



**Left:** Staff Associate Mallory Naake demonstrates outside the Supreme Court for the *Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt* case. **Top center:** Toni Bond Leonard and Lisa Weiner-Mahfuz of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice visit WATER. **Right:** Diann L. Neu getting her feet washed by Mary Irving, SSND, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, photo March 24, 1989, The Washington Post. **Bottom center:** Mary E. Hunt with Professor Susan Roll in Ottawa at the Centre for Women and Christian Traditions, Saint Paul University.

## WATER Makes Friends in Cuba

By Mary E. Hunt

I had the privilege of teaching a masters course on Contemporary Theological Ethics in Cuba in February. Students included Anglican priests, ministers from the Seventh Day Adventist Church (including two from Angola), Baptist and Presbyterian ministers, and a U.S. woman from the Disciples of Christ. This lively group focused on ethical discourse in an evolving Cuba.

We used liberation theological approaches, especially feminist/womanist/*mujerista* and postcolonial, to develop an ethical method adequate to contain the voices and visions that populate Cuba today. It was an exercise in challenging pedagogy as well as cross-cultural sharing that I have been invited to repeat at SET in 2017. I learned much from these committed colleagues in the classroom who brought their ministerial experiences to the table for real-life ethical discourse.

A major ethical concern was growing economic disparities as some Cubans move in an entrepreneurial direction as the economy opens up. Another issue was how the family is changing with so many young people going abroad and the resultant aging population staying in Cuba.

It was thrilling to see people set their own agenda and reconfigure the tools of ethical reflection according to their needs and those of their communities. *(continued on page 2)*



l to r: Rev. Dr. Ofelia Ortega, former Rector, SET; Dr. Mary E. Hunt; Dr. Clara Luz Ajo Lázaro, Vice Rector, SET; and Dr. Yoo Jin Choi of Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary of Seoul, Korea

WATER is making friends with Cuban colleagues in the *Seminario Evangélico de Teología* (SET) in Matanzas where Clara Luz Ajo, longtime WATER compañera, is Vice Rector. She visited WATER last October and will return in July to continue our common work and deepen our partnership.

## WATER Invites Internship and Visiting Scholar/Minister Applications

WATER welcomes students and visiting scholars/ministers from seminaries, universities, colleges, and congregations worldwide to apply for a summer or year-long internship. The program includes work such as event planning, writing and editing projects, non-profit fundraising, community outreach, and website/social media maintenance.

Summer internships typically begin in May and end in July, but there is some flexibility; a minimum of six weeks is required. The application deadline is March 25. Year-long internships typically begin in September and end in July. Visiting scholars/ministers work on their own projects and come on their own schedule.

To apply, visit [www.waterwomensalliance.org](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org) or call 301.589.2509.



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## Who We Are

WATER is a global network, an educational and spiritual space, a center for dialogue on feminism, faith, and justice. We connect activists, religious leaders, students, scholars, and allies who are using feminist religious values to create social change. Founded in 1983 by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, we have been empowering women to address structural violence for over thirty years — making WATER one of the oldest feminist religious non-profit organizations in the world.

The WATER community needs you to work toward inclusive theologies and rituals, to push for social change, and to collaborate across many differences. Join us! To learn more about what we do, visit us at [waterwomensalliance.org](http://waterwomensalliance.org).

Mary E. Hunt Diann L. Neu | Co-directors

Emily Harder Mallory Naake Elizabeth Hardt | Staff Associates

## WATERituals Thank Wise Women

In November, WATER rebooted our monthly WATERritual series with the theme "Thanks for Wise Women." Each month we gather in the office and by phone to celebrate in solidarity with women from around the world who are examples for justice. To date, we have lifted up a Litany of Women (goddesses, biblical, historical, and women in our lives), Mary the mother of Jesus, Sojourner Truth, Brigit of Ireland, and Comadres of El Salvador.

Judy Heffernan, a WATERritual participant in Philadelphia, told us: "I was very touched by the Sojourner liturgy, as I am by every ritual that has the name Diann Neu anywhere with it! The whole WATER team did a beautiful job! Also, I am very grateful you welcome phone sharers—I felt very included. Thanks so much."

Published rituals and registration for rituals can be found at [www.waterwomensalliance.org/monthly-prayers-and-rituals](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org/monthly-prayers-and-rituals)





## You Helped Support:

• WATERtalks this fall/winter with Mormon feminist **Joanna Brooks**, interfaith scholar **Beverly Lanzetta**, ethicist and theologian **Grace Kao**, vegan-feminist writer **Carol J. Adams**, and womanist theologian, **Kelly Brown Douglas**.

• Contemplative Prayer/Meditation evenings this fall/winter with **Mary E. Hunt**, former WATER intern **Kate Stoltzfus**, and WATER friends **Janet Bohren**, **Virginia Day**, **Phoebe Knopf**, and **Judy Bond**.

Audio from all WATER programs can be found on our website [www.waterwomensalliance.org](http://www.waterwomensalliance.org).

Photo: *Kelly Brown Douglas (seated, center) talked at WATER about her new book Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God (Orbis Books, 2015).*

## Upcoming Programs

Join us at WATER or by phone. Register for upcoming events on our website or email [waterstaff@hers.com](mailto:waterstaff@hers.com)

### WATERtalks

Conversations with feminist activists and theologians for an open dialogue of ideas, research, and experiences. Wednesdays, 1-2pm ET.

**April 13** with *Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite*

**May 11** with *Rita Nakashima Brock*

**June 8** with *Joan Chittister*

### Contemplative Prayer

Communal meditation welcoming everyone. There is a time of silence and reflection followed by optional sharing. Mondays, 7:30pm ET.

