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FEMINIST THEOLOGY REACHING NEW BORDERS

BÚSQUEDAS DE LA TEOLOGÍA FEMINISTA

BY: VÉLEZ (COORD.), CHUNG, CORPAS, GEBARA, IRARRÁZAVAL,
LOPES, MURNIATI, NAVIA, RODRÍGUEZ, TOMITA, VIVAS.

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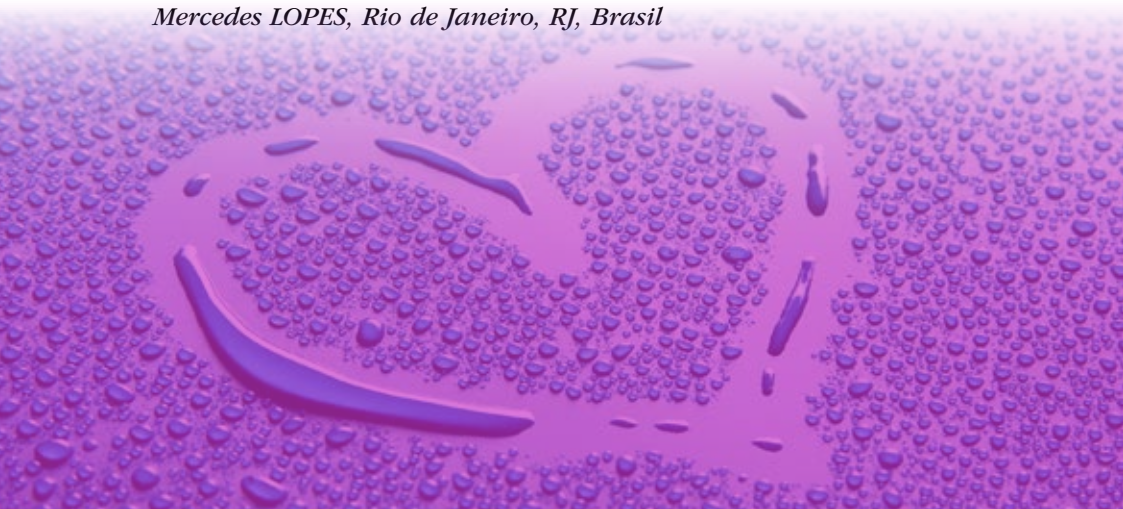
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Presentation

The Ecumenical Association of Theologists of the Third World, EATWOT (in spanish Asociación Ecu mica de Te logos y te logas del tercer mundo -ASETT), from its Committee of Latin American women, wishes to express through this issue of the Theological Journal VOICES, the efforts which are being made in many parts of the world and particularly in those places traditionally called "Third World" –though we know the globalized reality has made evident the existence of first worlds in third worlds and viceversa-, so that women's voices are heard and their search and efforts for the recognition of their dignity, the same as that of males, are not kept silent.

A long way has been covered in the last decades. From the 60's, the work of feminist theologians and biblical experts is evident, struggling for a place for women in the church, the liturgy and theology and not any presence, but that which will give them back the dignity that "machismo" and androcentrism present now have denied them for centuries, and that will allow them an effective and affective participation in all public areas.

The fruits of this work can be seen in many publications and in the interest it has arisen. Nevertheless, the road is hard since, though there are more open areas to women, this does not reach all women in all places and because the androcentric mentality cannot be changed so easily and continues to guide the search and realizations of both men and women. We cannot say there is a homogeneous path in the feminist theological search, or a lineal development. But the creativity, insistence, audacity and many other attitudes that go together with this search are evident and through persistence they open new roads.

The papers published here come from different places and express some of the challenges experienced in those areas. As it has been common in the feminist theology, some start from the experience of women (and men), others from the importance and force language has in the

changes required and in the possibility of opening new roads, apart from the already known biblical pursuits in which the prominence of women in the first christian communities attest the urgency of not only opening a place but also reclaiming what in fact was there in the beginnings and which institutional patriarchy erased and finally eliminated.

Many other topics could have been dealt with but the purpose is not to cover topics but to continue insisting that the presence of women in society and the Church cannot continue to have a second place but should develop with all the richness its presence implies, not limited to the sphere usually given to women –intuition, kindness, sensibility, care, etc.-, but also to all the human dynamism that creates and enables human development, technological, scientific, holistic and that is capable of looking for alternatives for a world in true reciprocity not only among human beings but also in communion with all of creation so as to make this “common house” sustainable, a house we share and that the Lord entrusted us to be co-creators of a world which from the beginning He/She saw “as good” (Gn 1,31).

We hope these papers are a boost to continue the feminist theological task from the realization that the basic equality between male and female is not a trendy topic, a whim of some women, a fight already overcome, or a movement which is still stigmatized. This fundamental equality is dear to God, thought by him from the beginnings of creation and an unwavering aspect for the realization of the Kingdom of God. This is not a women only task, it is the task of all those who take on the cause of humanity –which is the cause of God- in their hands and work to make it possible.

From **Korea, Meehyun Chung**, in her paper *Militarism and gender in Korea*, analyzes the situation of the two Koreas where civil war between them has left as inheritance a militarist mentality which appears in everyday life. The political situation justifies the militarist system and promotes a culture of militarism in both the micro and macro social levels. This paper shows this situation from the perspective of gender, in particular that of the sexual workers in the American camps with their children. They are turned into “the others” in their own country because there is no State protecting them against the abuses the military foreigners living in Korea perform. What is more, because of the tradition of “blood purity” existing in this country, children born from American military are not accepted and most of the times their only future is in adoption.

Stories such as the adulterous woman in John’s gospel, show how this mentality of accusing only the woman without questioning the man who is also committing adultery, is repeated in the case of sexual workers

because they are the only to be stigmatized and rejected. South Korea promotes an anti-communist mentality which is taught in all places including churches, what makes it even more difficult to build fraternity and reconciliation bonds. Capitalism, militarism are not denounced forcefully, and the experience of faith is oriented towards the salvation of the individual soul more than the prophetic denounce of all this situation marked by the dominant capitalist policies and military interests.

Isabel Corpas de Posada, from **Colombia**, shares her paper *Intimacy and eroticism in the works of past century mystics*, in which she has a theological approach to the mystic language that expresses a communion experience from the texts of six women mystics, challenging such language for the world of today. She will make reference to some texts by Hadewijch of Ambers and Gertrudis of Helftle (from the Middle Ages). Both authors express their relation and union with God with a direct spousal language and evocative of the language in the Song of Songs. Another mystic she makes reference to is Saint Therese of Jesus, from the XVI century, who also uses conjugal symbolism to express what her soul feels when united with God. From the XVII century and from another environment, non cloistered, she refers to Anne Marie van Schurmann and Jeanne de Guyon. From the first she rescues self-denial through sacrifice to open up to God and make the union with him possible, an experience that produces pleasure. From the latter she shows the nuptial symbolism as a spiritual itinerary for the union of the soul with God, dying to the self to revel in God. Finally she refers to Francisca Josefa del Castillo of the neo-Granadian colonial baroque, who as the other mystics used nuptial symbolism to express her encounter with God.

With this proof of the language that expresses the mystic experience, the author shows how all these mystics, immersed in a patriarchal context, were able to subvert the established order putting on paper their experiences and doing that with a language of erotic love. And she questions if that type of relation with God is still valid in this XXI century, concluding that maybe the language is less daring but the experience of communion persists because that is the essence of christian life. The paper ends establishing a relationship between that experience of communion and the compromise with the poorest, experience which today is called as mysticism with open eyes, understanding it from within and from below, marked by an effective compromise of solidarity towards the poor.

Ivone Gebara's paper, *Spirituality and resistance: a Latin American Feminist Perspective*, gives from **Brazil** a rich analysis over the way women, without denying their religion of origin, are looking for other spiritual paths that can reinterpret the religious values beyond the

traditional ways as transmitted in the churches governed by men. She sees language as one of the challenges of this XXI century where plurality of meanings shows words do not have one sole valid interpretation for all times, actually they transmit the richness of human interaction which creates meanings and these depend on the experiences and relations established between persons. It is in this context that we may think of spirituality and resistance, the first understood as the best manifestations of our humanity and the second as the capacity to resist evil and fight against all types of oppression. The paper wants to show how words need to be thought again because we live a complex process full of contradictions and easy certainties and as Sigmund Bauman says, a liquid society with liquid meanings.

The author, from the experience of women in Latin America, wishes to show how resistance is now a source and result of a spiritual change taking place. This change is due to the awareness of connecting one's reality to spirituality and hence the awareness of fighting for justice, denouncing any type of violence against women, saying a word different from the establishment, becomes a spiritual experience as valid as the one traditionally lived in the official churches. These experiences are true spiritual experiences which were not recognized by the liberation theology, since it only considered the economic and not all these other oppressions that affect women so much. The spirituality connected to life and daily struggles, concretely of the most poor women, makes it possible to open paths beyond the institutional and discover new experiences and roads that are fertile for the better development of all.

From **Chile**, **Diego Irarrázaval** offers us a contribution on masculinities in his article *Femininity in Men*, where, based on several authors he affirms that men have more masculine qualities and an interior feminine energy. Giving up control above other persons and the history, and through relationships, it is possible to build new masculinities which allow the femininity to emerge and recreate all aspects of the masculine personality, giving an amazing testimony of the Beatitudes, becoming an efficient collaborator and never a sacred oppressor. When one accepts the kingdom of God's love, one is capable of rejecting the omnipotent structures. To assume the feminine qualities is not a difficult task as one becomes able to live the Gospel from such qualities: to part the food, to opt for justice, to heal pain, to trust God, to love with no idolatries.

From **Brazil**, **Mercedes Lopes**, gives us *The role of Martha in the Joanine community*, as part of the present experience of feminicide, which is growing due to the present awareness of this situation, consequence of a patriarchal system that makes women invisible in the social

and ecclesiastical areas. Within this context to rescue the character of Martha in John's gospel is to talk of hope, courage and dignity, for her clear faith in the God of Jesus and her capacity to trust in the force of life when this is deteriorated. The situation of John's community was of oppression from the Romans and Lazarus' death may symbolize this. But the presence of the women is proactive and Martha represents it. She questions if Martha would be the loved disciple and to respond to this she gives a more detailed study of the text.

The disciple category is basic in John's gospel. Equivalent to that of apostle in the synoptics. The gospel introduces the name of Martha before that of Lazarus and Mary and makes the confession of faith from Martha a central point: "Yes Master, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God alive". In this way in John, Martha occupies Peter's place in Mathew's gospel. Hence, in the horizon of the God Sophia tradition, John shows the active participation of women in the community and their prominence in the confession of faith. Martha's confession expresses the apostolic faith and reveals the important role Martha had in John's community, acknowledging Peter's role, but stressing that the commitment to Jesus is more important.

From **Indonesia**, **Agustine Nunuk P. Murniati**, presents her paper *Another world is possible*, making use of the name of the World Forums, in which she participated in 2009, because she states that the strategy to change the world can only be through a socio cultural movement. In this movement there was a campaign, and solidarity communities came together and were supported. But, what is the real meaning of that expression? Maybe the Kingdom announced by Jesus which implies the liberation from all oppression included that of the patriarchal culture and gender stereotypes. But this liberation is not easy because the cultural impact is so big that we mistake what is the wish of God with what is created by human beings. Looking at the origins, with the garden of Eden, women and men divided tasks and there was no possession of one over the other. But the idol of power has overtaken us and capitalism changed values. It is necessary to recover the original values, to find the feminist potential with all the ideas and wisdom of the foremothers.

In Asia feminism is not women's stuff but it is starting to appear as their conscience when looking at their situation. But this is an imperative for all for the growth of humanity. It must discern the religious views because many times they have contributed to the subordination of women and are an epistemological process arising from the fairness of our being. Feminism in Asia has been oriented more by a secularization process and needs to be introduced more into the Asian worldwide

which is more sacral. Prophets of Judaism inspire the Asian woman to fight against all oppression, following the example of Mary of Nazareth as a prophet. Besides, Jesus' practice shows his different behavior towards those marginalized and particularly towards women. Another world is possible, therefore, a new world, a new Eden that comes from following Jesus and his announcement of the Kingdom. We are called to offer an alternative for the future. We must foster international solidarity with a prophetic mission of following Jesus.

From **Colombia**, **Carmaña Navia** gives us a paper called *The Feminine Representation in the Theology of Liberation*, which deals with one of the big problems between this theology and the feminist theology. On the one hand, although the theologians of liberation recognized the situation of oppression of the poor, they were unable to include the female view and express solidarity with her fight and movements towards her liberation. Starting from the importance given today to language due to its power to shape individuals, it shows how in the big works of the theology of liberation words such as woman, gender, Mary of Nazareth, etc., so dear to the feminists were not included. At the same time the works of some women theologians about the importance of a more existential and poetic language –much more used by women–, was not taken into account as it should have been.

Neither has the problem of the masculine language about God been dealt with sufficiently and though the theology of liberation was very creative through poetry, songs, etc., it did not consider women. To prioritize this masculine language about God prevented women to recognize themselves in the divinity because they cannot identify themselves with him. What is not mentioned does not exist. A poor understanding of the subjectivities, mainly the feminine view which would allow to understand reality from other standpoints, has been a noticeable shortage in the theology of liberation. For this reason the feminist theology was a step forward from these theologies and took language as one of its fields of battle, not only as an exchange of pronouns, but as something deeper looking for a way to talk about God for women and men of the XXI century for whom the transcendent mystery has stopped being not only interesting but also viable in the present world.

From **Colombia** too, and referring to the Popular Reading of the Bible, the paper by **Mary Betty Rodríguez**, *Dei Verbum, a popular reading of the Bible and women*, shows how Dei Verbum opened up paths to new ways of approaching the biblical text, not because the document deals with the popular reading of the Bible but because it introduces fresh air that was welcomed by the Latin-American and

Caribbean Episcopal Conferences, mainly the Conference of Medellín. Many bishops committed to the poor attended this Conference, which made the appearance of the Basic Ecclesial Communities that have been mostly constituted by women. They started to see in the biblical texts the presence and action of God on them and little by little the feminist biblical hermeneutics appeared to help them become aware of themselves as historical subjects, though oppressed and discriminated, but with a liberation perspective. It was not simple for these women to have their views welcomed. Presently there are various groups where the Popular Reading of the Bible continues and in them the women continue to read the Bible from their standpoint, not silencing their prophetic voice and having the Bible as a reference, despite the fact that the church resists a greater participation of women in it.

From **Brazil**, **Luiza E. Tomita**, the paper *Feminist theology on eco-feminist practices in Latin America: problems and challenges in the 21st century*, wants to display the inferior situation of women in society and in church due to the dominant patriarchal ideology. At this age of concern about ecology and the ecosystem protection, women are also doing their best to enter this enterprise. For them it is not hard to be a protector of the ecosystem as they have always been identified with nature, while men were identified with culture and sciences. For this reason, they have begun a type of *solidary economy* which is an alternative way to generate income and to enable their survival as well as their children's. Moreover, this type of economy does not harm the ecosystem as it enables an ecologically sustainable form of development.

Another fact is that the feminist theology has found out the close connection of the women's body and nature in what refers to the reproductive process which is controlled by the patriarchal institutions to continue their domination over women's body.

Another paper that makes reference to a woman in the Bible belongs to **Socorro Vivas**, *The ministry of Mary Magdalen. A performative referent for women today*. From **Colombia**, the author presents Mary Magdalen so that women in the Church today can find elements that are invigorating, probing and performative. Mary Magdalen is presented as an apostle, as the loved disciple, possessed by seven demons, a woman with no family bonds, a woman that attests to the death of Jesus, a woman that is witness to the resurrection –“I have seen the Lord”-, a woman who experiences the fear of declaring that Jesus resurrected, and the image of repentant sinner which has to be cleared because it lies in the popular imagination but in the canonical gospels this woman is not Mary Magdalen.

In a second stage she refers to Mary Magdalen within the circle of apostles in relation to the present debate about the ordination of women. From biblical data, with all the limitations it has, it can be concluded that Mary Magdalen complies with all the conditions to be disciple and her position has the same responsibilities as that of Peter. Today there is a debt to women in the sense of recognizing their role and giving them a place in decision taking. Finally, language plays a fundamental role and hence the way we talk of Mary Magdalen shows our way of understanding her. To take care of the language and to clear the wrong imagination that have been placed on her, is to help towards another way of valuing women and their role in the ecclesiastical ministries.

EATWOT's Latin American Theological Commission for Woman
Olga Consuelo VÉLEZ CARO
Bogotá, Colombia.





Presentación

La Asociación Ecuménica de Teólogos y teólogas del Tercer mundo (ASETT, en inglés Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians – EATWOT), desde la Comisión de mujeres de América Latina, quiere expresar a través de este número de Theological Journal VOICES los esfuerzos que continúan realizándose en diversas partes del mundo y, concretamente, desde los lugares tradicionalmente llamados “del Tercer mundo” –aunque sabemos que la realidad globalizada ha hecho real la existencia de primeros mundos en los terceros mundos y viceversa-, para que la voz de la mujer continúe alzándose y sus búsquedas y esfuerzos por el reconocimiento de su igual dignidad con el varón, no sean silenciados.

Mucho camino se ha recorrido en las últimas décadas. Desde los años 60s, se pueden reconocer los trabajos de biblistas y teólogas feministas abogando por una presencia de las mujeres en los espacios eclesiales, teológicos y litúrgicos y no cualquier presencia, sino aquella que les devuelva la dignidad que el machismo y androcentrismo imperantes les han negado durante tantos siglos y que les permita una participación efectiva y afectiva en todos los espacios públicos.

Este camino ha dado sus frutos y se constata en muchas publicaciones y en el interés que ha suscitado en diversos estamentos. Sin embargo, el camino aún es arduo porque aunque hay más espacios abiertos, estos no llegan a todas las mujeres de todos los lugares y porque la mentalidad androcéntrica no cambia tan fácilmente y esta continúa configurando las búsquedas y realizaciones tanto de varones como de mujeres. No podemos hablar de un camino homogéneo en las búsquedas teológicas feministas, ni en un desarrollo lineal. Pero sí es posible constatar la creatividad, insistencia, audacia y muchas otras actitudes que acompañan estas búsquedas y que a fuerza de persistencia abren nuevos caminos.

Los artículos aquí consignados proceden de diversas latitudes y expresan algunos de los desafíos que se experimentan en estos lugares. Como ha sido común en la teología feminista, algunos parten de la experiencia de las mujeres (y los varones), otros a la importancia y fuerza que tiene el lenguaje en los cambios que se requieren y en la posibilidad de abrir nuevas sendas, además de las ya consabidas búsquedas bíblicas donde el rescate de figuras femeninas y su protagonismo en las primeras comunidades cristianas, avalan la urgencia no sólo de abrir un lugar, sino de reivindicar lo que de hecho se dio en aquellos inicios y que el patriarcalismo institucional fue borrando hasta eliminarlo definitivamente.

Muchos otros temas podrían haberse tratado pero, el objetivo no es abarcar temas sino seguir insistiendo que la presencia de la mujer en la sociedad y en la Iglesia no puede seguir ocupando un segundo lugar sino que debe desplegarse con la riqueza que su presencia implica, no limitada al ámbito de lo que tradicionalmente se ha adjudicado a las mujeres –intuición, ternura, sensibilidad, cuidado, etc., sino también a todo aquel dinamismo humano que crea y posibilita el desarrollo humano, tecnológico, científico, holístico y que es capaz de buscar alternativas para un mundo en verdadera reciprocidad no sólo entre los seres humanos sino en comunión con toda la creación para hacer sustentable esta “casa común” que compartimos y que el Señor nos encomendó al hacernos co-creadores de este mundo que desde los inicios Él/Ella vio que “era bueno” (Gn 1, 31).

Esperamos que las contribuciones de estos artículos sean un impulso para continuar la tarea teológica feminista desde esa constatación de que la igualdad fundamental entre varones y mujeres no es un tema de moda, un capricho de algunas mujeres, una lucha que ya fue superada o un movimiento al que se le sigue estigmatizando. Esta igualdad fundamental es querida por Dios, pensada por él desde los orígenes de la creación y un aspecto irrenunciable para la realización del reino de Dios. No es tarea de mujeres sino de todos aquellos que asumen la causa de la humanidad –que es la causa de Dios- en sus manos y trabajan por llevarla adelante.

Desde **Corea**, **Meehyun Chung**, en su artículo *Militarismo y género en Corea*, analiza la situación de las dos Coreas donde la guerra civil entre ellas ha dejado como herencia una mentalidad militarista que se traduce en las actitudes cotidianas. La situación política justifica el sistema militarista y promueve una cultura del militarismo en los niveles sociales micro y macro. En este artículo se quiere ver esta situación bajo la óptica de género, en particular, la de las trabajadoras sexuales en los campamen-

tos estadounidenses con sus niños. Ellas se convierten en “los otros” en su propio país porque no tienen un Estado que las respalde frente a los abusos que cometen estos extranjeros asentados por la fuerza militar en Corea. Además por la tradición de “pureza de sangre” que existe en este país, los hijos nacidos de militares estadounidenses no son aceptados y la mayoría de las veces su único futuro está en la adopción.

Relatos como el de la mujer adúltera del evangelio de Juan muestran como esa mentalidad de acusar sólo a la mujer sin preguntarse por el varón que estaba cometiendo adulterio, se repite en el caso de las trabajadoras sexuales porque es solo a ellas a quienes se estigmatiza y rechaza. Desde Corea del sur se promueve además una mentalidad anti-comunista que se enseña en todos los estamentos, incluidas las iglesias, lo que dificulta la construcción de lazos de fraternidad y reconciliación. No se denuncia con fuerza el capitalismo, ni el militarismo, y se orienta la experiencia de fe más a la salvación del alma individual que a la denuncia profética de toda esta situación marcada por los intereses militaristas y políticas capitalistas dominantes.

Isabel Corpas de Posada, de Colombia, nos ofrece el artículo *Intimidad y erotismo en escritos de místicas de siglos pasados* en el cual se propone una aproximación teológica al lenguaje místico que expresa la experiencia de comunión a partir de textos de seis místicas preguntándose la pertinencia de dicho lenguaje para el mundo de hoy. En concreto va a referirse a algunos textos de Hadewijch de Amberes y Gertrudis de Helftle (del medioevo). Ambas autoras expresan su relación y unión con Dios con un lenguaje sponsal directo y evocando el lenguaje del cantar de los Cantares. Otra mística a la que se refiere es Santa Teresa de Jesús, del Siglo XVI, quien acude al simbolismo conyugal para expresar lo que siente el alma cuando se une con Dios. Del Siglo XVII y tomadas de otro ambiente no conventual, el artículo se refiere a Anne Marie van Schurmann y Jeanne de Guyon. De la primera rescata la negación con el sacrificio para abrir espacio a Dios y posibilitar la unión, experiencia que le proporciona placer. De la segunda recoge nuevamente el simbolismo nupcial como itinerario espiritual para la unión del alma con Dios, muriendo a sí misma para gozar plenamente de Dios. Finalmente, se refiere a Francisca Josefa del Castillo del barroco colonial neogranadino quien también como las demás místicas recurrió al simbolismo nupcial para expresar su encuentro con Dios.

Con esta constatación del lenguaje con que se expresa la experiencia mística, la autora muestra como todas esas autoras, inmersas en un contexto patriarcal fueron capaces de subvertir ese orden establecido al poner por escrito sus experiencias y hacerlo con un lenguaje de amor

erótico. Y se pregunta si en este siglo XXI esa manera de relación con Dios sigue vigente concluyendo que tal vez el lenguaje es menos osado pero la experiencia de comunión sigue siendo pertinente porque esa es la esencia de la vida cristiana. El artículo termina relacionando esa experiencia de comunión con el compromiso con los más pobres, experiencia que hoy se habla como mística de ojos abiertos, entendiéndola desde adentro y desde abajo marcada por un compromiso de solidaridad efectiva hacia ellos.

El artículo de la brasileña, **Ivone Gebara**, *Espiritualidad y resistencia: un perspectiva feminista latinoamericana* nos ofrece una rica reflexión sobre la manera como las mujeres sin negar su religión de origen, están buscando otras vías de espiritualidad que reinterprete los valores religiosos más allá de las maneras tradicionales como se han transmitido en las iglesias conducidas por varones. Se fija en el lenguaje como unos de los desafíos de este siglo XXI donde la pluralidad de significados constata que las palabras no tienen una sola interpretación válida para todos los tiempos sino que transmiten la riqueza de la interacción humana que crea significados y los hace depender de las experiencias y relaciones que se establecen entre los individuos. Es en este contexto donde se puede pensar la espiritualidad y la resistencia, la primera entendida como la mejor manifestación de nuestra humanidad y la segunda como la capacidad de resistir al mal y el luchar contra toda clase de opresión. El artículo se propone mostrar cómo esas palabras hoy necesitan repensarse porque vivimos un proceso complejo lleno de contradicciones y certezas fáciles y como dice, Sigmund Bauman, en una sociedad líquida con significados líquidos.

La autora, a partir de experiencias de mujeres de América Latina, quiere mostrar cómo la resistencia se ha convertido en fuente y resultado de un cambio espiritual que está tomando lugar en nuestra realidad. Este cambio responde a la conciencia de conectar la propia realidad con la espiritualidad y por eso la toma de conciencia de luchar por la justicia, denunciar todo tipo de violencia contra las mujeres, decir una palabra diferente a la oficial, se convierte en una experiencia espiritual tan válida como la tradicionalmente vivida en las iglesias oficiales. Estas experiencias son verdaderas vivencias espirituales que tampoco fueron reconocidas por la teología de la liberación, al limitar todo a lo económico y no tomar en cuenta estas otras opresiones que afectan tanto a las mujeres. La espiritualidad que se conecta con la vida y las luchas diarias, concretamente de las mujeres más pobres, permite abrir caminos más allá de lo institucional y descubrir nuevas vivencias y caminos fecundos para el mayor desarrollo de todos y todas.

Diego Irrarrazaval, desde **Chile**, nos ofrece una contribución desde las masculinidades en su artículo *Feminidad en los varones* en el que basándose en diferentes autores muestra como los varones tienen más cualidades masculinas y una energía interior femenina. Mediante la racionalidad y renunciando al control sobre las personas y la historia es posible construir nuevas masculinidades que dejen aflorar lo femenino y recree todos los aspectos de la personalidad masculina, dando testimonio gozoso de las Bienaventuranzas, siendo eficiente colaborador y no un sagrado opresor. Al aceptar el reinado del amor de Dios, el varón es capaz de dejar las estructuras omnipotentes. Asumir las cualidades femeninas no ha de resultar difícil pues el mismo evangelio se vive desde dichas cualidades: compartir alimentos, optar por la justicia, sanar el dolor, confiar en Dios, amar sin idolatrías.

El artículo de la brasileña, **Mercedes Lopes**, *El papel de Marta en la comunidad de Juan*, parte de la experiencia actual de feminicidio tan creciente por la toma de conciencia que se ha hecho de este, fruto del sistema patriarcal que invisibiliza a las mujeres en el ámbito social y eclesial. En este contexto rescatar la figura de Marta en el evangelio de Juan es hablar de esperanza, coraje y dignidad, por la claridad de su fe en el Dios de Jesús y su capacidad de confiar en la fuerza de la vida cuando está totalmente deteriorada. La situación de la comunidad joanina era de opresión por parte de los romanos y la muerte de Lázaro puede significar esto. Pero la presencia de las mujeres es proactiva y Marta lo representa. Se pregunta si Marta será la discípula amada y para responder se dispone a un estudio más detallado del texto.

La categoría discípulo es básica en el evangelio de Juan. Equivale a la de apóstol de los sinópticos. El evangelio introduce el nombre de Marta antes del de Lázaro y el de María y pone como central la confesión de fe de Marta: “Si, Señor, yo creo que tú eres el Cristo, el Hijo de Dios vivo”. De esta manera en Juan, Marta ocupa el lugar que Pedro ocupa en el evangelio de Mateo. También el evangelio de Juan, en el horizonte de la tradición del Dios-Sofía, muestra la participación activa de las mujeres en la comunidad y su protagonismo en la confesión de fe. La confesión de Marta expresa la plena fe apostólica y revela el papel importante que tenía Marta en la comunidad de Juan, sin desconocer el papel de Pedro, pero subrayando que la adhesión a Jesús es más importante.

Agustine Nunuk P. Murniati, desde **Indonesia**, nos presenta su artículo *Otro mundo es posible*, recogiendo el título de los Foros Mundiales, en el que participó en el 2009, porque afirma que la estrategia para cambiar el mundo solo puede hacerse a través de un movimiento socio cultural. En ese movimiento se hizo campaña, se defendió y se

unieron comunidades solidarias. Pero ¿qué se quiere significar con esa expresión? Tal vez signifique el reino anunciado por Jesús que supone liberarse de toda opresión incluida la cultura patriarcal y los estereotipos de género. Pero no es fácil esa liberación porque es tan fuerte el impacto cultural que nos constituye que confundimos lo querido por Dios con lo creado por los seres humanos. Mirando los orígenes, retomando la figura del Edén, las mujeres y los varones se repartían las tareas y no había posesión de unos sobre otros. Pero el ídolo del poder nos ha coaptado y el capitalismo invirtió los valores. Es necesario recuperar los valores originales, para encontrar el potencial feminista con todos los pensamientos y sabidurías de las antepasadas.

Por su parte en Asia el feminismo no es cosa de mujeres pero empieza con la conciencia de ellas que ven su situación. Pero es una exigencia para todos para el crecimiento de la humanidad. Ha de discernir los imaginarios religiosos porque estos muchas veces han contribuido a la subordinación de la mujer y supone un proceso epistemológico desde la honestidad de nuestro ser. El feminismo en Asia se ha orientado más por el proceso de secularización y es preciso introducirlo más en la cosmovisión asiática que tiene una visión más sacral. Los profetas del judaísmo inspiran a la mujer asiática para luchar contra toda opresión, siguiendo el ejemplo de María de Nazaret como profeta. Además la praxis de Jesús muestra su comportamiento diferente contra los marginados y, concretamente, con las mujeres. Otro mundo posible es, por tanto, un nuevo mundo, un nuevo Edén que surge del seguimiento de Jesús y del anuncio de su reino. Nosotros estamos llamados a ofrecer una alternativa de futuro. Debemos fomentar la solidaridad internacional con una misión profética de seguimiento de Jesús.

Carmiña Navia, colombiana, nos presenta un artículo titulado *La representación femenina en el discurso de la teología de la liberación* que retoma uno de los grandes tropiezos que se han vivido entre esta teología y la teología feminista. Por una parte, aunque los teólogos de la liberación visibilizaron la situación de opresión de los más pobres, no fueron capaces de incluir la mirada de la mujer y solidarizarse con sus luchas y movimientos en pro de su liberación. Partiendo de la importancia que hoy se ha dado al lenguaje por su capacidad de configurar a los sujetos, muestra como en grandes producciones de la teología de la liberación no se incluyeron palabras tan determinantes para el quehacer feminista como mujer, género, María de Nazaret, etc. Así mismo los aportes de algunas teólogas sobre la importancia de un lenguaje más existencial y poético –usado mucho más por las mujeres–, no ha sido tomado en cuenta con el peso que debería.

Tampoco se ha abordado con suficiente profundidad el problema del lenguaje masculino sobre Dios y aunque la Teología de la Liberación tuvo tanta creatividad a través de poesías, canciones, etc., no tuvo ninguna iniciativa frente a la mujer. El privilegiar este lenguaje masculino sobre Dios impide que las mujeres se constituyan plenamente desde la divinidad porque no logran identificarse con ella. Lo que no se nombra no existe. La escasa comprensión de las subjetividades, concretamente de la mirada femenina que posibilitara la comprensión de la realidad por otras vías, ha sido una carencia notable en la teología de la liberación. Por eso la teología feminista supuso un paso adelante frente a estas teologías y tomo el lenguaje como uno de sus campos de lucha no sólo como intercambio de pronombres sino más profundo, buscando como hablar de Dios para las mujeres y los varones del siglo XXI para quienes el misterio trascendente ha dejado de ser no sólo interesante sino viable en el mundo actual.

Refiriéndose a la Lectura popular de la Biblia, el artículo de la colombiana **Mary Betty Rodríguez**, *La Dei Verbum, la lectura popular de la Biblia y la mujer* muestra cómo la Dei Verbum abrió caminos a nuevas maneras de acercarse al texto bíblico, no porque ese documento hablara de lectura popular de la Biblia pero sí porque introdujo ese aire nuevo que fue bien acogido por las Conferencias Episcopales Latinoamericanas y Caribeñas, concretamente la Conferencia de Medellín. A esta Conferencia acudieron varios obispos muy comprometidos con los pobres lo cual permitió el surgimiento de las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base las cuales han sido constituidas, en su mayoría, por mujeres. Ellas comenzaron a ver en los textos bíblicos la presencia y la acción de Dios en ellas y poco a poco se fue recreando la hermenéutica bíblica feminista ayudando a que se reconocieran como sujetos históricos, aunque oprimidas y discriminadas, pero con una perspectiva de liberación. No fue fácil para estas mujeres que su reflexión fuera acogida. Actualmente existen diversas agrupaciones donde la Lectura Popular de la Biblia continúa realizándose y en ellas las mujeres populares siguen leyendo la Biblia desde su realidad, no callan su voz profética y tienen en la biblia su referencia aunque la iglesia se resista a una mayor participación de las mujeres en ella.

Desde **Brasil**, **Luiza E. Tomita**, en su artículo, *Teología feminista en prácticas ecofeministas en Latinoamérica: problemas y desafíos en el siglo XXI*, quiere mostrar la situación de inferioridad de la mujer en la sociedad y en la iglesia debido a la ideología patriarcal dominante. En esta era de la preocupación por la ecología y la protección de los ecosistemas, las mujeres también están haciendo su mejor esfuerzo para entrar

en esta empresa. Para ellas no es difícil ser protectoras del ecosistema, ya que siempre se han identificado con la naturaleza, mientras que los hombres se identifican con la cultura y las ciencias. Por esta razón, han comenzado un tipo de economía solidaria como forma alternativa de generar ingresos y permitir su supervivencia, así como la de sus hijos. Por otra parte, este tipo de economía no daña el ecosistema, ya que permite una forma ecológicamente sostenible de desarrollo. Otro hecho es que la teología feminista ha descubierto la estrecha relación del cuerpo y la naturaleza de las mujeres en lo que se refiere al proceso reproductivo que está controlado por las instituciones patriarcales para continuar su dominio sobre los cuerpos de las mujeres.

El artículo de **Socorro Vivas**, de **Colombia**, *El ministerio de María Magdalena. Un referente performativo para la mujer hoy* presenta la figura de María Magdalena para desde allí encontrar elementos dinamizadores, probativos y performativos para la mujer en la Iglesia. Muestra la figura de María Magdalena como apóstol, como discípula amada por Jesús, poseída por siete demonios, mujer sin lazos familiares, mujer que atestigua la muerte de Jesús, mujer que testimonia la resurrección -“he visto al Señor”-, mujer que experimenta el miedo de anunciar que Jesús resucitó, y la imagen equivocada de pecadora arrepentida que hay que desmontar porque está en el imaginario popular pero en los evangelios canónicos, esta mujer no es María Magdalena.

En un segundo momento se refiere a María Magdalena en el círculo de los apóstoles en relación con el debate actual sobre la ordenación de mujeres. De los datos bíblicos con todas las limitaciones que tengan se puede concluir que María Magdalena cumple con las condiciones para ser discípula y su puesto no demerita en nada la misma responsabilidad concedida a Pedro. Para las mujeres hoy sigue en deuda reconocerles su papel y darles espacio en los órganos de decisión. Finalmente el lenguaje juega un papel determinante y por eso la manera como se hable de María Magdalena indica una manera de entenderla. Cuidar el lenguaje y develar los imaginarios errados que se le han puesto a ella, es ayudar a que se viva de otra manera la valoración de la mujer y su papel en los ministerios eclesiales.

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Militarism and gender in Korea

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I. Introduction

A major destructive problem has been caused by the Korean War, which left huge traces of tragedy and suffering throughout Korea. Through the division of Korea many kinds of suffering and social problems have occurred in the personal area and in the public area. Due to Korea's geopolitical context and complexity, this has been frequently used for the militarization of Asia Pacific in the past and the present, and is likely to be so used in the future. Korea is very much affected by militaristic tension. Korean ordinary vocabulary is affected by militaristic terminology. Strategical and militaristic terms are frequently used in daily life: A bullet taxi, a shot delivery service, bomb drink of alcohol, spading (working in vain), D-day (Demobilization Day), fighting, FM (Field Manual) are some few examples. Ranking in military staff and system is very common to be used in order to describe function of people in various areas. These kinds of words affect people's mind unconsciously and promote indirectly militaristic mind and attitude. Systemic hierarchical order reinforces this terminology.

No wonder in a country which still exists under a cease fire agreement—not under a permanent peace treaty after the Korean War—we have continuous fear of potential war. This political situation justifies having a militaristic system and promotes a culture of militarism. Therefore Korean Militarism is related to micro and macro level in society and culture in general.

Gender Discrimination toward others takes place everywhere. In Korea, Gender Discrimination is related, in part, to the militaristic system. In this article I would like to examine different aspects of the militaristic stream regarding gender in order to illuminate the Korean context of mili-

tarism. In particular, the topic connects with the issue of sexual workers in US Camp and their children. They are the other in own country.

In order to break down barriers toward the other and to promote awareness of peace and reconciliation with each other we need an alternative to the popular anti-communist oriented Christianity.

II. Maleness oriented culture and militarism

Countless people have already suffered from the Korean War and division of Korea. However this is not only a fact of the past, but also an ongoing present reality in Korea. Every young male has to join to military service for approximately two years in Korea due to Korea's conscription system. For various reasons, most young men don't want to join. They are very reluctant to spend such a long time in isolated situation. Sometimes there is an understandable fear. But they have to—they have no choice. After completing their service, some young men are very proud of it. Their military experience becomes an important topic of conversation in people's gatherings on various occasions. It is a matter of heroic discourse—they to show their status as "a real man". To fulfill military service is considered as being a real male. It is a kind of process of socialization. This is one of the cultural streams which carries and disseminates militarism.

*Mow down the enemy
How many they are
On the way the South Korean man goes
They are obstacles as enemy
Come forward
For the victory
Come forward*

This was a popular song, when I was young to play a jumping game with elastic cord.¹ This kind of song illustrates the anti-communist mindset in South Korea. Korea is surrounded by big power countries like China, Russia and Japan. Therefore this small country was frequently a battle place of power struggles among these countries. In modern history, after the colonial period by Japanese (1910-1945), another tragedy was waiting for the Korean people. Korea was forced in 1945 to divide into two parts according to the interest of the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union because the Second World War was ended by them. Since independency was brought by them, not by the Korean people (even though Koreans worked hard for it), it cause a second dependency on those power countries. The U.S. military government dominated in South Korea, while North Korea was under the dominance of the Soviet Union. When the Korean War happened in Korean peninsula, it was essentially a proxy War

between super powers. Afterwards the scar remains everywhere in many layers. Anti-communist ideology has been disseminated in many areas in South Korea in general, but in Christianity in particular. Indeed we are domesticated in this trend of anti-communism. Hostility against North Koreans dominated people's emotions and attitude in South Korea. All kinds of democratic movements were suppressed in the name of National security against North Korea. We were taught that North Korea is evil or a demon nation with a horn. Long-term total disconnection between the Korean people was a great barrier to the promotion of mutual understanding.

This situation has gradually changed since the 1990s when migrant people from North Korea occasionally escaped and shared their experiences. Besides this, small-scale economic cooperation began between the Koreans. These kinds of cooperation enable a new perception of others. However, changes of ideology do not occur quickly. Generalization of nationalistic and militaristic culture had occurred unconsciously, and the Conflict between communist and anti-communist ideology prevailed everywhere.

III. The other in own country

The Korean War left many kinds of scars. One major problem was the issue of sex workers during the war and post-war period of Korea.² In the US military camp there were complex problems regarding gender and sex. Wherever the US military established camp, a camp of prostitution was created as well and "sex among allies" was permitted officially. Two major problems occurred as result: First, there was discrimination and unjust treatment of these sexual worker and discrimination against them in society. Secondly this sexual intercourse brought many kinds of mixed blood children. Due to cultural preferences for a pure blood line, these children were consciously and unconsciously disregarded. Thus it became main reason of adoption of Koreans into USA and other so-called first world countries. International adoption per se is a big social issue in Korea which is related to many different origins and causes.

Prostitution in US Camp

In Korean Society racial national homogeneity is very much emphasized. Sexual purity of women is one of important virtue, which is mostly required only by women. Throughout its history, Korea was invaded repeatedly by foreign forces like China and Japan. For instance in the era of Mongolian period, during the Ming and Ching Dynasty, there were several invasion where the women were raped and taken away. Most of

them lost their lives, only a few came back home where they were not accepted. Due to this ideology of homogeneity they were not accepted even their own families. There is a popular curse against women, phonetically “wha-nhang-yeon.” It means literally a woman who returned alive. It shows exclusivism against women who have lost sexual purity. Their being is socially disregarded.

Due to Korea’s Confucian ideology, pure blood line and homogeneity are very much underlined. For the ancestor worship ceremony patri-linearity is reinforced. This kind of ideology has been dominant and it was not until the late 19th century that Korea, forced by foreign power, opened itself to the international community. Even though there was already mixed blood in the historical development, people do not want to recognize this reality. This kind of tendency is very much affected in society in general which makes it difficult to correct racism toward people of color and sex workers who served for American soldiers. Therefore Prostitutes for the military in general are very much despised. After the Korean War, American soldiers and camp remained in South Korea. Military command was handed over to the US President and, currently, wartime military command has still not been transferred to the Korean President.

Under this kind of dependency on US militaristic system many kinds of incidents happened to the civil citizen in South Korea. I would like to restrict my comments to the issue of prostitution on US Camp area. On the one hand they worked for their own survival, but on the other hand they worked for the physical desires of American soldiers within the US-Korean militaristic system. It means they worked on behalf of the Korean people, although they were disregarded as “Yang Gongju” which sarcastically means, “western princess.” Their being is viewed socially with deep contempt.

There is a minority NGO Durebang that works with these women and corrects social prejudice against them. Durebang is “a Korean women's peace organization working to eradicate prostitution, human trafficking and challenge militarism.”³ Durebang was founded in March 1986.⁴ Durebang has worked with marginalized women of various backgrounds who face different challenges with U.S. soldiers within the U.S. camptowns.⁵ The mission of Durebang is to support marginalized and oppressed women in camptowns in order to promote self-esteem and assist for self-help. Their ultimate goal is to lead them to healthful lives and to find reintegration to the society. “Durebang continues to work toward finding solutions to problems that result from prostitution, the harmful effects of militarism, and especially the current situation of both

Korean and migrant women being forced or deceived into working in the camptown sex industry.”⁶ After female migrant workers introduced to Korea women from Philippine and Russia take over this kind of work as prostitution. Since the system has not changed, challenges and problems remain. Durebang has expanded and now supports sisters in the Philippines and Indonesia. Especially valuable is their know-how and experience facilitating a shelter and helping women with domestic violence.

The reality of military prostitution in US-Korea relations is critiqued and disregarded. However, people do not consider why this kind of prostitution was necessary. They were victimized and objectified, as was the accused woman in John’s Gospel.

The Story of the Adulterer in John

In the story in John 7.53-8.11, the woman is accused of being an adulteress although her partner in the act isn’t mentioned. Compare this to Leviticus 20.10, where both adulterer and adulterous are mentioned, but in John’s story there is not a single word about the male, only the adulteress is mentioned. Nor is the woman given a chance to recount what happened or to share her side of the story. As is usual in the bible, the woman is either victimized, objectified, or both. “The power to speak is directly related to the power to act; so far this is commonplace. The linguistic powerlessness of some categories of subjects is congruent to their physical objectification.”⁷

The text does indicate that through his actions Jesus sets aside the limitations of scripture. Jesus demonstrates the superiority of the spoken word of love to the power of written legislation. Through a spoken word of compassion, Jesus fulfills the true spirit of the law as written word. We can say that it was the Word Incarnate that was the subject of the action.⁸

In her article about John 7.53-8.11, Jean K. Kim draws attention to the adulterer: who he might have been and how his presence could be situated in the story. Addressing the problem of woman as object, she also specifically mentions the denial of the woman’s powers of articulation. Why are they absent? Kim also pointed to the colonizing domination of the Roman Empire as a potential factor.⁹

She interpreted this biblical incident through the Korean context of Yun Kum-I, who was murdered very brutally by a US soldier. ¹⁰ Due to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), an unjust agreement between Korean government and the US Military, the murderer was not punished under Korean law.¹¹ According to a coalition of 46 different Korean

organizations “This (crime) has been presented as an accidental homicide, committed by one individual soldier—a ‘Private crime’ between the victim and the perpetrator. However, we the people believe that this is an example of how American soldiers treat Korean women.”¹²

Jean K. Kim draws out the possibility that the male adulterer in John’s story may have been a Roman soldier protected by a colonialist agreement. The sexual purity of women always goes hand in hand with the honor of men. The policy, during war, invasion and colonization, of foreign soldiers raping females is meant not only as a violation of the victimized women, but also as an act of humiliation for the men who can’t protect them. “...men who are unable to protect their women tend to feel shame at not being real men, and thus the sexual invasion of their women by foreign men becomes an assault on male and national honor...”¹³

It is thus that in patriarchal societies the sacrifice and innocence of the women is soon forgotten, while the lost honor of the men remains important.¹⁴ In the story of adultery as John tells it, Jesus uses the power of direct speech to clarify the true nature of law, how it is meant to support and guide life among us all, and not to become an instrument of death and oppression. Indeed Jesus showed the power of spoken word. Jesus reinterprets this law toward life and breaks custom in order to transform culture. Jesus does not set himself over against the Law as a description of God’s righteous presence or the covenant in God’s name. Jesus affirms the Law in order to save life.¹⁵

It is still important to remember the sexual context around US camps and to recognize their stories toward life.

Adoption

The next section considers the discrimination toward people with mixed blood from the cultural and religious aspects in Korea. It is closely related to the issue of adoption in Korea. Korean adoptions have multiple complex dimensions in terms of origin and background. Korea is well known as a country of export for children. Generally speaking there are two major reasons: the first is related to the Korean War and its consequences. The second is connected to industrialization of Korean society in the 1960s and 70s. Notwithstanding their differences, one commonality among these roots of adoption is alienation among people. In this chapter the issue of adoption is limited to the first reason for exporting children. It is especially related to the Korean war-period when so many children were abandoned and became orphans. Later it was related to sexual intercourse between Korean prostitutes and American soldiers who remained in Korea. Due to the confusing ideas of a pure blood line-

based family system, it was not accepted to adopt children from other family backgrounds.

Because of many Koreans' exclusive attitude, children of mixed marriage between American soldiers and Korean prostitute were not welcomed in Korean society. They have difficulty integrating because of appearance and skin color. They were the other in their own country whose existence is not recognized properly in the society. Mimicry orientalism occurred in Korean society in general. Furthermore, people of color with mixed blood were not accepted. People are not interested in this kind of extraordinary militaristic situation. Women and children in US Camp were vulnerable and accused easily due to social prejudice.

“The prostitutes themselves never learned to trust and depend on one another because camptown life bred competition, deceit, violence, and fear. And those who bore children rarely had the thought of becoming mothers, and many gave up their children to American fathers or to adoption agencies. In short, because personal relationships and contexts failed them, the rule of law became a more pressing need.”¹⁶

However all women and children who suffered under this militaristic system of prostitution are not merely victim of this mechanism. They are priming water to enable us to draw water from a well which teaches us the deeper reality of this system. As subaltern their story hasn't been heard. In Confucian-oriented culture, their being is blamed due to lack of recognition for how they support themselves through their body to comfort US soldiers. The being of byproduct is also not accepted. It remains only discrimination against those women even they were living letter of Korean modern history. In order to correct our attitude toward “otherness,” one-dimensional understandings of adoption as charity work should be corrected and the intersectional complexity of this matter should be reflected.

IV. Transforming Anticommunism oriented Christianity

Korean Christianity has been deeply affected by Anticommunism since the Korean War. Churches haven't yet tried to overcome this kind of ideological conflict and tension. The Division of the Korean Presbyterian Church was also related to this issue of Anticommunism in the 1950s. Membership in the World Council of Churches was the official reason of this kind of separation, because the WCC was considered by some as a communist-oriented organization. Afterward this issue of ideological conflict and tension intensified. This trend continues today in Korean Christianity.

Militarism is one of important component to sustain worldwide capitalistic market-system. It is a necessary condition for maintaining wide economic power. Thus, Militarism is not unrelated to market-economy and capitalistic business interests.

Major Korean Churches are conservatively and apolitically oriented, concentrating on the salvation of individual souls.¹⁷ These communities are also driven by influence of American missionaries and U.S. fundamental theology from the beginning. Americanized conservative Christianity is reproduced in Korea very similar way. This kind of characteristic reinforces a culture of militarism and anticommunism as ideology among Christian churches.

Dorothee Sölle criticized global chain of militarism because it is driven by this kind of capitalistic expansion and promotes market economy for militaristic industry. Those who take hegemony of militarism also have control power over the market system. Therefore political power by militaristic manipulation and dominance by economic power are closely intertwined. Fundamentalist-oriented religious people support this kind of militaristic domination and thus directly and indirectly help the business of the military industry. Sölle underlined that this kind of worldwide militaristic position is supported by religious orientation. Militaristic power is viewed like God's being. This kind of hegemonic power within US is lead by ultra-conservative Christians who idolatrously worship secular power under the guise of Christian liturgy. Barbarism and brutality is globally covered with religious terminology and liturgy. On the other side many religious conflicts are swept under the carpet.

God in Christianity became a maid of militaristic imperialism. God's creation is raped by militaristic interest and ideology, global hegemonic political dominance. It causes oppression of people of color in various stages of history. Furthermore this kind of dominant attitude of people and power struggle reinforces objectification of nature by human-being. It significantly contributes to exploitation and the destruction of nature worldwide.

“If the problem in Western traditions lies in the separation of the individual and the collective and the ascendance of the individual over the collective, the problem in Confucianist traditions is the opposite: the tendency of the collective to subsume the individual. In the case of Korea, governments have used ‘national security’ as the rallying cry for collectivism and as an excuse for silencing and making individuals ‘invisible.’”¹⁸ Therefore stories of reluctant sex workers and their children could be disseminated in order to remind of system of militarism.

Ongoing tension and conflict happen continuously. Therefore militarism influences not only the military system, but also the entire Korean culture. The whole society is affected by this patriarchal military order-obedience mechanism. Those who possess hegemonic power dictate everything instead of promoting the spirit of empowerment and embracing of diversity. A monotonic linear idea dominates and does not consider otherness and complexity. This kind of power chain is hard to break because it is easy to monopolize power. It is a great hindrance to the development of democratic creativity and the acceptance of diversity, or to reach a consensus by recognition of otherness. The important thing is how we promote our awareness of peace and reconciliation with one another. In that kind of process we need to transform Christianity, moving beyond its one-dimensional Ideological orientation.

V. Conclusion

For those who experienced the horrors of the Korean War directly, it is not easy to accept people from North Korea and North Korea per se. Due to their direct physical experience, such people do not give up anti-communist propagation. On the other hand, younger generations are disinterested in this kind of issue because they are focused upon their own individual life and future job possibilities. Unification is understood, therefore, as an expensive burden which they don't want to take on. Disinterest in the matter of unification is pervasive among this young generation. However, they are, at the same time, directly affected by the military system and culture. Nobody lives in a protected bubble, free from such influences. The Ideology of militarism is related to every single matter of the society and culture in macro- and micro level. A third way is necessary in order to overcome the mechanical dualism of tension and dichotomy like white and black, wrong and false, pro and anti-communism, capitalism and communism. Afterward dialectical synthesis could be derived through this tension. Gender discrimination which was caused by militarism could be also corrected toward gender justice.

In order to reach this goal, Korea's ceasefire or armistice agreement should be changed into a permanent peace agreement. It could contribute to healing the people who are affected by long-sustained fears, threat and hostility by this division of the Koreas. Militarism and militaristic culture is one of the most important social streams in Korea which is related to micro and macro discourse in Korea. The third way for unification is possible if both Koreas would accept each other and correct animosity and propagation. To give up old conflict of ideology between anticommunism and pro-communism would be a first and necessary step in the effort to move forward¹⁹.

