

waterwheel

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

New Religious Leaders

Mary E. Hunt

Feminist religious leaders are not your grandmother's clergy. Most of them don't wear collars, many of them are not ordained, and few fit the old preacher's mode. What are they like and how can we encourage new modes of leadership without sacrificing quality?

Even with formidable barriers to change still looming—Roman Catholic women's struggles to minster leap quickly to mind—enough change has come to the world's religions because of the entry of women, people of color, young people, LGBTQ people to discern some noticeable trends. Naming those, and alerting one another to them, will only foster more. For those who have been ignored and excluded in religious circles this will be a boon. The feminist dimension assures that

death in the family, want spiritual guidance, or plan to solemnize a wedding or covenant, they still seek someone identifiably religious to accompany them. Such well meaning persons are also vulnerable in their needs, so extra care should be exercised to be sure that the quality of what they get by way of religious leadership is high. Happily, this is usually the case among critical feminists who know the downside of sloppy preparation or predatory ways.

Religious leaders of various stripes emerge. Some are trained, credentialed, ordained in the traditional realm, but are expansive and flexible enough to function beyond it. Some with sterling credentials are rejected by their respective religious systems—LGBTQ people, for example—but are just as well

*Feminist religious leaders
are not your grandmother's clergy.*

race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, and the like will be given priority attention.

The first trend is away from institution-only ways of being religious. Many people now say "I'm spiritual but not religious," or "my tradition just doesn't do it for me anymore," or "I am disgusted/scandalized/bored by some religious leaders in my community. I am looking elsewhere." Fine. To be encouraged.

But when the same people have a

qualified, often better prepared than those who are admitted.

Others are less well prepared, but sometimes attractive because they exemplify the qualities being sought in a religious figure. Perhaps they are interfaith in their own way of operating or express the same beliefs one is seeking. They are welcome new religious leaders and need to be acknowledged as such both within and

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WATER Staff Updates

Thanks to
**Laura
Bernstein,**
WATER staff
member for



eight years. Laura was the eagle-eyed proofreader as well as the queen of the database, always careful and attentive to detail. We appreciate her many years of work and wish her health and happiness in her next adventures.



WATER
welcomes
Emily Cohen of the
Loretto Volunteers
whose institutional
motto is "working for
justice, acting for

peace." She also works at the Women's Ordination Conference, so she is getting a double dose of feminist work in religion. Emily is a recent graduate of Seattle University with a double major in Theology/Religious Studies and Liberal Studies. She has a wealth of volunteer service and experience in campus ministry.

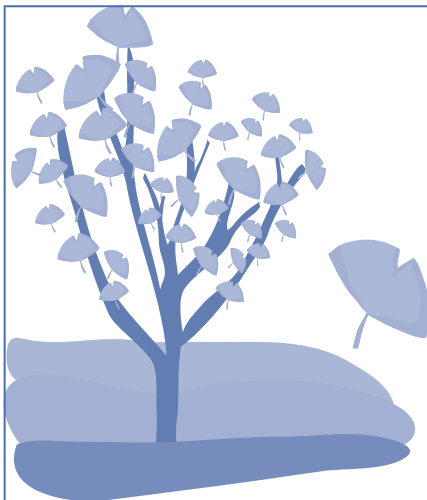
Loretto Volunteers live in community in Washington, DC. Emily shares a house with four women who are volunteers at DC Rape Crisis Center, New Ways Ministry, Interfaith Voices, and N Street Village. We welcome these women to the social justice community and congratulate the Loretto Community (they gave us our first grant before these interns were born!) on the success of this much-needed program led by **Katie Jones.**

Editorial

A text is sacred not because of the paper it is written on, but because of the faith of those who find it meaningful. What is sacred is their connection to the words, the ancestors, and the values that the text represents. Hence, any attack against sacred texts is explicitly an act of aggression toward the people who hold it dear. While it is legal to desecrate texts (and flags and other symbols of peoples' values), it is bad form in the extreme even in a democracy.

