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Renata Furst-Lambert, editor

Miguel De La Torre, visiting editor

Ulrike Guthrie, visiting editor

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CONTENTS

PERSPECTIVAS: OCCASIONAL PAPERS

EDITOR
Renata Furst
Faculté de Théologie de l'Université de Montréal, Canada

VISITING EDITOR
Miguel De La Torre
Hope College

VISITING EDITOR
Ulrike Guthrie
Freelance Editor, Bangor, Maine

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Editorial correspondence should be addressed to
The Hispanic Theological Initiative, 12 Library Place,
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In 1998 the Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) initiated the publication of *Perspectivas: Occasional Papers* to support its efforts in highlighting Latino scholarship in theology and religion and to provide a resource that will stimulate further dialogue and research. The scant number of journals dedicated to featuring the contributions of Latino scholars in theology and religion makes the creation of *Perspectivas* a welcome presence.

Past and present publications feature the work of HTI mentors, awardees and HTI Regional Conference speakers. The present publication is the eighth in the series.

Perspectivas is sent to seminaries throughout the United States and Puerto Rico, and to theology departments in universities and other institutions. We continue to be happy to accommodate requests from faculty and/or students for additional copies and/or copies of back issues when available.

We trust you will find the present articles engaging and insightful. We welcome comments and responses to any of the articles.

Joanne Rodríguez
Director, HTI

DEFINING THE MAP TO FOLLOW

"Recent Latino/a doctoral graduates are asking, "So where do we go from here?" They know where they've come from, and are grateful to those scholars who during the late 1960s and 1970s carved out a distinctive Latino/a place and contribution in the religious studies field, thus giving voice and academic credibility to the trials and tribulations of our people. But it now falls to this new generation of scholars to build upon that foundation, to continue forging the path, to suggest where we might go.

Several junior scholars are rising to the challenge of forging the path, as witnessed by the numerous books and articles being published. One particularly noteworthy book is Benjamín Valentín's *Mapping Public Theology*, a book recognized by his peers as deserving the prestigious 2003 Hispanic Theological Initiative Book Award. We are honored to print in this issue of *Perspectivas* the lecture Valentín gave on the occasion of accepting this Award, a lecture entitled "Going Public: Latino(a) Theology as Public Discourse." Valentín challenges Hispanics who participate in the theological discussion to engage and influence the broader public discourse, noting that concentrating solely upon the politics of identity will prove insufficient to fostering an emancipatory vision capable of advancing social justice.

In response to Valentín's challenge to engage in a public theology, Luis Rivera-Pagán supports the desire but offers cautions about the assumption of a consensus in identity and the symbolic value of popular religiosity. He is particularly emphatic in his insistence on the need for specific proposals to combat oppressive structures; generalized talk does not result in concrete change.

It is specific proposals that Elizabeth Conde-Frazier has in mind in her HTI Dissertation Series Award-winning work on *los*

institutos bíblicos. She suggests that though it has been through these biblical institutes that the Latina/o community has historically conducted religious training, and though they have enjoyed tremendous success, it is time to revamp their educational approaches for the postmodern context, one quite different to the context faced a generation ago. In her article, "Religious Education in an Immigrant Community: A Case Study," Conde-Frazier delineates the implications of a religious education grounded within the context of the faith community where the church is located, rather than upon a missiology shaped by academics outside of the Latino/a community. Such a religious education provides an alternative paradigm by which future leaders of the faith community can meet and adapt to the challenges that arise within their ever-changing disenfranchised context.

Robert Pazmiño's response to Conde-Frazier's article buttresses her suggestions and yet also offers constructive proposals. He raises questions that attempt to avoid narrow personalism while also pushing to include critical thinking within the Bible institutes.

These articles, then, offer a variety of responses to where we might go from here. Our hope is that they will provoke deliberation and discussion, both in writing, teaching, and in person.

"Going Public: Latino(a) Theology as Public Discourse"[1]

Benjamín Valentín

Lecture given at Princeton Theological Seminary for the 2003 HTI Book Prize Award

Dr. Valentín is Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture at Andover Newton Theological School. His teaching and research interests are in contemporary theology; the relation of religion and theology to American public life; representations of the public intellectual; and theologies of liberation. He is the author of *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference* (Trinity Press International, 2002), editor of *New Horizons in Hispanic/Latino(a) Theology* (The Pilgrim Press, 2003), and co-editor of *The Ties that Bind: African American and Hispanic American/Latino(a) Theologies in Dialogue* (Continuum International, 2001). Besides his academic vocation, Valentín has also been actively involved in the church as a lay leader in various forms and currently attends an American Baptist Church in the Boston area.

The Makings of a Map: Introduction

Mapping Public Theology, the work that the Hispanic Theological Initiative has decided to grace with its book award this year, began to take shape about six years ago as I pondered various intersecting matters of interest in my budding intellectual career. First among these was my growing curiosity with U.S. Hispanic/Latino(a) theology. While at Harvard Divinity School, I had closely studied the classic figures

and texts of modern and contemporary Euro-American theologies, becoming well acquainted with the Schleiermachers, Barths, Tillichs, Niebuhrs, and Kaufmans of the theological world. The study of what are variously called "contextual theologies" or "theologies of liberation," however, remained a bit of a mystery to me because these received less attention at HDS—save for the occasional courses offered specifically on these types of theologies. As one could expect, the relative obscurity of these piqued my curious mind. And so I began to look into these "contextual theologies" or "theologies of liberation," finding among them writings which carried the label of U.S. Hispanic/Latino(a) theology.

Of course it was partly my being a Latino that attracted me to these newfound texts and hence the desire both to formulate—or, perhaps more precisely, to "reformulate"—a self-identity and also to identify with a discursive tradition that gives expression to familiar questions and narratives. The longing to work out who we are as ethnically and culturally situated persons has rarely enjoyed high regard in theological scholarship. Yet, the question of self-identity always lurks in the shadows of our consciousness in some way or another. And for this reason, as well as for others, it always deserves our intellectual scrutiny.

Although such an interest had arisen in me, it was not until I arrived at Drew University's Graduate School and was encouraged by Dr. Catherine Keller to explore the potentially unique intimations that could spring forth from my own experience and identity that I took stock of my "Latinidad" and explored Latino/a theology more thoroughly. And it was then that I decided to settle into the role of an interpreter of U.S. Latino/a theology, in order to apprehend the inner imagination (both theological and political), the motivations, and the longings of this still-evolving discursive tradition.

However, there was still another matter of interest which had also been calling my attention for quite some time. Increasingly,

I had come to see a need for theologies that could adequately engage, respond to, and even influence the broader public discourse and public problems of the United States in the realm of civil society. This need attracted my attention, and set in motion an exploration simultaneously of the possible meanings of the term "public"; the conditions of American public life; and the nature or character of public discourse. Faced with these varied interests, I began to think over whether these intellectual concerns could be consolidated or whether they were necessarily at odds and, therefore, irreconcilable. My conclusion was that these different queries could in fact be explored co-jointly, and so I set out to find a way to bring them together into a comprehensive study and vision. The result of this quest was *Mapping Public Theology*. It was a result that, in Catherine Keller's apt words, was a "case study of Hispanic theologies in the U.S. which guides and rehearses us in the practice of a coalitional public" discourse. As I put it in the book's introduction, my aim was to put forth a call and to set an introductory course for the conceptualization of Latino/a theology as a form of public discourse.

This book-length exposition is principally motivated by my disenchantment with an unconscious and unreflective commitment to a discursive cultural politics of identity program in Latino/a theology. To be sure, we must recognize that there is ample reason for this emphasis. We Latinos and Latinas have always had to struggle not only to keep alive our distinctive historical and cultural identities, but also to claim our membership as legitimate citizens and active agents in this action. And thus, insofar as the Latino/a experience in the United States has been played out within the context of cultural imperialism and racism, and insofar as Latinos and Latinas have had to contend with denigrating images and discriminating forces that frustrate positive self and group identity, it is not surprising that Hispanic/Latino theologians and Latino/a scholars in general have devoted a great

part of their attention to the task of cultural, identity, and difference recognition.

