



Evangelical Seminary of Theology
Matanzas, Cuba
ACONTECER / MAY 2021

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ACADEMIC EXCHANGE WITH LANCASTER SEMINARY

Reverend Elizabeth Soto, pastor from the Mennonite Church and professor at the Lancaster Seminary, United States invited our Seminary through The Memorial Center Martin Luther King, Jr.



from Havana to participate in an intercultural exchange via virtual conferences from May 10-21 for the students of her course.

Lectures were imparted via Zoom by SET professors, and dialog with students ensued.

Title

A Cuban Religion of African Ancestry: Santeria
Church and Leadership of Women in Cuba
History and Development of Theological education in Cuba
Progress of LGBT Community in Cuba
Cuban Art and Cinema

Lecturer

Clara Luz Ajo
Ofelia Miriam Ortega
Carlos Emilio Ham
Kirenia Criado
Moraima González

SET BOARD AND FACULTY MEETINGS



During this month, SET Rector Carlos E. Ham and faculty developed the following meetings via zoom:

- May 3 – The organizations Diakonia on the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC) organized a series of videoconferences. Our Rector presented the topic *Diakonia in times of COVID-19: Are We Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution?*
- May 10 – Rector attended the presentation of the topic *Claiming the D Word: Diakonia in the Church*.
- May 17 – Rector Carlos E. Ham participated in the conference organized by DOTAC *Brazilian Perspectives on Diakonia: Empowerment, Diakonial Methodology and Transformation* presented by Deacon Dionata Rodrigues de Oliveira.
- May 19 – Panel *Cuba-Canada: Solidarity and Testimony among Partners* by panelists Rev Joel Ortega Dopico from the Council of Churches of Cuba; Rita García Morris, from the Christian Center for Reflection and Dialog (CCRD); and Rev. Carlos E. Ham Stanard from SET. The closing words were given by Professor Dora Arce Valentin.
- May 20 – Yumurí Television Center from Matanzas interviewed SET Professors Adolfo Ham Reyes, Ofelia Ortega Suárez y Carlos E. Ham Stanard on occasion of the 80th Anniversary of the Council of Churches of Cuba and in memory of Odén Marichal Rodríguez.
- May 25 – Participation in the seminar *Dialogs to Increase Climate Action* organized by the ACT Alliance and the World Lutheran Federation.
- May 26 – Participation of Rector in the virtual celebration of the 198th Anniversary of the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Trinidad y Tobago and the dedication lecture *The Trinity and Us in the 21st Century Caribbean Reality* given by Rev. Canon Professor Kortright Davis.
- May 17 – Presentation of the phonogram *Con sentimiento cubano: Patria o Muerte (With Cuban Passion: Homeland or Death)* by Ignacio Herrera, aka ‘Nachito’, from the Westminster Presbyterian Church at Minneapolis. Professor Reinerio Arce Valentín gave an especial presentation. SET Professors Carlos E. Ham, Dora Arce Valentín and Moraima González Ortiz also participated.
- May 27 – SET Rector participated in the webinar *Latin America: the Pandemic in the Land of Inequalities* of the World Council of Churches.

FAMILIES OF LOVE AND INCLUSION AVAILABLE



The Christian Institute of Gender Studies (ICEG) and SET joined efforts to publish a booklet entitled *Families of Love and Inclusion* in digital and paper formats.

Starting from the biblical studies by Professor Ofelia Ortega Suárez, this booklet is enriched with the theological analysis of Professor Reinerio Arce Valentín and the research of Family Specialist and Psychologist Patricia Arés Mucio. All this is combined with liturgical resources by Presbyter Beidy

Casas Aragón and student Ruth Marie Trueba. The latter presents a co-authored paper that resulted from the Master in Liturgy at SET in agreement with the Theological Community from Mexico.

Because of the importance of the family in Cuban society and in the congregations of our churches and Christian and secular institutions, this booklet presents a parallel between the current families and the Bible families. Family is understood as any integration that is based on accompaniment and love: grandfathers and grandmothers, mothers, fathers, boys and girls, friends and neighbors. Families have been an essential support in the midst of the social and economic situation that the COVID 19 pandemic has brought on us. The practice of life and faith has resulted in this material, directed to the families and to each and every one of their actors.

This material has come to light with the support of the Missionary Department of Lausanne, Switzerland and the editorial coordination of Moraima González Ortiz. If you want to have access to it contact moraimaglez@gmail.com

NEW ISSUES OF CUBA TEOLÓGICA AND DIDAJÉ



Beatriz Ferreiro García, General Editor of *Cuba Teológica* and *Didajé* reports on the January-June 2021 issues.

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Published PDF issue (SET web) - *Didajé* No. 18, 2020

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In design

Cuba Teológica, No. 1, No. 2, 2020

Cuba Teológica, No. 3, 2020

In edition

Cuba Teológica, No. 1, 2021

You can access these issues at SET website www.setcuba.org

Any questions or requests you can contact cubateologica@seminario.co.cu

SET PROJECTS

ORGANIC GARDEN



During this period the Seminary managed to buy and certify 20 m³ of organic soil needed to complete 20 new flowerbeds for planting.



