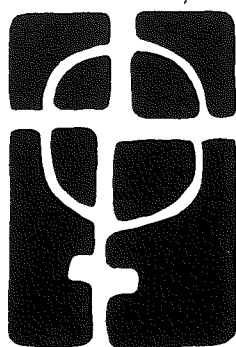


Women's Theological Center



Quarterly Newsletter

DECEMBER, 1992
Volume 10, No. 4

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Suggested fee for 4 issues:
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Splitting the World Open

by Donna K. Bivens

Donna Bivens, WTC Co-Director, delivered the following speech on October 13, 1992, at Perkins School of Theology's Women's Week conference entitled, "Her Name is Woman. A Vital Witness".



photo by Elizabeth Bettenhausen
Donna K. Bivens, WTC Co-Director

In the 70's when I was first coming to feminist consciousness, women often used a quote that I am hearing a lot again recently. It was the quote by Muriel Rukeyser that says "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open."

At the time I thought the quote was overly dramatic. I did not understand the power of the truths we have been forced to hide as women or how much this world which is not serving our needs depends on our hiding that truth to maintain itself. I had no idea how indoctrinated I was to keep my truth even from myself. At the time I had no idea how much we fear a world split open. And I had no idea that holding an unjust world together destroys our very souls. Now after almost twenty years of the truth telling, I know that what hope I have lies in worlds split open and not in eyes and mouths, hands, hearts and intelligence closed in on themselves.

I have learned much from the telling and the listening that has been feminism for me. I have reconstructed

my life based on the activism that womanism infused into the movement--the moving, as Alice Walker describes, from lavender to purple that brought with it internal as well as external conflict. Conflict out of which has come a phenomenal increase--that we do not celebrate enough--of authentic and loving relationships of solidarity and resistance across differences that were not only unbridgeable but often unseen before our liberation movements insisted on splitting the worlds open.

I want to talk today about racism and the truths we must tell each other about it. The wounds of racism and other systemic oppressions parallel those of incest, battering, sexual abuse and the other horrors we have learned to tell. They share the ability to destroy us and our possibilities for creating a world that meets and reflects our needs. I want to talk about my experience of splitting worlds open even among women who would think we are all one. I want to affirm that it is hard work and frightening but it is work we must do if we are to create a new world and not simply patch up the ones we have had to split to save our own lives. The work of communicating across different worlds and realities must be in a spiritual context. I want to point out the wealth of resources we have and the rich history to draw on for doing this work.

In the Study/Action Program at the Women's Theological Center, each year a small group of women makes a nine-month commitment to each other to struggle tell the truth of our lives and histories to each other. We struggle across our differences and challenge ourselves and each other's most basic assumptions as we try to really bring together what we say are our deepest beliefs and our day-to-day existence. We begin our year by doing a visual presentation to tell our life stories. Until recently, we have done this in the form of a faith or spiritual journey.

One year, I had an experience that illustrates some of what I want to say about racism and women. Before that year, I had always created my journey with the center being my family of origin, the people I have loved in my life and my personal spiritual resources. It had included a hint of my history but only as it related to the here and now.

After going through some major growth and transition personally and politically over the course of a year or two and having a real awakening, I changed my journey drastically that year. At the center in a way that had never happened before was my history as an African American woman.

Central to my story was a self-portrait that I had painted. In it I was facing forward, centered, with a mysterious and strangely intense expression on my face. To my right was a small, naked, weeping version of myself--totally vulnerable and lost in grief. She represented the depth of sadness I sometimes feel when I take in how much my people have been and continue to be damaged by white racism--my grief at how we sometimes turn our rage and white people's hatred

....what hope I have lies in worlds split open and not in eyes and mouths, hands, hearts and intelligence closed in on themselves...

of us on ourselves and on each other. To my left was a Black male, his back to everything looking strong and armored in his red, black and green African garb. He symbolized our fierce resistance and determination to survive against the odds, but also the toll it takes on us to feel we can afford to give ourselves the time and space to mourn the devastation that has occurred because the assault is so relentless.