Moreover, I contend that any comprehensive political project genuinely concerned with the remedy of injustice must make room in its agenda for the consideration of issues related to the defense of group identity, the end of cultural domination, and the requirements of recognition. These concerns and struggles have everything to do with justice and must continue to be part of any emancipatory project, and, therefore, of Latino/a liberation theology. Yet Latino/a theology has tended to focus predominantly on discussions of symbolic culture, identity, and difference and has given too little attention to scrutinizing the multifaceted matrices that impinge upon the realization of a broader emancipatory political project and energy. The albeit important emphasis on specific localization and on a politics of identity which undergirds much of our liberationist discourse is too narrow to foster the kinds of overarching and harmonizing emancipatory visions that social justice requires now. The enthusiasm for a circumscribed discourse of identity, cultural recognition, and cultural justice, if not adequately checked and supplemented, can distract us from examining other axes of social stratification with equal urgency and appropriate sustained attention; from addressing, for instance, the social fragmentation, loss of civil bonds, political balkanization, and fracturing of utopian energies that we are witnessing in the realm of civil society; from sufficiently promoting a desire for connection and coalition building across boundaries of group difference; and, thus, from advancing a much broader response to social injustice.

The fundamental argument of my *Mapping Public Theology* is that Latino/a theologians should be attentive not only to the needs of "local" theologies but also to the possibilities of what I call "public theologies," that is, for theologies that can engage the broader context of social and political life, and that may revitalize

a populist sentiment and coalitional energy in our society. Accordingly, the book seeks both to point to the need for a conception of Latino/a theology as translocal and transcultural "public" discourse and to provide a theoretical description of public discourse that takes into account the justice demands of our age. So here I want to briefly go over these two main features of the kind of cartogram that I provide in *Mapping Public Theology*, giving particular attention to my reading of Latino/a theology, and on my rendering of public theological discourse.

Mapping Latino/a Theology

Although it may seem to be a new-fledged elaboration to many in the mainstream of U.S. theology, and perhaps even to some of its exponents, U.S. Hispanic/Latino(a) theology has existed as an academic discipline of inquiry for almost thirty years. Emerging in the mid-1970s with Virgilio Elizondo's early theological writings on U.S. Latino/a life, it has gone on to achieve a mature level of articulation, to develop its own conceptual motifs, and even to establish its own distinctive identity as a kind of liberationist-inclined theological expression that provides insight into the confounding reality of life in the United States and of the varieties of religious experience found within it. U.S. Hispanic/Latino(a) theology has heralded such influential theological innovations as the turn to cultural memory as a theological source; the theorization of the concept of *mestizaje* (cultural hybridity) and popular religion; the elaboration of a distinctive women's theology of liberation; the advancement of historical Jesus study through the presentation of his mestizo and border socio-cultural identity as a Galilean Jew; the valuation of aesthetic representations of Latino/a life; the development of an ecclesiology that emanates from the context of the *barrio* (the inner city); a reading of the Bible from the eyes of Hispanics/Latino/as; the promotion of postcolonial studies within biblical hermeneutics; the development of a

distinctive Christian ethics based on Latino/a notions of *dignidad*; and many other innovative developments. All of these developments demonstrate, as Fernando Segovia notes, that not only has U.S. Hispanic/Latino/a theology burgeoned; it has also "gone on to develop deep foundations and to mature and flourish as well."[2]

Getting such contributions to be noted by the mainstream of the theological "intelligentsia" has, however, not been an easy task. Far too often Latino/a theology has resembled that unacknowledged, unrecognized conversation partner who is mentioned in the "road to Emmaus" biblical narrative in Luke 24:13-35. Despite the fact that it has existed right alongside other theologies of liberation since at least 1975, Hispanic/Latino/a theology and Latino/a religious discourse have largely been overlooked in the broader spheres of religious scholarship. This neglect mirrors the lack of recognition that has more generally been tendered to the Latino/a experience in the broader U.S. society.

Change is in the air, however. Gradually, the unique theological expressions and religious interpretations of Latino/a theologians and religious scholars are beginning to draw the attention of many within the U.S. theological academy and the greater society. Spurred on by the recent interest in the long-ignored reality of Latino/as in the United States, the heightened awareness of the Latino/a population's increase, and the growth in the numbers of Latino/a scholars, U.S. Hispanic/Latino/a theology and religious scholarship have recently taken enormous strides both in the proliferation and richness of their distinctive expression. Along with this have finally come increased visibility and recognition.

This is a good thing both for Latino/a theology and the wider theological intelligentsia. Latino/a theology has much to offer to theological scholarship. A good deal of its uniqueness derives from the centrality that it gives to the category of culture and to matters of self and collective identity. It can be said that in certain ways this focus mirrors a wider trend in humanist study. Since

the early 1980s, intellectuals have increasingly turned toward culture to study the cultural contexts in which individuals and groups act. More and more, they have focused their analysis on what I call "the symbolic order" of human activity—the symbols, rituals, discourse, and cultural practices—rather than to the study of social structures and social relations. This interest in the concept of culture has swept over a wide range of academic disciplines, including the field of theology.

Even before discourse on culture became popular in U.S. theological scholarship during the late 1990s, however, Latino/a theologians had already been inaugurating a turn to culture in their theologies. From its beginning, U.S. Hispanic/Latino(a) theology has placed emphasis on the concept of culture. The very first text written from a fully intentional and uniquely Hispanic/Latino theological perspective, published by Virgilio Elizondo in 1975, was appropriately titled *Christianity and Culture*.[3] This book offered not only a full-length theological study and expression of the consciousness that emanates from the culture and religion of the Mexican American people, it also called attention to the possibility and desirability of a Christian theological interpretation that emanates from the space of the self, of identity, and which begins with a contextualized cultural reading of the Hispanic experience. Most later exponents of U.S. Latino/a theology have similarly directed their thinking to the realm of culture and to the topic of identity.

Indeed, it is important to note that the emphasis given to the concept of culture by Latino/a theologians is closely connected to their concern with identity. Culture is, after all, a recurrent theme in Hispanic/Latino(a) theology, both as a basis to counteract the ethnic prejudice and/or cultural subjugation with which Latino/as have often had to contend and also as a way of fostering self-affirming identities. As this last aspiration manifests, then, Latino/a theologians have given the category of culture a central place in their search for and reconstruction of a denied

positive identity. These two themes of culture and identity can therefore be seen as two distinct yet inexorably linked core topics in Latino/a theology.

It is my belief that the interconnected concern with culture and identity is most manifest in the recurring use of, and significance attributed to, the concepts of *mestizaje* (cultural hybridity) and *popular religion* in the writings of most Hispanic/Latino(a) theologians. Indeed, it is difficult, if not impossible, to find a work in Hispanic/Latino theology that does not refer to one or both of these concepts. I suggest that in whatever manner the term *mestizaje* is employed, and no matter what secondary meaning may be attributed to the study of popular religion, the main thrust behind the use of these concepts is a concern with the proper remembrance, defense, and celebration of Latino cultures and identities. In this sense, the terms *mestizaje* and popular religion are employed as explanatory categories that synchronously: a) depict the cultural hybridity that characterizes Latino/a identity, b) help point to what is different and new about that identity in the United States, and c) provide fertile space for new formations and celebrations of Latino/a cultural identity to take hold.

In sum, I suggest that the theme of culture and identity has pervaded much of the efforts of U.S. Hispanic/Latino(a) theology, impressing itself upon theology's theological and political imagination. Theologically, for instance, it is perceptible in the recurring use of, and significance attributed to, the concepts of *mestizaje* and popular religion; when comparing the historical Jesus' *mestizo* identity to present-day Latino self-subjectivity; when theologizing Latino/a agency such as literature, for instance; and when musing over the surreptitious activity and potentiality embedded within forms of Latino/a religious expression. Politically speaking, the motif of culture and identity is expressed through a political imaginary that seeks to defend and advance Latino/a identities, end cultural domination, and win recognition for

Latino/as. In these ways and others, Latino/a theology demonstrates a commitment to a discursive paradigm of cultural recognition and to a politics of identity program.

The emergence of culture and identity as reflexive categories in Latino/a theology is something to be appreciated and even preserved. Given the historical realities and dynamics of cultural subjugation, ethnic prejudice, and hurtful negative stereotypes with which Latino/as have often had to contend, and the continued existence of strategies of cultural oppression in our national context, this turn to culture and identity is an important and necessary strategy. These concerns and struggles have much to do with justice. Nevertheless, as I mentioned at the beginning of my talk, I believe that Latino/a theology has tended to focus predominantly on discussions of identity, symbolic culture, and subjectivity, and has given too little attention to the critical scrutiny of the multifaceted matrices that impinge upon the realization of a broader emancipatory political project and energy. More specifically, it has thus far operated mostly with an understanding of injustice which is cultural or symbolic, focusing on the provision of a theological response to injustice which is "rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication" such as "cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own); non-recognition (being rendered invisible by means of the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretive practices of one's culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions)."[4] Largely missing from this theology, however, has been a convincing or substantive response to socioeconomic injustice, to injustice which is rooted in the political-economic structure of society and which includes injustices such as "exploitation (having the fruits of one's labor appropriated for the benefit of others);

economic marginalization (being confined to undesirable or poorly paid work or being denied access to income-generating labor altogether); and deprivation (being denied an adequate material standard of living)."[5] In short, I suggest that the emphasis on matters of identity and cultural injustice in our theologies has unintentionally served to engender certain debilitating oversights. Our strong focus on matters of identity and symbolic culture has unintentionally, for instance, served to disguise other serious economic and political disparities that exist in our society and which disproportionately afflict Latino communities. Not surprisingly, Hispanic/Latino(a) theology has lagged behind in its scrutiny of issues related to socioeconomic injustice and the development of an adequately comprehensive social theory that connects the study of signification to institutions and social structures.