Notes

- 1** This part is based on the following article and is lightly revised. Meehyun Chung, "Korean Feminist Theology for Unification", VOICES, Vol. XXVII, 2004, p. 62-82, Journal of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.
- 2** Katherine H. S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies. Military prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*, (New York: Columbia University, 1997). http://blog.naver.com/man_songs2?Redirect=Log&logNo=220515371604 (visited on 17th. Dec. 2015).
- 3** <http://durebang.org> (visited on 17th. Dec. 2015).
- 4** Na-Young Lee, "Negotiating the Boundaries of Nation, Christianity, and Gender". *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 17(1)2011, 34-66.
- 5** About the life of those women see History of My Sister's Place. The Stories of the Women of Durebang, ed. by Durebang 2001.
- 6** <http://durebang.org> (visited on 17th. Dec. 2015).
- 7** Mieke Bal, *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 243.
- 8** Jean K. Kim, "Adultery or Hybridity?", *John and Postcolonialism. Travel, Space and Power*, 122. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (eds.), *Dangerous Women: gender and Korean Nationalism*, (New York:Routledge, 1998).
- 9** Jean K. Kim, *op.cit.*
- 10** Jean K. Kim, *ibid.*, 125. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (eds.), *ibid.*
- 11** There is special phrase used to describe an adulterous woman in Korea, while there is no such concept of wrongdoing for the man equally involved. These concepts have their origins in foreign invasions of Korea, especially the Japanese invasions of 1592-1598 and the Chinese invasions of 1636-1637. Women were often doubly victimized. They were first raped and taken as captive slaves to a foreign land. But when they somehow, through great effort, managed to survive and return home, or to pay sufficient ransom for their release, their return was not welcomed. Their own families were shamed due to the lost purity of their bodies. These unjust concepts and pejorative phrases were again applied during the 20th century to those Korean women who served as 'comfort women' for the Japanese soldiers or worked as prostitutes serving the US military bases or, as sometimes happened, married US soldiers. Because the 'purity' of blood was so idealized, mixed marriages were treated as wrong, bad for society, and culturally abhorrent.
- 12** Katherine H. S. Moon, *Sex Among Allies. Military prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations*, (New York: Columbia University, 1997), 31; Na-Young Lee, "Negotiating the Boundaries of Nation, Christianity, and Gender," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, 17(1)2011, 34-66.
- 13** Jean K. Kim, *ibid.*, 122. Elaine H. Kim and Chungmoo Choi (eds.), *Dangerous Women: Gender and Korean Nationalism*, (New York: Routledge, 1998).
- 14** These attitudes, prejudices and social perceptions were obstacles to the public discussion and understanding of critical historical events. The voices of the Comfort Women were silenced for a long time, and were only heard in 1992 through the efforts of a dedicated women's group. Since then, every Wednesday, there have been peaceful weekly demonstrations in front of the Japanese Embassy on this issue. It is through such perseverance and commitment that difficult information has entered the public sphere, leading in 2014 to a recognition of the problem by a US Senator in the American Senate. Cf. <https://www.womenandwar.net/contents/home/home.nx>

- 15 Indeed Jesus came to fulfill the law, not set it aside (Mt. 5, 17). To the extent that the Law describes God's presence and activity with us, the Law points to God and our place in God's covenant. The Law only becomes problematic when it takes on a life of its own, i.e., when it becomes a means or instrument of revelation/salvation/wisdom that does not depend upon God. What Jesus does is replace it with himself (God with us) and so redirect our attention upon the Lawgiver whenever we contemplate the Law. *The Law after Christ* still retains a remarkable role for us in the Reformed tradition, but no longer as a demand-requirement. I appreciate to Merwyn Johnson for improvement of expression regarding law and orality.
- 16 Katherine H. S. Moon, *ibid.*, 159.
- 17 Dorothee Sölle, *Thinking about God: an introduction to theology*, (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1990), 15-17. Sölle listed some negative examples of this kind of separation like the Church under Hitler, Franco, Pinochet and the CIA so on. Christianity is combined with fascism in certain degree and reinforces it.
- 18 Katherine H. S. Moon, *ibid.*, 160.
- 19 Hur, Ho-Ik, "Ideological Conflict in South Korea and Reunification Theology," *Korean Journal of Systematic Theology*, 42(2015) Sep. 181-183.



**¡Sin las
mujeres
la lucha
va por
la mitad!**

**Ya basta de discriminación de género,
y menos entre camaradas...**



Intimidad y erotismo en el lenguaje de escritoras místicas

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Para el curso “Literatura y lenguaje orante”, organizado con ocasión de los quinientos años de nacimiento de Teresa de Jesús por el Instituto Carmelitano de Espiritualidad de Bogotá, preparé una lectura teológica y en perspectiva de género de escritos de místicas de siglos pasados en los que pude identificar, a manera de común denominador, la experiencia de intimidad con Dios y el erotismo del lenguaje en el que dejaron testimonio de dicha experiencia. Y esta conclusión es la que me propongo presentar en este trabajo, que se articula en tres momentos: una aproximación teológica al lenguaje místico que expresa la experiencia de comunión, la lectura teológica y en perspectiva de género de textos de seis místicas de los siglos pasados y unas preguntas en relación con la pertinencia de dichos textos para el mundo de hoy.

Pero antes de abordar los textos escogidos como campo hermenéutico, conviene precisar cuál es el horizonte de lectura: el método de la teología hermenéutica y contextualizada en la línea de Gadamer, Schillebeeckx y Alberto Parra¹ y la teología en perspectiva de género, como forma alternativa de hacer teología a partir de la teoría de género como instrumento metodológico².

1. Aproximación teológica al lenguaje místico de experiencia de comunión

Para referirme al lenguaje místico debo referirme también a la experiencia mística, que interpreto como experiencia de comunión con

la divinidad, cualesquiera que sean las circunstancias de tiempo y espacio. Experiencia que, como toda experiencia profundamente humana, se expresa en un lenguaje que es simbólico (Corpas 2010) y que, tratándose de experiencia de comunión con la divinidad, “no pertenece al orden de lo descriptivo” (Wittgenstein, en: Durán Casas 234) sino al “habla de lo inefable” (Valencia 2006).

Ejemplo de lenguaje simbólico es el *Cantar de los cantares*, el poema bíblico que canta el amor de la pareja (Corpas 2004 114-235), en el que se ha querido identificar, en el marco veterotestamentario³, una alegoría de la relación exclusiva de Dios con su pueblo:

Mi amado es para mí y yo soy para mi amado (Ct 6,3).

Yo soy para mi amado y hacia mí tiende su deseo (Ct 7,11).

¡Que me bese con los besos de su boca! Mejores son que el vino tus amores (Ct 1,2).

¡Qué hermosos tus amores, novia mía! ¡Qué sabrosos tus amores! ¡más que el vino! (Ct 4,10).

De estas imágenes nupciales se han apropiado místicas y místicos cristianos, principalmente una de las tres corrientes que suelen identificarse en la tradición cristiana –la mística sponsal, representada por la corriente monástica medieval– que expresa la comunión con Dios “como la comunión de la esposa con el esposo” (Olivera). Y de esta forma de expresar la experiencia mística, escribe Elisja Schultz:

En la búsqueda del amor místico, las conmociones corporales, el surgir de los deseos libidinosos y las fantasías eróticas desempeñaban un papel decisivo como indicadores de los abismos más profundos del alma [que] las mujeres parecen haber vivido de manera más inmediata, más personal y más desvergonzada (198).

2. El simbolismo nupcial en escritos de seis místicas de siglos pasados

Las seis mujeres cuyos textos me propongo abordar desobedecieron los esquemas androcéntricos de su entorno cultural, invadiendo el espacio masculino de la palabra y el saber.

Dos de ellas vivieron en el mundo medieval. La una –Hadewijch de Amberes (ca. 1200-1260)⁴ – como beguina, una opción de vida religiosa por fuera de los cánones establecidos que era perseguida por la autoridad eclesiástica. La otra –Gertrudis de Helfte (1256-1301)⁵ – en el convento que “enclaustraba”⁶ a las mujeres separándolas de los varones (Fuente y Fuente 84) e identificándolas como *sponsa Christi*, al mismo tiempo que las liberaba de presiones familiares y sociales (Rivera Garretes 11) y modelaba su espiritualidad, dirigida siempre por el confesor como figura masculina de autoridad.

Conmovida por las palabras de Jesús en el evangelio de Juan –“que todos sean uno, como tú, Padre, en mí y yo en ti” (Jn 17,21)– Hadewijch registró así su experiencia de unión con Dios y conocimiento de Dios:

... hace cuatro años, el día de la Ascensión, Dios Padre en persona en el momento en que su Hijo descendió sobre el altar [...] nos tomó a él y a mí, a mí y a él, y nos recogió en él. Y en esta unidad en la que fui asumida y glorificada, comprendí esta realidad y aprendí a conocerla de una manera más clara que a través de los sentidos (“Carta XVII”) (En: Mommaers 1994 63).

Escribió para sus compañeras beguinas probablemente por orden de su confesor (Ibídem 57) y en su búsqueda de figuras, metáforas y palabras que pudieran expresar su experiencia mística recurrió al género de la lírica cortesana de los trovadores, comparando alegóricamente la relación con Cristo como la relación de la dama con su señor, al mismo tiempo que optando por la mística del abandono, del despojarse de sí, del “no desear nada distinto del propio Dios [que] conduce a un verdadero aniquilamiento del alma” (Épiney-Burgard y Zum Brunn 23).

Gertrudis, por su parte, tuvo una visión de Jesús resucitado que describió así:

Vi de pie ante mí, un joven amable y delicado, como de unos dieciséis años, tal cual mi juventud de aquél entonces hubiera deseado que se complacieran mis ojos exteriores. El cual, con rostro atractivo y palabra dulce me dijo: “Pronto vendrá tu salvación, ¿por qué te consumes de tristeza?” [...] Él mismo, de repente, sin ninguna dificultad, tomándome, me levantó y me estableció junto a sí. [...] Desde entonces, serenada por una alegría espiritual enteramente nueva comencé a correr tras el olor de tus perfumes y a comprender cuán suave es tu yugo y ligera tu carga, lo cuál antes me resultaba insoportable (*Legatus* II, 1.2) (En: Forastieri 115).

Recibió la orden de poner por escrito sus visiones y revelaciones, lo que hizo en parte de su puño y letra pero también con ayuda de una redactora debido a las frecuentes enfermedades que padeció. Su espiritualidad gira alrededor de la unión con Cristo expresada en clave sponsal, “omnipresente en la obra gertrudiana” (Forestieri 136) desde la cual interpreta y expresa la experiencia mística en lenguaje en el que “resuena o se trasluce la fuerza del *eros* o amor-pasión” (Ibídem): “con frecuencia diez o más veces, durante un salmo, estampaste en mi boca un muy delicioso beso” (*Legatus* II 21) (En: Olivera); “que con el beso de tu dulce boca me introduces como tuya propia en la cámara nupcial de tu amor festivo [...] para que me hagas experimentar con amor sponsal y en el abrazo nupcial, quién eres tú y cuál es tu grandeza. [...] Hazme gustar por experiencia, como una verdadera esposa, la unión de tu casto amor” (*Ejercicios* III) (En: Ibídem).

La vida Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada (1515-1582), la tercera de las místicas escogidas como campo hermenéutico, está enmarcada en la Contrarreforma, en la Inquisición –que perseguía a quienes ponían en peligro la unidad de la fe– y en el convento, en el que a pesar de la clausura las mujeres gozaban de un espacio de libertad sin tener que someterse a la autoridad del padre o al esposo, aunque debieran hacerlo al confesor.

En *Su vida* y en *Las moradas*, Teresa escribió lo que había “visto por experiencia” (Su vida 157), cuando “parece el Señor arrebatarse el alma y la pone en éxtasis [sic], y así no hay lugar de tener pena, ni de padecer, porque viene luego el gozar” (Ibidem 166) y acudió al simbolismo conyugal para interpretar y expresar “qué siente el alma cuando está en esta divina unión. [...] ¡Dígallo quien lo sabe, que no se puede entender, cuánto más decir!” (Ibidem 96-100). Y en su castiza prosa escribió:

Lo que pasa en la unión del matrimonio espiritual es muy diferente. Aparécese el Señor en este centro del alma sin visión imaginaria sino intelectual, aunque más delicada que las dichas, como se apareció a los Apóstoles sin entrar por la puerta, cuando les dijo: “Pax vobis”. Es un secreto tan grande y una merced tan subida lo que comunica Dios allí al alma en un instante, y el grandísimo deleite que siente el alma, que no sé a qué lo comparar, sino a que quiere el Señor manifestarle por aquel momento la gloria que hay en el Cielo, por más subida manera que por ninguna visión ni gusto espiritual (“Morada 7a, capítulo 2”, *Las moradas* 193).

Quiso el Señor que viese aquí algunas veces esta visión: veía un ángel cabe mí hacia el lado izquierdo, en forma corporal. [...] Veíale en las manos un dardo de oro largo, y al fin del hierro me parecía tener un poco de fuego. Esta me parecía meter por el corazón algunas veces y que me llegaba a las entrañas: al sacarle me parecía las llevaba consigo, y me dejaba toda abrasada en amor grande de Dios. Era tan grande el dolor, que me hacía dar aquellos quejidos, y tan excesiva la suavidad que me pone este grandísimo dolor, que no hay que desear que se quite, ni se contenta el alma con menos que Dios. No es dolor corporal sino espiritual, aunque no deja de participar el cuerpo algo, y aun harto. Es un requiebro tan suave que pasa entre el alma y Dios (*Su vida* 165-166).

Los escritos, de la santa de Ávila fueron también producto de la obediencia a sus confesores: así lo afirma en la introducción de *Su vida*, al definirla como “esta relación que mis confesores me mandan”. Y al incluir como subtítulo de su autobiografía: “por mandato de su confesor”, además de que en casi todas las páginas repite “díjome quien me mandó a escribir” y mencionando una y otra vez a “vuesa merced”, su confesor, como interlocutor a quien confía sus éxtasis, visiones, tormentos, penalidades, dudas, trabajos y aflicciones, amén de sencillas reflexiones y de

numerosas referencias a sus enfermedades, de las cuales fue víctima a lo largo de toda su vida. Aceptó el mandato para ayudar a sus hermanas religiosas a orar, como ella misma lo expresara: “Mejor se entienden el lenguaje una mujeres de otras” (*Las moradas* 30).

No pertenecieron a un entorno conventual las otras dos escritoras –Anne Marie van Schurmann (1607-1678)⁷ y Jeanne de Guyon (1648-1717)⁸ – que tienen como escenario el siglo XVII europeo, caracterizado por tensiones entre tendencias espiritualistas y racionalistas, por controversias teológicas de la Reforma y la Contrarreforma al mismo tiempo que por guerras religiosas entre católicos y protestantes, como también por la persecución a los seguidores del labadismo⁹ y del quietismo¹⁰.

Calvinista holandesa, desde la espiritualidad labadista, de la que se hizo seguidora, van Schurman buscaba un tipo de conocimiento que denominó como la “única cosa necesaria” [...] un conocimiento íntimo de Dios (*intima notitia Dei*)” (Lee 218-219. La traducción es mía), refiriéndose a un conocimiento experiencial, diferente de complicadas reflexiones teológicas acerca de Dios, para lo cual había que negarse a sí misma, abandonarse, “destruirse”, en cuanto vaciamiento de sí, y acompañar esta negación con sacrificio para abrir espacio a Dios y posibilitar la unión (Lee 218-219). Y esta autonegación era, para ella, medio de alcanzar placer.

Católica francesa, en su *Commentaire au Cantique des cantiques de Salomon*, madame Guyon propuso un itinerario espiritual para la unión del alma con Dios utilizando el simbolismo nupcial, en el que planteaba la necesidad de morir a sí misma para poder gozar plenamente de Dios:

El matrimonio se realiza cuando el alma, muerta a sí misma cae rendida en los brazos del Esposo que la acepta y la recibe (En: Lee 228. Traducción propia).

Según Guyon, para gozar de la íntima presencia divina, el alma debe “entregarse en el altar del sacrificio” (Ibídem 213) y sufrir innumerables penalidades para poder experimentar el placer de Dios, que consiste en permitir que el alma sea destruida o despojada de sí: es lo que ella denominó *annéantissement*.

La última mística cuyos textos se abordan –Francisca Josefa del Castillo (1671-1742)¹¹ – vivió en el contexto del barroco colonial neogranadino, movimiento traído de Europa a las tierras americanas. En las páginas que escribió desde su celda del convento de Santa Clara en Tunja recurrió al simbolismo nupcial para expresar su encuentro con Dios:

Mira como el esposo del alma quiere como emplear los sentidos en la esposa: muéstrame tu rostro para agrado de tu vista, porque tu rostro es grandemente hermoso y majestuoso. Suene tu voz para mis oídos, porque tu

voz me es como una música suave. Tus vestiduras a mi olfato, son como el olor de todos los aromas. ¡Cuán suave eres y cuán hermosa, carísima, dulce a mi sabor y a mi garganta como un panal de miel! Pues la habla del esposo en lo más superior del alma es un toque suave sobre toda suavidad; fuerte sobre toda fortaleza; limpio y puro sobre toda pureza. Y a la manera como la mano hiriendo blandamente la vihuela hace en ella las consonancias que quiere, así aquellos amores castos, dulces y fuertes se difunden en el alma. Y ella gusta, ve, oye, toca y percibe un bien sobre todo bien; una hermosura que no está sujeta a formas; un sabor, un olor, una voz penetrativa como el óleo, suave y delicada como el silbo, poderosa como el fuego, que prende y abrasa toda materia combustible y hasta el fierro transforma en sí. Ama el alma y siente ser amada ("Afecto 35").

Por obediencia, también, escribió la madre Catillo. Porque sus confesores se lo ordenaron y eran los destinatarios de las páginas que ella escribía: "lo que vuestra paternidad me ordena". A ellos confió sus visiones y arrobamientos, sus estados de ánimo, las prácticas ascéticas con las que maltrataba su cuerpo, tales como cilicios, flagelaciones, como también tormentos espirituales y dolencias del alma.

3. ¿Experiencias místicas hoy en el continente latinoamericano?

¿Qué interés pueden tener en el siglo XXI, más allá de la curiosidad histórica, estos relatos en los que Hadewijch, Gertrudis, Teresa, Anne Marie, Jeanne y Francisca Josefa expresaron su experiencia de encuentro y unión con Dios en un lenguaje que a veces hace sonrojar?

En primer lugar, cada una de ellas vivió la experiencia de encuentro y unión con Dios en sus circunstancias históricas y desde sus correspondientes imaginarios. Y todas ellas, aunque se vieran obligadas a obedecer a sus confesores, se atrevieron a desobedecer el orden patriarcal, sintiéndose libres para convertir en lenguaje escrito dicha experiencia.

En segundo lugar, en los escritos de todas ellas la búsqueda de intimidad con Dios es el propósito de sus respectivos itinerarios espirituales. ¿Será porque las mujeres buscan –buscamos– la intimidad en la experiencia de pareja como experiencia del amor?

En tercer lugar, encuentro que en las escritoras místicas la experiencia de intimidad –de comunión con Dios– aparece cargada de erotismo. ¿Será porque hay placer en la experiencia de intimidad que es experiencia del amor? ¿Será porque es en la intimidad que se vive y se expresa la entrega como unión total en el amor –comunión– con el amado en un dejar de ser "yo misma" para fundirme con el otro en comunión? Así, cuando Hadewijch confiesa haber vivido intensamente la comunión con Cristo escribe: "[Dios Padre] nos tomó a él y a mí, a mí y a él, y nos recogió en él". También cuando Teresa de Jesús canta su entrega

a Dios, acude al simbolismo nupcial de la entrega: “Vuestra soy; [...] por vuestra me ofrecí”. O cuando van Schurmann y Guyon, hablan del placer del despojamiento y del anonadamiento están hablando del placer de la entrega. Y cuando Josefa describe el clímax de su experiencia mística sencillamente escribe: “Ama el alma y siente ser amada”.

En cuarto lugar, me pregunto si en nuestro siglo pueden o suelen darse las experiencias de comunión con Dios y cómo las expresan las mujeres: si se sigue empleando el lenguaje erótico del simbolismo conyugal que aparece en los escritos de místicas de siglos anteriores o si las mujeres del siglo XXI somos más recatadas a la hora de expresarlas. Porque lo que sí creo es que la experiencia de comunión con Dios puede y debe darse porque la vida cristiana, que es vida bautismal, es vida de comunión: comunión con Dios en Cristo; comunión eclesial que se vive y celebra en la eucaristía como comunión con el Padre y comunión fraterna; comunión que se hace misión y misión que es para la comunión (CL 19).

Y en quinto lugar me pregunto cuál puede ser la experiencia mística y el lenguaje que la expresa en el siglo XXI y en América Latina. O la diversidad de experiencias y lenguajes. Es experiencia de comunión que se concreta en servicio a quienes esperan que nos acerquemos a sus carencias a partir de la contemplación activa de los y las marginados/os y oprimidos/os que nos revelan a Cristo sacramento del pobre y nos moviliza en solidaridad efectiva con ellos y con ellas, que son sacramento de Cristo. Es la espiritualidad latinoamericana cuyo objeto no son “las cosas divinas” como lo definía Santo Tomás, sino “las cosas del Reino” (Casaldáliga y Vigil 138) porque está centrada en el Reino y “se vive en la acción liberadora” (Ibídem); en la que “la proximidad humana, [es] experiencia elevada al mismo lugar de la proximidad divina y trascendental” (Susin 138). Espiritualidad de mujeres latinoamericanas “de ojos abiertos [para] observar la *realidad* y preparar la *acción*” (Porcile 28); que “se plantea 'desde abajo' y 'desde adentro' de las realidades humanas, de las carencias, de las no presencias, de las injusticias y dolores sociales desde los cuales Dios es elocuente” (Navarro S. 266-267) y en la que “Dios que penetra, y se com-penetra en nuestra existencia, nos atraviesa sutil y sensualmente, nos hace sentir vivos, potencia la creatividad y nos hace entrar en comunión y solidaridad con otros” (Sierra 250).

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Notas

- 1 Sigo a Gadamer, para quien autor y texto tienen un contexto que condiciona lo que dice el texto e incluso la forma de decirlo, mientras el contexto de quien hace la lectura del texto condiciona su interpretación y su mirada tiene una intencionalidad, que es el “desde” de la lectura del texto. Tomo de Schillebeeckx su propuesta hermenéutica: los textos se enmarcan en un *Sitz im Leben* que se hace necesario identificar para interpretarlo y distinguir qué es lo contextual y cuál es el contenido del texto, proceso que se conoce como “círculo hermenéutico”. Me apropio de los tres momentos constitutivos de la elaboración teológica que identifica Alberto Parra para abordar los textos desde el método hermenéutico y las mediaciones socioanalíticas, en su correspondiente con-texto con un pre-texto que define la intencionalidad de la lectura.
- 2 La teoría de género, al señalar que el género es “una división de los sexos socialmente impuesta” (Klapisch-Zuber 13), cuestiona los patrones establecidos y alienantes que son condicionamientos socioculturales y que, por ser producto de una construcción social es posible deconstruir, como la división entre la esfera pública y la esfera doméstica que ha hecho que el silencio fuera femenino mientras la palabra y el saber han sido masculinos por pertenecer al mundo exterior del cual han estado ausentes las mujeres. Como “instrumento metodológico desde donde plantear y responder diversas cuestiones” (Azcuy 2004 41), la teoría de género fundamenta la teología en perspectiva de género, una forma alternativa de hacer teología: la mirada de las mujeres ha podido “percibir” realidades (Navia 37) que habían pasado y siguen pasando “desapercibidas” a la mirada masculina (Corpas 2009), permitiéndonos “modificar los paradigmas interpretativos” (Schüssler 1989 24) para poder expresarnos “en las propias categorías” (Navarro 8) y “con voz teológica propia” (Schüssler 1996 8), introduciendo “un nuevo método de pensar y expresar la teología misma” (Bingemer 18).
- 3 A pesar de que Yahvé Dios estaba por encima del sexo, no tenía consorte y los ritos de fecundidad estaban excluidos del culto, el simbolismo conyugal recorre las páginas del Antiguo Testamento, comoquiera que encuentra en la unión de la pareja capacidad simbólica para expresar la relación de Dios con su pueblo en los textos que se refieren a la alianza, particularmente en la interpretación que hicieran los profetas en clave de relación esponsal.
- 4 Escribió en lengua vernácula sus cuatro libros –*Lettres, Mélanges poétiques, Poèmes strophiques, Visions* [títulos de las traducciones al francés]–, librándose del latín que era la lengua del saber y, por lo tanto, lengua del clero y lengua de varones. Fue acusada de herejía y arrestada por pertenecer al movimiento de las beguinas, que llevaban vida religiosa por fuera del convento. Mommaers, su biógrafo, dice de ella que “vivió una experiencia desconcertante: la presencia efectiva de una fuerza que la invadía y la acaparaba; fue tocada, incluso en su cuerpo, por una energía misteriosa y actuante” (13), posiblemente el *jubilus mysticus*, vivencia frecuente en el Medioevo, consistente en “una alegría que no se puede expresar en palabras” (41).
- 5 A los cinco años entró al monasterio de Helfte que practicaba la regla benedictina en la tradición cisterciense. Recibió en el monasterio la educación clásica –el *trivium* y el *quadrivium*– y profesó al terminar dicha educación.
- 6 La reforma gregoriana del siglo XI marcó la distancia entre el clero y las mujeres al establecer el celibato sacerdotal en la Iglesia de Occidente y la clausura a

- la vida religiosa femenina “para evitar el contacto de las monjas con el mundo exterior” (Fuente y Fuente 84), es decir, con los hombres de Iglesia, práctica que contribuyó a invisibilizar a las mujeres (Cf. Brennan).
- 7 Fue la primera mujer que pudo estudiar en la Universidad de Utrecht, aunque debió hacerlo escondida tras un biombo. Para defender la educación de las mujeres, siempre que no interfiriera con las tareas domésticas, escribió *Dissertatio de Ingenio Muliebris ad Doctrinam, et meliores Litteras aptitudine* (1641), pero su escrito principal es *Eukleria* (1673), en el que propone su itinerario místico (Cf. Lee 214-216).
 - 8 Escribió más de 20 comentarios a la Sagrada Escritura, su autobiografía –*Vie de Madame Guyon, écrite par elle-même* (1791)– varios tratados, numerosas cartas que trazan caminos de espiritualidad y tres volúmenes de *Justificaciones* en los que defiende la ortodoxia de sus planteamientos, pues tras la publicación de uno de sus tratados, *Le moyen court et autres écrits spirituels* (1685), que fue considerado herético porque su autora era seguidora de la espiritualidad del quietismo, estuvo varias veces en la cárcel entre 1695 y 1703.
 - 9 Movimiento religioso iniciado por el ex jesuita convertido al calvinismo, Jean Labadie.
 - 10 Movimiento de espiritualidad de carácter pietista fundado por de Miguel de Molinos que enseñaba la pasividad en la contemplación.
 - 11 Ingresó al Real Convento de Santa Clara de Tunja, donde su celda tenía una tribuna que daba a la capilla para estar más cerca del Señor (Cf. Achury Tomo I xxxiii). Sabemos de sus primeros años por el recuento que ella misma hace en su autobiografía, en la que en tono hagiográfico evoca su nacimiento, las enfermedades y dolencias que padeció en su juventud, el paisaje familiar y las prácticas de devoción. Sabemos por esta misma fuente que aprendió a leer en su casa, al lado de su madre, y que durante los años de su juventud leyó desafortunadamente vidas de santos, particularmente la de santa Teresa, y libros que en su autobiografía llamaría “comedias”: libros de caballería, obras de Góngora, Quevedo y Lope de Vega, las *Coplas* de Jorge Manrique, y *La Celestina*, que estaban prohibidas en España pero en los barcos españoles llegaban a la Nueva Granada (Cf. *Ibidem* cxiv-cxv). En su obra es posible identificar la influencia de los místicos españoles: de Santa Teresa de Jesús y San Juan de la Cruz; de fray Francisco de Osuna, de fray Luis de Granada y de fray Luis de León, que eran los autores místicos más conocidos de su tiempo. Otra huella en sus escritos es de los *Ejercicios espirituales* de San Ignacio que tuvo oportunidad de conocer a través de sus confesores y, por supuesto, de la Biblia, a la que solamente pudo tener acceso en los apartes que podía leer en el Breviario. Y copió en sus cuadernos versos de sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

UNA SERIE DE AUDIOS SOBRE LA "LAUDATO SI" DEL PAPA FRANCISCO

La serie radial *LAUDATO SI'* es una adaptación radiofónica de la idea central que atraviesa la encíclica del Papa Francisco: el cambio climático está arruinando a la Madre Tierra y sus terribles consecuencias perjudican a todos los seres vivos, especialmente a los hombres y mujeres empobrecidos por un sistema que ya no se aguanta.

Francisco de Asís, quien cantó al hermano Sol y a la hermana Agua, que hablaba con las criaturas de Dios, tiene ahora la oportunidad de conversar con el Aire, los Peces y los Pájaros, y también con el Oro, el Maíz Transgénico y la Lluvia Ácida, con las criaturas que se ven cada vez más afectadas por la irresponsabilidad de los seres humanos y sus empresas depredadoras del ambiente.

Son 20 programas de unos 10 minutos cada uno. Todos tienen el mismo objetivo: crear conciencia sobre la indispensable ciudadanía ecológica. Sobre la urgencia de cambiar de rumbo y superar el estilo de vida consumista, la cultura del descarte, un modelo de civilización tecnocrática, mercantilizada y ambiciosa, que no es sostenible.

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Intimacy and Eroticism in the writings of Women Mystics

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On the occasion of the fifth centenary of the birth of Teresa de Jesús, I prepared a theological and gender approach of six women mystics' writings from past centuries for the course "Literature and prayer language" at the Carmelite Institute of Spirituality in Bogotá. This approach disclosed that the experience of intimacy with God and the erotic language in which these women left testimony of their experience was common to all of them.

And this is the conclusion I intend to present in this paper, which is divided into three chapters: a theological approach to the mystical language that expresses the experience of communion, a theological and gender approach of texts written by six women mystics from past centuries and a few questions regarding the relevance of these texts for today's world.

But before approaching the texts chosen as a hermeneutic field, I consider it is convenient to specify that the reading horizon is the method of hermeneutical and in context theology, following Gadamer, Schillebeeckx and Alberto Parra¹ as well as theology in gender perspective as an alternative way of theological reflection using gender theory as a methodological instrument².

1. Theological approach to the mystical language of experience of communion

In order to referring to mystical language it is necessary to refer to mystical experience, which I interpret as the experience of communion with the divine, under any circumstances of time and space. Experience which, like any other deep human experience is expressed in a symbolic

language (Corpas 2010) that, regarding the experience of communion with the divine, “does not belong to a descriptive order” (Wittgenstein, in: Durán Casas 234. My English translation) but to the “speech of the Ineffable” (Valencia 2006. My English translation).

An example of symbolic language is the biblical poem Song of Songs. It sings to the love of the couple (Corpas 2004 114-235), but is identified, within the Old Testament³, as an allegory of the exclusive relationship between God and his people:

I belong to my lover, and my lover belongs to me (Sg 6:3).

I belong to my lover; his yearning is for me (Sg 7:11).

Let him kiss me with kisses of his mouth, for your love is better than wine (Sg 1:2).

How beautiful is your love, my bride! How much better is your love than wine! (Sg 4:10).

Christian mystics, both men and women, have appropriated of these bridal images. In particular one of the three streams that are usually identified in the Christian tradition –the spousal mystic, represented by the medieval monastic stream– that expresses the communion with God “as the communion of wife and husband” (Olivera. My English translation). Elisja Schultz writes about this expression of the mystical experience:

In search of mystical love, body shocks, lustful desires and erotic fantasies played a decisive role as indicators of the deepest depths of the soul [that] women seem to have lived in a more immediate, more personal and more shameless way (198. My English translation).

2. Bridal symbolism in the writings of six women mystics of past centuries

The six women whose texts I intend to approach disobeyed the androcentric structures of their cultural environment, invading with their writings the male space of words and knowledge.

Two of them lived in the medieval world and lived religious life: Hadewijch of Anvers (ca. 1200-1260)⁴, as a beguine, a religious life option outside the established canons which was persecuted by ecclesiastic authorities; Gertrude of Helfte (1256-1301)⁵, in the convent that “cloistered”⁶ women, separating them from men (Fuente y Fuente 84) and identifying them as *sponsa Christi* modeled their spirituality, always directed by the confessor as a male symbol of authority, while the convent also liberated them, at the same time, of social and family pressures (Rivera Garretes 11).

Moved by the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John –“that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you” (Jn 17:21)– Hadewijch wrote down her experience of union with God and of knowledge of God:

... on Ascension day, four years ago, God the Father himself at the moment his Son came upon the altar [...] took the Son to himself with me and took me to himself with the Son. And in this Unity into which I was taken and where I was enlightened, I understood this Essence and knew it more clearly than by speech, reason, or sight ("Letter XVII") (in: Mommaers 1980b 84).

She wrote for her beguine sisters probably ordered by her confessor (Mommaers 1980b 57) and found in the genre of the courtly poetry of troubadours the figures, metaphors and words that could express her mystical experience, comparing in allegorical way the relationship with Christ as the relationship of the lady with her lord. At the same time Hadewijch opted for the mystique of the abandonment, of the despoiling of oneself, of the "not wishing anything other than God himself [which] leads to a real annihilation of the soul" (Epiney-Burgard and Zum Brunn 23. My English translation).

Gertrude, in turn, had a vision of the risen Jesus that she described this way:

I looked up and saw before me a youth of about sixteen years of age, handsome and gracious. Young as I then was, the beauty of his form was all that I could have desired, entirely pleasing to the outward eye. Courteously and in a gentle voice (Cf. Gen 50:21) he said to me: "Soon will come your salvation; why are you so sad?" [...] Suddenly he seized me and, lifting me up with the greatest ease, placed me beside him. [...] From that hour, in a new spirit of joyful serenity, I began to follow the sweet odor of your perfumes (Song 1:3) and I found your yoke sweet and your burden light Matt. 11:30), which a short time I had thought to be unbearable (*Legatus* II, 1.2) (in: Forastieri 115).

She was compelled to write her visions and revelations. And she fulfilled this task partly on her own but also with the help of a secretary due to frequent illnesses she suffered. Gertrude's spirituality deals about the union with Christ expressed in spousal key, "omnipresent in the gertrudian work" (Forestieri 136. My English translation). It is from this spousal key that she interprets and expresses the mystical experience in a language in which "resounds or permeates the force of *eros* or passion-love" (Ibidem): "often ten times or more, during the course of one psalm, you have placed the sweetest kiss upon my lips" (*Legatus* II 21) (in: Winkworth (Editor) 127); "with the kiss from your sweet lips introduce me as your own in the bridal chamber of your festive love [...] in order to let me experience with spousal love and in the nuptial embrace, who are you and what is your greatness. [...] Let me taste in experience, as a true wife, the union of your chaste love" (*Ejercicios* III) (in: Olivera. My English translation).

The life of Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada (1515-1582), the third of the women mystics chosen as hermeneutic field, is framed in the Counter-Reformation, the Inquisition –which persecuted those who threatened the unity of faith– and, as a Carmelite nun, the convent, where despite closure she was able to enjoy a space of freedom without having to submit to the authority of a father or husband, although she had to accept the confessor's.

In *Su vida* and in *Las moradas*, Teresa wrote what she had “seen through experience” (*Su vida* 157. My English translation), when “it seems the Lord withdraws the soul and puts it in ecstasy, and there is no place for grief, or for suffering, but only for delight” (Ibidem 166. My English translation). She used marital symbolism to interpret and express “what the soul feels in this divine union. [...] Only someone who knows what this is can speak about it, since no one can understand it, no less can speak about it!” (Ibidem 96-100; my English translation). She also wrote:

What happens in the union of spiritual marriage is different. The Lord appears in this center of the soul with no imaginary but intellectual vision, although more delicate, as he appeared to the Apostles without going through the door, when he told them: “Pax vobis”. It is such a big secret and such a great mercy what God communicates there to the soul in one instant, and the very great delight that the soul feels, that I do not know with what to compare it, but that the Lord wants to show in that moment the glory that there is in heaven, in a greater way than through vision or spiritual pleasure (“Morada 7a, capítulo 2”, *Las moradas* 193. My English translation).

The Lord wished I had sometimes this vision: I would see an angel besides me, toward the left side, in bodily form. [...] I would see in his hands a long gold spear and it seemed to have fire on its end. At times it seemed to me that the spear was thrusting into my heart and piercing up my entrails: when the spear came out it seemed as if my entrails came out with it. And I was left on fire with a great love of God. The pain was so great, that it made me moan, and so surpassing the softness of this great pain, that there is no wish to be rid of it and the soul is not content with nothing less than God. It is not body pain but spiritual pain, although the body participates, and very much. It is a soft flirting between the soul and God (*Su vida* 165-166; my English translation).

The writings of the saint of Ávila were also a result of obedience to her confessors, as she states in the introduction to *Su vida*, which she defines as “this account that my confessors ordered me to write”. She also states this as a subtitle of her autobiography –“ordered by her confessor”– and repeats in almost every page “who ordered me to write, said”, and refers to her confessor as someone with whom she could share her ecstasies, visions, torments, hardships, doubts, works and afflictions, as

well as her simple thoughts and numerous references to illnesses which she suffered throughout all her life. She accepted this mandate in order to help her religious sisters in their prayers, as she herself wrote it: “Women can better understand the language of other women” (*Las moradas* 30. My English translation).

The next two writers –Anne Marie van Schurmann (1607-1678)⁷ and Jeanne de Guyon (1648-1717)⁸ – did not perform in a monastic environment. They both lived in Europe during the 17th century, a period of discussions between spiritualist and rationalist tendencies, of theological controversies between the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, of religious wars between Catholics and Protestants, and of persecution for the followers of the Lbadist⁹ and the Quietist¹⁰ movements.

A Dutch Calvinist and a follower of the Lbadist spirituality, van Schurman “yearned for a kind of knowledge that she would label ‘the one thing necessary’ [...] an ‘intimate’ or ‘inmost’ knowledge of God (*intima notitia Dei*)” (Lee 218-219), referring to experiential knowledge, “opposed to complicated theological reflection about God” (Ibidem 222). To obtain this knowledge, she considered self-denial was desirable. Self-denial that meant for van Schurmann a surrender to the will of God, when “the self is abandoned and ‘destroyed’ in order to create space, ultimately, for a greater joy” (Ibidem 226). And this self-denial was, for her, the source of “unspeakable joy”, since “self-denial is the precise means through which the greatest pleasure is achieved” (Ibidem).

A French Catholic, madame Guyon proposed a spiritual journey for the union of the soul with God in her *Commentaire au Cantique des cantiques de Salomon*, using bridal symbolism and raising the need of spiritual death to fully enjoy God:

The marriage takes place when the soul falls dead and senseless into the arms of the Bridegroom, who seeing her more fit for it, receives her into union (in: Lee 228).

According to Guyon, to enjoy the intimate presence of the divine, the soul must “lay itself on the altar of sacrifice” (Ibidem 213) and suffer many penalties in order to be able to experience the pleasure of God, which consists in allowing the soul to be destroyed or stripped of: and that is what she termed as *annéantissement*.

The context of the last mystic writer whose texts are studied – Francisca Josefa del Castillo (1671-1742)¹¹ – is the colonial baroque movement brought from Europe to America. In the pages she wrote in

her cell at the Convent of Santa Clara in Tunja, she used spousal symbolism to express her encounter with God:

Mira como el esposo del alma quiere como emplear los sentidos en la esposa: muéstrame tu rostro para agrado de tu vista, porque tu rostro es grandemente hermoso y majestuoso. Suene tu voz para mis oídos, porque tu voz me es como una música suave. Tus vestiduras a mi olfato, son como el olor de todos los aromas. ¡Cuán suave eres y cuán hermosa, carísima, dulce a mi sabor y a mi garganta como un panal de miel! Pues la habla del esposo en lo más superior del alma es un toque suave sobre toda suavidad; fuerte sobre toda fortaleza; limpio y puro sobre toda pureza. Y a la manera como la mano hiriendo blandamente la vihuela hace en ella las consonancias que quiere, así aquellos amores castos, dulces y fuertes se difunden en el alma. Y ella gusta, ve, oye, toca y percibe un bien sobre todo bien; una hermosura que no está sujeta a formas; un sabor, un olor, una voz penetrativa como el óleo, suave y delicada como el silbo, poderosa como el fuego, que prende y abraza toda materia combustible y hasta el fierro transforma en sí. Ama el alma y siente ser amada ("Afecto 35").

Mother Castillo also wrote because her confessors ordered her to do it. And they were the recipients of the pages she wrote: "what your paternity orders me". To them she entrusted her visions and raptures, her moods, the ascetic practices with which she hurt her body, such as cilices, flagellations, as well as spiritual torments and pains of the soul.

3. Mystical experiences in Latin America today?

Apart from historical curiosity, what interest can these texts have in the 21st century?

Anyhow, these texts where Hadewijch, Gertrude, Teresa, Anne Marie, Jeanne and Francisca Josefa expressed their experience of encounter and union with God in a language that can make you blush, pose a few considerations and a few questions.

In the first place, that each of these women lived and expressed the experience of encounter and union with God in their historical circumstances. And all of them, although they were forced to obey to their confessors, dared to disobey the patriarchal order and considered themselves free to turn this experience into written language.

Secondly, that according to their writings, the search for intimacy with God is the purpose of all these women's spiritual itineraries. Is it because women seek intimacy as the experience of love?

Thirdly, I found that in these mystical women the experience of intimacy –communion with God– appears in their writings charged with eroticism. Is it because there is pleasure in the experience of intimacy

as the experience of love? Is it because in the intimacy lived and expressed as total union with the beloved –communion– one gives up being “oneself” to be one –in communion– with the other one? Thus, when Hadewijch confesses that she had intensely lived the experience of communion with Christ, she writes: “[God the Father] took the Son to himself with me and took me to himself with the Son”. Also when Teresa de Jesús sings her surrender to God, she uses bridal symbolism: “I am yours [...] as your property, I surrendered myself”. Or when van Schurmann and Guyon speak of the pleasure of the despoilment and the annihilation they mean the pleasure of surrender. And when Josefa describes the climax of her mystical experience, she simply writes: “The soul loves and feels to be loved”.

Fourth, I wonder if in our century the experience of communion with God can be lived and how women express it. If the erotic language of marital symbolism that appears in the writings of women mystics of earlier centuries is still used and if 21st century women are more demure when it comes to express this experience. But what I do believe is that the experience of communion with God can and must occur because Christian life, which is baptismal life, is life of communion: communion with God in Christ; ecclesial communion that is lived and celebrated in the Eucharist as communion with the Father and fraternal communion; communion that turns into mission and mission that is for communion (cf. CL 19).

And in the fifth place I ask myself what kind of mystical experience and what kind of language to express it corresponds to our century and to Latin America. Or what is the diversity of experiences and languages. I think it is experience of communion that turns into service for those who expect that we move to their needs in active contemplation of the marginalized and oppressed ones that reveal us the presence of Christ, sacrament of the poor ones. It is experience of communion that mobilizes us in effective solidarity with them, in whom Christ is sacramentally present. It is Latin American spirituality, whose object is not “the divine things” as Santo Tomas defined it, but “the Kingdom things” (Casaldáliga and Vigil 138), focused as it is in the Kingdom. Spirituality that “is lived in liberating action” (Ibidem), when “human proximity, [is] experience elevated to the same place of divine and transcendent proximity” (Susin 138). Spirituality of Latin American women “with eyes open [to] observe *reality* and to prepare for *action* (Porcile 28); that “arises ‘from below’ and ‘from the inside’ of human realities, from the deficiencies, from the no presence, from the injustices and from the social sorrows from which God is eloquent” (Navarro S., 266-267) and in which “God penetrates and

interpenetrates our existence, subtle and sensually crossing us over and making us feel alive, enhancing our creativity and making us enter in communion and solidarity with others” (Sierra 250).

Quoted bibliography

See the bibliography in the original Spanish version, in the previous pages.

Notes

- 1 According to Gadamer, author and text have a context that conditions what the text says and how it is said, while the context of the reader of the text conditions its interpretation; also, its reading has an intentionality which is the “where-from” of the reader of the text. According to Schillebeeckx’s hermeneutical point of view, in order to interpret a text it is necessary to identify the *Sitz im Leben* in which it is framed and to distinguish what belongs to the context and what belongs to the text, process known as “hermeneutic circle”. According to Alberto Parra, with the hermeneutical method and the socio-analytical mediations the “text” is interpreted in its corresponding “context” with a “pretext” which defines the intentionality of the interpretation.
- 2 Gender theory, defining gender as a “division of sexes socially established” (Klapisch-Zuber 13), questions social and cultural conditionings that are alienating patterns. A social and cultural pattern is, for example, the division between public and domestic spaces that considers silence is feminine because it belongs to the domestic world while knowledge and words are masculine because they belong to the public world. And since these social and cultural patterns are a social construct, they can be deconstructed. As a “methodological instrument from where diverse questions can be posed and answered” (Azcuay 2004 41), gender theory bases theology in gender perspective, an alternate way of theological elaboration: women “perceive” realities (Navia 37) that were and are “not perceived” by men (Corpas 2009). This alternate way of theological elaboration enables women “to modify interpretive paradigms” (Schüssler 1989 24) in order to express ourselves “in our own categories” (Navarro 8) and “with our own theological voices” (Schüssler 1996 8), introducing “a new method of theological thought and its correspondent theological expression” (Bingemer 18).
- 3 Even though Yahweh did not have a divine consort and fertility rites were excluded from the cult, marital symbolism is present in the Old Testament, because the love of the couple is able to symbolically express the relationship of God and his people in texts referring to the Covenant, in particular in the interpretation made by the prophets using the spousal relationship key.
- 4 She wrote her four books –*Lettres, Mélanges poétiques, Poèmes strophiques, Visions* [titles of the French translations]– in vernacular language, liberating herself from Latin, the language of knowledge and, therefore, language of the clergy and language of men. She was accused of heresy and was arrested because she belonged to the beguine movement, a group of women who lived a religious life outside the convent. Mommaers, who wrote her biography, says that “she lived a disconcerting experience: the effective presence of a strength that overran and overwhelmed her; she was even touched in her body by a mysterious and moving energy” (13), probably the frequent in the Middle Ages *jubilus mysticus*, “a joy that can not be expressed in words” (41).

- 5 When she was five years old she entered the Benedictine monastery of Helfte where the rule of Saint Benedict was followed in the Cistercian tradition. In the monastery she received classical education –the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*– before professing as a nun.
- 6 By instituting celibacy for priests in the Western Church and closure for feminine religious life “in order to avoid contact of nuns with the outside world” (Fuente y Fuente 84), that is to say, with Church men, Gregorian reform in the 11th century set up the distance between clergy and women, and also contributed to make women invisible (Cf. Brennan).
- 7 She was the first woman to study at the University of Utrecht, eventhough she had to hide herself behind a screen. Para defender la educación de las mujeres, siempre que no interfiriera con las tareas domésticas, She wrote *Dissertatio de Ingenio Muliebris ad Doctrinam, et meliores Litteras aptitudi-ne* (1641), where she defended women’s education as long as it would not interfere with their domestic duties. But her most important work is *Eukleria* (1673), where she proposes her mystical itinerary (Cf. Lee 214-216).
- 8 She wrote over 20 Biblical commentaries, her autobiography –*Vie de Madame Guyon, écrite par elle-même* (1791)– several treatises, numerous letters which outline spiritual paths and three volumes of *Justifications* where she defends the ortodoxy of her approaches, since one of her treatises, *Le moyen court et autres écrits spirituels* (1685), was considered heretical because she was a follower of the Quietist spirituality. Also, for this reason, she was several times imprisoned between 1695 and 1703.
- 9 Religious movement initiated by Jean Labadie, a former Jesuit converted to Calvinism.
- 10 A movement of pietistic spirituality founded by Miguel de Molinos, who taught passivity in contemplation.
- 11 She entered the Real Convento de Santa Clara in Tunja, where her cell had a balcony facing the chapel in order to be more near of Our Lord (Cf. Achury Tomo I xxxiii). We know about her early years through her autobiography, where she evokes her birth, the illnesses she suffered in her youth, her family and the practices of devotion. Also from this source, we know she learned how to read at home, at her mother’s side, and that during the years of her youth she read lives of Saints, particularly Santa Teresa’s, as well as books that she called “comedies” in her autobiography: books of chivalry, works of Gongora, Quevedo and Lope de Vega, the *Coplas* of Jorge Manrique, and *La Celestina*, books that were banned in Spain but arrived in New Granada (Cf. Ibidem cxiv-cxv). It is possible to identify in her writings the influence of the Spanish mystics: Santa Teresa de Jesús and San Juan de la Cruz; fray Francisco de Osuna, fray Luis de Granada and fray Luis de León, who were the well-known mystic authors of her time. Also St. Ignatius’ *Spiritual exercises*, which she had the opportunity to know through her confessors; and, of course, the Bible, or more exactly, to the excerpts she could read in the Breviary. And she copied in her notebook poems of Juana Inés de la Cruz.

Along the Many Paths

J.M.VIGIL, Luiza TOMITA, Marcelo BARROS (eds.)

Foreword: Pedro CASALDÁLIGA

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Interreligious Studies

José M. Vigil, Luiza Tomita, Marcelo Barros (Eds.)

Along the Many Paths of God

Foreword: Pedro Casaldáliga



LIT

Latin American theology is associated with liberation, basic Christian communities, primacy of the praxis and option for the poor. The present volume shows that Latin American theologians added new themes to the previous ones: religious pluralism, inter-religious dialogue and macroecumenism. It is the fruit of a programme of the Theological Commission of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) in Latin American, to work out a liberation theology of religions.

This volume summarizes the three first ones of the series of five volumes.

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Spirituality and Resistance

A Latin American perspective

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São Paulo, SP, Brazil

A brief introduction

I want to begin by underlining a social and philosophical point of view on spirituality and resistance, the two themes the organizers of this meeting have proposed for my reflection. To reflect from a social and philosophical perspective means, first of all, to be connected with what is becoming culturally significant for different groups of people, especially for women's feminist groups. Why have I singled out these groups? Not because they are more important than others, but because today they are revealing a set of values that are no longer under the privilege and control of religions. These women are not denying religions but are suggesting that there are other ways to live spirituality beyond those of organized religions. They are advocating for a renewed interpretation of values that go beyond those prescribed under traditional male guidance. They are comfortable with not having all the answers to their questions and are content to live the planet's evolutionary process in their everyday lives. They are aware that this is a difficult moment where they cutting themselves off- and most likely their children as well- from an old tradition in order to give themselves over to searching for a freedom and meaning that can permeate their daily lives. They do this without expecting to leave a new set of beliefs for their children or promote another sacred written tradition. They are only intent upon discovering what it means to be human and to live out their humanity as fully as possible.

We are living in a very challenging time—one that invites us to reflect more critically about how to deal with the difficulties surrounding spiritualities and resistance movements. We know how much religions and spiritualities have been and still are compatible with every sort of conduct, condoning both good and bad forms of resistance. Resistance as

well as spiritually are complex terms that can cover a multitude of different situations and experiences.

One of the most exciting and ambiguous challenges of the XXI century concerns the pluralistic meaning of words. Up until the last century, words such as *spirituality* and *resistance* were more likely understood following the logic of Aristotle, which was adopted in large part by Christian theologies. This logic holds that concepts can express human experiences with a degree of certitude corresponding to real situations. In spite of differences, equivocations and mistakes of all sorts, these concepts can touch on what is deemed the Truth. It means that words and concepts are based in reality, an essence linked to its historical existence. Here as well, we see some aspects of Platonism, still very present in Christian culture.

Today, however, concepts and words regarding the human being and human behavior are seen within the horizon of diversity. Meaning depends on different situations, ideologies, moments, persons and interest groups. In one sense, we are all owners of the words we employ. At the same time, we are not owners, and have to explain frequently their use and what they mean for us. This is part of our social interaction and of our human condition of living together.

As a result, today we often feel insecure with words to express ourselves and at the same time, we know we have only words and gestures to do so. We inherit them and we recreate them as something that is essential to our very identity.