We continued to check and restore the hydraulic nets, acquiring new valves and 100 m of special hose.



Four flowerbeds are already working and we are selling retail products such as tomato, chili, spinach, pepper, leek and sweet potato.

ESTUARY WELL

Since the beginning of the project of the organic garden, this well was prepared to irrigate the garden. The well is located in the estuary near the banks of the Yumurí River. Near this well, a community began to settle; most of the people who settled there were people coming to the city from other municipalities and provinces. This community has increased very rapidly and now there are over 500 inhabitants and over 100 houses. This neighborhood does not have water supply and its hydraulic infrastructure is badly damaged, so its inhabitants receive the water pumped from of the Seminary every day.

In the new context in the country, the prices of the cubic meter of water and of kilowatts/consumption of energy have increased. In this sense, the Seminary devised a plan of measures for this project to save water and electricity, so that the Seminary could pump eight hours daily to adjust to the needs of the residents of the neighboring community. After analyzing the context and the need to continue serving the people who live there, we decided to increase the pumping time one more hour in the morning on weekends.

Living Waters for the World. Cuba Network

SET is the institution that coordinates the installing of water purification systems donated by the ministry of Living Waters for the World (LWW) in Cuba, together with brothers and sisters from churches in the United States. The Cuba network in the headquarters in Matanzas continues the process to improve the filtering process of 2500 liters of water daily. Because of the deficit of water supply to the population, actions are taken to improve its distribution to the population in the city. Two workers are in charge of distribution and filtering process in the system of water purification. Users receive and are grateful for this service.



In the spirit of continuing the service in our installations along the country, and in the midst of adverse conditions because of the pandemic, a team of our technicians went to two Adventists of the Seventh Day churches in Cienfuegos and Pinar del Rio during this month to bring them the necessary filters to maintain the water purification system running and serving the population. They travelled in vehicles that are usually used for emergencies to look for the parts requested by the churches. They also tended to a request from the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center (CMLK) to repair and reinstall the whole system. Our technicians together with the brothers from the CMLK finished this task in one day.

We thank God for the blessing of offering pure water through the outreach ministry of Living Waters for the World.

BOOK PRESENTATION



The book *Soñar, Luchar, Vivir. Una teología desde la praxis y la visión de una mujer cubana* (*Dreaming, Struggling, Living. Theology based on Praxis and the Vision of a Cuban Woman*) by Ofelia Miriam Ortega, was presented by Cherie White and Leopoldo Cervantes-Ortiz from Mexico City via Zoom on Thursday, May 20. It was transmitted live through Facebook, FaceLive on the webpage of CUPSA Publishing House.

Cherie expressed, “This project emerges from Ofelia’s dissertation to receive the Ministry Doctorate in the specialty of International Feminist Theologies of the San Francisco Theological Seminary. The book we are presenting tonight is not a thesis, but a compilation of articles that Ofelia Miriam Ortega – the first woman to be ordained as a Pastor in the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba – has written along all her professional life, representative of her way of thinking and her personal interests. She has a long professional career as a specialist in Christian Education, as a pastor and theologian/Biblicist in various spheres at international level.”

Each essay, reflection and biblical studies, as well as the homilies, interviews and lectures present a wide variety of topics of general interest in reference to women in the society and in the church; to theological education and ecumenical training; to ethics and social action of Christians and to the promotion of justice in the economy and in the earth. In short, this book is a transcendent meditation that leads the reader into deep reflection.

NOTES FOR HISTORY: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

THE SIXTIES

As early as June 15, 1960, when the process of nationalization of big enterprises, mostly of foreign capital had begun Rector Alfonso Rodríguez Hidalgo expressed his point of view before the SET Directive Board: “Because of its legal basis, SET is clearly a Cuban institution and it will never be affected by the laws of nationalization.”

Next year, the Revolutionary Government enacted the Law of Nationalization of Education by means of which all private education went to the control of the State in Cuba. This law affected the churches greatly, because they lost a valuable vehicle to influence our society and our culture and led to the exodus of a substantial part of the students and the professors of religious schools. The declaration of the socialist nature of the Revolution had also hastened the exodus of people who did not share the new course traced by the Revolutionary Government.

Despite the scenario described before, the relations with the missionary boards of the churches in the United States were maintained as well as with other international ecclesiastic organizations. SET member churches began to appoint full time professors. Commendable commitment, perseverance and faith kept even in the most difficult situations by students and professors, by resident and guests who gave continuity to the wholesome preparation of Christian leadership and persisted in actions in the pastoral field.

(From the booklet *A Laboratory of the Ecumenical Movement: Notes for the History of the Evangelical Seminary of Theology of Matanzas*)

Contributions to Evangelical Seminary of Theology in Matanzas should be made to the Ofelia Ortega Endowment Fund, Fund ID: 89726, Account: 1020094701. This information should be written on the memo line of the check. Contributions may be made either by individuals or congregations or presbyteries. The check should then be mailed to: Presbyterian Foundation, 200 East 12th Street, Jeffersonville, IN 47130.

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