

# REACHING SIDEWAYS

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND IDEAS

Compiled by the Joseph Priestley District Women and Religion Committee

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Volume III, No. 3

June 1984

## VOICE FROM THE CHAIR

The Women/Religion Committee of the Joseph Priestley District met on May 19th to begin plans for the coming year. Thanks and appreciation go to Mary Ann Kelley for her guidance of the committee, as chair; to Sara Best, as editor of Reaching Sideways, to Marilyn Moors for her work with the development of the Networking Project; to Grace Davis, as Secretary, and to Grace Davis and Jean Zoerheide for chairing the Spring Conferences; and to all of the W/R Committee people who have worked this year for the benefit of UU women of the district.

The committee at this meeting named me as the new chair. Just a few words of introduction are in order.

I am: Kay Cox (Katherine C. Cox)  
476 Kerr Lane  
Springfield, PA 19064  
(215) 543-4248

Church Affiliation: Unitarian Universalist Church  
of Delaware County, PA.

Trustee from Delaware Valley Area Council to the  
Joseph Priestley District Board

President: Women's Group of UUCDC

Many of the committee members will continue their interest and support of committee and task force assignments. It is my hope, however, that we will have broad representation on the committee from all areas of the district. Do give your support in whatever ways that are of interest to you.

Plans are being made for a Fall Women's Retreat October 26, 27, 28. Do plan to participate. If you are going to the General Assembly in Columbus,

Ohio please look me up so that we can get to know one another. Also, drop me a line if you are interested in working on a committee or task force.

The Continental W/R Committee was given the assignment of writing its own Charge and Purpose. A task force drew up an outline for committee consideration from which evolved the following Charge and Purpose, to be presented to the UUA Board for its approval. I would be interested in your reaction to this statement.

THE CHARGE AND PURPOSE  
OF THE  
CONTINENTAL WOMEN AND RELIGION COMMITTEE, UUA

In order to implement the 1977 Women and Religion Resolutions, the UUA Board of Trustees has appointed the Continental Women and Religion Committee.

The members of the committee are chosen from the constituency of the UUA at large, as well as, from Liberal Religious Education Directors Association, Ministerial Sisterhood Unitarian Universalist, the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation.

The Women and Religion Committee shall

Identify and name sexist patterns of thought, belief, behavior and practice which degrade the spirit, mind and body of women, men and child within the UU association;

explore and implement methods to reform and transform these patterns;

Create and promote programs, materials, networks and other support services that will offer hope and direction toward liberating ways of thinking, being and becoming;

enable and inspire groups and individuals to develop their own bold and courageous responses to sexist thought and practices;

challenge the women, men and children of our denomination truly to affirm, defend and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and thus to change the structures and the distribution of power;

report to the UUA Board of Trustees and elicit from them response, counsel, and support. -The Continental W/R Committee

Rev. Jane Bramadat, Marinel Hartogensis, Corinne LeBovit, Janet Lutz-Smith, Rev. Linnea Pearson, Betty Sprague, Rev. Tracey De Vol, Chair

## OPTIONS FOR CHANNING'S SISTERS

William Ellery Channing, long acclaimed the foremost prophet of Religious Liberalism, chose exodus. He and his associates and followers formed a new denomination when they felt it was impossible to continue to accept Calvinism with its doctrines of original sin, election and predestination.

What are the options available for Channing's Sisters who now feel it is impossible to continue to accept the Unitarian Universalist version of patriarchal religion both in ideology and in practice? I shall make no attempt to list options but merely give some background and raise the question for readers of REACHING SIDEWAYS.

Conrad Wright, in "Three Prophets of Religious Liberalism, Channing, Emerson and Parker," tells us that the most persistent and irreconcilable disagreement between liberal ministers and orthodox ministers concerned the interpretation of the Scriptures in regard to "the nature of man and his destiny," (the underlining is mine and there is no doubt that "man" as used in this instance refers to the human male).

"Channing took the liberal wing of New England congregationalism, fastened a name to it, and forced it to overcome its reluctance to recognize that it had become, willy-nilly, a separate and distinct Christian body," Wright tells us.

To say that the new denomination was and continued to be patriarchal, meaning male centered and male controlled, is an understatement. Over the years, in song and in text, in examples and language, "man," the human male, became central to Unitarian beliefs. "Manism" (my word) masquerading under the guise of "Humanism" proclaimed that, "The proper study of man is man" and the music score was "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men."

Women accompanied the men in exodus, apparently believing that in this instance the term "man" was generic and that Channing's concern for the nature and destiny of man also included a concern for women's nature and destiny as well. Few women, aside from Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the revising committee who produced "The Woman's Bible," read the Scripture critically to see specifically what they said about woman's nature. Women believed what they were told by those in the pulpit and seldom explored carefully the actuality of their own experience.

