

A CONFERENCE ON

**WOMEN  
AND  
SPIRITUALITY**

**WOMEN'S LIVES  
IN WORLD  
RELIGIONS**



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1983

**RELIGIOUS STUDIES &  
WOMEN'S STUDIES  
MANKATO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

**UNITED  
CHRISTIAN  
CAMPUS CENTER**

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 8:15-9:00 a.m. Registration - Trafton Center, Room C121
- 9:00-9:15 a.m. Welcome and introductions
- 9:15-9:30 a.m. Singing, and led group singing
- 9:30-10:30 a.m. Keynote Speaker (Rita Gross) and questions
- 10:30-10:45 a.m. Singing, followed by break time
- 11:00-12:15 Morning workshops
- 12:15-1:15 p.m. Lunch
- 1:15-1:30 p.m. Singing
- 1:30-3:00 p.m. Panel of five faiths and questions
- 3:00-3:15 p.m. Singing, followed by break and refreshment
- 3:30-5:00 p.m. Afternoon workshops
- 5:15 p.m. Dinner
- 6:40-7:00 p.m. Singing
- 7:00-8:30 p.m. Interfaith service of celebration
- 8:30-? p.m. Space available for rapping, discussion, etc. as wanted

NOTE: Those taking the Conference for credit will meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday and from 1:00-5:00 p.m. Sunday.

Those attending the MN Women's Studies Association meeting will meet Friday from 1:00-5:00 p.m.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

### RITA M. GROSS

Rita Gross, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Wisconsin--Eau Claire, is nationally known in the study of women and religion. Her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago was earned with the dissertation Exclusion and Participation: The Role of Women in Aboriginal Australian Religions. Rita's specializations--in addition to women and religion--include Indian religious thought, the religions of pre-literate humankind, and research methodology.

Rita has received grants to study Hindu concepts of deity as female, for advanced study of Buddhist practice and theory, and for a post-doctoral study tour of India. She has lectured widely on these and related topics, with a strong emphasis on applications of materials from other cultures to Western feminist spiritual thought.

Rita has been very active in the Women and Religion section of the American Academy of Religion. One of its founders, she also served as its chairperson from 1974 to 1980. She has been involved in the feminist work of the Academy's Women's Caucus, and served on its Research and Publications Committee from 1980 to 1983. Among her many other professional commitments is membership in the International Executive Committee of the East-West Religions Institute since 1981.

Rita has edited two books: Beyond Androcentrism: New Essays on Women and Religion, Scholars Press, 1977; and (with Nancy A. Falk) Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures, Harper & Row, 1980. She serves on the editorial board of Anima: An Experiential Journal, and consults for various other journals and publishers. Her extensive journal publications include articles on feminist thought and Buddhism, women in tribal religions, feminine dimensions of the sacred, feminine imagery of Deity in Jewish theology, reflections on Mary Daly's Gyn/Ecology, and methodological articles on the study of women's religiousness.

Rita believes that the spiritualities of the major world faiths have been, for the most part, written by and for men. In her keynote address, she will share her reflections on the inappropriateness of these spiritualities for women, and will suggest steps toward developing a spirituality by and for women.

## KEYNOTE PANEL

### SAJIDA ALVI

Sajida Alvi, a native Pakistani, is with the South and Southeast Asian Studies Department of the University of Minnesota as an associate professor. Her Islamic faith has been a part of her life from her early days, and her academic career also involves study of Islamic culture and traditions.

### EDNA BERNHARDT

Educator Edna Bernhardt, an ALC Lutheran, has taught in the public schools and has done research in guidance. She is a church deacon for Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Redwood Falls, Edna is doing graduate work in counseling, and has worked in the nuclear freeze movement.

### RUTH FINGERHUT

Jewish educator Ruth Fingerhut co-founded the "Twin Cities Women's Minyan," a ritual community for Jewish women. Seeking new paths for Jewish women's spirituality, she has created woman-centered Jewish celebrations that embrace tradition and new visions.