This ambiguity and complexity has to do with the fact that words are linked to the materiality of our body, our history, our values, emotions and feelings. Words are material symbols; they reflect the materiality of our relationships expressed in those spaces where we can convey our multilayered desires, feelings, experiences and dreams. Given this perspective, words like spirituality and resistance can't be separated from the materiality of life. Materiality was traditionally understood from a dualistic point of view or from a dual location, including moral behavior. On the one hand, some people have been considered ideologically good, while on the other, ideologically bad; on the one hand, monotheistic people believed that they were following the will of God and building His Kingdom, while at the same time these beliefs allowed them to seek profit and oppress people. On the one hand, male power over women was considered natural, and women therefore needed to submit to men's control over them. The continuity of a logic of "or this or that" seems to correspond to the questions we are reflecting upon.

In the recent past, some institutions such as the Christian churches and other religious institutions became the guarantors of the correct way to live, the guarantors that defined the meaning of good and of justice. They were recognized as institutions for the common good. Those institutions have their foundations in the ideas of a founder or in the Bible or in other religious traditions. For instance, the Bible, which is considered as a revelatory text, has its foundation in God and God does not need foundations. God became a kind of last answer for all questions, a kind of limit beyond which we could go no further. It seemed perfectly logical that the world of human relationship should be obedient and simply submit to this concept of God.

The dualistic way of understanding our relationship with others and with the world is changing. A dualistic understanding of epistemology, ethics, politics, emotions and spirituality is now no longer a homogeneous dual space among us, although we still feel its presence. Traditional religious foundations are being stormed by the winds of rational critique, by insights coming from the sciences, by the irruption of the right to diversity in democracy, which includes feminist movements. The one-dimensional man/woman and the one-dimensional direction of cultural truth have been shaken by a new order of knowledge that is both plural and diverse.

In recent times, the globalization of economics and culture has imposed a new worldwide order of living together; as a result, new ways to approach human life and the many different forms of life are emerging. It is within this perspective that we can also think about *spirituality* and *resistance*. On the one hand, spirituality has always been understood as the best manifestation of our humanity—as that positive dimension that can improve our lives through good ways of living. On the other hand, resistance has been understood as the capacity to resist evil or to fight against all sorts of oppression. Today we question those clear definitions and challenge our former spiritual certitudes in light of the diversity we discover in our historical and contextual relationships. This means that our beliefs must be re-examined within the present movement of destruction and reconstruction of our world and of ourselves. In this same vein, we must submit our understanding of resistance to a critical and historical analysis with regard to the consequences of what we call resistance has brought about. Why is it that killing many people to protect the power of an ideology is also called resistance?

Spiritualities and resistances are nuanced and plural concepts and not always directed to the common good of human groups. Today they have become objects of suspicion. They are complex and ambiguous just

like everything else regarding human being and it is from their nuanced reality that we move forward in our common history. This is the challenge that I want to reflect upon and show how much it is present in today's social movements in Latin America, including those so-called movements for liberation and transformation.

1) The pitfall of political and religious words.

Words are our way of being. We humans need words to tell us who we are. But they can also entrap us, box us in. Because of that we are also suspicious about words. It may be because we are not satisfied with what they are conveying about the meaning of our lives—about our beliefs and their foundations, about our insecurity in our ability to nurture life and keep our daily relationships intact. Suspicion about words is a suspicion about ourselves and our great capacity to destroy one another and to destroy the planet through the use of beautiful words. Suspicion about words goes hand in hand with the growing awareness that for some of us the traditional ways of dealing with religious myths and political ideologies and principles are no longer working to enhance wholesome relationships among us. They are used to keep power from others, to benefit themselves and to destroy the dignity of people by using words like good and God.

In past years, for instance, when speaking about the left and right in politics, we could observe differences between both sides. Now, nothing is clear. Sometimes there is convergence of points of view, in spite of the divergences. Words like *right* and *left* in politics are no longer adequate to explain what is going on today. Sometimes individual interests take precedence over collective ones. The corruption and political scandals present everywhere lead us to question our understanding and use of political language, once again revealing the inadequacy of our words. That is why words have to be explained again and again with regard to personal actions and social behavior. A new searching for coherence in order to build a common sense of wellbeing must become at least a minimal reference for our lives. And it is here where feminism as a social movement is trying to re-understand, re-visit, re-interpret words and ideas to reorient the direction of our relationships. It is a very complex process full of contradictions and fragile certainties.

The same alienating process happens with the word *liberation* within the Christian context of the 20th century. It was employed especially by theologians of liberation; it marked leftist political and religious groups thinking and acting in Latin America. From their perspective, for instance, resistance defined a movement that stood firmly against capita-

lism and all forms of economic and political oppression against the poor. But they never welcomed the idea that feminism could also be a political resistance movement that stood up against the patriarchal behavior of dictators as well as the left's political oppression of women.

Liberation theologians saw spirituality as the presence of God's Spirit helping us in our initiatives against injustice. It was the strength of His Spirit that held us together to resist the social and political forms of evil. But this liberationist spirituality never accepted the critique of Christian feminists regarding the limited, oppressive and invasive presence of God the Father.

Despite their coherence in a past contextual situation, those meanings are now challenged by the winds of the human right to democratic diversity, to feminism and to a pluralistic understanding of justice.

Today, words and meanings have become the private property of a variety of groups. They seem to have lost the collective dimension of expressing those deep aspects of our life. Borrowing from Sigmund Bauman, I can say that we are living in a "fluid society" with "fluid meanings". This is neither good nor bad. It just is. But officials and authorities of different churches are not aware of that and want to keep their power. They still impose a kind of sweet violence on the lives of believers; they enjoin upon them the same concept of God, of Jesus, of church, of ethical life and so on, in order to save the unity of their church and probably their own power and privileges.

Having experienced the traditional process of domination in the past, imposed by churches and political parties, we can say that today we are experiencing a different moment of fragmentation and new forms of domination, observed by the use of words. There is a new authoritarian way of using them that imposes and confirms old forms of a new fragmented totalitarianism in a globalized world. Today we are aware that globalization globalizes words and gives them power and a multiple usage that has to be explained again and again. Words are products of the international market and a manifestation of the current imperial power that uses religious words and religious experiences to exercise their power of domination. Religious language has become part of capitalistic society. Because of this, we have to acknowledge the complexity of the present moment, as well as the difficulty in providing adequate analyses and word usage from a very clear political and religious perspective.

We are moving in uncharted territory.... We have to walk and discover, day by day, the steps, the path that can be taken. We are in a time of intermingled experiences and blended emotions and blended analyses

and blended forms of resistance and blended spiritualities. How to find light and love for today? How to discover and welcome the hidden beauty of this moment? How to share it deeply in order to nourish our lives today? How to accept with joy and concern that words, concepts, and theories can't explain all sufferings and all beauties that we experiment in our bodies?

It is from this state of analysis and questioning that I want to share some aspects of women's resistance in Latin America and dare to affirm this resistance as a source and a result of a spiritual change taking place within our many-layered reality.

2) The meaning of spiritual change from one feminist perspective.

First of all, I have to explain briefly what I mean by spiritual change. Spiritual change is a moving state in our embodied soul; it is an experience we have of ourselves as we try to re-understand our life; it is a perception of the mutability of life, taking into account above all our own history and experiences. It's a kind of particularization of a more global experience. It is a way to learn to read the history of our own context from our own life.

I am not conforming to the traditional distinction between body and soul but only using these words in a new meaning. Soul means, here, an experience from the deepest part of ourselves that allows us to say that something is changed or has to change because we can no longer endure the present suffering or the present nonsense or the present oppression in our daily lives and in the world. We have to change and we are changing. In the process, we perceive ourselves and our relationships in another way, with new lights as well as shadows.

Spiritual change is the awareness that we can't stay where we are any longer; we can't tolerate being treated as slaves or as objects that can be used and thrown away. We have to do something because inside of us something has changed, something has been born—most likely because of an injustice committed against us, or from sadness or loss or maybe from love. What is born is the awareness that we do not want to be an accomplice to, or object of injustice. This means that in the deepest part of our being, of our desire, symbolized by the word soul, we are alive and want to live with dignity, we want to stop the present suffering, and we need to breathe in a different atmosphere. We are conscious that we are not obliged to accept violence and oppression in our daily lives and from the inside out we decide that change is possible and that a new relationship can be tried both today and tomorrow.

Spiritual awareness is like a deep encounter with ourselves provoked by internal and external problems and challenges. It is like being

awakened from a humdrum life of oppression and silence in order to try other possibilities. It is like an intimate command that I recognize in myself to stop oppression and suffering in me as well as in others. It is a kind of personal decision to try to live in another way and a personal decision to give a helping hand to others and to struggle with them in solidarity. It is like a small candle glowing in the lived obscurity of oppression.

Spiritual change is not necessarily something that comes in the same way for all. Because of that, I want to stress that a spiritual change opens up a particular perspective of social and personal struggles for justice. It is a concrete change evolving from specific situations.

We know that some people believe that spirituality should not change. For them, it is that stable part of life identified with traditional religious values. But in the perspective I am presenting, spiritual change is lived as an historical reality in the image of our dreams for justice and right relationship. It is a constant and renewed breathing, a searching for the meaning of our lives and our collective freedom. It is a renewed alliance with Life, with myself and with others. It is a new, intimate logic and passion prompting us not to accept injustice or oppression in our lives. It is an envisioning of new situations and an attempt to live them even as they are being born. It is that experience that makes women different when they decide to struggle for a piece of land; it is that experience that makes women denounce domestic violence; it is that experience that makes women demand an equate care in public hospitals; it is that experience that makes women theologians dare to say a word different from the masculine tradition. We have plenty of examples here.

We know that what we want will never be exactly as we want it. This is our human condition. Unpredictability is part of our spiritual change. We can accept that we do not have the last word about common events and about us, but we have a word to say now and we want to express it, in spite of possible mistakes.

I want to stress this aspect in the process of the journey to spiritual change. It is a real spiritual change in the lives of so many women, change observed from different social movements in Latin America. Spirituality is no longer linked to membership in a church or a religion but to membership in the larger community of people doing their best to live together with dignity. It is an experience beyond institutional religious boundaries.

As we know, for a longtime the word spirituality was linked to institutional religious membership. However, since the second half of the

20th century, spirituality is, in some sense, disconnected from an institutional religious membership despite the influence of religious values on our culture. From this perspective, spirituality is not directly involved with Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist or African faith and traditions, but goes beyond them. As a result, we can ask about a new, larger meaning of spirituality. For some activists and for some groups who have a precise social and cultural goal of transformation to accomplish, there is no exact answer to this question. Some groups never use the word spirituality. Generally speaking, however, we can say that spirituality has to do with *nutrition*, with spiritual food or symbolic food that helps us to nourish our life and conduct it in the direction that makes us feel better individually and collectively. This symbolic food nourishes and gives strength to our inner life, which is intimately connected with our external life. That is why spirituality has to do with the set of symbolic nutrients we choose for ourselves and for others in order to be prepared for our journey. The symbolic nutrients are diverse and are linked to the personal and cultural preferences of each person. A shared meal, a shared garden, a book, certain music, a dance, a conversation, a walk together, a quiet meditation, reading the Bible, a poem, talking with a friend, playing with a child, painting a picture, watching a film, a small victory in some social struggle, being silent... These examples and many more can nourish our spirituality and help us to go further. Symbolic nutrients are also material nutrients because we are not a separate spiritual body—we believe that all is connected. All is in all. It is so simple and at the same time so complex...

Most women are reconnecting with spirituality in their own lives. They are rediscovering the roots of their bodies and thoughts. They believe that religious institutions directed by men no longer have the power to control their bodies and their souls. They want to participate in building their own lives. A new path for liberation is opening.

3) Aspects of women's struggle in Latin America

Women's social, political and cultural visibility as public citizens is one of the most important changes in women's condition in these years. This visibility includes a different way of being visible and of being the protagonists of our own rights. We no longer want to be visible in the traditional patriarchal way, but as citizens creating new relations from our sense of justice and based on our own needs, desires and possibilities. We want to be citizens in dialogue with others. This is new in women's groups in Latin America, especially among those who call themselves feminists.

Can we say that those groups live a spirituality of resistance? What does that mean? Who is resisting whom?

Resistance is an internal and external movement inviting women not to accept a pre-established concept of who they are. Expressions such as “the second sex” or “Adam’s rib” define women in a pre-determined role that can’t be changed. Because of that she can be subject to all sorts of violence. Women’s resistance is confronted by the resistance of other social groups that don’t want to alter patriarchal cultural relations. In some sense, it is resistance against resistance, the latter represented by a group that forbids women’s emancipation.

We can observe women’s new resistance in different women’s organizations. I want to share some examples to make my point. But what I offer is only a pale glimpse of the ongoing emergence of new forms of expression in women’s search for a renewed sense of dignity.

a) The resistance of peasant women in the south of Brazil.

In spite of their membership in a larger peasant organization (*Via Campesina*) that gathers together different rural movements in Latin America, women have taken up their own local initiatives. Two years ago (2006), more than one thousand women invaded the laboratories of a multinational (Aracruz) and went off with small plants of eucalyptus. They forcefully declared that their children can’t be nourished by eucalyptus trees and that the land is being robbed and destroyed by this kind of plantation. As we know, eucalyptus trees absorb lots of water and need wide expanses of land.

What moved those women to do what they did? It was their need of living life with dignity; it was concern about their own lives and the lives of their families; it offered them a taste of freedom for themselves and for others; it was a struggle against a social organization that promotes first of all profit for an elite and forgets about poor people, especially women; it was the desire to be full citizens and have the possibility to decide and act by themselves; it fostered loving care for the earth and the ecosystems; it showed a love and respect for their own lives; finally, it was a spiritual experience that arose from their deepest being in search of freedom.

b) The resistance of some groups of women to obtain the right to chose and to control their reproduction and sexual life.

This is a challenging question for women everywhere in the world.

Beginning in 1990, here in Latin America an important part of the feminist movement showed the link between economic oppression and

the cultural oppression of women's sexuality. This movement influenced feminist theology which began to criticize the enormous control the region had over women's bodies, present especially in Catholic and Christian traditions. Theologies, including liberation theology, have not taken seriously the sexual reality of bodies—especially women's bodies. Indeed, they spoke about oppressed bodies in a general and masculine way. For them, economic oppression is not linked to cultural and sexual oppression against women. Nor is political domination linked to sexual domination. They compartmentalize the human body and can't see some forms of oppression as real oppressions.

Feminists and feminist theologians have opened the window on this way of thinking in order to show that economically-oppressed bodies are also sexually-oppressed bodies. And they stress that the reality of that oppression has different ways of manifesting itself and that it is also present in the lives of those men who struggle against it. The origins of oppression can't be limited only to economics. Economics is also a culture and our cultural background colors other masculine and patriarchal characteristics.

Since 1990 a new conflict has appeared inside Christian Churches over discussion about bodies and sexuality, as introduced by feminist theologians. As a result there has been an urgent necessity to rethink traditional Christian theologies, to re-imagine our religious traditions and symbols in other ways and to express them in a more inclusive way. Feminist theologians have opened a provocative discussion that has been rejected by different churches. These church groups are convinced that they are the gatekeepers of doctrine, as well as the protectors of the truth about God.

Feminist theologians try to be connected to women's real problems. From their experiences they are molding new expressions and concepts. They are linking the continent's many different visions and cultural contexts to traditional Christian values. They are aware of our multicultural reality, which so defines our different countries. To me, their work is part of what I call "democratic diversity"—a broader understanding of the traditional democratic system.

4) Approaches to democratic diversity

Currently, we humans place great faith in the supposed happiness that we can get in the here and now—especially through consumerism. This situation influences what we call spirituality and resistance and invites us to rethink the present meaning of our lives and the immediate effects of what is called 'the spiritual life' under capitalism. On the one

hand, we notice the introduction of diverse forms of meditation, new age spirituality, yoga, retreats and other practices to produce harmony in different business enterprises. Spirituality has become an important factor to keep workers and employees doing what the masters of capital want them to do. Of course there is respect and searching for the well being of every one, but at the same time the larger objective is to forestall dissatisfaction in daily work and produce harmony so capital can continue to grow. Sometimes we are not sure if people are really more valued than the goods being produced. Connected with this situation, are the new forms of capitalism spreading among us to increase our desire for ever more goods and services to consume, including “spiritual products” that tap into our desire for a more fulfilling life. The international market promotes an infinity of desires; globalization pressures us to renew our possessions and fosters our need to possess what they propose as the supreme good or happiness for NOW. It is a new totalitarian domination of technological materials and consumerism that burrows deep into our desire. At the same time, in spite of the huge diffusion of information, most of us feel disconnected from a sense of living in an historical moment and live our lives only for the immediate present. Most people are convinced that a new global force commands everything and that they must simply accept living their own private, narrow lives, spending their capital for their own benefit. They can use different religious doctrines—which are often taken out of their original context—to maintain a minimum sense of happiness and tranquility.

Others are struggling to find a common objective under a kind of democratic diversity and try to propose an ethos where each is respected. They want to act differently and build together a multicultural, multi-gendered, multicolored, multi aged, multi ecosystems world. Diversity and the right to be different are a possibility in an ethical democratic society. They believe that human beings are diverse and it is from this lived diversity that we can be disciples to one another, learn and teach from our common and different roots. It is from our nuanced human condition that we can build equality, which is not sameness or the repetition of a subtle new imperialistic order. Equality means equal access to land, to food, to education, to respect, to rights, to well-being, to identity, to pleasure, to thoughts and so on. Those people are aware that equality can be explained as an idea but has to be built every day through hard dialogue. This is the big challenge that different movements, including the feminist movement, are daring to believe and build in Latin America.

It seems to me that democratic diversity has to do with the right to build a variety of worlds inside our global world while respecting the

different perspectives and the needs of people. This democratic diversity is not only an ideal. We can find seeds of it present among us, especially in some women's movements. The secret is learning in our small groups how not to reduce the other to my own experience and take my experience as the norm. The secret is admitting that respect for diversity means learning to negotiate our necessities vis a vis those of different groups.

Most people are convinced that changes begin with small initiatives in spite of grandiose utopias or international political decisions. Qualitative changes have to do with personal spiritual convictions and with the concern for our planet's life. It is from this perspective that the biblical call "*to love your neighbor as you love yourself*"—a wisdom also present in different ethical traditions—becomes a key inspiration to reconcile unity and diversity in democratic institutions. But it is a crucial and complex inspiration because it challenges us to understand and express what love of myself is and how loving myself could be a criterion to love others. How can the "me" be a criterion for the other or for the whole? From this biblical perspective we are always asked to reinterpret the meaning of loving our neighbor, our enemies, foreigners, those who disturb me by their presence, by their difference, by their accents and ways they present themselves. Taking this biblical call or this piece of human wisdom seriously is accepting the complexity of human ethical behavior. It is an invitation to enter into the urgent necessity to forge new relationships aware of our fragility. To love himself or to love herself is not evident. How to find the way to perform acts of justice or love? How to build a world for all? The answer is only a kind of hope, a kind of desire, a kind of emotional utopia that lives and moves in us. From these feelings we can say that a plurality of actors can try to build a unity of respect for each other if they accept the constitutive diversity of life. It will not be a symmetric unity but an asymmetric, renewable and complex one. The task is to begin and continue everyday knowing that sometimes we will be tempted to abandon it.

If we dare to believe in love or in the respect for others in their *diversity* as a form of loving myself, of loving the other and loving the planet, we are on the way to improving the wisdom of living together. Speaking about wisdom is speaking about something that is sometimes present and sometimes absent among us because it is entertaining a utopia without the final piece or without the happy ending. Each day we have to find the appropriate step to help us to go back and forth, down and up in the dance of life. Each day, we must listen again to the music of our world and adjust our paths in a creative way because the dance and the music we hear are coming from our own world. The dance and

the music are also each one of us. Spirituality and resistance means that we believe that human beings nurture seeds of hope inside our biological and emotional lives. Not only do we have hope in something good for us, but we ourselves are hope and because of that we can be our neighbors, our friends and lovers. This is an experience of transcendence where we can find in our personal lives and in the lives of different people a commitment to preserve their dignity and the dignity of our planet.

A few words to conclude

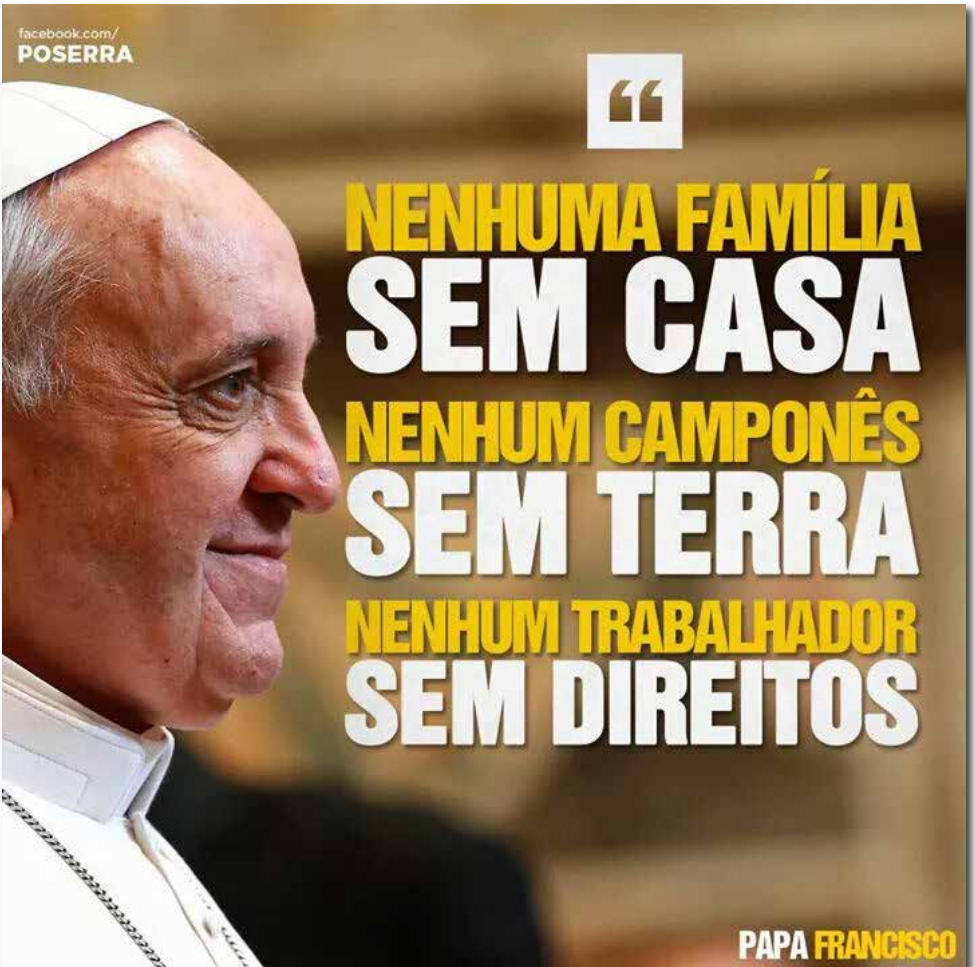
In this very brief conclusion, I would like to stress a few ideas linked to the responsibility of churches or religious institutions regarding the present moment.

As we know, churches and religious institutions define themselves as institutions to serve people and their needs. But we also know, given some exceptions, how much they were and still are, so far away from people's real questions and needs. They have become repetitive, dogmatic, powerful and bureaucratic institutions. Today the new challenge faced by religious institutions is to be more and more aware of the diversity of claims and the diversity of those searching for solutions. The role of religious institutions is first of all to listen to the questions, to be perceptive to the sorrows and oppression of people, and particularly to the way they are dealing with their problems and finding solutions. Religious institutions do not have the responsibility of offering solutions, which sometimes come from old institutional and patriarchal recipes. Rather, they should help people by providing new possibilities for formation, creativity, discussion, mutual confirmation and solidarity. Institutions exist for people and not people for the institutions. Some of them are no longer serving as they should and need to disappear. Institutions are necessary only if they are flexible to the challenges coming from the world and from local communities. Their rich tradition could be renewed by adopting viewpoints more in keeping with the current reality of the world. This simple behavior could provide churches and religious institutions with a spirituality of confidence in people's possibilities. People can solve most of their problems by themselves. What is needed is a spirituality that believes that power, wisdom and love are spread out among different persons and groups and not only in the leaders of those institutions. This was the spirituality that led to a healthy resistance to patriarchal power, which gradually is being changed by a democratic and collective power shared by a variety of groups.

I am aware of the difficulties and of the negative resistance coming from institutions. But I can't find or propose another alternative to the

present domination of the hierarchical model outside of a renewed dialogue. Again, this means a conversion, a spiritual change beyond the established rules of institutions. Finally, the Sabbath was created for human beings and not the opposite.

I try to be realistic. I try to notice alternatives and think about them, always aware of the surprises in our global and individual histories... Who knows what tomorrow will bring! What keeps me going in this search for a better life is this: the quality of friendship among those who are in love with a world where we can be recognized and respected as interdependent and as a mystery in our own individuality.





Feminity in Men*

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Unilateral understandings and actions are often present in our lives. For example, in informal conversations it is felt that men treasure autonomy, and it is said that women establish more bonds. What happens among persons has to consider many factors in everyday life, and take into account scientific inquiries. There is a growing concern for the personal, historical, wholistic meanings of masculinity (that include feminity in men's existence). A major goal today is 'being human in relationships'.

There are plenty of immediate connections, but few real bonds. Individuals and communities are often placed against each other. Personal characteristics unravel in local and global settings. Contemporary technology often turns us away from cultural roots and spiritualities of the Earth.

A huge distance appears between others and me. This is underlined by an outstanding poet and bishop in Brazil, Pedro Casaldáliga:

"between you and me,
there is distance: I.
However, there is a bridge...:
the two of us." ¹

In today's pos-modern context it has become difficult to nurture relationships. It is painful how each 'I' is unable to acknowledge and encounter others. Whoever is different usually is discriminated. Moreover, many males feel their feminity is not meaningful, rather that it is threatening. In general terms, we are jailed to patterns of western masculine superiority. In ethical terms, androcentrism (and anthropocentric behavior) is a widespread sinful attitude. The I-You dichotomy seems to support masculine aversion towards the feminine in each human being.

Throughout this brief essay, gender concerns are seen according to my particular experience; everyday patterns are questioned; the feminine and masculine are re-examined. These concerns have a goal: the struggle to be fully human.

Before examining these realities, allow me to briefly mention great obstacles. In terms of methodology, one common difficulty is being unilateral and unable to engage with other hermeneutics. For example, when 'being more human' is segregated from environment and ecology. Another obstacle lies in pos-modern categories which tend to be more subjective/cultural and are less socio-political. Some researchers fall into conceptual traps: the masculine and the feminine are seen as essences. Our opinions are framed by stereotypes: male are more rational, women are mostly emotional; masculinity is strong and femininity is weak; sexuality is confused with gender; homosexuality is seen as sickness or as feminine; tenderness is considered non-masculine, etc. Other difficulties are to see all of feminism as one reality; or to only consider *machismo* and to neglect major obstacles such as patriarchy, kyriarchy, androcentrism.

As it happens in other realms, masculine and feminine dimensions require plenty of critical and constructive dialogue². One has to acknowledge ambivalence, subordination, structural injustice, forms of social and religious evil (and even of idolatry). On another part, human well-being happens through sexuality, relationships, pleasure, responsibility and power from below, masculine and feminine gender. A constructive approach also includes spiritual, political, ethical, dimensions of living out the Gospel and of church renewal. My points of view arise from masculine and heterosexual understandings. Its focus is not gender per se, but rather paths towards freedom and towards being human in harmony with the Earth. All know that there are other valid approaches. Each person speaks from experienced frameworks, and hopefully from concrete care for life.

1) Disestablishment and correlation

Women's social and cultural initiatives have direct or indirect influence in daily feelings and actions of men. When one interacts with women who exercise their rights and capabilities, and have strong identities, one has to accept facts. At the same time, in an explicit or mostly an implicit way, men appreciate global expansion of women's rights and leaderships. This is unsettling. Often it becomes like an earthquake. One is disestablished and insecure, and is removed from situations of privilege. For many men it is painful; and for some of us it is also challenging and liberating. One begins to draw away from patriarchal status quo. Most men belong to marginal social-cultural strata, and so have their particular experiences and reactions, in comparison with those of us who are in the middle class or in affluent levels of power³.

It is significant how many latinamerican men feel left on the sidelines, when women are empowered by their own efforts, have more eco-

conomic and educational tools, organize public and private events, carry out their forms of leadership. Some begin to ask gender-questions. This helps men to cease acting as in charge of everything, and to no longer claim ownership over other persons. One can leave aside phantasies of control over the world. In a positive way, latinamerican men are moving towards reciprocity, collaboration, tolerance with different kinds of persons. Some are able to step down from pyramids of power. These changes include transforming simple tasks, everyday rituals, and even religious traditions.

Here I mention three types of changes, that include healing experiences, where several persons and also myself have been involved⁴. During several years, men and women, married and single, indigenous and mestizo, have been developing workshops so as to rediscover gender roles and spiritualities. Each one of us has been shaken in convictions and in forms of correlation. Moreover, in terms of daily tasks, our institution decided to no longer have a woman-secretary nor a person to do cleaning, preparation of coffe breaks, etc.; rather we have begun to share such tasks among all, men and women. In terms of our biblical and theological formation, instead of seing Mary's role as complement to Christ's saving mission, andean communities have been rediscovering being disciples like Mary, and giving witness of Love in both masculine and feminine imagery. As men, it has been a healing experience to rediscover companionship with the prophet of Galilee (and not pretend ownership of truth and morality). These and other experiences have disestablished many of us, and have allowed a healthy attitude towards oneself and others. It has also opened up wholistic sensibilities and actions.

Therefore, significant transformation has not been due to ideas; rather it comes forth through reciprocity (and not competition) among men, personal experiences, correlation with women who have gender strategies and disrupt the status quo. Neither femininity nor masculinity are unmovable essences. Rather a person wishes to be free with others, interacting in the midst of different realities, and having an open approach towards gender⁵. One becomes uneasy when there is superiority of one over others, and when dualistic patterns become sacred. A challengin process of disestablishment allows men to be more humanly healthy, and also to interact with the 'otherness' of femininity. This includes unraveling prejudices about what is 'feminine' in the human condition.

Correlation and collaboration are certainly challenging goals. Concerning femininity within ourselves, what happens? What often stands out are everyday tasks such as fathers taking care of children, cooking, concrete social responsibilities, collaboration with women in leadership roles, sharing with a woman-partner in a family. The bottom line is acceptance of the 'other' and collaboration, between men and women, and us

men being persons and not authoritarian figures with unjust power over everyone else. Decent communication and interaction is a starting point; the general goal is correlation in society, at home, in church and educational contexts. Correlation takes place in private and public spaces, between different kinds of persons with specific gender contributions (and limitations). The socio-economic dimension of interaction goes together with emotional and spiritual correlation. In these areas, as a man one has to honestly examine the impact of patriarchal and androcentric evils. Moreover one has to avoid rhetoric ('others are machistas, but not me, since I help at home'), and avoid lack of accountability.

This implies a type of asceticism, which goes into the deeper layers of consciousness and of relationships. One disagrees with hegemonic forms of being *macho*, one is a rebel, and confronts violent cultural forms. A person develops new attitudes, and experiences loving reciprocity. In terms of the Gospel, one goes through a conversion experience, a *metanoia*, and is thankful as a new creature within the body of Christ.

We have in mind how Jesus dealt with both men and women, drawing them away from the idolatry of power. Therefore, being today disciples of Jesus is quite demanding. As men and women were touched and freed by the prophet of Nazaret, so today we are called to be more human and faithful to the Spirit of the Lord. The Spirit is the source of correlation, reciprocity, unconditional love. The Spirit moves us so that all -and primarily the poor- may have life in abundance. Obviously this means moving away from oppressive forms of masculinity. What is most importante is a daily and institutional positive reconstruction of masculinity. This includes acceptance of feminine dimensions. It is like being born again. Masculine arrogance is left behind, and the road ahead is one of correlation and unending learning of what is different. Thus, in terms of gender, persons walk with the Risen Lord.

2) Appraisal of femininity

Among men it is often said (or presupposed) that characteristics of women and of the feminine are difficult to understand. It is often reduced to emotional categories, to stereotyped (and subordinate) roles, to what the media introduces in our imagination, to the complexity of personal interactions with women. It certainly benefits everyone to move beyond stereotypes and unilateral analysis; and to be able to see both femininity and masculinity in terms of sico-social experiences that are open to many understandings.

During these last decades, gender perspectives and persons doing feminist hermeneutics have explored crucial questions and developed

deep concerns. Significant steps are being taken by some men. Feminine characteristics are being examined by literature, anthropology, psychology, politics, economics, theology. Much may be learned from Jungian research, and from work done in Latin America by Humberto Maturana, José Olavarría, Leonardo Boff, Edenio Valle, Hugo Cáceres, Francisco Reyes (and others). Insights and research done by these (and other) experts have to be highlighted and sincerely thanked. One becomes aware of being theoretically ignorant, and discovers new questions in the open fields of gender. There is a need for unceasing interdisciplinary reflection. Epistemological knots need to be untied. One has to address discrimination and aggression towards women; which often goes hand in hand with homophobia. Prejudices also need to be resolved; for example, focusing on caricatures such as being 'where they belong', 'pretty and non conflictive', 'doing what women have to do'.

Everyone is aware that masculinity and femininity are framed by culture, sexuality, age, social standards, family upbringing, local and regional context, subjective and emotional paradigms. Moreover it is easily seen how femininity belongs mostly to women, and that masculinity is mainly present in men. Therefore, essential categories (masculinity *per se*, femininity *per se*) seem unreal. What is evident is the existence of dominant forms in each context, marginal manifestations, and also resistance to the status quo and liberating forms. These and other phenomena require constant discussion. Here more attention is given to femininity within men and to understandings of masculinity. (It would also be good to examine aggressive jokes and stereotypes about women and men; this is not done here).

Since the focus is on masculine understandings of gender and on femininity as a positive and challenging dimension, how is it acknowledged among church people and among theologians? How open are men to questions about patriarchy and homophobia? In each context, how are dehumanizing factors confronted by tasks of justice and peace? In terms of gender, what is today's meaning of liberation? These and other questions are often not taken care of. It can be honestly acknowledged among us. (These difficulties are present throughout my life; something similar may be happening in other men).

This essay focuses not only on dominant phenomena, but also on alternative roads. It is difficult to accept what is different, and not easy to explain femininity in one's experience. It is unacceptable whatever endangers our machista superiority, and whatever makes us loose control over others. If one wishes to be at peace with oneself, one has to overcome masculine fear of partnership and of losing grounds (of

privilege and power), since a male obsession is to be always ahead of others. Contemporary mythology overemphasises the 'I', a masculine ego that is rationalistic and in charge of the world. This of course draws us apart from fellow men (who lack power that few of us have), alienates us from the natural environment, and harms feminine characteristics. At the beginning of this essay, Pedro Casaldaliga reminded us that 'You' and 'I' are segregated because of an egocentric approach to life. Deep down in contemporary phantasies there is an absolute 'I', and a radical distance towards the other. This requires disestablishment, and conversion to reciprocity, so that 'others' are meaningful and loved.

A Jungian perspective is an eye opener. In men and women archetypes have different impacts. Heloisa Cardoso explains cultural and unconscious factors: *anima* (in men) and *animus* (in women). These hypothesis of *anima* and *animus* are very helpful; they are not essences. Cardoso writes that Jung has not “explained the meaning... of masculine and of feminine characteristics”⁶. On another part, Walter Boechat considers that Jung mainly considers such principles in terms of gender, and not in terms of 'individuation'⁷. One can also add that such realities are neither unchangeable nor ahistorical. Jung's reflections are eye openers, since men resist *anima* that “represents the unconscious with dynamics and contents that have been excluded from conscious existence”⁸. A Jungian perspective helps to see men's femininity as a thrust to be more human and less dualistic. Such theoretical contributions provide us with keys that open doors into subjective, interactive, and spiritual realities that are often concealed and marginalized⁹.

Let us now move into another area: masculine sensibility and thinking. One regrets that sensuous and corporal dimensions are usually left out of male rationality. This often happens within mainline Christianity and in its socio-cultural activities. Thus, it is important to be renewed by our faith tradition in the Incarnation and the Resurrection of the Body, and to listen anew to what the Spirit says to the Church.

Christian renewal is rooted in Jesus' person and message that give priority to concrete bodies of humanity. This priority is manifested in the Beatitudes and in numerous healing narratives. As it is well known (due to biblical work throughout the world and also in Latin America¹⁰), the *rabbi* of Nazareth, in his interaction with male disciples made no room for superiority and hegemony over other human beings. Rather, Jesus insisted on healing bodies (and did not take care of 'souls'). The prophet of Nazaret was a pilgrim on the road and not a landowner, a servant and not a master, and was among the 'little ones' of the Kingdom of God (Mc 9:33-7, Lk 9:46-48, Mt 18:1-4). In Jesus' experience and ministry, trans-

cendence happens in the midst of concrete humanity and the natural environment.

The gospel message is lived out with feminine qualities and meanings, such as table fellowship, healing of suffering, trust in God, love beyond power structures. Transcendence is present through images and interactions: a father embracing the 'lost' son, a woman baking bread, feminine parables of the Kingdom, the last supper including washing the feet of disciples. God is a savior through mercy; and this benefits the down trodden, the sick, the excluded (like children, women, foreigners, pagans, 'sinners'). This shows forth feminine wisdom that promotes inclusivity, tender correlation, option for justice. There are many signs that Jesus shared these kinds of wisdom.

What happens in masculine understandings of life? They may follow a stereotyped androcentric pattern, or they may be in dialogue with other men and women. Unfortunately, many of us have been trained to distrust feminine intuition and knowledge (expressed by women, and partially within men's experience). A terrible division is often made between either thinking like men or feeling like women.

In the midst of debates, extraordinary insights are given in Chile by Humberto Maturana and Ximena Dávila, and in Brazil by Leonardo Boff, Rose Marie Muraro, Lucia Ribeiro. For example, the biologist and philosopher Maturana acknowledges how "Ximena Dávila contributes to deepen my understanding of relational dynamics that intertwines the Biology of Knowledge with the Biology of Love... (and later adds)... this understanding allows persons -who suffer- to rediscover the path towards self-respect"¹¹. It seems to me that this is a good example of how a man does not incorporate a women into his interests, but rather that masculine and feminine kinds of wisdom are weaved together. In concrete forms knowledge springs forth because of love, and it resolves sufferings from within.

Leonardo Boff has carried out many dialogues about these issues. He underlines that one does not exactly know what is masculine and what is feminine; rather Boff stresses the value of different energies and relationships; and has developed writings with philosophers and social activists Rose Marie Muraro and Lucia Ribeiro¹². Boff explains the complexity of being different and being together; how the feminine is present in men and is more important in women; how the masculine is present in women but has greater weight in men. This allows a better understanding of what is predominant, and what is present as a minor reality, of what is within and what is an 'otherness', of the way we think with our bodies, and the way symbols are meaningful. Moreover, humans are active and

passive, we take care of others and are taken care by others. These are correlational dynamics. However, personal events are not the last word. According to Boff, the thirst for transcendence goes beyond each human being.

Another crucial issue is the transcendence of imagination. Unfortunately, when compared with analytical concepts, images and intuitions are sometimes considered negatively. Concerning this problem, Francisco Reyes criticizes the fact that imagination “is culturally considered as feminine and childish, in comparison with reason (what I know) and with objective scientific arguments. A denial of imagination diminishes and mutilates the human condition”¹³. Reyes adds that the epistemological status of imagination may be considered as important as human reasoning. This help us to be aware that insights, imaginations, historical initiatives of women, belong to a wholistic epistemology. Since feminine imagery usually claims no ownership over things and persons, it goes forward in a liberating/transcendent direction.

3) Becoming deeply human

Feminity is experienced (and may be understood) in several ways. Here I am emphasizing its movement towards being genuinely alive. It happens among us humans and in positive links with the environment and with sacred entities. In today’s world (and obviously also within us men), the feminine in correlation with the masculine may move towards deeper humanization. This basic desire goes together with other major thrusts; namely, to move from being ego-centered to become we-centered, from anthropocentric domination to biocentric liberation, from absolute essences (feminine, masculine) towards correlation among different factors, from obsessive humanism to eco-human challenges, from post-modern hedonism towards corporal/spiritual pleasure. These movements or tendencies are thus not towards an I-centered success, but rather to walk in solidarity, between much darkness and abundant light, towards shared goods.

Concerning feminity, it has been said that it is somewhat like a dynamic mostly in women, and partially within men. Some men experience it as a special ‘inner energy’, as ‘otherness’ within me. Here Jungian elements are enriched when meaningfully blended with psychoanalytic studies. For example, Sofia Uribe critically examines types of bonds that seem to belong to narcissism; moreover she writes in favor of dealing with conflicts, and she praises transformation through relationships¹⁴. Amanda Cueto says that being more human implies connections and also independence from the other; she points out that one sees “the other as a person both different and similar to oneself”; moreover, realistically

one sees that “one is constituted as an incomplete being, and that death is ahead of each one of us”¹⁵. Such down to earth interpretations are eyeopeners and also help us to go beyond positivism.

However, there are also institutional borders. One does not only move from within; one belongs to particular material, political, human scenarios, that offer possibilities of growth, but that also are boundaries which constrain any activity. José Olavarría puts it this way: “both men and women have problems in their intimate and daily lives, and these experiences are due not only to personal relationships... nor only because of desires, phantasies, projects, but also due to public policy”¹⁶. Thus, one has to face global structures and dynamics that have an influence on what happens within any person and any relationship with others. We are conditioned by economic and cultural events in regions of the world, by inequality and violence of all kinds, by the media and educational institutions, by family, by social movements of resistance, by alternatives to the status quo. All of these function as frameworks for both femininity and masculinity; and all of them affect our good wishes for shared humanization.

When one is a member of a Christian community, such conditions and such strategies are tested according to evangelical criteria. Becoming more human with a gender perspective and praxis, how is it understood since we are coparticipants of the Body of the Risen Christ? What factors of femininity and of masculinity affect Christian communities in solidarity with all beings, and in a special way with the 'last ones'? According to the Gospel, believers share goods, and persons in need are taken care with tender charity and with justice. Such justice is due towards all discriminated women, and towards most men who have little or no power. We feel partnership with others and support each other within the Body of the Lord. Thus, spiritual interaction is not self-centered nor is it a religious seclusion. Rather, fruitful personal, social, gender strategies become open to actions of the Spirit of Christ, who in mysterious ways is present in all human experience.

Because there are theological criteria one confronts any kind of omnipotence; neither men nor women are deities. Rather, faith in the Lord moves us to live among the humble, and also demands us to confront arrogant and oppressive elites (and to confront oneself when such things happen within). Unfortunately being surrounded by unjust powers and patriarchy, some men and women play divine roles pretending to control everyone. One wishes that in us men, femininity may continue as a source of solidarity and freedom. This attitude emerges from being disciples of a humble and courageous Jesus who called disciples to be friends of all, and not masters.

This implies walking with persons, and preferentially moving among the marginalized. It also implies dreaming, building networks, taking care of others with tenderness and justice. Persons are sacraments of God. As Guillermo Campuzano says: “the poor lead us to a radical humility, they allow us to become more human, since they reveal our deepest fragility, and they save us because what we accomplish with them we are carrying out with Christ (Mt 25,31ss)”¹⁷. Salvation comes from below, from vulnerable people. This mystical/political experience moves mountains.

In other words, being followers of Jesus does not happen in complicity with interests and mental frameworks of the powerful; nor is it a product of doctrinal speculation. It is hard for us men to carry all of this out in everyday existence. What does it imply for men vis a vis androcentrism? How are we breaking the chains of economic and cultural privileges? The starting point of a masculine journey of faith is the acceptance of vulnerability in the midst of other persons, and of openness to the Spirit of Christ so that relationships are not defined by self-pride, but rather by radical discipleship.

Each man is challenged by relationships that arise out of fragility and out of tendencies towards compassionate power. This may influence all of one’s behavior, and also allow us to reconstruct masculine sexuality. Any person is easily trapped by hedonism and by other forms of being unilateral and oppressive. Maricarmen Bracamonte writes: “one is born woman or man... the feminine and the masculine does not arise automatically from biology, nor from only cultural factors... in a religious way of looking at it, it is a process that has historical-transcendent meaning... in one’s intimate and loving relationship with God we may as women and men share God’s wishes that we enjoy life in abundance”¹⁸. Healthy experiences of sexuality and of gender lead to a relational spirituality.

This is discovered throughout one’s human journey. It is not like a birth certificate nor like membership in a church. A relational spirituality is not mere tolerance nor feelings with others, one-self, and sacred entities. It requires breaking away from I-ism (‘yo-ismo’), from a *machista* culture, from treating others (and the sacred) as objects, from arrogant patriarchy. It implies partnership in building bonds, and in traditional relationships..

Each one is empowered relationally, in so far as there is interaction with personal wishes and needs and rights of others; one enjoys links with persons who are close and often have quite different journeys in life. Such positive discoveries place us at the doorsteps of the mystery of Love.

There is an insight into a relational Mystery, due to contact with other persons, within myself, in events inside and outside (and in the midst of one's shortcomings). This may be called standing before God, and enjoying daily silence before transcendence. Other faith traditions have other languages. What is crucial is encountering the sacred through links with all that happens in the universe.

Bonds -both with other men and with women- are appreciated with ethical criteria. If one follows an ethics inspired in the Gospel of Jesus, the key attitudes are thanksgiving for others and oneself ('love neighbor as yourself'), humility before God, not considering oneself as sacred, and unconditional dedication to needs of one's neighbor and preferentially to the poor. Members of a Christian community interact with others without much speculation. Being genuinely interconnected means neither explicit nor undercover dominion. A true disciple has no ownership over fellow men (and obviously one also struggles so as not to control and invade existence of women).

Why this type of ethics? Because God grants a relational freedom to all entities of the universo, and to us men and women. Also because as members of God's family we are sons and daughters, sisters and brothers (and not socio-cultural rulers over each other). God's people is not religion-centered, but is rather called to unconditional mercy and mutual service. In the case of our communities they are summoned by the Spirit to be at the service of humanity's well being. In doctrinal language, it is said that the church is -for humanity- a sacramental signs of salvation.

There is also more openness to the Word of God. Briefly I describe an experience. As members of Amerindia network, during months our local group has been reflecting with Pagola's *Jesus, una aproximación histórica*. He has fascinating inputs, like this one: "Jesus' movement prepares and is an anticipation of the kingdom of God... it has to be a community where women and men, as Jesus did, embrace, bless, take care of persons who are fragile and small..."¹⁹. As we reflected on this biblical theology, a friend (Adriana Palacios) allowed me to see how "Jesus projects the feminine into the existence of the community... and invites us to see God with new eyes"²⁰. Many give witness of how persons (and in a special way women) empower us to rediscover how God moves our lives. Feminist understandings of God come from other persons (as in the case just mentioned) and also may arise from one's own feminity. Thus the Spirit moves hearts, minds, hands. Maria Angeles Martinez underlines Jesus' contacts with women who are disciples of the Lord . They share with us paths of the Lord. Such voices enlighten men's spirituality with qualities of feminity.

As this essay comes to an end, may I underline concerns and persuasions. Reflections on masculinity cover key dimensions of everyday identity, power, economics, symbols of faith, personal options. Together with important research and writings about gender, I have underlined experiential concerns. Throughout the last decades I have been thanking persons, networks, institutions, spaces of spirituality, theologians, social activists, who allow me to collaborate in gender concerns. Both masculinity and femininity deserve to be on top of our agendas, as persons seeking meaningful and just relationships, and also as theologians who are on the paths of being more human..

The starting point has been socio-spiritual disestablishment, and concrete changes in routine. It implies a radical critique of behaviors, new connections with others, intimacy. One is often unaware of complicity and naive participation in androcentric structures that hurt women, fellow-men, the environment. Therefore, a wrenching conversion is a beginning (and an unceasing process). It is wrenching and healing. All of this happens together with psychological and political connectivity with femininity in oneself. In Latin America some good examples are Humberto Maturana, Leonardo Boff, Francisco Reyes, Jose Olavarria, religious in Brazil. Today we have clear proposals for men who wish to leave aside patriarchal jails and choose to join humanity that strives for well-being. Men become empowered due to one's masculine qualities, and due to creative assimilation of one's femininity. This wholistic process includes disengagement from evil stereotypes, an inner crisis, new bonds, transcendent experiences.

Jesus' life and message are paradigmatic and most challenging. Oneself and other men are urged to give witness to joyful and liberating Beatitudes, and to be efficient servants and not sacred masters. Inspired by the prophet of Nazaret, a christian community gives witness of reciprocity in Love. We are urged to relate to women as friends and as lovers, and to be disciples as men who are not rulers of the world.

Concerning social, academic, ecclesial institutions (where some of us earn our daily bread), one has to relinquish being a ruler and to leave aside ingrained habits of superiority over others (women and fellow men). We claim to be communities led by the Spirit. This requires unending changes in gender behavior. For example, accepting God's kingdom of happiness implies stepping down from omnipotent structures, giving up idols of power, refusing to be treated as direct representatives of the divine, and, what is most important, enjoying bonds among different persons who share a passion for Life.

At the end of this essay allow me to reword Pedro Casaldaliga's insight (quoted at the beginning of this essay). The neo-liberal and post-modern 'I' (that suffocates other entities) may interact with a 'You' and be transformed into a 'We'. May there be a reconstruction of being human within each man that has masculine qualities and also femininity (although this dynamism is often caricatured and even denied). Hopefully, masculine experience can be reconciled with femininity. Since bonds are fragile, one walks ahead with patience and creativity. In a violent and postmodern context, relationships are like sharing recently baked bread and delicious fruits with the lowly.

In solidarity with the marginalized, men are reborn since there are plenty of masculine strengths and qualities, and since femininity is an inner energy. With a relational spiritual thrust, all persons walk ahead and contribute to freedom. This happens in a transcendent here and now.