Of course, all of it was me--the

strong and the weak, the armor and the vulnerability, the rage and the love, the fear and the courage, the male and the female. It did my heart good to have a visual presentation of what I feel in myself so deeply about racism.

Next to my picture, I placed a daguerreotype taken in the early 19th century of a woman named Delia. Delia faced the camera. Her strong, beautiful, violated, ebony body naked from the waist up. It was a picture taken by some white man who had total power over her and who decided he wanted to "document" her. She obviously had no choice in this matter.

What shocked me as I put together my self portrait and the photograph of Delia was that the look on my face was the same as hers. I had not consciously drawn that expression. As often happens in creating sacred space, something came crystal clear for me as I completely saw myself in Delia. I truly found the past that *lives* inside me.

As I presented this all to the new Study/Action class, I was proud to have made this leap in my own understanding and developed the confidence to show this much of myself even though there were no other African Americans present to support my reality.

But when I finished presenting, one of the women--a white woman--got up and as she asked my permission turned the page in the book showing Delia's picture. She said to me, "That picture has always haunted me. Do you mind if I turn the page? It is too painful for me to look at."

I was so shocked by this that I literally could not take it in. It took me days to retrieve it and I had to ask my co-worker if it had really happened. When she confirmed that it had, I as a facilitator went through a long process to determine how to bring it back to the participant in a way that was respectful of both me and her learning process. How to make it the gut-level symbolic expression of how even the most committed of us hold racism in place by turning from the truth of the damage it caused and continues to cause.

Ironically, when she turned the page in that particular book that held Delia's picture, the next page was a diagram of a slave ship in which some white genius had so precisely sketched out how to load Africans--my ancestors and Delia's--into the bottom of a ship most efficiently.

In the space we had created for ourselves as a Study/Action group, it turned out to be impossible to run from the particular truth that all of us had to

Racism would have me try to run from the existence of Delia in me....

come to terms with Delia's violation and our inheritance of it if we were to build anything together. Not only did I understand more clearly than when I had started why Delia's picture belonged at the center of my journey, I no longer needed the picture--it was seared into my memory through my connection to her and the new history of this new group of women trying to come to terms with it and thus with each other. You see, it was so deeply symbolic of racism: the turning from painful realities, the collusion with deadly lies that is destroying so much of human connection, the futile attempts to avoid the splitting of worlds through truth-telling that could save us.

I want to be clear that the point of this story is not to criticize that woman, who is in fact a woman of great integrity. In the year that followed, we began to develop a respectful and authentic relationship through this and other experiences. I tell the story to move to examine the process of splitting worlds open--in this case, confronting racism among those who would be allies. She saw and owned the fact that she was holding an unjust world together when she refused to look at Delia--that when she turned from Delia she turned not from me or the ugly past but from herself. Racism would make it hard for

her to see her own self in Delia. It would also support her in her denial of her historical connection to the man and the system that controlled the camera.

My lesson in all of it in relation to my oppression was as Audre Lorde has so lovingly taught me "My silence will not protect me". Racism would have me try to run from the existence of Delia in me and thus miss the amazing power and beauty that is her continued existence in African Americans today and those who will follow us.

What internalized racism would have had me believe was that I somehow was an individual from one period of human history and that Delia was not as much a part of me as my own Mother. What internalized racism would have had me believe was that Delia's nakedness and violation was her shame and mine and not the oppressors. It would have deluded me into believing I had a Self to claim that did not include that history of oppression. Claiming Delia meant claiming all of my African American past and present proudly--from the most accomplished to the most degraded for like my white sister, it is in that claiming that I claim all of myself and my commitment to splitting the world open to build a new one.