### INDIRA Y. JUNGHARE

Professor Indira Y. Junghare, born and brought up in India, received her M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. She has been teaching at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, since 1972. Her teaching and research are in the areas of Indian philosophy, Hinduism, Buddhism, Indian women, Indian linguistics and literature. She is a middle caste Hindu.

### SONJA MARGULIES

San Franciscan Sonja Margulies has been a student of zazen (Zen Buddhist meditation) since 1969 and received lay ordination in 1975. She has been very active in the Zen community in California and is a transpersonal psychotherapist. Currently, she is an Associate Editor of The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology and a member of the Board of the Bodhi Teachers' Endowment Trust.

## WORKSHOPS

### Morning

#### "Anonymous" 12-step Programs as a Spirituality for Women

Kate Brown is a Mankato attorney. She has worked a 12-step program for over four years after three years of serious struggle, ending in a breakthrough to relative peace.

Workshop: This time is for sharing experiences and talking about implementing a 12-step program for oneself. The merits and drawbacks of the 12-step program as spiritual work for women will be highlighted. For Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, other anonymous program workers--and anybody interested in learning more about this widespread spirituality.

### Changing Assumptions About Women in Early Christianity

Barbara Keating, a MSU sociologist specializing in family, gender roles, and research methods, was raised a Catholic. Dissatisfied with her religious education, she studied the history of women in the church on her own. Dissatisfied with women's roles in her conservative Evangelical Lutheran Synod, Barbara Quick's spiritual journey has led her away from Christianity. Karen Malecha attended Catholic schools for 12 years. She is interested in the contributions of religious myths to misogyny.

Workshop: The workshop examines and challenges the assumptions made about women in church history. It discusses the impact these assumptions have had on the roles of women in contemporary religion.

### Chinese Religious Traditions

Miriam K. Lo, Geography Department at MSU, is a cultural geographer. Her special interests include Chinese philosophies and religions, and relationships between culture and economic development.

Workshop: It is often believed that Confucianism is a religion, although it is not. Taoism, however, has a religious as well as a philosophical base. This workshop identifies the basic tenets of Taoism, and traces relationships between it and Confucian thought.

### Christian Responses to the Arms Race

Florence Sponberg, a Lutheran minister's daughter, is a professor emerita from MSU. Her interest in religion is lifelong. Not allowed to attend seminary herself, she has devoted herself to social concerns. In recent years, she has made the peace movement her major occupation.

Workshop: The enormity of nuclear threat and concern for the children and grandchildren who come after us make the subject of nuclear disarmament a potent issue. This workshop shares the fruits of much study and research, and suggests ways that concerned religious women can help.

### Global Spirituality--World Wide Consciousness

Patricia A. Keefe, OSF, earned a M.A. in theology. A J.D., she currently practices law part time and also works as a staff member of Global Education Associates. She is researching international law and conducting workshops in Global Education concepts.

Workshop: The workshop stresses need for a global spirituality deeply grounded in oneness with the earth and consciousness that all living beings share the same source of life. A living spiritual journey, if based on the depths of one's inner being, provides the creative imagination needed to address global problems. The workshop includes time for input and sharing.

### Goddess Images of the Ancient Mediterranean

Nancy Luomala, Associate Professor of Art History at MSU, has been involved with women's, religious, and minority studies since 1967. She has taught, lectured, and published on women artists, feminist art, iconography of Egyptian queens, and related topics. She paints, draws, sculpts, and mothers two creative feminist daughters.

Workshop: This lecture and slide presentation focuses on symbols of the pre-creative principle in prehistoric Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East. Paleolithic rock art, megalithic architecture, and goddess icons will be shown.

### In-and-Out Ambivalent Catholic Women

Mary Jo Meadow, an ambivalent Catholic, has been with MSU's Psychology Department since 1975. Her areas of specialty are psychology of religion and psychology of women; her first two books will be published this winter. She also does marital therapy, and individual therapy on women's and spiritual concerns.

Workshop: This workshop offers a forum for sharing. We celebrate positive aspects of the Catholic tradition, while recognizing the sexism, legalism, and dogmatism that negatively affects us. Bring your own story to share, and learn what signs of hope exist for bonding, sharing, and support among Catholic women.