Notes

- * Published in spanish: "Lo femenino en el varón" (Yolanda Ramos, ed., Teologías contextuales, La Paz: ISEAT, 2015); rewritten and translated for EATWOT'S journal VOICES. My apology for this simple translation.
- ¹ See P. Casaldaliga, *Todavía estas palabras*, Estella: Verbo Divino, 1989.
- ² Since 'feminine' usually refers to characteristics peculiar to women, in this essay I use the noun: 'femininity' in men (others prefer 'femininity'). It deals with dimensions in men (formula in spanish: 'lo femenino en el varón'). It does not mean an essence, but rather refers to socio-social experience and wisdom.
- ³ This essay reflects mostly experiences of men in professional and middle social sectors. Other voices and essays deal with data about middle class and poor men, masculinity among different social groups. See Gabriela Rotondi, *Pobreza y masculinidad* (Buenos Aires: Espacio, 2000, 59-132), José Olavarría, *¿Hombres a la deriva?* (Santiago: FLACSO, 2001, 89-108), Rafael Montesinos, *Las rutas de la masculinidad* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2002) who deals with the Mexican context.
- ⁴ Having gender workshops, restructuring working conditions, and new understanding of Mary, have been key moments in my long journey in Peru; this allowed me to write "Del androcentrismo a la relacionalidad", *Anales de la Sociedad Chilena de Teología* (Santiago, SCT, 2001, 135-150), and also *Felicidad masculina: una propuesta ética* (Chucuito, Perú: IDEA, 2002).
- ⁵ Francisco Reyes underlines urgent interdisciplinary consideration (among ethnic, gender, age groups, etc.) of masculinity (see his *Otra masculinidad posible*, Bogotá: Dimensión Educativa, 2003) which is carried out by persons "comprometidos con la necesidad de construir un mundo realmente justo" (pg. 30). Concerning the masculine/feminine correlation it is dynamic and comprehensive; nothing is excluded. According to Beatrice Bruteau and Felicity Edwards,

- what we have is an “energizing polarity”; the masculine in each person is “specialized, analytical, focused”, and the feminine is “general, intuitive, holistic” (F. Edwards, “Spirituality, Consciousness, Gender Identification: a neo-feminist perspective”, in Ursula King, *Religion and Gender*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, 181-182). She speaks against the popular (and false) polarization.
- 6 H. Cardoso, “O homem: sua alma, sua anima” in W. Boechat, *O masculino em questão*, Petrópolis: Vozes, 1997, 63. She also comments how Jung places logos as the conscious principle of men, and eros as psychic conscience in women. Being principles and archetypes, they do not have “essential” meanings.
 - 7 See W. Boechat, pgs. 18 y 20.
 - 8 C.G. Jung, *Psicología y Religión*, Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1961, 123. See also C.G. Jung, G. Adler, R Hull, *Aspects of the Feminine*, Princeton: U. of Princeton, 1982; C.G. Jung, *Tipos Psicológicos*, Barcelona: Edhasa, 2008. Anima is like a feminine personification of the unconscious archetype in men; as Jung explains “the unconscious transmits an archetypal representation which must not be confused with an archetype in itself” (Arquetipos e inconsciente colectivo, Barcelona: Paidós, 1997, 158). Therefore, there is no need to consider such representations as “essences”.
 - 9 See interdisciplinary works of Edenio Valle, *Psicologia e experiencia religiosa* (São Paulo: Loyola, 1997), Mauro Amatuzzi (org.), *Psicologia e espiritualidade* (São Paulo: Paulus, 2005), and a series of enlightened workshops in Brazil's Conference of Religious: *Gênero e poder na vida religiosa; Sexualidade; Genero, Identidade e vida religiosa; Masculino e Feminino* (São Paulo: Loyola, 1999, 2000).
 - 10 Jesus' masculinity is thoroughly examined by peruvian Hugo Cáceres, *Jesús el varón. Aproximación bíblica a su masculinidad* (Estella: Verbo Divino, 2011), by colombian Francisco Reyes, *Otra masculinidad posible* (Bogotá: Dimensión Educativa, 2003, 85-112); also by the outstanding biblical theologian: Jose Antonio Pagola, *Jesús, aproximación histórica* (Madrid: PPC, 2007, 211-236).
 - 11 Humberto Maturana and Ximana Davila, *Habitar Humano*, Santiago: JC Saez, 2008. 210-211; in several moments Maturana underlines “she shows...”, not in the sense of ideas but rather as dialogical knowledge. Moreover, Maturana thanks Davila for allowing him to see that “suffering that implies asking for help is always a cultural experience ... and that being free of this cultural jail means that he or she understands him/herself as the source and realization of the Biology of Love (and when this does not exist, one is trapped by pain)”, Maturana and Davila, pg. 232.
 - 12 L. Boff, “Masculino/Feminino: o que é o ser humano?”, in SOTER, *Genero e Teologia*, (Sao Paulo: Loyola, 2003, 203-216); Leonardo Boff, Rose Marie Muraro, *Feminino e Masculino, uma nova consciencia para o encontro das diferencas* (Rio: Sextante, 2002), Leonardo Boff, Lucia Ribeiro, *Masculino/Feminino, experiencias vividas* (Rio: Record, 2007); these three books are shared productions, and not a mixture of texts.
 - 13 F. Reyes, “La masculinidad como una construcción imaginaria”, *Journal Mandrágora* 12 (2006), São Paulo; and his outstanding book *Otra masculinidad posible* (Bogotá: Dimensión Educativa, 2003).
 - 14 See Sofia Uribe “Los vínculos como gran tejido que construye humanidad”, *Revista CLAR* 2 (2008), 33-42; her work in Colombia includes an analysis of patterns of control and superiority that are mostly phantasy; “narcisism requires being acknowledged by others, since one feels alive when being praised by others and its imagery...” (pg. 42); this certainly influences one type of masculine identity.

- 15 Psychoanalyst Amanda Cueto, "Hacerse humano. La difícil relación género-sexualidad" in Carlos Schickendantz (ed.), *Religión, genero y sexualidad*, Cordoba: EDUCC, 2005, 59-60.
- 16 Jose Olavarría, *Hombres: identidad/es y violencia*, Santiago: CLACSO, 2001, 34; who spells out global economics, housing projects, educational structures, issues of health, family concerns.
- 17 Guillermo Campuzano, "Humanización: camino y misión de la vida consagrada", *Revista CLAR*, Bogotá, XLVIV/1 (2011) 41.
- 18 Maricarmen Bracamonte, "El don de la sexualidad y la tarea de recrearla: de la fragmentación a la integración", *Revista CLAR*, Bogotá, XLVI/2 (2008), 12 y 21.
- 19 Jose Antonio Pagola, *Jesús, aproximación histórica*, Madrid: PPC, 2008, 228.
- 20 Group of Amerindia, in Chile, 23/6/2012. Amerindia begun in the late seventies, has been and continues to be a space of deep friendship, Christian leadership, social commitments.
- 21 See María A. Martínez, "Volver a Jesús, narración entre mujeres", *Pastoral Popular*, Santiago de Chile, 326 (2012) 12-17.

J.S. SPONG - M^a LÓPEZ VIGIL - R. LENAERS - J.M. VIGIL

A cura di Claudia FANTI e Ferdinando SUDATI

Oltre le religioni

Una nuova epoca per la spiritualità umana

John Shelby Spong
María López Vigil
Roger Lenaers
José María Vigil



Oltre le religioni

Una nuova epoca per la spiritualità umana

prefazione di
Marcelo Barros



Con i loro miti e i loro dogmi, con le loro leggi e la loro morale, le religioni sono state a lungo il motore del sistema operativo delle società. Ma, almeno nella forma che ci è familiare, non sono destinate a durare per sempre. "Per sempre" è la spiritualità, intesa come dimensione profonda costituiva dell'essere umano, non la religione, che ne costituisce la forma socio-culturale concreta, storica e dunque contingente e mutevole. La tesi degli autori del libro - J.S. Spong, M. López Vigil, R. Lenaers e J.M. Vigil, tra i nomi più prestigiosi, brillanti e amati della nuova teologia di frontiera - è che le religioni così come le conosciamo siano destinate a lasciare spazio a qualcosa di nuovo e non ancora facilmente prevedibile, ma sicuramente aprendo all'insopprimibile dimensione spirituale dell'essere umano un futuro ricco di straordinarie possibilità.

Ma che ne sarà della tradizione di Gesù? Riuscirà il cristianesimo nell'impresa di trasformare se stesso, reinterpretando e riconvertendo tutto il suo patrimonio simbolico in vista del futuro che lo attende? Riuscirà a liberarsi di dogmi, riti, gerarchie e norme, di tutti quei rituali religiosi che hanno finito per sovrapporsi al Vangelo?

È a questo compito tutt'altro che semplice che hanno rivolto le loro riflessioni, e dedicato la loro vita, gli autori di questo libro, ma a cui guardano con interesse e passione anche tutti coloro - e sono sempre di più - che avvertono la necessità di trasformare la propria religiosità, vivendo ormai dolorosamente la contraddizione con la dottrina ufficiale e coltivando una vita spirituale al di fuori di ogni steccato religioso.

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Martha's Role in the Johannine Community

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Introduction

We are living out a critical dense period of history manifested in both the difficult day-to-day struggle for survival, and the lack of perspectives which would guarantee life for our common home and the dignity of all beings. In such a context, I dwell on a situation that has dragged on for centuries and millennia: violence and discrimination against women. An everyday physical, psychological and symbolic violence that takes place primarily in the home and which can end in femicide¹. And this violence has been nurtured by a patriarchal ideology which degrades, prevents, exploits, abuses and excludes women from political and ecclesial spheres. Confined to privately managing and even sustaining their homes, women also continue to be cheap labor in churches.

But there is great potential for change in times of crisis. With fervent hope I contemplate the horizons of history and reclaim Martha's presence in the Johannine community. I admire her courage and dignity, the clarity of her faith in the God of Jesus and her ability to trust in the power of life, even when it is already totally degenerate.

This was the situation of the Johannine community when the Fourth Gospel was being written at the end of the first century AD, a time when the Roman Empire suffocated the people through repression, bound as they were in mind, hand and foot by the ideology of the *Pax Romana*. And this was done to maintain the luxury of the Court, to ensure that wealth could build up in the capital of the empire, and move safely across the Mediterranean Sea. As a result of this process of accumulation, the lives of both people and creation deteriorated. The death of Lazarus could be a symbol of this situation (Jn 11:39,44) in which there was a community which was like a tiny ray of light and whose main features

were love and solidarity. In the Johannine Community women were leading figures. In all their wisdom, they carried on the project of Jesus with great determination: “I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full” (Jn 10:10b). With this conviction, they take the initiative to communicate to Jesus that Lazarus was sick (Jn 11:3).

Was Martha the beloved disciple?

There is one piece of information vital to understanding Martha's role in the community of the beloved disciple, namely “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (11:5). We know that discipleship is basic to the Fourth Gospel. Being a disciple in John corresponds to being an apostle in the Synoptics. Another important fact is that disciples are identified by their love, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?” (21:15-17). Certain authors identified Lazarus as the beloved disciple because of this indication that Jesus loved him (11:5). It is interesting to note the order of the names in this statement. Not only is Martha the first person indicated, but Bethany is identified as: “the village of Mary and her sister, Martha” (11:1). This explanation would seem to indicate that the two sisters are known in the broader Gospel tradition, which also includes the Lucan tradition (Lk 10:38-42).

Another important aspect is the central place occupied by Chapter 11 in the Fourth Gospel. The revelation that Jesus is the resurrection and the life expands until it culminates in 11:1-54. In the center of the Chapter, we find Jesus' revelation to Martha: “I am the resurrection and the life” (v.25) and Martha's messianic confession, proclaimed before seeing the sign of the resurrection of Lazarus: “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world” (v.27).

It is interesting to note that the writer insists on showing that Jesus' encounter with the two sisters happens on the way, “Jesus had not yet come into the village” (v.30), thereby reclaiming the theology of Sophia and forming an insertion for the central revelatory dialogue between Jesus and Martha.

a.20-21: Martha, “Lord, if You had been here, ...”

b.22-24: Martha said, “I know that he will rise again ...”

c.25-27: “I AM the resurrection.”

b'. 28-31: Mary got up quickly and went to him

a' 32: Mary: “Lord, if you had been here ...”

“At the heart of this small insertion two verses (25-27) stand out which express the most powerful and urgent Christian hope spoken by

Jesus”². But what interests me at this point of the story is the relationship between the heart of the structure of Chapter 11 and its location at the beginning of the Passion. The emphasis given here is that this Jesus who will be executed by the power of death is, in fact, “the resurrection and the life”. This statement is crucial for a community confronted by a centralizing power, “where confessing faith in Jesus the Liberator could result in torture and death”³. It is important to note that it is Martha who receives this revelation of Jesus, and makes the confession of faith assumed by the Johannine community.

As an expression of the movement of the text, the divine identity and life-giving Sophia identity of Jesus, and Martha’s role in the community of the beloved disciple are revealed:

- a) In the Johannine community, Martha plays a role similar to that of Peter in Matthew’s community (Mt 16:15-19);
- b) After receiving the revelation of Jesus and expressing her faith, Martha calls Mary (11:28) in a manner very similar to how Andrew and Simon Peter are called (1:40-42)⁴;
- c) Martha’s confession is repeated at the end of the Fourth Gospel, where the evangelist explains why he is writing (20:31).

This reconstruction of the Johannine community and Martha’s role in it is an entirely different proposition from the patriarchal society of the time - domineering, racist and exclusionary. It is also an alternative for the apostolic community and the communities presented in the pastoral letters, where women had to listen silently and submissively to instructions (1 Tim 2:11-12).

Male domination of women in some Christian communities shows that the Church legitimized the patriarchal structure of society and unreservedly accepted the logic of the empire (1 Tim 2:1-2, Titus 3:1). As a prophetic denunciation of this stance, the Johannine community reclaims the place that women had held in the Jesus movement in Palestine. Mark 15:40-41 shows the participation of women in the movement of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem. It was the Sophia-God of Jesus who made it possible for women to be invited to a discipleship of equals, a sign of the Kingdom of God and existential critique of the hierarchical and patriarchal society of the time. The announcement of the Kingdom breaks with patriarchal structures and creates alternative relationships; new relationships where women have the same possibilities as men. “Jesus, a man identified with women, inspired a discipleship of equals which still needs to be rediscovered and practiced by women and men in our times”⁵.

A closer look to get a better view

The structure of chapter 11 of the Fourth Gospel is clear and logical, and forms a coherent narrative; however, it is made up of small units or isolated scenes. At the epicenter is Martha's profession of faith, which expresses the main intention of the evangelist. The entire chapter is constructed from dialogues clearly intended to reveal who Jesus is, and emphasize the mutual glorification of the Father and Son, thus confirming the faith of the Johannine community.

According to Matthew, after his confession of faith Peter is invested with authority (Mt 16:16-18). The Johannine community is not unaware of this but insists that authority in the Church is not hierarchical, and that the proclamation of Peter does not give him any more authority than the other disciples. The following of Jesus is what is most important for the Johannine community and Martha is the model of this following. Martin Scott compares Mt 16:16; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20 and Jn 11:27 and shows that Martha's messianic confession expresses total apostolic faith and reveals the important role that Martha played in the Johannine community⁶.

Commentary on John 11

11:1-4 - The death of Lazarus will be for the glorification of Jesus; however, we know nothing about Lazarus' illness, a superfluous issue in terms of the evangelist's purpose. His intention appears in the response of Jesus who interprets the event and gives it its theological significance: "this sickness will not end in death, but it is for God's glory so that through it the Son of God may be glorified" (11:4).

11:5-10 - After this interpretation of Lazarus' sickness, the text then presents further information vital for the story: the friendly relations between Martha, Mary, Lazarus and Jesus. "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (v.5). For the evangelist this fact is crucial because it is precisely this friendly relationship that identifies the male and female disciples of Jesus (15:9,15; 17:23).

This is followed by a dialogue between Jesus and his disciples, in which the evangelist presents the double meaning of this return to Judea: to awaken Lazarus from the dead and present the reason for the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish authorities. There is a confrontation between the life-force manifested in Jesus and the power of death emanating from the patriarchal system.

11:11-16 - After confirming his decision to take the road to Jerusalem and presenting a reflection in symbolic language on walking in the light, the text now focuses on the concrete situation of the community. The disciples have difficulty in understanding the way of Jesus (Mk 8:33). In John 11:8, the disciples had already tried to dissuade Jesus from going to Jerusalem. Now they cannot grasp what he is telling them about the resurrection of Lazarus (v. 11). Their naive answer, "Lord, if he is at rest he will be saved" (v. 12), shows that they are a long way from understanding the project of Jesus (v. 13).

11:17-19 - V.17 informs the reader that Lazarus had already been four days in the tomb. This fact seems significant for the evangelist's purpose as it indicates the state of decomposition of the body of Lazarus. The same information is therefore repeated by Martha in v.39, "Lord, by now he will smell; this is the fourth day since he died". The sign that Jesus will make manifests the life-force present within him: "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25). Jesus is the victory present in history over the corruption and death of those days. Martha is challenged by Jesus to believe in his power over the destructive force of death, a power which surpasses its eschatological scheme, learned from the Pharisees⁷.

In v.20-21, Martha goes out to meet Jesus. Her dialogue with him takes place outside the village, that is, on the way. We have already seen that this could be a reference to the theology of Sophia that can be found on the street, in the byways, at the crossroads, in markets and at city gates (Prov 1:20-21; 8:1-3). "She anticipates those who desire her by making herself known first" (Wis 6:13). In Jn 6:44, the attraction of the Sophia-God, the Father of Jesus⁸, had already been indicated for those who follow him: "No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me, and I will raise that person up on the last day". It is no coincidence that this same claim is made by Martha in 11:24: "I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day".

For that reason, Martha does not ask for a miracle. She is full of confidence in the revitalizing power of God who works in Jesus (v. 22). Her attention focuses on the person of Jesus, in whom is revealed the Sophia: unlimited goodness and giver of life (cf. Prov 8:35).

11:25-27 - This is the center of Chapter 11. In v.25 Jesus reveals himself to Martha, "I am the resurrection". There is no reason to be awaiting the future, he says. Jesus is here, present, close to Martha, and has the power to "give life to anyone he chooses" (5:21), because "he has

life in himself” (5.26). “I am the resurrection” (11.25) and I am the one through whom it comes about. The liberating power of God is echoed here, that power manifested in the Exodus (Ex 3:14), to liberate the enslaved people from Pharaoh’s Egypt. The revealing expression of Jesus “I Am” develops a fundamental idea of the fourth Gospel: Jesus reveals himself as the one who has received the power to give life, reserved to God alone. A power which is manifested in the other major signs of healing the sick, for example, Jn 4:50-53.

This time the sign transcends the very fact of bodily life that returns to a corpse, and announces, first of all, the life that Jesus inspires in everyone who believes.

V. 25b-26 presents a parallel synonym that affirms life and excludes death:

*“Anyone who believes in me, even though that person dies, will live.
And whoever lives and believes in me,
will never die.”*

This statement of Jesus contains a demand for faith and a promise of life in dialectical opposition between dying and living. In Jn 10:10 Jesus had already said: “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”. The phrase “whoever lives” (v. 26) makes it very clear that he is referring to this present life. It is in this life that Jesus manifests himself as the revitalizing force for everyone who lives and believes. That is why he asks Martha, “Do you believe this?” Faith also has a content which consists of exactly what Jesus means for the believer. To believe means to nurture an intimate and committed bond with this God-sent, life-giving man.

11:27 is the theological peak of the entire Chapter 11. “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into this world.” Martha’s proclamation is a unique confession of faith. On recognizing Jesus as the Messiah, she says that all Jewish hopes are fulfilled in him. These same words that she uses to express her faith are repeated by the evangelist at the end of the book to indicate his purpose in writing the fourth Gospel, “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing this you may have life through his name” (Jn 20:31).

The evangelist draws the reader's attention to the fact that Martha believed before seeing the sign. She confesses that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God before he brought Lazarus back to life. For this reason, she is presented as an example of faith in a crisis similar to that being experienced by the Johannine community, facing so many conflicts.

As this is the situation of the community, the evangelist presents different confessions of faith in the course of his narrative: “Rabbi, you are the Son of God⁹, you are the king of Israel”, is what the astonished Nathanael says to him because Jesus knew him (1:49); “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world” said the enthusiastic crowd after having seen the multiplication of the loaves (6:14); “we believe; we have come to know that you are the Holy One of God” said Peter during the Galilee crisis, when some had abandoned Jesus (6:66-69). However, none of these confessions reached the level of Martha’s proclamation, made before seeing the sign and motivated solely by the word of Jesus who revealed himself to her as “the resurrection and the life” (v. 25).

Towards the end of the Gospel, when faced with Thomas’s incredulity, Jesus says: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe” (20:29). The blessedness proclaimed by Jesus goes back directly to Martha. Following Jesus is the most important thing for the Johannine community and in this Martha is a model. Her messianic confession expressed total apostolic faith and shows the key role that she played in the Johannine community.

11.28-32 - There is a difference between Jesus’ dialogue with Martha and his dialogue with Mary. Even though both use the same phrase, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died” (v.21,32), in the meeting with Mary, Jesus gives no answer. The dialogue is interrupted by the emotion of the crowd, Jesus crying and his question about the location of the tomb. Common to the meetings of Martha and Mary with Jesus is the fact that both take place outside the home (v.20,30). On the street this same affirmation made by Martha and Mary is repeated. It expresses both women’s recognition that the Sophia-God acts in Jesus and wants all people to have life and have it to the full (Jn 10:10).

This became clearer to me when I came across Schnackenburg’s observation that this scene was not part of the original source, and the fact that the evangelist included it here could indicate his wish to compare or contrast the attitude of the two sisters¹⁰. In my opinion, it could also show the image of God which is being revealed in Jesus and which had been grasped by the women of the Johannine community. Jesus is the God of life, infinite mercy, who searches out people and finds them along the way, and offers them life, rest and knowledge¹¹.

In v. 28 Martha calls Mary and whispers, “the Master is here and wants to see you”. This would seem to indicate two things. First, the faith common to the two sisters was not shared by all the Jews present. In addition, this call of Martha, communicated intimately to Mary so that

she would meet Jesus could also indicate a certain leadership on Martha's part within the Johannine community. When called, Mary gets up quickly and goes out to meet Jesus (v.29). This attitude suggests her immediate willingness to follow Jesus and listen to his word.

According to the synoptic tradition, Mary was a disciple of Jesus (Lk 10:39). The expression "sitting down at the Lord's feet" of Luke 10:39, indicates the very posture of a disciple (Lk 8:35; Acts 22:3). This same tradition also tells us about the female disciples who followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (Mk 15:40-41; Lk 8:1-3; 23:49; 24:10; Mt 27:55-56). The evangelist wanted to record this tradition here and give it a new meaning in the context of the Johannine community, in which women played a leading role. In addition, they are capable of creating new relationships, totally different from those exclusive relationships of patriarchal society. In Chapter 9, a strong opposition arises between the Jews and those who profess faith in Jesus. In 11:31-45 the Jews visit the two sisters, known as the disciples of Jesus (Lk 10:38-42). What happens? It seems that this is an example of how women are capable of transforming not only the community itself, but also relationships with others. The text suggests that in the midst of conflict, it is the women who present creative and alternative proposals¹².

11:33-45 – In 4:41, the Samaritans believed in Jesus through the words of the Samaritan woman. Here the Jews are led to Jesus through his relationship with Mary and Martha. According to Schnackenburg, this scene of the two sisters was added to the traditional account by the evangelist¹³. I think this addition reflects the situation of the Johannine community where the women's evangelizing action takes place, expressed in Martha's messianic confession (v. 27), in her call to Mary (v. 28), and Mary's prompt response (v. 29) and the indication that the Jews followed her to meet Jesus, although in a mistaken (v. 31) and doubtful (v. 37) way. The presence of 'the Jews' as witnesses to what happened (vv. 36-37) is a very interesting fact. They represented the traditional self-righteous faith in the future resurrection and are called on to overcome the limits of their faith in order to believe in the present in Jesus as the "resurrection and the life" (v. 25). Because the healing of Lazarus had roused the people's curiosity (12:9), these Jews are the ones who will give testimony of Jesus, through the sign they had witnessed (12:17-18). The sign they had seen was the resurrection of Lazarus, preceded by the cry of Jesus which shows his power over death and his call to life (v. 43)¹⁴.

11:46-50 – It seems exaggerated that the resurrection of a person from the dead was the main reason why the Jewish authorities would convene a Council (v.47) to decide about the life of Jesus. In the internal Council discussions, the political question clearly appears: “If we let him go on this way everybody will believe in him, and the Romans will come and suppress the Holy Place and our nation.” (v.48). Through this verse, the evangelist also presents his conception of the leaders of the Jewish people with their narrow view of the political situation. When the fourth Gospel was written, the destruction of Jerusalem had already happened and Jesus had been given the death sentence but that had not prevented what the Jewish authorities feared.

11:51-54 - The salvific significance of Jesus’ death also appears in 6:33,51c and 10:11,15; 17:19. Giving one’s life is the ultimate expression of love and it is this love to the end (13:1) which will bring together the new people of God, made up of Jews and Gentiles. Love lived out in communities of equals, light in the darkness of the patriarchal society, where diversity is assumed as mutually enriching and gifts are shared with joy.

Alternatives for a new society

The Mexican anthropologist Marcela Lagarde defines Gender Theory in a nutshell:

“There is the myth which says that what happens to us women is caused and can be explained by the fact that we were born to this and that it is part of a natural and biological condition. What we now know is that our gender condition is not natural, we were not born that way; and neither were men. We have both been brought up and socialized all through life to behave according to certain stereotypes. What is important is that it is not natural to live life like this; that means that it can be changed, in society and in the life of each one in order to create non-alienating way of life between men and women”¹⁵.

Both cultural anthropology and developmental psychology point to the decoding of the discriminatory society in which we live. The humanities help us to “discern that the gender gap came about because of real and objective inequality between women and men”¹⁶.

For Joan Scott “gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the genders and the first way of signifying power relations”¹⁷. That is why a biblical reading from a gender optic is so urgent and important, as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza has stated:

“The feminist biblical interpretation explains that divine truth and revealing presence are found among women, who are invisible members of God’s

people. It makes it clear that both men and women receive and proclaim revelation. So, it tries to interrupt the theological silence and ecclesial invisibility of women, so that God's grace and truth are revealed to the full"¹⁸.

In the Johannine community, it is Marta who receives and proclaims the central revelation of Jesus. This text (11:17-32) allows us to reconstruct the situation of women in the Johannine community and discover their role as protagonists and their active participation in the community. In this as in other respects, the community of the beloved disciple is seeking to be faithful to an ancient tradition of Jesus. The movement and ministry of Jesus in Palestine were interpreted as a revelation of Sophia, merciful goodness manifested in the meal shared with tax collectors, prostitutes and sinners¹⁹.

In an alternative Jewish tradition, Sophia is personified and described "as the confidant and beloved of the disciples of wisdom; I shall hide no mysteries from you, [...] setting out what we know of her in full light" (Wis 6:22-25)²⁰. She prepares a banquet and invites the simple and fools to eat gratuitously with her (Prov 9:1-6; Sir 24:19-21).

This tradition is taken up by Luke in the context of criticism of Jesus as "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Lk 7:34). Without any explanation, Luke says, "Yet wisdom is justified by all her children" (Lk 7:35; Mt 11:19). The relationship of Jesus with Sophia is clear in this tradition, identified by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza as belonging to the Q Source²¹. This quote from Luke and Matthew is paralleled in Jn 6:35-37, where Jesus is the bread of life who invites all the starving and thirsty to a banquet. I understand that the Johannine community interprets Jesus as the incarnation of God, recognized, above all, in the role of Sophia (Jn 1:1s; Prov 8:22-31; Sir 24: 3-12).

Silvia Schroer, who analysed the theology of Sophia, situates its origin between the 3rd and 1st centuries BC. She dwells especially on the time of the writing of the book of Wisdom, at the threshold of Christianity, when the situation of the Jewish communities living in Egypt is worsening. Because of the domination of the Roman Empire and pressure from local society, there was a lot of apostasy, slander and persecution within the Jewish Diaspora communities. In such a situation, a biblical rereading is made, presenting a female image of God - Sophia - who brings together the Jewish and Greek Hellenist Wisdom traditions, without accepting either mystery cults, or the worship of images, or the worship of kings²².

"Nationalism and autonomy are universally reconciled in Sophia with a theologically-based inculturation. Such dialogue is not acritical. According to Jewish understanding, wisdom is not a private matter nor a hidden mystery

nor the privilege of the initiated (...). In the context of the expansion of the *Pax Romana*, Sophia is a symbol of the critique of power, directed against arbitrariness and tyranny²³.

By recognizing the manifestation of Sophia in Jesus, the community of the beloved disciple is basing itself on the very teaching of Jesus, according to the Synoptics (Mt 11:19; Lk 11:31), but develops and goes into it in greater depth and reclaims this alternative Jewish tradition:

- a) The origin of Jesus-Sophia is mysterious (Jn 7:27-29; 8:14,19);
- b) Only Jesus-Sophia knows the mysteries of God and reveals them to mankind (Jn 3:12; Wis 9:13-18; Mt 11:25-27);
- c) Jesus-Sophia invites men and women to go to meet him, and the answer must come before it is too late (Prov 1:24,28; Jn 7:34; 8:21).
- d) Jesus-Sophia is "the light of the world" (Jn 1:4-5.7-9; 3:19-21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9-10; 12:35-36,46).

In these abundant quotes from John's gospel, I find a reinterpretation of the theology of Sophia. Behind this theology, there is a reinterpretation of the tradition of Exodus, made in the post-exile period when the biblical people were severely impoverished and fragmented (Wis 10:17; 18:3; Sir 24:4).

The revelation of Jesus as Sophia is one of the central messages of John 11. Jesus-Sophia wants life and integrity for all. He presents himself as the resurrection and the life²⁴ and as such, reveals himself to Martha. When provoked by Jesus, Martha makes her unprecedented confession of faith: it has a woman as protagonist, it contains great theological precision and takes place in the public domain, which, according to the theology of Sophia is the place of meeting with the Supreme Being.

At this historic moment of crisis and major change, we are called to conquer protagonist space in society. More than ever before, we women have sought empowerment. We have created safe spaces for study, sharing of experiences and dreams. However, our political participation has been considerably reduced. In Brazil, women make up only 9.9% of the House of Representatives and 13% of the Senate, far below the global average of 22.1%²⁵. What is the participation level of women in party politics in other Latin American and Caribbean countries? We can also ask ourselves about women's participation in demanding public policies, wages, and equal rights.

And in the churches, what role have we played? Do we continue to be liturgical 'assistants'? Are we still providers of cult and builders of churches and halls? What decision-making spaces have we acquired within our churches? What images of God do we harbor within us? Do these strengthen our search for meaning, for full human growth, and

happiness? What alternative outlets are we discovering to break new ground in equal and effective participation in our churches? “While there is still time, let us make a healthy pause to reflect, weigh up our actions and interfere in the decisions of the Church that is still called ‘People of God’ ”²⁶.

Notes

- ¹ It is estimated that between 60 and 70% of feminicides, in Brazil, are committed by partners or ex-partners.
- ² BROWN, Raymond E., *La comunidad del Discípulo Amado*, Salamanca, Ed. Sigueme, 1983, p.249.
- ³ Idem, p. 250.
- ⁴ A comparison between these texts gives me the impression that Marta is the anonymous disciple of 1.40. Many authors have already dealt with this issue, but the assertion that Marta would be “the beloved disciple” would need more study. Therefore, although I consider it feasible, I will not dwell on this hypothesis.
- ⁵ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *As origens cristãs a partir da mulher – Uma nova hermenêutica*, São Paulo: Paulinas, 1992 p. 190 or Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *En memoria de ella – Una reconstrucción teológico-feminista de los orígenes del cristianismo*, Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwe, 1989.
- ⁶ Martin Scott, *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, England, Sheffield, 1992, p. 202-204, Supplement Series 71.
- ⁷ Gail R. O'Day, "Gospel of John" in, Carol A. Newsom and Sharon Ringe, *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, 1992, p. 298.
- ⁸ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's child, Sophia's prophet*, Ed. Continuum, New York, 1994, p. 150.
- ⁹ This is a simple messianic title that can also be found in Mt 4:3-6; Mk 3:11; 5:7; 15:39; Lk 4:41. These words do not indicate any more than the special favor given to the Messiah-Servant.
- ¹⁰ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *El evangelio según San Juan*, Versión y comentarios, Tomos I, II y IV, Barcelona, Herder, Tomo II , 1980, p.412.
- ¹¹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, New York: Continuum, 1994, p.180.
- ¹² Sharon Ringe's observation in a letter dated 17.09.1995.
- ¹³ The original source of the story seems to have been drafted according to the Synoptic narrative model (cf. Mt 9:23; Mk 5:38s). Rudolf Schnackenburg, *El evangelio...*, Tomo II, p. 415.
- ¹⁴ In apocalyptic writings, the hope that the voice of God, or of his angel, would awaken to life was common (cf. Jo 5:26-29; 1Thess 4:16).
- ¹⁵ Marcela Lagarde, "Propiciadora de la equidad", an interview with Aurelia Dobles in *La Nación*, Sección B, San José, Costa Rica, 25.06.1995, p.16.
- ¹⁶ Irene Foulkes, "Hermenéutica bíblica y óptica de género", in *Boletín Teológico*, Revista de la Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, Año 27, nº 58, Junio de 1995, p.73-78.

- 17 Joan Scott, *Gênero: uma categoria útil para análise histórica*, Ed. SOS Corpo, Recife, p.14.
- 18 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Mujer-Iglesia: el centro hermenéutico de la interpretación bíblica feminista" in *Del cielo a la tierra*, Sello Azul, Santiago/Chile, Ed. de Mujeres, 1994, p.239.
- 19 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *As origens cristãs...*, p. 181.
- 20 Silvia Schroer, "Transformações na fé – Documentos de natureza intercultural na Bíblia", in Revista *Concilium* 251, Petrópolis: Vozes, 1994 p.16.
- 21 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *As origens cristãs...*, p. 179.
- 22 In the year 30 BC, Egypt was made a Roman province.
- 23 Silvia Schroer, "Transformações na fé ...", p.28.
- 24 In Prov 8:35, Sophia says: "whoever finds me finds life". In John's gospel, the word 'life' appears 47 times, in some identifying Jesus as life (14:6), in others, presenting his project: "I have come so that they may have life" (10:10) and still others showing Jesus as "the bread which gives life to the world" (6:33).
- 25 <http://www.fetecpr.org.br/mulheres-trabalhadoras-nao-ao-retrocesso/14/08/2015>
- 26 Ivone Gebara, "Enquanto ainda é tempo... De Joana D' Arc a Helder Câmara", in <http://site.adital.com.br/site/noticia.php?lang=PT&cod=85239>, published on 01/06/2015

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O Papel de Marta na Comunidade Joanina

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Introdução:

Vivemos um período denso e crítico da história que se manifesta tanto na luta dura e diária pela sobrevivência, como na falta de perspectivas que garantam a vida da nossa casa comum e a dignidade de todos os seres. Nesse contexto, meu olhar se detém sobre uma situação que se arrasta por séculos e milênios: a discriminação e violência contra as mulheres. Uma violência cotidiana, física, psicológica e simbólica que se realiza, sobretudo, no espaço doméstico e que se concretiza no femicídio¹. E esta violência vem sendo nutrida pela ideologia patriarcal que inferioriza, invisibiliza, explora, maltrata e exclui as mulheres dos espaços políticos e eclesiais. Enclausurada no espaço privado da gerência e até da sustentação de suas casas, as mulheres continuam sendo, também, mão de obra barata nas igrejas.

Mas, tempo de crise traz em seu bojo grandes possibilidades de mudança. É com um olhar de esperança que contemplo o horizonte da história e resgato a presença de Marta na comunidade joanina. Admiro sua coragem e dignidade, a clareza da sua fé no Deus de Jesus e sua capacidade de confiar na força da vida, mesmo quando esta já está totalmente deteriorada.

Esta era a situação da comunidade joanina, quando colocou por escrito o quarto evangelho, no final do primeiro século da E.C. Uma época em que o império romano mantinha o povo sufocado pela repressão, atado de mente, pés e mãos pela ideologia da pax romana. E o fazia para manter o luxo da corte, garantindo que as riquezas pudessem acumular-se na capital do império, transitando seguramente através do Mar Mediterrâneo. Como consequência desse projeto de acumulação, a vida

dos povos e da criação ia se deteriorando. A morte de Lázaro pode ser um símbolo desta situação (Jo 11,39.44) na qual, como um pequeno foco de luz, havia uma comunidade que tinha como características principais o amor e a solidariedade. Na Comunidade joanina as mulheres eram protagonistas. Cheias de sabedoria elas levavam adiante, com muita garra, o projeto de Jesus: “Eu vim para que todos tenham vida e a tenham em abundância” (Jo 10, 10b). Convencidas disso, elas que tomam a iniciativa de comunicar a Jesus que Lázaro estava doente (Jo 11,3).

Marta seria a discípula amada?

Há uma informação fundamental para a compreensão do papel de Marta na comunidade do discípulo amado: “Jesus amava Marta, a irmã dela e Lázaro” (11,5). Sabemos que a categoria de discípulo é básica para o quarto Evangelho. Ser discípulo em João corresponde a ser apóstolo nos sinóticos. Outro dado importante é que o discípulo é identificado por seu amor: “Pedro, você me ama mais do que estes outros?” (21,15-17). Alguns autores chegaram a identificar Lázaro com o discípulo amado por esta indicação de que Jesus o amava (11,5). Talvez fosse interessante levar em conta a ordem dos nomes nesta afirmação. Marta não somente é a primeira indicada, como também na localização de Betânia se acrescenta: “povoado de Maria e de sua irmã Marta” (11,1). Esta explicação do redator parece indicar que as duas irmãs são co-nhecidas na tradição mais ampla do Evangelho, que abrange inclusive a tradição lucana (Lc 10,38-42).

Outro aspecto importante é o lugar central que o capítulo 11 ocupa dentro do quarto Evangelho. A revelação de que Jesus é a ressurreição e a vida vai crescendo até culminar em 11,1-54. No centro do capítulo encontramos a revelação de Jesus a Marta: “eu sou a ressurreição e a vida” (v.25) e a confissão messiânica de Marta, proclamada antes de ver o sinal da ressurreição de Lázaro: “Sim, Senhor, eu creio que tu és o Cristo, o Filho de Deus que vem ao mundo” (v.27).

È interessante observar que o redator faz questão de indicar que encontro de Jesus com as duas irmãs acontece no caminho: “Jesus não havia entrado ainda no povoado” (v.30), resgatando a teologia da Sofia e formando uma inclusão para o diálogo central e revelador entre Jesus e Marta.

- a. 20-21: Marta: “Senhor, se estivesse aqui...”
- b. 22-24: Marta disse: sei que ele ressuscitará...
 - c. 25-27: EU SOU a ressurreição e a vida.
- b'. 28-31: Maria levantou-se e foi ao encontro de Jesus
- a'. 32: Maria: "Senhor, se estivesse aqui..."

“No coração dessa pequena inclusão brilham aqueles dois versículos (25-27) em que se expressa a esperança cristã mais poderosa e mais exigente jamais dita por Jesus”². Mas, o aspecto que me chama a atenção neste momento da história é a relação entre o coração da estrutura do capítulo 11 e sua localização no começo da Paixão. O enfoque que se dá aqui é que este Jesus que será executado pelo império da morte é, na realidade, “a ressurreição e a vida”. Esta afirmação é fundamental para uma comunidade confrontada com um poder centralizador, “onde a confissão de fé em Jesus Libertador pode ter como consequência a tortura e a morte”³. Parece importante ressaltar que é Marta que recebe a revelação de Jesus, e faz a confissão de fé assumida pela comunidade joanina.

Como uma expressão do movimento do texto vai se revelando ao mesmo tempo a identidade divina e vivificadora de Jesus Sofia e o papel de Marta na comunidade do discípulo amado:

a) Marta desempenha na comunidade joanina papel semelhante ao de Pedro, na comunidade de Mateus (Mt 16,15-19);

b) Marta, depois de receber a revelação de Jesus e de expressar sua fé vai chamar Maria (11,28), de maneira muito similar ao chamado de André a Simão Pedro (1,40-42)⁴;

c) A confissão de Marta se repete no final do quarto Evangelho, onde o evangelista explicita seu propósito ao escrevê-lo (20,31).

Essa reconstrução da comunidade joanina e do e do papel de Marta nela representa uma proposta totalmente diferente ante a sociedade patriarcal, dominadora, racista e excludente da época. É também uma alternativa perante as comunidades apostólicas e diante das comunidades que aparecem por detrás do texto das cartas pastorais, onde a mulher deve ouvir a instrução em silêncio, com toda submissão (1Tm 2,11-12).

A dominação do homem sobre a mulher, em algumas comunidades cristãs, manifesta que a Igreja legitimou a estrutura patriarcal da sociedade e aceitou sem reservas a lógica do império (1Tm 2,1-2; Tt 3,1). Como denúncia profética dessa postura a comunidade joanina resgata o lugar que tinham as mulheres no movimento de Jesus na Palestina. Marcos 15,40-41 indica a participação das mulheres no movimento de Jesus desde a Galileia até Jerusalém. Foi o Deus Sofia de Jesus quem tornou possível o convite às mulheres para um discipulado de iguais, sinal do Reino de Deus e crítica existencial à sociedade hierarquizada e patriarcal da época. O anúncio do Reino rompe com as estruturas patriarcais e cria relações alternativas às vigentes; relações novas, onde as mulheres têm as mesmas possibilidades que os homens. “Jesus, o homem identificado com a mulher, suscitou um discipulado de iguais que ainda necessita ser redescoberto e realizado pelas mulheres e varões nos dias de hoje”⁵.

Olhar de perto para ver melhor

A estrutura do capítulo 11 do quarto Evangelho é clara e lógica, formando um conjunto narrativo coerente, porém construído de pequenas unidades ou cenas isoladas. No epicentro do capítulo está a profissão de fé de Marta, que expressa a intenção principal do evangelista. Todo o capítulo está construído a partir de diálogos que têm a intenção clara de revelar quem é Jesus e realçar a mútua glorificação do Pai e do Filho, confirmando assim a fé da comunidade joanina.

Segundo o relato de Mateus, após sua confissão de fé, Pedro recebe autoridade (Mt 16,16-18). A comunidade joanina não o desconhece, porém, insiste em que a autoridade na Igreja não é hierárquica, e que a proclamação de Pedro não lhe dá mais autoridade que a outros discípulos. A adesão a Jesus é o mais importante para a comunidade joanina e Marta é modelo da mesma. Martin Scott compara os textos de Mt 16,16; Mc 8,29; Lc 9,20 e Jo 11,27 demonstrando que a confissão messiânica de Marta expressa a plena fé apostólica e revela o papel importante que tinha Marta na comunidade joanina⁶.

Comentário de João 11

11,1-4 - A morte de Lázaro será para a glorificação de Jesus, porém, nada sabemos acerca da enfermidade que tinha Lázaro. Esse dado era supérfluo para o propósito do evangelista. Sua intenção aparece na resposta de Jesus que interpreta o acontecimento, dando-lhe sua significação teológica: “essa doença não é para a morte, mas para a glória de Deus, para que o Filho de Deus seja glorificado por meio dela” (11,4).

11,5-10 - Depois de apresentar a interpretação da enfermidade de Lázaro, o texto se detém em outra informação importante para o relato: as relações de amizade entre Marta, Maria, Lázaro e Jesus. “Jesus amava Marta, a irmã dela e Lázaro” (v.5). Para o evangelista esse dado é muito importante, pois é justamente a relação de amizade que identifica os discípulos e as discípulas de Jesus (15,9.15; 17,23).

Segue um diálogo entre Jesus e seus discípulos, no qual o evangelista apresenta o duplo significado da volta à Judéia: despertar Lázaro da morte e apresentar o motivo do conflito entre Jesus e as autoridades judaicas. O enfrentamento se dá entre a força de vida que se manifesta em Jesus e a força de morte que emana do sistema patriarcal.

11,11-16 - Após confirmar sua decisão de tomar o caminho em direção a Jerusalém e de apresentar em linguagem simbólica uma reflexão sobre o caminhar na luz, o texto se concentra na situação concreta da comunidade. Aparece a dificuldade dos discípulos para compreender o

caminho de Jesus (cf. Mc 8,33). Em Jo 11,8, os discípulos já haviam tentado dissuadir Jesus de sua viagem a Jerusalém. Agora não podem captar o que ele lhes diz sobre a ressurreição de Lázaro (v. 11). Sua resposta ingênua: “Senhor, se ele está dormindo vai se salvar” (v. 12), manifesta que estão longe de compreender o projeto de Jesus (v. 13).

11,17-19 - No v.17 o narrador informa que Lázaro já estava há quatro dias no sepulcro. Esse dado parece importante para o propósito do evangelista, pois indica o estado de decomposição em que se encontrava o corpo de Lázaro. Por isso, a mesma informação é repetida por Marta no v. 39: “Senhor, já está cheirando mal. Faz quatro dias”. O sinal que Jesus vai realizar manifestará a força de vida presente nele: “Eu sou a ressurreição e a vida” (v. 25). Jesus é a vitória sobre a corrupção e a morte nesses dias, presente na história. Marta é desafiada por Jesus a crer em seu poder sobre a força destruidora da morte, superando seu esquema escatológico, aprendido dos fariseus⁷.

Nos v. 20-21 Marta sai ao encontro de Jesus. O diálogo de Marta com Jesus se dá fora do povoado, isso é, o caminho. Já vimos que esta pode ser uma referência à teologia da Sofia que se deixa encontrar na rua, nos caminhos, nas encruzilhadas, mercados e portas das cidades (Pr 1,20-21; 8,1-3). “Ela mesma se dá a conhecer aos que a desejam” (Sb 6,13). Em Jo 6,44 já se havia indicado a atração do Deus Sofia, Pai de Jesus⁸, sobre aqueles que o seguem: “ninguém pode vir a mim se o Pai que me enviou não o atrai, e eu o ressuscitarei no último dia”. Não é casual que esta mesma afirmação seja feita por Marta em 11,24: “Sei disso, sei que ele ressuscitará no último dia”.

Por isso, Marta não pede um milagre. Ela se apresenta cheia de confiança no poder revitalizador de Deus que atua em Jesus (v.22). A atenção de Marta se concentra na pessoa de Jesus, em quem se revela a Sofia: Bondade ilimitada e doadora de vida (cf. Pr 8,35).

11,25-27 - Este é o centro do capítulo 11. No v.25 Jesus se revela a Marta: “Eu sou a ressurreição”. Não há motivo para ficar esperando o futuro, diz ele. Jesus está aí, presente, próximo de Marta, e tem poder para “dar a vida a quem ele quer dar” (5,21), porque “possui a vida em si mesmo” (5,26). “Eu sou a ressurreição” (11,25) e sou aquele por quem ela acontece. Ressoa aqui a força libertadora de Deus, manifestada no Êxodo (Ex 3,14), para tirar do Egito um povo escravizado pelo Faraó. A expressão reveladora de Jesus “Eu Sou” desenvolve uma ideia fundamental do quarto Evangelho: Jesus se revela como aquele a quem recebeu o poder de vivificar, reservado a Deus. Um poder que se manifesta nos outros grandes sinais de cura de enfermos, por exemplo, em Jo 4,50-53.

Neste momento o sinal transcende o próprio fato da vida corporal que retorna a um cadáver, e anuncia, antes de tudo, a vida que Jesus suscita em toda pessoa que acredita.

Os v. 25b-26 apresentam um paralelismo sinônimo que afirma a vida e exclui a morte:

*"Quem acredita em mim, mesmo que morra, viverá.
E todo aquele que vive e crê em mim,
não morrerá para sempre".*

Esta afirmação de Jesus contém uma exigência de fé e uma promessa de vida em contraposição dialética entre morrer e viver. Já em Jo 10,10 Jesus havia afirmado: "eu vim para que tenham vida, e a tenham em abundância". A expressão "e todo aquele que vive" (v.26) deixa muito claro que se trata desta vida presente. É já nesta vida que Jesus se manifesta como a força revitalizadora para toda pessoa que vive e acredita. Por isso, Jesus pergunta a Marta: "você acredita nisso?" A fé tem também um conteúdo que consiste exatamente naquilo que Jesus significa para a pessoa que crê. Acreditar significa nutrir uma ligação íntima e comprometida com esse enviado de Deus, comunicador de vida.

Em 11,27 encontra-se o cume teológico de todo o capítulo 11. "Sim, Senhor. Eu acredito que tu és o Cristo, o Filho de Deus que vem ao mundo". A proclamação de Marta é uma afirmação de fé sem igual. Ao reconhecer Jesus como Messias, Marta expressa que todas as esperanças judaicas se cumpriram nele. As mesmas palavras de Marta para expressar sua fé são repetidas pelo evangelista no final do livro para indicar seu objetivo ao escrever o quarto Evangelho: "para que vocês acreditem que Jesus é o Cristo, o Filho de Deus. E para que, acreditando vocês tenham a vida em seu nome" (Jo 20,31).

O evangelista chama a atenção do leitor e da leitora para o fato de que Marta acredita antes de ver o sinal. Ela confessa que Jesus é Messias e Filho de Deus antes que Jesus devolva a vida a Lázaro. Por isso, Marta é apresentada como um exemplo de fé em situações de crise, como esta que a comunidade joanina está vivendo, desafiada com tantos conflitos.

Diante dessa situação da comunidade, o evangelista apresenta, no transcurso de sua narração, diversas confissões de fé: "Rabi, tu és o Filho de Deus", tu és o Rei de Israel", é o que diz Natanael maravilhado de que Jesus o conhecesse (1,49); "este é mesmo o Profeta que devia vir ao mundo", dizia a multidão entusiasmada por haver visto a multiplicação dos pães (6,14); "nós acreditamos e sabemos que tu és o Santo de Deus", afirmou Pedro na crise da Galileia, quando alguns haviam abandonado Jesus (6,66-69). Porém, nenhuma dessas confissões alcançou o nível da

proclamação de Marta, feita antes de ver o sinal e motivada unicamente pela palavra de Jesus que se revela a ela como “a ressurreição e a vida” (v. 25).

No final do Evangelho, diante da incredulidade de Tomé, Jesus afirma: “Felizes os que acreditaram sem ter visto” (20,29). A bem-aventurança proclamada por Jesus nos remete diretamente a Marta. A adesão a Jesus é o mais importante para a comunidade joanina e Marta é modelo da mesma. A confissão messiânica de Marta expressa a plena fé apostólica e revela o papel importante que tinha Marta na comunidade joanina.

11,28-32 - Há uma diferença entre o diálogo de Jesus com Marta e seu diálogo com Maria. Embora ambas digam a mesma frase a Jesus: “Senhor, se estivesses aqui, meu irmão não teria morrido” (v.21.32), no encontro com Maria não há nenhuma resposta de Jesus. O diálogo é interrompido pela comoção de todos, o choro de Jesus e sua pergunta sobre o lugar do sepulcro. O que há de comum entre os encontros de Marta e Maria com Jesus é que ambos se dão fora de casa (v.20.30). É na rua que se repete a mesma afirmação, feita por Marta e Maria na rua. Ela manifesta o reconhecimento das duas mulheres de que em Jesus atua o Deus Sofia, que deseja a vida íntegra e plena para todas as pessoas (Jo 10,10).

Esse aspecto me ficou mais claro quando encontrei a observação de Schnackenburg de que essa cena não estaria na fonte-semeia, e que o fato de que o evangelista a incluiu aqui poderia indicar seu propósito de comparar ou contrapor a atitude das duas irmãs¹⁰. Em minha opinião também poderia indicar a imagem de Deus que se revelava em Jesus e que tinha sido captada pelas mulheres da comunidade joanina. Jesus é o Deus da vida, misericórdia infinita, que vai em busca das pessoas e as encontra no caminho, oferecendo-lhes a vida, o repouso e o conhecimento¹¹.

No v.28 Marta chama por Maria, dizendo-lhe ao ouvido: “o Mestre está aí, e está chamando você”. Tal afirmação parece indicar duas coisas. Primeiro, que a fé comum às duas irmãs não era compartilhada por todos os judeus presentes. Além disso, este chamado de Marta, comunicado de forma íntima a Maria para que esta fosse ao encontro com Jesus pode indicar também certa liderança de Marta dentro da comunidade joanina. Ao ser chamada, Maria se levanta em seguida e sai ao encontro de Jesus (v.29). Esta atitude de Maria sugere sua disposição imediata de seguir Jesus e de escutar sua palavra.

Segundo a tradição sinótica, Maria era discípula de Jesus (Lc 10,39). A expressão “estar sentada a seus pés”, de Lc 10,39, indica a postura própria de discípula (cf. Lc 8,35; At 22,3). Esta mesma tradição nos informa

também sobre as discípulas que seguiram a Jesus desde a Galileia até Jerusalém (Mc 15,40-41; Lc 8,1-3; 23,49; 24,10; Mt 27,55-56). O evangelista quis registrar aqui esse dado da tradição, dando-lhe um significado novo segundo o contexto da comunidade joanina, onde as mulheres tinham um papel de protagonismo. E mais, elas são capazes de criar relações novas, totalmente diferentes daquelas excludentes, próprias da sociedade patriarcal. No capítulo 9 aparece uma forte oposição entre os judeus e aqueles que confessam a Jesus. Em 11,31-45 os judeus visitam as duas irmãs, conhecidas como discípulas de Jesus (Lc 10,38-42). Que aconteceu? Parece que este é um exemplo de como as mulheres são capazes de transformar não só a própria comunidade, mas também a relação com os demais. O texto nos sugere que em meio ao conflito são as mulheres que apresentam uma proposta criativa e alternativa¹².

11,33-45 - Em 4,41 os samaritanos creram em Jesus pelas palavras da mulher samaritana. Aqui os judeus são conduzidos a Jesus por sua relação com Maria e Marta. Segundo Schnackenburg, essa cena das duas irmãs foi acrescentada pelo evangelista ao relato tradicional¹³. Penso que tal acréscimo reflete a situação da comunidade joanina onde se realiza a ação evangelizadora das mulheres, expressa na confissão messiânica de Marta (v. 27), em seu chamado a Maria (v. 28), na pronta resposta desta (v. 29) e na indicação de que os judeus a seguiam ao encontro de Jesus, ainda que de forma equi-vocada (v. 31) e duvidosa (v. 37). A presença dos "judeus" como testemunhas do acontecido (vv. 36-37) é um dado muito interessante. Eles representam a fé tradicional farisaica na ressurreição futura e são também chamados a superar os limites de sua fé para crer em Jesus como a "ressurreição e a vida" (v. 25), no presente. Diante da curiosidade que a cura de Lázaro despertou no povo (12,9), esses judeus serão os que darão o testemunho de Jesus, pelo sinal que haviam presenciado (12,17-18). O sinal que haviam visto foi a ressurreição de Lázaro, precedida do grito de Jesus que indica seu poder sobre a morte e seu chamado à vida (v. 43)¹⁴.

