

Women's Theological Center



Quarterly Newsletter

December, 2002
Volume 20, No. 4
ISSN: 1062-6565

In this issue:

A Safe Place to Surrender
by Gladys A. Wheaton

**A World That Works
for Everyone**
by Noel Doyle

Reflections on Assembly 02
by Ann Flynn

The Axis Of Good
by Donna Bivens

**Taking Process Work
to the Streets**
by Meck Groot

Poem
by Alana Todman

FEE: Free to our members
Libraries: \$35/year



Penny Hodge, Marlies Zammuto, Gladys Wheaton, and Kasuko Sugiyama
working together in small group at
"Exploring Spiritual Leadership for These Times" held January 25, 2003.

A Safe Place to Surrender

by Gladys A. Wheaton, Member

My ancestor gift word was *Surrender*. My reaction was, "What do you mean surrender? Haven't I surrendered enough?!"

As someone relatively new to the WTC, who had participated previously in a retreat and a workshop, I welcomed the opportunity to attend this "Exploring Spiritual Leadership for These Times" workshop. I was full of anticipation.

As I entered the building wondering where to go, I saw the sign and then the light in the narrow hallway, a gold yellow light. There was a warm glow, inviting color and evidence of activity in the room beyond. It was there that I received my ancestor card.

As I entered the room, the signs of warmth and welcome were everywhere with images, inspirational messages, and color all around the walls. Candlelight and an atmosphere of peace and openness drew me in further. Paying the fee and making one's name tag became more like an offering than a business transaction, and choosing an ancestor card became an entrance into a spiritually communal event, a reminder that we were not alone in this workshop in the cosmic scheme of things.

Thus, finding one's own place in the circle of chairs had as much to do with Spirit as physical location. One did not have to conform to someone

else's idea of "where to sit," and the altar in the center, signifying a universally recognized but variously named spiritual center, allowed one to recognize the communal bond beyond the specific focus of the moment.

Upon taking my chosen place, I found that we were a varied group of women and one man who were, as well, new to WTC as well as long term, with levels of participation from minimal to maximum. We were/are various color, cultures and ethnicities, economic categories, and educational backgrounds. A wonderful mix!

From the introductions to each other and the shared introductions of each other, through the meditation, the workshop exercises and the tasty, nourishing lunch, it was clear that the values espoused by WTC were all in operation, and that the vision and mission were still current for all those in attendance, not only the facilitators; that these tools not only had informed but could still inform each person of what they were about as well as provide a focal point from which to work with each other and into which to grow.

For me, personally, I experienced much healing. It began with the meditation where I was actually able to surrender to the process. During the rest of the time, I had the joy of offering myself and of being received, of receiving from oth-

ers and offering in return in a stimulating flow of reciprocity. It became a large womb space for the collection of our potential. I had hungered and thirsted for this for so long it was difficult to believe it was real. Surrender! Surrender! Surrender!

In one of my groups, we discussed the Golden Rule as a kind of guide to all relationships spiritual or otherwise: *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Matthew 7:12)*. We decided that it was important also “not to do unto others as we would not like to be done unto” and also “not do unto others what they would not like to have done unto them.” After all, we were not the same. What is appropriate for one person may not be appropriate for another. To me this was a helpful way to move away from stereotyping moments and methods of being of service.

In my African ancestry affinity group, I was able to touch again an old African American value of shared, non-gender specific, domestic duties and that of appreciating each person’s uniqueness. This was not new to us, and we rejoiced in claiming it and reclaiming it. What a feeling not to have to explain myself to people. It was wonderful.

I came away once again with hope, hope that it is possible to have and be part of not only a like-minded group of people but a like-hearted group of people; people who were concerned with mutual empowerment, mutual discovery, mutual cooperation and appreciation; people who were interested and active in fostering all of that throughout the world, each in our own little sphere of influence; people who were also concerned with helping each other help others draw upon the Universal Love Energy, and who aspire to do this without lock-stepping or mold-casting everyone; people who are accountable to that Universal Love Energy as they are experiencing it within themselves, and who have respect for its Presence and Expression in others. WOW! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Thank You for making it safe for me to

We can be contacted at:

617-536-8782

Fax: 617-536-3602

Email: WTC@world.std.com

A World That Works for Everyone

By Noel Doyle SNDdeN, Member

Longtime WTC member and former board member Noel Doyle was on sabbatical this year and wrote the following article on her latest exploration of spiritual leadership.