**April 11** with *Cynthia Tootle*

**May 9** with *Janet Bohren*

**June 6** with *Maya Combs*

**July 11** with *Elizabeth Hardt*

### WATERrituals

Monthly communal ritual series to raise up wise women. Thursdays, 7:30pm ET with *Diann L. Neu* and *Mallory Naake*.

**April 21:** *Earth Day: Women Care-Sharers of Earth*

**May 19:** *Sally Ride: Reaching for the Stars*

**June 16:** *TBA*

### Catholic Lesbian/Queer Women's Group

Community-building teleconferences with WATER and DignityUSA offering conversation, feminist liturgy, and book discussions. Sundays, 11:30am ET.

**May 1:** *Reflections about Lesbians in Religious Life*

**July 10:** *Liturgy*

### Sisterly Conversations 2016: "Nurturing Our Spirits — Sharing Our Sacred Practices"

A weekend for LGBTIQ women to come together and focus on spirituality, including the intimate connections of spirituality and sexuality.

**September 9, 2016 - September 11, 2016** at Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center, Bangor PA

### Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network

Topic: Intersectionality and Political Action

**November 18, 2016**, Friday, 4-6pm at the AAR/SBL Annual Meeting in San Antonio TX

Email [waterstaff@hers.com](mailto:waterstaff@hers.com) for more information.

## Earth Day Prayer for April 22

By *Diann L. Neu*

*We call upon Earth, our planet home, with its beautiful depths and soaring heights, its vitality and abundance of life. With all creation, we praise You, Divine Providence. Breathe Your Life through us!*

*We call upon the mountains, the high green peaks and meadows filled with flowers, the knobs and the foothills. With all creation, we praise You, Divine Providence. Breathe Your Life through us!*

*We call upon the waters that rim Earth, horizon to horizon, that flow in our rivers and streams, that fall upon our gardens and fields. With all creation, we praise You, Divine Providence. Breathe Your Life through us!*

*We call upon the land that grows our food, the nurturing soil, the fertile fields, the abundant gardens and orchards. With all creation, we praise You, Divine Providence. Breathe Your Life through us!*

*We call upon the forests, the great trees reaching strongly to the sky with Earth in their roots and the heavens in their branches. With all creation, we praise You, Divine Providence. Breathe Your Life through us!*

*We call upon creatures of the fields, forests and seas, our sisters and brothers, the wolf and deer, the eagle and dove, the great whale and dolphin, the beautiful orca and salmon. With all creation, we praise You, Divine Providence. Breathe Your Life through us!*

*We call upon all those who have lived on Earth, our ancestors and our friends who dreamed the best for future generations and upon whose lives ours are built. With them, we praise You, Divine Providence. Breathe Your Life through us!*

### Act Green that Earth may live!

- . Go for a walk in the woods to reconnect with Earth.
- . Pick up litter in your neighborhood.
- . Stop using disposable plastic.
- . Eat less meat. Buy local produce. Compost.
- . Recycle – food, electronics, plants, clothes, paper.
- . Reduce your carbon footprint – drive less, walk, bike, bus.

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Flowers in Cuba

## Cuba (from page 1)

I was privileged to be able to share the work of Cuban American *mujerista* theologian the late Ada María Iasí-Díaz. Her concept, *lo cotidiano*, daily life, was a rich source of our ethical reflections.

Korean professor, Yoo Jin Choi, who is affiliated with the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary in Seoul, offered a course on feminist theology the same week as mine. Students could see how theo-ethical connections work and how global conversations in feminist studies in religion are unfolding.

Ofelia Ortega, Rector (president) of SET from 1996-2004, is celebrating her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this season. WATER wishes her a healthy, happy future and thanks her for her important contribution to theological education and global networking.

Colleagues like Clara and Ofelia prompt us to continue WATER's commitment to an ongoing *Mujeres Cruzando Mundos* (Women Crossing Worlds) relationship with our colleagues in Cuba.

We will continue to share books, personnel, and friendship in the years ahead with Cuban colleagues.

We are grateful to WATER's many donors whose generosity makes this sharing possible. ■

*Mary E. Hunt is Co-founder and Co-director of Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER).*

## Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network

*2015 Annual Meeting Report by Mary E. Hunt*

The (FLTN) Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network met in Atlanta on Friday, November 20, 2015, at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature to look at feminist liberation theologies and the arts.

Kittredge of Seminary of the Southwest on "A Lot of the Way Trees Were Walking," Mónica Maher of the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences in Ecuador on "Feminist Liberation Theologies within the Museums of Quito, Ecuador," and



*l to r: Mercy Amba Oduyoye of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, Ghana; Katie Cannon of Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond VA; Hisako Kinukawa of the Center for Feminist Theology and Ministry, Japan; Shannon Clarkson of Guilford CT*

More than eighty people from ten countries gathered: seasoned activists and scholars, graduate students, 12 undergraduates from Presbyterian College in South Carolina, and even a high school student. Our future is bright!

Speakers were Katie G. Cannon of Union Presbyterian Seminary on "Antecedents of Womanist Artistic Expressions," Cynthia Briggs

Elizabeth Ursic of Mesa Community College on "Making Things Rite: The Importance of Ritual in Feminist Liberation Theologies."

In small groups and in plenary, questions emerged about how intersectional justice struggles can be articulated in art. Colleagues talked about how creative and changing pedagogy is necessary to bring feminist religious insights to fruition. ■