Women in the denomination failed, for the most part, to note that Channing and his associates and those who followed, "sharpening the cleavage between themselves and their orthodox neighbors both theologically and ecclesiastically" did nothing, made no attempt, to do anything that would indicate that they questioned, denied or disassociated the new denomination from the negative and demeaning image of women expressed

either implicitly or explicitly in the Scriptures and in the statements of theologians throughout time.

For the most part, Channing's Sisters have remained "the other," blindly loyal and supportive, failing to realize that without specific and widely circulated repudiation of Scriptural sexism and of the sexism of the prophets and theologians of all patriarchal faiths, the denomination remains essentially orthodox and patriarchal. Indeed, "Humanism may be patriarchy's last stand," as Marjorie Leaming tells us, but patriarchal it is and the presence of women in the pulpit and on the staff on the hill does not alter that fact.

In his famous sermon given in Baltimore, May 5, 1819, Channing said, "Our leading principle in interpreting Scripture is this, that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other books."

In recent years, feminists have been looking at the implications for women of having Scriptures written for men, in the language of men, and, beyond Channing's assertions, of having Scriptures written by men and interpreted from a patriarchal perspective. We are seeing the consequences of having men in control of the myth structure, which has been the case for the last 3,000 years or more.

One hundred and fifty eight years after Channing gave the Baltimore sermon, his sisters--feminists in congregations--called on the denomination, women and men, those in leadership and those among the laity, to examine our own and related religious traditions as deep-seated causes of discrimination and patriarchal power. The Women and Religion resolution requires a critique of patriarchal religion from a feminist perspective. It points to the fact that "models of relationships arising from religious myths, historical materials and other teachings still create and perpetuate attitudes that cause women everywhere to be overlooked and undervalued."

The resolution points to an injustice far more significant and global than Channing's issue of interpretation of the Scripture regarding the nature and destiny of the human male. It includes Scriptural content as well as interpretation. The General Assembly voted unanimously to (a) put traditional (patriarchal) assumptions and language (of the Scriptures) in perspective and (b) avoid sexist assumptions and language in the future.

After adoption at General Assembly, the resolution was taken inside the walls of the superstructure where all resolutions go for interpretation and implementation. The deeper meaning of the resolution was not understood, or if understood, it was intentionally misinterpreted.

Institutionalized from the beginning, it was interpreted from the point of view of those in charge who place high value on status within the hierarchical system of patriarchy. Implementation became an effort to get more women into the institutional hierarchy rather than to recast the limited perspective (worldview) of Patriarchy itself. This resulted in interpretation and implementation that entirely reversed the concept being promoted by the resolution.

The interpretation by the leadership, however misleading, becomes the official truth for the majority. Others seldom make an effort to examine resolutions for themselves. Why do so? The interpretation by those in charge stands regardless of attempts by those in the laity to revise.

There are those who say that the resolution has been effective. Indeed, since its adoption in 1977, there has been a flurry around so-called "women's issues." The Women and Religion Business Resolution became, on the continental level, a catch-all for actions which, except for emphasis on sexist language, rightly should have been taken as implementation of numerous other resolutions, particularly those concerned with obtaining equal rights and opportunities for those women attempting to move into the denominational hierarchy.

The basic issue called forth by the resolution is religious patriarchy which sanctions hierarchy and domination; and legitimates and perpetuates the patriarchal family and patriarchal institutions and practices in society. Patriarchy, aside from attention to language that supports patriarchal thinking, has had little if any attention on the continental level. We are told that the word patriarchy is frightening to men! How long will we keep our sisters in bondage to an outmoded system of domination that demeans us all, men and women alike, rather than call that system by name?

Our hope, nay, even our expectation that the denomination would act in reponse to a resolution of this import was naive. The resolution is a frail vehicle, greatly over-rated. Women in the laity are the least powerful in the church hierarchy. Without the tools available to the leadership: Status, pulpits, pamphlets, professional organizations and the media- -all of which Channing had and the laity do not have, little will happen.

So what are the options of Channing's Sisters now? What are the options of women and men who want to move beyond the limited and biased world view of patriarchy but within the UUA?

In reflecting on this question let us look around us to see what is happening elsewhere, for we are only a small part of the movement taking

place within patriarchal religions. There are many who now recognize that the issue is patriarchy and the myths, symbols, theology, language and institutions that legitimate it.

Feminists among Catholic women, for example, having put a concern for ordination on the siding some time ago are now calling themselves Woman-Church and thinking of themselves as in exodus from the land of patriarchy but inside the patriarchal church. They are naming a place and a space for their own authentic mission. In their third meeting as Woman-Church in Chicago in November 1983, 1,250 women spent two solid days probing the effects of patriarchy in its various manifestations of sexism, racism, classism, neo-colonialism and militarism as they affect women.