WATER stands with the many groups that abhor religious intolerance and resist the hegemony of one faith, in the current case, Christianity, over all others. While the Quran burning was prevented on September 11, 2010, by the outcry to millions, the underlying sentiment has not gone away. It is that threat to the common good that we seek to replace with inter-religious dialogue and renewed attention to Islam especially by those of us who know little of the teaching and practice.

There are many ways to be faithful. Surely one of them is to notice and respect the faith of others. This is what we teach our children who live in an increasingly pluralistic world. Anything less is morally tawdry, unworthy of the hint of the divine in all religions.



New Religious Leaders...

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beyond their tradition. I think here, for example, of women priests who are ordained outside of a patriarchal institution or rabbis who are called by their individual communities because they are such brilliant teachers.

While such leadership is welcome, a word to the wise is also in order. Institutional connections are no guarantee of quality, but they do offer some safeguards worth noting. Among them are malpractice insurance, mandatory continuing education, and some form of peer review. I repeat, institutional affiliation is not magic. But these and other professional standards are useful expectations when choosing religious leaders.

Today no one has to settle for the stodgy, stale, lifeless ways some ministers still oper-

A second trend is leaders who are comfortable with the new social media approaches to ministry. Who would have guessed that the Internet which made pornography so convenient might also give religion a boost? For example, I follow the writings of a woman rabbi whose weekly posts are as spiritually insightful as most sermons if not more so. She reaches a wide audience, offers her spiritual wisdom, and so does her part to repair a broken world. I admire the work of a minister who has a congregation on Second Life, the online virtual universe. Admittedly, of the five million people who have avatars on Second Life, most of them are not there for religion. But imagine the number of people who join this colleague for worship on a given afternoon. They get a good feminist service in the privacy of their own homes. Some are in their pajamas; others don't have to worry about driving an hour or climbing steps to get to the service.

One commentator wrote, "Give me that on-line religion." Others have asked if such encounters are really religious. In fact they are, since they connect (*religare*, to bind fast) people to one another and perhaps to the divine.

I worry more about the flip side of the convenience, namely the isolation or atomization of "each one 'neath her screen and modem." I ponder the accountability of leaders whose congregations are so amorphous. I also wonder if our deepest spiritual longings can be fulfilled in a disembodied way. But the attraction of these modes and these leaders is precisely that they can be so many things to so many people. Again, I urge caution about the quality of ministry at the same

time that I applaud the creativity, generosity, and openness to innovation. Just as the human spirit in each generation longs for fulfillment, so too are there among us people who step forward to lead the way.

A third trend in religious leadership is what I have come to think of as do-it-yourself and/or peer ministry. Some congregations have experimented with this in peer counseling and shared spiritual direction. Again, there are pluses and minuses. On the positive side there is much to recommend socializing the ministry tasks. After all, adult believers express their faith by being agents of their own spirituality, not simply waiting for someone to come and fill them up like a car at a gas station. Lots of people can visit the sick, prepare educational events, help to maintain the facilities, keep the books, and do other tasks routinely handled by clergy.

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...Religious Leaders

(Continued from page 2)

Feminists have been in the vanguard of this movement, seeing the potential in one another rather than in one specially appointed, set aside person to take on religious leadership. This works well in fairly homogeneous communities where people with similar backgrounds and education can prepare quality liturgies and/or help one another through life's problems and quests for meaning. Many women-church and small faith communities have functioned in this way.

The negative side needs mention as well. The reality is that not everyone has access to such richness. I think of the 14 million people in the U.S. who live in poverty, most of whom have little inclination and less time to worry about their spiritual lives. In short such models tend to be elitist. There is also something to be said for education and training in a field like religion. Just having a strong belief does not mean something is historically connected or liturgically effective. Just being a person of good will does not make one an effective spiritual companion. Education and training have their place in ministry.