11,46-50 - Parece exagerado que a ressurreição de um morto seja o motivo principal que leva as autoridades judaicas a convocar um conselho (v.47) para decidir sobre a vida de Jesus. Na discussão interna do conselho aparece claramente a questão política: "se deixamos que ele continue assim, todos vão acreditar nele; os romanos virão e destruirão o Templo e toda a nação" (v.48). Com este versículo, o evangelista comunica também sua concepção sobre os dirigentes do povo judeu com sua visão estreita da situação política. Quando o quarto Evangelho foi escrito a destruição de Jerusalém já havia acontecido e a pena de morte contra Jesus não havia impedido que ocorresse aquilo que as autoridades judaicas temiam.

11,51-54 - A importância soteriológica da morte de Jesus aparece também em 6,33.51c e 10,11.15; 17,19. A entrega da vida é a expressão máxima do amor e é este amor até o extremo (13,1) que congregará o novo povo de Deus, formado de judeus e gentios. Amor vivenciado em comunidades de iguais, luz nas trevas da sociedade patriarcal, onde a diversidade é assumida como enriquecimento mútuo e os dons são partilhados com alegria.

Alternativas para uma nova sociedade

A antropóloga mexicana Marcela Lagarde define em poucas palavras em que consiste a teoria de gênero:

“Existe o mito de que o que acontece a nós, mulheres, se deve e se explica pelo fato de que assim nascemos e que é parte de uma condição natural e biológica. O que agora sabemos é que nossa condição de gênero não é natural, não nascemos assim; e não só nós, tampouco os homens nasceram assim. Ambos temos sido educados e socializados ao longo da vida para nos comportarmos de acordo com certos estereótipos. O importante é que não é natural viver assim a vida; isso quer dizer que é possível mudá-la, na sociedade e na vida de cada um, para criar modos de vida não alienados entre homens e mulheres”¹⁵.

Tanto a antropologia cultural como a psicologia do desenvolvimento humano apontam para a decodificação da sociedade discriminadora em que vivemos. As ciências humanas nos ajudam a “discernir que a diferença de gênero se tem dado em termos de uma desigualdade real e objetiva entre mulheres e homens”¹⁶.

Para Joan Scott “gênero é um elemento constitutivo das relações sociais baseadas nas diferenças percebidas entre os sexos e a primeira forma de significar as relações de poder”¹⁷. Por isso é tão urgente e importante uma leitura bíblica a partir da ótica de gênero, como afirma Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza:

“A interpretação bíblica feminista explícita que a verdade divina e a presença reveladora se encontram entre as mulheres, que são membros invisíveis do povo de Deus. Deixa claro que tanto homens como mulheres recebem e proclamam a revelação. Assim, busca interromper o silêncio teológico e a invisibilidade eclesial das mulheres, para que a graça e a verdade de Deus sejam reveladas entre nós em sua plenitude”¹⁸.

Na comunidade joanina é Marta que recebe e proclama a revelação central de Jesus. Este texto (11,17-32) nos permite reconstruir a situação da mulher na comunidade joanina e descobrir seu protagonismo e sua participação ativa na comunidade. Neste, como em outros aspectos, a comunidade do discípulo amado busca ser fiel a uma tradição de Jesus muito antiga. O movimento e o ministério de Jesus na Palestina foi inter-

pretado como uma revelação da Sofia, bondade misericordiosa que se manifesta na refeição comum com publicanos, prostitutas e pecadores¹⁹.

Numa tradição alternativa judaica, a Sofia é personificada e descrita “como a confidente e amada dos discípulos da Sabedoria. Seu ser não é mantido em segredo, mas abertamente proclamado” (Sb 6,22-25)²⁰. Ela prepara um banquete e convida os simples e ingênuos para comer gratuitamente com ela (Pr 9,1-6; Eclo 24,19-21).

Essa tradição é recolhida por Lucas, no contexto da crítica a Jesus como “um comilão e beberrão, amigo de cobradores de impostos e pecadores” (Lc 7,34). Sem maiores explicações, Lucas afirma: “Mas a Sabedoria foi justificada por todos os seus filhos” (Lc 7,35; Mt 11,19). A relação de Jesus com a Sofia é clara nessa tradição, identificada por Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza como pertencente ao Documento Q²¹. Essa citação de Lucas e Mateus tem seu paralelo em Jo 6,35-37, onde Jesus é o pão da vida que convida todos os famintos e sedentos a um banquete. Entendo que a comunidade joanina interpreta Jesus como a encarnação de Deus, reconhecido, sobretudo, no papel de Sofia (Jo 1,1s; Pr 8,22-31; Eclo 24, 3-12).

Silvia Schroer analisa a teologia da Sofia e situa sua origem entre os séculos III e I a.E.C. Detém-se de maneira especial na época em que foi escrito o livro da Sabedoria, já no limiar do cristianismo, quando a situação se deteriora para as comunidades judaicas que residiam no Egito. Frente à dominação do império romano e a pressão da sociedade local, havia muitas apostasias, calúnias e perseguições no seio das comunidades judaicas da diáspora. Nessa situação, faz-se uma releitura bíblica, apresentando uma imagem feminina de Deus - a Sofia - que reúne a tradição sapiencial judaica com a tradição sapiencial do helenismo grego, sem aceitar a devoção mística, nem o culto de imagens de deuses, nem o culto aos monarcas²².

"Nacionalismo e autonomia harmonizam-se na Sofia com universalismo e com uma inculturação teologicamente elaborada. Tal diálogo não é acrítico. Sabedoria, segundo a compreensão judaica, não é questão privada nem mistério abscondito e privilégio de iniciados (...) No contexto de expansão da 'Pax Romana', a Sofia constitui um símbolo da crítica ao poder, voltada contra a arbitrariedade e a tirania"²³.

Ao reconhecer em Jesus a manifestação da Sofia, a comunidade do discípulo amado está se apoiando no próprio ensinamento de Jesus, segundo os sinóticos (Mt 11,19; Lc 11,31), porém o desenvolve e aprofunda, resgatando essa tradição alternativa judaica:

- a) Jesus Sofia é de origem misteriosa (Jo 7,27-29; 8,14.19);
- b) Somente Jesus Sofia conhece os mistérios de Deus e os revela à humanidade (Jo 3,12; Sb 9,13-18; Mt 11,25-27);
- c) Jesus Sofia convida homens e mulheres para ir a seu encontro, e a resposta deve vir antes que seja demasiado tarde (Pr 1,24.28; Jo 7,34; 8,21).
- d) Jesus Sofia é “a luz do mundo” (Jo 1,4-5.7-9; 3,19-21; 5,35; 8,12; 9,5; 11,9-10; 12,35-36.46).

Nessas abundantes citações do Evangelho de João encontro uma releitura da teologia da Sofia. Por trás dessa teologia encontro uma releitura da tradição do Êxodo, feita no pós-exílio, quando a situação de empobrecimento e fragmentação do povo bíblico tornou-se muito grave (Sb 10,17; 18,3; Eclo 24,4).

A revelação de Jesus como Sofia é uma das mensagens centrais do texto de Jo 11. Jesus Sofia quer a vida e a integridade de todas as pessoas. Apresenta-se como a ressurreição e a vida²⁴ e, como tal, revela-se a Marta. Provocada por Jesus, Marta faz sua inédita confissão de fé: tem como protagonista uma mulher, possui grande precisão teológica e se realiza no espaço público, que segundo a teologia da Sofia é o espaço onde se encontra a Divindade.

Neste momento histórico de crise e de grandes mudanças, somos chamadas a conquistar espaços de protagonismo na sociedade. Mais que nunca nós mulheres temos buscado capacitação. Geramos espaços seguros de estudos, de partilhas de experiências e sonhos. No entanto, vem diminuindo consideravelmente nossa participação política. No Brasil, as mulheres representam apenas 9,9% da Câmara Federal e apenas 13% do Senado, muito abaixo da média mundial que é de 22,1%²⁵. Qual seria o índice de participação política partidária das mulheres em outros países da América Latina e Caribe? Também podemos perguntar-nos sobre a participação das mulheres nas demandas por políticas públicas, salários, direitos iguais?

E nas igrejas, qual tem sido nosso protagonismo? Continuamos como ‘assistentes’ nas liturgias? Somos, ainda, as provedoras do culto e de construções de igrejas e salões? Que espaços de decisão conquistamos no interior de nossas igrejas? Que imagens de Deus abrigamos em nossa interioridade? Tais imagens de Deus fortalecem nossa busca de sentido, de crescimento humano pleno, de felicidade? Que saídas alternativas estamos descobrindo para abrir novos caminhos de participação igualitária e efetiva em nossas igrejas? “Enquanto ainda é tempo, façamos uma pausa salutar para refletir, pesar nossos atos e interferir nas decisões de uma Igreja que ainda é chamada ‘Povo de Deus’”²⁶.

Notas

- 1** Estima-se que entre 60 a 70% dos homicídios de mulheres, no Brasil, são cometidos por companheiros ou ex-companheiros.
- 2** BROWN, Raymond E., *La comunidad del discípulo amado*, Salamanca, Ed. Sígueme, 1983, p. 249.
- 3** Idem, p. 250.
- 4** A comparação desses textos me dá a impressão de que Marta é a discípula anônima de 1,40. Muitos autores (as) já têm tratado desse tema, mas a afirmação de que Marta seria "a discípula amada" necessitaria de mais fundamentação. Por isso, embora a considere viável, não vou me deter em tal hipótese.
- 5** Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *As origens cristãs a partir da mulher – Uma nova hermenêutica*, São Paulo: Paulinas, 1992 p. 190 ou Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *En memoria de ella – Una reconstrucción teológico-feminista de los orígenes del cristianismo*, Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwe, 1989
- 6** Martin Scott, *Sophia and the Johannine Jesus*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament, England, Sheffield, 1992, p. 202-204, Supplement Series 71.
- 7** Gail R. O'Day, "Gospel of John" in, Carol A. Newson e Sharon Ringe, *The Women's Bible Commentary*. Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, 1992, p. 298.
- 8** Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus Miriam child, Sophia's profet*, Ed. Continuum, New York, 1994, p. 150.
- 9** Este é um simples título messiânico que pode ser encontrado também em Mt 4,3,6; Mc 3,11; 5,7; 15,39; Lc 4,41. Essas palavras não indicariam mais que o favor especial outorgado ao Messias-Servo.
- 10** Rudolf Schnackenburg, *El evangelio según San Juan*, Versión y comentarios, Tomos I, II y IV, Barcelona, Herder, Tomo II, 1980, p. 412.
- 11** Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, New York: Continuum, 1994, p.180.
- 12** Observação de Sharon Ringe em carta de 17.09.1995.
- 13** A história original da fonte semeia parece ter sido elaborada segundo o modelo da narração sinótica (cf. Mt 9,23; Mc 5,38s). Rudolf Schnackenburg, *El evangelio...*, Tomo II, p. 415.
- 14** Era comum na apocalíptica a esperança de que a voz de Deus, ou de seu anjo, despertaria para a vida (cf. Jo 5,26-29; 1Ts 4,16).
- 15** Marcela Lagarde, "Propiciadora de la equidad", Entrevista por Aurelia Dobles in *La Nación*, Sección B, San José, Costa Rica, 25.06.1995, p. 16.
- 16** Irene Foulkes, "Hermenêutica bíblica y óptica de género", in *Boletín Teológico*, Revista de la Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana, Año 27, nº 58, junio de 1995, p. 73-78.
- 17** Joan Scott, *Gênero: uma categoria útil para análise histórica*, Ed. SOS Corpo, Recife, p. 14.
- 18** Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "Mujer-Iglesia: el centro hermenéutico de la interpretación bíblica feminista" in *Del cielo a la tierra*, Sello Azul, Santiago/Chile, Ed. de Mujeres, 1994, p. 239.
- 19** Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *As origens cristãs...* p. 181.
- 20** Silvia Schroer, "Transformações na fé – Documentos de natureza intercultural na Bíblia", in *Revista Concilium* 251, Petrópolis: Vozes, 1994, p. 16.

- 21 Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *As origens cristãs...* p. 179.
- 22 No ano 30 a.E.C. o Egito havia sido convertido em província romana.
- 224 Silvia Schroer, *Transformações na fé...* p. 28.
- 25 Em Pr 8 35, a Sofia diz: "quem me encontra, encontra a vida". No evangelho de João, palavra vida aparece 47 vezes, em algumas delas identificando Jesus como a vida (14,6), outra, apresentando do seu projeto: "Eu vim para que todos tenham vida" (10,10) e em outras mostrando Jesus como "pão de Deus que dá vida ao mundo" (6,33).
- 26 <http://www.fetecpr.org.br/mulheres-trabalhadoras-nao-ao-retrocesso/14/08/2015>
- 27 Ivone Gebara, "Enquanto ainda é tempo... De Joana D' Arc a Helder Câmara", in <http://site.adital.com.br/site/noticia.php?lang=PT&cod=85239>, publicado em 01/06/2015

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Edição especial, em várias línguas, que continua a reflexão teológica e das ciências da religião após o lançamento da Proposta Teológica do Paradigma Pós-religional feita pela EATWOT no ano de 2011. O novo paradigma se aprofunda e prolonga com a reflexão das assinaturas mais reconhecidas neste campo:

Roger LENAERS, John Shelby SPONG, Marià CORBÍ, Diarmuid O'MURCHU, Lee CORMIE, Danny PILARIO, Geraldina CÉSPEDES, Juan MASIÁ, Simón Pedro ARNOLD, Faustino TEIXIRA, Sergio OSORIO, Don CUPITT, Stefen BATCHELOR, María LÓPEZ VIGIL, José Maria VIGIL...

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WHAT IS
NOT SACRED?

AFRICAN SPIRITUALITY



LAURENTI MAGESA





Another World Is Possible

Agustine Nunuk P. MURNIATI

Indonesia

I choose the motto of World Social Forum for the title of this essay, because it is my personal reflection of this world social movement. I have been convinced that effective strategy for social change can only be done through social cultural movement. In this movement we do campaign, advocacy and gathering communities solidarity. In January 21-25, 2009, as EATWOT Asian Coordinator I participated in The Third World Forum for Theology and Liberation in Balém Brazil. After the conference I joined the World Social Forum in the same place, Balém, which was located in the Amazon rainforest. When I joined in the long marches which were among the activities of the forum, people screamed out... another world is possible... water, earth, theology for another world... social-economic and political justice for another world... justice and peace laws for another world... and other yells which always contain the phrase “another world”. The phrase “another world” came to me through my ears and by process went to my mind, my heart, my spirit and my whole body. What did the people meant when they say another world? Is that “new world” which was mentioned by Jesus in his teaching? Or, is that the world which is only managed by The Creator? Is that “the Reign of God” as Jesus said? This is my sustainable personal reflection. How can I faithfully become a participant in this movement, if I am still a woman product of patriarchy culture, a culture after Eden? I cannot become agent of social cultural change when I have not liberated yet as a full human being. Through my personal analysis , I have tried to reflect on my life since I was in my mother’s womb. My mother and father told me that social, economic, politic, and culture situation-condition influenced my parent’s life. Elizabeth Hurlock, in her theory of Developmental Psychology told us that condition and situation of embryo in the womb is influenced by the condition

and situation her/his mother's biology, psychology and spirituality. When I was born, the social, the cultural and the political constructed me as an Indonesian, Javanese Catholic girl. I was baptized when I was only seven days of age, because my parents were faithful follower of Catholic tradition. Culture, social structure and religion provided me with an identity. The politics of gender identity constructed my being. I am aware that I am not a liberated woman since I was in the womb. I have been living through my "gendering" process in my whole life. I have lost my authentic identity as a woman, because I have to abide to the constructions that culture has provided for me. All people have the same experience like me. The differences are only in time, place (localities) and how much will each person has to face it.

Ignored and Unacknowledged Women's Way of Life

We live in the world full of tradition, cultural rules, religious teachings, laws and many kinds of conventions, whether they are local, national, regional or international. From a critical observation, we will understand that almost all human and environmental problems are the impacts of those conventions. Those conventions and the problems of life are related as cause and effect. It makes people unable to differentiate *nature* and *nurture*. In fact, it was purposely obscured on the behalf of the political interests of people who have power as social-political and religious leaders. Our awareness is corrupted by political hegemony. We cannot differentiate any more which are God's creations and which are the products of the authority human beings. Our way of thinking more and more become clouded when social, culture and politics mixes up sociology and theology. Our consciousness, little by little, slowly, but definitely and systematically is lost. We live in the world which is created by people who have authorities for their interests. We live in a global culture; a culture which disregards the reality of plurality of sex/ethnicities/race/religions/etc., the diversity of culture, local wisdoms, indigenous religions, mysticism, women's way of life, women's wisdom, women's insight and skill, and a lot of other aspects of life have been ignored. All decision to manage the people' life is based on male's perspective only. We live in the world AFTER Eden. We have to look for the cause of why we live in this world.

When human beings have not known the family yet, they lived as a community, maintaining their life. Male community lived separate from female community because they lived according to their bodily needs. Women community lived in the places which provided shelter for sources of water, trees, and many kinds of plantation which is needed

for women's body. They lived in the caves near the forest. In the other hand, men community lived nomadic, freely "under the sky", as hunters and fishermen. In the human story, male human being created animal husbandry. Women managed sources of water, collected food from the forest such as vegetables, flowers, fruits, seeds, tubers, and manykinds of roots. From their experience, women found that seed could grow in the soil. Then women created agriculture¹.

Naturally, as social creatures, both women and men communities needed to meet and gather. In the gathering women and men talked and shared food and experiences of life. They ate, sang and danced together in rituals devoted to The Creator, The Mystery. They didn't know yet about religion, but they were convinced that The Mystery had protected and saved them. From the women's perspective, The Protector is The Great Mother, who gives human being life and prosperity through food and many kinds of natural wealth. The perspective of human being develops from their daily real experience of life, so there are different perspective between women and men, including their image of The Creator.

In the daily life, women and men also did different work for maintaining their life. Men lived nomadic and went hunting. Women lived settled in the sheltered places. They harvested and collected forest produce. By daily life men have insights and skill for hunting and dominated open air situation. Women dominated insights and skills about soil, forest plantation, managing source of water, herbs, fertilizer, seed, and wisdoms of related area surrounding their lives. Thus it was the human story that men created animal husbandry and women created agriculture. The characteristic of agriculture is sustainable, that is to begin from seed, planting, growing, harvesting, saving a part of the produce for seeding and the other part for food. This circle of agriculture ran sustainably and continuously.

On the other hand, the characteristic of animal husbandry is accumulation of animals (wealth). Men faced with the problem of inheritance. They didn't know where their children, because the girls and boys lived with their mother in the women community, until the boys stand alone. The problem of inheritance had been motivated men to create the family². From sociological perspective, the family was born in this world because of men's interest. Men wanted to know exactly who their children were, their "legal" heir.

Whereas from women perspective, the origin of the family was the beginning of women's lives after Eden. The beginning of patriarchy culture was the beginning of the lost of women's freedom. In the patriarchy culture, women's way of thinking was slowly ignored and un-acknowled-

ged. In the family woman is controlled by her husband. This process of ignoring became speedier when the patriarchy culture collaborated with capitalistic economic system. The characteristic of capitalistic system is based on the accumulation of capital, similar to the accumulation animals as wealth in the beginning of animal husbandry. Nowadays we live in a global culture. Our lives have been controlled by neoliberalistic economic system. We lost a lot of our consciousness, so we get difficulties to understand the divine one. The idol of power over, wealth (material) and pleasure have been tempting our mind, our feeling and our spirituality, even all our life.

Looking for the lost woman's potential

I look for the lost of my potential through my personal experience. My grandparents lived in a village, an agriculture area, in the slope of Mount Merapi, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. It was in 1950, I had experienced to learn socio-cultural teaching from my grandparents, especially my grandmother. In this village, "Lurah" (the leader of village) divided the roles of men and women based on their capabilities. There was no dominant sexist division of roles. Observing my grandmother's life, I really saw the freedom of a woman's life. She is given an authority to be a leader of the village's women community. This community have duties to manage the source of water, to maintain the soil's fertility, to decide what kind of foodstuff to plant, to do the seeding, to make fertilizer, to harvest and even to cook and prepare the food to be eaten by all members of their big family. They have habits to talk with plantation before they take fruits, leafs and flowers. It was more interesting that their habits included feeding rats in the field and tigers which came down from the mountain.

They did their habit based on their experience. They knew when the paddy grains started to fill, the rats would be very happy to eat the young paddy. Woman could feel what the rats' need, so they gave different food for rats. Before approaching the night, they went to the field, bringing the left over food for feeding the rats. The rats knew and ate this food and they didn't eat young paddy.

Another amazing habit was to feed tiger. Mount Merapi is volcanic. When the volcano was in active condition, all animals which lived on the slope of mountain went down to the village to find food. The village women understood about this situation. Those animals needed to eat and they will eat their livestock if they as human being did not prepare "another food" for them. The village women provided the food for the tiger like: goat, chicken and another left over food as fish and meat at the edge of village.

Living in that situation, I was happy and felt peaceful. The women did their work by using their heart and common sense with the purpose of creating peace. Women bring about justice not only among human being but also for the animals and environment. I can understand the existence of a connecting line from the heart, the common sense, the work and the result which ended in peace, satisfaction and safety of all human being and all creations. They considered that human being, all creations are relatives and should properly help each other³. When I asked my grandfather, why the duties for caring life was assigned to my grandmother and her community, he answered that women know more about life, as they are the one who take care of all human being since the baby is still in her womb. It seems to me that my grandfather knew exactly the role of woman in this life. It seems to me that my grandfather didn't experience the gynophobia, the subliminal fear of the woman⁴.

My grandfather was able to capture the mysterious relationship between woman, cosmos and The Creator. My grandparents were polytheistic believers. They believed that the life's guardian are God and Goddess, like GAIA for the Greek society⁵, similar to what the Indonesians call the motherland as "Ibu Pertiwi" (Mother Earth). The relationship between women and the soil resulted in material for living, food plantation, herbs, the water system management, the wood for making fire, the cloth material and the other means. The work place of women was in the forest. The forest is a supermarket for women since there are various foodstuffs in it. The forest is also a place for doing ritual, to have a dialogue with the ancestors. The forest does not only provide the material but also the spiritual need of life. From this women experience, the ancient women created a life arrangement wrapped in three kind of laws:

1) The Law of Unity, a view that life is ONE and WHOLE, as it is source from ONE ENERGY, one good, one power, but contains various elements.

2) The Law of Rhythm, a view that life is a harmonious rhythm, just like the processing rhythm inside the body of a human being. Our blood stream and the sigh are rhythms that become one with the rhythm of nature. Every woman has experienced cycle of menstruation, nine month and ten days process of pregnancy, the process of giving birth, taking care of the baby until the child can stand alone is also a rhythm of process.

3) The Law of Love of the Dance, a view which teaches how human being faces the life with joy in peace because of the love atmosphere will covers the life, it is combined as a continuous dance that keeps flowing through its dynamic⁶. The women way of life is a view that life

is a unity, it is not the binary and the dichotomy of patriarchy (right and wrong, black and white, etc.). Instead it is holistic. Life is a dynamic process of sorrow and joyfull by turns. We learn from the women who had lived before human being created the family, ancient women who had lived in “the World of Eden”. We learn constinously from them to find our feminist⁷ potential, our feminist insights and wisdom, which was lost after Eden.

The struggle of Asian Feminist

Learning from the ancient women and from my grandmother, I do agree with the three axioms for feminism which was proposed by Aloysius Pieris. First of all, I am deeply aware that feminist’ struggle is not only for women, but it starts from a woman awareness. Woman as a person had became a victim of misogyny perspective since the “dramatical story in Eden”⁸. Woman awareness as a person is the starting point to develop her feminist potential. This starting point is a conversion of woman to change her perspective, her way of thinking, her way of life and her struggle of life. Our feminist potential is our power within, a power which come from our deep awareness physically, psychologically, and spirituality⁹. Our power within influence to each other through our power to in our community. Then our community have collective powers called “power-with”, a community power. Power with is a motor to move people to initiate social-cultural change. So, that is right, feminist movement is not a temporary movement, but rather it is a permanent feature of our growth toward the *humanum*.¹⁰

Secondly, feminism is indissolubly married to religion, for better and worse. My feminist awareness started and has become deeper and deeper since I study theology. From my understanding of theology I found many kinds of “untruth” in my religion, especially religious teaching based on misogyny perspectives. I got traditional Catholic teaching from my parent and my Catholic religion teacher. I received all of those without question, which what believing meant for me at that time. That was my understanding about believing and faith. But in my life experience there are many problems of life which cannot be solved appropriately by those religious teaching. Religion as a “language of the spirit” speaks from a region which is not appropriate with our being, where we are truly ourselves. The subliminal relationship between religion and feminism will give birth to the question “what’s wrong with religion”.

It is not astonishing if many feminist friends chose to leave their religion and to declare that they are secular feminist. Whereas in fact, religion can never operate in an ideological vacuum without action

oriented. When we arrange action oriented for our religion, we will find many problem of life cannot be covered by religion. In this perspective, feminism is a permanent ideological critique of religion, something that religion cannot do without.¹¹ Thus secular feminists still need to reflect deeper on the relationship between feminism and religion.

As the third axiom, Pieris said that “Feminism is a subject that, by its very nature, can neither be fathomed nor articulated adequately except through an epistemic process that touches the most honest parts of our being, the subconscious and the body”¹². That is true, feminist struggle is to reclaim and reaffirm our full humanity. We are searching for our human authenticity which was lost by “gendering”; a socio-cultural construction of Gender Patriarch Ideology. We are not aware that in our human development process, something was lost because it was disregarded. All of us become human through a process from pre human, in our mother’s womb. This human development process is a biological as well as a cosmic(religious) experience. Our first experience in the womb, in the micro cosmic, is our real experience, and there is a subliminal experience. The phenomenon of *gynephobia*, which itself is a religious, cosmic, become a subliminal experience. In this case, Mary Daly proposed her insights *a gyne-ecological orientation* in our very mode of existence. By understanding the phenomenon of gynephobia, we can understand to our real personal problems. We understand the mystery phenomenon in our life. When we were born, we faced “gendering” to process our human person. Thus we don’t know who we are anymore. We are socially and culturally constructed according to the place where we were born into.

If we want to struggle for freedom from injustice and oppression, we must start from our personal deepest awareness. We have to deconstruct our politics of gender identity and to reconstruct our authentic identity, our fully human persons. Aloysius Pieris gives his insights “the cosmic in Feminism” as a critic to secular feminist. He said that Asian feminist adopt the “secularist” model unreflectively. The secularist ideology has its roots in the desacralization of the universe, where as Asian cultures is rich of sacralization the universe. Asian folk are rich of symbols as sacraments of life¹³. We appreciate this contribution from Pieris, because this is based on his real experience as an Asian male. Asian feminist should be feminist who has gyne-ecological orientation since Asian culture is rich in matriarchal culture which sees the womb as a micro cosmos which is a continuum of macro cosmos of the universe.

But another reality, Asian societies have a common experience that is under the colonialism and imperialism pressure. Since Asian folks were victims of unfairness and oppression from the colonial rulers, they

develop an ability to resist the oppressing ruler¹⁴. This situation also happened in the time of the Judaic prophets. So, this situation inspires Asian women to do prophetic mission. The mission of the prophet is to grow, preserve and raise the society awareness that around us there is a dominating culture. Globalization culture, that is a collaboration of patriarchal and capitalistic system, has been dominating our world. Globalization is going to try to eliminate pluralism of culture, local wisdom, local faith, indigenous religion, and another reality of life. This means that the insights and wisdom of women and another oppressed communities are in danger of extinction. Women lost her insight for controlling her own body, lost her insights and skill to manage sources of water, lost her skill to maintain life, lost her skill of food system management, lost her skill to maintain soil fertility, and other inherited women insights and skills. In this situation of “chaos”, we are called to proclaim the truth, justice and peace.

We are living is the false truth, it is not authentic truth, because the truth is determined by the ones with interests, namely masculine and capitalistic interests which dominate the society. The truth from feminist perspectives is disappearing, eroded by dominant education from masculine perspective. Therefore, to understand the prophetic principle from feminist perspective, a critical analysis of the prophetic tradition is needed¹⁵. From the Bible source we do not find prophets explicitly struggling for women as oppression victims, but we can take its tradition principles. From the Book of Prophets, we know that they condemn oppression by the ruler in social, economy and politics (Isaiah 10:1-2; Amos 8: 4-6; 5:21.23-24). The prophet criticized not only the dominating government, but also the religious leaders. Religion which is regarded as justifying unfairness and oppression becomes the criticism target of the prophets. Prophetic principles, especially liberation principle can be sustained and made perfect in feminist struggle. Traditional principles of prophetic liberation originate from the faith that 1) God protects and recovers victims of oppression; 2) the oppressing authority system must be stopped; 3) new world will be materialized when the system and social structure become just and peace, in which only under the reign of God (source of GOODNESS); 4) as long as ideology and religion support or justify oppression, it should remain be analyzed critically and fought¹⁶. We can learn from woman prophet, Mary from Nazareth.

Mary implemented the prophetic tradition in a special way. Catholic Church respect to Mary very much, however, so far the Church gives perspective about Mary from masculine view only. Mary as an independent woman who could capture the mystery of life, cosmic, is never been

discussed in our community. Her courage to continue her pregnancy was a free choice decision. She made her choice without asking first to her fiancée, her brother, her father, which were the habits of common women who are dependent on men. She made decisions after communicating directly to The Mystery. She used her religious experience, she recovered her subliminal experience, cosmic experience. Her awareness to her authentic personhood is Mary's power within, her personal power and courage. The woman mystic of Mary was able to capture The Mystery's will on herself. Mary was not afraid to face "social punishment" for pregnant woman outside marriage (Luke 1: 38).

We learn from Mary, a humble woman from Nazareth, how we can develop our mystical ability, to fight our gynephobia. If we have a gynecological orientation, as Mary Daly proposed, we train our mystical ability. The relationship with The Mystery is the invisible center of person. When the relationship is properly ordered, the result is religious life. I believe that in all each person's heart The Mystery, named God(s) have special concern and it is the arena of battle also. God knows the hidden heart (1 Corin. 4:5), the examined heart (Rom. 8: 27), and the test heart (1 Thess. 2:4). God wants more than lip service which only makes the heart far from God (Mk. 7:6). God doesn't trust appearances, but look at the inner reality of heart (2 Corin. 5:12). In the heart also evil seeks to possess. Satan entered into Judas' heart (John 13:21) and filled up the heart of Ananias (Act 5:3). All of those are our temptations. So, we have to mix all phenomena of our life as well as we chew our mind, feeling and spirit. By this we can integrate our transcendent and immanent relationship beyond our religion for doing our prophetic mission.

Indonesian feminist's struggle

Indonesia is in South East Asia. Most Indonesians are Moslem. But Indonesia, as other Asian countries, is also inhabited by indigenous religions. Indonesian society is pluralistic in terms of tribes, ethnicity, race, language, wisdom, culture and tradition, etc. Before "great religions" dominated the Indonesian society, every region has traditions and rituals to worship The Mystery which is called local religions. Before colonization, the characteristic area of Indonesia was rice fields and forest. Agriculture dominated the society's life.

Agricultural society used bilinear system for their family, thus man and woman has equal relationship and sex does not determine the role in the society. The distribution of roles is based on each person's abilities. Unfortunately, bilinear system disappeared when Indonesian government implemented structural transformation to industrial society. Especially

during the green revolution for developing country, the bilineal system lost completely. The collaboration of patriarch and capitalist way of thinking swept away agriculture wisdom. Its impact “produce” different kinds of problem of life, as migrant worker (especially women migrant), environment destruction, decreasing source of water, unfertile soil, lost local seed and local food plantation, etc. However, that “the wave of greed” cannot sweep all creation, until now in Indonesia there are still remnant of agriculture wisdom. Some regions of Indonesia still implement bilineal relationship where men and women works together hand in hand. Before Indonesian independent in 1945, men and women join hand in hand to struggle against Dutch occupation. Nowadays, Indonesian men, women, and LGBT unite in a people’s movement to change our world.

To follow Pieris’ axiom and also my own conviction, feminism is not a temporary movement, but a permanent movement toward the humanum. This means that women, men and LGBT have to struggle together toward “another world” which is a just and peaceful world. Indonesian feminist do not struggle exclusively anymore, but we invite everybody who has the same vision and mission. In Indonesia we have a male community called “Asosiasi Laki-Laki Baru Indonesia” (Indonesian New Men Association). They care very much about women issues so they learn about Feminism, Gender, to analyse women’s problem, and many kinds of issues related to women and children. They name themselves as Male Feminist. What ever they called, I appreciate their openness for dialogue and their critique to us. It seems to me, it is enlightening to have dialogues and discussions with them. I can understand more about male perspective when I analyse women’s problem. I noted some their critiques which are very interesting for me.

Haryatmoko, an Indonesian Jesuit priest with a background in philosophy who is also a friend, is a self confessed male feminist. His heart has been touched by Annie Leclerc’ yearning to call women to learn to appraise everything in our life from her own perspective, not through men’s perspective. He contributes his reflection to Indonesian women feminists on *symbolic violence*. This violence is unseen and it seems inexistent in plain view. The concept such “human norm is man”, “woman is a misbegotten man”, “subordinate position of woman is nature”, Kings and Religious leaders (all men) have divine rights, concept hierarchy structure in the society, misogyny perspective, etc., are form product of male discourse. Male discourse controlled women’s way of life, women way of thinking, women’s language, women’s wisdom and women’s insights. Male discourse is symbolic violence, and male domination. The root of gender injustice is in the social-cultural-religion institutions which

is determined by male discourse. Moko criticises us because until now there are still many feminist who unconsciously follow male discourse. We have to understand deeper and being more critical in facing symbolic violence. Feminists are often still trapped in male discourse. We use male way of thinking, male language, even male ideology, unconsciously. In presenting gender justice in this world we have to deconstruct male discourse and reconstruct to be human discourse. We have to reinterpret concept and thinking of philosophy, theology, anthropology, product of laws, moral norms and religion norms, etc. The interpretation has to consider the background of time and how people understood the discourse, then criticize the ideology and finally deconstruct the male discourse¹⁷.

Another contribution from Kris Budiman, he is man of letters. In his book “Feminis Laki-Laki dan Wacana Gender” (Male Feminist and Gender Discourse), he shares his experience that he also be a victim of patriarchal culture. He is controlled by socio-politic-cultural system how to be a “good man”. He is aware that sexism occurs not only in the deviation of role but also in all aspect of life as language, symbol, myth, way of thinking and ideology. He supports feminist to write her own way of thinking as feminist discourse. Myths as “ibuisme” (motherhood), beauty myth, emansipation, “complimentary relationship”, etc have to be destroyed. He struggles with us to analyse languages and myth for creating non sexist words¹⁸.

“Asosiasi Laki-Laki Baru Indonesia” have been doing movement of gender and feminism awareness for Indonesian men. They share, talk and discuss about their experience as a man in the androcentris society. On the other hand, I am a member of Solidaritas Perempuan (Solidarity of Women’s Rights), a feminist organization in Indonesia. I was it’s National Leader. We do movement gathered with “new men” community in Indonesia as a part of World Social Forum movement. Interfaith Commitment Theology motivates us to struggle against violence and oppression. Through our routine activity for evaluation and reflection, we do group theology. We are united by our conviction of personal transcendent and immanent relationship. This is the point we can relate our heart and mind to discuss our struggle for human liberation in Indonesia.

My Reflection as a Catholic feminist

As Javanesse Catholic woman, I very often think “who is Jesus?”, “why I follow Jesus a Jewish man from Nazareth?”. Jesus came to Indonesia gathered with spices traders rode VOC’s (Vereneging Ost-Indiche Company) ship in 1602, which was recent compare to the history of the religion. My ancestors are polytheistic believers. My parent introduced Jesus to me according their perspective as traditional Catholic

since I was born. My parents became Catholic because they studied in the Catholic Dutch school. In the path of my life I have tried to understand Jesus as my Christology. From the Bible I knew he was a teacher and a community leader. He also many times performed the obligation of prophet, to proclaim the truth and invited people's repentance. My Christian faith lead me to be convinced that The Mystery incarnate in Jesus, as Jesus Christ. But why is he is man ? Is he a "new man"? In understanding Jesus is new man or he is not, I take three human story from the Bible for reflection.

1. The Wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11)

Women play significant roles in the Gospel of John. John 2:1-11 is the opening event in Jesus' ministry. Before he attends the wedding, he gathers with the first disciples (John 1:35-51). Mary, his mother is also in attendance this wedding. In this human story I want to reflect how the attitude of Jesus as a Jewish man shows that he is not like as common Jewish man. Jesus lives in Jewish community, Jewish socio-cultural construction cannot be avoided by Jesus. "Gendering" also works in the person of Jesus as a man. Unbalanced relationship man-woman is the main characteristic in the patriachal culture also influence the holy family in Nazareth. One day, Jesus was invited to the wedding as a guest, like everyone else. His personal relation in the public is the recipient of a gesture of hospitality. His first ministry is played out in an intimate, personal, familial setting. Mary also a guest, but as woman she attends with her caring attitude. So, when the wine at the wedding feast runs out, Mary feels as host feeling, what will be happen. The host will be great embarrassed if the wine used up before the feast done. Mary's intuition as her power within works and to inform her son about this lack. She knows that her son can do something. The conversation between Jesus and her mother is very important. First of all, an unbalanced communication occurs (2:3-4). When Jesus' mother speaks to him in 2:3, she asks nothing explicit of him, but Jesus responds her with a sarcastic answer (2:4). It shows disparage attitude of Jesus to his mother as a woman. When Mary assumes that her son can remove the scarcity, Jesus' words to his mother seem harsh to be listened. His words are not an act of rudeness to his mother, but it is Jesus' freedom from all human control. Mary captures this sign by her heart and without words to her son, she just asks to the servants with utter confidence "Do what ever he tells you"(2:5). Here, there is moving relation conversation position. Balance communication occurs in the conversation Mary and Jesus. When power within of Jesus as a man and Mary as a woman meet each other, unbalanced relationship is destroyed and reconstructed an equal one. This equal conversation between

man and woman creates the miracle. Turning water into wine is an act turning scarcity into abundance. In this story, Jesus deconstructs man's way of thinking. He doesn't demand the reason, why his mother does it. Jesus creates "new way of thinking" by following "the law of rhythm". The "new way of thinking" appears in this rhythm : lack of wine (scarcity) - heart caring of Mary – action for helping – conviction her son can do something – conversation woman and man – process communication unbalance become balance – action for helping – abundance – every body happy, salvation happened. To reflect from this story, I can capture the process of deconstruction-reconstruction way of thinking which Jesus and his mother did. Equal relationship man-woman emerge when he and she uses his/her inner hearth, his/her power within.

2. *Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (John 4:4-42)*

In this story, Jesus deconstructs many male discourses. When Jesus travels to Samaria (4: 4), he moves away from official Judaism, because in that time Jews and Samaritan were bitter enemies (4:9). The source of the enmity between them was dispute about the correct location of the cultic place of worship. Jesus deconstructs this enmity when he meets the Samaritan woman (4:20). When Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well, he meets someone who provides a striking contrast to all that preceded. He meets man who has names, Nicodemus (John 3). Now, he meets a woman un-named and foreign woman. His behavior is not common behavior of Jewish men. The conversation between Jesus and the woman is thus a scandalous conversation, a scandal noted by the woman herself. She responds to Jesus' request for water with the words "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (4:9). The woman knows that a Jewish man should not talk with a Samaritan woman. The scandal is noted also by Jesus' disciples. When they arrive at the well (4:27), they are amazed that Jesus speaks with the woman in daylight and in public. Jewish rabbis did not speak in public with woman (4:31). The disciples know that Jesus has broken traditional cultural and social convention and expectation. They want to protest but unvoices. However, Jesus will not limited by such convention and restraints. He breaks open boundaries in his conversation with the Samaritan woman, that are the boundary between male and female, the boundary between "chosen people" and "rejected people", the boundary enmity between persons. The conversation two person, man and woman based on their power within challenges the status quo of male discourse which contain symbolic violence. The conversation by offering the water of life (4:13-14) to Samaritan woman is a deconstruction for male discourse which is maintained by women also. Jesus executes "shock therapy" to un-

conscious men and women, especially for women. Jesus as a Jewish man calls us men and women to deconstruct symbolic violence product of male discourse through creating new perspectives, a human perspective. In androcentric society we live in and under conventions, product of laws, religion teaching which is based on male discourse. We are called to criticize and to fight it.

3. The foreign woman and her daughter (Mark 7:24-30)

In this story, I will point out to the main characteristic of male socio-cultural conventions, that is hirarchical relationship. Here, there are relations between man and woman, between Gentile and Jew, between “dogs” and children, and between native and foreign citizen. How Jesus stands at attention to this society’s convention. The woman in the crowd was separated from her religious and kindship community because her illness and her inpurity. The woman in Mark 7 is an outsider because her nationality and her religious beliefs. She is a Syrophoenician by birth, a Phoenecian from Syria. She is identified as a Gentile or a “Greek”. She doesn’t mentioned relate with man (husband, bother or son) and her economic status, but she has perspective that Jews has privilege as “chosen people”. She falls at Jesus’ feet and begs Jesus to drive the evil spirit from her daughter. Spontaneous, Jesus expresses his refusal to accede to this foreign woman request. Jesus shows his ordinate position attitude, look down to the woman. This is politic gender identity for Jewish man, it cannot be avoided. Only one who has been conscious, can change his mind. Jesus’consciousness changes the situation by deconstruction and reconstruction process. The process of decontruction of male way of thinking happens in the conversation Jesus and the foreign woman. First of all Jesus compares her and her daughter to a little dogs who are not to be fed the children’s bread, “Let the children first be fed, for it is not rifgt to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (7:27). But she answers “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children crumbs” (7:28). The word “Lord” shows that the woman assumes herself in subordinate position, she postures and sets as conventional woman. But in the other hand, the woman compounds her shamefull behavior by boldly, and successfully as it turns out, contesting Jesus’ metaphor. She gives an argument to Jesus exactly and Jesus change his mind. Acknowledging her clever and daring retort, Jesus tells her that he original request has been granted and the demon has left her daughter. When the woman arrived home, she discovers what Jesus said to be true. The process of deconstruction - reconstruction discourse happened when man and woman appreciates one another. The woman appreciates Jesus as well as politic gender identity of Jesus, she falls at Jesus’ feet and calls “Lord” to Jesus.

In other hand, Jesus appreciates her clever and daring retort. This means, Jesus has broken male perspective that woman stupid and irrational. In the same time Jesus creates equal relationship between Gentile and Jew, native and foreign citizen, children and “dogs”. It is an example deconstruction of hirarchyal relationship and reconstruct equal relationship.

From three scenes in the Bible, I find that Jesus is “a new man”, he is not like Jewish man as common. He gives example to another man how to become “new man”. Jesus was born from Mary’s womb in Betlehem, he cannot avoided from the Jewish gives politic gender identity to him. But he shows us how to challenge social-politic-cultural convention which draws the people far from The Creator. Jesus’s mission is to proclaim the Reign of God and calls the people to repent. To repent means change the way of life, the way of thinking and perspective which move us to destroy life. Repentance needs one’s awareness and critical understanding about the authentic truth. We have to critically understand the discources which have been led us astray. We have to create new discourses, new way of thinking, new perspective for saving our life and all creation.

Another World : New World, New Eden

To follow Jesus means to continue his vision and mission. Jesus’ vision is The Reign of God and his mission is to create A New World. Only three years Jesus gives us example how to do his mission, against the authority who had power over killed him. Jesus also lives in the world after Eden, the world full of injustice, violence and oppresion for people in determinated and subordinated position. In the 21st century we still live in the same situation, and even more complicated. Hegemonic globalization policy control people’s life in this world and direct them to ignore the reality of life. The collaboration patriarchal culture and capitalism economic system is working to get rid of pluralism, local wisdoms, women insights and skills, and another reality of life. In this situation we need a space which offer a self-conscious effort to develop an alternative future. We need an open space for action toward an international solidarity to create another world. Let us do our prophetic mission to follow Jesus. Jesus is a Jewish man, but he is also the incarnate one. Jesus Christ is two side of a coin. Jesus calls us to build people’s community. Jesus as community organizer gives example to us how to urge for the movement through changing people’s way of thinking. We have the opportunity to join with people movement. The world’s movement takes effective strategy by organizing people in the grassroots, campaigns and advocations. People movement by implementation of *active non violenceaction* is the strategy which was chosen by Jesus.

Notes

- 1 John Madeley, "Food For All", 2002
- 2 Frederick Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State", 1972
- 3 Nunuk P.Murniati, "Mengubah Budaya kekerasan menuju Spiritual Hidup : Perspektif Perempuan Jawa", page 33-55, in the book entitled "CERITERA PEREMPUAN KRISTEN INDONESIA", 2002
- 4 Aloysius Pieris, "Fire & Water, Basic issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity", 1996
- 5 Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Gaia & God. An ecofeminist theology and Earth healing", 1992
- 6 Andrew Harvey & Anne Baring, "The Devine Feminine", 1996
- 7 Feminist is a woman or man or LGBT, who has been aware that in this world there are injustice for women, universally and systematically, and she/he joins to struggle against this injustice. Thus, it is not automatically a woman be a feminist
- 8 This is from biblical perspectives, and from sociology perspectives it was started since the origin of family
- 9 According to Carl Jung theory, every person has three layers in his/her body : physically, psychologically and spirituality (this is the deepest one), it called inner heart.
- 10 Aloysius Pieris, "Fire & Water" Basic Issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity", page 12
- 11 Ibid. page 12
- 12 Ibid, page 13
- 13 Aloysius Pieris, "Fire & Water. Basic issues in Asian Buddhism and Christianity", page 15 – 27
- 14 Formerly most Asian countries were occupied by European countries, but now in the post colonial situation Asian are oppressed by military government
- 15 Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Sexism and God-Talk. Toward Feminist Theology", 1993
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Haryatmoko, "Dominasi Laki-Laki melalui wacana" (Male domination through Discourse) an article in the Book "Feminis Laki-Laki, Solusi atau persoalannya" (Male Feminist, solution or problem), YJP, Jakarta, 2001
- 18 Kris Budiman, "Feminis Laki-Laki dan Wacana Gender" (Male Feminist and Gender Discourse", Indonesia Terra, 2000

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La representación femenina en el discurso de la teología de la liberación

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Cali, Colombia

Los conocimientos lingüísticos y neurolingüísticos, desde hace más de un siglo, nos dan la certeza de que el lenguaje nos configura. Edward Sapir afirma en 1921:

Tan pronto como la palabra queda lista, sentimos de manera instintiva, con una especie de suspiro de alivio, que también el concepto está listo para que lo manejemos... ¿Acaso estamos tan prontos a morir por la "libertad", a luchar por nuestros "ideales" si las palabras mismas no estuvieran resonando dentro de nosotros? Y la palabra, como sabemos, no es sólo una llave, puede ser también una traba. (Sapir 1966, pág. 23).

No es posible pensar sin lenguaje y cada lengua igual que cada discurso realiza su apropiación y comprensión de aquello que llamamos lo real al mismo tiempo que configura su expresión.

La teología, de la misma manera que todos los campos de la ciencia y de la reflexión gnoseológica, construye sus saberes en la medida en que va desarrollando su propio *juego de lenguaje*, para hablar en términos de Wittgenstein. En este sentido, el lenguaje usado no es neutro o transparente, por el contrario determina las vivencias y prácticas religiosas desde las representaciones elaboradas. A partir de esas mismas representaciones condiciona la construcción de identidades -individuales y colectivas- y la búsqueda del sí mismo.

Sigamos a Elizabeth Johnson, reconocida teóloga norteamericana, en sus afirmaciones:

El insondable misterio de Dios siempre se ha visto sometido a la mediación del discurso histórico cambiante. El lenguaje sobre Dios tiene historia. Si señalamos esos cambios tanto en el período escriturario como a lo largo de la historia siguiente, nos daremos cuenta de que no ha existido un lenguaje atemporal sobre Dios en las tradiciones judía y cristiana. Hay que pensar más

bien que las palabras sobre Dios son creaturas culturales, entretreídas de las tradiciones y avatares de la comunidad de fe que las usa. Conforme cambian las culturas, cambia la especificidad del lenguaje sobre Dios. (Johnson 2002, pág. 21).

Las aproximaciones a la Divinidad están atravesadas por las prácticas sociales, por las ideologías, por la episteme cultural desde dónde se habla y se piensa. En lo tocante a nuestro estudio las construcciones teológicas de la tradición cristiana se han gestado y desarrollado al interior del sistema patriarcal en que vivimos, nos *movemos y existimos*.

Aunque no siempre, sí la mayor parte de las veces, las mujeres han sido excluidas del quehacer teológico y por ello mismo no han podido desarrollar ampliamente sus propias propuestas en este sentido y sobre todo, no se han transmitido una herencia propia. Sin embargo remontándonos a la Edad Media, encontramos que algunas autoras y pensadoras rompieron con lo institucionalizado y encontraron sus propias rutas para nombrar al *Misterio*, a esa *Energía trascendente* a la cual querían acercarse. Porque es necesario afirmar que las mujeres no pueden identificarse siempre con un EL trascendente en el cual su sexualidad y género no encuentra un espejo. Por esto, o lo trascendente les permite una propia búsqueda seria y profunda, o deben alejarse del paradigma supuestamente común.

Las teólogas de siglos anteriores siempre se acercaron a esa realidad denominada *Dios* de forma distinta que los varones. Nombres como los de Hildegarda de Bingen, Juliana de Norwich, Hadewijch de Amberes, son una clara muestra de ello. En lugar del discurso *racionalizado* y *escolástico* estas mujeres hablaron de la Divinidad en términos de metáforas, visiones, y experiencias, lo que no impidió que nos legaran tratados coherentes y profundos sobre los aspectos de la trascendencia que abordaron. Con el avance y el predominio de la dogmática tomista, estos lenguajes y estas pensadoras fueron excluidas del quehacer teológico, fueron silenciadas y ocasionalmente fueron relegadas bajo la denominación ambigua de *místicas*.

Rupturas de la Teología de la Liberación

La teología de la liberación (TdeL), se desarrolló inicialmente en América Latina a partir de los años sesenta y fue sistematizada en sus intuiciones iniciales por el teólogo peruano Gustavo Gutiérrez. Se trata de un discurso teológico que se inscribe mayormente en el tronco de la teología católica-europea, a partir de un nuevo punto de partida: la mirada desde los pobres, se repiensen algunos presupuestos de la teología política desarrollada a mediados del siglo XX en Europa. Tradicionalmente

la teología construye su discurso desde presupuestos filosóficos y una de las rupturas claves en esta nueva práctica teológica es apoyarse en la economía y en las ciencias sociales para sus propuestas:

La teología de la liberación plantea la exigencia de la interdisciplinariedad respecto a las teorías sociales. Es lo que podríamos llamar una mediación socio analítica. Postula entonces un conocimiento positivo, contextual y concreto de la sociedad. De ahí su crítica al pensamiento especulativo y abstracto que ella considera a-histórico y alienante. La mediación de los análisis sociales se presenta entonces como una exigencia de la praxis de fe, en la medida en que esta quiere ser una fe encarnada. (Boff 1980, pág. 15).

Esta exigencia logró que la TdeL se inscribiera de manera realista y objetiva en el mundo cotidiano, y desde él repensara las grandes cuestiones que siempre abordó el pensar teológico.

La TdeL apoyó a las comunidades de cristianos y cristianas en su compromiso con diversos procesos de liberación en el continente y en este sentido las mujeres populares se sintieron apoyadas en sus luchas por un mejor estar de sus familias. Acerca del debate sobre la vigencia o no de esta propuesta teológica es necesario anotar que las condiciones económicas y sociales de injusticia que dieron lugar a su nacimiento y desarrollo no han sido transformadas y ello hablaría de su vigencia. Pero también hay que tener en cuenta que los procesos de construcción de identidades de los sujetos sociales sí han cambiado y tal vez los teólogos del subcontinente no han dado a ello la debida atención.