### Incorporating the Goddess into our Lives

Suzanne L. Bunkers, a "recovering Catholic," is Assistant Professor of English at MSU, specializing in women's literature. She was reared in rural Iowa parochial schools. Her active examination of her own spirituality includes studying alternatives to traditional patriarchal religion.

Workshop: This workshop examines images of the goddess as they appear in literature by women. Discussion will include looking at ways in which women writers have named "the goddess within," and identifying means of empowering ourselves to reclaim the goddess within each of us.

### Judaism as Cultural Identity: A Woman's Perspective

Natalie Rosinsky, granddaughter of a Jewish immigrant woman, grew up on the outskirts of a large Hassidic community in New York. Since 1974, she has lived in the Midwest as a feminist student, teacher, and scholar of literature. She speaks as a culturally-identified Jewish woman.

Workshop: Why are obsessive, domineering mothers called "Jewish mothers"? How did the "Jewish American Princess" become a recognized literary character? And why are we still concerned today about dark-haired Rebecca vs. fair Rowena in Ivanhoe? This discussion considers Western culture's historic and contemporary roles, stereotypes, and options for Jewish women.

### Lesbian Women's Christian Experiences

Jan Bodin celebrated her fifth ordination anniversary in the Lutheran Church of America by attending a Catholic Mass near the UCC Church of which she is now a member. "Exiled" from the Lutheran church for affirming her entirety--which includes being lesbian--she struggles to remain faithful.

Workshop: The workshop will gather reflections on lesbian lifestyles and experiences, look at scripture on the subject, and examine pertinent church policies. Jan will offer resources, and encourages sharing of experiences.

### Liberating God from Sexist Language and Imagery

Sisters Michelle Meyers and Kay O'Neil are feminist Catholic nuns. Since 1973 they have developed and taught courses throughout the upper midwest on women in the Christian tradition, on assertiveness for Christian women, and on integrating Christianity and feminism.

Workshop: Key issues in liberating the Christian God from sexist imagery and language include how God is depicted, named, prayed to and talked about. Practical applications for change will be suggested, and resources for further study will be offered.

### Meditation, Women, and Health Issues

Mary Gail Sovik, Administrator of the Center for Higher Consciousness in Minneapolis, has studied meditation for ten years in a tradition of Himalayan teachers. An M.S. in Educational Psychology, she has held numerous counseling positions. She also teaches yoga and meditation.

Workshop: The workshop includes relaxation methods, definition and introductory steps to meditation, and breath awareness study. These experiences promote good health in mind, body, and spirit. Women's concerns will be a special focus.

### Religion and Family Planning

Laura Loving, an ordained UCC minister, is especially interested in ministry to women. She organized the pastoral counseling program for The Religious Affairs Committee of Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, and has lectured on various religious issues in family planning. Last year she became a planned parent.

Workshop: The workshop will discuss the interest and involvement or organized religion in family planning issues such as contraception and abortion. Time will be allowed for sharing of experiences and for questions and answers.

### Afternoon

#### Food in Celebrations of Four Faiths

Beth Zimmer, Home Economics Department of MSU, is a scholar of religious celebrations involving food. She has collected slides of many celebrations, and investigated the importance of food in them. Beth has served on campus ministry boards.

Workshop: This slide and lecture presentation looks at the role that food plays in celebrations of the faiths investigated. The traditions' celebrations will be explained by word and picture. Questions and answers about the food involved will follow.

### Images of the Feminine in Ancient Greece and India

Nancy Luomala, Associate Professor of Art History at MSU, has been involved with women's, religious, and minority studies since 1967. She has taught, lectured, and published on women artists, feminist art, iconography of Egyptian queens, and related topics. She paints, draws, sculpts, and mothers two creative feminist daughters.

Workshop: This lecture and slide presentation focuses on the roles and functions of goddesses in Greek myth, Hinduism, and early Buddhism, as illustrated in their sculpture and architecture.

### Matilda Joslyn Gage: Heretic/Visionary

Sally Roesch Wagner, Chair of Women's Studies at MSU, has researched the life of an early American feminist, Matilda Joslyn Gage for 10 years in preparation for writing a three-volume biography of Gage. She wrote an introduction to Woman, Church & State, Gage's major work and a feminist classic.

