

REACHING SIDEWAYS

AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND IDEAS

Compiled by the Joseph Priestley District Women and Religion Committee

Volume I, No. 2

January, 1982

AGENDA FOR ACTION

There was just time before we printed our first issue of REACHING SIDEWAYS to include a quotation from the Baltimore Sun of October 5, 1981, which was headlined, "UNITARIANS EXORCISE 'SEXIST' PASSAGES IN BURNING CEREMONY." The headline referred to part of a service by Bob Zoerheide, minister of the First Unitarian Church in Baltimore, in which nine women read and then burned quotations which downgraded women. In an interpretative statement in the service, Jean Zoerheide said, "We publicly carry out the burning in a symbolic act of expurgating from our own lives these slanderous statements...These teachings have shaped...attitudes, causing women to be...undervalued. We affirm ourselves as women and declare our sisterhood with women everywhere."

Surely we can rejoice at Jean's statement. Women in our denomination have been asked to agree to the principles in our by-laws which state that we shall "Cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition ..." Nowhere is it stated that we will cherish only those "universal truths" which do not downgrade women. Why should not thinking women who take their religion seriously wish to have offensive passages, categorized as "universal truths" by our by-laws, expurgated from their own lives?

The actual burning of these quotations was done in the following manner according to a description by Jewell McHugh who attended the service in Baltimore:

...Each woman quietly in turn took a candle, lit from the chalice, symbol of Truth, and destroyed the falsehood regard-int herself. The lighted slip of paper was placed in a small earthen pot which was immediately covered...

Apparently the act of burning the offending passages, described by newspaper headlines in Baltimore and other parts of the country, changed the whole meaning of an act of purification by fire for those

who were not present. Burning the slips of paper was viewed by the newspapers as the same kind of censorship exhibited by the Nazis and other hate groups. And some of us believed. We allowed headlines to make our symbols for us in such terms as "symbolic book burning." We didn't remember that fire has also been used traditionally to burn such contaminated items as the bedding of small pox victims. We forgot that the slips of paper held by each woman were lit from a candle, lit in turn from the U-U symbol, the flaming Chalice. Since the newspapers said, "symbolic book burning," we believed.

Now we Unitarian Universalists as a group pride ourselves on our clear thinking. We are searching for the truth, we say. Does this mean that we end our search when we read the headlines? Are we so blinded by the power of the printed line that we will condemn one of our own ministers for a reading included for exemplification in his service because of some newspaper headlines?

Apparently we are. I must confess that I can't help wondering whether much of the condemnation of the service comes about because statements critical of women were burned. By focusing on the burning of the quotations from theologians and religious source books, critics hope to be able to avoid any discussion of the fact that such injurious statements about women exist as religious teachings. And perhaps such condemnation is successful in frightening other U-U ministers or congregations who might be tempted to point to the sexist nature of some of our "universal truths."

For those who seek digression from the main issue, I have no response. No reporting of facts will stop them from attempting to brow-beat women into accepting their current status.

For those who are aware that newspaper headlines are often more sensational than accurate, let me say that no books were burned, either symbolically or in reality, and no material was banned or even declared unsuitable for study in the service in Baltimore. The women involved in the service were expurgating from their own lives those statements from theologians and religious source books which degraded them. Additional comments on the intention of these women is contained in Jean Zoerheide's article, "LET HER DIE", which begins on page 5 in this issue.

In our last issue, I made an offer to send copies of the Rev. Bob Zoerheide's service at the First Church in Baltimore to anyone who requested a copy. The offer still stands. For the benefit of those readers who are still searching for truth, we are also, in the article

which follows, providing those statements which were given so much attention. These quotations are truly offensive to anyone believing in the equality of the sexes. Read them and weep!

Saňa Best, Chair, JPD W & R Committee

SELECTED UNIVERSAL TRUTHS--A REPUDIATION

(A Reading used in the service in the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Baltimore, October 4, 1981. Please see articles preceding and following.)