Otra de las rupturas especialmente significativas fue la propuesta de Gustavo Gutiérrez, de *hacer teología desde el reverso de la historia*. Planteamiento conceptual de grandes alcances:

Vivir y pensar la fe desde los ausentes de la historia replantea el modo de entender el mensaje salvífico del evangelio. Situarse de lleno en el mundo de la opresión, participar en las luchas populares por la liberación lleva a releer la fe; pero esa relectura supone una ubicación en la historia diferente a aquella de los sectores dominantes de la sociedad. (Gutiérrez 1977, pág. 35).

Esta mirada transforma los análisis, los presupuestos, los caminos del saber. Se trata de un punto de partida que capacita mucho más para entender la dinámica histórica y la inscripción en esta dinámica de las fuerzas que mueven lo religioso-social. Este planteamiento del *reverso de la historia*, trae consigo consecuencias en distintos ámbitos de la aproximación y explicación de lo real. Consecuencias que llevaron a la TdeL a proponer caminos alternativos para el pensar teológico tradicional y lo más importante, la llevaron a acompañar luchas y reivindicaciones de muchos grupos sociales de Abyayala. Sin embargo en el terreno de la

mujer como sujeto no se avanzó lo que habría sido impostergable. *Mirar la historia desde el reverso*, sigue siendo necesario y plenamente vigente en un mundo cada vez más inequitativo. Pero mirar la historia desde el reverso significa también -en un mundo patriarcal- mirarla desde las mujeres, tantas veces ignoradas, silenciadas y excluidas.

La mujer en este paradigma

Para ilustrar nuestra propuesta podemos tomar un ejemplo casi al azar: Examinemos uno de los *Diccionarios de teología de la liberación* más populares en el subcontinente. El editado por el Centro Ecuménico Diego Medellín de Chile, en 1992.

No aparece el término MUJER, entre las entradas del *Diccionario* (Rosales y Ferari 1992), sí por el contrario: *negros, mestizos, pobres, pobreza...* Por supuesto no aparece tampoco el término Género, ni ninguna otra entrada que apunte a pensar la diferencia y diversidad sexual. No se trata de un simple descuido, esta omisión se explica porque a pesar de que las mujeres fueron una inmensa mayoría dentro de las *Comunidades Eclesiales de Base*, realmente nunca fueron *vistas*, como *sujetas*, al interior de este largo y complejo camino. Nunca se contempló a la mujer con autonomía, con necesidades, derechos y expectativas propias. Se ignora también el término *María de Nazaret*, definitivamente importante en la mirada femenina teológica contemporánea.

De todas maneras, tomando prestado un concepto de Bourdieu, podemos hablar del campo teológico, en una forma similar al *campo literario o artístico* (Cfr. Bourdieu 1995). Entonces, los hechos no son unívocos o transparentes, no son lineales y simples... Al interior mismo de la teología que analizamos se desarrollaron contradicciones y fuerzas en pugna. Una de las obras más importantes, de recopilación de este pensamiento fue la realizada por Ignacio Ellacuría y Jon Sobrino, bajo el nombre *Mysterium Liberationis: Conceptos fundamentales de la teología de la liberación* (Ellacuría y Sobrino 1990). En ella encontramos el artículo: *Teología de la mujer en la teología de la liberación*, escrito por Ana María Tepedino y Margarida L. Ribeiro Brandão.

Las autoras recogen en este ensayo los pasos que se fueron dando al interior de las necesarias tensiones de género. Desde 1985 las teólogas de América Latina se encontraron periódicamente para avanzar en sus búsquedas. Siempre al interior del mismo paradigma. En este sentido plantean las autoras mencionadas:

Las teólogas latinoamericanas, en su experiencia pastoral y cristiana, aprenden que la opción por el pobre, se concreta en la opción por la mujer pobre, que es hoy la más pobre entre los pobres. En ellas la fuerza de trans-

formación de las mujeres puede sintetizarse como resistencia para sobrevivir, como creatividad para encontrar su nuevo lugar en la sociedad y como libertad que, en el sentido religioso, significa vivir y hablar de Dios. (Tepedino Ribeiro 1990, pág. 295).

La mujer de todas maneras, sigue estando *referida a...* en este caso los pobres, y no es mirada ni descubierta en sí misma.

Ivone Gebara dando algunos pasos adelante propone:

Las mujeres intentan en su quehacer teológico recuperar las realidades existenciales, dejándolas hablar libremente y permitiendo que se reorganicen a partir del contexto actual, para sólo después, ligarlas a una tradición anterior.

Mediante este procedimiento se intenta devolverle al lenguaje teológico su capacidad de tocar algunos centros vitales de la existencia humana. En otros términos este procedimiento equivale, en cierto sentido, a devolverle a la teología la dimensión poética de la existencia, puesto que lo más profundo del ser humano sólo se expresa por analogía; el misterio sólo se formula en poesía; la gratuidad sólo se traduce a través de símbolos. (Gebara 1994, pág. 21).

Y aquí precisamente nos encontramos con los límites de este discurso teológico desde la perspectiva feminista.

Lenguajes e imaginarios

La TdeL permaneció y permanece, ligada a concepciones masculinas y patriarcales de la Divinidad. Y en esto radica el principal problema para que las mujeres no nos sintamos cómodas bajo este paraguas y aquí se inscribe una de las principales rupturas llevadas a cabo por algunas de las teologías feministas. En los proyectos y en las reflexiones teóricas de América Latina, nunca se abordó el problema del lenguaje sobre la Divinidad, de sus imágenes y símbolos. Predominó siempre y sigue predominando un acercamiento a un Dios que aunque liberador y amoroso, es fundamentalmente un varón: *El Dios de los pobres, el Dios de la historia, el Dios liberador del éxodo...* Avances respecto a teologías desencarnadas anteriores, pero en ningún caso una *casa para la mujer en sí y por sí misma*. La TdL dio por cierto, mucha importancia a las imágenes: tanto en lo pictórico como en las canciones y poemas, hubo mucha creatividad, pero estas construcciones poéticas, muy enriquecedoras y en ocasiones estéticamente muy bellas, no lograron hablar DESDE Y A la mujer en sí misma.

Los imaginarios nos constituyen con la misma fuerza que las experiencias vividas porque estas experiencias las leemos desde... y las volcamos en... esos imaginarios. Los imaginarios religiosos acompañan

permanentemente -de manera consciente o inconsciente- la construcción de nuestra identidad:

La psicología y la antropología han demostrado cómo el uso de símbolos exclusivamente masculinos de Dios les impide el desarrollo de su plenitud humana a las mujeres. La psicóloga jungiana, Toni Wolff, describió las consecuencias negativas de esta situación para la psiquis femenina. Explica: "La imaginación de Dios representa el máximo símbolo de las mejores características humanas y de las ideas más profundas del espíritu humano. ¿Cómo puede una mujer encontrarse a sí misma, si sus propios fundamentos síquicos no están objetivados en un símbolo? El símbolo va a mostrar su efecto en el ser humano desarrollando su significado en el tiempo, poco a poco". (Seibert 2010, pág. 72).

El quehacer teológico ha de entenderse como una aproximación muy tentativa y balbuciente a la Divinidad, que al construir metáforas de aproximación necesariamente tiene que responder a los grupos y sujetos sociales desde los cuáles piensa. Porque de lo que se trata es de proponer a personas no especializadas, conceptos y realidades que se resbalan y se escapan. La exclusión tradicional que la mujer ha sufrido del pensamiento y la expresión teológica ha contribuido a que la representación de Dios siempre se haya dado en términos masculinos. La teología cristiana ha tomado cuerpo en una matriz patriarcal y por ello en forma comprendida como *natural* y más allá de las declaraciones oficiales en el sentido de que *Dios no tiene sexo*, este siempre ha sido concebido como un varón. Este hecho deja a las mujeres por fuera de un imaginario que las constituya en su ser de mujeres, que les permita una identificación plena con su sexualidad. Las deja en una sin salida.

Como bien lo dice Carol P. Christ:

Las religiones centradas en la adoración de un Dios masculino crean "disposiciones de ánimo" y "motivaciones" que mantienen a las mujeres en un estado de dependencia psicológica de los hombres y de la autoridad masculina y que al mismo tiempo legitiman la autoridad política y social de los padres e hijos en las instituciones sociales. Los sistemas simbólicos religiosos centrados exclusivamente en imágenes masculinas de la Divinidad crean la impresión de que el poder de las mujeres jamás podrá ser totalmente legítimo o benéfico. Este mensaje no tiene que entregarse explícitamente (como, por ejemplo en la historia de Eva) para que sientan sus efectos. Una mujer que ignora totalmente los mitos bíblicos de la maldad femenina reconoce, sin embargo, la anomalía del poder femenino cuando reza exclusivamente a un Dios masculino. Podrá verse a sí misma como semejante a Dios (creada a imagen de Dios) sólo si niega su identidad sexual. Pero nunca podrá tener la experiencia de la cual goza automáticamente todo hombre y niño de su cultura, de afirmar plenamente su identidad sexual por sentirse hecha a la imagen y semejanza de Dios. (Christ 1997, págs. 161-162).

Por tanto una práctica religiosa que tenga en su horizonte la configuración del sujeto femenino tendrá que buscar una aproximación al misterio y a la trascendencia que sea inclusiva, y como lo abstracto y universal no toca las fibras más íntimas del YO, es necesaria una apropiación y un desarrollo de todas las expresiones de la sexualidad y de la construcción genérica. Si se habla del *Dios de los pobres* hay que preguntarse qué pasa cuando una mujer pobre sufre violencia por su compañero sexual que está comprometido en los caminos de las comunidades eclesiales de base... ¿Cómo experimenta esta mujer que Dios está de su lado, que la ama y la acompaña, que quiere su crecimiento y autoafirmación? ¿Cómo experimentar que Dios no es cómplice -en tanto que varón- de su compañero "comprometido" que habla de ese Dios con mucha propiedad? Son preguntas que la TdeL nunca se formuló y por tanto que nunca respondió.

Según vimos en el ejemplo del *Diccionario*, la TdeL, nunca nombró a la mujer y con los que no se nombre hay dos posibilidades: O simplemente no existe, o se convierte en *síntoma* porque se reprime. No nombrar es no reconocer, no reconocer es no tomar conciencia de la existencia de lo silenciado; esto como punto de partida y hacia adelante se sigue un camino de desconocimiento y radical incomprensión. A lo largo de al menos tres décadas el discurso teológico latinoamericano ni siquiera utilizó un lenguaje inclusivo, al mismo tiempo que organismos internacionales como la UNESCO, la ONU y plataformas educativas avanzaban en este terreno.

Algunos de los límites de la TdeL, por ejemplo su escasa comprensión de las distintas *subjetividades* tienen que ver precisamente con el hecho de haber desconocido el *camino femenino* al saber, al estudio y al conocimiento. Su matriz teológica no asumió *una mirada femenina* que posibilitara la comprensión por otras vías.

La Teología feminista implicó y supuso un salto cualitativo respecto a teologías anteriores tanto en los puntos de partida epistemológicos como en el pensar y procesar los imaginarios, por ello asume el lenguaje como uno de sus *campos de lucha*. Porque no se trata de *revolver* algunas cosas para que todo quede igual, sino que se trata de entregar a las mujeres creyentes, herramientas para la construcción de su identidad en el sentido de autoafirmarse radicalmente. Como bien plantea Dorothee Sölle:

En la teología feminista no se trata de intercambiar pronombres, sino de concebir una manera distinta de trascendencia: una trascendencia que no deba entenderse como la independencia de todo y el señorío sobre todas las demás cosas, sino que esté ligada al tejido de la vida... Es necesaria una

aproximación a la mística, que es la que más ampliamente ha superado la comprensión jerárquica y masculina de Dios, es decir, una mística que no deje que la sed de liberación real se pierda en el mar del inconsciente. (Sölle 1996, pág. 60).

Un trabajo interesante en este sentido es el realizado por la teóloga norteamericana Sallie McFague. El punto de partida de esta autora es la certeza de que hay un quiebre en el lenguaje sobre Dios y que es necesario realizar rupturas que lleven a una conexión más real con las mujeres y los hombres del siglo XXI porque la referencia al misterio trascendente ha dejado de ser no sólo interesante sino viable en el mundo actual. Es un desafío entonces conseguir nuevas aproximaciones que sean más dicentes. Ella apuesta por asumir riesgos valientes en este sentido:

Se ha hecho cada vez más dolorosamente evidente para muchos occidentales -tanto para los que están dentro de la tradición judeocristiana como para quienes están fuera de ella, pero han sido influidos por su iconografía, valores y conceptos- que el lenguaje utilizado para expresar la relación entre Dios y el mundo necesita una revisión. En mi opinión esta revisión debe comenzar en el plano de la imaginación, en un experimento mental con aquellas metáforas -y los correspondientes conceptos- que a diferencia de las utilizadas principalmente por la tradición, propongan un marco unificado e interdependiente para la comprensión de las relaciones Dios-mundo y ser humano-mundo. (McFague 1994, pág. 48).

Su planteamiento es recuperar un discurso teológico de tipo metafórico y apofático.

Por esta vía, la teología feminista puede reencontrarse con el lenguaje sobre Dios elaborado por mujeres medievales y por místicas de distintos tiempos cuya conciencia espiritual las llevó a vivenciar a Dios como misterio y por tanto a emplear para referirse a la trascendencia exclusivamente metáforas y visiones.

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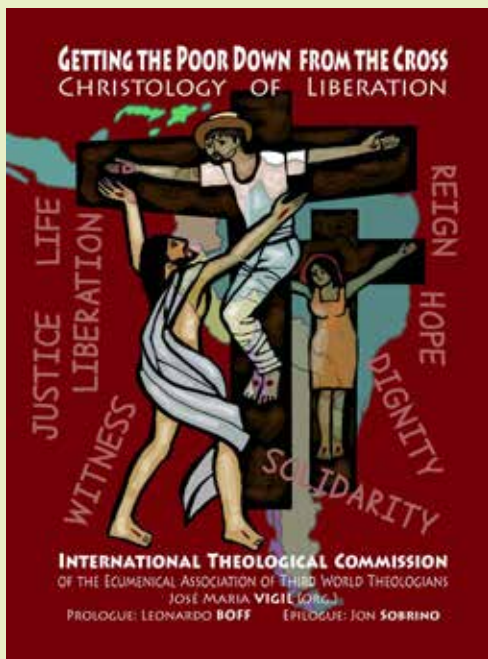
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The Feminine Representation in the discourse of the Liberation Theology

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For over a century, the linguistic and paralinguistic knowledge gives us the certainty that language shapes us. Edward Sapir said in 1921:

As soon as the word is ready, we felt instinctively, with a sort of sigh of relief, that also the concept is ready for us to handle ... Are we as ready to die for "freedom" to fight for our "ideal" if the words themselves were not ringing within us? And the word, as we know, is not only a key, it can also be an obstacle. (Sapir 1966, p. 23).

You cannot think without language and each language, like every speech, makes its ownership and understanding of what we call the real and at the same time configures its expression.

Theology, in the same way that all fields of science andgnoseological reflection, builds its knowledge to the extent that it develops its own *set of language*, speaking in terms of Wittgenstein. Here, the used language is not *neutral or transparent*; on the contrary, it determines the experiences and the religious practices from the representations made. From those same representations determines the construction of identities – individual and collective – and the search of oneself.

Let us follow Elizabeth Johnson, renowned American theologian, in her statements:

The unfathomable mystery of God has always been under the mediation of the changing historical discourse. The language about God has history. If we note those changes in both the scriptural term as well as following along with history, we realize that there has not been a timeless language about God in the Jewish and Christian traditions. We have to think better that words about God are cultural creatures, interwoven traditions, and avatars of the faith community that uses them. As cultures change, the specificity of language about God changes. (Johnson 2002, p. 21).

Approaches to The Divinity are crossed by social practices, ideologies, and the cultural episteme from which *we talk and think*.

Regarding our study, the theological constructions of Christian tradition have gestated and developed into the patriarchal system in which we live, move, and exist.

Although most of the time, but not always, women have been excluded from the theological work and as a result, they have failed to widely develop their own proposals in this direction and above all, they have not been passed down their own inheritance. But going back to the Middle Ages, we find that some authors and thinkers broke with institutionalized ideologies and found their own paths to name the *Mystery*, to that *transcendent Energy* which they wanted to approach. For we must say that women cannot always be identified with an HE transcendent because her sexuality and gender cannot find a mirror. Therefore, either the transcendent allows them their own serious and profound search, or they should get away from the supposedly common paradigm.

The theologians of past centuries always approached that reality called *God* differently than men. Names like Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich Hadewijch of Ambers, are a clear example of this. Instead of the *rationalized* and *scholastic* discourse, these women spoke of the Divine in terms of metaphors, visions, and experiences, which did not prevent that they bequeathed coherent and profound treaties to us on the aspects of the transcendence that they approached. With the advancement and the predominance of Thomistic dogma, these languages and these thinkers were excluded from theological work, were silenced, and were occasionally relegated under the ambiguous name of the *mystical*.

Ruptures in the Liberation Theology

The theology of liberation (LT) was initially developed in Latin America in the sixties and was systematized in its initial intuitions by the Peruvian theologian Gustavo Gutierrez. It is a theological discourse, which falls mostly on the trunk of Catholic-European theology. From a new starting point, the view from the poor, some assumptions of political theology developed in the mid-twentieth century in Europe and are referred to rethinking. Traditionally, the theology built its speech from philosophical assumptions. However, a key rupture in this new theological practice is to rely on the economy and the social sciences to their proposals.

The liberation theology poses the need for interdisciplinary regard to social theories. It is what we might call a social analytic mediation. Then it postulates a positive, contextual, and concrete knowledge of society. From there comes his criticism of the speculative and abstract thinking that she considers ahistorical and alienating. The mediation of social analysis is then presented

as a requirement of the practice of faith, to the extent that it wants to be an incarnated faith. (Boff 1980, p. 15).

This requirement got the LT enrolled in a realistic and objective manner in the everyday world and from there, to rethink the big questions that always addressed theological thinking.

The LT supports communities of Christians (men and women) in its commitment to release various processes of liberation on the continent and in this regard, the popular women felt supported in their struggles for a better living for their families. About the debate on the validity or otherwise of this theological proposal, it is necessary to note the economic and social conditions of injustice that led to its birth and how its development has not been transformed and that we should talk about its validity. But we must also bear in mind that the processes of identity construction of social subjects have indeed changed and maybe the sub-continent theologians have not given it due consideration.

Another especially significant shift was the proposal to Gustavo Gutierrez, of doing theology *from the other side of history*. Conceptual approach to long ranges:

Live and think the faith from the absence of history reframes the way of understanding the salvific message of the Gospel. Placed squarely in the world of oppression, participate in popular struggles for liberation leads to rereading the faith; but that rereading means a different location in history from that of the dominant sectors of society. (Gutierrez 1977, p. 35).

This look transforms the analyses, the assumptions, and the paths of knowledge. It is about a starting point that enables much more to understand the historical dynamics and the enrollment in this dynamic of the forces driving the religious-social. This approach of *the reverse of history* brings consequences in different areas of approximation and explanation of the reality. Consequences that led the LT to propose alternative ways to traditional theological thinking and most importantly, led her to accompany struggles and demands of many social groups of Abyayala. However, in the field of women as subjects, no progress was made which would have been postponed. *Looking at history from the reverse*, it remains in full force necessary in an increasingly unequal world. But to look at history from the reverse also means- in a patriarchal world -to look at it from the women perspective that is so often ignored, silenced, and excluded.

WOMEN in this paradigm

To illustrate our approach we can take an example almost at random: Consider one of the most popular *Dictionaries of Liberation*

Theology in the subcontinent. The one edited by Diego Medellin Ecumenical Center of Chile in 1992.

The word *woman* does not appear among the dictionary entries (Rosales and Ferari 1992), on the contrary: blacks, mestizos, poor, poverty ... Of course, also not shown is the term Gender, or any other entry that point to think there is a difference in sexual diversity. It is not a simple oversight; this omission is because although women were the overwhelming majority within the Christian Base Communities, they really were never *seen* as a *subject* within this long and complex road. It never looked at women with autonomy, with needs, rights, and own expectations. The term *Mary of Nazareth*, definitely important in contemporary theological feminine look, is also ignored.

However, borrowing a concept of Bourdieu, we can speak of the *theological field*, in a similar form to the *literary or artistic field* (cfr. Bourdieu 1995). The facts are not unambiguous or transparent, they are nonlinear and simple ... Inside of the theology we analyze the contradictions and opposing forces that were developed. One of the most important works of summary of this thought was the one carried out by Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino, under the name *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental concepts of the theology of the liberation* (Ellacuría and Sobrino 1990). In it we find the article: *The woman's theology in the theology of the liberation*, written by Ana María Tepedino and Margarida L. Ribeiro Brandão.

The authors collected in this essay the steps that were taken to the interior of the necessary tensions of gender. Since 1985 the theologians of Latin America met periodically to advance in their searches. Always to the inside of the same paradigm. In this sense the mentioned authors explain:

Latin American theologians, in their pastoral and Christian experience, learn that the option for the poor is summed up in the option for the poor woman, who is now the poorest among the poor. In them, the women's force transformation can be summarized as resistance to survive, and creativity to find their new place in society and as freedom that, in the religious sense, means to live and talk about God. (Tepedino Ribeiro 1990, p. 295).

The woman is being *referred to* ... in this case the poor, and she is not looked or discovered in herself.

Ivone Gebara taking some steps forward proposed:

Women attempt in their theological work to recover the existential realities, leaving them to talk freely and allowing them to reorganize from the current context, for only then link them to an older tradition. By this method we attempt to give back to the theological language its ability to touch some vital centers of human existence. In other words, this procedure is equivalent,

in a sense, to return to the theology the poetic dimension of the existence, since the deepest of the human being is only expressed by analogy; the mystery is only formulated in poetry; the gratuitousness is only translated through symbols. (Gebara 1994, p. 21).

And here we in fact encounter the limits of this theological speech from the feminist perspective.

Languages and imaginary

The TL remained and remains bound to masculine and patriarchal conceptions of the Divinity. And therein lies the main problem that women do not feel comfortable under this umbrella. Therefore major disruptions resided and were carried out by some feminist theologies. In projects and theoretical reflections of Latin America, the problem of language on Divinity, their images and symbols are never addressed. There has always prevailed and still prevails an approach to God that while liberating and loving, is primarily a male: *The God of the poor, the God of history, the liberating God of the Exodus ...* Progress regarding previous non-incarnational theologies, but in no case a house for *the woman in herself and for herself*. The LT gave great importance to the images: pictorial, songs, and poems. There was a lot of creativity but these poetic constructions – very enriching and sometimes aesthetically beautiful – failed to talk FROM and TO the woman herself.

The imaginaries constitute us with the same force as the lived experiences because these experiences we read from ... and turn them in... on those imaginaries. The religious imaginary accompany permanently – consciously or unconsciously – the construction of our identity:

Psychology and anthropology have shown how the use of exclusively masculine symbols of God prevents women from developing their full humanity. Jungian psychologist Toni Wolff described the negative consequences of this situation for the feminist psyche. She explains: "The imagination of God represents the ultimate symbol of the best human characteristics and the most profound ideas of the human spirit. How can a woman find herself if her own psychic fundamentals are not objectified in a symbol? The symbol will show its effect in humans, developing its meaning over time, little by little." (Seibert 2010, p. 72).

The theological task has to be understood as a very tentative and stammering approach to the Divinity, that in order to construct metaphors of approximation, it is necessary to respond to groups and social subjects from which it thinks. The purpose is to propose to the non-specialized people concepts and realities that slip and escape. The traditional exclusion suffered by women of the thought and the theological expression has contributed to the representation of God that has always been in mas-

culine terms. The traditional exclusion that women have suffered from the thought and theological expression has contributed to the representation of God being always expressed in masculine terms. Christian theology has taken shape in a patriarchal womb and therefore understood as *natural* and beyond official declarations, God has no sex. This, however, has always been conceived as a male. This fact leaves women out of an imaginary that constitutes them in their being of women, allowing them a full identification with their sexuality. That leaves them in a dead-end.

As Carol P. Christ says very well:

The religions centered on the worship of a male God create "dispositions of spirit" and "motivations" that maintain women in a state of psychological dependence on men and masculine authority and, at the same time, legitimize the political and social authority of parents and children in social institutions. The symbolic religious systems centered exclusively on masculine images of the Divinity create the impression that the power of the women can never be totally legitimate or beneficial. This message does not have to be explicitly delivered (for example in the story of Eva) to feel its effects. A woman who completely ignores biblical myths of feminine wickedness recognizes, nevertheless, the anomaly of feminine power when she prays exclusively to a male God. She can see herself like God (created in the image of God) only if she denies her sexual identity. But she will never be able to have the experience that automatically enjoys every man and child of her culture, of fully affirming her sexual identity by feeling made in the image and likeness of God. (Christ 1997, pp. 161-162).

Therefore a religious practice that has on its horizon the configuration of the feminine subject will have to find an approach to the mystery and to the transcendence that is inclusive, and as the universal and abstract do not *touch* the most intimate fibers of the I, it is necessary an appropriation and a development of all expressions of sexuality and generic construction. If we speak of the *God of the poor*, we have to ask ourselves what happens when a poor woman suffers violence by her sexual companion who is committed to the paths of the base ecclesial communities ... How does this woman experience that God is on her side, that God loves her and accompanies her, that God wants her to grow and establish self-assertion? How to experience God that is not an accomplice – as that of the male – of his "committed" partner that speaks of that God very properly? These are questions that the Theology of Liberation never formulated and therefore never responded to.

As we saw in the example of the *Diccionario*, the LT never *mentions* the woman and with those that are not named, there are two possibilities: either they simply do not exist or they are converted into *symptoms* that are repressed. Not naming is not recognizing and not recognizing is not

to be aware of the consciousness of the existence of the silenced; this as a starting point and forward follows a path of ignorance and radical misunderstanding. Over the course of at least three decades, the Latin American theological discourse never utilized an inclusive language, but international organizations such as UNESCO, the UN, and educational platforms advance over this field.

Some of the limits of the LT, for example, are its poor understanding of the different *subjectivities* that have to do precisely with the fact of having unknown the female knowledge, way to learn, and study. Its theological matrix did not assume a *feminine look* that would have made understanding possible by other means.

The feminist theology implied and supposed a qualitative leap with respect to previous theologies concerning both epistemological starting points as in thinking and processing the imaginary; therefore, it assumes the language as one of its *field of fights*. It is not about stirring some things so that everything is equal, but it is about giving to believing women and using tools for the construction of their identity in the radically self-affirming sense. As it raises Dorothee Sölle:

The feminist theology does not try to exchange pronouns, but to conceive a different manner of transcendence: a transcendence that does not have to be understood as the independence of everything and the dominion over all other things, but to be bound to the weave of life ...It is necessary an approximation to the mystic, which is the one that more widely has surpassed the hierarchical and masculine understanding of God, that is, a mystic which does not let the thirst for real liberation be lost in the sea of the unconscious. (Sölle 1996, p. 60).

An interesting work in this regard is made by the North American theologian Sallie McFague. The starting point of this author is the certainty that there is a break in the language about God and that it is necessary to perform ruptures that lead to a more realistic connection with the women and men of the twenty-first century because the reference to the transcendent mystery has ceased to be not only interesting but viable in the present world. It is a challenge then to get new approaches that are far more telling. She commits in taking brave risks in this regard:

It has become more and more painfully evident to many Westerners (within the Judeo-Christian tradition as for those outside them, but they have been influenced by their iconography, values, and concepts) that the used language to express the relationship between God and the world needs a revision. In my opinion, this revision must begin at the imagination's level, a mental experiment with those metaphors – and the corresponding concepts – and unlike those used mainly by tradition, propose a unified and interdependent framework for understanding the relationships between the God-world and the human being-world. (McFague 1994, p. 48).

Her exposition is to reclaim a theological discourse of metaphorical and apophatic type.

In this way, feminist theology can reencounter with the language about God elaborated by medieval women and mystics of different times whose spiritual consciousness led them to experience God as a mystery and therefore used metaphors and visions to refer exclusively to the transcendence.

Bibliography

See the bibliography in the original Spanish version, in the previous pages.

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Bibliografía en línea sobre Nuevos Paradigmas

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La Dei Verbum, la lectura popular de la Biblia y la mujer ¹

Mary Betty RODRÍGUEZ MORENO

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Acérquense gustosamente al sagrado texto (...) para que los hijos de la Iglesia se familiaricen sin peligro y fructuosamente con las Sagradas Escrituras y se penetren de su espíritu (Dei Verbum 25).

Introducción

El siguiente texto quiere hacer una breve aproximación a la relación entre la Dei Verbum, la Lectura Popular de la Biblia (LPB) y la mujer, señalando el aporte de la Constitución Dogmática a estos procesos populares. En principio se hará una breve contextualización del Concilio y los cambios que éste favoreció para la LPB y la visibilización de la mujer en los procesos eclesiales; cómo llegó el movimiento del Episcopado Latinoamericano a los sectores populares, cuál es la raíz de la LPB, la mujer en los procesos bíblicos populares y finalmente una presentación de los distintos caminos que este proceso popular fue gestando en clave prospectiva, teniendo en cuenta los nuevos contextos sociales y los nuevos sujetos eclesiales, que apuestan por un buen vivir para todos, no sólo para unas minorías.

1. Breve contexto del Concilio Vaticano II

La contextualización del Concilio Vaticano II favorece la comprensión y/o relación entre la Constitución dogmática Dei Verbum, la LPB y la mujer en este movimiento latinoamericano ². Significativa fue la participación de un mayor número de obispos del mundo; en Trento participaron más o menos 250 en Vaticano I 750 y en Vaticano II 2.700, entre ellos 54 latinoamericanos.³

En ese contexto es ineludible preguntarse por la participación de la iglesia latinoamericana; ¿qué aportó? Leonidas Ortíz señala que su aporte fue “la dimensión social de la evangelización”, (Ortiz, 2015)⁴. Detrás de la intuición del papa Juan XXIII, ya se venía sintiendo la necesidad de cambiar y en Colombia concretamente se gestaba un movimiento progresista

(la unión de 18 parroquias del sur de Bogotá), poco conocido así como otros movimientos de distintas ciudades de Colombia.

2. ¿Cómo llego este movimiento desencadenado por el Episcopado Latinoamericano a los sectores populares?

Varios de los obispos que participaron en Medellín, acompañaban comunidades en situaciones de gran pobreza y marginalidad, por ejemplo Monseñor Leonidas Proaño, en Riobamba Ecuador y Samuel Ruíz en San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, México. La Conferencia Episcopal de Medellín y las nuevas expresiones eclesiales, que surgieron por la interpelación de la realidad de sometimiento a la pobreza e injusticia de muchas comunidades, favoreció y reconoció el surgimiento, anterior al Concilio y a Medellín, de las comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs), que por demás son pueblo Dios.

Las comunidades (formadas por hombres y mujeres) fueron creadas por los laicos de los sectores populares que se reunían para reflexionar su fe a la luz de la Palabra de Dios, desde su situación de pobreza e injusticia. Las CEBs nacen de los movimientos surgidos por la formación de los laicos (hombres y mujeres) en la Doctrina Social y la Acción Católica (Pedroza Gallegos). En Colombia las CEBs fueron poco acogidas por el episcopado colombiano, que junto con el argentino se presentaban como los más conservadores del momento. No obstante en el país el movimiento era tan fuerte que algunas CEBs lograron generar espacios de reflexión social y eclesial a la luz de la Palabra, confirmando que el texto bíblico narra procesos de liberación y salvación en los que ellas se encontraban inmersas. (Cebes).

Dos puntos fundamentales de estos movimientos fueron: la búsqueda de Dios en su historia y cómo ser testimonio de Él en la realidad social; siguiendo el texto de Ex 3, 7 en el que Dios “ve el sufrimiento y escucha el clamor de su pueblo”. Es importante recordar que uno de los textos bíblicos más estudiados desde la realidad latinoamericana fue el libro del Éxodo, siguiendo un poco el estudio y desarrollo que hizo José Severino Croatto en Liberación y Libertad (Míguez, 2001). La gente sencilla en las comunidades se comprometía a generar mejores condiciones de vida desde su realidad de pobreza y a la luz de la Palabra. A partir de lo anterior se fue despertando en la gente la conciencia crítica ante la situación de injusticia, teniendo como derrotero acciones concretas que impidieran la indiferencia y el conformismo, estableciendo así un diálogo entre la fe y la realidad⁵.

Por esta razón y por las preguntas que suscitaba la situación social y eclesial en este Continente oprimido y empobrecido⁶, la metodología

de estudio bíblico fue diferente y la teología tenía un nuevo rostro: el de la liberación, de tal forma que esta metodología paso a ser propia de América Latina (Echeverry, 2007). De hecho para 1978 se consideraba que uno de los grandes logros de Medellín fue haber puesto lo social al interior de la reflexión teológica, releer en la situaciones injustas de las estructuras y de los valores de la sociedad una «situación de pecado», comprendiendo que el Dios anunciado por Jesucristo es el Dios de los pobres y que además es un Dios de la historia (Saranyana, 2005).

De suyo las comunidades que realizaban la LPB, quizá no eran muy conscientes o conocedoras del Concilio Vaticano II, específicamente de la Constitución Dei Verbum, en cuyo documento no aparece directamente la clave de interpretación que se realiza en la LPB; no obstante, la Dei Verbum favoreció los impulsos que al respecto se venían realizando en el Continente.

Es claro que de la Dei Verbum no nace la LPB o la visibilización de la mujer en los procesos eclesiales; la clave de ésta surge en la Teología de la Liberación, sin desconocer la diversidad de raíces que se encuentran en estos procesos (Mena Maricel, 2015). Por otra parte, en el recorrido de este camino popular, las comunidades que hacen LPB han ido superando esas lecturas ingenuas y reduccionistas de la Escritura. Este proceso ha mostrado saberes, empoderamiento de las comunidades y lecturas críticas de la realidad que les lleva a ser propositivos desde los lugares populares y ha favorecido la conciencia feminista en las mujeres que empezaban hacer teología, después de Vaticano II, en América Latina.

¿Cómo se acoge la Dei Verbum (DV) en Colombia? Es probable que a primera vista no se constata la recepción de la Constitución en las diócesis colombianas, pues al parecer ninguna de ellas realizó pastoral bíblica a partir de la Dei Verbum. Sin embargo, Medellín y Puebla se impulsaron a raíz del Concilio y éste abrió la posibilidad de que todos los fieles accedieran a la lectura del texto bíblico, aunque no lo diga explícitamente sí que lo sugiere en el numeral 8 y 25 DV (Documentos Concilio Vaticano II). De igual forma se podría decir que tampoco aparece en la Dei Verbum su dirección hacia los pobres, pero sí que Dios se revela en la historia y siguiendo la tradición e incluso la vida de los primeros cristianos es evidente el interés por la historia de “los pobres”, quienes eran los marginados del siglo primero y lo siguen siendo en esta época.

Con todo, Las comunidades de base y los grupos bíblicos en algunas parroquias de Colombia y América Latina, ya leían el texto bíblico. La Dei Verbum abrió las perspectivas de interpretación ⁷ y en las CEBs se hizo con mayor impulso la recepción de la Palabra; mucha gente de los sectores populares tal vez no podía explicar y dar razón del Concilio y

menos de la Dei Verbum, pero sentía los efectos de este acontecimiento eclesial. En el Continente fue importante ser conscientes de la acción reveladora de Dios, él continua hablando hoy, dirigiendo su Palabra por medio de hechos y personas y por medio de la Escritura. El auge del Concilio en la iglesia hizo que la Biblia fuera llegando a las manos del pueblo (Mester y Orofino, 2007) y las mujeres que ya participaban de esos procesos fueron poco a poco manifestando su conciencia feminista (Marcos, Silvia, ed., 2008, p. 44).

3. La raíz de la Lectura Popular de la biblia (LPB)

En el fondo de este proceso de lectura en América Latina, está el pobre; reconociendo en él un nuevo sujeto histórico, que desde su situación social hace una interpretación del texto bíblico, sin más pretensión que encontrar a Dios en el acontecer diario. Contextualizando lo que esto significa, las palabras de Monseñor Leonidas Proaño lo expresan magníficamente

“Después de muchos años de silencio el indio volvió a hablar en Chimborazo. La Palabra de Dios ayudó al indio a hablar, a pronunciar su auténtica palabra... “Y el Verbo se hizo hombre” y el no-hombre, el estropajo vil y despreciable, se puso en pie y gritó sobre la alta montaña: aquí estoy, aquí existo, estoy vivo, soy hombre..., soy...” (Proaño, 2001).

En América Latina la pobreza es tan evidente que la interpretación de la Biblia orienta una nueva visión de fe y se reconoce en los pobres el lugar privilegiado de la presencia y revelación de Dios. Quizá se podría decir que la iglesia Latinoamericana ve en el pobre a Cristo, comprendiendo que Dios está interpelando a sus seguidores con una palabra distinta, en un contexto histórico distinto: “por medio de la revelación Dios quiso manifestarse a Sí mismo y sus planes de salvar al hombre...” (Dei Verbum 6, 1968).

Pero en medio de estas posibilidades que se propiciaban, surgía también la pregunta de “¿cómo hablar de Dios a un mundo no humano; cómo hablar de Dios: al sufriente, al excluido y al marginado?, tal como lo planteaba Gustavo Gutiérrez (Echeverry, 2007). En Colombia Álvaro Ulcué, desde su experiencia como indígena vio la necesidad de la preparación y formación de las comunidades, indígenas, negras y los grupos marginados, porque le dolía la situación de su pueblo; formar a la gente sencilla (mujeres y hombres) fue una estrategia de liberación y de evangelización⁸.

Al realizar esta lectura de la Biblia con las comunidades, la pretensión no fue simplemente llevar la Biblia al pueblo y que éste la leyera por sí mismo olvidando que la Biblia fue escrita en un tiempo y espacio

determinado⁹. ¿Cómo se lee la Biblia en las comunidades, en los sectores populares? Discerniendo la Palabra de Dios con el deseo de comprender su acontecer, de escuchar y ver a Dios en la realidad¹⁰.

Se puede afirmar que la raíz de la LPB, está en las CEBs y en el rescate del sentido histórico y espiritual que hay en las narraciones bíblicas (NT) que resalta la experiencia de la presencia y revelación de Dios en el mundo de los pobres (Pedroza Gallegos). En consecuencia, La LPB deconstruye aquella creencia que fija la revelación únicamente en el pasado, generando un cierto fundamentalismo y teniendo el texto bíblico casi como un recetario para responder a cada situación de la vida, creyendo que con sólo leer la Biblia ya se escucha la Palabra de Dios. Quizá en otros extremos como un libro mágico que surte su efecto al abrirlo y leerlo literalmente. No obstante, al mismo tiempo las comunidades se reconocen como aquel grano de mostaza sembrado en un campo... Mt 13,31-33.

4. La mujer en los procesos bíblicos populares

El movimiento popular bíblico en los barrios populares de varias ciudades de Colombia, hizo que con los aportes metodológicos de la teología de la liberación se diera un despertar de la conciencia y el tema de la opción de Dios por los pobres, ayudó a que las mujeres empezaran a ver en los textos bíblicos la presencia y acción de las mujeres en ella, que posteriormente se vería en la hermenéutica bíblica feminista. Los congresos ecuménicos de mujeres teólogas y biblistas, favorecen las nuevas relecturas del texto bíblico en comunidades populares.

Biblistas y teólogas ayudaron a que las mujeres en los sectores populares se reconocieran como sujetos históricos, aunque oprimidas y discriminadas, pero con una perspectiva de liberación. La lectura de la Biblia ha de ser liberadora y contribuir a la transformación de la realidad. En estas primeras etapas las mujeres de la Biblia que favorecerán esos procesos de liberación y aporte a la sociedad y a la iglesia popular son: Debora (Jue 4,1-24), Cifra y Puá (Ex 1,8-21), Miriam (Ex 15,20-21), Judith, Ester, etc. y desde el NT María de Nazaret, Marta y María (Lc 10,38-42) la mujer con flujo de sangre (Mt 9,20-22), la mujer jorobada (Lc 13,10-17), etc. El punto de estas lecturas se enmarcaba en la esperanza del reconocimiento de la dignidad de la mujer y su lugar en igualdad de condiciones en los destinos de la Iglesia (Tamez Elsa, en: Marcos, Silvia; (Ed.), 2008, pp 49-52).

Mujer e iglesia pasaban a ser temas importantes, pero también controvertidos, pues la resistencia a su visibilización en la iglesia tuvo dificultades. Muchas mujeres tuvieron que ser trasgresoras de las costumbres

eclesiales “bien vistas” dentro de las normas para ellas. El rechazo a través de la sátira o el sarcasmo a sus reflexiones o acciones de liderazgo intelectual se veían presentes en los ambientes eclesiales, no sólo populares sino también académicos. No obstante, la fortaleza de muchas mujeres, en ocasiones con acciones radicales, permitió una leve participación de la mujer en la iglesia. El rechazo y la opresión a la que ha sido sometida por siglos, hizo que la hermenéutica tomará este tinte de opresión-liberación, que posteriormente tendría una transformación hermenéutica no en las mujeres de la Biblia, sino en el rostro femenino de Dios (Tamez Elsa, en: Marcos, Silvia; (Ed.), 2008, p 52).

En los últimos tiempos la lectura bíblica con mujeres, no sólo se realiza desde la perspectiva de liberación, se hacen también resaltando la cultura patriarcal que hay en la Biblia. Se tiene en cuenta el aporte de las mujeres en la construcción de la iglesia primitiva, su papel en la evangelización del siglo primero, los desafíos que ellas enfrentaron y los que enfrentan las mujeres que leen el texto actualmente, por ejemplo una relectura desde la dignidad de las discípulas de Jesús (Pertuz, 2013, pp. 29-39). Estos avances en la lectura de los textos bíblicos con ojos de mujer, no quedan ahí, la mujer sigue releendo el texto con esta clave que dignifica, pero que también sigue siendo atrevida, osada y trasgresora de aquello que excluye, pero que se presenta como lo establecido y oficial dentro de la iglesia. El camino sigue...

5. Prospectiva de la LPB y la mujer desde la Dei Verbum

La relación entre la LPB, la mujer y la Dei Verbum, no radica en lo que ésta última pueda decir al respecto, que de hecho no lo hace, pues la LPB y el movimiento de mujeres ya venía germinando en muchos lugares del Continente. El punto está en el proceso que desencadenó posteriormente en América Latina y las CEBs, que toman el texto bíblico y empiezan a releer su situación histórica a la luz de la Palabra, comprendiendo que su situación de sometimiento, e injusticia está en contra del designio de Dios para todos los seres humanos, especialmente para los más frágiles del sistema y esencialmente que Dios estaba con los pobres, constatando que desde sus inicios la iglesia fue de los pobres, sin que ello signifique exclusión, pero sí preferencia; eso sin mencionar que las primeras destinatarias de las apariciones del Resucitado fueron mujeres.

Hoy a 50 años del Concilio, del pacto de las Catacumbas, hay una nueva racionalidad en la que se comprende que la iglesia se construye con la colaboración de mujeres y hombres, que el buen vivir proclamado por los pueblos indígenas de América Latina, no ha de estar reservado para unos pocos, sino para toda la humanidad.

Se puede confirmar en las comunidades populares que siguen teniendo la Biblia como referencia de vida el cambio social, generacional y las nuevas preguntas que se plantean a partir de lo anterior, así como las múltiples influencias culturales. La misma experiencia cristiana (católica) en los últimos tiempos se presenta con una aceptación más del contexto Latinoamericano, es decir reconociendo las raíces, indias, mestizas y negras, y en consonancia con las diversas tradiciones religiosas, sin embargo aún se resiste a la participación total de la mujer en la iglesia. No obstante estos hechos siguen surgiendo mujeres “trasgresoras” que llevarán a un reconocimiento y aceptación total de su papel en los destinos eclesiales.

Por otra parte, la reflexión bíblica teológica en la experiencia católica, no sólo se aborda desde las categorías del catolicismo oficial europeo e incluso con mirada androcéntrica, sino que es enriquecido con el reconocimiento de todas estas tradiciones culturales y el aporte de las mujeres que leen la Biblia; se es más consciente de la revelación de Dios en las culturas y en todos los seres humanos (mujeres y hombres).

Hoy la novedad que se constata de la LPB son los nuevos sujetos de interpretación del texto bíblico. Hay una primavera eclesial, que visibiliza nuevos lectores y sujetos de transformación que leen la Biblia; tanto en el texto como en la realidad, se comienzan a ver los invisibilizados y se empieza a estudiar el texto respetando la diversidad cultural, social y eclesial. Hoy con todos esos movimientos y procesos suscitados quizá no se habla como tal de la LPB, pues el desarrollo de ésta ha sido tan enorme, que los nuevos sujetos encuentran en esta primavera eclesial, otros rostros, otros caminos por recorrer acompañados de la Palabra de Dios y de la LPB, en comunidades como: Patiecitos bíblicos de Cartagena cuyos lectores del texto bíblico son los niños, la casa tejiendo sororidades de Cali, que lee con perspectiva de mujer, el centro bíblico de Quibdó, la lectura campesina de la Biblia, casitas bíblicas en Palermo sur-Bogotá, etc. Comunidades y procesos que a pesar de las dificultades no han claudicado de su fe y su esperanza en Dios. La LPB en los sectores populares y marginales de algunas ciudades del país, y en América Latina en general, comenzó a crear grupos y círculos bíblicos. Las y los biblistas y teólogas/os formados en Europa, pero interpelados por la realidad latinoamericana, dan pie con sus reflexiones desde este contexto a nuevas hermenéuticas que suscitan cambios no sólo eclesiales, sino además sociales. Se recupera la experiencia de Dios desde la historia de sufrimiento del pueblo, y especialmente aquella imagen olvidada de Dios, como un “Dios de la historia”, que camina con su pueblo. Faltan muchas cosas por hacer, pero se agradece el camino realizado por tantos hombres y especialmen-

te mujeres que trasgredieron “lo establecido” y se atrevieron a proponer nuevos caminos y derribar prejuicios eclesiales. Sin embargo, aún el camino es largo, pero en la esperanza que la mujer sigue siendo enviada al anuncio de la Resurrección, como María Magdalena quien da cuenta de lo que ha visto y ha oído “anda a decirle a mis hermanos...” Jn 20,17.

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Notas

- 1** Mary Betty RODRÍGUEZ MORENO. Docente de Ciencias Bíblicas en el Instituto Bíblico Pastoral Latinoamericano, Uniminuto. Bogotá. Correo: mbrodriguez@uniminuto.edu, perteneciente a la Asociación de Teólogas Colombianas.
- 2** Antes del Concilio ya se estaban suscitando movimientos eclesiológicos en el mundo. Recordar que el Concilio no surgió como históricamente lo habían

- hecho otros por ejemplo para enfrentar herejías. Este fue el primer concilio que se reunió para hablar de temas que afectaban al mundo, como la pobreza, el desarrollo de los derechos humanos, el armamentismo, el papel de la iglesia en el mundo, la relación con las otras expresiones cristianas, etc. Cfr. Documentos del Concilio Vaticano II. (Madrid: BAC, 1968), 8-15.
- 3 Siendo así, el mismo Concilio mostró una "salida" del espacio europeo y mediterráneo favoreciendo el tema de la inculturación (Del Vaticano II a Medellín), posibilitando una mayor participación de otros obispos más allá de las fronteras europeas.
 - 4 puesto que ya en diferentes partes del mundo surgían movimientos católicos que apelaban por una reforma en la iglesia, se deseaba que ella tuviera incidencia social dados los diversos conflictos humanitarios que se enfrentaban en su momento.
 - 5 Vale aclarar que desde este aspecto en América Latina a diferencia de Europa y Norte América cuando se abordó el texto bíblico, el diálogo no se hizo con otras ciencias o con la filosofía; en principio se hizo con la realidad social y hasta el día de hoy la lectura y estudio de la Escritura tiene como punto de partida la realidad en la reflexión bíblico-teológica.
 - 6 Los deseos de renovación, en Colombia también se venían gestando; aunque no es muy conocido entre 1950 y 1964, en Bogotá se desarrolló una experiencia pastoral progresista, incluso a nivel de América Latina. Este movimiento fue la articulación de 18 parroquias del sur de Bogotá ante el desplazamiento de miles de colombianos por la violencia bipartidista. Los sacerdotes desarrollaron un gran dinamismo colectivo con la comunidad, que les ayudó a responder a las necesidades más urgentes de los desplazados. Cfr. TORRES MILLÁN Fernando (2015), *Diversos orígenes de la teología de la liberación en Colombia*. <http://sicsal.net/articulos2/sites/default/files/adjuntos/Or%C3%ADgenes%20Teolog%C3%ADa%20Liberaci%C3%B3n%20Colombia.pdf>
 - 7 Aunque siempre reservando dicha interpretación a los obispos y sacerdotes.
 - 8 Hay una nueva experiencia espiritual que se mezcla con la experiencia social de sufrimiento de las mayorías empobrecidas, es por ello que "la LPB en el continente encuentra su raíz, su fuerza y su originalidad en esa presencia y revelación de Dios en el mundo de los pobres" Cfr. RICHARD Pablo, *Lectura Popular de la Biblia en América Latina*. Ribla 1 1988. <http://www.claiweb.org/ribla/ribla1/2%20lectura%20popular%20de%20la%20biblia.htm>
 - 9 La Palabra de Dios trasciende el texto como tal, de esta manera el texto sagrado se convierte en un referente de discernimiento para encontrar la Palabra de Dios en la historia, tanto de las comunidades que en la Biblia aparecen, como en las que actualmente la leen. Cfr. MESTERS Carlos y OROFINO Francisco, *Sobre la Lectura Popular de la Biblia*. San José de costa Rica. Revista Pasos 130, 2007, pp. 16-26.
 - 10 La pregunta es si esta o aquella situación responde al querer de Dios para el ser humano, viendo el rostro de Jesucristo en el marginado social y en la pobreza estructural, no desde una perspectiva conformista y asumiéndola como voluntad de Dios, sino desde la pregunta misma de lo que en verdad agrada a Dios para los más frágiles del sistema. Así el texto bíblico se aborda desde el sentido-en-sí (textual) y el sentido-para-nosotros (espiritual), para la situación presente y no sólo como una palabra dicha en el pasado. Cfr. RICHARD Pablo, *Lectura Popular de la Biblia en América Latina*. Ribla 1

TEOLOGÍA CUÁNTICA

Implicaciones espirituales
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TEOLOGÍA CUÁNTICA

Diarmuid O'MURCHU

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17



Dei Verbum, Popular Reading of the Bible and Woman ¹

Mary Betty RODRÍGUEZ MORENO

Bogotá, Colombia

Come close to the sacred text willingly (...) so that the children of the Church may safely and fruitfully with the Scriptures and identified of his spirit (Dei Verbum 25).

Introduction

The following text want to make a brief reference to the relationship between the Dei Verbum, the Popular Reading of Bible (LPB) and the woman, explaining the contribution of the Dogmatic Constitution these popular processes. In principle, a brief contextualization of the Council and the changes it favored for the LPB and the visibility of the woman n in the church processes; how the movement of Latin American Bishops came to the grassroots, what is the root of the LPB, women in popular biblical processes and finally a presentation of the different ways that this popular process was brewing in prospective key, taking into account new social contexts and new ecclesial subjects, who opt for a good life for all, not just for a minority.

1. Brief context of Vatican II

The contextualization of Vatican II favors understanding and/or relationship between the Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum, the LPB and the woman in this Latin American movement². Significant was the participation of a greater number of bishops in the world; in Trento participated more or less 250 in Vatican I 750 and Vatican II in 2700, including 54 Latin Americans³.

In this context is inescapable question the participation of the Latin American Church; What contributed? Leonidas Ortiz said that his contribution was "the social dimension of evangelization" (Ortiz, 2015)⁴. Behind

the intuition of Pope John XXIII, had already been feeling the need to change and Colombia specifically a progressive movement (union of 18 parishes south of Bogotá), little known as well as other movements in different cities of Colombia.