Workshop: Gage created the first feminist analysis of pre-historic matriarchies, demanded that the female-ness of God be recognized, and named the Church as the primary source of woman's oppression. She formed an anti-church organization in 1890. This workshop will explore Gage's religious theory and work.

### Mother Earth, Grandmother Moon

Mary Van Voorhis has coordinated American Indian programs at Mankato State since 1976. She has taught and lectured widely on minority women, and done advocacy work in education, health, social service, and employment. She is also a human relations consultant.

Workshop: The workshop explores the varying understandings of mother earth, grandmother moon, and other nature symbols among a variety of Native American tribes.

### Rejecting Stereotypes of Jewish Women

Vicki Epstein Pieser is a life-long, small town Jew comfortable with reforms in Judaism and the challenge of interacting with an urban Jewish community. Her Jewish heritage interested her in work in fields that require questioning ethical systems: social work, teaching, and community volunteer work.

Workshop: Stereotyping of Jewish women has led to anti-Semitism and has been detrimental to the self-concept of Jewish women. To refute distorted stereotypes and negate victim-blaming, the workshop seeks Jewish role models from the past and recognizes Jewish women's contributions to religious and secular affairs.

### Spirituality and Health

Becky Banks, Health Science Department at MSU, has long been interested in the relationships between health practices and concerns and individual spirituality. Her thesis project involved an extensive study of such issues.

Workshop: This slide/tape presentation investigates the spiritual dimension of health. It includes a definition, discussion of daily applications, and how the spiritual dimension interacts with the other dimensions of health. There is also a section showing a spiritual retreat via nature.



### Spirituality Through Movement

Florence A. Cobb, Associate Professor at MSU, teaches dance and coordinates dance education programs and curriculum. She is dedicated to the elevation of the human spirit.

Workshop: This activity workshop will lead participants into movement exercises that enhance self-appreciation, release of tension, and sensitivity to the voice of one's human spirit. Self-expression in movement to music has an integrating and whole-making effect.

### Woman-Centered Rituals

Patti Lather, MSU Women's Studies Assistant Professor, researches women in traditional occupations. She has been a member of a women's spirituality circle for several years.

Workshop: Contemporary women's spirituality often focuses on solstice and equinox celebrations. Patti will lead group members in activities that provide an experiential awareness of women-centered ritual and spiritual celebration.

### Women and Quakers: A Spirituality of Wholeness

Marilyn Beckstrom, a ministry student, works as a career planning consultant and retreat leader. She has taught and been a business consultant. Her life in various spiritual communities has focused on important concerns with social justice issues, intentional community, and relating the inner and outer journeys.

Workshop: Quakers consider all to be priests, affirm inner experience, and are actively committed to social justice. They live by consensual agreement rather than hierarchical structure. This workshop applies their insights to women's lives today, using group discussion and a variety of exercises and activities.

### Women's Experience in Ministry

The Rev. Sandra Holmberg is an Episcopal priest who served as campus chaplain at MSU for three years. Her ministry focuses on women. Special interests include spiritual growth and spiritual direction, journaling, counseling, and peace and justice issues.

Workshop: This workshop is designed for clergy, women thinking about attending seminary, and women involved in active lay ministry. The focus will be a sharing of stories, how we cope with discrimination, and how our spirituality can serve as a ground of and support for our ministries.

### Zen Buddhism for Women

Karen Thorkelson, a psychologist and psychotherapist, has been practicing Zen meditation since 1968. She was ordained a Zen priest in 1980, and practices at the Minnesota Zen Meditation Center in Minneapolis.

Workshop: The workshop includes instruction in zazen (Zen meditation) and an opportunity to meditate together. Particular attention will be given to the ways women can shape the present manifestation of this ancient religion that has proven adaptable to cultural conditions and is inherently egalitarian in its philosophy.