Also, when I told this story to some of my more direct and confrontative friends, they expressed concern at my slowness to take in and react to what was clearly a violation. They would say "I would have smashed her!" or "How could you have blanked out on such disrespect?". I want to be clear that I do not think that I was more moral or "spiritual" to not react swiftly. But in that particular setting, it is helpful to be slow in reacting to take in the full dynamics of what has happened to and for me and the others. I want to be clear, however, that my deepest spiritual being would put me in the same place as the most "militant" in my community: outraged by and opposed in my whole being to such violation. I do not believe in any spirituality that finds righteous anger and swift rebellion against violation or oppression to be problematic.

I remember being on a panel once and being asked if it wasn't true that in order to address racism what has to happen is that "the white man must understand the Black man's anger and the Black man must understand the white man's fear". I very quickly answered a resounding "No". My experience in women's community tells me that people of color and white people must understand and come to terms with our own fear and our own anger, our own love and our own spirit and to do so we must confront the power structures that keep us from the truth of our own experience and the history, however painful, that we share.

To work with my story a little

more, what was important was not simply the depth of the exchange for me and the other woman. What was even more significant was that we had created the context in which it happened. It happened with in an organization and space created for and by women committed to our own and each other's truth-telling and to supporting each other through that experience. It happened in a space in which the power dynamics are intentionally exposed and analyzed: in unapologetically feminist and womanist space.

This brings me to the heart of our understanding of racism. Because racism--like any other crime against

SO, DOES THE WTC MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

In this tenth year, we're checking on whether what we're doing as WTC is what you want done. We're curious about our impact, or lack thereof. Are we about the work we should be--could be--about?

WHAT DO YOU COUNT ON THE WTC FOR? IF WTC WEREN'T THERE, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?



Waiting by the phone is Loretta Williams, who's helping us gather your opinions and ideas for the next ten years. She--and we--would like to hear from you.

CALL 617-522-2349.

OR WRITE HER IN CARE OF THE WTC.

Your stories and candid opinions will help us plan for the next decade--and the next!

humanity--is not just about interpersonal relationships and the quest for honest encounters. Racism is about power. And anti-racism is about creating structures that are respectful and inclusive of the diversity of human beings and that meet our deepest needs --not the whims and fancies of those with the most power. In fact, to go back to the Rukeyser quote, it explains what I know I did not understand was between the lines: what I had to learn and continue to learn is that what splits the world is not just the telling of truths but the unjust power-over that is exposed when this is done. It is the

We must claim a use of power that serves the masses of us and the other species and the planet....

challenging of old power relations and that can be done from the position of oppressor or oppressed once we come to understand that the current set-up not only keeps us from each other but from our very selves, our authentic, courageous, truth-telling and truth-hearing selves.

In our anti-racism work at the WTC, we see racism as having to do with unequal distribution of power on the basis of race and we see four major aspects of that power. The first is the power to make and enforce decisions. Second is access to and control of resources broadly defined. Third, the power to set standards of appropriate behavior. And forth, the power to name reality, to say what "the problem" is.¹

We must take racism apart using this definition and not simply through superficial understandings that involve being kind to each other or liking each other. We do what must be done to create a more equal sharing of power and an acknowledgement of power beyond the "might makes right"

definition that has been guiding us for too long. We must find a definition and expression of power that also includes the power that comes of our gentleness and vulnerability, our secrets uncovered and our limitations. We must claim a use of power that serves the masses of us and the other species and the planet and not the greedy, fearful few of us who insist on binding us to a more limited understanding of power.

Today is October 13, 1992--the day after the marking of the 500 years of the meeting of worlds that began the current era we as "Americans" must come to terms with. For me, it has been a profound experience to try to take in what this particular anniversary means about racism and our fight against it--what it means that all the conflicts and devastation of that history are present in today as we decide whether this is a time to celebrate or to mourn. As an African American, I have struggled to reflect on the devastation this has meant for the indigenous people of this land and to sit with my people's relationship to that devastation and my own personal relationship to it. At the same time I have tried to mourn what this period has meant for Africans enslaved and kidnapped to the scene of this violence. It has been even harder to take this in in the midst of the assaults of the past year: the Thomas-Hill hearings that were so devastating to us as a people, the Rodney King debacle and the despair and resistance it generated, the continued stereotyping of our youth as the most violent people while the clean handed violence of systemic racism has gone unseen. I have also struggled to understand what this has meant for white people so stuck in one way of looking at this history so violent to those among them or anyone else who would say, "Let's look at the whole thing because surely, we can do better."