In contrast to the meeting of Catholic women, where patriarchy was central, Unitarian Universalist women had the opportunity to attend a Coalition Convocation on "Women and Religion in the 80's" in Albuquerque in March '84. At this meeting, sponsored by the four leadership groups of women in the denomination, no opportunity for focusing on and critiquing the role of patriarchy in womens' lives was provided.

In light of the fact that the leadership has not been inclined to bring patriarchy into focus under the Women and Religion resolution, those of us interested in critiquing our current understanding of reality and reaching for a more inclusive world view, need to look for additional ways of working. What are our options? What actions do we take? We need to think individually and together--make lists and share them.

Certainly those who are in districts actively working on the Women and Religion resolution will stay with it and direct attention ever more toward the role that patriarchy, both in modes of thought and action, plays in our daily lives--in the family and in the larger society. Your efforts are valuable and "Stay with my work in the district," should top your list of options.

Others of us must find means of working on the larger spirituality individually, in pairs, in small groups, ecumenically, and--, and--. Start your list where you are. Each of us need to know that we are not alone, that there are others around this continent who, as UU women, are reaching for the new vision. So we need to communicate.

How can we do that? To begin, I am requesting REACHING SIDEWAYS to start a Channing's Sisters column where our ideas and actions can be listed. I am sending my first contribution to that column.

--Lucile Schuck Longview, 63 Locust Ave., Lexington, MA 02173

## FROM ONE FEMINIST TO ANOTHER

Within the last month two UU women from different parts of the country talked to me about the same factor they are considering before renewing pledges to their churches. Each has said to me, "My minister is not a feminist, and I am getting so little spiritual nourishment out of my affiliation I am wondering why I continue with my church." (One minister is male, the other is female.)

I want to share a response I have worked through. It is based on a theological consideration. Let me say first that the work of feminism has to be undertaken by each of us. It is personal, social, and theological analysis. The work we do, the process, is the only way each of us can move toward becoming self-determining rather than socially-determined women-beings. We can expect and we need encouragement from others, but the burden of responsibility rests on each of us.

The impulse to expect this work to be done for us by a minister is in itself a patriarchially-determined impulse. It descends upon us from belief in the old God who was all-knowing and all-powerful. Subconsciously, we tend to hang the same adjectives on ministers as representatives of God. Our relationships with ministers become more direct, honest, and wholesome as we meet them on a new ground of shared humanity.

What can we expect then of a UU minister? Basically, we can expect the understanding from her or him that we have assumed a spiritual task. The trouble is that we have the obligation to communicate this with a minister. (Remember she/he is not all-knowing.) Communication is difficult because we do not feel very sure of our words; we are more sure of our feelings. Our communication should have as its goal self-expression, not conversion, and it is made easier if we have one or two other people to share the burden, going with us.

Second, and gradually, we should be able to expect some recognition from our minister that the denomination has undertaken to broaden our use of pronouns and symbols to become inclusive of women. I believe a minister has an obligation to help interpret this undertaking to members of congregations, whether the minister agrees with the changes or not. A sensitive leader will want to be inclusive of even a small minority of feminists and should say so to the other members.

Third, we should expect a minister to provide space for feminists: Literally space and time in which to meet, bulletin and announcement space, recognition of programming, and psychic space which involves respect and good will. This may involve some courage in facing other church members who are satisfied with woman's place in man's world, as

it has been. But ministers face congregations on racism and other issues of principle.

Fourth, the pulpit should be available occasionally for a feminist sermon to educate the congregation and for feminist worship to demonstrate some experiments in new style.

Fifth, it would be heartening for us as feminists to see some evidence that our minister had an acquaintance with the growing body of literature on feminist theology, history, and poetry.

Sixth, we'd like to see her/him at District Conferences for further understanding of where some UU women are.

Back to your pledge: If only the first requirement is filled, you can probably renew your pledge if you also have even one staunch feminist friend in the congregation. You can stick around a year or two more until you detect movement on the next level; but you must expect to make the demands.

This leads me to my own testimonial. The UUA has been an institution in which a small core of feminists have found and encouraged one another on a continental basis. These are strong and inspiring women and men. We have an opportunity for changing our small part of the world by staying with the movement. We also have an opportunity as UU women to work across denominational lines in some rather exciting and experimental ways. I believe change in local churches can come. We are not involved in a theological argument as much as a theological demonstration, which means changing ourselves first.