Section C of the by-laws of the Unitarian Universalist Association states the principles upon which the Association of churches has agreed and includes the following: "The Association, dedicated to the principles of a free faith shall: Cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to humankind."

A few days ago members of First Unitarian Church, Baltimore, took a look at some of the so-called "universal truths" taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition to see whether they affirmed us as women. We now share these with you.

1. Students in our theological schools study the twentieth century theologian, Karl Barth, who said, "Woman is ontologically subordinate to man."

2. Kierkegard lived in the 17th century, a noted theologian, still required reading for students, "What a misfortune to be a woman! And yet the worst misfortune is not to understand what a misfortune it is."

3. Martin Luther whose 95 theses began the Protestant Reformation, wrote during the 16th century: "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."

4. Thomas Aquinas, 1225-1279, said it for the Catholics: "Woman is defective and misbegotten. She is by nature of lower capacity and quality than man."

5. The Koran instructs all Islam, 650 A.D., "Men are superior to women."

6. St. Augustine, for the early Christians, 354-430: "Any woman who acts in such a way that she cannot give birth to as many children

as she is capable of makes herself guilty of that many murders just as with the woman who tries to injure herself after conception."

7. St. Ambrose tortured logic and left us this wisdom: "Adam was led to sin by Eve and Eve by Adam. It is just and right that woman accept as lord and master him whom she led to sin."

8. St. John Chrysostom said: "Among all savage beasts none is found so harmful as woman."

9. From the Asian culture of 100 A.D., the Hindu Code of Manu V, we receive this teaching: "In her girlhood a girl should be under the will of her father; in her youth that of her husband; her husband being dead, under the will of her sons. A woman should never enjoy her own will. Though of bad conduct or debauched, or devoid of all good qualities, a husband must always be worshipped like a god by a good wife."

10. The Chinese teach us about women and men and their marriage: "The five worst infirmities that afflict the female are indocility, discontent, slander, jealousy and silliness...Such is the stupidity of woman's character, that it is incumbent upon her, in every particular, to distrust herself and to obey her husband."

11. And finally, the Hebrew tradition taught it has been divinely ordained that man should dominate woman: Genesis 3:16: "God said to Eve, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and your pain in childbearing, In pain thou shalt bring forth children...and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee."

Such is the dogma that underlies Patriarchal thought. The universal truth has been established, authenticated and even sanctified that women are secondary to men!

At the end of these readings, we shared a fantasy that we burned these statements of a universal truth. We now make that fantasy real, as we publicly carry out the burning in a symbolic act of expurgating from our own lives these slanderous statements, aimed at half of the human race. These teachings have shaped cultural attitudes, causing women everywhere to be overlooked and undervalued. We affirm ourselves as women and declare our sisterhood with women everywhere.

LET HER DIE!*

By Jean Zoerheide, one of the Baltimore Women

The Baltimore Unitarian Universalist church witnessed a sacred act on October 4, 1981, when during a church service nine women read sexist passages from great religious prophets and teachers. We represented

a larger group of women. Only one of us had heard these quotations previously. When we were asked to read these defiling passages in church, we demanded to burn them as an act of self-purification. One woman said she considered gargling with an antiseptic mouthwash, but that did not seem cleansing enough. Inadvertently we tied in with a symbol so strongly pre-empted in our culture as the destruction of freedom of thought and speech that while our meaning of purification was clear to most of those present at the service, it was lost in the wider communications of the press.

Perhaps we should have swallowed the fire in good womanly tradition of self-sacrifice! Would that have fixed attention on the religious sanctification of sexism?

The issue was sexism when the General Assembly of the UUA passed the Women and Religion Resolution in 1977. In 1981, the issue still is sexism--and the way religion sanctifies and perpetuates sexism. Let us remember that!

Sexism is the attitude that males are by birth (ontologically) superior to females. Since history is written from the point of view of males and life has been culturally interpreted by males, sexism has been inevitable even when not actually motivated by malevolence. Sexism is particularly potent in religion, which, in seeking the ultimate, confuses the interpretations of males with universal law. We are led to believe we have attained the ultimate vision when we have peered through a single telescope.

