



Left: WATER Staff Associates Hannah Dorfman (left) and Janaya Sachs (right) rally in solidarity with DREAMers at the January 2018 Women's March in Washington, DC. **Top center:** WATER Staff Associate Heureuse Kaj (right) and her clergy learning partner Rev. Clarafrancie Cromer-Sowers (left) plan a January 2018 WATERritual against human trafficking. **Top right:** Mary E. Hunt (left), Jane Adams Spahr (center), and Diann L. Neu (right) connect at the watershed Rolling the Stone Away Conference in St. Louis, MO in October 2017. **Bottom (l to r):** Elena Giacci, Margaret Farley, Salma Abugidieri, Marie M. Fortune, Emily Cohen, Mary E. Hunt, Denise Starkey, and Traci C. West honor Marie M. Fortune at the 40th Anniversary Celebration of the FaithTrust Institute in November 2017 in Boston, MA.

Women-Church Convergence Issues Statement on DACA

"Women-Church Convergence believes the Trump Administration's rescinding of DACA, and Congress's inability to pass legislation to protect this population, is unconscionable and violates the human rights of these individuals who made no choice to come here as children and know no home but the United States."

"Therefore, we call for Congress to pass, and the president to sign, legislation that protects Dreamers' human rights and provides them a reasonable pathway to citizenship. These young victims deserve the legal right to live and work here, acquire an education and keep their families intact in this country, without fear of deportation. We oppose efforts of the Trump Administration and legislators to tie hard-line provisions to legislation protecting Dreamers, include funding an expansion of the wall at the U.S.-Mexico border, cracking down on minors migrating from violence-torn countries in Central America, and curbing federal grants to 'sanctuary cities.'"

WATER is a member of the Women-Church Convergence, a coalition of autonomous Catholic-rooted groups working to build just social and ecclesial structures. For more information and to read other statements, visit www.womenchurchconvergence.org.



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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 people to address structural violence for thirty-five years—making WATER one of the oldest feminist religious non-profit organizations in the world.

Join the WATER community as we work toward inclusive theologies and rituals, push for social change, and collaborate from different perspectives. To learn more about what we do, visit us at www.waterwomensalliance.org.

Mary E. Hunt, Diann L. Neu: Co-directors | Hannah Dorfman, Janaya Sachs, Heureuse Kaj, Rachel Beaver: Staff Associates | Joe Scinto: Volunteer

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Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual • NEWSLETTER

Volume 25 • Issue 4 • 2017-2018

Time's More than Up

By Mary E. Hunt

Whether in Hollywood or Congress, training rooms for young gymnasts, restaurant kitchens, and everywhere in between, survivors are calling a halt to the sexual violence powerful men inflict on women.

A public reckoning over sexual misconduct, discrimination, and harassment is in motion. There will inevitably be some false positives. But believing women for a change, despite the perpetrators who insist they were just communicating with their "soul mates" or providing medical care, is becoming the new norm.

This unprecedented outpouring of pent up frustration with unchecked male power results in large part from the visceral reaction of many people to the Perpetrator in Chief who, until now, has abused with impunity. But the time is more than up for such despicable actions to go on unsanctioned. Details are shocking and disgusting, some beyond comprehension as scene after scene of workplace violence makes clear the scope of the problem.

"My mother insisted upon things that other people postponed insisting on," was how early feminist theologian Anne McGrew Bennett was remembered by her son. Feminists in religion have been working for decades to create a safer world for women and girls, nearly all of whom experience violence.

Anne Bennett worked in the 1970s to eradicate violence. Since then, scholars and activists, including many through WATER, have clarified the links between religion and violence, theology and misogyny, religious laws and the oppression of women, male entitlement and women's subordination. We have not won popularity contests or feathered our nests, but we have persisted for justice.

#MeToo, Time's Up, and related movements show that others are catching on. Since religions are central to how ethics are shaped—both supporting violence in some profound ways and having some potential to overcome it—feminist religious analysis can play a constructive part in contemporary movements.

I have to go no further than my own Catholic community to point to the epidemic of priest pedophilia and episcopal cover-ups that flow seamlessly with male-only decision-making and masculine language/imagery for the divine. Therein are the seeds of violence.

Endless Catholic clerics' repetition of banal blather against birth control and abortion, not to mention the-priests-do-protest-too-much approach to same-sex love by a mostly gay clerical caste is the violence part. But the masks are falling fast and light is shining brightly on many offenders, and on the top-down system that undergirds their actions.