2. How do I get this movement triggered by the Latin American Bishops popular sectors?

Several of the bishops who participated in Medellín, accompanied communities in situations of great poverty and marginalization, such as Monsignor Leonidas Proaño in Ecuador Riobamba and Samuel Ruiz in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico. The Episcopal Conference of Medellín and the new ecclesial expressions that emerged from the questioning of the reality of submission to poverty and injustice in many communities, encouraged and recognized the emergence prior to the Council and Medellín, the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs), that for other are God's people.

Communities (formed for men and woman) were created by the laity of the popular sectors who gathered to reflect their faith in the light of the Word of God from their poverty and injustice. CEBs are born of movement arising from the formation of the laity (men and women) on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Action (Pedroza Gallegos). In Colombia CEBs were less welcomed by the Colombian bishops, together with Argentina were presented as the most conservative of the moment. But in the country the movement was so strong that some CEBs managed to generate spaces of social and ecclesial light reflection of the Word, confirming that the biblical text narrated liberation and salvation processes in which they were immersed. (CEBS).

Two points of these movements were: the search for God in their history and how to be witness in social reality; following the text of Ex 3,7 in which God "sees suffering and hears the cry of his people." It is important to remember that one of the most studied biblical texts from the Latin American reality was the book of Exodus, following a little research and development that made Jose Severino Croatto in Liberation and Freedom (Míguez 2001). The simple people in the communities agreed to create better living conditions since their reality of poverty and in the light of the Word. From the above it was awakening in people a critical consciousness about the situation of injustice, with the road map concrete actions that would prevent indifference and conformity, thus establishing a dialogue between faith and reality⁵.

For this reason and for the questions raised by the social and ecclesial situation in this oppressed and impoverished continent⁶, the

methodology to be different biblical study an theology had a new face: that of liberation, so that this step methodology to be typical of Latin America (Echeverry, 2007). In fact for 1978 it was considered one of the great achievements of Medellin was to have put the social into theological reflection, reread in situations unjust structures and values of society a "situation of sin", understanding that God announced by Jesus Christ is the God of the poor and also is a God of history (Saranyana, 2005).

Of his community who performed the LPB, perhaps were not aware or knowledgeable of Vatican II, specifically the Constitution *Dei Verbum*, in which the key document interpretation is made in the LPB it does not appear directly; however, it favored the *Verbum Dei* about the impulses that were being done on the Continent.

It is clear that the *Verbum Dei* not born the LPB or the visibility of woman in the church processes; The clef to this arises in liberation theology, while recognizing the diversity of roots found in these processes (Maricel Mena, 2015). Moreover, in the course of this popular way, the communities that have been overcome that reading and scripture. This process has shown knowledge, empowering communities and critical readings of reality that leads them to be proactive from the popular place and favored feminist consciousness in women who began doing theology after Vatican II, in Latin America.

¿How welcomes the *Dei Verbum* (DV) in Colombia? It is likely that at first glance is not checkup reception of the Constitution in Colombian diocese, because apparently none of them did Biblical pastoral from *Verbum Dei*. However, Medellin and Puebla were promoted as a result of the Council and it opened the possibility that all the faithful agree to the reading of the biblical text, but did not explicitly say yes suggested in paragraph 8 and 25 DV (Vatican Documents II). Similarly it could be said that neither his address on the *Dei Verbum* to the poor, but God is revealed in history and the tradition and even the life of the early Christians is evident interest in the history of "poor "who were marginalized in the first century and remain at this time.

However, the base communities and biblical groups in some parishes in Colombia and Latin America, already reading the biblical text. The *Verbum Dei* opened the perspectives of interpretation⁷ and BCCs became more momentum reception of the Word; many people from the popular sectors perhaps could not explain and account for the Council and within the *Verbum Dei* but felt the effects of this ecclesial event. On the Continent was important to be aware of the revealing action of God, he continues to speak today, directing his word through events and people and through Scripture. The rise of the church council made the Bible

were reaching the hands of the people (Mester and Orofino, 2007) and women already involved in these processes were gradually expressing feminist consciousness (Marcos, Silvia, ed., 2008, p. 44).

3. Following the popular reading of Bible (LPB)

At the bottom of the reading process in Latin America, is the poor; recognizing in it a new historical subject, which since its social situation makes an interpretation of the biblical text, with no claim to find God in the everyday events. Contextualizing what this means, the words of Bishop Leonidas Proaño express magnificently

After many years of silence the Indian spoke again in Chimborazo. The Word of God helped the Indian to speak, to utter his real word... "And the Word became flesh" and the non-man, the scourer and scorn, stood and shouted over the high mountain: I'm here, here I am, I am alive, I am a man... I am... "(Proaño 2001).

In Latin America, poverty is so obvious that the interpretation of the Bible directs a new vision of faith and is recognized in the poor the privileged place of the presence and revelation of God. Perhaps one could say that the Latin American Church sees in the poor a Christ, realizing that God is questioning his followers with a different word in a different historical context "by the revelation God wanted to manifest Himself and plans save the man... "(Dei Verbum 6, 1968).

But amid these possibilities conducive, also it arose the question of "how can we speak of God to a non-human world; how to talk about God, the suffering, the excluded and the marginalized raised?, as Gustavo Gutierrez (Echeverry, 2007). In Colombia Alvaro Ulcué, from his experience as indigenous, he saw the need for the preparation and training of communities, indigenous, black people and marginalized groups, because it hurt the situation of his people; train ordinary people (women and men) was a strategy of liberation and evangelization⁸.

In making this reading of the Bible with the communities, the aim was not just to bring the Bible to the people and that he read it for yourself forgetting that the Bible was written at a time and given space⁹. How the Bible is read in communities, in the popular sectors? Discerning the Word of God with the desire to understand its occurrence, to hear and see God in reality¹⁰.

We can say that the root of the LPB is in the CEBs and the rescue of the historical and spiritual meaning is in the biblical narratives (NT) that highlights the experience of the presence and revelation of God in the world of the poor (Pedroza Gallegos). Consequently, the belief that deconstructs LPB setting disclosure only in the past, generating a certain

fundamentalism and having the biblical text, taking almost a recipe to respond to each situation of life, believing that by reading the Bible and listening to the God's word. Perhaps other end as a magical book that has an effect to open and read it literally. However, while communities are recognized as one grain of mustard seed in a field... Mt 13.31 to 33.

4. The Woman in the popular biblical processes

The biblical movement in the popular neighborhoods of several cities in Colombia, made methodological contributions to the liberation theology of awakening was given awareness and the theme of God's option for the poor, helped the women start seeing the biblical texts in the presence and action of women in it, which would later in feminist biblical hermeneutics. Congress ecumenical theologians and biblical scholars women, promote new rereading of the biblical text in popular communities.

Biblical scholars and theologians helped women in popular sectors were recognized as historical subjects, although oppressed and discriminated against, but with a perspective of liberation. Reading the Bible is to be liberating and contribute to the transformation of reality. In these early women of the Bible that will enhance these processes release and contribution to society and the popular church were: Deborah (Judges 4.1-24), figure and Puah (Ex 1.8-21), Miriam (Ex 15.20-21), Judith, Esther, etc. and from the NT Mary of Nazareth, Martha and Mary (Lk 10.38-42) women with blood flow (Mt 9.20-22), the crippled woman (Lk 13,10-17), etc. The point of these readings was part of the hope of recognition of the dignity of woman and their equal place in the destiny of the Church (Elsa Tamez in: Marcos, Silvia, ed., 2008, pp 49-52).

Woman and church happened to be important, but controversial issues as resistance to its visibility in the church struggled. Many women had to be transgressive of the "good views" within the ecclesial customs rules for them. The rejection through satire or sarcasm to his thoughts or actions intellectual leadership were seen present in church environments not only popular but also academics. However, the strength of many women, sometimes with radical actions allowed a slight participation of the woman in the church. Rejection and oppression that has been subjected for centuries, made the hermeneutics take this dye oppression-liberation that would later transform hermeneutics not women of the Bible, but in the feminine face of God (Elsa Tamez in: Marcos, Silvia ed., 2008, p 52).

In the last time Bible reading with women, not only done from the perspective of liberation are also made highlighting the patriarchal culture that is in the Bible. It takes into account the contribution of women

in the construction of the early church, its role in the evangelization of the first century, the challenges they faced and women who read the text currently face, such a reinterpretation from the dignity the disciples of Jesus (Pertuz, 2013, pp. 29-39). These advances in the reading of biblical texts-eyed woman, are not there, the woman continue rereading the text with this key dignified, but also remains bold, daring and transgressive of what excluded, but that is presented as and established official within the church. The road continues...

5. Prospects of LPB and women since the *Verbum Dei*

The relationship between LPB, the woman and *Dei Verbum*, lies not in what the latter can say about it, that in fact it does not, because the LPB and the women's movement was already germinating in many parts of the continent. The point is in the process triggered later in Latin America and the BCCs, who take the biblical text and begin to reread his history in the light of the Word situation, realizing that the situation of subjugation and injustice is against the plan of God for all human beings, especially for the most fragile system and essentially that God was with the poor, noting that since its inception the church was poor, without thereby excluding, but preference; Not to mention that the first target of the resurrection appearances were women.

Today, 50 years after the Council, the covenant of the catacombs, a new rationality in which it is understood that the church was built with the collaboration of men and women that good live proclaimed by the indigenous peoples of Latin America must not be reserved for the few, but for all humanity.

This can be confirmed in popular communities still have the Bible as a reference for social life, generational change and new questions that arise from this, and the many cultural influences. The same Christian experience (Catholic) recently presented with an acceptance over the Latin American context, e recognizing the roots, Indian, mestizo and black, and consistent with the various religious traditions, but still refuses to participate Total of women in the church. Despite these facts continue to emerge "transgressive" women who carry a recognition and acceptance of their role in the church destinations.

Moreover, the biblical theological reflection on Catholic experience, not only is approached from the categories European official Catholicism and even androcentric gaze, but is enriched with the recognition of all these cultural traditions and the contribution of women reading the bible; one is more aware of God's revelation in cultures and in all human beings (women and men).

Today the novelty is found in the LPB are the new subject of interpretation of the biblical text. There is a church spring, which makes visible new readers and transformation subjects who read the Bible; both in the text and in reality, they begin to see the invisible and you begin to study the text respecting cultural, social and ecclesial diversity. Today with all the movements and processes arising may not speak as such of the LPB, for the development of this has been so enormous that the new subjects are in this ecclesial spring, other faces, other ways to go accompanied by the word God and the LPB, in communities such as: Biblical Patiecitos Cartagena biblical text whose readers are children, the house weaving sororities Cali reading with woman's perspective, the biblical center of Quibdo, the peasant reading the Bible, Biblical houses in Palermo sur-Bogotá, etc. Communities and processes despite the difficulties have not given up their faith and hope in God. The LPB in the popular and marginal areas of some cities, and Latin America in general, began to create groups and Bible circles. The biblical scholars and theologians and/os trained in Europe, but challenged by the Latin American reality, give rise to reflections from this context to new hermeneutical aroused not only ecclesial, but also social changes. The experience of God is retrieved from the history of suffering of the people, and especially those godforsaken image as a "God of history", who walks with his people. They are missing many things to do, but appreciated the way by so many men and especially women who transgressed "provisions" and dared to propose new paths and break down prejudices church. However, the road is still long, but in the hope that she is still sent to the announcement of the Resurrection, like Mary who realizes what he has seen and heard "Go tell my brothers..." John 20:17.

Bibliography

See the bibliography in the original Spanish version, in the previous pages.

Notes

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- ² Before the Council were already raising ecclesiological movements in the world. Remember that the Council did not emerge as historically they had to face other such heresies. This was the first council met to discuss issues affecting the world, such as poverty, development of human rights, the arms race, the role of the church in the world, the relationship with other Christian expressions, etc. Cf. *Vatican II documents*. (Madrid: BAC, 1968), 8-15.

- 3 As such, the Council itself showed a "way out" of the European and Mediterranean space favoring inculturation (Vatican II Medellín), enabling greater participation of other bishops beyond Europe's borders.
- 4 Since in different parts of the world Catholic movements arose appealed for reform in the church, she had wanted social impact given the various humanitarian conflicts they faced at the time.
- 5 It is clear that from this point in Latin America, unlike Europe and North America when the biblical text was discussed, the dialogue was not done with other sciences or philosophy; in principle it became the social reality and to this day reading and study of Scripture has as its starting point the reality in biblical-theological reflection.
- 6 The desire for renewal in Colombia came also brewing; although not well known between 1950 and 1964, in Bogotá he developed a progressive pastoral experience, even at the level of Latin America. This movement was the articulation of 18 parishes south of Bogotá to the displacement of thousands of Colombians bipartisan violence. The priests developed a large collective dynamism to the community that helped them respond to the most urgent needs of the displaced. Cf. Fernando TORRES MILLÁN (2015) Various sources of liberation theology in Colombia. <http://sicsal.net/articulos2/sites/default/files/adjuntos/Or%C3%ADgenes%20Teolog%C3%ADa%20Liberaci%C3%B3n%20Colombia.pdf>
- 7 Although this interpretation always reserving the bishop and priests
- 8 There is a new spiritual experience which mixes with the social experience of suffering of the impoverished majority, it is why "the LPB in the continent find its root, its strength and originality in their presence and revelation of God in the world poor "Cf. RICHARD Pablo, *Popular reading of the Bible in Latin America*. Ribla one1988. <http://www.claiweb.org/ribla/ribla1/2%20lectura%20popular%20de%20la%20biblia.htm>
- 9 The Word of God transcends the text as such, so the sacred text becomes a reference of discernment to find God's Word in the history of both communities in the Bible, as in the currently read . Cf. MESTERS Carlos and Francisco OROFINO, *On popular Bible reading*. San Jose, Costa Rica. Magazine Steps 130, 2007, pp. 16-26.
- 10 The question is whether this or that situation responds to the will of God to man, seeing the face of Christ in the social outcast and structural poverty, not from a conformist perspective and assuming it as God's will, but from the question itself what really pleases God for the weakest system. So the biblical text is approached from the sense-in-itself (sic) and sense-for-us (spiritual), to the present situation and not just as a word spoken in the past. Cf. RICHARD Pablo, *Popular reading of the Bible in Latin America*. Ribla 1.



El ministerio de María Magdalena

Un referente performativo para la mujer hoy

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Mi propósito es mostrar el trabajo realizado por María Magdalena, según lo presentan los evangelios. Destacar en sus acciones las características propias del apostolado, según la época e identificar en ellas y en su lenguaje elementos dinamizadores, “provocativos” y performativos para la mujer en la iglesia. No se trata de presentar un tema en sí mismo en cuanto al ministerio de esta mujer, sino una propuesta como un camino a seguir.

1. ¿Quién dice que era María Magdalena según los libros canónicos?

María de Magdala, o Miriam de Magdala, llamada así en referencia a su lugar de origen. Una ciudad portuaria y también colonia de pescadores, situada en la orilla occidental del lago Genesaret. Es un personaje controvertido en la tradición canónica. De su personalidad, hay dos imágenes que se han transferido en el inconsciente colectivo: por una parte, testigo de la resurrección y por otra parte, prostituta arrepentida. Se dice que fue una discípula/apóstol de Jesús de Nazaret. Apoyó su causa, con su presencia y bienes. Fue una líder en las primeras comunidades cristianas. Se le atribuye ser la primera testigo de la resurrección del Maestro. De ella se sabe poco y la búsqueda de su figura histórica hay que complementarla en diferentes textos. Los evangelios canónicos, como también en la lectura de los textos apócrifos. Fue curada por Jesús y que de ella expulsó siete demonios. Afirmación que intenta presentar un proceso de transformación. Sabemos que el número siete es simbólico. Significa unidad. Con ello, se nos dice acerca de María Magdalena, que después de esta “curación”, personifica una mujer nueva.

No existe ningún texto, dentro o fuera de los Evangelios, que indique que María Magdalena fue prostituta o pecadora pública. Sin embargo, por razones no conocidas explícitamente, a partir del siglo III, sus accio-

nes públicas fueron ocultadas y enfatizado el oficio de la prostitución, o pecadora, o la mujer que lavó los pies de Jesús –en el Evangelio de Lucas–. El papel que desempeñó Magdalena en su relación con Jesús nos muestra que no podía ser la mujer prostituta de la interpretación errónea de los textos canónicos. Abandonada, fue acogida por Jesús, que expulsa los demonios de su cuerpo. En todo esto, es evidente la unión de la posesión demoníaca con la sexualidad¹. Por otra parte, en los evangelios extracanáncios Magdalena deja de ser prostituta del ejército romano para seguir a Jesús, imagen que refuerza este apelativo que no corresponde a la que presentan los evangelios.

En el Nuevo Testamento, sólo los evangelios (Marcos, Mateo, Lucas y Juan) nos ofrecen informaciones sobre su personalidad y la actividad apostólica. Destaco algunas representativas, que nos servirán para evidenciar su rol en la iglesia naciente.

1.1. Mujer apóstol

La interpretación tradicional, en los libros canónicos, no identifica a María Magdalena como apóstol², sí podemos percibir ese tono en los textos: se cita a María Magdalena en primer lugar entre las mujeres que acompañan a Jesús desde el inicio de su misión en Galilea: *A continuación fue recorriendo ciudades y pueblos proclamando la Buena Noticia del reino de Dios. Lo acompañaban los doce y algunas mujeres que había sanado de espíritus inmundos y de enfermedades: María Magdalena, de la que había salido siete demonios (Lc 8,1.3). Estaban allí mirando a la distancia muchas mujeres que habían acompañado y servido a Jesús desde Galilea. Entre ellas estaban María Magdalena, María, madre de Santiago y José, y la madre de los Zebedeos. (Mt 27,55-56). Estaban allí mirando a distancia algunas mujeres, entre ellas María Magdalena, María, madre de Santiago el Menor y de José, y Salomé, quienes, cuando estaba en Galilea, le habían seguido y servido; y otras muchas que habían subido con él a Jerusalén (Mc 15,40-41).*

Ser citada en primer lugar y *andar con Jesús*, son datos importantes para comprender el ministerio apostólico de María Magdalena. Estos relatos presentan a las mujeres de manera distinta a las multitudes. Se detiene a nombrarlas y a decir qué hacían siguiendo a Jesús. Magdalena estaba con Jesús desde los inicios de su ministerio en Galilea. Es uno de los aspectos que justifica su título de apóstol. Así, como les pasó a Pedro, Juan y los demás varones que seguían a Jesús. A Pedro, también se le cita como el primero entre los hombres apóstoles. Magdalena aparece de forma discreta como líder apostólica en los canónicos. Y si es citada de esa manera, pese al contexto es porque realmente la comunidad la identificó como tal.

Los evangelios intentan reducir el papel de Magdalena cuando afirman que ella y otras mujeres servían a Jesús con sus bienes. La tradición procura mostrar que apóstol no es lo mismo que discípulo: el apóstol habría estado al lado de Jesús desde el comienzo de su misión hasta la ascensión y, también, como testigo de su resurrección (Hch 1,21-22). La tradición neotestamentaria, sugiere, que en un principio, Jesús reservó ese título a los doce apóstoles³.

Magdalena acompañó a Jesús y fue la primera que presenció su resurrección. Jesús la llama por el nombre y le encarga que anuncie que resucitó. ¿Hay otra prueba mayor que ésta? Entonces, ¿por qué no era considerada apóstol?⁴ El motivo por el cual callaban parece ser otro: el machismo, la cultura patriarcal, la misoginia y todas las esferas de exclusión de la mujer, quizá también este sea una de las razones por las cuales la quisieron hacerla aparecer como mujer prostituta para restarle credibilidad a su liderazgo. Pareciera que sus acciones y palabras se desprecian solamente por el hecho de ser mujer.

1.2. Mujer discípula amada por Jesús

Cuando Jesús muere en la cruz, tres mujeres, tres Marías, están junto a la tumba: María, su madre; María, la mujer de Cleofás, y María Magdalena. Jesús ve al discípulo amado y le ofrece como madre a su propia madre. Uno debe cuidar de la vida del otro. Entre los especialistas se discute el número exacto de personas que estaban al pie de la cruz.

Esther de Boer trabaja la hipótesis de que al pie de la cruz estaban solamente Magdalena y María, la madre de Jesús. En este caso, María Magdalena sería la "hermana", es decir, la prima o cuñada de la madre de Jesús, y ésta, por primera vez, no sería mencionada sólo como "madre de", sino también como "María de Cleofás". Boer cuando dice que María Magdalena tal vez podía ser "el discípulo amado". Jesús estaría dando a María, su madre, un nuevo hijo, a saber, María Magdalena. El término "hijo", según de Boer, no significa necesariamente un varón. Se puede pensar que más de una vez un término gramaticalmente masculino puede señalar también a una mujer⁵.

En la tradición, es a Juan quien se le llama discípulo amado. La nueva interpretación de Boer, es provocadora. Estaríamos diciendo, que el discípulo amado, podría ser María Magdalena. Posteriormente a la resurrección de Jesús, recibió en su casa a la madre de Jesús: *Después dice al discípulo: abí tienes a tu madre. Y desde aquel momento el discípulo se la llevó a casa.* (Jn 19,27). Con ello, los dos polos opuestos –María, la madre de Jesús, y Magdalena– estarían unidos y así el origen y la vocación de Jesús fueron colocados uno al lado de otro⁶. María la pura y Magdalena la pecadora se unen.

Por otra parte, es posible la explicación de que Magdalena fuera la discípula amada, pero dado el contexto en que fue escrito y la presión de la ortodoxia del momento, referido a las mujeres, es impensable que esto sucediera, por tanto, se colocó “amado” junto al nombre de Juan. Si observamos la secuencia de los hechos, nos damos cuenta que Magdalena no pierde tiempo para ir a la tumba, mientras que Juan, desaparece de la escena.

1.3. Mujer poseída por siete demonios

Lo acompañaban los doce y algunas mujeres que había sanado de espíritus inmundos y de enfermedades: María Magdalena, de la que habían salido siete demonios (Lc 8,2).

¿Cuál es el significado de este hecho en la vida de Magdalena? ¿Por qué siete demonios? "Demonio" es un término originario de la cultura griega, la cual creía que era un espíritu de un fallecido que tenía poderes sobrenaturales o incluso un ser intermedio entre la divinidad y el ser humano⁷. En Mc 16,9 el demonio aparece incorporado al espíritu inmundo. Unirse a la llamada de Jesús significaba liberarse del demonio. Jesús expulsó siete demonios de Magdalena, un número perfecto para quienes se oponían al Reino⁸. Magdalena venció todas las fuerzas del mal que le impedían estar con Dios. Vivido este episodio, ella queda preparada para ser apóstol y no abandona a Jesús no después de su muerte.

Por otro lado, se puede afirmar que en Lucas la enfermedad no está ligada a una simple disfunción orgánica, sino que comprende la integración de la persona en el contexto o espacio que habita, en su relación familiar y social. También tiene que ver con el sistema cognoscitivo compartido. Tiene como objetivo hacer posible o facilitar la vida con sentido pero puede entrar en crisis en ciertos momentos y para ciertas personas⁹.

Lo importante no es la descripción del aspecto morboso de la enfermedad como tal, sino la construcción cultural en el momento.

Elisa Estévez afirma que todo padecimiento físico deja ver el desequilibrio y la trasgresión de las fronteras sociales. Refleja una anomalía en la estructura y organización que estos grupos se han impuesto a sí mismos. Lo cual significa que la comprensión de los males físicos está ligada a las principales creencias del Mediterráneo antiguo acerca de la valoración de la naturaleza humana, de su definición de las identidades personales y de los roles desempeñados en la sociedad. Por tanto, la curación, antes que la recuperación del estado físico, representa un restablecimiento de la armonía social y del puesto que la persona ocupa en ella¹⁰.

Dicho lo anterior, podemos decir, que en los relatos de Lucas, hay abundantes curaciones realizadas a mujeres, lo cual podría tener que ver

con la identidad de roles de ellas, en ese medio social, y con el liderazgo y el papel que Magdalena estaba desempeñando en esas comunidades.

1. 4. Mujer sin lazos familiares

Otras mujeres que aparecen en el Nuevo Testamento siempre lo hacen asociadas a su marido, a su hijo o a su casa (María, madre de Jesús; María, mujer de Cleofás...); Magdalena, sin embargo, es nombrada en los textos sin parentesco. Siempre unida al nombre de Jesús por haberla liberado de los siete demonios. Por tanto, Jesús es el único varón que perfila su persona y su identidad frente a la construcción del reino de Dios, según lo anunciaba Jesús.

1.5. Mujer que atestigua la muerte de Jesús

Magdalena está a los pies de la cruz en el momento de la muerte de Jesús. Cuando José de Arimatea preparó la sepultura de Jesús, Magdalena, junto con María, la madre de Santiago, acompañó el desarrollo de los acontecimientos. Sentada cerca de la tumba, miró que el cuerpo se colocaba en la piedra sepulcral.

No huyó, como Pedro. Bien sabido es que el testimonio de una mujer en esa época no era tenido en cuenta. En cambio, la palabra de Pedro, por ser varón sí contaba. Por eso, negó su cercanía con Jesús, sabía que le podía acarrear la muerte. Magdalena, mujer y amada, sabía que su amado no podía morir.

1.6. Mujer que testimonia la resurrección: "He visto al Señor"

La comunidad joánica conservó la memoria de que María Magdalena fue la mujer que vio y habló con el Resucitado (Jn 20,1-18). Fue sola a la tumba para visitar el cuerpo de Jesús. También Mateo, Marcos y Lucas relatan que Magdalena fue al sepulcro con María, la madre de Santiago, Juana, Salomé y otras mujeres (Mt 28,1; Mc 16,1; Lc 24,10) Sin embargo, hay que tener en cuenta que a la redacción del evangelio del Marcos se agregó –capítulo 9,1-9–, según la opinión de los exégetas, dice que Jesús resucitó en la madrugada del primer día de la semana y que se apareció primero a María Magdalena, de quien había expulsado siete demonios. La alegría de la resurrección incitó en ella el deseo de anunciar el acontecimiento a sus hermanos, compañeros de su ministerio.

Los evangelios canónicos organizan el texto de tal modo, que Pedro tuvo que ir a la tumba para confirmar que Magdalena estaba diciendo la verdad (Lc 24,12) Volvió sorprendido porque vio solamente el sudario no el cuerpo de Jesús. La comunidad de Marcos dice que los apóstoles no creyeron en el testimonio de las mujeres (Mc 10,16).

Magdalena termina su intervención en los evangelios hablando con la firmeza de quien mucho ama y cree: "He visto al Señor" (Jn 20,18). *El Evangelio de María Magdalena* profundiza en ese ver. De todas formas, Pedro y Andrés se muestran escépticos ante el testimonio de María Magdalena¹¹.

1.7. Mujer que experimenta miedo de anunciar que Jesús resucitó

La comunidad de Marcos nos ha dicho que María Magdalena, María la madre de Santiago y Salomé, compraron aromas y fueron en la madrugada del primer día de la semana al sepulcro para unguir a Jesús. Cuando llegaron al lugar, vieron que la piedra había sido movida y que el cuerpo no estaba allí. Un joven vestido de blanco les dirige la palabra y les dice que deben comunicar a los discípulos y a Pedro que Jesús ha resucitado y que lo verán en Galilea. Temblorosas y con miedo, Magdalena y las mujeres huyeron y no contaron eso a nadie (Mc 16,18). Esa narración, contraria a las demás, quiso mostrar que también las fieles mujeres, como Pedro y los otros discípulos, vacilaron en la fe. Ellas no esperaban ser las primeras testigos de este acontecimiento.

Aunque su nombre no se cita de forma explícita María Magdalena estaba con los discípulos en el momento de la venida del Espíritu Santo, en Pentecostés (Hch 2,1-12).

Este breve perfil presentado de María Magdalena sería incompleto sino se hablara de ella, con la imagen más popular y desprestigiada que se la ha conocido en la historia: prostituta arrepentida. Los evangelios canónicos no dicen que María Magdalena era una prostituta. El texto de Le 7,36-50, el de la pecadora que unge los pies de Jesús, no dice que era ella.

Aquí me uno al análisis que hace Freitas Faria al respecto: La comunidad lucana dice que Jesús andaba por ciudades y pueblos predicando y que estaba acompañado de mujeres, entre las cuales se encontraba Magdalena, aquella de la que había expulsado siete demonios. Pero, surge la pregunta, en el caso de que fuere ella: ¿por qué la comunidad lucana iba a omitir su nombre? Además, Magdalena aparece en el texto posterior con el adjetivo de ex poseída. ¿Podría ser que este calificativo ha llevado a la Iglesia a identificarla con la mujer prostituta? Si la comunidad de Lucas supiera que la prostituta que ungió a Jesús era Magdalena, no tendría motivos para no decirlo. Si situamos el texto de la pecadora en los comienzos de la vida pública de Jesús, la comunidad de Lucas quiso mostrar que todos los pecadores, como los que siguen al Maestro, deben tener un lugar en la comunidad. Por tanto, la interpretación de Lc 7,36-50, que continuó después en la devoción popular y en el arte, fue un error histórico de los padres de la Iglesia¹².

Muy posiblemente, este análisis favorecía el espíritu machista de los comienzos del cristianismo. Así, Magdalena quedó subestimada en su papel de líder apostólica. Se ha ocultado el liderazgo como apóstol de esta mujer que vistas las características de liderazgo que desempeñó, según la nombran los evangelios, no cabe duda de su ministerio como apóstol.

Por otra parte, desde 1960, la Iglesia católica, en el concilio Vaticano II, reconoció que esta confusión era un error y corrigió las lecturas del día en que se conmemora la memoria de esta mujer. De esto hace ya casi cinco décadas. El capítulo 8 del evangelio de Juan, en el que Jesús se opone a la lapidación de una mujer anónima, acusada de adulterio por unos varones también anónimos. En este momento, en medio de la sacralidad de una fiesta y del templo, Jesús está haciendo unas revelaciones sobre sí mismo, sobre su misión, sobre el Padre. Como parte de estas revelaciones, con una simple frase: “el que esté libre de pecado que arroje la primera piedra”, desbarata al menos ocho siglos de prácticas abusivas contra la mujer, sustentadas en la Ley de Moisés y en la doble moral machista de los varones. Se evidencia que a Magdalena, discípula y apóstol de Jesús, le ha sido ocultada y silenciada su liderazgo, su memoria histórica como mujer creyente. Las propuestas de los textos del Nuevo Testamento son diversas y complementarias. Los evangelios canónicos concuerdan en afirmar que Magdalena tiene una presencia significativa en la pascua de Jesús.

Por otro lado, la literatura apócrifa de los dos primeros siglos la identifica y la reconoce también como una mujer importante, promotora de comunidades y siempre al servicio del seguimiento de Jesús de Nazaret.

2. Magdalena en el círculo de los apóstoles

La cuestión de la pertenencia de mujeres al círculo de los apóstoles cada vez está representando mayor importancia en relación con el debate acerca de la posible ordenación de mujeres. El interés se concentra especialmente en el resultado del estudio de algunos datos bíblicos como hemos visto anteriormente, pero en especial, el que hace referencia al papel desempeñado por María Magdalena en cuanto a la pertenencia de ella al grupo de mujeres que se cuentan entre el grupo de discípulos de Jesús. A ellas no se las denomina for-malmente “discípulas”. Pero se dice de ellas que “seguían” a Jesús, que le “servían”, que “habían subido” con él desde Galilea a Jerusalén. En el marco de estas relaciones se dice con frecuencia que los discípulos “no comprendían”. Acerca de las mujeres no se dice esto. En contraste con los discípulos que habían huido, tres mujeres –según Mc 15,48: *María Magdalena y María de José observaban dónde lo habían puesto* (Mc 16,ss)– son testigos de la muerte y sepultura del Señor.

El envío de María: *Le dice Jesús: Déjame que todavía no he subido al Padre. Ve a decir a mis hermanos: Subo a mi Padre, el Padre de ustedes, a mi Dios, El Dios de ustedes* (Jn 20,17) y el cumplimiento del encargo de predicación: *María Magdalena fue a anunciar a los discípulos: He visto al señor y me ha dicho esto* (Jn 20,18) indican que la cristofanía no debe entenderse como una revelación privada sin ninguna importancia para la comunidad postpascual. Aquí podemos constatar cómo, mientras en la historia de la recepción del Evangelio, la expresión *ver al Señor* formaliza la base del apostolado universal y perpetuo de Pedro y Pablo, en el asunto de Magdalena, pareciera que su función apostólica quedara reducida a un servicio de mensajería a corto plazo.

Según los criterios apostólicos, Magdalena podría haber sido el primer apóstol, especialmente porque Pablo, en 1Cor 9,1, legitima su propia autoridad como apóstol¹³: *Pero, ¿no soy libre?, ¿no soy apóstol?, ¿no he visto a Jesús Señor nuestro?, ¿no son ustedes mi obra de apóstol al servicio del Señor?* ¹⁴ Es cierto que su papel como apóstol no puede provenir del mundo textual del evangelio de Juan, ya que éste no hace uso del término apóstol como tal¹⁵, sin embargo, la representación joánica tiene importantes consecuencias para la reconstrucción histórica del cristianismo primitivo y su correspondiente recepción.

Por otra parte, en algunos testimonios patrísticos y medievales, María de Magdala es nombrada explícitamente como “*apostóla*” (título otorgado por la Iglesia occidental)¹⁶.

Los evangelios presentan a Magdalena como una testigo fiel desde el comienzo de los milagros de Jesús en Galilea hasta su muerte en la cruz y, según la concepción reflejada en Hch 1,21ss, no se la considera como digna del apostolado debido a su género. Lucas tiene una concepción cerrada del apostolado como circunscrito al grupo de los Doce (aunque originalmente tal concepción era abierta). Este paradigma se justifica como único referente de continuidad, autenticidad y legitimidad de la misión primitiva, hecho que modificó de manera fundamental la visión histórica del cristianismo primitivo¹⁷.

Visto lo anterior, y ante la pregunta de si María Magdalena estuvo en el círculo de apóstoles y si desempeñó un ministerio como tal. Bien sabemos que los textos no se podrían referir a ella abiertamente como apóstol, dado el contexto patriarcal en que surgen los textos, así, como también por un lenguaje utilizado totalmente de corte masculino y en cuanto a oficio y roles destinados a las mujeres en aquella época. Sin embargo, podemos tener algunas claridades al respecto.

El testimonio del grupo de mujeres galileas, con María de Magdala a la cabeza, representa el vínculo entre el Jesús prepascual y el Cristo resucitado, en relación con las figuras clave de la profesión de fe primitiva. Respecto a la búsqueda de un referente común en las historias de la mañana pascual, se puede decir, que las mujeres con su presencia, anuncio y compromiso contribuyeron a la constitución de la comunidad de seguidores de Jesús, de tal modo que “el asunto de Jesús” tiene continuidad tras la fase crítica de la crucifixión. María de Magdala es mencionada en primer lugar, y su papel sobresaliente queda evidenciado en la tradición de la profanía¹⁸.

A pesar de que su rol varía en cada uno de los evangelios, todos están de acuerdo en destacar su ejemplar desempeño en el discipulado.

Se puede dibujar un itinerario que va desde su seguimiento y *diakonia* prepascual hasta la misión de predicar y ser testigo, aspectos que son comparables a los asumidos por Pablo, reconocido como apóstol. Con relación a María de Magdala, existía una tradición más amplia, aunque sólo se encuentra algunos datos en el Nuevo Testamento, especialmente en Jn 20,1ss: *El primer día de la semana, muy temprano, cuando todavía estaba oscuro, María Magdalena va al sepulcro y observa que la piedra está retirada del sepulcro...* En los evangelios canónicos, solo en este pasaje se le otorga la palabra, a diferencia de los otros discípulos que guardaban silencio, ella hablaba aquí con las personas que aparecen. No la presentan como parte del grupo de las mujeres, a diferencia de los sinópticos.

En cambio en los textos gnósticos, se la relaciona con las enseñanzas y milagros de Jesús, como su interlocutora. Los círculos gnósticos cristianos, conocedores de la tradición de su primado como testigo del resucitado, la representan como la portadora apostólica más significativa de la tradición. El ejemplo más significativo se encuentra en *el Evangelio según María*, en donde se retoma Jn 20: la ascensión de Jesús hacia el Padre de Jn 20,17 se desarrolla en una visión de la ascensión del alma a la esfera celestial, al mismo tiempo que se tematiza explícitamente un conflicto apostólico entre María y Pedro. Aquí, como en otros escritos apócrifos, se contraponen una discípula llena del Espíritu con el representante del primado masculino. Este escrito tiene cuestionamientos como: la posición de liderazgo de Pedro, la legitimidad de su predicación o incluso su derecho a hablar, mientras que María de Magdala, representante de las mujeres en el grupo de seguidores de Jesús, así como de las mujeres en la comunidad, encarna las pretensiones de autoridad femeninas¹⁹.

¿Es posible que muchos de los seguidores de María, como consecuencia de una marginalización de las tradiciones centradas en las muje-

res, así como de una opresión progresiva de las posiciones de liderazgo femeninas²⁰, encontrarán un “lugar” en grupos gnósticos que adoptaron el significado original de la Magdalena como la testigo y receptora de la revelación del Resucitado?

3. Magdalena y las mujeres hoy

Ante distintas comprensiones en la lectura de los textos que presentan a Magdalena como discípula, apóstol, la pecadora que unge a Jesús, María de Magdala y María de Betania, en la historia de la Iglesia, ha prevalecido la comprensión de ella como una prostituta arrepentida que sigue a Jesús. Renuncia a su “vida de pecado o entrega a los hombres en la prostitución”. Y, aquella mujer que lideró un proceso importante en la comunidad primitiva del cristianismo, como apoyo incondicional de Jesús de Nazaret, queda en un segundo plano o han sido silenciada para los creyentes de hoy.

Este silenciamiento ha permanecido en la Iglesia de Occidente durante 14 siglos. Mientras que la Iglesia de Oriente ha propuesto identidades diferentes para estas dos representaciones (la pecadora arrepentida y la discípula a quien Jesús resucitado se evidencia). Por otra parte, el Concilio Vaticano II intenta separar estas dos imágenes otorgadas a Magdalena. Sin embargo, aún hoy, algunos predicadores, leen un texto evangélico en el que muestran a Magdalena como primera testigo de la resurrección y enseguida hacen una predicación acerca de la historia de la prostituta arrepentida. Tal pareciera, que esta es una imagen que atrae mucho más a los varones que la imagen de una mujer líder eclesial.

Hoy, gracias al aporte de las ciencias sociales y a otra clase de aproximaciones al análisis de textos bíblicos, permite ofrecer nuevos matices acerca de ella y del grupo de mujeres que seguían y apoyaban a Jesús.

Si reconocemos la pertinencia de la teología paulina en cuanto al origen de la Iglesia dada por la autoridad de los/las testigos/as de la muerte y resurrección de Jesús de Nazaret, tendríamos que asumir responsablemente la centralidad de la misión de Magdalena como uno de los cimientos de esa comunidad en sus inicios. Reconocimiento que la Iglesia institucional ha desconocido y que la tradición ha recogido, pero no siempre valorado. Esta tensión eclesial también la hemos evidenciado en el canon. Sin embargo, al leer el cuarto evangelio en contratexto con los sinópticos, nos damos cuenta del peso de la tradición de las mujeres que el texto tiene. La eclesiología consignada en el evangelio de Juan es más igualitaria y presenta a la mujer con un papel más significativo.

La tensión vivida no solamente en la comunidad cristiana primitiva, sino en la historia de la Iglesia por ocultar o silenciar este trabajo de liderazgo de Magdalena, es también, la tensión que viven en las igle-

sias muchas mujeres que ejercen un liderazgo significativo, pero que las estructuras de poder patriarcales, intentan ocultar. Tensión eclesial que muestra los juegos de poder e intencionados en el manejo de mujeres líderes. Así, como también, en la manera como se narra la historia, cuando se hace del lado de los “ganadores” o “triunfadores”, desconociendo el trabajo de las mujeres.

Es importante devolver o visualizar la identidad y el papel de María Magdalena en los evangelios y en la historia de la Iglesia, también es importante recuperar la identidad de otras tantas, en los evangelios, en la Iglesia y en el mundo de hoy, que dejan huella con su trabajo silencioso, subversivo, o resiliente. Sus acciones se tornan en modelo de servicio de discipulado, y de anuncio “apostólico” a la Iglesia de hoy.

Afirmar que María Magdalena no fue una prostituta arrepentida no es descontaminarla de su ser de mujer y/o de su sexualidad... se trata por el contrario de desenmascarar una mentira y de mostrar el contexto en el que se produce y el porqué de este proceso histórico de acallamiento de su labor. El verdadero impacto de Magdalena y de otras mujeres en la historia del cristianismo, posiblemente no se llegue a descubrir en su total dimensión hoy, pero sí es claro que nuestra labor desde la teología es avanzar en este camino, porque la distorsión y el silencio del ejercicio ministerial es una deuda que mujeres y varones creyentes tenemos hoy con nuestra propia historia de vida y con el pasado.

No puedo finalizar este artículo sin hacer alusión al sentido y significado que el lenguaje comporta para las personas hoy. Si consideramos la significación del lenguaje que a diario utilizamos, él nos acerca a las realidades más sutiles y de pronto imperceptibles, como a las realidades trascendentes y de sentido que marcan u orientan nuestra existencia. El lenguaje cotidiano, en lo referido a la llamada experiencia de fe, puede estar cargado de religiosidad y aquello que se expresa a través de éste, puede proponer contenidos teológicos, que al ser comunicados pueden provocar diferentes reacciones en quienes escuchan o reciben estas palabras. La pregunta que surge es: ¿qué aspectos o características hace que este lenguaje pueda significar más para quien lo escucha? ¿En qué medida puede ser provocador, motivante? O, por el contrario, dispersador? Cuando el lenguaje religioso cotidiano está en la posibilidad de suscitar nuevos sentidos y preguntarse acerca de las prácticas, también está en la posibilidad de generar nuevas transformaciones en las mismas. Así, podremos decir que éstas prácticas han significado algo y han producido un efecto significativo. En otras palabras, es importante el valor que tienen las palabras en producir un efecto. Podemos hablar de un lenguaje autoimplicativo. Es la posibilidad de incluirse en el acto hablante, en el contenido lógico de lo expresado. Hecho que conlleva a “estar afectado

por las palabras pronunciadas”, por tanto, he pronunciado una palabra con sentido transformador.

Cuando el lenguaje ordinario es capaz de generar sentidos y preguntar por las prácticas produciendo transformaciones en las mismas, tenemos que decir que este ha significado algo y ha producido el efecto significado. A estos factores, efecto y significación se refiere la teoría de la performatividad del lenguaje y desde esta consideración de la performatividad, es decir, la capacidad que tiene la palabra de producir un efecto, nos remitimos igualmente a la autoimplicación, o sea la capacidad de estar incluido el sujeto que habla en el contenido lógico de lo dicho; esto conlleva el que soy afectado por el discurso pronunciado en el juego complejo de los elementos sintácticos, semánticos y pragmáticos que me señalan que he pronunciado una palabra con sentido transformador.

Por tanto, no es lo mismo hablar de Magdalena como aquella mujer arrepentida, convertida que sigue a Jesús. Que “anunciarla” y “nombrarla” como aquella que estuvo presente en los momentos significativos en la vida Jesús, como también en su Pascua y la misión que ejerció en todo el proceso constructivo de la iglesia primitiva. No es lo mismo que la mujer de hoy sea nombrada como “pecadora, o “culpable”, y se le invite a la conversión y siga a Jesús. Que ser nombrada, con palabras claves que se pueden ver y seguir en Pedro, Pablo y el grupo de los apóstoles fieles a la misión del Reino.

Notas

- ¹ Cfr. FREITAS FARIA, J., *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*, 136.
- ² Bien sabido es el contexto patriarcal en que fueron escritos estos textos y la posterior pugna al interior de las comunidades nacientes por opacar el desempeño de las mujeres en el movimiento de Jesús.
- ³ Cfr. Mt 10, 1-4; Mc 3, 13-19; Lc 6, 12-16. Quizá, la intención fuese conectarlos con las doce tribus de Israel: Mt 19, 28; Lc 22, 30.
- ⁴ Cfr. FREITAS FARIA, J., *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*, 119.
- ⁵ Cfr. DE BOER, Esther. *María Magdalena, más allá del mito*, 34.
- ⁶ Citado por Ángela BERLIS, "Een magnetisch veld: María Magdalena van Mágdala", en *María van Nazaret – Schrif*, nº 205, Tilburg, 2003, 9.
- ⁷ Cfr. DEN BORN, A., Van, *Dicionário enciclopédico da Bíblia*, Vozes, Petrópolis, 1987, 365-366.
- ⁸ Cfr. De FREITAS FARIA. *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*, 119.
- ⁹ Cfr. BERNABÉ, Carmen. María Magdalena y los siete demonios. En: *María Magdalena. De apóstol a prostituta y amante*, 48-49.
- ¹⁰ ESTÉVEZ, Elisa. *El poder de una mujer creyente*, 97.

- 11 Cfr. De FREITAS FARIA. *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*, 123.
- 12 Cfr. *ibid.* 126.
- 13 Cfr. 1 Cor 15,8ss; Gal 1,10-17 con las mismas fórmulas primitivas de experiencia de vocación y revelación que se encuentran en Jn 18, puestas en boca de María
- 14 También se puede confrontar con estos textos: *Por último se me apareció a mí, que soy como un aborto. Porque yo soy el último entre los apóstoles y no merezco el título de apóstol, porque perseguí a la Iglesia de Dios. Gracias a Dios soy lo que soy, y su gracia en mí no ha resultado estéril, ya que he trabajado más que todos ellos; no yo, sino la gracia de Dios conmigo. Con todo, tanto yo como ellos, proclamamos lo mismo y esto es lo que ustedes han creído (1Cor 15,8-11); ¿Busco acaso la aprobación de los hombres? ¿O la de Dios? ¿Intento agradar a los hombres? Si todavía quisiera agradar a los hombres, no sería servidor de Cristo... (Gal 1,10ss).*
- 15 Juan introduce el término de mensajero y enviado (Jn 13,16) No hace alusión al término apóstol, sino discípulo, pero las características con las que se refiere a éste son las mismas.
- 16 Cfr. TASCHL-ERBER, Andrea. *María Magdalena ¿Primer apóstol?*, en NAVARRO Mercedes - PERRONI Marinella (eds.), *Los Evangelios. Narraciones e historia*, Verbo Divino, Estella 2011, 446.
- 17 *Ibid.* 453.
- 18 El libro de los Salmos maniqueos (s IV) (Sal 187) Jesús la envía a los Once, que, en lugar de ser pescadores de hombres, han vuelto a su antigua tarea de pescadores, con la finalidad de reconducir estas ovejas perdidas a su pastor. También, en otro lugar en donde se enumera a los discípulos, se la describe como "la que arroja la red" para capturar a los otros once que están perdidos (Sal 192,21ss) Citado por Taschl-Erber, *María Magdalena, ¿Primer Apóstol?*, 543.
- 19 TASCHL-ERBER, A., *ibid.*, 454.
- 20 Cfr. 1 Tm 2ss.
- 21 AUSTIN señala tres clases de actos hablantes: 1. Acto locucionario, el hecho de decir algo, 2. Acto ilocucionario, aquello que se realiza al decir algo, 3. Acto perlocucionario, aquello que se realiza por el hecho de haber realizado un acto ilocucionario. El acto ilocucionario es la propuesta hecha para este contexto de recuperar la identidad propia de María de Magdala, es decir, un hecho performativo; y el perlocucionario, es aquel que genera una acción de transformación, de performatividad. Cfr. *¿Cómo hacer cosas con palabras?*, 94.

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The Ministry of Mary Magdalene

A performable referring for the woman today

Socorro VIVAS
Bogotá, Colombia

My purpose is to show the job made by Mary Magdalene according to the gospels. Remarking in her actions the proper characteristics of her apostolate, depending on the time and to identify in those actions and in her language dynamic elements, “inciting” performable for the woman in the church. It is not about to present a theme in itself towards the ministry of this woman but a proposal of a way to follow.

1. Who says Mary was according the canonical books?

Mary de Magdalene, o Miriam de Magdala, named this way referring to her place of origin. A harbor city and also a colony of fishermen, located on the western shore of the Lake Genesareth. She is a kind of controverted character in the canonical tradition. About her personality, there are two images which have been transferred in the collective unconscious: in one way she was a witness of the resurrection and on the other way she was a repented prostitute. It is said that she was a pupil / apostle of Jesus of Nazareth. She supported his cause with her presence and her goods and chattels. She was a leader among the first Christians communities. She is said to be the first of the resurrection of the Master. There is a little knowledge about Mary Magdalene, and the searching of her historic figure has to be complemented in different texts. The canonical gospels an also in the reading of the apocryphal texts. She was healed by Jesus and seven demons were expelled from her. This affirmation endeavor presenting a process of transformation. We know that the number seven is symbolic. It means unity. With this we are told about Mary Magdalene that after “this cure”, she personify a new woman.

It does not exist any text in or out the Gospels, which indicates that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute or a public sinner. Nevertheless, because of explicit unknown reasons, since the third century, her public actions

were hidden and it was emphasized the job of prostitution or sinner or the woman who washed the feet of Jesus –in the Gospel of Lucas–. The role performed by Magdalene in her relation with Jesus show us that she could not be prostitute woman in the wrong interpretation of the canonical texts. Abandoned, she was welcome by Jesus who expelled the demons out of her body. In all this it is evident the union of evil possession with the sexuality¹. On the other hand, in the extracanonical gospels Magdalene stopped being prostitute of the roman army in order to follow Jesus, image than reinforce this appellative and it does not correspond to the one presented in the gospels.

In The New Testament, only the gospels (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John) offer to us information about her personality and her apostolic activity. I underline some representatives that help us to show her role in the rising church.

1.1. Apostle woman

The traditional interpretation, in the canonical books, does not identify Mary Magdalene as an apostle² we can perceive this tone in the texts: Mary Magdalene is quoted, in the first place among the women who accompanied Jesus since the beginning of their action in Galilea: *Then He went through villages and towns proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God. He was accompanied by the twelve and some women who were recovered from evil spirits and illnesses: Mary Magdalene, from whom, seven demons were ejected* (Lk 8,1.3). *Many women, that had accompanied and served Jesus from Galilea, were there, looking at the distance. Among them, there were Mary Magdalene, Mary, Santiago's mother and the Zebedee's mother* (Mt 27,55-56). *Looking at the distance, there were some women, among them Mary Magdalene, Mary Santiago's mother, the youngest, and Joseph's, and Salome, who, at the time they were in Galilea had followed and served Jesus and many others who had going up with Him to Jerusalem* (Mk 15,40-41).

To be quoted in the first place and *walking with Jesus* are important data to understand the apostolic ministry of Mary Magdalene. These narrations present the women under a different manner from the crowds. She makes a pause to name them and to ask what they did following Jesus. Magdalene was with Jesus from the beginning of her ministry in Galilea. It is one of the aspects that justifies the title of apostle. It happened the same to Peter, John, and the other men who followed Jesus. Peter is also quoted as the first among the men apostles. Magdalene appears under a discreet manner as an apostolic leader in the canonicals. Thus she is quoted this way, despite the context, it is because the community really identify her as she was.

The gospels try to reduce the role of Magdalene when they say that she and other women served Jesus with their resources. The tradition tries to show that apostle is not the same as disciple: the apostle would have been with Jesus from the very beginning of his mission up to the Ascension and also like witness of his resurrection (Acts 1,21-22). The neotestamentary tradition suggests that in the beginning Jesus reserved this title for the twelve apostles³.

Magdalene accompanied Jesus and was the first who saw his resurrection. Jesus called her by her name and she is asked to announce that he resurrected. Is there another major proof than this? Then why wasn't she considered an apostle?⁴ The reason because of which they kept silent seems to be another : the machismo, the patriarchal culture, the misogyny al every aspect of woman exclusion, it is possible this could be a reason for which they wanted her to be appear like a prostitute, for taking away not only her credibility but her leadership. It quite seems that her actions and words were insignificant just because she was a woman.

1.2. Woman pupil beloved by Jesus

When Jesus died on the cross, three women, three Mary were close to the tomb: Mary his mother, Mary, Cleona's wife and Mary Magdalene. Jesus sees his beloved pupil and offers him as a mother his own mother. One must take care of the each other's life. Among the specialists, the exact number of people who were at the foot of the cross is discussed.