The danger of such narrowness is that all other visions of reality become secondary, or inferior, or are overlooked entirely. Religion continues to sustain sexism.

U U's have attempted to correct specific manifestations of sexism as they have surfaced, and we need to continue to do this; however, we have seldom confronted the underlying causes of sexism. (It is much harder to provide a critique of one's own institution than others, one's own prophets than others.) We have allowed women to move from the balconies where we sat at denominational meetings in the mid 19th century, we have given women a vote in all assemblies, and we have given "exceptional women" a voice in the pulpit and leadership on boards, as women have learned to articulate the dominant male point of view.

* Martin Luther: "If a woman grows weary and, at last, dies of child-bearing, it matters not. Let her die of bearing: she is there to do it." There are even worse sayings from other teachers and prophets.

Are there other voices and what do they say about meaning? Can women be allowed to know their own vision and to make its gift to a denomination that will receive it? In this process of consciousness raising, may men also be liberated from a tradition, however great, that has not yet called forth their own hidden gifts? For two decades or longer a compilation of sexist teachings from the world's great religions has been circulating among us and has been read here and there in small workshops and occasionally in church services. (These teachings are part of the curriculum in theological schools still. Are they accompanied by a feminist critique?) The reception has been accompanied by embarrassed giggles, that device for distancing by humor which allows us to go on to more important matters. The laughter signifies our unwillingness to enter the crucible of true feeling. Yet the passages cited have had tragic consequences for real women and men. The documentation for this accusation is spelled out brilliantly and painfully in Mary Daly's book, Gyn/Ecology. Wherever flames are lit to suppress truth, the writhing bodies of women burned during the European Inquisitions mingle with the bodies of Indian women, the widows burned in suttee.

The passages cited--and others like them--are the tap roots for attitudes against ERA; against productive freedom for women; against assistance for hungry mothers and children; against the Equal Employment Opportunities Act, which assisted women to resist sexual harassment in the workplace; and against fair valuation for the labor of women whether in their homes or in the market place. These passages are the tap roots nourishing the commerce in pornography which equates violence with sex and glamorizes the rape of women and children. These passages should not be destroyed; they need to be named for what they are and their fruits in the present need to be traced to their parents' vines.

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NEED WE SAY MORE? From Mary Ann Kelley, Paint Branch UU Church

According to the National Christian Action Coalition, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra O'Connor's views on abortion are irrelevant. The group's objection is to her sex. Coalition leader William Billings tells his followers that God will severely punish America for disobeying His order that women "not be placed in positions of authority over men, or to sit in a seat of judgment over men." The Coalition was founded by Dr. Robert Billings, who is currently serving the Administration as Regional Liaison at the Department of Education.

"AND WHO WILL I BE?" by Marti King

I knew this little girl
Who really wanted to climb trees
But thought she'd better play with dolls
If she wanted her mother to love her
And her father to call her his sweet little girl
 (Which was important at the time)
 And WHO will I be
 When I become what pleases you?

I knew this little girl
Who really wanted to solve math problems
But thought she'd better write poetry
If she wanted her mother to love her
And her father to call her his darling little girl
 (Which was important at the time)
 And WHO will I be
 When I follow the path you mark for me?

I knew this young girl
Who really wanted to study physics
But thought she'd better take English lit
If she wanted her mother to love her
And her father to call her his sensitive little girl
 (Which was important at the time)
 And WHO will I be
 When I live the values you select for me?

I knew this young girl
Who really wanted to be a biologist
But thought she'd better take nursing
If she wanted her mother to love her
And her father to call her his dedicated little girl
 (Which was important at the time)
 And WHO will I be
 When I live the life you choose for me?

I know this young woman
Who really wants to take charge of her own life
But thinks she'd better hide her real self
If she wants her mother to love her
And her father to call her his happy little girl
 (Which is getting less important all the time)
 And WHO am I
 Now that I've become what pleases you?

