

NEWS RELEASE

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New Book by Local Religious Leaders Offers Liberating Message for Sexual Assault Survivors

Co-editors available for speaking engagements in the fall and beyond

Justice. Peace. Liberation. In *Liberating the Politics of Jesus: Renewing Peace Theology through the Wisdom of Women* ([T&T Clark](#)), author and editor Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Soto writes that every survivor of sexual assault needs to hear those words. Her liberating message to victims of sexual assault and abuse is, “God does not desire suffering for your life.”

In the book, to be released Sept. 3, Soto and co-editor, the Rev. Dr. Darryl W. Stephens, explore the political and religious dynamics of sexual abuse, bringing the wisdom of women’s experience to bear on abuses of power. The book includes contributions from 12 female scholars.

Soto writes, “Most Christian teaching about suffering has been an obstacle for women healing from gender-based violence. To be a servant—to sacrifice one’s life—was to suffer, and that was deemed good and acceptable.” Soto pushes back against this harmful teaching by combining a Christian commitment to justice with a feminist commitment to liberation for women.

“I want to chart a new path: the process of justice-liberation, which I call JustPraxis,” she says.

Soto’s Catholic upbringing in Puerto Rico and Chicago and early experience as an adult in the Mennonite community did not prepare her for understanding the political dynamics of suffering. She writes about her advocacy with survivors of sexual abuse in the church “through tears and anger.”

Contact Dr. Soto and co-editor Rev. Dr. Darryl W. Stephens now to schedule an appearance for your congregation, adult education group, or advocacy organization in the fall of 2020 and beyond. Presentations can be arranged via videoconference or in-person.

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Soto Albrecht

A Lancaster scholar, advocate, and pastor, Elizabeth Soto Albrecht is Adjunct Instructor and former Global Theological Education advisor at Lancaster Theological Seminary. As Moderator of Mennonite Church USA, 2013–2015, she oversaw the passage of a Churchwide Statement on Sexual Abuse. Her current ministry includes disaster relief work in her native Puerto Rico through Mennonite Disaster Service and volunteer Spanish language interpretation in local hospitals.

Rev. Dr. Darryl W. Stephens

Darryl W. Stephens directs the Pennsylvania Academy of Ministry at Lancaster Theological Seminary where he also serves as Director of United Methodist Studies and teaches leadership and ethics. He is ordained in The United Methodist Church with dual standing in the United Church of Christ. He has a PhD in Christian Ethics from Emory University and a Master of Divinity from Perkins School of Theology.