In honor of the quincentenary and our sad but for me hope-filled state, I would like to share a story taken from Leslie Marmon Silko's amazing novel *Ceremony*. It is one of the most amazing stories I have ever read. In this story, witch people from all

over the world, get together for a contest in witchery. They show off their tricks to one another. The tricks range in maliciousness and evil intent. Finally, a witch who has not yet participated, says, "What I have is a story." All the other witches laugh. But the story is told and as it is told, it begins to happen. It is the story of white people, who have grown out of touch with life and the natural world and are afraid of everything. Out of this fear, they destroy. The story describes the journey of white people across oceans; the spread of disease; the destruction of earth, sea, and air; the slaughter of millions. When the storyteller finishes, the other witches ask that the story be called back. But a story once it is told cannot be called back.

I first read this story during the Gulf war. I agonized over it. I felt a sense of relief because it expressed the level of devastation I feel about the path we are on. At first I agonized and all I could think was "She's right. This is what we are living. A story cannot be stopped." But after entering into my fear and rage over this, I asked, "What can beat a story?" And I know the only thing that can is another story--the

Our hope is in being the women who tell and hear the truth of each other's existence.

stories each of us carry in our bellies, the truths that split worlds open. These are our strength, and our power is our ability to live a new world--a new story for ourselves and each other. Our hope is in being the women who tell and hear the truth of each other's existence. Let that world split open. Let the healing and new creation begin in us. #

1. Adapted from the work of Robert Terry.

Working Class Educated

by Meck Groot

When I discovered a few years ago that I am not middle class I went into mild shock. The discovery came during a course I was taking with Dr. Katie Cannon. She introduced us to Paul Fussell's "Living Room Scale", an exercise designed to help people locate themselves along class lines. The exercise values things in your living room by assigning them with positive or negative numbers. A hardwood floor, for example, gets you 4 points, while you lose 6 points for having a vinyl floor. Each person begins the exercise with 100 points and goes down the list of possible living room contents by adding or subtracting points.

Though there are undoubtedly flaws to this test, the important thing about it for me was what it taught me about my own class standing. First of all, as someone raised to value "new"

things, I was shocked that a new oriental rug rated minus two points, while a threadbare rug rated plus 8! I learned of the existence of Tiffany lamps (3 points) and parquet floors (8 points). I was astonished to discover that I, who pick up clutter all day long, might have gotten an additional 6(!) points for "overflow books stacked on floor, chairs, etc." Just in doing the exercise I learned a few things--such as "I know less about what counts than I thought." As I recall, I ended up with about 102 points, which according to Fussell puts me just into the middle class. Part of what got me those points was the high ceilings and shapely wooden molding of the dormitory I was living in.

After taking the test for my living room of three years ago, I also took the test for the living room of my childhood

and my parents' current living room. My parents immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands in 1953. The house we rented until I was 9 didn't have indoor plumbing or central heating. Today, my parents live in a brand new home built by my father and furnished with many new things. I wanted to measure the extent of their class mobility over time. I was not prepared for the results. Our living room of the 1950's scored just over seventy points, putting my family at "high prole" (Fussell's term for comfortable working class), while the living room of the 1980's scored only another ten points. Those ten extra points left my parents in the same class. So much for thirty-five years of "upward mobility"!

It wasn't until I did this exercise that I really understood that class is about a whole lot more than money.

Nancy Resigns

by Meck Groot



Nancy Richardson putting together quilt blocks for a WTC fundraising project.