These three trends and several others on the horizon demonstrate that change is possible and happening in our lifetime. If it can happen in religions that seem so hidebound, it can happen in other arenas as well. Today no one has to settle for the stodgy, stale, lifeless ways some ministers still operate. Rather, we can all roll up our spiritual sleeves and get to work on sharing new models and modes among people who want to be religious in a twenty-first century inclusive way.

MARY E. HUNT is a feminist theologian and codirector of WATER.

Join Us for WATER Feminist Ministry Teleconferences



WATER's teleconferences are a chance to hear and speak with leaders in the field of feminist issues in religion. This year we are featuring women who have chapters in *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views*. Many gather with colleagues over lunch to join the conversation. Afterwards, access them at www.hers.com/water.



Dr. Rosemary Radford Ruether, professor at Claremont Graduate University in Claremont, California, gave a sweeping overview

of the field of feminist theology from her chapter entitled "Feminist Theology in Theological Education." She spoke of her recent experiences in Taiwan. What a fascinating scene it is with Buddhist nuns growing in number and influence, feminist theologians teaching and organizing, students being exposed to feminist work in their regular studies. We concluded that it is time we organize some sharing trips so many women, in addition to scholars, can find ways to exchange information and experiences.

One topic that arose was whether male scholars (and activists) "get it" when it comes to feminist theology. This is a hard question, but one that remains to be discussed as efforts to be inclusive are often met with resistance or are simply being ignored. They can join these calls!

Rev. Dr. Traci West, professor of ethics and African American studies at Drew University Theological School, led a recent call on her work, "What Does



Antiracist Feminist Christian Social Ethics Looks Like?" We delved into tough issues thanks to everyone's candor and willingness to push deeper than is often comfortable.

Traci insisted on the culturally plural dimensions of each and every situation. Her telling example of how Black clergy were written about in the *Los Angeles Times* during the Prop 8 struggles said it all: while others were referred to by denomination, position, geography, Black clergy were named by race as if all Black clergy were unanimous on the issues. The white racist logic of this is what we need to eradicate.

She also called for partnerships with people from a range of traditions and religions. She differentiated among the many kinds of "Black women"—Caribbean, African immigrant, Afro European, Afro Latina, as well as African America—such that any generalizing is misplaced. She distinguished how wealthy and powerful Black women experience racism differently than their poorer less powerful sisters. She connected how male perpetrated violence works. It happens to women in the U.S. and to women in other parts of the world where U.S. military and contractors work.

Join us for future calls at 1 PM EST; contact water@hers.com for phone-in information.

- **October 13, 2010: Rev. Dr. Wanda Deifelt** on Latin American feminist theology
- **November 10, 2010: Dr. Virginia Ramey Mollenkott** on trans feminist theology
- **December 1, 2010: Rev. Dr. Shelly Matthews** on feminist scripture studies

To order *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views* go to www.hers.com/water.

Background

The season of Thanksgiving invites us to say “thank you.” This liturgy gives thanks to wise women. Focus it on one woman who has reached the official age of wisdom, age 56 and older. Or focus it on an outgoing board member or a friend who is moving. Look at the wisdom of each person in the group. The possibilities to give thanks to wise women are endless.

Gathering Song: “Holy Ground,”

Traditional.
This is Holy Ground.
We're standing on Holy Ground.
For Wisdom is present,
And where She is it's holy.
This is Holy Ground.
We're standing on Holy Ground.
For Wisdom is present,
And where She is it's holy.

We are Holy Ground.
Yes we are Holy Ground.
For Wisdom is present,
And where She is it's holy.
We are Holy Ground.
Yes we are Holy Ground.
For Wisdom is present,
And where She is it's holy.

Opening Prayer

Divine Creator of the Universe,
Welcome!
Wisdom Sophia, Welcome!
She Who Is and Will Always Be,
Welcome!

Please say after me:
Divine Wisdom, / in you we live and
move / and have our being. /

Call to Gather

At this season of Thanksgiving, we gather to give thanks to wise women. (Name your focus; for example, we honor you N. for your dedicated work for WATER.) In particular, we want to give thanks for the wisdom of women in this community.