Women in many circumstances are helping one another speak their truth, what another pioneer feminist theologian, Nelle Morton, called "hearing each other into speech." Much remains to be done, but the sheer numbers shock. Abuse is more common than not.

Unlike earlier times, when a few mostly white, upper educated women had access to redress, today's movements are broadly based. Sexual abuse happens to virtually every woman albeit differently. Black and brown women are especially vulnerable. Class, race, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical/mental ability, age, nationality, country of origin, and so much more condition safety and survival.

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Check Out Our New Podcast!

We are delighted to announce the launch of WATERcast, our new podcast! Each episode will feature conversations about feminism, faith, justice, and more!

Hosted by WATER Staff, WATERcast is a new way to engage with Mary E. Hunt on issues you are passionate about, to celebrate rituals with Diann L. Neu, and to have conversations with leaders in the field of feminist theology and ethics. Listen to our inaugural episode, "The Myth of Origin," where Mary and Diann tell the story of WATER's founding. You can also enjoy episode two, "A Cup of Blessing," a ritual with Diann to center yourself for the New Year.

Subscribe for free to WATERcast on iTunes, Stitcher, SoundCloud, or Spreaker. Visit our website, www.waterwomensalliance.org, for more information.





Give a Warm WATER Welcome to Rachel Beaver!

WATER is pleased to welcome our newest intern, Rachel Beaver!

Rachel joins us as a recent graduate of the Religious Studies program of Randolph College. Originally from Texas, Rachel looks forward to learning how feminist theology can benefit the lives of those back home, across the country, and around the world.

In the Fall of 2018, Rachel hopes to begin graduate school pursuing an M.A. in Religious Studies.

Time's More than Up...

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The good news is that we in the feminist religious community are eager to help and are in a strong position to be useful. The FaithTrust Institute, capably founded and led for forty years by Marie M. Fortune, stands out as the go-to place to get help (www.faithtrustinstitute.org). Their resources and their expertise are a few clicks away. Consult them.

We at WATER have open doors, phone lines, and inboxes to connect the many feminist religious resources to those who need them.

Moving through and beyond this social crisis requires an honest look at how we got here and what we can do to prevent the spread of violence. That means doing foundational work about gender, power, images, symbols, beliefs, and ethics. Only by getting at the root causes will we eradicate the problem.

One role of religion is to provide hope, not fantasy. Pleasurable, meaningful human relationships based in equality and safety are possible.

Edie Windsor whose Supreme Court victory extended marriage rights to same-sex people cautioned: "Don't postpone joy." Her words are a healthy counterbalance to backlash against today's anti-violence work. A terrible outcome of all of this would be for intimate personal relationships to become transactional contracts. Safety and pleasure are not mutually exclusive.

Let's assume the time is really up and there will be massive changes in workplace ethics. What will it look like? Equal pay, equal access to education/training, equal chances to be promoted are but a start. We also need new, non-binary ways of understanding human beings, new respect for boundaries, and new norms about expressing affection.

We cannot start early enough in the educational arena to give girls the tools of their own survival. The time is now. ■

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

Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network

2017 Annual Meeting Report by Mary E. Hunt

Resistance, Resilience, and Creativity was the theme that gathered more than seventy participants from over ten countries at the twenty-first meeting of the Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network in Boston, MA on November 17, 2017 at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature.

Christine Pae, Chair of the Religion Department at Denison University, spoke of *Feminist Spiritual Activism in the Militarized World*. She discussed

lifted up Rohingya women, and turned her major attention to matters of diversity, especially bio-diversity as a foundation for creative, sustaining life.

Sharon Welch, affiliated faculty member at Meadville Lombard Theological School, presented *The Soul of Democracy*. She laid out the consequences of authoritarian values, proposing the term "generative interdependence" as a fruitful way forward.



(l to r): Sharon Welch, Elaine Wainwright, Christine Pae, and Mary E. Hunt, Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network panelists, in conversation during the discussion.

women as sexualized labor in the service of American soldiers during the Korean War, spelling out "survivor wisdom" and the connection between love and exploitation. Christine concluded with an image of "God filled with tears" as part of the politics of life in a militarized world.

Elaine Wainwright, RSM, Professor Emerita at the University of Auckland, enlightened us with *What Sustains us for the Long Journey of Resistance, Resilience, and Creativity?* She addressed women in the Gospels,

Suggestions for the 2018 meeting were nearly unanimous on the theme of economics. People expressed interest in fundraising and the sustainability of movements as well as ways to talk about income inequality in diverse groups.

Changes in the global economic order ground these local matters, all of which will form the focus on our 2018 meeting on Friday, November 16, 4-6 PM in Denver, Colorado.