In the deepest part of my being, I yearn to help make this a world that works for everyone. In addition, I ask, is this not the yearning of most human beings? I believe it is, the loud and arrogant voices, decisions, and actions of so many of our leaders, ecclesial and political. I have come to believe that dwelling in anger about the misdeeds of these leaders serves no good purpose. Directing negative energy towards them only adds to the negativity already there. A newer strategy for me is to nurture the hope that there is some place in their hearts where my positive energy and that of many others can penetrate and actually bring about transformation. This is the challenge of non-violence; of loving one’s enemies — grounded in the teachings of all great religious leaders of our world.

Meanwhile, for my own inspiration, I turn my thoughts to the countless groups who are working daily for justice and peace. Many do this work with a growing awareness that however we use our gifts, wherever we “walk the walk and talk the talk” of peace making, community building, creation caring, people empowering, we are social artists.

“Social artistry” was at the core of bringing together 140 women and men of all different ages, faiths, cultures, and races to the Mystery School in New York. This school, in existence for 19 years, is under the capable direction of co-leaders Jean Houston and Peggy Rubin. Jean, a philosopher, teacher and psychologist; Peggy, a long time director of Sacred Theatre, offered to those who came for one weekend a month over a 9 month period, a most provocative and enlivening educational experience.

The theme is never the same at Mystery School, bringing some participants back for the whole 19 years, and others for 2 or more years. It was this year’s theme that caught my attention: “Powers: Becoming a Planetary Person.” The word “powers” here is taken from quantum physics, meaning “the act of trans-

forming energy.” It was exciting for me to find a place during my sabbatical year to explore with others the “energy, potency and grace of the peoples of the world,” their unique giftedness and contribution to the tapestry of our universe. The cultures we focused on were India, China, Africa, Italy, Greece, Bali, Andalusia, and the Aborigines culture of Australia.

Three of the many challenges given me at Mystery School and which I’m sure to ponder for a long time, I offer to you for your reflection:

◆ “There are openings, articulations of places where cultures can meet and exchange the skills and discoveries that have been uniquely theirs, but which now can belong to the whole planetary condition.” (Jean Houston)

How could this statement apply to you in the place where you are living and/or working?

◆ “Talking about cross cultural powers is soul work, reconciling work, magnifying work, energetic work, power work.” (Jean Houston)

Is it possible this kind of “soul work” could help us, to make this a world that works for everyone?

◆ “It seems to be on this planet that when the time is decadent and has run out and is ripe for renovation, something arises from the past or the future to supply it ... that a renaissance is a rebirth out of an outmoded, dying or impossible disastrous situation.” (Jean Houston)

Has the time come for an American Renaissance? What would this look like? How could it be part of our legacy for the next generation?

Attending The Mystery School in New York has expanded my consciousness, awakened my creativity, most importantly, deepened, and enriched my spirit. I pray that because of the gift given me through this experience I will find a new way to be in service to others and in harmony with the whole universe.◆



The Axis of Good

by Donna Bivens, Co-Director
and introduction by Anna Smulowitz

Donna Bivens was invited to speak at the 10th annual Newburyport YWCA's Martin Luther King breakfast January 20, 2003. We reprint her speech here, together with Anna Smulowitz's introduction of and context-setting for Donna's speech.

ANNA:

Good morning. I'm pleased to welcome all of you and I'm thrilled to honor a personal role model of mine, Dr. Martin Luther King. I must also take this opportunity to address recent offenses against the people of Newburyport. I have been a long-time resident that has always preached inclusion. However, for the most part, our collective tolerance has been untested.

Last month, a few vandals frightened an entire city. They did not personally injure anyone. And yet, an entire city reeled from the attack. Before the paint had dried, the bigoted words and symbols were sandblasted away and covered up... But the problem remains.

The offenders will be dealt with by the legal system, but all those who bear some responsibility for this crime cannot be charged. *We* are the citizens of this community, *we* shape its culture and values, and *we* have *failed*. I have failed. Our tolerance has been tested and it is difficult not to be discouraged by the results.

In our corner of the world, we have long championed equality while ignoring the very obvious: we have few minorities to treat as equals. This circumstance originated in history and geography but it continues due to sociology and economics. In the light of recent events, we must ask ourselves, does our homogeneity seed the fertile ground of hate in our community? Being ill prepared to address the primary causes of our homogeneity does not excuse us from confronting its effects.

