WATER Teleconference with Nancy Pineda Madrid, May 11, 2011
Notes for further study

WATER is deeply grateful to Nancy Pineda-Madrid for her wonderful teleconference. Following are notes we took, interspersed with her suggestions for further reading.


http://www.amazon.com/Suffering-Salvation-Ciudad-Juarez-Pineda-madrid/dp/0800698479/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1305296531&sr=1-1

Background:
1. Latina feminist theology in the U.S. began in the 1980’s but is deeply rooted in:
   --Latin American Liberation Theology
   --Womanist and feminist theologies. For example, the term mujerista (developed by Ada Maria Isasi Diaz), is a term with roots in womanist work
   --History of foremothers that goes back centuries and is often not recognized

2. A few historical foremothers of Latina feminist theology:
   a. **Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz** (1648-1695):
      


   b. **Lola Rodríguez de Tío** (1843-1924):
      


   c. **Mirabal Sisters -- Minerva, Patria, Maria Teresa & Dede** (1920s/30s – 1960s):
      
3. Key early works of Latina Feminist Theologians:


Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz is a Cuban American Catholic who writes about *mujerista theology* while Maria Pilar Aquino is a Mexican American Catholic who uses the term “feminist” to identify her work. Daisy Machado, also Cuban American, is ordained in the Disciples of Christ. Her work focuses on “borderlands.”

Nancy stressed social location including geography as important for theologians. She described herself as Mexican American whose grandparents were economically poor. Her parents created a middle-class lifestyle and were deeply devoted Catholic parents. She is a practicing Catholic; heterosexual and married to a Jewish man so she lives an interfaith reality. She was raised in El Paso, Texas and is a “mujer fronterizada” (a woman of the borderlands).

**Content of Nancy’s book, *Suffering and Salvation in Ciudad Juarez*:**

The focus is on “femicide” in Ciudad Juárez, the systematic murdering of girls and women. Throughout history violence against women has been used as a weapon of war, this includes rape and, horrifically the brutal murdering of women. The murdering of women has been identified using two terms femicide and feminicide. “Femicide” is like homicide though it specifically refers to the murdering of women because they are women. Still, the term does not point to the murder of women on a massive scale and with impunity for the perpetrators. “Femicide” comes from the Spanish “*feminicidio,*” a term initially used by feminist activists in the 1980s who were trying to bring violence against women to an end in the Dominican Republic and elsewhere.
The Ciudad Juárez feminicide began in 1993. Since then, well over 600 girls and women between the ages of 10 and 30 have been murdered. This includes victims of sexual serial killers, of narco-traffickers, of snuff films, of domestic violence, of illegal organ traffickers and others. What has become clear in Juárez is that in many different ways men are using women’s bodies to assert power and mark territory.

Nancy asks how one can believe in God when faced with this kind of evil. It is a question reminiscent of the Holocaust about which theologians including J.B. Metz and Dorothee Soelle have asked similar questions.

Just as sin is seen by liberationists to be social and structural, so too, she argues, salvation needs to be understood as social as well as individual. The practices of resistance which have developed in Ciudad Juárez must command our attention just as the killings do. Women who have suffered the loss of a daughter, sister, mother have organized practices of resistance to demand that these killings end. For example, in 2001 on the heels of a series of particularly public and brutal murders, women organized significant public practices of resistance. A coalition called NI UNA MAS formed as an umbrella organization of 300 groups that planned several events including “Exodus por Vida,” (Exodus for Life) linking women’s experience of violence with the biblical Exodus story. Another group painted crosses a delicate pink and placed them where they find women’s bodies; they painted the name of murdered women on the cross bar of the cross. Their effort was to link the crucifixion of Jesus to the crucifixion of female humanity, to rethink assumptions about crucifixion, to claim that women can be considered the *imago Christi* not only when it comes to Roman Catholic ordination, but in all of life.

**Beginning List of Sources on Feminicide and Violence Against Women in the Americas, particularly in Ciudad Juárez.**


A Beginning List of Sources on Women, Violence, Suffering and Theology:


Nancy engaged in discussion calling for university conferences on the theme of violence against women. She emphasized the distinctiveness of what is happening to women as women. She looked at myths and narratives that need examining because they are used to make violence against women appear more normal. Religious idealizing of silent suffering of rape/assault/abuse needs to be undone. The Catholic Church can be helpful, but its leadership for the most part has been largely silent in the face of abuse against women.

Rituals that accompany resistance are important. The pink crosses are one example. Another is the white handkerchiefs and silhouettes chalked on the sidewalks by the Mothers of
Plaza de Mayo in Argentina to represent their lost ones. Also, a large cross was placed at the Paso del Norte bridge at the El Paso-Juárez US/Mexican border with large nails and white strips of paper with names of women killed.

**Conclusion:**

Professor Pineda-Madrid’s future work is on the concept of social salvation. She will trace its deep roots in the Christian tradition and plans a book on the genealogy of social salvation.

**A select list of Nancy Pineda-Madrid’s publications:**


