

**Melanie S. Morrison, Ph.D.**  
Author & Racial Justice Educator  
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## **Education**

The University of Groningen, Ph.D.

Yale Divinity School, Master of Divinity

Beloit College, Bachelor of Arts

## **Professional Experience**

### **Author**

Author of five books including *Murder on Shades Mountain: The Legal Lynching of Willie Peterson and the Struggle for Justice in Jim Crow Birmingham*, published by Duke University Press in 2018, and *Letters from Old Screamer Mountain*, published by RCWMS Press in 2021. Fifty-two essays and articles in journals, magazines, and newspapers including *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *Yale University Reflections*, *Sojourners*, *Journal of Current Social Issues*, *The Christian Century*, *Hervormd Nederland*, *Trouw*, and *The Witness*.

### **Social Justice Educator and Consultant**

Thirty years of experience designing and facilitating transformational group process. With a multiracial team of colleagues, designed and led seminars, workshops, and training events for educational, religious, and non-profit organizations including Yale Divinity School, Wayne State University, Guilford College, United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries, Lillian E. Smith Center, and Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council. Keynote speaker at national and regional conferences addressing issues of racial, sexual, and disability justice. In 1994, co-founded *Doing Our Own Work*, a six-day anti-racism seminar for white people. Facilitated this seminar for hundreds of participants throughout the United States.

### **Founder and Executive Director, Allies for Change**

Founded and directed a national network of social justice educators for thirteen years. Allies for Change provided education, training, and resources for individuals and organizations seeking to deepen their commitment to social justice and organizational change. Oversaw constituency development, marketing, fundraising, curriculum design, and training of new facilitators. Action and reflection formed the heart of every Allies for Change program with the goal of equipping participants to become effective, knowledgeable, and compassionate agents of structural change in their local communities.

### **Executive Director, Leaven Center**

Co-founded Leaven in 1987, a non-profit organization dedicated to nurturing the relationship between spirituality and social justice. In 2000, co-founded the Leaven Center, a retreat and study center in mid-

Michigan serving people engaged in movements for social change. Oversaw constituency development, fundraising, grant writing, program development, supervision of staff, and administration of the day-to-day operations of the center.

### **Adjunct faculty**

Graduate level courses in the fields of practical theology and social justice for seminary students at Chicago Theological Seminary and Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Courses included *United We Stand: Working to End Racism and Homophobia in Our Communities*, *Ministry on the Margins: The Joys & Perils of Unconventional Ministries* and *Doing Our Own Work: An Anti-Racism Intensive for White People*.

### **Pastor**

Ordained in 1978 to ministry in the United Church of Christ. Began ministry as the first woman to serve a church in Bronson, Michigan. Pastored a Dutch congregation in Groningen, the Netherlands (1982-1985). In 1987, co-founded Phoenix Community Church in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Phoenix Community Church welcomed lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from its inception and affiliated with the United Church of Christ in 1990.

### **Selected Presentations and Workshops**

*A Just Reckoning: Forging Deeper, Truer King House Narratives*. University of Montevallo in Montevallo, AL. September 14, 2023.

*Why We Must Remember: A King Descendant's Reckoning with Her Slaveholding Ancestors*. University of Montevallo in Montevallo, AL. April 14, 2022.

*Doing Our Own Work: An Anti-Racism Seminar for White People*. Six-day intensive seminar for faculty, staff and administrators at Wayne State University, Detroit, MI. January – March 2020.

*Transforming Scholarly Publishing Through an Equity and Anti-Racism Framework*. Workshop presentation, Association of University Presses Annual Meeting. Detroit, MI. June 2019.

*Researching Injustice: Telling the Story of Legal Lynching in Jim Crow Birmingham*. Hallie Farmer Lecture, University of Montevallo. March 2019.

*Becoming Trustworthy Anti-Racist White Educators*. Workshops for faculty and administrators at Guildford College, Greensboro, NC. August 2016 and January 2017.

*Racial Justice Institute*. Six-day training for Michigan Voice, a coalition of social justice organizations. Detroit, MI. 2015.

*Creating Culturally Proficient Communities*. Multi-year professional development program for teachers and administrators in Ypsilanti Community School District. Ypsilanti, MI. 2013-2014.

*Race & Inclusion at Yale Divinity School*. Workshops for faculty and students at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, CT. 2012.

*Race, Disability, and Class: Confronting Interlocking Privilege and Oppression*. Six-day intensive seminar for faculty and graduate students in the College of Education, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. 2011-2012.

## Selected Publications

### Books

- Morrison, Melanie S. *Letters from Old Screamer Mountain*. Durham, NC: RCWMS Press, 2021.
- Morrison, Melanie S. *Murder on Shades Mountain: The Legal Lynching of Willie Peterson and the Struggle for Racial Justice in Jim Crow Birmingham*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Morrison, Melanie. *The Grace of Coming Home: Spirituality, Sexuality, and the Struggle for Justice*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1995.
- Morrison, Eleanor and Melanie Morrison. *Created in God's Image: A Human Sexuality Program for Ministry and Mission*. Cleveland: United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 1993.
- Kamphuis, Christine and Melanie Morrison. *Verpleegkundigen en Ethiek (Nurses and Ethics)*. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1988.

### Book Chapters

- Morrison, Melanie. "Here's To You, Mr. Robertson" *Re-Membering and Re-Imagining*. Nancy J. Berneking and Pamela Carter Joern, eds. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1995.
- Morrison, Melanie. "Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Faith and Conviction" *Cloud of Witnesses*. Jim Wallis and Joyce Hollyday, eds. New York: Orbis Books, 1991.

### Selected Articles

- Morrison, Melanie. "Genealogy as Spiritual Practice: Reflections on My White Ancestral Investigations." *Geez Magazine*. Fall 2023.
- Morrison, Melanie. "Trayvon Martin, the Legacy of Lynching, and the Role of White Women." *radicaldiscipleship.net*. July 16, 2018.
- Morrison, Melanie. "Beyond Good Intentions: Cultivating an Antiracist White Identity." *Response Magazine*. February 2016.
- Morrison, Melanie. "Becoming Trustworthy White Allies." *Yale University Reflections*. Spring 2013.
- Belser, Julia Watts and Melanie Morrison. "What No Longer Serves Us: Resisting Ableism and Anti-Judaism in New Testament Healing Narratives." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*. Fall 2011.
- Morrison, Melanie. "A Love That Won't Let Go." *Sojourners*. July 1991.
- Morrison, Melanie. "A Crisis of Pronouns," *The Other Side*. March-April 1990.
- Morrison, Melanie. "A New March on Washington." *Trouw*. May 14, 1983.
- Morrison, Melanie. "Europe's Peace Movement: Strengthening Political Solutions," *The Christian Century*. July 6-13, 1983.
- Morrison, Melanie. "Survival Obligates: Portrait of a Dutch Journalist Slain in El Salvador." *Sojourners*. October 1982.
- Morrison, Melanie. "Bonhoeffer: A Kind of Brokenness. A Conversation with Eberhard Bethge." *Sojourners*. May 1979.