In calling our untested tolerance by

its true name, indifference, by no means excuses us. The quote in front of Newburyport's Unitarian Church reads: Each Snowflake in an Avalanche Pleads Not Guilty. What I am saying is: tolerance that remains untested can easily devolve into tolerance that is *untaught*. And so as a community, we must reassess our failings, consider a new strategy: to teach respect, and to rededicate ourselves to converting our very lofty rhetoric into reality.

Admittedly, it is very difficult to combat an enemy that does not show itself plainly or often. And so we let our guard down. We are fortunate that we do not face a barrage of racism, but we cannot forget how to fight back. Today we honor a man who fought such a tidal wave of hate that it carried him to a much higher shore. And yet one rolling swell of adolescent hate has left us drifting in the well-charted territory of unpreparedness.

When asked by someone involved in the incident in Newburyport, someone who insists he didn't know his actions would hurt people, when asked how I *felt* when I heard what had taken place, my thoughts turned immediately from the Brown School, the South End, and the year two thousand three, to Kentucky, my hometown, and the 1950s. Upon seeing our synagogue vandalized and desecrated, my father wept. The stained glass was shattered and bleeding red swastikas were painted on the walls. As a child, I couldn't understand why he was crying, or why he said, "My God, it's not over." As an adult, I now understand that he stood on the familiar streets of Louisville seeing the ghosts of Eastern Europe...his village, his father weeping at the site of the broken glass and swastikas of their synagogue in 1939. The swastika will always be a symbol of hate for me, my father, my grandfather and all the Jewish people. When asked how I *felt* about this particular hate

crime in my adopted hometown of Newburyport, I *felt* all the weight, the anger, the ramifications of my *inheritance*.

And so with renewed determination, I dedicate myself to educating the children of our community on the principles I have long promoted but somehow, painfully, failed to bequeath. I dedicate myself to proving a worthwhile role model through actions and not simple words. I dedicate myself to exploiting my position as a seasoned member of this community to *both* speak out against what's gone wrong *and* figure out how to make it right. I am *confident* and *hopeful* that each of you will do the same. ♦

DONNA:

If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.

Mother Theresa

Thank you for the honor of speaking to you on Martin Luther King Day. King's Day is my favorite holiday because it calls us to reflect on our ancestors — both biological and spiritual. I also take it as a day to ponder our commitment to life. This year such reflection is especially profound because it comes as our country is poised for war on Iraq.

Saturday, I listened to the protesters in Washington as they again and again remembered and reflected on the life and words of Dr. King. They pleaded for three things that Dr. King gave his life for: peace, justice and love — a sort of axis of good. They inspired me. Hundreds of thousands of people — standing joyful and triumphant in the bitter, bitter cold to say to each other and the world what they stand for.

The work of the Women's Theological Center community is to support, help facilitate and cheer ourselves and others to take leadership. To take spiritual leadership towards creating transformation, liberation and justice for and in our world. The definition of spiritual leadership that we use was largely crystallized in one quote by Dr. King: "Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice and justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love."



The quote speaks volumes. Love is boldly named as the only truly creative force for power. In fact, the official quote says justice at its best is *power* correcting everything that stands against love. But in the transcript of one major speech Dr. King actually said: "Justice at its best is *love* correcting everything that stands against love."

In spiritual reality, the opposite of love is fear. Fear is what our government and media are most likely to encourage in us these days. Since September 11, we, as a nation, have tottered between a response to our terror with love and a response with fear. Most of the major institutions that have access to the formation of our opinions — our media — have favored tapping into and even stoking our fear. I believe the vast majority of us know that this is a knee-jerk response. We know it will not take us to where we must go if we are to survive and thrive. But too often fear has won out and we are afraid to even admit it to ourselves — let alone to proclaim it in our thoughts and speech and actions to our fellow citizens.

For this King's Day, the slogan that is in my soul for us is "no justice, no peace." It's a slogan that I used to hate but a New Year's Day conversation with the co-chair of the WTC board gave me a new way to look at it. I used to hear it as a challenge to some "other," as a taunt, a threat. I heard it as "If you don't give me justice, I won't let you have any peace". But now, I hear it only as a challenge to myself and any "we" I am a part of.

