



A Newsletter of the Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual

Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network: Our Theological Roots

By Mary E. Hunt, Co-convenor

The annual gathering of the Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network (FLTNT) took place in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Baltimore, MD, on November 22, 2013. More than sixty people from many countries—Australia, Canada, England, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, South African, Sweden, United States, among others—looked at the roots of contemporary theologizing in the work of our foresters.

Professor Nikki Young of Bucknell University traced her theo-ethical lineage to Beverly Wilding Harrison, Traci West, and Kelly Brown Douglas. These scholars helped Nikki deal with critical race theory and feminist/queer issues. Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, who is finishing her doctorate at Iliff School of Theology, University of Denver, focused her theological ancestry on Gloria Anzaldúa. Her work encouraged Robyn to underscore the importance of intersectionality in the feminist liberation work of building bridges. Monica Melanchthon, professor at the United Faculty of Theology and MCD University of Divinity in Australia, described her indebtedness to the work of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (co-convenor of the FLTNT), Rosemary Radford Ruether, Letty Russell, and Mary Daly as she grappled with issues in India in the 1980s. Monica brings shared insight from these women to her own work in biblical studies.



Kwok Pui-lan and Mary E. Hunt at the American Academy of Religion Meeting in Baltimore, MD, 2013

Lively discussion ensued both in small groups and in the plenary session. Consensus emerged that the FLTNT needs to deal with anti-violence work in theological education. This will be the focus of the next meeting on Friday, November 21, 2014 in San Diego, CA, 4-6 PM. This year's meeting concluded with an impromptu song and circle dance, giving yet another expression to feminist liberation theology. Perhaps we can look at the arts as vehicles for feminist liberation theology in 2015.



Retreat with WATER and Women of Dignity

"Holy, Wholly Holy:

Catholic Women's Routes to Holiness"

A Gathering for All Women | June 13-15, 2014 | Retreat Center at Bon Secours, Marriottsville, MD

WATER and the Women of DignityUSA team up for a third retreat led by lesbian and queer women. This year we will focus on holiness, sainthood—our own and other's—and how we get there. The weekend will include prayer, quiet, recreation, celebration, and conversation. Women saints will guide our way. Wholly holy women will emerge. For more information contact waterstaff@hers.com.

Meet Rev. Dr. Coralie Ling of Melbourne, Australia

Coralie Ling is a longtime friend and colleague of WATER. She was the first woman to be ordained in the Methodist Church in Melbourne, Australia, in 1969. Later the Methodists joined with Presbyterians and Congregationalists to form the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977.

As a Visiting Scholar and Minister, Coralie graces the office annually for a week, usually en route to the American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting. She catches up on the latest feminist issues in religion. Her special interests are in inter-religious work, ritual studies, and feminist theology.

Upon returning to her home in Australia, Coralie prepared a ritual with the community of Sophia's Spring, an eco-feminist group of the Uniting Church which includes Gwen Benjamin, another beloved WATER friend. This "Midsumma" celebration is part of a LGBTIQ festival of arts and music held every January. Read Coralie's rainbow sermon on WATER's website in our past updates. We are grateful for Coralie's ministry and friendship over the years. We await her return in 2014.





**Spring Ritual:
Goodbye Winter...
Hello Spring!**
By Diann L. Neu

This winter has been difficult for many in the Northern Hemisphere. More darkness, less light; snow and more snow; more hibernation, less community... It's time to say goodbye to winter woes and hello to spring joys.

Goodbye Winter

Depart, Spirit of Winter. **Response:** Go, winter, go.
Be gone, all slippery ice, slushy sleet, dangerous snow, and piercing winds. **R:** Go, winter, go.
Be gone, all ice, sleet, and cold in our personal lives: snide remarks, judgmental statements, nasty gossip, untruths, anger, and jealousy. **R:** Go, winter, go.
Be gone, times of loneliness. **R:** Go, winter, go.
Be gone, *add what you wish*. **R:** Go, winter, go.
Hear our prayer and go, Spirit of Winter. Depart from our neighborhoods and lives for another year.