MEN NEED LIBERATING TOO

(The following are excerpts from a sermon, just about half the original, delivered by The Rev. William R. Murry on December 13, 1981, at the River Road Unitarian Church, Bethesda, Md. where he is the minister. In preparing this sermon, Bill Murry wishes to acknowledge his heavy indebtedness to The Liberated Man, by William Farrell and Hazards of Being Male, by Herb Goldberg.)

First, we men are bound to what I call the success syndrome, the notion that we must achieve a certain level of financial success, of fame or position if we are to be able to look at ourselves in the mirror and like what we see...

Part of the success syndrome is our society's emphasis on competition. The idea of competing and winning is so deeply imbedded into the male psyche that it is almost unthinkable for a man in our culture not to be caught up in it. Those who don't make it experience disappointment, a sense of inferiority, a lack of self esteem. Those who do live in constant anxiety and under pressure.

It can be very liberating for a man not to have to feel that you must compete and win, not to have to feel that you must make a certain salary or attain a certain level or rank in your vocation. Not that we need to fail in our work--although the problem for many is that they regard anything short of the top in their profession as failure. There are of course varying degrees of vocational success and there are other areas where success of another kind can be more satisfying than material success. So, the person who, let us say, spends his life working in a low-status, low-paying job but who gives a lot of time to his own children and perhaps works with kids in a neighborhood program or donates his time to some other worthy cause, surely such a person has found greater satisfaction than many of his wealthier counterparts.

(2) Closely related to the need to succeed is the work ethic. The man feels that he must always be working: working to get ahead, working to keep his high position, working to maintain self-respect, working because that is what men are supposed to do. ...His work is who he is ...If he loses his job, he may lose a great deal of self-esteem; he may become terribly depressed, and not know what to do with himself. Retirement can be--and often is--a slow death. ...We men need a play ethic that says it's O.K. to play, it's O.K. to have fun; that life is meant to be enjoyed, to include pleasure. The play ethic needs to affirm

that we are just as human and just as valuable when we are playing, or resting, or attending a party, or retired, as when we are working. And we need to affirm the importance of play as relaxation and therapy so that work can be more enjoyable, but also play as an end in itself, just for the fun of it.

(3) Still another problem we men have relates to our difficulty in expressing feelings. ...The ideal male is cool...detached, emotionless, machine-like. ...When on those rare occasions a man actually does show emotions in public it may cause him great embarrassment or worse. Senator Muskie may have lost his chance to be President by allowing tears to appear on his face in New Hampshire in 1972....

To be fully human means to be able to experience the full scale of emotions, to be able to be tender and caring, and to be able to cry without feeling that it is a sign of weakness to be ashamed of.

(4) To admit any kind of physical or emotional weakness goes against the male mystique. For boys, physical strength and athletic skill are central to their identity and sense of self, so much so that the boy who is not blessed with athletic ability may have trouble getting self-confidence and a sense of value as a person....

Dependence is regarded as another form of weakness men are not supposed to exhibit. Men are not supposed to need help. ...Independence and a strong sense of responsibility are pre-eminent male values. These are so strong in some of us that we feel uncomfortable when a woman is driving, or we have difficulty asking for directions....

Human relationships can be strengthened and deepened when we let others help us, for that is a way of caring and it is a way of letting others into our lives. But we men seem to have to learn that it's O.K. to ask for help, that people are not our competitors, but our friends, for that is the basis of the problem, I think. We are taught to perceive others as people against whom we are competing, and we cannot therefore ask them for help! That would be tantamount to losing.

(5) Sexuality is still another area in which men need liberating. A lot has been said about the fact that men think of and relate to women as sex objects. The exploitation and objectification of women is seen in advertising, for example, and in such magazines as Playboy and Hustler, and less obviously but in my estimation just as destructively in the use of language. When women are referred to as "chicks", or "dolls" not to mention some worse terms, it is dehumanizing.