We gather to thank you for your gracious presence. We honor your blood, sweat, and persistence which

have helped to shape this community of justice-seekers. We call you into the ranks of Wise Women, and we bless you for the future.

Loving Divine Wisdom Sophia, we ask that you bless all Wise Women tonight. Draw near and enfold us in your loving embrace as we continue to share your love, creativity, and wisdom as leaven in the world.

Please say after me:
Divine Wisdom, / in you we live and
move / and have our being. /

Reading from the Book of Wisdom

(Two readers alternately proclaim)

1: Wisdom has built herself a house; she has prepared her food, mixed her wine and set her table... she calls to all in the cities and in the town... come and eat my food and drink the wine I have made.

(Proverbs 9:1-5)

Response: You are wisdom, Holy Wisdom; Holy Wisdom you are.

2: Who can find a valiant woman? She is far more precious than jewels. Give her a share in what her hands have made. Let her works tell her praises. *(Proverbs 31:10)*

Response: You are wisdom, Holy Wisdom; Holy Wisdom you are.

1: Wisdom calls aloud in the streets... I will pour out my heart to you... tune your ear to wisdom and your heart to truth... then you will understand who God is and discover love of life... you will understand justice and the ways of happiness. *(Proverbs 1:20, 2:1,6)*

Response: You are wisdom, Holy Wisdom; Holy Wisdom you are.

2: Wisdom is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come... Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all. *(Proverbs 31:25, 29)*

Response: You are wisdom, Holy Wisdom; Holy Wisdom you are.

Reading: “Imagine a Woman”

©Patricia Lynn Reilly, 1995
www.imagineAwoman.com

Imagine a woman who believes it is right and good she is a woman. A woman who honors her experience and tells her stories. Who refuses to carry the sins of



Give Thanks to

Diann

others within her body and life.

Imagine a woman who trusts and respects herself. A woman who listens to her needs and desires. Who meets them with tenderness and grace.

Imagine a woman who acknowledges the past's influence on the present. A woman who walked through her past. Who has healed into the present.

Imagine a woman who authors her own life. A woman who exerts, initiates, and moves on her own behalf. Who refuses to surrender except to her truest self and wisest voice.

Imagine a woman who names her own gods. A woman who imagines the divine in her image and likeness. Who designs a personal spirituality that informs her daily life.

Imagine a woman in love with her own body. A woman who believes her body is enough, just as it is. Who celebrates its rhythms and cycles as an exquisite resource.

Imagine a woman who honors the body of the Goddess in her changing body. A woman who celebrates the accumulation of her years and her

wisdom. Who refuses to use her life-energy disguising the changes in her body and life.

Imagine a woman who values the women in her life. A woman who sits in circles of women. Who is reminded of the truth about herself when she forgets.

Imagine yourself as this woman!



o Wise Women

L. Neu

Litany of Wise Women

(Light a candle)

Song: "Spirit of Our Elders" by Kathy Sherman, *Coming Home*, ©1993.

Spirit of our elders,
Dance, oh dance in me. (2x)

(Pass the candle to the next reader, who proclaims:)

Holy One of Life, Source of Wisdom, we give thanks for the rich history of women from whose lives we now reap our own liberating hope. Their re-imaginings allow us to dream dreams with wisdom.

Song: "Spirit of Our Elders"

Blessing Wise Women

Let us take time now to bless Wise Women. N, we call you to the center of this circle to honor you for the gifts you have given this community. Come forth, good and faithful wise woman!

The gifts you have given so freely to our community have flourished and borne fruit! (Name them) We honor you with this gift. (Give a gift.

Share lessons and visions.)

We now anoint you with oil, symbolizing you are a Wise Woman. (Each participant puts oil on N's hands, feet, face.)