How do you say "Nancy Richardson is resigning as Co-Director" in a way that does not minimize its significance, overdramatize its consequences or trivialize the feelings of WTC board, staff and friends on hearing it for the first time? When Nancy first told me she

was resigning as Co-Director effective June 30, 1993, I was shocked. The WTC without Nancy? Nancy without the WTC? It was somewhat beyond imagining. Nancy has been with the WTC since it began a decade ago. Her passion for the WTC is a rare and precious gem. Ruby red. Fierce. Tender. Glorious. I see this on a daily basis.

Donna Bivens, the WTC's other Co-Director, has similar feelings: "It's a little too soon for me to express or even understand my feelings about Nancy's resignation--so much of my relationship to WTC is our partnership and the amazing friendship that's grown out of our work together. Nancy has given more than most can imagine--in love, commitment, resources, and energy--to make WTC what it is. It's largely her genius that has created this space for coworkers and participants to both be who we are and be challenged to grow."

Though she is resigning as Co-Director, however, Nancy is not leaving the WTC. She will continue to work with the organization in a

variety of ways that include doing anti-racism trainings and consultations and helping out with Study/Action. According to Joan Martin, WTC board member, "Nancy's departure from the WTC as Co-Director is more like retirement than resignation. Although the movement for feminist change in theological education has not come into the promised land, our journey through the wilderness would have been much more precarious without Nancy's presence and resources--materially and spiritually--over this last generation."

Though highly compelling, that journey has been a gruelling one in many ways and sometimes a passionate soul gets tired. It is Nancy's turn to rest. Shannon Clarkson, WTC Board Co-Chair, writes, "Nancy is so much a part of the WTC that there is no way we can replace her. Our job will be to ask how we can honor all her hard work and her vision by moving ahead and providing new openings for teamwork with the rest of the WTC staff."

Today my parents have money they never dared dream of when they started work for the Canadian farmer who sponsored them. While their financial picture has changed, however, their education, family history, assumptions and values have not.²

Katie Cannon further helped me and my classmates unpack the mystifying jumble of things, besides economic income, that go into determining class. How each of these factors plays out is influenced to greater or lesser degrees by one's gender, race, and sexual orientation. None of these by themselves can determine class location. They all work together. Assuming anything about another person based on just a couple of these factors can be very misleading.

Ancestry: *Who your parents, grandparents, etc. are/were determines a great deal about who you are in the world and how you will be treated.*

Style of life: *Do you travel, dine out, clean up your own messes, go bowling? Do you entertain guests or hang out with friends? What groups, clubs or leagues are you a member of? What are your hobbies? Your style of life is determined by the choices that are available to you and these are very much dependent on your class location.*

Education: *What degrees do you have and where did you get them? A degree from an ivy league college or university assumes something different than a diploma from a trade school--even if both require the same amount of time, energy, skill or intelligence.*

Interpersonal Relations: *Who you spend time with and who you are acquainted with or connected to says a lot about who you are and what your choices or options in life are.*

Manners: *Each class has its own rules and conventions for both public and private behavior. Which ones you know best are indicative to you and others of "where you belong". Passing as someone from a different class, requires that you*

know the rules of that other class.

Social Distance: *The higher your class location, the more choices you have about how much distance you can have from other people. Privacy can be very expensive. How much privacy a person or family wants and can get usually says something about their class location.*

Values: *What you consider to be the relative worth of things, ways of behaving, being, and believing are greatly determined by your class location.*

Ideology/Political Stance: *Whose side you are on, what issues you support and how you support them (financial contributions, volunteer work, demonstrations, talk, etc.) all say something about your class location.*

Religious Affiliations: *In terms of class status in the US, it is helpful to be Christian. And the classiest Christians tend to be Episcopal. (It is no accident that the US's "National Cathedral" is Episcopal.) Unitarian Universalists do alright too.*

Motivation: *Having the energy and drive to get things done is dependent on what you believe you can achieve. And this is usually dependent on what messages you are given both by those inside and outside your class.*