--Jean Zoerheide, 739 Stoney Springs Dr., Baltimore, MD 21210

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#### CHANNING'S SISTERS

I share the book, "Patriarchy as a Conceptual Trap," with many people. It is a great book for beginners, which we all are, and it is good for discussion groups also. --Lucile Schuck Longview (Roundtable Press, Four Linden Square, Wellesley, MA 02181 \$7.95 paperback/ISBN 0-934512-04-3)

#### WOMEN'S RETREAT PLANNED AT MURRY GROVE

Be sure to save the dates of October 26 thru 28, 1984 for a JPD Women's Retreat. Marily Moors and Mary Ann Kelley are the chairs for an exciting program beginning Friday night, continuing all day Saturday and ending Sunday after lunch. This is an opportunity not to be missed. A whole weekend of prepared meals, good company and stimulating ideas. Be on the look-out for further information.



Editors Note: The article, "Christ as Woman; God as Mother" in the May 9 Baltimore Sun referenced in Myra Zinke's article following, was written by Father Joseph Gallagher, a priest of the Baltimore archdiocese. He does metaphor-talk at St. Mary's Seminary. The gist is that Christ didn't hesitate to refer to himself in maternal terms-as when he said that he longed to gather the people of Jerusalem to himself the way a hen does her chicks. At a time and in a culture that downgraded women, Jesus showed extraordinary sensitivity toward women. An excerpt from Gallagher says, "In spiritual terms, the crucified Jesus stands for all the innocent sufferers in history. In view of the sexual violence inflicted on women, of the various discriminations practiced against them, of the multiple sorrows of mothers and wives, womankind is rightly linked with Christ crucified." But Gallagher comments that recently a crucifix depicting Jesus as a woman which was exhibited in the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York was ordered removed by church authorities. According to Gallagher, the near nudity of the figure, referred to as Christa, no doubt enhanced its startling effect. Now on to Myra Zinke's article.

#### "HIS TRUTH GOES MARCHING ON"

It is not surprising that the crucifix depicting Jesus as a woman was ordered removed from the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. A fundamental issue is at stake here. Christian tradition considers women as inferior and evil, so how is it possible to conceive of the Savior as female? Priest Joseph Gallagher, in discussing this fact in his article in Other Voices in the May 9 issue of the Evening Sun, entitled "Christ as Woman; God as Mother," refers to the fact that the historic Jesus was masculine in a time and in a culture that downgraded women. He said that God is unimaginable and made a calm plea to attend to the essentials of the spiritual experience and not to get stuck in the gender issue. He quoted Thomas Aquinas who taught that all talk about God is analogical. Thomas Aquinas was a Christian philosopher who lived in the thirteenth century and his position in the authentic tradition of Western Christian Theology is firmly established. His main positions were officially confirmed by two encyclicals, the last in 1923. Presumably Gallagher used Aquinas' position to emphasize the futility of ascribing gender to God.

Many of us have been ready for years to stop ascribing gender to God, but "he" won't go away. In 1977 the Unitarian Universalist Association passed a resolution at their General Assembly entitled "Women and Religion" in which the various societies were urged to avoid sexist assumptions and language and to examine the deep-seated patriarchal nature of our religious traditions. New ways of perceiving the nature of women and men and of relationships between them must be developed. Further, in taking another look at our Bylaws, we found that one of the principles was to "cherish

and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition." Well! When some of the women reviewed what some of the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition had to say about women, they wanted to delete this section from the Bylaws. It was learned that Thomas Aquinas said that "Woman is defective and misbegotten. She is by nature of lower capacity and quality than man." (Small wonder that religionists in the twentieth century who still revere this man and his teachings, are repelled by the depiction of Jesus as Woman). Martin Luther said "If a woman grows weary and at last dies of childbearing, it matters not. Let her die of bearing; she is there to do it." And listen to St. John Chrysostom: "Among all savage beasts none is found so harmful as woman." Karl Barth, a twentieth century theologian, said "Woman is ontologically subordinant to man."

The list goes on. And, we thought, recorded history has described as "universal" those experiences which are limited to males. They have depicted what it has meant to be a man. They may not pertain to all cultures nor to all persons within those cultures.

When the women in our Women and Religion breakfast group at the First Unitarian Church in Baltimore learned of all this, we agreed that we should no longer uphold the "universal truths taught by these great prophets and teachers" and we wanted to take some action for the Sunday services of October 4, 1981. Nine of us women participated. Each had a saying typed on a strip of paper which she read and then ignited from a lit candle and deposited in an urn which contained sand. In planning the service we had been concerned with the hazard of fire and took care that there would be no danger. We did not anticipate nor were we prepared for the fire that lit under the press and other Unitarians across the country.