Yet, if we want our theological discourses to have teeth, teeth that have a comprehensive bite, we need to pay adequate attention to the broader material structures in society that generate disadvantage at various levels of social life. Our liberationist theological discourses must adequately address not merely how cultural identities may be defended and constructed differently, but also how they are produced, negotiated, and sustained within a deeply hierarchical and exploitative society in which symbolic culture is only one among many other sources of stratification. The dynamics of identity and culture are always embedded in a larger web of shifting social, political, and economic relations. These matters of symbolic culture, agency, and identity, therefore, must be understood in relation to broader societal constituents, stratifications, and crises that transcend the space of the self and the local, and yet, nevertheless, influence everyday personal and local realities.

In this vein, Hispanic/Latino(a) theologians must bear in mind that U.S. Latino/as suffer injustices that are traceable not only to the denigration of their cultures and identities, but also to socioeconomic inequity. If our theological discourses are ultimately to

be useful in the promotion of a reinvigorated social justice movement that aids impoverished and marginalized Latino/as, as well as disadvantaged persons from other ethnic communities in our society, then such discourses will have to search for ways of reconnecting a cultural and identity politics of recognition to a social politics of redistribution. In short: our God-talk, our Christ-talk, our church-talk, our talk about mestizaje, our talk about popular religious expression, and our religious practice must be connected to this kind of broader, more comprehensive emancipatory project and vision if they have any hope of anticipating—or being helpful to—integral liberation.[6]

In my estimation there are still three other challenges that the present theological enchantment with a discursive paradigm of symbolic culture and identity politics confronts, and that points to the need for the conceptualization of Latino/a theology as a form of "public discourse." The first of these challenges involves the emergence, since the late 1980s, of public conversations that highlight the fragmentation of the U.S. social context. These recent discussions have again brought the debate on national and civic identity to the fore by warning of a dangerous erosion of civil society in the United States. Whether it is to agree with, to argue with, or to nuance these discussions on U.S. public life, it is important that theologians who work from within suffering communities, and who aspire to meaningful liberating praxis in society, engage with these conversations on civil society in the United States. Such engagement is necessary because it is vital that we learn how adequately to respond to and influence public discourse, particularly if we hold any hopes for the transformative relevance of theology.

In this vein, I suggest that Latino/a theologians should pay attention to the recent discussions on civil society that have emerged in the United States because they have apparently shifted the discursive context for our theologies. In the decades of the 70s and 80s, following the evolution in the grammar of political

claims-making from civil rights to identity recognition, the task of contextually and ethnically based thought was to articulate and elaborate the difference of each constitutive cultural and ethnic community. At present, even in light of postmodernist and post-structuralist influences, the assignment seems to be that of speaking about particularity, specificity, and difference in a time when greater emphasis is being placed on forms of balkanization, fragmentation, and the loss of social and civil bonds in our society. To put it simply, the intellectual challenge in the present U.S. context, especially for those who wish to operate as "organic" and "public" intellectuals, is no longer merely that of developing autochthonous localized cultural discourses and identities; rather, the broader challenge is to find ways to construct discourses that can simultaneously help excluded groups to establish themselves as distinctive communities with distinct social claims while also linking these to some notion of a "public good." Encouragingly, some thinkers are working precisely on the development and advancement of this sort of public thought. Anthony Appiah, Seyla Benhabib, Nancy Fraser, Susan Friedman, Edward Said, and Cornel West are among those who have engaged the prospects and limits of a cultural politics of identity. In doing so, they present a refreshing and adequately probed cosmopolitanism that is acutely attuned to meaningful markers of situatedness yet transcends the parochial confines of nativist thinking. Further engagement with the work of thinkers such as these can be a profitable undertaking for liberation-hoping theologians.

A second challenge for Latino/a theologians involves the apparent fracturing of utopian energies which we have witnessed in more recent times within our national context. The U.S. political scene since the 1980s has not been devoid of progressive movements, but rather crowded with distinct social movements, "each politicizing a different 'difference.'"[7] The problematic result is that, while all of these various movements for justice and pro-

gressive social change cut across one another, the kind of affiliation and coalition-building that can produce a major insurgent force has not been produced.

Yet, as Susan Friedman points out, "we cannot afford to give up the utopian dream of coalition and connection."[8] This utopian vision of coalition and connection is especially pertinent for those historically subordinated persons and groups in society that by themselves lack the power to single-handedly transform present institutional structures. Social change, especially in the United States today, requires the building and nourishment of wider communal bonds among different communities of struggle.

Toward this goal, our theologians need to reflect critically on their emphases and rhetorical models. We must ask ourselves openly whether our discourses facilitate or hinder the vision and energy necessary for affiliation and coalition. For the task of alliance building, we need discourses that can occasionally and when necessary dare to move "beyond theorizing difference to theorizing the spaces in between difference" and that seek resolutely to facilitate "a solidarity of difference."[9]

A third additional challenge that should draw our attention involves the marginalization of theology in the broader public sphere. The reality is that theology rarely manages to have an impact or even to be heard beyond its disciplinary, professional boundaries. And even within those boundaries, some theological discourses are confined to peripheral niches and limited audiences, as they are treated as appendices to the "mainstream" curriculum. A theology that is inspired by an ameliorative impulse and longs to make a social difference cannot be content with this arrangement.

To sum this all up, I have noted five warrants for (a) a reconsideration of the discursive paradigm of cultural and identity politics that has enthusiastically been embraced by may Latino/a theologians, and, therefore, (b) for the need to conceptualize Latino/a theology as a form of "public discourse:" 1) because the

dynamics of identity and symbolic culture or agency are always in fact embedded in a larger web of shifting social, political, and economic relations which must be equally kept in mind when theorizing on matters of subjectivity; 2) because U.S. Latino/as suffer injustices that are traceable not only to the denigration of their cultures and identities, but also to socioeconomic inequity; 3) because the current discursive and American public context for our theologies prevails upon us to consider the possible dangers of social fragmentation and the loss of social and civil bonds in our society; 4) because we have witnessed a debilitating fracturing of utopian energies in our recent political scene that highlights the need for alliance and the fostering of solidarities of difference; and 5) because our academic theologies continue to be culturally marginalized declamations, failing to capture the attention of a wider audience both in the academic and public arena. Given these warrants, I suggest that what we need and should strive for is a mode of address that can simultaneously a) engage with and potentially influence public discourse; b) integrate the cultural or symbolic and the social or institutional through reflection on the social whole and the development of an appropriate theory of the public; c) facilitate the building of progressive alliances of struggle; and d) gain its own recognition as "public" discourse. Furthermore, I suggest that the concept of "public theology" is a potentially useful tool for this multifaceted discursive enterprise. I believe that it may function as a heuristic device at the level of a theory of discourse that can help us to address the discursive strivings which I have mentioned. Public theology is, therefore, an idea that Latino/a theologians should explore further. In what space remains, I will briefly highlight some of the meanings and connotations that I attach to the concept of "public theology."

Mapping Public Theology

In recent years, some theologians and religious scholars have called for the development of public theologies. Among these we

can include David Hollenbach, Robin Lovin, Martin Marty, David Tracy, Richard John Neuhaus, Max Stackhouse, Ronald Thiemann, Michael and Kenneth Himes, Linell Cady, Rebecca Chopp, Robert Benne, and Victor Anderson. The term "public theology" does not, however, mean the same thing to each of these thinkers, nor do they align the concept with the same overall theological or political project. In my book, *Mapping Public Theology*, I offer a sketch of some of the different ways in which the term has been employed, and I offer a distinctive take on the concept, employing it more as a theory of theological discourse and infusing it at once with influences from currents such as liberation theology; the kind of historicist-constructivist theological methodology espoused by theologians such as Gordon Kaufman, Sheila Davaney, Linell Cady, and Catherine Keller; critical social theory; and the sort of prophetic American Pragmatism endorsed by Cornel West.[10] Indeed, I think that some of the distinctiveness of my "mapping of public theology" can be traced to my blending of these various theoretical elements. Its distinctiveness also stems from my hope to create better intersections between two fields of discourse that have not entered into substantive internal dialogue: liberation theology and public theology. The fact is that liberation theologians in general have not directly engaged the question of the public and/or publicness. Conversely, theologians who have examined the query of the public have not often explicitly engaged the question of liberation. Moreover, the emphases I attach to the idea of public discourse in this work have not often been clearly articulated in, nor exemplified by, U.S. liberation theologies or public theologies. By tackling these issues and concerns, and by merging these influences, I hope to create new discursive bridges and to hint at new possible directions for Latino/a theology, liberation theology in general, and for public theology in the United States.