However, not only do men treat women as objects; women also reduce men to sex objects, albeit in a somewhat different way. Whereas a man

tends to respond to a woman on the basis of her physical appearance, the woman's attraction to a man is often based on his status, income and power.

We need to be freed from the bonds represented by both aspects of the objectification of sex---at least the more extreme forms it takes. Only so can sexuality become a truly human relationship where two people enter into a genuine relationship of caring and giving and receiving.

* * *

There are many other areas where we men need to change and where our culture needs to re-define the meaning of male humanness---what it means to be a man. The masculine value system includes at least the following...the idea that it is better to be a good talker than a good listener...that a hard, tough and aggressive approach instead of a soft, persuasive approach is better in human relationships; that concrete results and external rewards such as money, trophies and votes are better than less concrete, internal satisfactions such as one finds in personal relationships, in family life, in learning. The masculine value system regards politics or business as an end in itself rather than contributing to human betterment; it emphasizes dynamism and charisma rather than long-term credibility.

One of the problems is that these values not only are the values men are socialized to adopt, but because they are male values and because men have been for generations in control of society, they have come to be regarded by many as society's highest values. It often seems that many women who make it in the professional world are the ones who adopt these values, and since most of these values are anti-human, their adoption by women represents a further reduction of humanness, of love and of caring.

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How can men become liberated?

It will take a lot of things to bring about a thoroughgoing change in the male mystique and the masculine value system. It will take a new social pressure to re-define masculinity as seeking internal self-improvement goals, the freedom to express dependency and emotions, the development of a broader sense of sexuality, etc. Each of us can work on ourselves---modifying our behavior and our attitudes little by little, although since we are products of our society and since we remain in that society, we have to accept the fact that we can only go against the grain so much. A consciousness-raising group can be helpful in this

respect, for most of us need both the insight and the support of others when we make changes in our lives. A spouse or friend can be helpful in making us more aware of sexist acts or statements.

We can also contribute to the liberation of the next generation of men--those of us who have children especially--and at the same time break out of our own stereotypical patterns. Sex role behavior is not something innate: it is something learned. We learned it and we teach it, and as fathers become more liberated, their sons will too.

...men can grow and find satisfaction by allowing their nurturing and caring side, their feminine side if you will, to be expressed, and their children will be the better for it. Nurturing and caring for children and sharing life more deeply with others do not reduce our masculinity: they enhance our wholeness, our humanness. They also provide better models for our children.

Why should men become liberated?

...there are some important human values at stake, as I have tried to say already. People who live out largely stereotyped roles are escaping from the freedom to develop a true self. At stake in the liberation movements is personal, moral, and spiritual growth.

At stake also is the possibility of greater happiness and fulfillment for both men and women. For men to be able to express their feminine side is to enable them to be fuller, richer human beings, and it will also enable women and children to experience fuller and richer lives as well.

* * *

GROWING UP FREE

A book review by Grace Davis, Wilmington

A book that may grow into a classic is Letty Cottin Pogrebin's GROWING UP FREE. Its 650 pages of research and documentation make the very readable case that ours is a society warped by sexual stereotyping. Here is a book that shows how men and women have been pushed into life styles and behaviors that do not always suit their talents and temperaments.

There are two usually unspoken, but powerful, rules or principles which our society condones. The first, "Boys are better", is documented in ways familiar to us all. Many parents want a boy first, and may have girl after girl in the hope of that superchild--a male. Many families sacrifice to educate a boy, but seem to care little about the girl's education.

The other often unspoken rule, "Women are meant to be mothers", often implies "and only mothers". The vast majority of girls have been

raised to believe that motherhood was the supreme career for them. When most of us were growing up, women were supposed to choose marriage or career--but men were guaranteed both.

These two rules with the resulting sex-stereotyping of all behavior have strait-jacketed the development of children.