I ask all to join me in blessing N. today. Please put your hands on N. (ask her ahead of time) in blessing as we pray together: (Use this prayer or invite women to offer their own sentence of blessing.)

Divine Creator of the Universe, Wisdom Sophia, She Who Is and Will Always Be, we ask you to bless N. today and every day. N,

May you have strength, courage, and wisdom for the journey ahead.

May you be blessed with good health.

May your heart be filled with loving compassion in the work of justice.

May you be filled with hope, love, and laughter.

May you know the comfort of community, good friends, and family.

May the peace of Divine Wisdom live always in your heart and home.

May you always bear witness to the love of Divine Wisdom in this world.

May Holy Wisdom bless you and keep you.

May She make her face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May She lift up her countenance upon you and give you peace.

Go forth good and faithful woman!
We thank you! And call you Wise Woman.

Song: "Spirit of Our Elders"

Closing Prayer: adapted from

"Benediction," *Sarun Primer*, 1636
May Wisdom be in our minds and in our thinking;

May Wisdom be in our hearts and in our perceiving;

May Wisdom be in our mouths and in our speaking;

May Wisdom be in our hands and in our working;

May Wisdom be in our feet and in

our walking;

May Wisdom be in our bodies and in our loving.

May Wisdom be with us all the days of our lives.

Greeting of Peace

Filled with this Wisdom, let us embrace one another as wise women. *(Hugging)*

Closing Song: "Blessing Song" by M. T. Winter, from *Woman Prayer, Woman Song*.

May the blessing of God go before you.

May Her grace and peace abound.

May Her Spirit live within you.

May Her love wrap you 'round.

May Her blessing remain with you always.

May you walk on holy ground.

DIANN L. NEU is a feminist liturgist and minister, spiritual director and psychotherapist who is codirector of WATER.

New Book from WATER! Order Today!

NEW FEMINIST CHRISTIANITY Many Voices, Many Views

Edited by Mary E. Hunt and
Diann L. Neu

Published by Skylight Paths Publishing

Insights from twenty-eight women ministers and theologians, activists and leaders, artists and liturgists who are shaping, and being shaped by, the emerging directions of feminist Christianity. They speak from across the spectrum, and from the many racial and ethnic groups that make up the Christian community. Taken together, their voices offer a starting point for building new models of church and society.

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In Memory of ...



From Sr. Janet Schaffran of Pittsburgh, PA; and Laura Balas of Aneroid, Saskatchewan, Canada: In memory of **Mary Daly**.

From Virginia Anne Day of Southport, CT: In memory of **Virginia O'Leary**.

From Janis Pilkinton and Mo McGowan of Lakewood, CO: In memory of **Carmela Flores**.

From Stephanie May of Sudbury, MA: In honor of "my mom and her journey, **Deb May**."

From Frances Cunningham, OSF, Greenfield, WI: In honor of **Rosemary Huddleston, OP**.

From Deborah Amatulli of Suffolk, VA: In memory of **Terry Scott**.

From Katie Cannon of Glen Allen, VA: In memory of **Rosa C. W. Lytle**.

From Anna Beth Roeschley of Washington, DC: In honor of **Katie Jones**.

From Carolyn Farrell, BVM, of Dubuque, IA: In honor of the **BVM Silver and Gold Jubilarians**.

From Betty Hoskins of Worcester, MA: In memory of **Lucile Schuck Longview**

From Rachael Dumont, RSM, of Atkinson, NH: In memory of **my mother**.

From Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu of Silver Spring, MD: In memory of **Rustum Roy**—scientist extraordinaire, Renaissance man in spirit and action, human being in the fullest sense of the term.

From WATER: In memory of **Patricia Black**, WATER supporter and faithful friend.

From WATER: In memory of **Flor Rodriguez**, Methodist pastor without peer, Chilean teacher and mentor, whose ministry will endure for generations.