I use the term "public theology" to describe the attempt to address the pressing issues in a given social context and to culti-

vate a care for the quality of our lives together from within theology. Specifically, the call for a public theology is the establishment of a theological mode of discourse that addresses the following four concerns: First, it must take explicit account of the broad national sociopolitical circumstances within which it takes place; second, it must seek to nurture a sense of our common life and a concern for the quality of our lives together as a social whole; third, such a theology should visualize the possibilities and conditions for an overarching emancipatory project that could account for the diverse processes that produce social injustices and could prompt fellow citizens to take public action on behalf of justice; fourth, it should try to capture the attention of a wide and diverse audience with a moving and harmonizing message that could facilitate alliances of struggle across racial, cultural, gender, class, and religious lines. A public theology, then, is a form of discourse that couples either the language, symbols, narratives, or background concepts of a religious tradition with an overarching, integrative, emancipatory sociopolitical perspective in such a way that it movingly captures the attention and moral conscience of a broad audience and promotes the cultivation of those modes of love, care, concern, and courage required both for individual fulfillment and for broad-based social activism. This is the utopian or hope-full description of public theology that I concoct in my *mapping of public theology*. In a sense, it is certainly a hopeful, and perhaps even idealistic rendering. In another sense, the contribution I offer here in this work is modest because it is merely a prefatory and descriptive rendering. Nevertheless, it is my hope that this book can serve to highlight the urgent need for public visions and discourse in our time and that it can serve as an invitation for others to conceptualize the tasks of theologies that aspire to go public as public discourse.

Conclusion

Our times call for the construction of relational, public theologies. We can pretend that our current particularist, identity-and culture-based theologies of liberation will somehow produce an emancipatory movement that will raise the living standards for Latino/as and members of other social groups, and will somehow bring to bear meaningful broad-based pressure on the unjust institutional structures of society, but the evidence thus far has been overwhelmingly to the contrary. After three decades of our discursive and activistic affiliation with the paradigm of identity politics and a cultural politics of difference, the poor have become poorer while the wealthy have become wealthier, racism continues to permeate institutional life, and cultural oppression and sexism continue to exist. Moreover, we have witnessed the fissuring of progressive social movements—a happenstance that has somewhat dampened the willingness to envision social arrangements that could harmonize the interests of our diverse and currently fragmented local utopian energies. Clearly, then, we are in need of types of liberationist theological discourse that may be better able to reckon with the justice demands of our age. Of course, it is very possible that even with the best of our attempts at a public theology such social ills may still emerge. Nevertheless, our desire to make some sort of difference in the world through our theoretical constructions and activism should continuously impel us to seek to put together better diagnoses of our time; preferable speculations of social justice; and more desirable comprehensive, integrative, programmatic thinking. Accordingly, in *Mapping Public Theology* I have called on Latino/a theology to assume an orientation that is public, encouraging it to attempt to put forward overarching visions and broad analyses that may captivate the interest of a broad pluralistic social constituency beyond our culturally defined groups. Through such an effort, I believe that we will be better able to go public with our Latino/a liberation theologies on roads that we have not often traveled.

NOTES

[1] This essay is an edited transcription of a lecture delivered at the Hispanic Theological Initiative's summer workshop gathering, (on July 19, 2003), a lecture which was given as part of the book award conferral on that occasion. Because the aim of the lecture was to retrace mentally both the contents and motivations of the book honored on this occasion, the essay draws liberally on my treatise titled *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002). However, it also draws upon my thoughts in my essay titled "Oye, Y Ahora Que?/Say, Now What?: Prospective Lines of Development for U.S. Hispanic/Latino(a) Theology," in *New Horizons in Hispanic/Latino(a) Theology* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2003): 101-118.

[2] Fernando Segovia, "Introduction: Aliens in the Promised Land," in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise*, ed. Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz and Fernando F. Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 42.

[3] Virgilio Elizondo, *Christianity and Culture: An Introduction to Pastoral Theology and Ministry for the Bicultural Community* (Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1975).

[4] I borrow this descriptive phrasing from Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 14.

[5] Ibid., 13.

[6] In various ways, the recent work of Christopher Tirres and Manuel Mejido points in this same direction. See particularly Christopher Tirres' "Liberation in the Latino(a) Context: Retrospect and Prospect," and Manuel Mejido's "The Fundamental Problematic of U.S. Hispanic Theology," in *New Horizons in Hispanic/Latino(a) Theology*, 138-162 and 163-178 respectively.

[7] I borrow this choice of words from Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus*, 179.

[8] Susan Friedman, *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 66.

[9] I borrow the first quoted phraseology from Friedman, *Mappings*, 68; and the second from Antonia Darder, "The Politics of Biculturalism: Culture and Difference in the Formation of *Warriors for Gringostroika* and *The New Mestizas*," in *Culture and Difference: Critical Perspectives on the Bicultural Experience in the United States*, ed. Antonia Darder, (Westport, Conn.: Bergin & Garvey, 1995), 15.

[10] See, for example, Gordon D. Kaufman, *An Essay on Theological Method* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1979); Sheila G. Davaney, *Pragmatic Historicism: A Theology For The Twenty-First Century* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2000); Linell Cady, *Religion, Theology, and American Public Life* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); Catherine Keller, "Seeking and Sucking: On Relation and Essence in Feminist Theology," in *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms*, ed. Rebecca Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 54-78; and Cornel West, *The American Evasion of Philosophy: A Genealogy of Pragmatism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989). For more on my theoretical influences, see the introduction of my book *Mapping Public Theology*, xi-xxi.

Response to Benjamín Valentín

Luis N. Rivera-Pagán

Dr. Rivera-Pagán is the Henry Winters Luce Professor of Ecumenics and Mission at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the author of several books, among them: *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (1992), *Mito, exilio y demonios: literature y teología en América Latina* (1996), *Diálogos y polifonías: perspectivas y reseñas* (1999), and *Essays from the Diaspora* (2002).

> THINGS FALL APART; THE CENTER CANNOT HOLD . . .
> THE CEREMONY OF INNOCENCE IS DROWNED;
> THE BEST LACK ALL CONVICTION, WHILE THE WORST
> ARE FULL OF PASSIONATE INTENSITY.
>
> *The Second Coming (1920-21)*
> William Butler Yeats

Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference [1] is not the first significant contribution of the young scholar Benjamín Valentín. In May of 1998, Valentín published a brief but very important article, "Nuevos Odres Para el Vino: A Critical Contribution to Latino/a Theological Construction," [2] in which, in his peculiarly elegant, intelligent, and eloquent way, he developed a poignant and cogent critique of the tendency of several Hispanic/Latino theologians to restrict their intellectual horizons to the boundaries of the church, neglecting the public and social arenas. I remember thinking, after reading that article: "This is a guy who seems to know something that the rest of us ignore!"

Then in 2001, along with Anthony B. Pinn, Valentín edited *The Ties that Bind: African American and Hispanic American/Latino/a*

Theologies in Dialogue,[3] a worthy contribution to the development of a creative dialogue between two contextual theologies in the U.S., both striving until then in relative isolation from each other to challenge the mainline Euro-American theologies. It was, again, a significant effort to widen the frontiers of the Latino/Hispanic *teología en conjunto*, to transform its cacophonous monologue into a diverse dialogue, to bring to the table of conversation partners with different collective memories and distinct historical projects.

And then, only a year later, this indefatigable scholar has come out with another book, *Mapping Public Theology*, that, as Justo González affirms in a blurb on the book's back cover, "may well set the agenda" for a new generation of Latino/Hispanic theologians. Once more, here is a guy who seems to know some truly important things that we have either ignored or whose urgency we have not been able to assess. Soon we will also be reading *New Horizons in US Hispanic/Latino(a) Theology*,[4] edited by Valentín and containing essays by young Hispanic/Latino scholars, among them several Hispanic Theological Initiative alumni.