I hear: "If *I* don't work for justice. If I don't live and breathe to figure out how to heal that part of me that would choose injustice for others to protect my little self... If I don't confront the fear that keeps me from speaking and working against the injustice I see in myself and others... I will not know peace."

The same is true for we the people ... "we" the people of the United States ... For us Americans ... If we don't work for justice for all our fellow citizens ... If we don't live and breathe to figure out how to heal that part of us that would choose injustice and poverty and exploitation for the rest of the

world to protect our little selves and big comfort ... we will not have peace. If we don't confront the fear that keeps us from speaking and working against the injustice we see in ourselves and others ... we will not know peace.

We may have and know a lot of things that masquerade as ways to peace but we will not know peace... This is not a punishment from some far-off God looking down on us. It is the shared reality we keep choosing to create. The truth is we — collectively — do *not* know peace. We feign abundance and shop till we drop at mega-malls ... We buy so much *stuff* that we have to buy fancy containers or rent storage shelters for it, but we do not have peace. We feign power as we tool around in huge vehicles that look more and more like tanks — but we do not know peace. We feign calm and freedom-from-worry as we take antidepressants to get us out of bed everyday so we can give our lives to work that pays us well — or doesn't — but we do not have peace. We feign comfort as we obliterate our pain with alcohol and illegal drugs, pornography, hatred or rage — but we do not know peace. We feign nourishment as we collectively eat our way to obesity — but we do not have peace.

We feign security from surveillance equipment to control one outspoken enemy or from unprecedented military might that can destroy a recalcitrant world — but we do not know peace.

We — collectively — do not have what we want because we do not have peace. We do not have peace because we do not make justice. We do not make justice because we do not give ourselves over to the power of love. We do not give ourselves over to the power of love because we are lost in fear. I am not pointing my finger at anyone, at any "other." I am well aware that if I point out at you three fingers point back at me. And yet I know that however much I individually work for justice to earn my own peace, in the end it is all about US.

In the speech Dr. King made the night before he died, in his very last public words, he gave us a blueprint for how we are to find our peace. He said: "Well, I don't know what will happen

now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it doesn't *matter* with me now ... Because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people will get to the promised land. And I'm happy tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have *seen* the glory of the coming of the Lord."

The blueprint that Dr. King gave as I see it is this: Dr. King gave his thirty-nine years on this earth to a quest for justice. He lived a life propelled by love. But fear was a constant companion and he was not —nor did he claim to be — a perfect man. For so many years he did not have peace. There are pictures of him marching, flinching with fear even as he marched against death threats. He continued to march and speak and work and minister for justice propelled by nothing more than a loving heart and a faith in God.

I am nowhere *near*, not even *close* to that level of courage, dedication, love and commitment to transformation and justice. Perhaps no one among us is. But what Dr. King left us with that late night in April is his hard-earned wisdom that if we act as if, if we push beyond our fear, if we insist — to the best of our ability, wherever and whenever we are able — on justice ... one day some force for good beyond us will lift us up and the fear will dissipate and we will see it for the illusion that it was. And we will love freely and fully. Dr. King left us with an US. He said "we *as a People* will get there."

Our work to that end is to encourage and support, to inspire and challenge and cheer each other ... To face our fear through love ... To demand justice for ourselves and our fellow human beings ... To trust and use our love to correct everything that stands against love ... To search far and wide for kindred spirits who remember that "we belong to each other" and then to fall into the arms of a sweet peace that passeth all understanding. ♦

Taking Process Work to the Streets

by Meck Groot, Co-Director



Lisbeth Gerritsen, Ada Rios Rivera and Carol Zahner at a WTC/ Maine Works in Process weekend led by Ada and Carol on Process Work in November.

We must accept equality or die.

W.E.B. DuBois

In November, WTC hosted a weekend in Process Work, cosponsored by Maine Works in Process and facilitated by Ada Rios Rivera and Carol Zahner. It was an amazing experience for me — one in which I was given tools that I have been using almost daily since that weekend.

Process Work offers methods for tending relationships — with oneself, intimate others, groups, institutions, etc. It provides tools for being attentive to the many things that are going on in any exchange and any experience. It asks us to pay particular attention to the things that we as individuals or as groups are marginalizing — the feelings, the ideas, the images, the people, the energies. It's goal is *awareness. Deep awareness.* Among its many benefits, Process Work offers ways to engage conflict, to be inclusive and intentional, to give space to what wants to be seen yet is being blocked from view. "It focuses upon the intended and unintended processes, upon what is happening and trying to happen, not upon who should be present, what should be happening, or what roles should be filled." (*Glossary of Process Work Terms* as compiled by J. M. Revar).