Meet the WATER Alliance This Fall

Feminist Liberation Theologians' Meeting

WATER sponsors the Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network that will meet on Friday, October 29, 2010, from 4-6 PM in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in Atlanta. The meeting will be held at the Greenbriar Room of the Hyatt Hotel in Atlanta. Further information can be found in the AAR Program Book where this session is listed as M29-302. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Mary E. Hunt will chair.

Our task is a deconstruction of the term "theology" as it relates to feminist liberation theology. Discussion will follow opening remarks by:

- . Julia Watts Belser, Missouri State University
 - . Katie Geneva Cannon, Union Presbyterian Seminary
 - . Emilie Townes, Yale Divinity School
 - . Leah Weiss, Boston College/Foundation for Active Compassion
- All are welcome to attend. RSVP to water@hers.com.*

Contemplative Prayer at WATER

On the second Tuesday of the month

Join us at the WATER office at 7:30pm or gather a group in your area.

WATER offers a regular contemplative prayer opportunity each month. This will be a time for communal meditation, a time of silence, and reflection followed by a short discussion. The office will be open at 7 PM for a cup of tea. Silence will commence promptly at 7:30 PM so please be here by then. We will finish and be on our way by 8:30 PM. All are welcome. Some of us have been involved in the Engaging Impasse process (www.engagingimpasse.org) which combines meditation with community dialogue. No experience required! Just come with a contemplative spirit. Your presence will enrich us all.

Upcoming Dates for Contemplative Prayer

October 12, 2010; November 9, 2010; December 14, 2010

Please RSVP to water@hers.com by the day before so that we can expect you or notify you of any changes.

WATER Women Gather for Ritual

On the third Thursday of the month

Join us at the WATER office at 7:30PM or gather a group in your area.

WATER offers a women's ritual group that meets monthly to pray, sing, and nourish one another to do our work for peace and justice. The liturgies celebrate the seasons, honor wise women, and focus on current world issues.

Upcoming Dates for WATERWomen Rituals

October 21, 2010; November 18, 2010; December 16, 2010

Please RSVP to waterstaff@hers.com by the day before so that we can expect you or notify you of any changes.

Resources

Albrecht, Elizabeth Soto. **FAMILY VIOLENCE: RECLAIMING A THEOLOGY OF NONVIOLENCE (WOMEN FROM THE MARGINS)**. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008 (182 pages, \$20).

A Mennonite theologian draws on the resources of her Anabaptist tradition and her Puerto Rican heritage to show the devastating impact of family violence in a range of settings. This practical peace building approach that has much to recommend it.

Bankson, Marjory Zoet. **THE SOULWORK OF CLAY: A HANDS ON APPROACH TO SPIRITUALITY**. Woodstock, VT: SkyLight Paths, 2008 (167 pages, \$16.99).

The author advises the reader to play her/his way to spiritual growth through pottery. Rich insights into how to do so make this a how-to book many will want to consult often.

Dreyer, Elizabeth A. **HOLY POWER, HOLY PRESENCE: REDISCOVERING MEDIEVAL METAPHORS FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT**. New York, NY and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2007 (344 pages, \$24.95).

Pneumatology is not a common theme in feminist theology, but close reading of medieval writers like Catherine of Siena, Julian of Norwich and Hildegard of Bingen reveals many useful insights for contemporary life.

Frankenberry, Nancy K., ed. **THE FAITH OF SCIENTISTS: IN THEIR OWN WORDS**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008 (523 pages, \$29.95).

Learn what some of the movers and shapers of the universe had to say about their religious beliefs. This is proof that science and

religion have a lot to say to one another. Check out Rachel Carson and Jane Goodall among other women.

Gaventa, Beverly Roberts. **OUR MOTHER SAINT PAUL**. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007 (218 pages, \$24.95).

Feminist readers hardly think of Paul for his feminine, maternal imagery. This study gives him his due.

Isherwood, Lisa and Rosemary Radford Ruether, eds. **WEEP NOT FOR YOUR CHILDREN: ESSAYS ON RELIGION AND VIOLENCE**. London, UK and Oakville, CT: Equinox Publishing Ltd., 2008 (273 pages, \$29.95).