In a cordial but critical dialogue with older Latino/Hispanic theologians, like Virgilio Elizondo, Orlando Espín, and Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Valentín insists in *Mapping Public Theology* that Latino/Hispanic theology has done a rather splendid job regarding the crucial areas of symbolic culture, identity, and cultural specificity, but has failed to develop the conceptual criteria and the linguistic discourse necessary to engage the broader public and political issues of social justice and political transformative praxis. In order to become the prophetic discourse and liberative praxis Latino/Hispanic theology has proclaimed to be its goal since day one, it has to come out of its splendid isolation in the sphere of symbolic culture and identity in order to establish bridges of communication with other theological and non-theological partners in the public and political arenas. Latino/Hispanic theology, according to Valentín, has to come out of the closet of cultural identity politics.

To be honest, it is not the first time that this challenge has been suggested. David Tracy, in his influential text, *The Analogical Imagination*, insisted that theology should always have in mind three different discursive realms: the church, the academy, and society.[5] We theologians are like clowns asked to perform in a three-ring circus. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, in several essays of her *Mujerista Theology*,[6] insists on the need to abrogate the leading social oppressive structures as a corollary of the liberative character of *mujerista* theology. Other Hispanic/Latino writers have also emphasized that their theological perspectives belong to the relatively new genre called "liberation theology." The recognition of the dignity and integrity of Hispanic/Latino cultural identity so closely related in their writings to popular religiosity therefore logically requires an intimate connection with an emancipatory general social process. And yet, Valentín is absolutely right when he indicates that such a goal also logically requires transcending the paradigms of cultural identity and ethnic difference and weaving a discursive outlook that both reflects upon the social whole and seeks to transform it by furthering social justice. Thus, the title of the book: *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference*.

One might say with a modicum of truth that Valentín's book attempts to reconcile the spirit of *aggiornamento*—the opening to the modern world and the particularities of its dilemmas and aspirations that has been pervasive since the Second Vatican Council— and the utopia of social liberation that guided the deliberations at Medellín of the Latin American Conference of Bishops, at least in the highly idealized and iconized vision of that event that Gustavo Gutiérrez has portrayed in several of his writings. It is an impressive effort to intertwine cultural self-affirmation and prophetic praxis.

Mapping Public Theology is well written, devoid of the jargon so common these days. The book is not only readable, it is a pleasure to read. I read it at the same time that I was enjoying some excel-

lent writers, like Nawal El-Saadawi, Eli Wiesel, Simone Weil, and Susan Sontag, and I sincerely confess: Valentín's text was not a letdown but rather is written in such a way as to succeed in communicating something meaningful and relevant to the strivings of birthing a just and free society.

However, the problem with writing a text whose main import is a serious critique to what friends and colleagues, *compañeros* and *compañeras*, have published, is that it necessarily invites critical reactions from its readers. Critique always boomerangs. Certainly, the cordial and constructive way in which Valentín criticizes his Hispanic/Latino colleagues should serve as a model to any dialogical critique of his text. Allow me some observations whose only purpose is to further the critical dialogue that animates everything published up to now by Valentín.

Mapping Public Theology, in its preliminary analysis of Elizondo and Espín, seems to assume a certain mature consensus about issues of cultural identity among Hispanic/Latino theologians. May I, however, suggest that we might have not yet reached a common agreement about what constitutes the particularities of Hispanic/Latino culture that we do not want to surrender or to relegate to the museum of nostalgic but atavistic memories? This is perhaps one of the reasons why we still have to tolerate, from time to time, boring and rather unpersuasive disquisitions about the naming of our name. Are we Latinos, Hispanics, Latino/Hispanics, U. S. Hispanics, U. S. Latinos? The search for the adequate self-designation hides the uncertainties of the layers of identity. We are like dislocated *Peer Gynts* seeking our true self.[7]

Isasi-Díaz writes: "After the Spanish language, popular religion is the most important identifying characteristic of Latinas, the main carrier of our culture."[8] Yes, indeed, but most probably Latino/Hispanic theologians entertain significant differences regarding both issues: language and popular religion. We are not of one mind about the role and meaning of Spanish, not only as a

ghetto language, the vernacular idiom of a community under siege, but also as a vehicle for intellectual discourse and academic publication. The Spanish language should serve for something more than attractive exotic adornments—"Caminemos con Jesús," "Mañana," "Dignidad," "La Morenita"—in texts written otherwise in the imperial lingua franca. I know, Spanish is "cute," "sexy," but it is also the living language of a community that prays, dreams, struggles, teaches, and publishes. *Mapping Public Theology* has a lengthy and impressive bibliography, but, with the exception of a bilingual edition of José Vasconcelos's *Cosmic Race*, there is a total absence of publications, books or articles, in Spanish. What does this exclusion say about the real value or significance attributed to the Hispanic linguistic identity or heritage? The significance and fluidity of the matter could be perceived by comparing Richard Rodríguez' early book, *Hunger of Memory* (1981) with his more recent *Brown* (2002). At least for some of us, heirs of more than a century of cultural and linguistic resistance, therein is a distinction that entails a meaningful difference.

An alert reader can also detect, thinly veiled behind the surface of Hispanic/Latino theological production, significant different perspectives regarding the symbolic values of popular religiosity. I, for one, feel myself more at home with the heterodox or, to use her language, *indecent, obscene,* and *perverted* approach to Mariology, found in Marcella Althaus-Reid's *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics*,[9] than in the pious and devout platitudes about the Guadalupe myth expounded ad infinitum by so many Hispanic/Latino theologians. This is not the time or the place to explore further this complex and sensitive matter, but I think it should at least be mentioned. Otherwise, the false impression might be given that we have reached a common agreement about which traditional cultural particularities and religious practices could or should be considered carriers of enduring symbolic values to be preserved and enriched.

The title of the book, *Mapping Public Theology*, promises more than what, to be honest, could be expected from anybody at this stage of the dialogue within the Hispanic/Latino theology. To be able to genuinely map the ways that Hispanic/Latino theologians might contribute to the design of an overarching emancipatory historical project for the general society, we should have already have in place a rather more complex and sophisticated literary corpus in which the main obstacles to the unfolding of the kindom of God, to use Isasi-Díaz's crucial way of reconstructing that most basic evangelical concept, are discussed and alternatives expounded and argued for. We do not yet have that analytic production dealing with the kind of issues discussed in, for example, *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*,[10] written, en conjunto, by the economist Herman E. Daly and the theologian John B. Cobb, Jr. What we do have in Valentín's book is rather an injunction, forcefully and persuasively argued, about the task that must be initiated. It also contains a compelling exposition of its goals and purposes and a preliminary account of the main signs and symbols of the endeavor to be engaged in. That is extremely important, but not enough to genuinely map the terrain of a Hispanic/Latino public theology.

The author dares to name some big-fisted adversaries: corporate capitalism and racism. And he is well aware of the sexist discrimination that suffuses and infects our society. His proclamation of war against those "axes of evil"—corporate capitalism, racism, and sexism—is eloquent and highly articulate. However, the exposition of the transformative strategies and the singularities of the historical project, that "overarching emancipatory project" mentioned several times in the text, is long in exhortation, but short in specific proposals that might be mapped. The text is stronger in the deconstructive than in the constructive dimension required by any critique coming from a non-cynical liberative perspective. It fulfills an important and necessary propaedeutic function. Not more, not less.

Valentín's book comes out at a moment in which many people in the United States—or at least the kind of groups and communities the author seems to have in mind when he writes about the need to forge alliances in the public social arena—are discussing two recent and controversial issues that have to be dealt with if an ample emancipatory social project is to be constructed: the military invasion of Iraq by the United States and its so-called "coalition of the willing" and the federal Supreme Court abrogation of Texas's anti-homosexuality law, thus ending the juridical criminalization of homosexuality in this nation.

The first issue has many major implications for any viable project of social justice. What does a Hispanic/Latino emancipatory public theology have to say regarding the construction of an American global empire, based upon a geometrical increase in military expenditures, the disdain of international law, and a sequel of deception and lies that would be exquisitely dissected by the irony of a Jonathan Swift, Mark Twain or George Bernard Shaw?[11] How would it face the celebratory and laudatory "prayer b reakfast" that so many Hispanic church leaders had with President Bush on May 15, 2003? Would it be able to find its way to confront that President with the same prophetic vigor that led Jeremiah to tell King Jehoiakim that his death would not be the cause of lament and dirge and that, on the contrary, at the moment of his demise he would receive the burial proper to that of an ass (Jeremiah 22: 18-19)? How would a prophetic public theology deal with the jingoism prevailing in the U. S. public environment, birthed by the imperial search for power, profit, and prestige, and nurtured by servile media conglomerates? Or am I asking too much of this emancipatory and prophetic public theology?