Frank Somerville wrote a piece in the October 5, 1981 issue of the Sun entitled, "Unitarians exorcise 'sexist' passages in burning ceremony." In his article he described what we women were wearing. The next Sunday, Ernest Furgurson, who was not in attendance at the ceremony and presumably had read about it in the newspaper, wrote a column on the Op-Ed page entitled, "The Book Burners" in which he connected what he said is a decline in Unitarianism (not correct) with the movement within the faith which has proposed dropping the use of God's name, because it, too, is sexist. He accused us of insisting on conformity to a narrow slice of doctrine and likened the event to a posse of illiterate stompers and screamers burning Marx and Shakespeare. Our minister received irate letters from Unitarians across the country who had read these distorted and inaccurate accounts of the event. We women noted that none of us received any mail. It was all addressed to our male minister, many with questions as to why he couldn't control his women any better than that. Many persons, when they learned the facts and reasons behind the ceremony changed their opinions. It was

an important turning point in the life of our church, since many of the members who were not present on that day were also upset about what they read in the newspaper. Some of the women (we call ourselves the "Baltimore Nine") met with the Board of Trustees and after our meeting there seemed to be consensus that we should take the resolutions of the UUA more seriously and there was a new energy to work toward that end.

We women were shocked that the issue of language and our taking action against statements denigrating to women could cause such convulsions. A searcher after truth could have written a remarkable piece about the event that day. Of course, there would have to have been some work involved, some research, some talking to the persons involved, some thoughtful consideration of the issues. We women learned one more time how frightening it is to some when women take action against ongoing indignities heaped on us. Our actions were engendered by anger, not fear, and we are very glad of that. The idea we raised, of equal, dignified participation, is still so very incendiary that it was side-tracked by the spurious issue of book burning by an emotional columnist who really had the day off.

The crucifix depicting Jesus as Woman, 'Christa', was sculpted by Edwina Sandys in 1975 for the United Nations 'Decade for Women'. The Church authorities ordered it removed. None of us is surprised.

-Myra R. Zinke, M.D., 1409 Eutaw Place, Baltimore MD 21217

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FEMINIST THEOLOGY: All at once pink  
bloom in community

1984 no need to hang saviors  
or hand painted eggs

on these branches the red  
tinged white blossoms are

One with the Tree

and this time the fruit will  
hold forth the promise of

Life.

(JPD WOMEN AND RELIGION  
BALTIMORE CONFERENCE)

Gail Ranadive  
8405 Porter Lane  
Alexandria, VA 22308

Editor's Note: The following letter was found on a hand-out table at a Congressional Sub-Committee Hearing on Postal and Civil Service workers. At this hearing, both the Director and his Deputy were questioned closely on this and other documents dealing with the Pay Equity Bill being sponsored by Representative Okar. Neither of their responses met with much credulity from the members of the Sub Committee. We are printing this letter in its entirety. We are sure you will share our dismay at learning how some political appointees set about subverting legislative intent.

U. S. Government MEMORANDUM

Office of Personnel

Subject: Pay Equity Bill

Date: 14 May 1984<sup>Management</sup>

From: James L. Byrnes

Deputy Associate Director  
for Staffing

To: Donald J. Devine, Director

In reviewing our options on standards setting and job evaluation, it occurred to me that we have not adequately investigated one option. This is especially pertinent now since Bob Moffit tells me there is good chance the House might pass Representative Oaker's Pay Equity Bill.

We know that a "comparable worth" system will not work. We do know, however, that job evaluation systems can be biased to produce the results favored by proponents of comparable worth, i.e., equal wages for male and female occupations. I recently referred to you an article which showed how certain standards could be manipulated so that any job evaluation technique could have male and female dominated occupations paid equally.

If the Oakar Bill passes, it would be a tremendous opportunity for OPM to develop a real comparable worth system, and show how preposterous it would be. The Federal Gov't's classification systems--which OPM has tried to change for years--are confusing and inefficient in any event, so a little more irrationality wouldn't hurt that much. But it would show a clear picture to the private sector about how ridiculous the concept of comparable worth is, and that in fact it is only job discrimination. It is truly wage-setting by administrative fiat. Only in this case, it would be under your control.

The political possibilities of this situation should not be underestimated. By doing job evaluation across clerical and blue collar occupations, a comparable worth study would immediately divide the white collar and blue collar unions. This would not be limited to those in the Government, although there are a large variety there who also represent outside interests, but it would also directly affect the private sector unions. Since our occupational standards are often applied outside Government, private sector unions could not afford to let the Government go too far.

The blue collar craft unions would especially be concerned, since they would be the inevitable losers in such a comparable worth adjustment process. Moreover, the unions would be pitted against the radical feminist groups and would further divide this constituency of the left. Rather than allowing Oakar to manipulate the Administration on the gender issue, we could create disorder within the Democratic House pitting union against union and both against radical feminist groups.

This situation presents opportunities that we should not ignore. Of course, it is a dangerous course, but it might change the nature of the whole debate on comparable worth.