Expectations: *What you expect out of life generally or a situation particularly is determined by what you are led to expect. What you dream for yourself (if you dream) and what you see as obstacles are for the most part taught to you by the people of your class.*

Language: *Your command of the "Queen's English", in terms of accent, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, etc., is key to class in the US. If you cannot train your tongue or your pen, you can only ever pass as yourself.*

Geographical Location: *It makes a difference in class terms whether you live in the city or in the country, whether you live in Oklahoma City or Philadelphia.*

Another factor I would say goes into class standing has to do with control. What or who you can control or wish to control is deeply connected to your class location. A key to uprooting classism (as well as racism, sexism, and other forms of oppression) is a redistribution of control. The upper classes currently have enormous control over much of the everyday lives of everyone else, for it is the upper classes who decide who gets what and how come. The access to control determines one's relationship to control. People in the upper classes tend to hold on to control in large and small things because this is what they are taught.

Articulating the conflict of values I, as a woman of the working class with educational privilege, carry inside me has enabled me to understand the alienation I first experienced when I left home at 17 to attend college. Much of my experience in the four years I worked towards a B.A. was about internalizing middle class values and trying to purge myself of values that I had come to college with. I read, analyzed, and discussed novels, plays and movies that I didn't understand. I got cast in plays and acted the part of characters I am still mystified by.

When I went home for visits I presented my parents with such "sophisticated" gifts as Matisse prints and Deutsche Grammophone albums. I was revolted by my parents' provincialism and small (read simple)-mindedness. They were suspicious of the things I was learning and even today would find the words I am writing in this moment irrelevant to their lives. One of the moments that stands out for me in hindsight as symbolic of my "choice" to be middle class came when I began my sophomore year and moved into a new dorm room. During the move, I took a pair of plaster plaques, given to me the summer I left for college by a friend who stayed behind in our rural town, and I cracked them over my knee. I decided I would not have something so "kitschy" on my wall. I shudder to think how many, many times I have chosen appearance over right-relation because of classism.

This story is not uncommon. However, the analysis that attempts to make sense of these experiences is, I believe, unfamiliar to most people, even those who have a similar experience. Reviewing my life's experience in the context of class has helped me understand that experience in new ways. It has also pushed me to intentionally use the lens of class through which to examine what I see on a daily basis. Not that this lens is necessarily focused. There is much that continues to confuse me and there is much that I miss altogether. Recognizing that I am a working class woman who has the privilege of education has helped me newly appreciate and reclaim a host of values which in the process of assimilating into the middle class I learned were unimportant, rude, crude, or (my favorite) ungracious. Some of these values include plain-spokenness, lack of pretense, hard work balanced with rest and leisure, living in community, rootedness in place and time, getting along with people you don't necessarily like (because you don't have a choice) and finding humor even in the most trying situations.

When I began to reclaim my working class identity, I romanticized my past, my people, my origins. Conversely, I was revolted by anything I perceived to be middle or upper class. I uncovered a strong anger and deep disdain for middle and upper class assumptions, lifestyles, values, options, and fears. Both of these tendencies still operate for me on a daily basis, though with less force now than a few years ago.

It is no accident that it took me until I was 33 years old to name my heritage as working class. Class in the US and Canada is a mystifying thing. This "new world" was presumably founded on the notion that all people are equal and should have equal opportunity. Such a myth does not support straight thinking about issues of class. If we are collectively going to work toward a just society, it is mandatory that we understand how class operates in our society--how we

use it and how it uses us.

Before feminism became a personal thing with me, I was one of the most male-identified women you've ever met. I tried talking, thinking, and even posturing like a man. In becoming woman-identified, my habits, alliances, thought patterns, etc., changed. Suddenly women mattered to me in ways they never had before.

