

Script for the video:

Feminist, Womanist and Mujerista Theologies

March 6, 2009

TRT approx. 17:00 minutes

Writer /Producer - Risé Sanders-Weir

Editor - Jim Parks

Justice for Women - Mary Streufert

ELCA Communications - Ava Martin

Notes:

Audio

Video

1.	(Music, 3 seconds)
2.	<u>KVAM</u> Many people understand feminism to be primarily a secular or political movement and don't understand how deeply connected it is with matters that are religious and sacred.
3.	<u>RISWOLD</u> What that means is talking about God, doing religion, studying religion while advocating for the full humanity of women and men with an eye to the way that their full humanity has been depressed or restricted in the past by theology.
4.	<u>VARGAS</u> In claiming the dignity of the fullness of Christ, the fullness of life that God intends for all of us, mujeristas are agents of their liberation and they're open and they're willing and they challenge other to come into this effort of liberation.
5.	<u>WALLACE</u> It's that universal love of people, both male and female, both, European Americans, African-Americans, Latino, all people, as well as love of oneself. So for me, that's at the core of it.

Audio

Video

6.

STREUFERT at podium

Welcome to this conference, Transformative Lutheran Theologies: Feminist, Womanist, and Mujerista perspectives. I am so very happy that you are here, each and every one of you. Thank you for being here.

7.

STREUFERT

The field of feminist theology is really at a crossroads, of what does the future hold and how can feminist, womanist and mujerista theologies infuse the church.

8.

9.

HANSON at podium

We can retreat in fear and isolation and try to be the church we once were or we can boldly go into the church God is calling us in Christ to become.

10.

STREUFERT

This is the first time that there is open, formal dialogue, that church leaders, those who are and also not, feminist, or womanist, or mujerista, have come to learn and to listen and to engage, and to think about what might come from these ways of thinking about theology and the ministry of the church that serve the gospel in the world.

Audio

Video

11.

MOS: STINGHOUSEN

What we are doing here is very sacred and very uplifting.

12.

MOS: DUORVILER

It's something as ELCA, as Christian women, we need to continue in doing and support each other.

13.

MOS: WELLER

The word "Feminist" in and of itself has been given so many negative connotations, in my opinion, by those who don't really understand what it means.

14.

MOS: MALE

I actually was brought by a friend of mine who recently took liberation theology and after many different arguments about what, sort of, a woman's place in this church is. She convinced me to come along, 'cause I said I really don't think the world is as sexist as you see it. I sort of said, well, I'll come and see what I can learn and I've learned so much. There is so much that you don't really think about that you can learn truly by sitting back, listening, and taking some time.

Audio

Video

15.

WALLACE

Embracing the voices of African-American women, I'm looking at it from a gender perspective, as well as an ethnic perspective. But also recognizing that African-American women in particular are one of the poorest in our community, and so looking at theology from the perspective of class.

Comment: This phrase should have been struck from the video and the transcript, per a previous review.

16.

WALLACE

To my sister who's living in the projects, for example, okay: You have something to say about God, okay. Tell me about it, okay. You have a particular life experience, tell me about it. Yes, you have your brother, your father, your son. Their experiences are different than yours. How about you tell me about it? Because you're valued by God. And so we want to hear what you have to say.

Audio

Video

17.

TRELSTAD

By focusing on the love and the covenant of God as something that heals and restores people and, I think also, it's not just pragmatic. It's not just because it addresses issues of abuse and different kinds of things like this. I think it also-- it's-- Luther-- Luther's own focus was on the promises, on God's promises and covenantal relationship and promises God's people of grace. And I think bringing that back to the center as-- that would inform all our ideas of atonement, even, is important. So it's not only pragmatic, but it's also theologically central to Lutheranism.

Audio

Video

18.

RISWOLD

The specific relationship for me between the Lutheran tradition and feminist theology comes both in method and in substance. So the method point is, is more about how we do this, right? So Lutheran theology, the Lutheran tradition dating back to Martin Luther claims a lot of "both/and" moments. Both one thing and another thing -- sinner and saint. Um, third way feminism specifically claims a lot of "both/ands," right? So when we're talking about human identity we're talking about how I am defined both by my race and by my gender and by my age and by my education and my ability and all of these other sorts of things. Um, and so the ability that Lutheranism and feminism have for me of holding a lot of things in tension and trying to speak to all of it -- bring them together and enrich each other.

19.

VARGAS

The term Mujerista comes from the Spanish word 'mujer', which means woman. In theology we apply it to the theological praxis of Latinas that live in the US.

Audio

Video

20.

VARGAS

The guiding principles of Mujerista theology is start in reality. It is a grassroots movement. Mujerista theologians what they do is not sit on a desk and thinking on, articulating some description about God, but going and being with and among women. Where they work, where they worship, where they study, where they cry and where they laugh.

21.

VARGAS

Jesus was crucified by oppressive systems--by the Roman system and the hierarchical authorities of his own religion. So he was both a victim, but also a redeemer of that systemic sin on the cross. Latinas suffer all the time from the consequences of systemic sin. So we hold onto the cross, and from it we derive our power to hope, in what it is our resurrection from the consequences of systemic sin.