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IN SEARCH OF ADVOCACY

Seven years after the 1977 Women and Religion Resolution passed at our General Assembly, the majority of the churches in our district still have the same kinds of women's organizations. We have such groups as Alliances and Support groups. These are all important. But somehow we have failed to develop many women's groups which deal with women's issues in a strong advocate role. We have avoided those activities which might put us in conflict with other members of our societies.

There are, of course, many reasons for this. Our fear of straying too far from our feminine stereotypical roles is, unfortunately, a fear born of our experience as women. Many men hasten to show their discomfort and displeasure when we are trying new roles. Many of our sisters are equally quick to let us know that they too are uncomfortable and do not share our passion for change.

And this is why churchwomen's organizations advocating changes are so necessary to those of us who need to feel that we are active participants in the changes coming for women. We need to know that we are not alone in our church communities, that others share our concerns. Most of all, we need to know that our commitment to equity and fairness for women is producing results, both in our societies and our denomination.

I am beginning, therefore, in this issue, a series of articles which deal with groups whose primary purpose is the advocacy of women's issues. Our first article in this new series is about the Women's Issues Task Force, which is a part of the Board of Social Concerns of Cedar Lane Unitarian Church in Bethesda, Md. For information about other such women's issues groups, I need your help. May I invite you to contribute articles about such women's issues advocacy groups in your society for our next issue of REACHING SIDEWAYS which will be published in the Fall. Please do not disappoint the rest of us. We need the inspiration that news of your group can give us.

Sara Best, 5211 Saratoga Ave., Chevey Chase, Md. 20815

## WOMEN'S ISSUES TASK FORCE NEWS

June 1984

Editor, Tom McHugh

### WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE DOING AND WHY WE ARE DOING IT

As a standing committee of the Board of Social Concerns, the Women's Issues Task Force sees its role as one of advocacy for constructive change in the patriarchal institutions which reduce the quality of life for women. The Task Force sponsors several kinds of activities in its contributions to the struggle for equality for women. A major activity is to inform the congregation of the continuing and pervasive injustices to women in this society. Of particular concern are those injustices within this denomination. Out of these efforts to illustrate to the congregation that women remain second-class citizens, the Task Force seeks to provoke constructive change in the institutions and forces which perpetuate and profit from the inferior status of women. With funds allocated from the Board of Social Concerns, the Task Force donates money to local and national organizations which effectively contribute to the struggle for equal rights and opportunities for women.

### LAST YEAR'S ACTIVITIES Fall Conference, Nov. 12, 1983: "Avoiding the Senior Citizen Trap"

About sixty members of the Cedar Lane Community attended this mini-conference, talked about such topics as retirement planning, developing housing and continuing education programs to serve older persons, and some legislative issues of major concern to seniors.

Adult Class on the Economics of Sex Discrimination. The Women's Issues Task Force sponsored a three-part series in our adult program last Fall, entitled, "Somebody Profits: The Economics of Sex Discrimination." This series illustrated that the profit derived by large segments of society from sex discrimination is a major factor blocking the struggle for equal economic opportunities.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL GROUPS. Our recommendations to the Board of Social Concerns for financial support reflect some major conclusions:

- 1) that women must have the right to control their own bodies,
- 2) that enduring social justice will come only if the struggle is fought and won in political and legal terms,
- 3) that women will more readily reject patriarchal socialization and join the struggle for equality if they are educated,
- 4) that the Unitarian Universalist denomination continues as a patriarchal institution, and
- 5) that the economic consequences of the Reagan administration social cuts have been particularly devastating to women and children.

We contributed to several groups with one or more of these conclusions as a foundation for their work.

A REPORT BY THE JPD LIAISON TO THE RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR ABORTION RIGHTS

I would like to share some facts that appear in a letter from Judy Goldsmith, President of the National Organization for Women. I am sure that many of you have read or heard of the wave of violence that has been launched against family planning and abortion clinics across the country, but I am sure you will be surprised and outraged at its extent.

Some Items from Judy's letter:

- \*\* In 1982, a total of 39 incidents; by the end of 1983, the number was 123. In the first three months of this year there are 87 reports of clinic burnings, break-ins, vandalism, threats and harassment.
- \*\* Joseph Scheidler, Director of the Pro-Life Action League has just published a book, "CLOSED: 99 WAYS TO CLOSE ABORTION CLINICS." Some chapter headings include: "Infiltrating;" "Use of Private Detectives;" "Get the Dirt on Them;" "Use of Inflammatory Rhetoric;" "Night-time Telephone Messages;" to name a few!

For many years this country kept black people from exercising their Constitutional right to vote through a systematic campaign of fear and intimidation. Now Joseph Scheidler is employing the same immoral tactics to keep women from their Constitutional right to make their own decisions about whether and when to have children.