Ada told us that she considers herself the most fascinating creature alive. As such, she approaches herself with intense curiosity and interest. Her mod-

eling presented us with a profound invitation for each of us to see ourselves the same way. Instead of pushing away the things we don't want to see (our "edges," as they are called in Process Work), we are invited to have a look and see what's really going on. We are invited to become ecologists of our own experience — recycling them to find what is useful instead of discarding them. Every experience has within it so

much to learn from, so much to be aware of. In really looking at the complexity of our experience, we learn something about what is called for in a moment, what is needed, what is calling out to be attended to and healed. Making such attention a practice is not easy — but I am discovering that it is enormously rewarding.

I have taken what I learned that weekend to the streets, so to speak. A case in point: on February 15, I joined hundreds of thousands of people in New York City who came to say "NO" to the US war against Iraq. We heard speaker after speaker remind us why this war is unjust and unjustifiable. This is the voice currently marginalized by the mainstream press and the Bush Administration. Not surprisingly, the response from Washington to the unprecedented worldwide protest: disregard. Such disregard is exactly what process workers point to as the energy that births terrorism. When all parts cannot come together equally, those who are outranked will find any way they can to be paid attention to.

Those in power know this, and so, 5000 police officers spent their day in the cold corralling us — trying to make us little, afraid, and invisible. They were determined that we would not shut down Manhattan. The polarity between the "public authorities" (government and police) maintaining control and the "moral authorities" (protesters) vying to be seen and heard charged the air the

whole day. Police carried batons and guns; some rode horses that rushed into a crowd to break it up. Each officer was a unique and distinct individual — personalities were evident — and yet, together, these police men and women became a force. While the police stood shoulder to shoulder, or cruised in vans, or charged on horses, protesters — again, unique and individual — made up another energy. We became the "terrorists" or the potential terrorists. We moved From First Avenue, to Second Avenue, to Third Avenue — on our own mission to be noticed, paid attention to, counted!!! "Whose streets?" "Our streets!"

Ada and Carol helped me remember through the experience of the workshop that all the energies that exist outside of us also live inside of us. All of the energies on the streets of Manhattan that day were inside of me. Part of me wanted to beat up the cop who pushed me, part of me wanted to wear an NYPD uniform and ride a horse, part of me wanted to cry like the little girl on her dad's shoulders when the horses came swooping down, part of me wanted to go sight seeing along with other tourists, part of me wanted to be in my warm and comfortable home ignoring the whole thing — disregarding the peril we are all in together.

The workshop was called "*The Good, The Bad and the Ugly: Embracing our Totality from the Outside In.*" As I recycle my experience of the streets of Manhattan, I know that everywhere I turned, was a mirror. Obliterating dictators will not eliminate the dictatorship that lives inside us. Ousting a predator will not end preying. Getting rid of "problem people" will not make problems go away. What we are challenged to do — at this moment when we stand on the lip of total planetary destruction — is to acknowledge and honor every energy. All energies want space and need tending. All energies have a purpose and serve a need. Moving toward our edges — individually and collectively — so that we are better able to think the unthinkable and see what we are blocking from view is deep spiritual work. The beauty is that we can do it anywhere, anytime. ♦

NOTE: WTC is offering another weekend in Process Work on March 28 to 30 (see back cover for details.)

Reflections On Assembly 02

by Ann Flynn, MMM

In October, Donna and Meck led the Medical Missionaries of Mary in an exploration of the ways in which dominant white culture plays out within that religious congregation. The following is one sister's reflections on her experience.

Racism. A word we hear often and usually in situations spelling some kind of trouble in the neighborhood or across the globe. Instinctively, we sense a "not niceness" about it. Hence, our tendency to remove ourselves from it.

Recognizing that racism adversely affects everyone everywhere, we opt as a Congregation to keep looking at this together. In October, we had our Assembly up in the Boston area ... Medical Missionaries of Mary and MMM Associates from the US. Leading into the Assembly, was the "Retreat with Medical Missionaries of Mary: Spiritual Leadership and Dominant White Culture" given by two women from the Women's Theological Center: Donna Bivens and Marian Groot.