This rich, eclectic collection leaves no doubt about the ubiquity of violence. Rosemary Ruether looks at the violence done on reproductive issues; Carol Adams explores violence against animals. In between are many other approaches such that the gestalt is compelling: there is work to be done.

Isherwood, Lisa and Mark D. Jordan. **DANCING THEOLOGY IN FETISH BOOTS: ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF MARCELLA ALTHAUS-REID**. London: SCM Press, 2010 (281 pages, \$45).

Marcella Althaus-Reid, Argentine born theologian who worked in Scotland, died prematurely. Her many colleagues, including Kwok Pui-lan, Robert Shore-Goss, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Emilie Townes, and Mary E. Hunt honor her memory by engaging with her work.

King, Ursula. **THE SEARCH FOR SPIRITUALITY: OUR**

GLOBAL QUEST FOR A SPIRITUAL LIFE. New York, NY: Blue Bridge, 2008 (244 pages, \$24.95).

A reliable guide in these matters, Ursula King brings together a wide range of resources to showcase the many ways people strive for spirituality. Issues of health, education, gender, the arts, and more are part of the quest. Read it, try it, enjoy it.

LaCelle-Peterson, Kristina. **LIBERATING TRADITION: WOMEN'S IDENTITY AND VOCATION IN CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE**. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008 (253 pages, \$24).

This evangelical perspective on women has helpful insights for a broader audience.

Mercer, Joyce Ann. **GIRL-TALK, GODTALK: WHY FAITH MATTERS TO TEENAGE GIRLS—AND THEIR PARENTS**. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2008 (158 pages, \$22.95).

A topic rarely addressed in the literature, this overview invites parents (fathers as well as mothers) to take their girls and their girls' faith seriously. With the acknowledgment that more must be said as girls find their voice, this is a good place to start.

Rupp, Joyce. **PRAYERS TO SOPHIA: DEEPENING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HOLY WISDOM**. Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2010 (118 pages, \$12.95). This is a follow-up to her popular volume, **THE STAR IN MY HEART: DISCOVERING INNER WISDOM**. Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2010 (98 pages, \$12.95).

Both carry strong messages of women's spiritual power and offer the reader an abundance of woman-centered prayers and reflections.

Schüssler Fiorenza, Elisabeth. **DEMOCRATIZING BIBLICAL STUDIES: TOWARD AN EMANCIPATORY EDUCATIONAL SPACE**. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009 (215 pages, \$24.95).

"Emancipatory pedagogy for graduate biblical studies" is an exciting project. Elisabeth accomplishes it with attention to what she calls "the use of the Bible in public religious discourses." The "forum of many voices" that she proposes was lived out at the Summer Forum "Making the Connections: Claiming Our Past—Envisioning Our Future Together," in 2008 sponsored jointly by Feminist Studies in Religion, Inc. and WATER.

Children's Books

Appelt, Akthi with illustrations by Debra Reid Jenkins. **I SEE THE MOON**, Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009 (14 pages, \$7.99)

This familiar story is rendered beautifully and with sweet drawings. Curl up with your favorite child and share it as early prayer.

Levy, Janice. **GONZALO GRABS THE GOOD LIFE**. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009 (30 pages, \$17.50).

The rooster who grew tired of his home tried his luck in the world. Wouldn't you know, despite lots of adventures he returned home to find the really good life he was seeking. Sound familiar?



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The Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER) began in 1983 in response to the need for theological, ethical, and liturgical development for and by women. A feminist educational center and network of justice-seekers, WATER brings twenty-seven years of experience to programs and publications, liturgical planning and consultation, workshops and retreats, counseling and spiritual direction. WATER offers fresh insights and abundant opportunities for all who thirst to engage in theological, ethical, and liturgical work developed by women.

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Autumn begins
to decorate the ground
with its fragile bits
of loosened gold.
—Teresita Fernández

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