

## PREFACE: SECOND EDITION

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The original manuscript for this book was completed in 1997. It reflected the developments in women's history and feminist theologies around the world up to that time. The second edition of this book, finished in early 2011, has made some revisions in its content and presentation. The book as a whole has been revised to make it more accessible for students who are studying this material on women and Christianity spanning the 2000 years of Christian history. Each chapter now opens with a timeline which notes the key dates covered in the chapter, both in the Christian history discussed in the chapter and in the historical context of the period.

Each chapter now concludes with certain data designed to aid students who are doing research on this material. There are several research questions which direct the student's attention to key issues or problems that are implied in the material of the chapter and could be the basis for further research. These

research questions are then followed by suggested readings, both primary sources and secondary sources. These suggested readings point the student to some of the primary sources for the material in the chapter. To this is added a list of some of the more significant and creative interpretations of the material by modern authors. In addition, several "text boxes" have been added to each chapter. These text boxes give quotations from primary sources in each chapter which seek to illustrate in a stimulating way some of the key issues and interpretative ideas of the women thinkers of the period.

In addition to this illustrative material to point students to further thought and research, a new final chapter has been added to the book. This new final chapter, Chapter Nine, seeks to add some of the new developments in global Christian feminist theology in the ensuing thirteen years from 1997 to 2010. In the author's view, the directions for

global feminist theologies covered in chapters Six, Seven, and Eight continue to be pursued in Western Europe, in North America and in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Many of the authors discussed in these three chapters continue to write and their works are still seen as foundational for the movements of feminist theologies in these regions. New writers are also emerging in ways that deepen and expand the themes developed in the 1990s.

Yet there are also emerging new themes and writers many of whom were already present in the 1990s, but whose work signifies both additional foci of interpretation and also additional constituencies. In this author's opinion, the most important new foci of interpretation in liberation and feminist theologies in the ensuing thirteen years has been postcolonialism. Although postcolonial critical thought was already present in the early 1990s, it operated mostly in literary and cultural criticism, and had not become a major theme for biblical and theological interpretation. But in the last decade many books from Christian biblical interpreters and theologians, including feminist theologians, are now organized around the theme of postcolonialism.

Postcolonialism is seen as a key category for global society, both for former colonized groups and former colonizers. The "post" in postcolonialism does not mean colonialism is "over," and we only look back at it as past history. Rather, the stage of direct political and military occupation of colonized peoples that characterized much of the world from 1492 to 1965 is now mostly over. But continued domination of the "West" over the "rest" still continues in more indirect forms of economic

and cultural domination, a form of domination often referred to as "neo-colonialism." Former colonized people are deeply aware of how they continue to be controlled by a global system that shapes much of their lives, creating a hierarchy of wealth and poverty around the world. Postcolonialism has emerged as the term for critical thinking for both how this system has been shaped by colonialism and neo-colonialism and how to shake free from it to develop a more just world order.

In addition to the idea of postcolonialism as an interpretative lens, some new voices in feminist theology are emerging that represent additional constituencies. I have chosen to speak of these additional constituencies as "Fourth World" peoples. They are subjugated and stateless people both within former colonized peoples and those conquered by settler states in what today is seen as "First World," such as the United States. These are the Native peoples historically threatened with genocide, such as Native Americans within the Americas, North and South, and Australian Aboriginal peoples. They also include Dalit people, subjugated within the Hindu caste system for thousands of years. They include African-Caribbean and African-Brazilian people brought as slaves to the Americas in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries who created a syncretistic faith in which a surface Christianity masks religions brought from Africa.

I include here also Palestinian people rendered stateless and oppressed in the Israeli settler state. Finally, I include the "indecent" theology which adds to feminist and liberation theologies many marginalized sexual and social minorities. Liberation theological

reflection has emerged from all these “Fourth World” groups. This development of liberation thought includes female members who have developed feminist critique. Men of the Fourth World, like men of the third, second and First Worlds, often are oblivious to the ways in which women of their groups suffer in additional ways as women. Thus feminist thinking is needed within Fourth World liberation movements to articulate issues of sexism both within these communities and also

in relation to the systems of class, race, and neo-colonial domination as a whole under which they suffer.

Thus Chapter Nine seeks to bring this volume “up to date” by adding voices of feminist theologians from various Fourth Worlds, thereby giving us the perspective of women from within the “oppressed of the oppressed.” It is a process that is ongoing and open-ended, not one that at this time or ever can be declared to be “finished.”