The title the women put on their presentation was in itself unsettling. No doubt, this was no accident. We find ourselves in 'dominant white culture' and denying this would only compound the problem. This was not to be the traditional "workshop" approach ... this was a 'retreat.' Leadership was not coming out of political, economic, social, religious realms. It was coming from Soul... from that part deep within each of us that has the capacity, the Creator's creativity, to transform. That's unsettling! I am personally responsible to look at myself as a racist. To even say it, causes me to stammer...how dare I call myself that!

I dare and I get the courage to do this because there is no choice. Knowing I am part of a community, each wrestling with this issue, adds incentive to face this pain. No longer can the being unaware hide and protect me. The obligation to look long and hard at the seemingly uneventful events and the chance meetings with others, begins to weigh heavily...as any task does when not being dealt with

properly.

Awareness. Looking at the word, I see it contains the word 'war' and rightly so because it is a sort of battle to be aware. There are personal casualties involved because it is not a one-time event. It hurts when I have to own that I have 'pulled rank' whether that is in the grocery store, here at home with my sister...or anywhere else with anyone else. Practice awareness. Looking at and seeing my failures with the eye of the artist ... knowing I can do better than that ... because that is what I am being called to and He will not fail me.

Living in the moment. "Transforming"... a verb in the present tense. Also a noun. Awareness births transforming. The presenters frequently used the term "across differences" and I thought of the phrase "across the miles." The miles are not stumbling blocks. They are merely the links which connect ... each precious with it's own particular brand of landscape. All part of the whole ... to be acknowledged, received and not made to conform to the last one. I don't know if I can overcome racism. I do know I can become a "recovering racist." It is spiritual work and daily spiritual work. The more I recognize the "I am" in me, the more I will recognize it others. The more I can learn to see across differences, the more I will be able to see Who is our Connection.

Now what! No pulling a bushel over the light ... this is something to be shared. How? Well, Sr. Kathleen Mc Cluskey, CSJ who facilitated one of the other sections of the Assembly, gave us a very good quote: "The answer to how is 'YES.'" For starters, when friends and neighbors asked, "How was your trip and what did you do?" I tell them about our work on the racism issue. The "pulling rank" really hits home and is a good springboard into the topic. We are all 'different' and our uniqueness comes from our Central Core ... the Divine Umbilical Cord ... linking us across differences! ♦

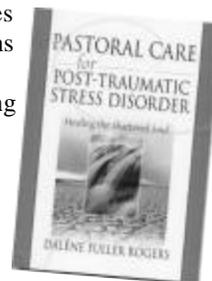
New Books by Members

Pastoral Care for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Healing the Shattered Soul
by Daléne Fuller Rogers

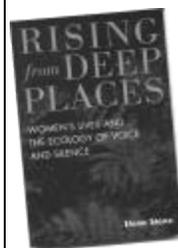
This book provides the practical means to support people through the healing process while maintaining their spiritual grounding. Rooted in her own Christian tradition, Daléne

addresses many dimensions of PTSD from the perspective of a pastor working with individuals and groups, and within social structures and belief systems.

Binghamton, NY: The Hawthorn Pastoral Press, 2002, 122 pages.



Rising From Deep Places: Women's Lives and the Ecology of Voice and Silence
by Elena Stone



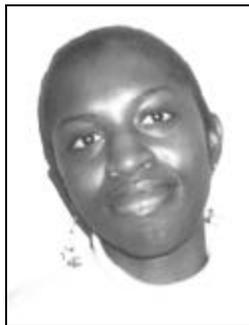
A provocative study using the stories and experiences of grassroots activists and artists to explore the question, "How do women find their voices?"

Interviews with African-American, white working-class, and Jewish women provide the foundation for Elena's look at the meaning of voice and silence in relation to living in a body, building community, seeking justice, creating art, and affirming one's connection with the earth.

New York: Peter Lang, 2002, 206 pages.