A fascinating study of the problems caused when people are forced to follow social behaviors not congenial to them was made by Margaret Mead in a book published 50 years ago, SEX AND TEMPERAMENT IN THREE PRIMITIVE SOCIETIES. Discussion groups reading the two books in conjunction might see how Mead's findings fit right in with Pogrebin's arguments--and marvel that the Mead book was, and still is, condemned for all sorts of reasons, mostly that it is establishment-threatening.

Mrs. Pogrebin devoted eight years to the research of her subject and found that recent studies of the behavior and development of young children negate the "common wisdom". For example, activity meters attached to very young children at play disclosed that girls are as active and energetic as boys. If social customs demand that they "sit quietly" and "be ladies", it is custom, not genes, that changes their behavior.

This book covers the many areas in which a young child learns how to find his/her identity, and to watch how the system works--in the family, in school, church, books, play, sports, and later, what he/she is taught or observes in fields like business and government. Lately we have been admonished to learn how sexism discriminates against girls. Boys are also victims of discrimination. When they are not permitted to display their emotions, when parents withhold physical and spoken affection, lest they turn their child into a "sissy", the boys are deprived, stunted emotionally. One could almost believe our society thinks it is raising two separate species of child, instead of trying to raise fully developed, self-respecting human beings, whatever their sex.

Mrs. Pogrebin's suggestions for improving the quality (and fun) of child-rearing are innumerable and personal. She indicates that the first step towards rooting out sexism is to be aware that it exists, and to be sensitive in spotting its manifestations. It would be good for society to be served by adults who are emotionally secure, happily self-reliant, educated to make the most of their talents, energy and ideas, finding fulfillment in their human relationships, and satisfaction in contributing where they can.

GROWING UP FREE, now in paperback, is a lively, well-written source of information.

THE WEB OF OPPRESSION

(Based on a report in the Harvard Divinity Bulletin, Oct.-Nov. '81, p. 12, by Melanie May, Ph.D. candidate at Harvard Divinity School and staff consultant to the Community of Women and Men in the Church Study in Geneva, 1979-1980.)

Prepared by Jean Zoerheide, First U U Church, Baltimore

The World Council of Churches has just completed a four-year study of questions raised by women concerning their images and roles in the life and thought of Christian churches. The study was directed by the Reverend Dr. Constance Parvey (American Lutheran), who invited contributions from women and men in local churches and cultures. The study results were presented in Sheffield, England, in July 1981, at a conference of 250 members from around the world.

Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury, in an opening address quoted from Martin Luther's remark about women having large hips on which to sit and stay at home. Then he paid tribute to women's "other ministries" of social worker, nurse, and teacher. He avoided the question of ordination of women.

Dr. Runcie's remarks so shocked Dr. Philip Potter, World Council of Church's General Secretary, that he departed from his prepared speech to respond to Runcie. Furthermore, Runcie's statement concentrated the collective mind of the congregation and sharpened the pressing topics for discussion in a way that a more sympathetic or tempered message could not have done.

Dr. Potter spoke of the deep pain and love evidenced in the Study reports and praised the "tremendous insights and wisdom...lying there wasted for so many years". He berated the "impotence of our male-dominated churches to see, to hear, to feel, to decide and act. Incensed with impotence, I wait for the potency which God's spirit can bring to us." He went on to say that the questions voiced by women are not to be heard simply as pleas for individual or group liberation, but that they call for a much more radical rethinking and re-forming of life in churches and societies around the world.

Seven sections of the Study brought recommendations in the areas of freedom and justice; ministry and worship; marriage, family and life-style; the place of Scripture in the new community of women and men; authority and church structures; identity and relationships; and tradition and traditions.

The section on freedom and justice stressed the inter-relationship of all freedom struggles. Delegates from Third World countries urged the new community and new church discussions be set within the "global context of desperate struggle against exploitation and poverty, hopelessness and despair". They reminded their sisters and brothers that in many societies women and men are equal in oppression. It is not possible to speak about women's issues without identifying the web of oppression which includes sexism, racism, and classism.