Reflection

Winter and spring represent seasons of our lives. This year, what is the winter to which I am saying goodbye? What is the spring for which I hope? What beauty do I want to bloom in my life so that all can be well again?

Hello Spring

Source of Life, You who bring forth daffodils,
Praise to you for blessing Earth with beauty!
Renew all life with flowing water, singing birds, and spring light.
Renew me with spring beauty:
May my eyes notice the bulbs peeking out of the garden.
May my ears hear the robins singing.
May my feet gently touch green grass.
May Earth be renewed.
May waters be clean.
May air be purified.
May peace reign.
May all be well again.
Amen. Blessed Be. Let It Be So.

Spring-into-Action

- . Plant something green. Get your hands in soil.
- . Take a walk. Notice the trees budding.
- . Clean up a creek. Skip stones across the water.
- . Invite friends to a picnic. Look for four-leaf clovers.
- . Get caught in a spring shower. Dance in the rain.
- . Listen to the birds singing. Give them food.
- . Feel the sun on your face. Breathe in new life.
- . Leave your windows open. Listen to nature.
- . Pack up winter clothes. Donate some to a shelter.
- . Do spring-cleaning. Decorate with fresh flowers.
- . Make an impact. Donate to a women's group.

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Be a Summer WATER Intern!

Apply now at www.waterwomensalliance.org/interns/. Please alert your friends, students, colleagues who might wish to apply. They will join a long line (now more than 50) of WATER interns who are making important contributions to the world, in part because of their experiences with WATER. Consider becoming one.

WATER Teleconferences

WATER holds monthly teleconferences as part of our *Feminist Conversations in Religion* program. Join us for our April teleconference: "Life is Tough, Deal with It" with Margaret Mann on April 9th at 1pm (EDT). Go to www.waterwomensalliance.org to register and to find the audio and notes of these recent and other teleconferences.

- "Conscience and Calling" with Anne E. Patrick
- "Talking Taboo" Part One with Robyn Henderson-Espinoza and Erin Lane
- "Talking Taboo" Part Two with Grace Biskie, Gina Messina-Dysert, Tara Woodard-Lehman, and Katey Zeh

Two Sister Films to Watch

Mary E. Hunt and Diann Neu of WATER and Erin Hanna of WOC (photo right) enjoyed a rough cut of "Radical Grace" at the Athena Film Festival at Barnard College in NYC. It is a good look at Sisters Jean Hughes, Chris Schenk, and Simone Campbell who are three of thousands of Catholic women getting on with justice work despite the Vatican's continued recalcitrance. Watch a trailer and learn how to help "kickstart" the production with a donation online.
Band of Sisters, Mary Fishman's film about Catholic nuns doing social justice work after Vatican II, is touring and well-worth a viewing. The Washington, DC area premier is on Friday, April 11, 2014, 7:15 PM at the American Film Institute. Join us at 5:30 PM at the WATER office for a reception. Mary Fishman will drop by. RSVP to waterstaff@hers.com.



In Memory of Her

Where does "in memory of her" come from? In Mark (14:9), Jesus said of the faithful woman who anointed him "and truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." Church history conveniently forgot her name. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza rescued her spirit.
We remember our friends who have died in the past few months, especially Kaye Ashe OP, Peggy Cleveland, and Robert Nugent. Full tributes to their life and work can be found on WATER's website.

Blessings of Spring to You!

YOU are such an important partner in our work. Thank you! We invite you to continue your faithfulness by giving a special spring gift now to assure that our much-needed, successful programs are WATERed. Please send a check or give online at www.waterwomensalliance.org. Thank you for ensuring that WATER will continue to provide these life-giving resources for you and for those who need them.

We wish you and your loved ones renewed life this season of daffodils.



(l to r) Creuza Maciel, Diann and Mary, Rio de Janeiro, 1985

Mary E. Hunt

Elizabeth Thoman

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