NOW is launching a Campaign to End Clinic Violence. Anyone wishing to help further this important effort to protect the reproductive rights of women can send a contribution to:

CAMPAIGN TO END CLINIC VIOLENCE  
National Organization for Women  
P.O. Box 7813, Washington D. C. 20044

--Betty Nichols, Liaison Representative for Joseph Priestley District, UUA, to Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights.  
1900 Lyttonsville Rd. #707, Silver Spring MD 20910

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THIS SUMMER, IT'S UUMAC!

Come join the Unitarian Universalist Mid-Atlantic Community for a week of worship, workshops, outdoor activities, denominational concerns, and inter-generational evening entertainment at Lafayette College in Easton, PA.

We'll be there from 22-28 July. Workshops include TOGETHER WE CAN by Mary Ann and Rick Kelley, HISTORY AS THE EXPERIENCE OF LIVING by Mary Ella Zippel with special focus on women in our 19th Century heritage, and WRITING YOUR JOURNAL and MEDITATION by Barbara Hebner. For info, contact Edith Hall, 2 Harvard Road, Shoreham, New York 11786.

woman, whatever her abilities, accomplishments, or potential. In fact, when he encounters a lady of demonstrated status in her field, the Duke of Courtesy is confronted with a challenge which he cannot possibly ignore. His command of the technical expertise in her field must be displayed for the amazement of the public and for the complete discrediting of the lady in question. He is firmly determined that all shall perceive that she is beyond her depth and that she would have been well advised to have stuck to "kinder, kirk und kitchen!" The Duke proceeds on his super-courteous, and supercilious level with a highly developed intuition for that the ladies are traditionally reknowned for. Don't we all know how subject they are to pre-menstrual stress? Haven't males had to deal with the elaborate unreasonableness of the fairer sex from time immemorial? The Duke presumes an awful lot about the reaction that I and many other males experience during his virtuoso performance. I note his concern for my male sensibilities, but I can damn well speak for myself.

I think I reserve my deepest rage for the Oh, so clever male contemporary who is blatantly exploitive of the deliberate inequity which prevails in many quarters of our society. Jack Sly knows the price of everything, but the value of nothing. He regards every opportunity, every device which he can use for taking advantage of the already disadvantaged as his just due. If he is a mechanic, he is highly inventive of phantom repair requirements which only he can diagnose. His special talent for the outrageous and exorbitant comes to the fore immediately if the customer is a woman. It is his special joy to charge for three fan belts where only one was needed and replaced. Jack Sly infests all occupations, but appears mostly where women exhibit special susceptibility. Politics and the clergy attract many of his ilk, maybe it is because of the groupies. I do not want to resort to blaming the victim, but it seems an uncommon number of gullible women surround the hustings and the pulpit, vying for the opportunity of throwing themselves on the altar of adulation. If any mild complaint comes to Jack Sly's ears from women who are not charmed, then Jack quickly resorts to trivialization. The laws are inequitable in the treatment of women. Well, Jack points out, "...a National Academy of Sciences study show that women may earn less than men because they have less seniority, stay in the labor force less consistently and tend to work in jobs with lower intrinsic value." Jack conveniently overlooks that in the same study, "...half of the wage gap is probably due to discrimination." If Jack-In-The-Pulpit hears complaints that his language and that of the hymns exclude women, his rejoinder is, "My women know what I mean. Words are generic and denigration of women is really trivial." The fact that his own stock in trade is facile articulateness and special connotations of words would never be admitted by Jack the Sly. Such complaints are from radical feminists whose preferences are lesbian.



### SOME MALES EMBARASS ME

When Mickey Rooney, the actor, and I were much younger, his role as Andy Hardy embarrassed me to within an inch of death. He portrayed so well what I deplored in myself, naivete, gauche behavior, ignorant and presumptuous demeanor in social relationships, and complete lack of consideration for others.

You would think that the Andy Hardy stereotype would be superannuated by now and that most American males would have picked up a veneer of good taste along the way. But no, a good many remain perennial adolescents. When the man is only the boy with exaggerated bad taste, then he attempts to trade on the general assumption that age brings judgement and dignity worth emulation and respect. He exploits his appearance as a pillar of society to disguise his persistent effort to demean and derogate the younger and weaker. His favorite prey are female, especially any who fail to succumb to his brand of superiority, his greater physical strength, or his louder, more authoritative voice. He unfailingly encroaches upon the personal dignity and self-esteem of others.