On April 1, 2003, five professors at Princeton Theological Seminary gave a press conference to publicly criticize the invasion

of Iraq. One of them was the object of several insulting and threatening e-mails and a letter promising to blow off his "commie ass." This particular professor had not been more active than his four colleagues in the anti-war campaign, he had not attended the big Washington, D. C., or New York demonstrations, nor had he written extensively about the issue. Why, then, was he the preferred target for scorn, insults, and threats? The clue to the answer came in an e-mail, received merely two hours before he was to read his inaugural lecture as professor of ecumenics in this institution. That electronic communication included a suggestion to leave this nation, as it was obvious that he did not belong here. Why was it so obvious? Because his name was not Mark Taylor, Peter Paris, George Hunsinger, or Deborah Hunsinger, but Luis Rivera-Pagán. It was apparently obvious to the writer of that e-mail that a person with such a name does not truly belong to this nation.

Any liberative public theology that wants to deal with the conjunction, rather than disjunction, between identity politics and social justice has to face the formidable obstacles that the present jingoistic environment prevailing in this nation imposes, has to take notice of the possible verity of the recent statement by Susan Sontag that "it remains as true as ever that most people will not question the rationalizations offered by their government for starting or continuing a war",[12] including, no doubt, the leaders of most Hispanic/Latino churches, and has to overcome the attitude of many Anglos that persons with strange names like Luis Rivera-Pagán are aliens in this society and do not have a genuine citizen's right to dissent.

The second issue is a very sensitive matter for it refers to the breakdown of the traditional patriarchal heterosexual and reproductive family model. The U. S. Supreme Court majority opinion, in *Lawrence et al vs. Texas*, on June 26, 2003, declared that "the liberty protected by the Constitution allows homosexual persons the right to choose to enter upon relationships in the confines of their

homes and their own private lives and still retain their dignity as free persons. . . The State cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime." This is a controversial matter, considered by some as divisive for the churches today as the abolition of slavery was in the nineteenth century. The churches are possibly the most important reservoir of heterosexism and homophobia. Many evangelical churches allude to gay and lesbians in a similar way as Nazis sometimes used to referred to Jews, some decades ago, or as Serbians seemed to regard Muslim Bosnians, very recently.

Up till now, Hispanic/Latino theology has eluded this controversy. It brings to mind María Luisa Bemberg´s provocative 1993 film, "De eso no se habla." But the dispute will not go away; instead to the contrary, it is moving to the forefront of theological dialogue and debate. Ada María Isasi-Díaz has compellingly shown that there cannot be authentic social justice and liberty without the overcoming of all forms of sexism. In several footnotes of *Mujerista Theology*, she includes heterosexism as one of the faces or dimensions of sexism. Maybe this matter could be relegated to a footnote in 1996, but certainly not in 2003, as demonstrated recently by the challenging article of our colleague, James B. Nickoloff, "Sexuality: A Queer Omission in U. S Latino/a Theology."[13]

There are too many crimes against gays and lesbians in the history of the Christian churches for us to engage in timid discretion and vacillation.[14] Or would we be forced to admit that the decisions of a relatively conservative Republican Supreme Court might be more daring and challenging than our own allegedly liberating and transforming theologies? Are Latino/Hispanic liberation theologians to be less courageous or less truthful storytellers than Gloria Anzaldúa who, more than fifteen years ago, in *Borderlands/La frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), registered, in her disturbing and moving poetic style, her strong denunciation of traditional heterosexual patriarchy? If we avoid the claims of the gay/lesbian liberation the-

ology, how can we ask others not to elude our own demands for cultural recognition and social retribution?

I am well aware of the difficulties regarding these complex matters in the Hispanic/Latino congregations. I was supposed to be the lecturer in a meeting of Presbyterian Hispanic ministers and pastors, and their spouses, in April in San José, Costa Rica. The subject was to be "twenty-first century ecclesiology." Shortly before the meeting on April 2, I received a note from the organizer of the meeting, instructing me that I should not include in my lectures, any matter that might be deemed controversial at the present moment, in the Presbyterian Church. It took me less than a nanosecond to e-mail that person what I thought of his restrictive norm. The communication system of this so holy place almost had a melt-down because of the tone of my reaction.

Whether we like it or not, we have to face these concrete issues and go beyond politically correct phrases, like "social justice" and "human liberation." And we have to face them well aware that jingoism and homophobic bigotry seem to be faring well in many churches, including the Hispanic/Latino congregations. If we are committed to designing a prophetic public theology, we will have to confront these two tasks: the critique of the prevailing nationalistic and militaristic jingoism and the dismantling of the oppressive culture of homophobia and heterosexism. If I have read adequately Benjamín Valentín's excellent book, my challenge, which certainly is not more radical than his, is congenial to the main thrust of his proposal.

The dialogue has begun in a grand way. For that precious gift, our profound gratitude to Benjamín Valentín.

NOTES

[1] Harrisburg/London/New York: Trinity Press International, 2002.
[2] *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*, May 1998, Vol. 5, No. 4, 30-47.
[3] New York: Continuum, 2001.
[4] Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2003.
[5] jDavid Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad, 1981, 1-28.
[6] Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996.
[7] The allusion is to Henrik Ibsen's play *Peer Gynt* (1867).
[8] *Mujerista Theology*, 74.
[9] London: Routledge, 2000.
[10] Boston: Beacon: 2nd. ed., 1994.
[11] See Ignacio Ramonet, "State-sponsored lies," *Le Monde Diplomatique* (English edition) July 2003 (http://MondeDiplo.com/2003/07/01ramonet).
[12] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003, 38.
[13] *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*, February 2003, Vol, 10, No. 3, 31-51.
[14] See, inter alia, Bartolomé Bennassar, "Le modèle sexuel: l'Inquisition d'Aragon et la repression des péchés 'abominables'," in his book *L'Inquisition Espagnole, XVe – XIXe Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 339-369 and Luiz Mott, "*Justitia et Misericordia:* A Inquisição portuguesa e a repressão ao nefando pecado de sodomia," in *Inquisição: Ensaios sobre Mentalidades, Heresias e Arte* (Anita Novinsky et Maria Luiza Tucci Carneiro, organizadoras) (São Paulo: Editora Expressão e Cultura/Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1992), 703-738.

"Religious Education in an Immigrant Community: A Case Study"

Elizabeth Conde-Frazier

Lecture given at Princeton Theological Seminary for the 2002 HTI Dissertation Series Award

Dr. Conde-Frazier is Associate Professor of Religious Education at Claremont School of Theology. She also teaches at the Latin American Bible Institute in La Puente and has taught in Kazakhstan. Her scholarly passions involve her in doing participatory action research with communities working on justice issues. She is an ordained American Baptist minister with more than ten years experience in the local church.

Introduction

The first letter of Peter reminds its hearers that we are a "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2: 9). This passage has led to the development of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and is linked to the theme of election. We are a people of God by election through our new covenant with God through Jesus, a covenant that redefines the notion of priesthood: in the New Testament it is no longer the priest but Jesus who mediates between the human and the divine, and priesthood becomes something to which all the members of the church are called as heirs with Christ.

The attributes of Israel as the people of God are now applied to the church: cleansed from her sins, she is a redeemed community and a royal priesthood. Through our baptism we are declared to be dead to sin and alive to Christ. This sense of being alive to

Christ invites us to give expression to our love for Christ and to participate in Christ's redeeming activity in the world. The eucharist then reminds us of our call to be priests. As a symbol of our initiation into the priesthood, it symbolizes our death to sin and entrance into a life dedicated to the call Jesus makes on our lives. It is a call to a life dedicated to the service of others—in itself a reflection of the character and mission of Jesus and, therefore, part of the salvific mission of Jesus.

The holiness of the church is manifest in its sacrificial service in the world or its priesthood. For this service, the people of God have been equipped with gifts by the Holy Spirit. This is affirmed by both the Protestant and Catholic tradition as seen in the writings of Protestant theologian Orlando Costas and Arturo Bañuelas, a Catholic theologian.[1] At different points in its history, the church has emphasized either the gifts of the entire body or the gifts of the special priesthood of a few for carrying out the eucharist. This understanding of the special priesthood began in the year 195 with Cyprian and has been variously understood and applied through the intervening centuries. Recently, the nature of bi-vocational ministers in the Hispanic Protestant community and the shortage of priests in the Catholic community have made us attentive to the development of lay ministries once again. It is the urgency of this call to service that brings us to the need for equipping persons to carry out their ministries both in the local parish and in the world.

