, legitimizing its forms and structures, and presenting the world as that group thinks, often subconsciously, the world is or should be.

Lindsey Bates, Meadville/Lombard theological student,  
June 15, 1977, Kyriokos

We Unitarian Universalists have a special problem in that our frequent denial of myth causes us to hide our myths more deeply within ourselves...We have to dig up our myths before we can deal with them. After finding out what they are, we can begin to find out what emotional and functional significance they have in our lives and begin the task of sifting out and discarding those that keep us from touching our world. The question we have to face is how to fill the space left by discarding the myth so that it doesn't retain its emotional hold on us. I see that as the task of religion.

Kate Rohde, Meadville/Lombard theological student,  
Kyriokos

Resolutions alone will not excise the sexist myths that envelop our lives and religious institutions. The theological journey "Beyond God the Father" is tougher than many Unitarian Universalists, female and male, comfortably embrace. The "Women and Religion" resolution would move us into deeper waters, ecumenical and secular. It calls upon our denominational leadership to lead, religiously. It encourages all of us to be spiritually transformed.

Jack Mendelsohn, minister, First Church, Chicago, IL.

## WOMEN AND RELIGION

## An Introductory Reading List

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Boulding, Elise. The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time. 1976 Westview Press \$24.75 An essential corrective for a distorted one-dimensional view of history.

Janeway, Elizabeth. Man's World Woman's Place. 1971 Delta \$2.65 Paper. A Study of Social Mythology.

Miller, Jean B. Towards a New Psychology of Women. 1976 Beacon Press \$9.95.

Myths Women Live By. Kyriokos. A Journal of Unitarian Universalists Women's Federation. Vol. 1, No. 3, UU World Supplement, June 15, 1977.

WOMEN AND RELIGION

Annual Journal of the Universalist Historical Society. "Olympia Brown," V. (1963) A special issue devoted to Olympia Brown, the first woman ordained to the Universalist ministry (1863).

A Study Action Guide for Women. Women's Caravan, 67 Newbury St., Boston, MA 02116 \$3.50. A collection of articles for workshop and discussion groups.

Collins, Sheila. A Different Heaven and Earth. Judson Press \$8.95 An Overview of Women's Studies in Religion.

Daly, Mary. Beyond God The Father. 1973 Beacon Press \$3.95 Paper. Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation.

Daly, Mary. Gyn/Ecology. 1978 Beacon Press. Another groundbreaking statement by one of the foremost feminist theologians of our time.

Doely, Sarah Bentley. Women's Liberation and the Church. N.Y. Association, 1970. Essays highlighting the role of women in the church.

Fuller, Margaret. Woman in the Nineteenth Century. New York: W.W. Norton, 1971 Paperback \$2.25. The first feminist book published in America in 1855 by Margaret Fuller, leading Unitarian Transcendentalist.

Hageman, Alice L., Ed., in collaboration with The Women's Caucus of Harvard Divinity School. Sexist Religion and Women in the Church: No More Silence! New York: Association Press, 1974. A dozen essays by various authors. Paperback \$5.95.

Hitchings, Catherine F. "Universalist and Unitarian Women Ministers," The Journal of the Universalist Historical Society, (1975). A biographical dictionary.

Hunter, Edith F. Sophia Lyon Fahs: A Biography. Boston: Beacon Press 1966. Hardcover \$5.95. Pioneer in liberal religious education.

Neuman, Erich. The Great Mother. Princeton, 1955. The history and meaning of the Female Goddess figure.

Ochs, Carol. Behind the Sex of God. 1977 Beacon Press \$9.95.

Patai, Raphael. The Hebrew Goddess. 1978 Avon Books Paper \$2.95.

Reuther, Rosemary. Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in Jewish and Christian Traditions. 1974 Simon and Schuster \$3.95 Paper. Eleven theologians treat the subject of women as seen by theology.

Reuther, Rosemary and Eugene Bianchi. From Machismo to Mutuality. Paulist Press, 1976.

Russell, Letty M. Human Liberation in a Feminist Perspective - A Theology. 1974. Westminster Press \$3.95 Paper. A contribution to theology of human liberation - written out of a specific involvement and a conscious engagement in the liberation of women.

The Woman's Bible. 1974 \$6.95. A Study Guide to the Woman's Bible. 1975. \$3.50. Coalition Task Force on Women and Religion, 4759-15th Ave. N.E., Seattle, Washington 98105. Reissue of two volumes (in one) of the commentaries on parts of the Bible published by a women's "revising committee" in 1890's. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Unitarian and feminist, was a member of the committee.

SIGNS. Journal of Women in Culture and Society. Winter 1976. Volume 2, Number 2. University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Ave., Chicago, IL 60637 \$4.00. Special section on Women and Religion.

Stone, Merlin. When God Was a Woman. 1976 Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch Paper \$3.95. Stimulating and controversial.

Thompson, Mary Lou, Ed. Voices of the New Feminism. Boston: Beacon Press, 1978. Available in paperback. Sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.

#### FICTION

Atwood, Margaret. Surfacing, 1972. Simon and Schuster. Reviewed in SIGNS (see above) - Volume 2, Number 2 - as an example of a woman's spiritual quest novel.



# NETWORK

AURELIA HENRY REINHARDT PROFESSORSHIP

Editor: Diana Peters  
for the Core Committee  
October 1, 1978

Hello everyone! In this, our 2nd edition of the NETWORK Newsletter we are introducing two pieces of excellent material for your use.

"A REQUEST  
FOR BALANCE"

a lively twenty minute slide show giving the history of the Thomas Starr King School for Religious Leadership and a look into its unique educational process.

Special attention is given to the presence of women in the school and the increasing awareness for the need for female faculty in theological education.

"A Request for Balance" is an excellent introduction to Starr King School and to the Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Professorship capital fund drive.

Used as a program it would provide the opportunity for discussion of women's roles in religion.

Description of slides:  
sequence of UUA churches  
" of Dr. Reinhardt  
" of Thomas Starr King  
" of Starr King School  
" of alternative ministries  
with nature scenes used as transitions.

Slide show rental fee -  
\$5 plus return postage

"A BEGINNING... OF  
AWARENESS OF WOMEN AND  
RELIGION" is the title of  
the new program packet  
written by the Reinhardt  
Core Committee's educative  
group.

Beautifully designed and  
illustrated, the packet  
contains group participa-  
tion ideas of varying  
format, and resources for  
worship services. The  
materials are useful for  
any UU church group inter-  
ested in programs on women  
and religion, such as UUWF  
units, social concerns  
committees, denominational  
affairs committees, etc.

Packet purchase price -  
\$2.50 plus postage (\$1.20)

As their titles imply, both of these offerings are fine ways to begin the process of implementing the 1977 General Assembly Resolution on Women and Religion.

Order from Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Professorship, 2441 Le Conte Ave., Berkeley, CA 94709.