## OTHER PARTICIPANTS

### MUSIC

Kathleen Gates, Licensed Psychologist  
Center for Psychological Health, Good Thunder, MN

She has been a therapist for 14 years working at MSU, MN Addictions Center, and Southern MN Psychiatric and Stress Clinic. She has presented many workshops for women in the areas of victimization, chemical dependency and sexuality. Kathy, who is the mother of two adolescent daughters, Kjirsten and Kylie, has been involved with the Lutheran Student Foundation, the Board of Directors of Women for Sobriety, and is a member of Messiah Lutheran Church, Mankato, MN. She and her partner, Katherine Speare, have led music at several women's worship services.

Katherine H. Speare, PH.D., Licensed Consulting Psychologist  
Center for Psychological Health, Good Thunder, MN

Kathy works as a psychologist focusing on women's issues, victimization, and relationship and family issues. She moved to Minnesota two years ago after having worked as a psychologist at the University of New Hampshire. While she loves her work as a psychologist, her soul is that of a musician. She is a professional singer who has been a soloist with choirs in New York City and the Boston area. Kathy is a double Virgo and is the proud mother of an elderly dog, Tammy. She and her partner, Kathy Gates, have been collecting music to perform and share at women's worship services.

## OTHER CONFERENCE INFORMATION

Conference FEES: Pre-registration (by OCT. 14) -- \$15.00 (\$8.00 students, senior citizens)  
At Door -- \$20.00 (\$15.00 students, senior citizens)

MEALS: Those desiring meals MUST pre-register. The meal packet is \$10.00 extra and includes registration beverage, Saturday lunch and dinner. You are also welcome to bring a bag lunch or to make your own food arrangements. Food service on campus is, however, limited on weekends. (Vegetarian meals will be available.)

HOUSING: Those interested in housing should make their own reservations. The following motels are within the Mankato area:

Holiday Inn North - Hwy. 169 North (507)625-9333 - Single \$33.75; double \$41.00  
Holiday Inn Downtown - 101 Main Street (507)345-1234 - Single \$35.75; double \$43.00  
Redwood Motel - Hwy. 22 & 14 (507)388-1621 - Single \$18.00; double \$25.00  
Super Eight Motel - Hwy. 169 North (507)387-4041 - Single \$21.88; double 25.88  
Cliff Keyes Motel - 1227 North Front Street (507)388-1638 - Single \$17.00-\$19.00  
Double \$21.00-\$23.00  
Prime Rate Motel - Hwy. 169 & 14 (507)345-8800 - Single \$23.99; double \$29.90

MSU is accessible to the HANDICAPPED. Anyone who desires special arrangements should indicate those needs on the pre-registration blank.

Women whose religious practices require special arrangements for food, housing, or other needs should so indicate on the pre-registration blank.

CREDIT: Those interested in taking the Conference for one (1) credit either in Women's Studies or Religious Studies may do so. Two additional sessions (see Schedule, Page 2) are required as is a short paper and some readings. The Conference fee is in addition to the fee for credit.

