



Prayer Shawl Ministries and Women's Theological Imagination

Donna Bowman

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Based on personal interviews, Prayer Shawl Ministries and Women's Theological Imagination uncovers the theological creativity of Christian lay women quietly stitching their own sacred fabric. From the origins of prayer shawl ministry in feminist and ecumenical thought, the movement has grown to hundreds of groups, composed mostly of women over 60, in denominations across the political and doctrinal spectrum. Through participation in handcrafting ministries, participants reflect on themes that sometimes complement and sometimes challenge the public stances of their communities. Women in prayer shawl ministries develop commitments to broad inclusion, reject the intrusion of market forces, and realize their productive power. Out of their traditional roles as caretakers, they craft compassion into a conscious, theologically-rich practice. Out of their historical subordination, they cultivate trust in divine providence and hope for the preservation of their legacy. Listening to their ideas, convictions, and concerns, and connecting them to findings from multiple scholarly fields, this book seeks to disclose the convergences and complexity of ordinary women's theological thinking and behavior.



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