With raised consciousness, white middle-class Americans, well-intentioned and concerned about women's rights, had to pause and reflect on their own complicity in the oppression, not only of women, but also of men in developing countries. And many Third World participants had to acknowledge that their churches were "social ghettos" and that they too were members of a privileged minority.

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HOW MANY OF OUR U-U RELIGIOUS EDUCATORS ARE TEACHING THE COURSE WHICH RIGHTFULLY COMES BEFORE OUR COURSE ON AKHENATON?

Prepared by Shirley Josephson, Buxmont Unitarian Fellowship

Merlin Stone, in WHEN GOD WAS A WOMAN, writes: A most enlightening and significant study on the social structures and position of women in Egypt was done in 1949 by Dr. Margaret Murray. Painstakingly tracing the lineage of royal families in Egypt, she eventually proved that, at the level of royalty, the Egyptian culture at most periods was matrilineal... According to Murray it was the daughters, not the sons, who were the actual inheritors of the royal throne... This may clarify why the Goddess Isis...was known as The Throne.

Sir Flinders Petrie, incidentally a deeply respected colleague of Dr. Murray's at the University of London, discussed the role of priestesses in ancient Egypt. He pointed out how their position had changed between the time of the earliest dynasties (3000 BC onward) to the Eighteenth Dynasty (1570-1300 BC). According to the available records, the Goddess known as Hathor, much the same deity as Isis, was in earliest times served by sixty-one priestesses and eighteen priests while the Goddess known as Neith was attended solely by priestesses. By the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty women were no longer even part of the religious clergy, but served only as temple musicians. It is in the Eighteenth Dynasty that Egypt was made to feel the greatest influence

of the Indo-Europeans....Incidentally, the use of the word "pharoah", generally summoning up images even more powerful than the word "king", actually comes from the term par-o, which literally means "great house". It was only from the time of the Eighteenth Dynasty that the word was used to signify the royal male of that household.

Merlin Stone says elsewhere in her same book that both queens Tiy and Nefertete, respectively mother and wife of the religious revolutionary king Akhenaton, are thought by some authorities to be of Hittite or Hurrian descent. This Egyptian pharaoh whom our Unitarian religious education curriculum glorifies as the first person to introduce the concept of one god, introduced this concept to replace the many gods who are one, the female goddess of many names. But is this what our children are learning in the course on Akhenaton? We teach a course on myths, also, but are they the male promulgated myths that come after the goddess had been defeated, or are they the real story of which the undestroyed evidence is only now coming to light?

* * *

EDITORS

This issue of REACHING SIDeways was edited by Sara and Guy Best and Jewell and Tom McHugh.

REACH SIDeways

The editors are looking to the readers to help us bring matters of consequence to the attention of thousands.

Recently we received a clipping from Rick Caughey taken from the Philadelphia Inquirer. It was a review of Gender: The Myth of Equality, by James C. Neely, M.D. According to the reviewer, this is one of the most viciously sexist, anti-women books of our time. For instance, Neely draws the preposterous conclusion that women must, naturally, find their main fulfillment through childbearing and child rearing. But, beyond this, so convinced is he that women are, above all, sexual beings (here he is soundly in the medieval tradition) that he declares that women of intellect are necessarily antisexual.

Please reach sideways with items you believe we all need to hear about. Send them to: Sara Best, Chair

JPT Women and Religion Committee
5211 Saratoga Avenue
Chevy Chase, Md. 20815

PURPOSE
OF
REACHING SIDWAYS

REACHING SIDWAYS will defy sexism because, in the words of our UUA Bylaws, we seek "to affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth and dignity of every human personality, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships."

Toward this end, REACHING SIDWAYS welcomes items about ways women and men in our societies are helping to implement the Women and Religion Resolution passed unanimously by the 1977 General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association. For example, your reactions to articles, sermons, discussions, conferences, and other materials that explore the relationship between religious myths and sexism, between religious and cultural attitudes toward women, and the hurts arising in sexist language.

Send your reactions to:

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* * *

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