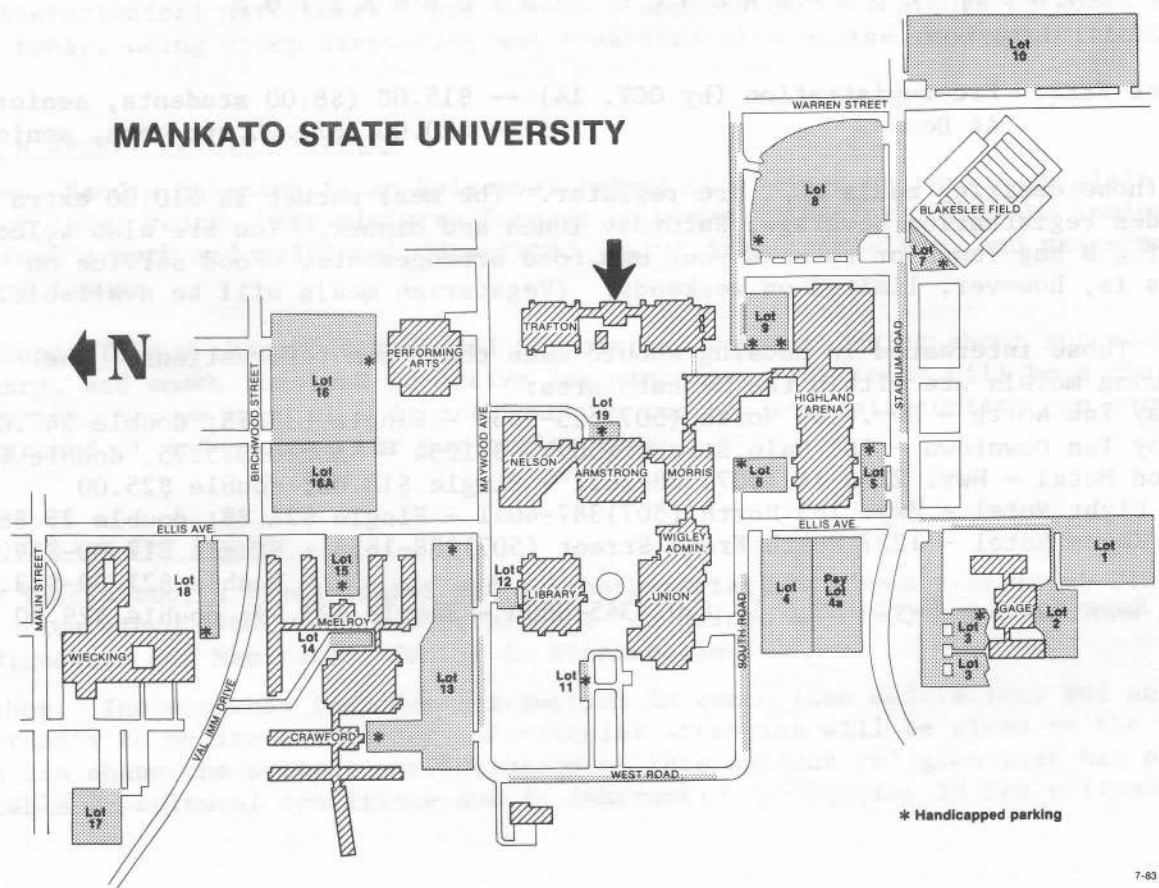
MN WOMEN'S STUDIES ASSOCIATION will meet in conjunction with this Conference. The working and business section will be held on Friday from 1:00-5:00 p.m. preceding the conference.

Partial SCHOLARSHIPS for anyone otherwise unable to attend are available. If desired, please pre-register and simply pay the student/senior citizen rate. Several full scholarships are available by contacting the Women's Studies Department.

PARKING: You may park in any lot or other legal locations on Saturday. Lot 8 or 9 will be the most convenient.

Other QUESTIONS: Call Women's Studies Department (507)389-2077; or Mary Jo Meadow (507)387-4276 or (507)389-1818; or the United Christian Campus Center (507) 625-6779.

EMERGENCY MESSAGES will be relayed to you during the Conference by calling (507) 389-2111 (MSU Security).



P R E - R E G I S T R A T I O N

Return to: Women and Spirituality Conf.  
Box 64  
Mankato State University  
Mankato, MN 56001

RETURN BY OCTOBER 14, 1983

Checks are payable to: Mankato State University. NO refunds can be made.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

I wish to pre-register: \_\_\_\_\_ \$15.00

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ 8.00 for students, senior citizens

I wish to attend meals: \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00

I would need the following special arrangements: \_\_\_\_\_

For those wishing to register for credit:

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number (We MUST have this info.)

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No Have you previously attended Mankato State University?

\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No Are you a resident of the state of Minnesota?

I have also enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for: Undergraduate resident-----\$26.40

Undergraduate non-resident--\$49.75

Graduate resident-----\$32.95

Graduate non-resident-----\$62.85

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Receipts can be picked up at the pre-registration desk at the Conference on Saturday morning. Full information packets will be distributed at that time.

Women's Studies Department  
Box 64, Mankato State University  
Mankato, MN 56001

Non-Profit Orgn.  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Permit No. 202  
Mankato, MN 56001

A CONFERENCE ON

WOMEN  
AND  
SPIRITUALITY

MANKATO  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY



WOMEN'S  
LIVES IN  
WORLD  
RELIGIONS

October 29, 1983