Poem

by Alana Todman



Do you know what it is like to already be dead?
To the point where a gunshot to the head wouldn't do
damage, because your soul and spirit is already gone?
Do you know what it is like when your world stops, and
everything around you is like a slow motion carousel
You have an outer body experience and you're almost not even here, but you
carry out the motions of the day
There are many people who walk around dead, their life squelched by the
rivers of pain
They continued on the river of pain for so long, their emotions vanished and
the gleam of their eyes became faint
It's like they're waiting for a seaman to rediscover the beauty of a shell
Waiting to be found, but still not discovered
The lonely void is consistent as each heart beat, and it never seems to be gone
They do not run to a man, or a female, but they run to their natural abilities
they work so hard, that they erase their very self in an attempt to give
But they have been so hurt that a brick wall encases the soul, and they live in
an internal jail cell
Some people survive, and others who die physically were dead long before.
But there are a few people who take a hammer and try to break the wall down,
it takes a lot of strength in the beginning to look at the depth of the wall.
You start pounding away the pain, and the traumatic incident, and then you
become overwhelmed, wondering
if the wall will ever come down. And only at the beginning, you give up for
some weeks, trying to
re-fuel your self for the next round.
Alright so you don't even return. You pray, you read, you watch television
shows about living
and hope, you sense a perk again, and you go after the brick wall again.
You are so focused on cutting down the brick wall, that no one can be in
your way. Friends or family cannot supercede your conviction to live.
They do not understand why you can be so serious
Why you cannot date on a casual level
Why you go some God in you, and no longer want to do the things you used to
You pound and pound and slowly begin to feel a level of calm within. It's so
peaceful you walk around like you're on a spiritual high
No marijuana, heroin, or crack needed thank you.
You pull on the strength of those who lived before
you pull on the strength of all the mountains you climbed over, and single
handedly pat yourself on the back
The brick wall for some comes tumbling down, for others if not early
enough, they die a silent death.
How many mourners will it take to end the recycle of pain? ♦

*Alana Todman is an artist/activist and a new supporter of WTC. She works at one of
our oldest sister organizations: the Irish Immigration Center.*

MEMBERSHIP / GIFTS

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Check all the apply:

I wish to become a WTC Member
at the level noted below.

I wish to renew my WTC me m-
bership at the level noted below.

I am registering for (details on
back cover)

Book Birthing (\$75 or \$100)

Roots and Wings (\$175 or
\$195)

Minimum deposit of \$25 required.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Precious Member (\$5)
(ages 0 to 17)

Steadfast Member (\$25 or \$10
low income)

Prayerful Member (\$50)

Faithful Member (\$100)

Miracle Member (\$250)

Sustaining Member (\$500)

Purposeful Member (\$1000)

Giving Member (\$2500 +)

METHOD OF PAYMENT

I'm enclosing a check, money
order or cash.

I am using my credit card
(complete information below)

CREDIT CARD INFO:

VISA / MC / AmEx

Card Number:

Name as on the card:

Expiration date: ____/____

Signature: _____

Return to:

**Women's Theological Center
P.O. Box 1200
Boston, MA 02117**



**BOOK
BIRTHING
with
NIAMBI JAHA**

March 14, 9 am to 4 pm

Writing a book is an art. Self-publishing it is a business. Giving birth to a book from “conception to delivery” is both challenging and rewarding. In this workshop we will ease the labor pains by learning:

- *how creating a book works*
- *counting the costs*
- *keeping your book healthy as it grows*
- *getting the support you need and more*

Niambi Jaha is a writer, fine artist and public speaker with over 15 years experience working with various kinds of creativity. Using 10 year experience in the printing industry, she is the owner of Perfect Books, a company geared specifically at assisting clients with Self-Publishing their literary works. Her workshops combine spirituality, art, and creativity to empower and enlighten. She is currently collaborating with WTC on a new project.

Cost (with lunch): WTC members — \$75
Non members — \$100

**ROOTS & WINGS
FOR
COMMUNITY BUILDERS
a group process training
with SALOME SCHWARZ**

**March 28, 7 to 9 pm; 29, 10 am
to 6 pm; and 30, 10 am to 1:30 pm**

This seminar will focus on expanding our abilities and skills as awareness facilitators for personal, organizational, and community transformation. We will

- explore the roles we play in transforming power and rank issues
- add a diverse and multi-dimensional awareness to our facilitation styles
- discover hidden gifts and eldership in trouble spots
- expand our small and large group facilitation skills

Salome Schwarz is a certified process worker with a private therapy practice in Oregon. She is a faculty member and trainer at the Process Work Center of Portland.

WTC members & early registration—\$175
Non-members after March 10—\$195

For a large print edition of this newsletter call 617-536-8782.

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Boston, MA
Permit No. 58625

Women's Theological Center
P.O. Box 1200, Boston, MA 02117-1200
Return Service Requested