Historically the church has had a variety of formal and informal means of equipping persons for their priesthood. Informally, we have learned through discipleship models of mentoring where relationship, observation, and reflection have been methods of teaching and learning. We have supplemented these with workshops, retreats, seminars, conferences and, in Latin America, "congresos." The more formal models have included monasteries where the focus has been spiritual formation. Scholasticism gave way to university studies where knowledge of the tradition became the focus and then seminaries were established as denominationalism and the identification of specific skills for ministry evolved.

Bible institutes in turn evolved as a more practical model of the seminary. In their beginnings (1886-1915) the emphasis was Scripture training and preparation for Christian service for laypersons. Their work was seen as complementary to the work of the seminaries. Most persons who were trained at these institutes went out to serve some of the poorest and forgotten areas of the cities. During this time, Protestantism was facing the challenges of modernism in culture and industrial capitalism, as well as the class inequities that arose from it. Today, these institutes are models of adult education: students typically work full-time during the day at a secular job and study in the evening. Classes are structured to accommodate the needs of its participants, many of whom are bi-vocational pastors pursuing a daytime job for financial stability while serving as part-time, oftentimes unpaid ministers in a church. In this setting, persons are educated while already in the context of their ministry. The Catholic counterpart to this is the lay ministry formation program at the diocesan level.

Here, we will look at the Bible institutes, their context, theology, pedagogy, and structures. We will discuss how they function as centers of empowerment in the Latino context by facilitating a doing of theology within structures where the decision making process is owned by the Latina church. The issues of theological education in the Latino context serve as a case study for helping us consider educational approaches in a postmodern context of rapid and continuous change.

The Process of Immigration

Leaders in Bible institutes around the country tend to begin their interview conversations with me around the dynamic of immigration in their particular community, so I consider it helpful

to begin with a brief description of the process of immigration and the details that are pertinent to our discussion.

In the early arrival stage of immigration, the first week to 6 months, persons begin the process of familiarizing themselves with their new environment, remaining involved with their homeland as they meet fellow immigrants. For up to the first three years, they acquire new life tools, learn the language, understand the customs, perhaps develop more flexible gender roles, and they start to organize themselves in support groups.

Over the next several years the immigrants continue this adjustment in the different dimensions of their lives, and they remain deeply connected to fellow immigrants. The next part of their journey is harder for it involves maintaining cultural flexibility and accommodation, developing realistic expectations of the new generation, developing a positive identity, and realizing that they should expect lasting personality changes.

Finally, now that survival needs have been met, there is typically a full-fledged entrance into the new culture and persons are finally able to connect past, present, and future. This process of re-stabilization takes at least one generation.

Individuals begin the process of entry into a new culture by maintaining a tension between containing the chaos of the destabilization of all previous patterns of life and the chaos of re-stabilization that comes from incorporating many new elements into their lives to create entirely new patterns of meaning making to respond to their new realities. Eventually, new cultural patterns emerge which richly combine the old and the new. Each new generation will mix the two in new and different ways so that there is both a continuity and a discontinuity with the culture of the country of origin.

Notice that in the process, perspective keeps changing. There is new information obtained every day that must be incorporated in some way into life. This demands continuous re-creation of the

environment or the reality we live. New skills and data must be acquired to survive. Experience and opportunities help make new information and skills accessible at best—or inaccessible at worst. An example of the latter is that in the 1960s and 70s, immigrants coming to New York City were being trained for manufacturing jobs which were moving out of the city. The schools were knowingly training the young people for vocations that were being phased out as the economy was shifting to a service economy. This created great unemployment in those communities and set in motion a myriad of problems that plague communities where unemployment is high. In this case, new data and skills were deliberately not made available to this immigrant community.

The type of interaction that the community has with the dominant culture is also important in this process. For example, whether or not a new group experiences racism and to what degree it does so will affect their sense of self esteem and identity in this new world, and this affects their ability to progress and re-establish their lives.

Another factor which has the potential to redefine the entire community is the interaction of the second generation with the new culture. How this next generation will incorporate new elements and mix them into the formation of the community may create tensions, adaptations, substitutions, and new ways of being. All of these encounters, interactions, and incorporations involve a process of creating new knowledge in the community at a very rapid pace. To survive this, one learns to think in a conjunctive manner. In other words, we take element A and element B, which ordinarily are in tension or contradict each other and would not normally be blended, and creatively interweave them into a new way of being or a new way of seeing things. We're not an either/or people but a highly inventive both/and community. For example, we may believe in predestination—God has a plan for our lives—while also believing in free will.

Implications for Religious Education

So, how should we approach theological construction from the point of view of the Latina community in this process? What are the implications which this dynamic has for religious educators, for the understanding of God and God's action in the world, of God's call to these communities, and of how they understand their relationship with God and others in their new world? Does the Latino church, its scholars, priests, priestesses, and lay ministers, including our youth, feel that it can do theology of its own, or does it feel that it needs to accept the authority of others' voices? Where might one begin to look for answers? How might our approach take place?

As religious educators, considering these questions and our own awareness of how we enter the community for dialogue about these matters in itself helps us to consider issues related to the voice of the community. Mary Belenky and her associates point out that "voice is more than an academic shorthand for a person's point of view. It is a metaphor that can apply to many aspects of persons' experiences and development…The development of a sense of voice, mind and self are intricately intertwined."[2]

Voice has to do with the ways in which we are connected or disconnected to the world. So let's look at something. The church is in the midst of this community. How does it relate to education, immigration, commerce, social agencies, transportation and the socio-political structures that fashion that community? What tools does she need to critique these structures or to interact in such ways as to bring transformation when needed?

The language barrier will affect the voice of the church in the community. The breadth of the voice of the church shapes it into a more attentive, dialogical, and caring body in relationship to its mission and in its task to relate to the needs of the world in which they now minister. Theology has to do with worldview. The connections, or lack thereof, with its new world will influence the

t h eological construction of the church.

Leaders from Bible institutes in the southwest concluded that in order for the church to play a key role in the new community, it must construct a theology that takes seriously issues of poverty. This means that social justice is a central focus in the church's responses to the realities of these diasporic communities and for the development of a ministerial practice that addresses the issues. In order for this to take place, theological positions may need to be expanded and deepened.

Deepening and Expanding the Theology

It is possible for a theological position to be expanded or redefined by a change in the way one relates to the world. However, when one's reflection of the structural relationships in one's world are not included in the theological conversation for the formation of the leadership, this expansion cannot occur. This happens when theological education does not pose or answer questions pertaining to the context of the people and when there is no analysis of that context. Theological education then becomes merely the accumulation and memorization of doctrinal truths that have already been formulated by those outside of the immigrant communities. The educational process asks and answers questions that the people are not asking. As stated by theologian Samuel Solivan at a conference for ministry and theological reflection which ordained Hispanic ministers and lay persons attended, "They have given us a canned theology of yesterday to be refried for today."[3] This implies that the missiology of the Hispanic church is being shaped by those outside of the Hispanic community who do not take into consideration the full context of the community where the church is located.

This results in a missiology that does not really speak to the context and a dialogue between church and community that will be undercut as will be the church's commitment to that context.

This is not to say that a relationship between the church and its context does not exist but that the relationship is affected by the limitations in the church's view of that context.

Traditionally, the educational resources of the Protestant Hispanic community have been informed by an evangelical tradition that has separated the church from the affairs of the world. Thus, the church can only view its mission as it relates to personal behaviors. Pietism and sin are defined in privatistic terms alone. Critical thinking, which includes a broader understanding of one's reality, is curtailed.

One way to change this concept of mission and to foster critical thinking is through the theological training of the local pastors. Any critical reflection in the local church requires the support and leadership of the pastor at some level. Samuel Solivan describes the teaching role of the pastor as emanating from his/her spiritual leadership.

> The pastor is the spiritual leader of the community, the interpretive link between God, the people, and the world. The pastor as a source for theological construction and critique may function as the embodiment of a dependent model of ministry that serves to maintain the ecclesial and secular structures of oppression or as a source of support and action for overcoming the forces of injustice and dependence. The pastor constitutes the most strategic venue for influencing the worldview of the community. The pastor can serve as a critical hermeneutical key in redefining the questions, the tools, and the sources to be used in reconstructing a liberating response to the needs of our people.[4]

The Role of Theological Education to Effect Change

Theological education may begin to effect a change in the missiological conception of the pastors by using the experience of

persons as a theological source. Solivan identifies experience as a source that helps pastors to venture out from the tradition with the purpose of seeing and feeling what God sees and feels in the lives of the marginalized and neglected, rather than becoming accustomed to the devastation in the communities where they live and minister. It has been female pastoral leadership that has played a crucial and pioneering role in providing a different point of view from that held traditionally by the male pastorate. For these women, the authority of their call to ministry has come through their attentiveness to their experience with the Holy Spirit in light of the Scriptures and the context of their communities. This has led them into a different truth, one that stands in contrast to the tradition and therefore asks new questions of the tradition.