The same thing happened when I understood about class. I became working-class identified. I still have a Master's degree and whatever advantages that gives me. What is different for me now, is that I lend less

credibility or importance to what the middle and upper classes say and do. My point of reference, my chosen perspective now is working class. Figuring out how to use the privileges my education has given me to the advantage of working class people continues to be a growing edge for me.[#]

1. Paul Fussell. *Class*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1983. Pp. 230 to 233.

2. I do not intend to imply that having access to more money is not a very tangible and important reality. However, class and money, though connected, are not the same thing.

Summary '93 Budget

(July, 1992 to June, 1993)

PROJECTED EXPENSES		PROJECTED FUNDING SOURCES	
Staff		Savings Balance	15,000
Salaries*	95,500	Program Fees	85,000
FICA and Benefits	18,972	Donations from Individuals	
Resource Center Programs	8,900	and Events	80,000
Study/Action Program		Carpenter Foundation	25,000
2 Seminar Leaders	12,000	Needed from other grants	49,842
Supplies and Fees	5,600		
Scholarships	20,000	TOTAL	254,842
Public Relations and Development			
Printing	14,000		
Postage	10,000		
Advertising	2,000		
Fundraising	1,000		
Recruiting	1,000		
Board & Alumnae	1,500		
Miscellaneous	1,500		
General Administration			
Office Rental & Maintenance	8,220		
Telephone	2,000		
Supplies/Equipment	2,500		
Fees/Services	2,150		
Catering	1,500		
Insurance	1,500		
Evaluation and Strategic Planning			
Consultant	10,000		
Research Assistants	5,000		
Travel/printing/administration	10,000		
Reserve Funds			
toward '94 budget	20,000		
TOTAL	254,842		

* For two full time and three haltime employees based on a fulltime salary of \$25,000; and for one two-fifths time employee based on a fulltime salary of \$20,000.

To help meet this budget, our goal is:

"\$5.00 from 5,000"

by December 31, 1992.

WTC UPDATES

by Meck Groot



"Loves Herself. Regardless" retreatants on Cape Cod in September, 1992.

Program Highlights

This year's Study/Action class is in full swing, having oriented, retreated, and gotten into a routine of classes, internships and paid employment. There are twelve students--six from Korea, one from the Bahamas, and five from the US. We welcome to this year's Study/Action faculty, Seungsook Moon, a doctoral candidate at Brandeis University, who is facilitating the *Social Analysis and Ethics* class with Nancy Richardson. Donna Bivens is again facilitating *Liberation Spirituality*, while Elizabeth Bettenhausen is again facilitating *Feminist Theology and Theory* class.

The "Loves Herself. Regardless" retreat was about to burst out of its quarters on Cape Cod as the largest group the program retreat has had to date participated in discussions around the theme "Naming and Claiming all of Who We Are". Says Renae Scott, Resource Center Co-ordinator, "Taking the theme, we explored the various roles and images of ourselves as African American women: sister, mother, lover,

friend. Who we are versus the roles we play." Women are already signing up for the next retreat in January when the topic will be "Creativity".

Money, Class, and the WTC

On October 8, 1992, a group of about twenty-five women from different class locations and income brackets gathered at the WTC, in response to our invitation to come talk about the ethical issues surrounding money and class as these impact the WTC. Though there was far too much to talk about in just a couple of hours, WTC staff learned a lot of things we didn't know before. Our learnings include:

- our sliding scale for programs is more of a skid than a slide as it goes neither high enough nor low enough to represent the variety of people who would like to attend;
- there is a significant number of people who know about us and support our work through donations, but who have never met any of us or attended any of our events;

- there are far too few places where women can get together to talk about money or class;
- the WTC needs to give supporters and potential program participants more information about what things cost us and where the money to pay for things is expected to come from. (The budget you find on page 7 is one way of beginning to give more information to our public.)
- we need to continue this discussion.

It was clear from people's sharing that this is an issue that many of us are grappling with both in our personal lives and in the lives of the organizations we hold close to our hearts. You will be hearing about this issue again.