22.

Audio

Video

23.

MOS: SULLIVAN

We need to learn how to speak in life giving, appreciating the theology that we have, but looking at it critically, and not assuming that what we have inherited is truth for all time, but more is a way that has been culturally conditioned and recognize what is gospel truth and what is cultural truth.

24.

MOS: FEIERTAG

This feels like a reopening of being able to speak publicly and to one another about our faith experiences as people who are concerned about how our tradition impacts women.

25.

MOS: BUSSE

It may sound cliché, but theology does really transform. It transforms people's lives and it transforms society.

26.

WALLACE

There are lots of things that the church does not know because voices, particular voices of persons, as one would say, on the margin, are not necessarily, you know, central to the discourse

Audio

Video

27.

KVAM

I've been amazed to see how critical Luther was of the theologies about women of his own time. So sometimes we think of this as a 19th or 20th century conversation but actually back in the 16th century he was already denouncing Aristotle for having called women a maimed man and saying that this is an inappropriate way to think of women.

28.

MOE-LOBEDA

The question of what in any given situation is uncritically assumed to be natural or normal or God's will or inevitable? That might in fact be a social construct. So to me an important principle of feminist theology is to hold that question in mind as one goes through life.

29.

TRELSTAD

It's important for the church because it raises voices that have been marginalized for a long time. And it brings those voices to the center. And I think that offers correction. It offers a richness to the kind of theology. And it also makes us relevant to the world.

Audio

Video

30.

RISWOLD

I don't think that the church can afford to pretend that feminism has accomplished all its goals. I don't think the church can afford the luxury of thinking that patriarchy has been defeated because it hasn't. It still exists. It also connects with racism and classism and homophobia and all of these other sorts of ways that we have to divide and oppress people.

31.

WALLACE

To not allow the voices of those on the margin, including African-American women, including persons who are in a different class, you know, category, persons who are of different ethnicity, I think it's a sin.

32.

MOE-LOBEDA

To confess sin is the first step of freedom from sin and the structural sins of white racism, and economic exploitation and patriarchy cannot be confessed if they're not recognized.

Audio

Video

33.

VARGAS

The ELCA wants to be a multicultural church. We have pockets of multiculturalism, uh but we are still very far from the goals that we set ourselves in 1988, of having 10%, for example, of people of color as members of our church. We are still at 2 point something, and it's 2009.

34.

(NAT sound, 3 seconds)

35.

KVAM

Our scripture opens with the sense that we are created male and female in God's image and what a wonderful kind of platform that is to really think about how men and women in God's original intention were created to be partners and to be equal. We have other biblical text that disagree with that and talk about the need for women to be silent because of their need to be under men's authority. But there's an important way of putting those kinds of text into conversation and tension.

36.

TRELSTAD

Lutheranism starts out as a protest movement, a theological protest movement against the theology of the church and its practices that are abusive.

Audio

Video

37.

KVAM

I see feminism similarly that the gospel may be misunderstood if it is understood that God intends for men to in some ways be in hierarchical or oppositional relationship with women that--it misconstrues the character of God and God's mercy.

38.

MOE-LOBEDA

God's mysterious and marvelous love is the principle force of the universe, is the heart of the world. And is flowing and pouring -- those are Luther's words; God is flowing and pouring through all things.

39.

MOE-LOBEDA

My position is probably best described as liberationist eco-feminist theology and that theology holds that the worldviews and social structures set up over the centuries to privilege men over women, also privilege people who are colored White over people who are other colors. People who have money over people who don't and to privilege human creatures over all of the rest of God's creation, and then eco-feminist liberationist theology holds that our call to participate in God's work on earth and our call to proclaim the Gospel includes the call to seek to dismantle various forms of oppression grounded in those structures.

Audio

Video

40. (NAT sound, 3 seconds)
41. **MOS: BARFIELD**
Change doesn't happen by the scholars talking about it. Change happens when the people in the pews begin to act on it.
42. **MOS: ARMAND-MILLER**
It has challenged me to think differently in some areas, in terms of my social context in relationship to other people.
43. **MOS: LANGDON**
The church has a long way to go. I think this is excellent conversation, but it is only a beginning.
44. **WALLACE**
We have a lot of conversing to do, because most of the writings, the readings about Lutheran ethics have been from the perspective of European male and female.
45. **TRELSTAD**
Lutheran theology has the possibility of including with it, all the messiness and the beauty of the world and not having to fix things or reduce them to one answer.

Audio

Video

46.

STREUFERT

To be able to engage theologically over concerns about the full co-humanity of males and females is not just a sidebar, it's not just an edition that gets added and kind of paid attention to and put on a particular bookshelf. Instead it's really meant as leaven for the church and how can the questions raised in these theologies serve the gospel for the sake of the church to be transformed.

47.

(NAT sound & MUSIC, 5 seconds)

48.

49. **END**