Join us! ■

Gratitude to You, Our Donors!

Thank you for the gifts you have given to WATER in 2017.
You strengthen our Alliance.

You renew the power of feminism, faith, and justice!
We look forward to connecting with you in 2018.

WATER Program Highlights

You can find audio of programs and ritual scripts at www.waterwomensalliance.org. Register for upcoming events on our website or email waterstaff@hers.com. Join us at WATER or by phone.

WATERtalks



In October, **Jennifer Bailey, Robyn Henderson-Espinoza, and Micky ScottBey-Jones** of Faith Matters Network joined us to discuss *Faith Rooted Organizing: Public Theology, Healing Justice, and Moral Imagination*.



In November, **Katherine Marshall and Susan Hayward**, editors of *Women, Religion, and Peacebuilding: Illuminating the Unseen*, presented on the unique role women play in peacebuilding.



In December, **Teresa Forcades i Vila**, a Benedictine nun, medical doctor, and feminist activist explained her research on *Medieval Feminist Monasticism: Did it Exist and Can it Be Relevant Today?*

WATERrituals

Our October WATERritual created by **Diann L. Neu & WATER Staff** focused on *Reclaiming Our Voices in An Age of Violence*. We shared stories of women who use their voices to end violence and challenged one another to do the same.

Diann L. Neu & WATER Staff led our November Ritual, *Harvesting Resilience*. We reflected on ways to cultivate resilience in the midst of our current political climate.



WATERmeditations



In October, **Phoebe Knopf** facilitated a meditation entitled, *Celebrating Abundance of Earth and Women's Choices*. We reflected on Marge Piercy's poem "The Sabbath of Mutual Respect."



Hannah Dorfman prepared us for the holiday season in the November gathering with a meditation about *Gratitude*, featuring Mary Oliver's poem "Gratitude."



Under the leadership of **Janet Bohren** in December, we contemplated *The Birth of a Refugee* and discussed the importance of welcoming refugees.

Upcoming WATERprograms

WATERmeditation

Monday, February 5 at 7:30 PM ET with **Cheryl Nichols**, "Let Justice Rain Down."

WATERtalk

Wednesday, February 7 at 1 PM ET with **Rima Vesley-Flad**, "Theological Responses to the U.S. Penal System."

WATERritual

Tuesday, February 27 at 7:30 PM ET with **Diann L. Neu and WATER Staff**, "Womanist Wisdom."

WATERcounseling

Call for spiritual direction, psychotherapy, or clergy supervision with **Diann L. Neu**, at WATER or via Skype.

WATERritual: Thanks to ReSisters

By Diann L. Neu

This International Women's Day and Women's History Month we raise up women reSisters worldwide for giving people voice and hope. We honor silence breakers. We thank feminists and womanists of the #MeToo and Time's Up movements. We celebrate the Women's Marches and the Pussy Hat Project. What women reSisters do you thank?

Listen to ReSisters

"I don't want to be remembered as the girl who was shot. I want to be remembered as the girl who stood up."

—Malala Yousafzai, *An Inspiration for Everyone*

"True resistance begins with people confronting pain... and wanting to do something to change it."

—bell hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*

"The likelihood that your acts of resistance cannot stop the injustice does not exempt you from acting in what you sincerely and reflectively hold to be the best interests of your community."

—Susan Sontag, *At the Same Time: Essays and Speeches*

"There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish."
—Michele Obama

Stand in Solidarity with ReSisters on the Seven Continents

We march with you, Women ReSisters of North America, and advocate for women's rights, racial equality, immigrant protection, health care reform, and democracy.

We protest with you, Women ReSisters of Asia, and declare "no more nuclear war."

We revolt with you, Women ReSisters of Africa, and shout "no" to human trafficking, "no" to violence against women, and "no" to civil war.

We organize with you, Women ReSisters of Europe, and confront climate change by protecting nature and working for clean water.

We demonstrate with you, Women ReSisters of Latin/Central America, and work for human rights, basic liberties, and protection for Dreamers.

We unite with you, Women ReSisters of Antarctica, and applaud your scientific research.

We rally with you, Women ReSisters of Australia/New Zealand, and call for the reform of sexual assault laws and a deep respect for indigenous people.

Send Blessings of Peace to Women ReSisters Worldwide

Take Action

- Email thanks to a women reSister who has inspired you.
- Support and vote for women who are running for office.
- Register to vote. Run for office.
- Put pictures of women reSisters around your home or office.
- Organize. Resist. Persist.

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