Interns at the WTC

We are encouraged each fall by the willingness of interns from local universities to put in time at the WTC. This year, we welcome back Grove who

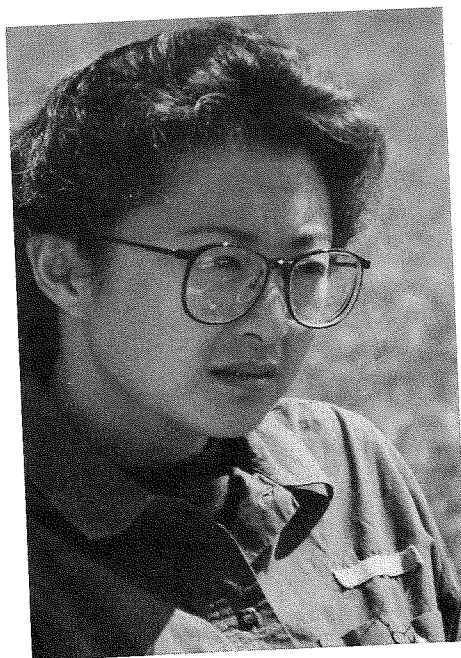


photo by Elizabeth Bettenhausen
Seungsook Moon, Study/Action facilitator, 1992-93

is now a Harvard Divinity School student trying to make connections between business and ethics. (Stressful, yes.) In addition to working on the business end of things with me, Grove will be helping out with the WTC self-study project.

Another Harvard Divinity School Student who is back with us this year is Julie Canniff whose main preoccupation this year is helping Loretta Williams coordinate the WTC self-study. In her work at Harvard, Julie is learning to develop curricula that is multi-cultural, multi-racial, and multi-religious.

Finally, Pat Hawkins, an Episcopal Divinity School student, is interning as the resident pastor in computerology, or woman-in-charge of whatever hardware and software the rest of us can't figure out. If you thought bringing together the fields of business and ethics was tricky, try pastoral care and computer science.

Our belief that all things are connected is not necessarily shared by all members of the academy. Thus, in return for their services to us, a lot of what we give back to interns is sanity and affirmation. It is a very good working relationship.

Recent Grants Received

As reflected in our budget on page 9, we have received a grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation which will enable us to conduct a self-study in which we will be reviewing the last ten years and envisioning the next ten. You will be hearing much more about this very soon--particularly through a survey you will receive soon.

We have also received grants for doing anti-racism work. These have come from the Boston Foundation, the Racine Dominicans, and the Society of the Sacred Heart.

Study/Action Alums

We congratulate Stacy Kabat ('88) on her recent receipt of this year's Reebok Human Rights Award for her work with battered women. The Reebok Foundation will give \$25,000 to an organization of Stacy's choice. For years now, Stacy has been advocating in the court and prison systems on behalf of women who have been battered, more specifically for The Framingham Eight,



photo by Elizabeth Bettenhausen

This year's Study/Action class retreating on Cape Cod.

Memorial/Recognition Fund
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from
CHERYL GILES
in memory of
LUCILLE GILES and
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Special Thanks to
CHARLES WALCOTT
for donating a TV
in memory of his mother.

WTC Wishlist

armchairs and large pillows for
our classroom;
VCR for anti-racism trainings;
bookshelves; meditative music
tapes; fax machine

a group of women currently serving time for killing their batterers in self defense. Stacy is the volunteer director of Battered Women Fighting Back. As a Study/Action student, Stacy interned at Renewal House, a shelter for battered women. Her devotion to this work has been evident since we met. We are proud of her accomplishments and wish her much strength in the pursuit of justice for battered women. May the violence end soon.

We share with Mary Anne Bodecker (88) the deep loss of her much loved son, Torsten Bodecker, who died of AIDS on September 27, 1992. We also stand in awe of the incredible ways in which she has integrated the spiritual, the political and the personal aspects of her AIDS work. That integration is reflected in her love, support and caring for Torsten; her help in creating RUAH, a hospice for homeless women with AIDS; and the time she takes for personal health and healing through mediation and retreat. Through her modelling, we have learned and continue to learn much. #

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