Esther de Boer works the hypothesis that at the foot of the cross there only were Magdalene y Mary, Jesus's mother and this one, for the first time would be mentioned not only like the "mother of" but also like the "Cleona's mother". When Boer says that Mary, probably, could be "the beloved pupil", Jesus would be giving Mary, his mother, a new son, that is Mary Magdalene. The expression "son" according Boer does not mean a man, necessarily. It can be thought that, more than once, a masculine expression also includes a woman⁵.

In the tradition, it is John who is called the beloved disciple. The Boer's new interpretation is provocative. We would be saying that the beloved disciple could be Mary Magdalene. Following the resurrection of Jesus, John received at home to Jesus's mother: *Then he says to the disciple: behold thy mother. And from that moment, the disciple took her home* (Jo 19,27). Thus, the two opposite poles –Mary Jesus's mother and Magdalene– would be united and thus the origin and the vocation of Jesus were placed next to each other⁶. Mary, the pure and Magdalene the sinner are united.

Moreover it is possible the explanation that Magdalene was the beloved disciple, but given the context in which it was written and the pressure of the orthodoxy of the moment referring to the women it is unthinkable that this happened, therefore it was placed “loved” by the name of John. Looking at the sequence of events, we realized that Magdalene does not lose time to go to the tomb while John disappears from the scene.

1.3. Woman possessed by seven demons

He was accompanied by the twelve and some women who had been healed of evil spirits and illnesses: Mary Magdalene, from whom, went out seven devils (Lk 8,2). What is the significance of this fact in Magdalene’s life? Why seven demons? “Demon” is a term originating from the Greek culture, which believed it was a spirit of a deceased who had supernatural powers or even an intermediate being between divinity and a human being⁷. In Mk 16,9 the demon appears incorporated to a nasty spirit. To be part of the Jesus’s convocation means to get free from demon. Jesus threw seven devils out Magdalene; a perfect number for those who opposed to the Kingdom⁸ Magdalene overcame all evil forces that obstructed her from being with God. After This episode, she is prepared to be an apostle and she does not abandon Jesus, not after his death.

On the other hand, we can say that in Luke’s disease is not tied to a simple organic dysfunction, but it involves the integration of the individual in the context and in the space, it inhabits in his family and social relationships. It also has to do with the shared cognitive system. It aims to make possible or facilitated a meaningful life but it can go into crises at certain times and for certain persons⁹. What is important is not the morbid aspect of the disease as such, but the cultural construction at the moment.

Elisa Estevez states that all physical suffering reveals an imbalance and transgression of social boundaries. It reflects an anomaly in the structure and organization that these groups have imposed themselves. It means that the comprehension of physical illness is linked to the beliefs of the ancient Mediterranean about the valuation of the human nature, and the definition of the personal identities and the roles played in the society. Therefore, healing before recovery of the physical condition, it represents a restoration of social harmony and the place the person holds in it¹⁰.

After have said that we can say that in the reports of Luke there are abundant healings made on women, which could have to do with the identities of roles of them in that social environment and with the leadership and role that Magdalene was playing in those communities.

1.4. Woman without family ties

Other women that appear in the New Testament always do it but associated to their husband, or their son or home (Mary, mother of Jesus, Mary, Cephas's wife...); Magdalene, however, is named in the texts with no kinship. She was always linked to the name of Jesus for have been liberated from the seven demons. Therefore, Jesus is the only man who outlines his person and his identity, face to the construction of the Kingdom of God, as Jesus announced.

1.5. Woman that testifies the death of Jesus

Magdalene is at the foot of cross when Jesus died. When Joseph de Arimathea prepared the burial, Magdalene with Mary the mother of Santiago, accompanied the development of the events. Magdalene was sitting near the tomb; she saw that the body was placed on the tombstone.

She did not run away, as Peter did. It is well known that the testimony of a woman at that time was not taken into account. Instead, Peter's words, for being a man, were listened. That is why he denied his closeness to Jesus; Peter knew that it could bring him the death. Magdalene, woman and beloved, knew that her beloved could not die.

1.6. Woman that testifies the resurrection "I have seen the Lord"

John's community preserved the memory of that Mary Magdalene was the woman who saw and spoke to the Risen from death. Magdalene went alone to the tomb to see the body of Jesus. Also, Mathew, Marc, Luke report that Magdalene went to the grave with the mother of Santiago, Jane, Salome and other women (Mt 28,1; Mk 16,1; Lk 24,10) However, it has to take into account that the writing of Marc's gospel added -chapter 9, 1-9- according to the opinion of the exegetes, it says that Jesus came back from death early on the first day of the week and he appeared first to Mary Magdalene from whom he had taken out seven demons. The joy of the resurrection prompted her the desire to announce the event to her fellow brother to her ministry.

The canonical Gospels organize the text, so that Peter had to go to the grave to confirm that Magdalene was telling the truth (Lk 24, 12) He came back astonished because he only saw the shroud and not the body of Jesus. The community of Mark says that the apostles did not believe in the testimony of women (Mk 10,16).

Magdalene finishes her intervention in the gospels talking firmly from whom loves and believes so much: "I have seen the Lord" (Jo 20,18). *The Mary Magdalene gospel* deepens in this view. Any way Peter and Andrew are skeptical to the testimony of Mary Magdalene¹¹.

1.7. Woman experiencing to be afraid to proclaim that Jesus rose from the dead

The community of Marc has said that Mary Magdalene, Mary, Santiago's mother and Salome bought spices, and then they went to the tomb, early in the morning, the first day of the week to anoint Jesus. When they arrive to the place, they saw that the stone had been moved and that the body was not there. A young man dressed in white spoke to them saying that they must inform that to the disciples and to Peter Jesus is risen and they can see Him in Galilee. Trembling with fear, Magdalene and the women ran away and did not tell anyone such a thing (Mk 16,18).

That narrative, contrary to the others wanted to show that also the faithful women, Peter and the other disciples wavered in their faith. The women did not expected to be the first witnesses to this event.

Although her name is nor mentioned, Mary Magdalene was with the disciples at the time of the coming of the Holy Spirit in Pentecost (Acts 2,1-12).

This brief profile of Mary Magdalene would be incomplete without reference of her with the most popular and tarnished image that has been known in the history: a repentant prostitute.

The canonical gospels do not say that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. The text of Lk 7,36-50, the one, the sinner that anointed the Jesus's feet, does not say she was.

At this point, I join to the analysis Freitas Farias carries out at this regard: The Lucan community says that Jesus walked through the towns and villages preaching and he was accompanied by women, and among them Mary Magdalene was, and from whom seven demons were taken out. However, the question arises: Why the Lucan community would omit her name? Besides, Magdalene appears on the subsequent text with the adjective of ex-possessed. Could it be that this qualifier has made the church to identify her with the prostitute woman?

If Lucan community would know that the prostitute who anointed Jesus was Magdalene, it would not have any reasons for not saying it. If we placed the text of the sinner at the begging of Jesus's public life, the Luke's community wanted to show that every sinner like the ones that were following the Master, should have a place in the community. Therefore, the interpretation of Lk 7,36-50, that after continued in the popular devotion and in the art, it was a historic mistake of the Church Fathers¹².

Quite possibly, this analysis supported the macho spirit of the early Christianity. Therefore, Magdalene was underestimated in her role of apostolic leader. It has been hidden the leadership of this woman as

an apostle, and she performed her leadership, all the characteristics have been seen, and the gospels named her, there is no doubt of her ministry as an apostle.

Moreover, since 1960, the Catholic Church, in the Second Vatican Council recognized that this confusion was a mistake and corrected the readings of the day when the memory of this woman is remembered. This is nearly five decades ago. In chapter eight, in gospel of John, in which Jesus is opposed to the lapidation of an anonymous woman accused of adultery by some anonymous men. In that moment, in the middle of the sacredness of the celebration and the Temple, Jesus is making some revelations about Himself, about his mission, about the Father. As part of these revaluations, with a simple phrase: “He who is without sin cast the first stone”, He wrecks at least eight centuries of abusive practices against the women supported by the Law of Moses, and the double morality of the macho men. It is evident that for Magdalene, disciple and apostle of Jesus, her leadership and her historic memory as a believing woman have been hidden and make them silent. The proposals in the texts in the New Testament are diverse and complementary. The canonical gospels agree that Magdalene has a significant presence in the Easter of Jesus.

On the other hand, the apocryphal literature of the first two centuries identifies and recognizes her as an important woman, promoter of communities, and she was always at service of the following Jesus of Nazareth.

2. Magdalene in the circle of the apostles

The matter of the women belonging of circle of apostles is representing increasingly greater relevance to the discussion about the possible holy order of women. The interest is particularly focused on the results of the studies of some biblical data, as we can see formerly but especially the one referring to the role performed by Mary Magdalene regarding to her membership to the group of women who are among of the group of disciples of Jesus. They are not formally called “disciples” but about them it is told that they “followed” Jesus and that they “served” him and that they “had come up” with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. In the context of these relationships, it is often said that the disciples-men “did not understand” About women this is not said. In contrast with the disciples that had run away, three women –according to Mk 15,48: *Mary Magdalene and Mary of Joseph observed where he had been placed* (Mk 16ss) they witness the death and the burial of the Lord.

The sending of Mary: *Jesus says to her: I have not gone up to the Father yet. Go told my brothers: I go up to my Father, Your Father, to my*

God. Your God (Jno 20,17) and the fulfilment of the order of preaching: Mary Magdalene went to announce to the disciples: I have seen the Lord and he told me this (Jo 20,18) indicate that the christophany should not be understood as a private revelation of no importance for the post-Easter community. Here we can see how in the history of the reception of the Gospel, the expression “see the Lord” formalize the basis of the universal and perpetual ministry of Peter and Paul in the matter of Magdalene, it seems that her apostolic mission is reduced to a short service of messages.

According to the apostolic criteria, Magdalene could have been the first apostle, especially because Paul, in 1Co 9,1, legitimizes his own authority as an apostle¹³.

*But, am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my apostolic work in the service of the Lord?*¹⁴. It is true that his role as an apostle cannot come from the textual world of the Gospel of John, since it does not use the term as such¹⁵ however; the John’s representation has important consequences for the historical reconstruction of early Christianity and its corresponding reception.

Moreover, in some patristic and medieval testimonies, Mary Magdalene is explicitly named as “apostola” (title awarded by the western Church)¹⁶. The gospels present Magdalene as a faithful witness from the beginning of the Jesus miracles until his death on the cross, and as a reflected conception in Acts 1,21ss she is not considered worthy because of her gender. Luke has a close conception of the apostolate as limited to the group of the twelve (though such a concept was originally open). This paradigm is justified as the only reference for continuity, authenticity, and legitimacy of the early mission, a fact that fundamentally changed the historical vision of early Christianity¹⁷.

Considering the above, and face to the question if Mary Magdalene was in the circle of apostles and if she performed a ministry as such. We know well that the texts could not refer to her as an apostle openly, because of the patriarchal context in which text arise, as well as the language used with a masculine style totally, and also the chores and roles assigned to women in that time. Nevertheless, we can have some clarities regarding this issue.

The testimony of a group of Galilean women, with Mary Magdalene at the head, represents the link between the pre-Easter Jesus and the risen Christ related to the principal figures and the profession of the primitive faith. Regarding the search for a common in the stories of the Easter morning, it can be said that women and their presence announced

the commitment and collaborated to the constitution of the community of followers of Jesus, so that “the issue of Jesus” has continued after the critical phase of the crucifixion.

Mary Magdalene is mentioned first, and her outstanding role is evident in the tradition of protophany¹⁸. Although her role varies in each of the gospels, everybody agrees on highlighting her remarkable performance in the discipleship. A path can be drawn that goes from her following and diakony pre-Easter, up to the mission of preaching and being a witness, both of which are comparable to those made by Paul, a recognized apostle. Regarding to Mary of Magdalene, there was a wider tradition, but only some data are found in the New Testament, especially in Jo 20,1ss: *The first day, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene goes to the grave and notes that the stone is away from the tomb...* In the canonical gospels only in this passage, she is given the word, unlike the others who were silent, here, she spoke to the appearing people. She is not presented being part of the group of women, not similar to the Synoptic.

In contrast, in the Gnostic texts, she is related to the teaching and miracles of Jesus, as his talker. The Christian Gnostic circles, knowing the primacy of his tradition and being witness of the Risen, represent her as the most significant bearer of apostolic tradition. The most significant example is found in the Gospel of Mary, where Jo 20 resumes: the Ascension of Jesus to the Father of Jo 20,17 it is developed in a vision of ascension of the soul to the celestial sphere, while it explicitly thematizes an apostolic conflict between Mary and Peter. Here, like in other apocryphal writings, a disciple full of the Spirit is contrasted with the representative of the male primacy. This paper is questioned about: Peter's leadership position, the legitimacy of his preaching or even his right to talk, instead, Mary Magdalene representative of women in the group of followers of Jesus, as well as the women of the community that embodies the pretension of the female authority¹⁹.

Is it possible that many of the followers of Mary as a result of a marginalization of traditions centered on women and also a progressive oppression of female leadership's positions²⁰, found a “place” in gnostic groups which adopted the original meaning of the Magdalene as the witness and receiver of the revelation of the Risen?

3. Magdalene and women today

Before the different comprehension in reading the text that present Magdalene as a disciple, apostle, the sinner who anointed Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany. In history of the Church, it has prevailed understanding her like a repentant prostitute who follows Jesus.

She gives up her “life of sin or she delivers men in prostitution” And that woman who led an important process in the primitive community of Christianity as unconditional support of Jesus of Nazareth, she remains in the background or she has been silenced for today believers.

This silencing has remained in the Church of the West for fourteen centuries. While the Eastern Church has propose different identities for these two representations (the repentant sinner and the disciple to whom risen Jesus show her evident). Moreover, the second Vatican Council tries to separate these two images given to Magdalene. However, even today some preachers read an evangelical text that shows Magdalene like the first witness of resurrection and soon they make a preaching about the history of the repentant prostitute. It seems like this image appeals the men more than the image of a church leader woman.

Today, thanks to the contribution of the Social Sciences, and other kinds of approaches to the analysis of biblical text, it can offer new nuances about her and the group of women who followed and supported Jesus. If we recognize the relevance of Pauline theology concerning the origin of Church given by the authority of the witness of death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, we had responsibly assume the centrality of the mission of Magdalene as the foundations of this community at the very beginning. Appreciation that the institutional church has ignored and the tradition has collected but has not always valued. This ecclesial tension we have also evidenced in the canon .But reading the fourth gospel in contrast to the synoptic we realize the weight that the tradition of the women has in the text. Ecclesiology contained in the Gospel of John is more egalitarian and presents woman with a more significant role.

The stress experienced not only in the early Christian community, but in the history of the church to hide or silence Magdalene’s leadership work, is also the tension that many other women, who have a significant leadership, live in the churches, but the structures of patriarchal power try to hide. Ecclesial tension that shows the games of roles that which intention is to handle leader women. It is also noticed in the way how the history is told when they are on the side of “winners”, ignoring the work of women.

It is important to go back and visualize the identity and the role of Magdalene has in the gospels and in the history of the church. It is also important to recover the identity of many others in the gospels, in the church, and in the present world, leaving traces doing a silent work, subversive and resilient. Their actions become a model of service of discipleship and also an announcement to today's church.

Claiming that Mary Magdalene was not a repented prostitute is not to decontaminate her being a woman and her sexuality... it is in contrast to uncover a lie and to show the context where and why the historic process of silencing her work occurs. It is possible that the real impact of Magdalene and the other women in the history of Christianity could not be discovered today in its full dimension, but clearly, our work is to advance from the Theology because the distortion and silence of ministerial exercise is a debt that believing men and women have today with our own life history and the past.

I cannot end this article without mentioning the meaning and significance that a language implies for people today. Considering the significance of the language we daily use it brings us to the more subtle and may be imperceptible realities, as well to the transcendent realities making sense that guide and mark our existence. The everyday language regarding to the so called faith experience can be loaded of religiosity and what is expressed through this could propose theological contents which at the moment to be communicate can cause different reactions to who hear or receive these words.

The question arises: What aspects or features make this language may mean more to the listener? To what extent can be provocative, motivating or on the contrary disperser? When the everyday religious language has the possibility to raise new senses and wonder about the practices, it has also the ability to generate new transformations in them. So, we can say that these practices have meant something and have produced a significant effect. In other words, the value the words have to produce an effect is important. We can talk about a self-implicating language. It is the possibility to be included in the speech act, in the logical contents of the statements. A fact that leads to be affected by the spoken words, thus, I have pronounced a word with a transforming sense.

When the ordinary language is able to generate senses and ask for practices producing transformations in them, we have to say that this has meant something and it has produced the meant effect. To these factors, effect and significance relates the theory of performative of language and from this consideration, the ability of the word to produce an effect. We also refer to self-involvement, or the ability to include the subject that speaks in the logical contents of what was said. It implies that I am touched by the speech pronounced in the complex set of syntactic, semantic and pragmatic elements that point that I have spoken a word with transforming sense.

Therefore, it is not possible to talk about Magdalene, saying she is a repented and converted woman, and she followed Jesus, rather than

announce and name her like the woman who was present in the significant moments in the Jesus's life, also in his Easter and the mission she exercised throughout the construction process of the early church.

It is not the same that women today are called "sinners" or "guilty" and are invited to conversion and follow Jesus, than to be named with key words that can be seen and followed in Peter, Paul and the group of apostles faithful to the mission of Kingdom.

Notes

- 1** Cfr. DE FREITAS FARIA, J. *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*, 136
- 2** It is well known in the patriarchal context were these text were written and the later struggle into the rising community to fade the women performance in the Jesus movement.
- 3** Cfr. Mt 10, 1-4; Mc 3, 13-19; Lk 6, 12-16. May be the intention was connect them to the twelve tribes of Israel: Mt 19, 28; Lk 22, 30.
- 4** Cfr. DE FREITAS FARIA, J. *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*, 119.
- 5** Cfr. DE BOER, Esther. *María Magdalena más allá del mito*, 34.
- 6** Quoted by Angela BERLIS, "E in magnetischveld: Mary Magdalene van Magdalene", in *Mary van Nazareth* – Schrif, No. 205, Tilburg, 2003, 9.
- 7** Cfr. DEN BORN, A.Van, *Dicionário Eciclopédico da Bíblia*, Vozes, Petrópolis, 1987, 365-366.
- 8** Cfr. DE FREITAS FARIA. *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*.
- 9** Cfr. BERNABE, Carmen. Mary Magdalene and the seven demons. En: Mary Magdalene. From apostle to prostitute and lover, 48-49.
- 10** ESTEVEZ, Elisa. El poder de una mujer creyente, 97.
- 11** Cfr. DE FREITAS FARIA. *El otro Pedro y la otra Magdalena según los apócrifos. Una lectura de género*, 123.
- 12** Cfr. *Ibid.* 126.
- 13** Cfr. 1 Co 15, 8ss; Gal 1,10-17 with the same primitive formulas of experience, vocation and revelation that are found in Mary's mouth.
- 14** It can also be confronted with these texts: Finally, he appeared to me, I am like an abortion. Because I am the last of the apostles and I do not deserve the title of apostle because I persecuted the Church of God. Thank God I am what I am, and his grace to me has not been sterile because I worked harder than all of them, not me but the grace of God with me. However, as much they proclaim the same and this is what you believed (1 Co 15, 8-11); perhaps I seek the approval or men or God? Do I try to please men? If I want to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ (Gal 1, 10ss).
- 15** John introduces the term messenger or sent. It does not refer to the term apostle, but disciple, but the features regarding to him are the same.
- 16** TASCHL-ERBER, Andrea, *María Magdalena, ¿Primer Apóstol?*, in NAVARRO Mercedes - PERRONI Marinella (eds.), *Los Evangelios. Narraciones e historia*, Verbo Divino, Estella 2011, 446.

17 *Ibid.* 453.

18 The Book of the Manichaeian Psalms (s IV) (Sal 187) Jesus sends the eleven who instead of being fishers of men have returned to their old task of fishermen, in order to bring back these lost sheep to their shepherd. Also, in another place where the disciples are listed, She is describes as "the one who casts the net" to capture the other eleventh who are lost (Psalm 192, 21ss) Quoted by Taschl-Erber, *María Magdalena, ¿Primer Apóstol?*, 543.

19 TASCHL-ERBER, A., *ibid.*, p. 454

20 Cfr. 1 Tm 2ss.

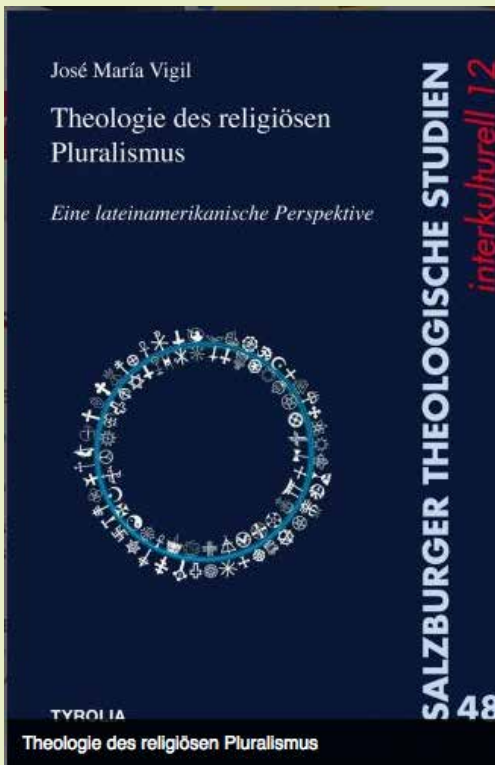
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Theologie des Religiösen Pluralismus

Eine lateinamerikanische Perspektive

José María VIGIL



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José María VIGIL nähert sich dem Thema des religiösen Pluralismus durch eine "lateinamerikanische" Methodologie, die dem bekannten Schema "Sehen, Urteilen, Handeln" folgt. Aus historischer und aktueller Perspektive entfaltet er zunächst die Tatsache der religiösen Pluralität in der Welt. Im zweiten Schritt stellt er verschiedene Instrumentarien vor, die diese Wirklichkeit erläutern und interpretieren helfen. Er bespricht verschiedene Paradigmen des religiösen Pluralismus und betrachtet ihn unter biblischem, ekklesiologischem und christologisch-dogmatischem Blickwinkel. Schließlich führt er im letzten

Teil des Buches wieder in die konkrete Lebenswelt der Menschen, zum "Handeln", und entfaltet eine neue Spiritualität und eine neue Dialogpraxis.

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Feminist Theology on Ecofeminist Practices in America Latina: Problems and challenges in the 21st century

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Introduction

In a century where women are conquering more and more spaces in all levels: academy, literature, arts, economy and politics, some churches still have not considered gender issues seriously. Pope Francis seems inclined to hear the women: he has opened the discussion on many important social items like the situation of divorced couples, sexual diversity, ecology, reproductive issues, but he is still very discrete in what refers to the women's role in church. During the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Feb. 9, 2015, he affirmed a new paradigm of 'reciprocity and equivalence in the difference': *The man-woman relationship should recognize that both are necessary as they have an identical nature but with different modality*. The Pope has been clear about women's ordination: according to Pope Francis, this is out of question!

Brazilian theologian Ivone Gebara, in an interview to ADITAL¹ said that Pope Francis is attentive to women issues, he tries to understand our claims, but as he lives inside masculine ecclesial structures, do not have conditions to give revolutionary steps to, in fact, promote the necessary innovation for today's world. 'He is a product of his time, of his clerical formation and the limits that it covers'. Gebara is of the opinion that the necessary changes should start from below, from the people's lives and behavior. And she adds: 'of course, the changes from the top are very welcome and necessary, but they will hardly happen if the people's secular behavior of submission do not change.'

Besides the women's roles in church, which involves the ordained ministries, the most difficult point of discussion is what refers to body, sexuality, reproductive health and rights. Ecofeminist struggles point out women's rights for the control of their body and life and a more sustainable relationship with the environment in order to achieve a full citizenship.

Women and Solidary Economy: a means of ecology preservation

Many are the reasons of poverty in Latin American countries, but one of them is the migration due to lack of opportunity, lack of water, illegal land exploitation etc in some poor regions of our continent. The lack of water by lack of rains, the destruction of forests due to illegal wood cut, the hegemonic practices of nature appropriation, in short, the devastation of traditional means of survival, have struck specially women, as they are who traditionally pick up the pieces with redoubled work. If water is polluted and scarce, women walk twice as far to carry it on their heads. If money is short, women plant domestic gardens to produce vegetables to sustain daily life. Women go out to be a cleaner or a cooker in the houses of the rich families or to make handicrafts to sell their products in the streets.

In the poor families, women are in general poorer than the males of their own families as they are the ones who take care of the children or the elders, or the sick people in the family, providing food, care and protection. Mothers are so concerned about their children's well being that they are often found malnourished and sick for overwork and/or lack of health care.

The situation of non-life of poor women in the Third World is the reason of decease of millions of women and children up to one year old. This phenomenon is known as "poverty feminization". Feminist theologian Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza points out the main reasons of this phenomenon. She asserts that there is an economic system separated for women, generated by the patriarchal separation between public sphere and private feminine domain. This economic system presupposes that the whole family is always headed by a father who works and sustains the family. In old times, women who worked only did it temporarily. Therefore, the low salaries paid to women were justified, as well as the lower responsibility positions. Their wages were supplementary, not to maintain a family. The consequence of this economic system separated for women gave origin to the *poverty feminization*².

This phenomenon is still worsened by racism. The women of color – black, brown, yellow – according to all statistics earn less and have less opportunity of good job than the white women.

The feminist movement in Brazil has been effective in their work with poor women. For example, since the 1970s, feminist agents had an educational prospect to work with the poor women in the periphery of the big cities, instructing them how to deal with their sexuality and informing about their reproduction rights. Some of these women participated at CEBs (Ecclesial Base Communities) in the big cities. It is unbelievable, but some of these women were married to social activists – of the left hand parties - who were good at claiming for political policies for the poor communities, but at home they used to oppress their wives. The feminists, using the method of auto-esteem raise through workshops and seminars, taught those women that they were more than mothers and wives, that they were persons with full rights as citizens. Women were taught to spend some minutes of their day to take care of their own body by looking at the mirror, combing their hair nicely, putting some make up to look more attractive. Strange as it may seem, some of them did not have the use of looking at their own face in the mirror, for many years, as the male oppression inside the house was so strong that they did not consider themselves a person with rights. These women also learned that they could have pleasure in sexual relations and that they had rights as citizens, as much as their male partners. These workshops and seminars took place especially in the decades of the 70s and 80s.

The feminist agents also helped these women, at these decades, to struggle for their citizen rights, going to the streets or after the regional Government institutions to demand for health care, education, and especially for mothering houses and public nurseries for babies so that they could go out to work. That was the beginning of poor women's independence: as they could have a trustful place to leave their small children, during the day, they also became able to enter the labor market.

Due to the public policies for women conquered by the feminist movements, the poor women's situation improved a lot during the last 3 decades. In many regions, even in the very distant ones, women are becoming experts in the development of micro-business of all kinds.

It seems that women at the poor communities have also discovered another type of economy, which is known as *solidary economy*, a fast growing phenomenon in countries known by their economic instability, with high taxes of unemployment and under-employment. This type of economy is considered as a contemporary reaction when the collective action is placed as a possible alternative for its actors which are in the majority, excluded by the formal labor market and the consuming market. Moreover, the solidary economy goes beyond income generation and brings proposals of change in the interpersonal relationship and the environment.

Cooperation and not competition, natural resources preservation, no labor exploitation, equality of power in the decision making inside the business market and responsibility with the local community, where the business is inserted, are the principles which direct this practice. In most of the cases, the women are leading this type of economy, which is organized by means of solidarity and collective work and has a thorough concern with the ecology preservation. As these women were frequently excluded by the formal labor market, it was an alternative activity they found to assure work and income, where the sources were scarce or non-existing.

The action of women in the solidary economy starting from profitable activities opened them a space to become owners of their own economic activity, with the same chances of the male workers through the collective propriety. Income is also better distributed among men and women, as the surplus distribution is based on a democratic principle of equal rights among the members of a collective enterprise, independently of gender.

Women's alternative organizations for survival are becoming major actors in the movements of resistance towards capitalism and globalization as well as an alternative vision of ecologically sustainable forms of development.

The women's movements from Latin America, Europe and Asia have participated in the *World March of Women*³ since its beginning in 2000 which displayed women's capacity of leadership at the World Social Forums⁴ since 2001. Especially at the 2015 Forum in Tunis, the March was able to fully show the empowerment of women, with their discussions on food security, family income, reproductive health/rights, effective public policies and other secondary issues. Women unfolded to be the actors of the daily life in its more concrete expressions, proclaiming their citizenship and the recognition of their dignity in the sphere of society and public life.

Control of women's body: a challenge to the Feminist Theology

Ecofeminist movements and the feminist theology have greatly contributed to the women's empowerment and struggles for the ecology preservation in the last decades. On the other hand, conservative churches, as some Evangelical churches, seem to start an aggressive campaign leadered by ordained male pastors, which follows the prescriptions of their hierarchy: they show a *kyriarchal*⁵ ideology which still associates women with nature, as an object of submission and control, forbidding

them to raise their voice to exercise their authority as Jesus' disciples and apostles. Therefore they still follow biblical texts as the First letter of Timothy chapter 2, 11-15:

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. I do not allow that woman teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence...

The image of subordination and submission of women brings many consequences which should be seriously reflected by the theologians. Women's body and sexuality are still controlled by men in the Catholic church, but women are now contesting this control as we are the ones who get pregnant, who carry a baby for nine months before its delivery, we are the ones who feed the baby and who, in general, grow up a child, teaching her/him the first steps and most frequently the following ones.

The control of women's body can be illustrated by the messages spread out by the churches. Let's give an example from the Roman Catholic Church's practice during lent time. Each year its highest hierarchy CNBB (National Council of Brazilian Bishops) establishes a so called 'Fraternity Campaign', which is an educational activity started in 1963 to raise solidarity within their followers in relation to a concrete problem related to the Brazilian communities.

Since the 1970s, due to the liberation theology influence, social issues have been the theme of such Campaigns. Ever since 1985, the Church has focused on Brazilian themes. Social themes like hunger (1985), land (1986), housing (1991), excluded people (1995), prisoners (1997), drugs (2001), ecology (2011), youth (2013), human traffic (2014) were determined, and also gendered (1990) and racial themes (black people in 1988, indigenous people in 2002) have been chosen. In 2008, the theme was about reproductive rights, with the title *Defense of Life*, in a very conservative perspective and it represented a fragrant disrespect to women's rights. One of the more controversial items was the prohibition of the use of condoms used as a contraceptive method, in some conservative pastorals. On the contrary direction, the feminist movements called a campaign of condoms to prevent sexually transmissible diseases.

The ecofeminist struggle is one of the priority issues of the feminist theology in Latin America as ecology and the ecosystem protection is one of the most recent discussions of the Latin American theologians: this has been theologically debated during the *World Forum of Theology and Liberation*⁶ in Belém, Brazil, in 2009, which theme was *Water, Earth, Theology For Another Possible World*.

The association of the words 'women' and 'ecology' in the construction of the word "ecofeminism" reminds how women, who struggled

for a change in the women-men relationship also started to struggle for a change between their relationship with the ecosystem. This discussion was introduced by the feminist sociologist Françoise d'Eaubonne at the end of the 70's of last century, in France: her debate was made in the political-ideological level, to show her concern on the increasing ecological disaster, as related by Gebara⁷.

The ecofeminism while an idea and a social movement has to do with the ideological connection between nature and women's exploitation inside the patriarchal hierarchical system, as object of domination in view of the capital growth. According to Gebara: *ecofeminism can be considered a wisdom that tries to recuperate the ecosystem and the women*⁸.

The identification of women to nature was due to the physiological functions of reproduction: women during child birth and child feeding were excluded from a more active participation in the culture and politics. Another factor of exclusion is the women's tendency of doing child care, as well as old and unabled persons care.

The control on women's body has to do with birth control and an arbitrary protection of the male's rights. Moreover it is certain that the Institutions like the Roman Catholic Church are very well known for its sexist kyriarchal ideology. In 2010, an astonishing event took place in the Northern part of Brazil. A young teenager girl of 9, but looking like 6 years old, got pregnant of twin children, after being raped. She and her sister of 13 years had been continuously raped by their step father during 3 years. She suffered a medical intervention to stop her pregnancy as the doctor had considered her unable to give birth to her babies. The Brazilian laws allow the interruption of pregnancy in case of rape, until 20 weeks of pregnancy and in case of cerebral malformation. She suffered the surgical abortion, but the regional bishop of Recife, D. José Cardoso Sobrinho published a document informing that he had applied the Canon Law of the Catholic Church to excommunicate the mother and the medical team who assisted the girl in the procedure. The bishop said: "worse than the sexual violation is the abortion". And further he explained that "it is written in the Canon Law that any person who commits abortion is automatically excommunicated." So the girl's mother and the medical team⁹ were informed by the newspapers that they had been excommunicated by the bishop. And paradoxically, the man who raped his daughter in law, who rendered her pregnant, was not even mentioned, no word of condemnation was pronounced toward him. At the end, he looked more a victim than an aggressor! There was no official pronounciation from the part of the hierarchy of the Church.

As a conclusion, we can assert that the rescue of women's integrity in every day life by the feminist theology, includes the struggle for their citizenship and integral rights. These rights include the sexual and the reproductive rights. There are great challenges to be overcome by the feminist theologians. The negative vision of sexuality represented as a malignant energy to be repressed has persecuted either the clergy and the liberation theologians as well. Women have been repressed in their body and sexuality in diverse ways, since the body ignorance, the charge of virginity, the use of sexuality only for procreation. The ignorance of her body induced women to have little control over the number of children they wanted to have. For the liberation theologians, these themes – contraception, abortion, domestic violence, divorce – are often considered irrelevant when they refer to women of working classes. The ethic option in the Liberation Theology asks for life, but the scarcity of mediations – of gender, class, race/ethnicity, generation – led that life would only understood as a material life, linked to food, house, material consumption. The ethical-theological reflection over the reproductive rights as a recurrent fact of women's life can lead to a conscience that life is bigger than the material life. It's a search for a life to the full¹¹.

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- ¹ www.adital.com.br. March 8, 2015.v
- ² SCHÜSSLER FIORENZA, Elisabeth. *Discipulado de Iguais: uma Ekklesia-logia Feminista Crítica da Libertação*, p. 242.
- ³ The *World Women's March* (MMM) is an international feminist movement since 2000 that was inspired in a march held in Canada in 1995 when 850 women walked from Quebec to Montreal against poverty; they achieved an increase in the minimum salary and more rights to the women/ migrant women and support to the solidary economy. They were received in Montreal by fifteen thousand people, the motto of the March was 'Bread and Roses'. By and by the March was strengthened by different campaigns in several countries of the planet, expressing alternatives for the economic, social and cultural areas for the construction of a world founded in principles of equality, freedom, jus-

tice, peace and solidarity among peoples and human beings, respecting the environment and the biodiversity. In Brazil the MMM is very effective since the first World Social Forum in 2001, gathering hundreds of women's groups and movements, from the North to South. In that year the 'Brazilian Women's Letter' was created.

- 4 The *World Social Forum* started in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2001 as an international event held by social movements from the various continents with the goal of creating alternatives for the global social transformation. Its motto is "For another possible world". Since the 2007 it crossed the Atlantic ocean to Africa (Nairobi (Kenya), Dakar (Senegal), Tunis (Tunisia)).
- 5 Elisabeth Schüssler has created the expression 'kyriarchal' in the 90s of last century to define the women's oppression as a structural domination from men over women in a kind of pyramidal hierarchy where the kyrios - Lord - is on the top. Women are at the bottom of the pyramid and the slaves (non-white women) are at the very bottom. Therefore the structure of the pyramidal oppression is sustained by the multiplying structures of control, exploitation and dehumanization: the oppressive forces of heterosexuality are multiplied by racism, poverty, cultural imperialism, military colonialism, homophobia and religious fundamentalism. SCHUSSLER, E. F. *Violence against Women*. p.11
- 6 The *World Forum of Theology and Liberation* is an event organized by worldwide theologians with the goal of global social transformation, which follows the World Social Forum since its beginning, wherever it happens. In general, it is held at the same days of the WSF offering round tables of theological discussion and trying to fully participate in the general social discussions.
- 7 GEBARA, Ivone. *Teologia Ecofeminista*, p. 9.
- 8 *Ibid, idem*, p.10
- 9 Very recently, on Feb. 19, 2016, the digital newspaper BBC showed an article where the doctor who made this abortion, Olimpio Morais, is now being again excommunicate - 'by the second time' it says - by the Catholic Church for now he is in favour of the women who want to do abortion when they find out that the child has microcephaly, due to the zica virus.
- 10 TOMITA, Luiza. "Por uma ética feminista de resgate dos direitos reprodutivos como direito de cidadania das mulheres", p. 194-195.
- 11 John 10,10.



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The Genesis of an Asian Theology of Liberation



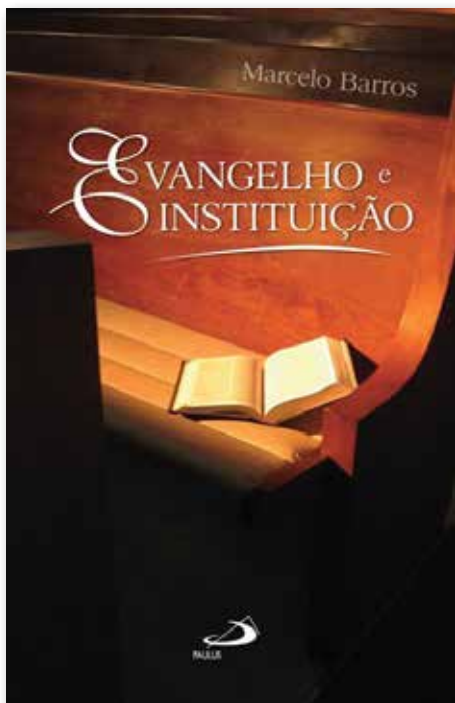
An Autobiographical
Excursus on the
Art of Theologizing
in Asia

*Aloysius
Pieris,
s.j.*

Tulana Research Centre,
Gonawala-Kelaniya
Sri Lanka, 2013



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BARROS, Marcelo, *Evangelho e instituição*. Paulus, São Paulo 2014, 204 pp.

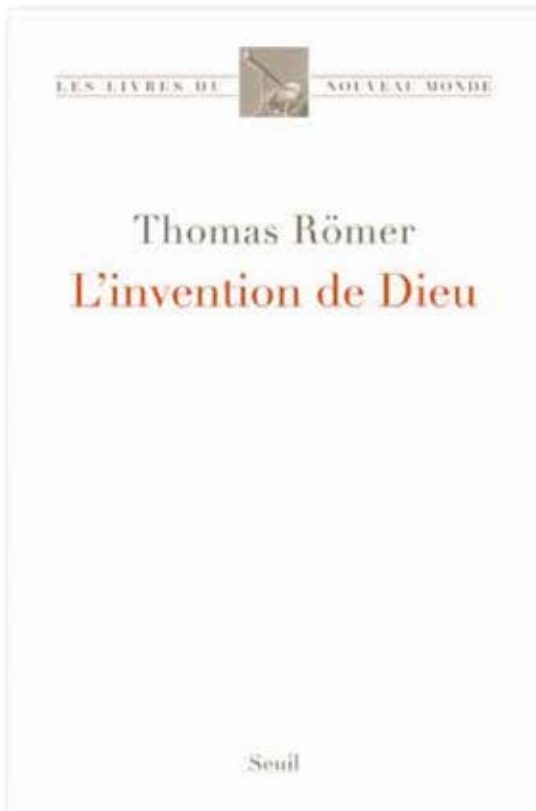


Muitos católicos e não católicos se perguntam sobre o sentido mais profundo da renovação da Igreja proposta pelo papa Francisco. Principalmente, querem saber como podem as comunidades e grupos de base participarem e colaborarem com esse projeto de uma Igreja “em saída”. O livro “Evangelho e Instituição, escrito por Marcelo Barros procura responder a perguntas como essas e oferece um subsídio importante para aprofundar essa problemática. O livro retoma a teologia do padre José Comblin e foi pensado em diálogo com esse teólogo, mestre de Marcelo. É uma meditação bíblica e teológica que liga fé e espiritualidade, Bíblia e vida concreta, história e desafios da ação da Igreja e de sua renovação no mundo.

De certa forma, esse livro reflete a realidade da Igreja Católica, anterior ao pontificado do papa Francisco. Isso poderia nos fazer pensar que essa reflexão esteja superada. Ao contrário, ela nos é ainda mais importante e urgente agora para superarmos a situação de neocristandade que ainda persiste como projeto de Igreja na cabeça e no coração de muitos pastores e fiéis. Só assim poderemos cumprir nossa missão no mundo atual e escutar com mais acuidade e obediência aquilo que o Espírito diz hoje às Igrejas e ao mundo.

Marco CAMPEDEGLI

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RÖMER, Thomas, *L'invention de Dieu*, Seuil, Paris 2014, 352 pp.



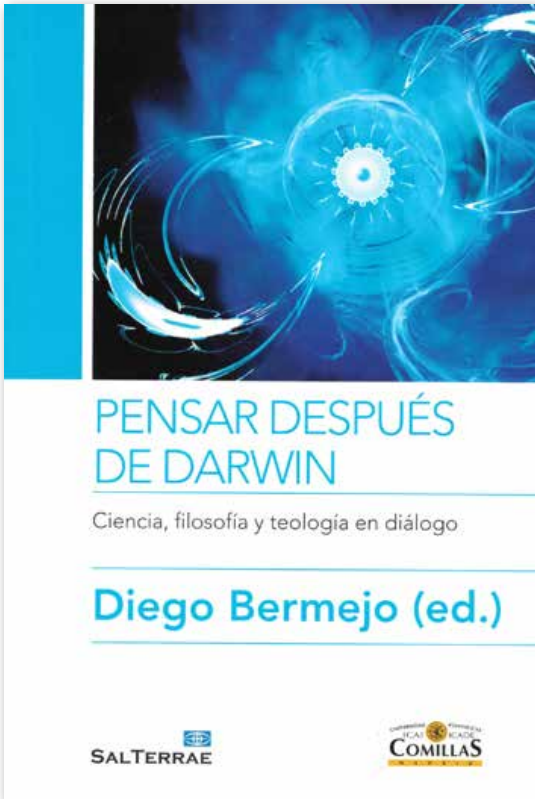
Si le judaïsme et, à sa suite, le christianisme et l'islam proclament l'unicité d'un dieu régnant seul de toute éternité sur le ciel et la terre, la Bible hébraïque elle-même témoigne, pour qui la lit attentivement, de ses racines polythéistes. De fait, le « dieu d'Abraham » auquel se réfèrent, chacune à sa manière, les trois religions du Livre n'a pas été unique depuis toujours.

Comment un dieu parmi les autres est-il devenu Dieu? Telle est l'énigme fondatrice que cette plongée aux sources du monothéisme se propose d'élucider en parcourant, sur un millénaire, les étapes de son invention. D'où vient ce

dieu et par quel biais s'est-il révélé à « Israël » ? Quels étaient ses attributs et quel était son nom avant que celui-ci ne devienne imprononçable? Quand accéda-t-il au statut de dieu tutélaire des royaumes d'Israël et de Juda ? Sous quelles formes était-il vénéré et représenté ? Pourquoi les autres divinités au côté desquelles il trônait déchurent-elles ? Au terme de quel processus et en réaction à quels événements le culte exclusif qui lui a progressivement été rendu s'est-il imposé ?

À la lumière de la critique historique, philologique et exégétique et des plus récentes découvertes de l'archéologie et de l'épigraphie, Thomas Römer livre les réponses d'une enquête rigoureuse et passionnante sur les traces d'une divinité de l'orage et de la guerre érigée, après sa « victoire » sur ses rivaux, en dieu unique, universel et transcendant.

O livro vai aparecer em português em agosto de 2016, pela Paulus, com o título de «A história de Javé», sendo apresentado no Congresso da ABIB, na UMESP de São Paulo. Translation into English: «The Invention of God», Harvard University Press, Cambridge-London 2015.



BERMEJO, Diego (coord.), *Pensar después de Darwin. Ciencia, filosofía y teología en diálogo*, Sal Terrae / Universidad de Comillas, Santander / Madrid, 2014, 558 pp.



Efectivamente, Darwin acabó marcando una línea divisoria, con un antes y un después. Y por eso, simbólicamente al menos, calificar un pensamiento como de «después de Darwin», es una forma de referirse a su asunción (o no) de un nuevo paradigma, el ecológico en este caso. La presentación de este paradigma es lo que viene a significar este libro, por implicación.

Sí, porque hay personas, instituciones, teologías, religiones... que siguen pensando *etsi Darwin non daretur*, como si Darwin no hubiera existido. como si después de Darwin algo pudiera seguir siendo igual...

Dirigido por Diego Bermejo, este extenso libro recoge una colección de estudios en respuesta a la presencia de Francisco José Ayala en la Universidad de Deusto en 2013, transformándose luego como un proyecto del grupo «Posmodernidad, posmodernidad y pos-secularidad» sobre los retos planteados por la teoría de la evolución a la filosofía y la teología. Su lectura y estudio resultan fundamentales para obtener una visión suficientemente amplia como para hacerse cargo de la amplitud y la profundidad de los cambios de visión implicados en la aceptación de este nuevo paradigma, no sólo para ciencia, sino para la comprensión de la realidad, la comprensión de nosotros mismos y la comprensión de nuestro puesto en la naturaleza y el cosmos.



BECERRA MELO, Silvia Susana, “El arte de reiniciar la vida. Aportes teológicos y pastorales a partir del acompañamiento a mujeres víctimas de violación sexual y del desplazamiento forzado”, Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá 2015, 177 pp



“Este libro es la segunda versión de otro libro titulado “El cuerpo de la mujer violada y desplazada, un lugar donde acontece la revelación-salvación de Dios. Una mirada de género”, obra fruto de la monografía realizada por Susana con la que obtuvo el título de Magistra en Teología. Este libro consta de 5 capítulos que recogen muy bien la intencionalidad del escrito. El primer capítulo describe el contexto en el que se inscribe -el programa de Vidas Móviles, en el que la autora fue una

de las fundadoras y ha participado por más de 9 años-, programa que permitió acercarse a la realidad que es explorada en el segundo capítulo, “Narración que se hace vida”, a través del testimonio de tres mujeres, víctimas de desplazamiento forzado. El tercer capítulo propone una iluminación a esa realidad presentada en los dos capítulos precedentes, desde la fe, a partir de la Parábola del Buen samaritano, texto que muestra “la compasión” como respuesta cristiana efectiva a los caídos en el camino y que Susana trabaja como “La compasión, fundamento del acompañamiento pastoral”. Precisamente porque los testimonios son de mujeres, la hermenéutica crítica feminista es el objeto del cuarto capítulo, centrándose especialmente en los cuatro pasos de la “Danza de la Sabiduría” que Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, propone para realizar esa tarea hermenéutica. El quinto capítulo, ofrece lineamientos para reinventar la vida es un ejercicio real que muchas mujeres y varones, víctimas de desplazamiento forzado y de violencia sexual van realizando. Pero no es tarea de los que la han padecido directamente sino de todos los que desde la fe y la compasión comprendemos que los desafíos de la realidad nos convoca a dar una respuesta afectiva y efectiva. Susana ha realizado ese camino porque este libro no es un conjunto de teorías aquí expuestas sino un grupo de rostros testimoniando la fuerza de la vida y la urgencia de la compasión. Una compasión que levanta y cura y acompaña ese nuevo comienzo”.

Olga Consuelo VÉLEZ, Bogotá, Colombia



IRARRÁZVAL, Diego, *Levadura en la harina. Potencia teológica en Sudamérica.* PPC, Bogotá, 2015., 206 pp. Colección «Propuestas alternativas» n° 6.

A partir del poema “...repartiremos la tierra, la belleza, el amor, todo eso tiene sabor de pan” (Pablo Neruda), es examinado el pensar sudamericano en estas últimas décadas. Se desenvuelve la teología de los signos de nuestros tiempos. Es escuchada la Palabra y son acogidas interpelaciones del Espíritu. El pensar sistemático dialoga con el comportamiento y la sabiduría de la gente común. Lo eclesial es revisado a fondo y reorientado al servicio del

mundo de hoy. Es como la sorprendente acción de la levadura dentro de la harina de la historia.

Las vetas espirituales y sapienciales van acompañadas de interrogantes y debates. En el trascurso de un cambio de época se examina el evangelizar dentro y entre culturas. En nuestros contextos la Iglesia y sus representantes son evaluados con críticas constructivas. Gracias al Concilio, y mediante varias corrientes de teología latinoamericana, se aporta al caminar del pueblo de Dios que cosecha buenos frutos.

Los capítulos de este libro consignan lo elaborado a lo largo de actividades y cursos en varios lugares del continente. En el diálogo somos interpelados por Jesús y su Espíritu, que reorientan la existencia humana hacia el Reino del Amor. La espiritualidad está des-centrada porque está

orientada a la Vida en plenitud (y sin fronteras). Varones y mujeres, profesionales autóctonos y mestizos, respondemos a la Palabra y la ponemos en práctica. También, en los márgenes del poder apreciamos la música del Espíritu que rompe parámetros y anima alternativas. Se ofrecen pistas con respecto a responsabilidades de cada día, al cambio de época, a la misión cristiana, a los vínculos dentro y entre culturas. También se anotan dificultades y oportunidades en la Iglesia. Son recalcados grandes interrogantes y búsquedas honestas encaradas en América Latina. Sobresale el *sensus fidelium*, el ordinario sentido de fe que responde al Espíritu que acompaña a cada pueblo.

Hablar de la evangélica levadura en la harina del mundo es un modo de soñar con lo deseable y viable. No es una temática más de las tantas que llenan los libros. Más bien se trata de una transformación desde adentro; así como lo hace la levadura con la harina, el agua, la sal, la manteca y el fuego. La alimentación (y la reflexión), tan mal distribuidas en el mundo de hoy, pueden llevarse a cabo a la luz del Evangelio y con la potencia del Espíritu. Así, el día a día es transformado, como avizoraba Pablo Neruda, en un sabroso “pan para todos los pueblos”.

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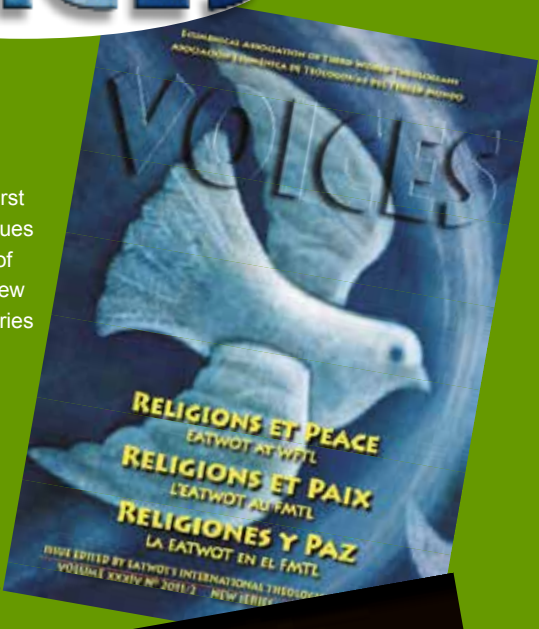
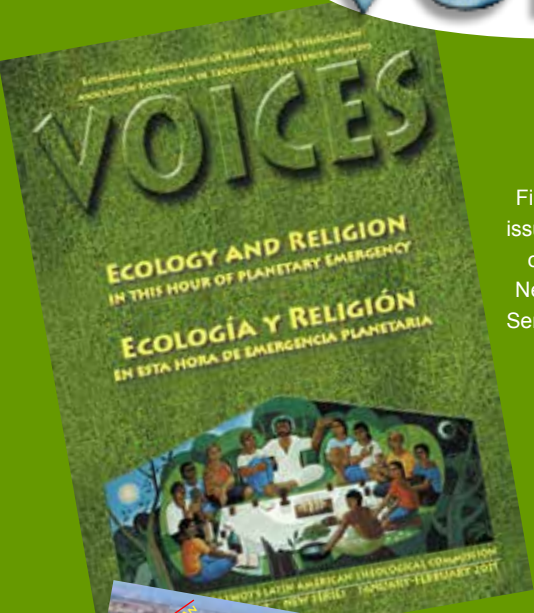
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