You will recognize my anathema from your own experience: A group of women and men have embarked on a subject of discussion. Joe Brash maintains silence until a few positions have been stated. A woman essays an opinion. Joe Brash sees the opening and can contain himself no longer. The opportunity has arrived for him to assert himself. He can depend upon an uppity woman always being fair game, so Joe Brash pulls a safe maneuver, well learned from the social milieu, and puts the lady down with devastating logic. Joe assumes that all the men will demonstrate approval of his tactic and that the ascendancy of good old Joe will be assured in this group. He has shown the woman her rightful place well down in the pecking order and has, thereby demonstrated his command of the situation. I assure you that I do not want to appear, in any way, to approve of Joe Brash.

Casanova LaBobais even less admirable. He seems to materialize by magic in any group. His sexual prowess is that one talent which 'tis death to hide. He reports on all the attractive females who have succumbed to his blandishments as nauseam. His amatory exploits are many and tedious. His Johnny One Note monologue inspires my most vicious sarcasm. Why, I am bound to inquire, have none of his paramours continued in subservient exuberance? Are their charms so transitory, or is he such a disappointment?

The courtly male chauvinist earns special appreciation (negative) from me. Every transaction he has with females is conducted with diligently cultivated old-world charm. Strange that this elaborate set of mannerisms do little to conceal his intensive contempt for every

The woman who has achieved the peer acceptance of "honorary male" has the capacity for making me cringe with a special horror in my embarrassment by men. She so intently pursues her goal of being "one of the boys" that she will defend any moss-back absurdity, even if she has to resort to feminine wiles to make her defense. She is so closely identified with the male point of view that she is quite over-zealous and lacks credulity in her more intense positions. She comes through as treacherous and dissembling as Phyllis Schlafly. She only appears as oblivious to her own status and as a devoted sycophant. I am embarrassed by this selfless and energetic drive to self-abnegation. She is like a lemming in the periodic migration to Atlantis which is a dash into the fjord to swim west until strength gives out and drowning results. One adept in psychologizing on such perverse behavior could only opine that "a masochist is best pleased by a sadist."

I realize that what I have listed above as embarrassing to me are a number of types of threats to my concept of myself as a man. After all I have taken great care that my credentials are beyond reproach. I can ride mustangs without pulling leather, I can shoot straight with a rifle, I can climb a windmill and get all the domestic animals into the root cellar for safety from a tornado. Of course, so could my mother, and she did. That doesn't bother me as much as some insensitive man creating an impression that I must share for male facetiousness and acts of chicanery. I don't want to be tarred with the brush that suits their brand of behavior. I wish I could wear a symbol which meant to all who see it, "I believe that every person should get an even break."

--Guy Best, 5211 Saratoga Ave., Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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CONTRIBUTIONS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

This journal of opinion exists because you feel strongly that the UUA Business resolution passed by the 1977 General Assembly has special significance to you and to other sincere liberals. The half-hearted implementation by 25 Beacon Street during the ensuing seven years is an important commentary on the responsiveness of our elected and appointed leadership to the high-flown verbiage of the Purposes and Principles sections of the UUA Bylaws put into effect in 1961 at the Unitarian Universalist merger.

This issue is of especially high quality due to the diligent efforts of the authors. The messages are the kind I think you will find thought-provoking. I think, further, that they are the messages our leaders may heed as being genuine matters of concern to many persons in the pews. You are again invited to express your sentiments for the October, 1984, issue.

Now, on the financial support which you have so generously provided to the publication of REACHING SIDEWAYS. A new year will be beginning in October. We will be asking for your demonstration of concern for a worthwhile journal of opinion that is being quoted widely throughout our denomination.

A GOOD THING

The Women's Review of Books is a relatively new monthly available from Women's Review, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA 02181-8255 (\$ 1.50 a copy; \$ 12.00 per year).

I just saw my first copy (Vol. I, No. 9, June 1984) and know from it how much the contributors of the half-dozen articles I read helped enlighten me about such subjects as: mother-daughter relationships, mothering and feminist theory, femininity, theories of oppression, eighteenth century misogyny, and language and gender. Subscribing promises to be a good way to keep in touch with the whole range of women's writing.

-Tom McHugh, 11702 Karen Drive, Potomac, MD 20854

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Editors: Sara Best, Barbara Hebner, Jackie Yacher, Jean Zoerheide

Production Staff: Guy Best, Sara Best, Tom McHugh

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THE MYTH OF EQUALITY

65% of teenage boys have had enough math to enroll in college calculus - the gateway to science and technology careers - compared to 45% of girls so prepared. --National Science Foundation, Directorate of Science Education.

Only 10 - 15% of working mothers can afford to enroll their children in day care centers for the whole day. One out of five employed women is out of work because she could not find adequate day care for her children.

--Mary Rubin, "Women and Poverty," Research Summary from Business and Professional Women's Foundation, Series #4.

Joseph Priestley District, UUA  
Women and Religion Committee  
9601 Cedar Lane  
Bethesda, MD 20814

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