Women have allowed this new truth to guide not only their understanding of their call to ministry but the shape they have given to their ministries. They have provided another "entry point to new sources and insights for constructing a theological perspective that can better serve our Hispanic community."[5]

> Our passion in prayer is informed by meditation and Bible study. This has been the way that women have dared to hold beliefs that differ from some of the traditions of their communities of faith about their call and about the forms of ministry. When theology has dichotomized the religious and the secular, the world and the church, women's experiences have led them to understand the Scriptures in a way that prophetically moves us to go beyond those boundaries. We have sat on boards and organized the community; in short, we have taken political action. We do not articulate it that way because we are not always conscious of what we are in fact doing. We are impelled by the Scriptures and a deep love for others that comes to us in prayer.[6]

The Source of Experience in Theological Construction

The role of experience in theological construction emerges as an entry point for re-informing the worldview of pastors, teachers, and preachers in the church, and hence for re-informing the church's worldview and mission. Theological educator and pastor Fernando Santillana places experience at the very beginning of his hermeneutical spiral.[7] This discussion recognizes experience not as a sole or more influential source for theological construction but as an equal among other sources, the three traditionally being the Scriptures, tradition, and reason. These four are in a dialogical relationship with one another.

The historical and geographical locus of the Protestant Hispanic people has changed, and this change must be considered in the theological construction of the Hispanic church. The truth of the incarnation requires that the church's mission also be incarnational. She must embed herself in the fabric of the everyday life of the community which she seeks to serve. Experience as a source is re-appropriated for this theological task. Jurgen Moltmann reminds us that:

> As the Christian church, the church must remind theology of God's people and insist on a theology which has relevance for that people.[8]

It is for these reasons that the training of Hispanic church leaders is key to transforming the missiological understanding of the Hispanic church into one that relates to all of the dimensions of the community's life. The most accessible and influential vehicle for theological training in the Hispanic community is the Bible institute. This is because Bible institutes emerge from the churches themselves or vice versa. These institutes also offer affordable theological education in our communities.

A major study about Hispanics and theological education, commissioned by the Fund for Theological Education,[9] showed that in

New York City alone, there are approximately six thousand Hispanics studying in about forty Bible institutes. How does this compare with other forms of theological education used by the dominant population? In the entire Mid-East area, which includes New York, there are only one hundred Hispanic students at graduate schools accredited by the Association of Theological Schools.[10] Formal theological education in its present form is not viewed as accessible by Hispanics. One of the reasons for this is reflected in the report by the President's Hispanic Education Commission which showed that the national portion of Hispanics with bachelor degrees is 4.9% and that those with masters degrees is only slightly over 2%.[11] The cost of traditional forms of theological education is another reason why Hispanics seek alternative options. All these factors make Bible institutes the educational form most used in the preparation of Protestant Hispanic church leadership.

The Bible Institute Today

As mentioned before, the Bible institute is an adult education model that provides theological training for pastors without college education. It does so in Spanish, the first language of the participants. In the southwest, some Bible institutes are bilingual and can accommodate the younger generations. Each of these characteristics makes the institute the most accessible theological education institution to Latino pastors and lay leaders.[12] Courses are designed for both the clergy and the laity, although sometimes there are courses specifically geared toward the pastors' needs. This is why the institute model is used by the Latino mainline churches as well.

Over the last several years I have had the honor of working with Bible institutes and in partnership with them, I am conducting a continuous study of their work and the contributions they make to Hispanic theological education as a whole. The study

looks at issues of partnerships between Bible institutes and other institutions providing theological education.

In any study about communities, it is important to hear the voices of that community as subjects and not objects. So in this study I employ grounded theory as my method of research. Traditionally, theory has been primarily logically deduced from a priori assumptions, and the data generated has been used to fit the theory. Grounded theory generates the data first and then systematically approaches it to discover the theory from the data generated rather than contriving data to fit the theory it started with. This methodology works with the notion of theory as process. It examines the interrelationships among conditions, meaning, and action.

During the study, the Bible institutes named several categories which described the nature of the dynamics of their training centers. I have selected a few of these as a way of discussing the educational approaches and epistemological principles that could be helpful for our task as religious educators in immigrant communities. Further on, I will also comment on how these centers point to directions in religious education that may be helpful to dominant culture communities as well.

Ministry: The Connection Between the Bible and the Context

In every time and culture, Christians are faced with how to make the message of the gospel relevant. When a people immigrates, this becomes an even more pressing task for the church and it becomes part of how persons begin to form a worldview in their new environment. This process involves contextualization. Contextualization refers to taking the unchanging message of the gospel and translating or relating it into a particular human situation or context. One asks and answers the questions related to what it means to be a Christian in a present time and place. The truth of the gospel then speaks into a specific context in a way that brings life to it. In light of this, one question leaders asked in

many different ways at different institutes was, "How can we prepare church leaders that can work with the poor in the inner cities and in the rural areas where people are being exploited? How is our faith central to answering this question?"

Discernment: Intuitive Reflection

So, how are the institutes themselves grappling with this in their classrooms? Many institutes are providing the opportunity for ministry reflection indirectly.[13] This type of reflection is taking place intuitively and serendipitously as persons raise questions about their personal and ministerial experiences in the light of the Scriptures. This usually gives way to a sharing of other experiences that reflect several solutions to the problem. Each solution may serve to raise questions from yet another perspective and so on. In the process, persons are exploring solutions to the problems in light of what they are studying. It results in a creative process of coming to ministerial action. This action is tested in one's ministry. It may re-emerge in a different class discussion at which time, the cycle begins once more. Persons are reflecting on how what is being learned impacts what they are doing. In this sense, it is transformational learning. The only problem with this intuitive reflection is that it is not an intentional part of the curricula. Students are not tested on this emerging knowledge. It is treated as a temporary out of curriculum discussion.

Another dimension of the learning/teaching environment is what the Bible institutes have named discernment and which we might be more accustomed to calling critical thinking.

Discernment: Critical Thinking[14]

Critical thinking is integral to this type of intuitive reflection. It is also an exercise in which the people are already involved every day. The evidence of this is in their survival. Every day they ask critically: "How can we survive?" At the same time that they are

asking these questions in the intuitive reflection process, the texts which Bible institutes use present doctrinal data as facts with no opportunity for interaction or discussion.

If the present texts and curricula do not provide for people the chance to think critically and theologically, nor to ask their own questions, how do we intentionally prepare the leadership to propose an alternative model to the tradition-centered model, one that would affirm some of the basic doctrines of the faith yet also provide theological/biblical resources for incorporating social action and justice?

An Orthodox Starting Point

The Scriptures and the affirmation of pneumatology are a way of starting within the accepted tradition in these communities of learning.[15] We might refer to it as an orthodox starting point. The Holy Spirit is given to the church for its work and function. It gives the church the capacity for knowledge since it leads us into all truth (John 16:13). This provides the foundation for the Spirit to lead toward truth. It frees communities of faith to examine their faith. This also implies they don't yet have all truth. It suggests an open-ended dialogical pedagogy: the truth of doctrine is not closed. Revelation therefore continues through the role of the Holy Spirit and the discernment of the community. The Spirit leading the faith community into all truth requires that the truth continue to unfold before it and this brings prophecy and hope. Why does the Spirit have to lead? Why not just read doctrine? The answers to these questions come from the very understanding of Scriptures.

The Scriptures call the community of the faithful to "always be ready to make...an accounting for the hope that is in you" (I Peter 3:15 NRSV) or to give a responsible articulation of the reasons for our faith and trust in Christ. Therefore, it is the source of the Scriptures that give freedom to critique and to question. In light of

this, one must take contextualization seriously. Who a community is and the world of which it is a part become a fundamental point of departure for critical theological thinking. The exercise of asking these questions starts to model this process for it asks: Why? What does this mean?

"Caciquismo": Issues of Authority

Critical thinking poses problems about authority. In the Hispanic Protestant church, authority is built first on the authority residing in God, in God's revelation, the Scriptures, and second on the tradition and our daily experiences with God through the work of the Holy Spirit. All of these factors assume that the issue of authority is placed within the community of faith. This authority is transmitted and expressed through the ministry of teaching and preaching so that the person of the preacher and/or teacher is the one vested with spiritual authority for the exercise of these gifts in the interest of the edification of the community.[16] (I Corinthians 12: 7-11; Ephesians 4:11-12)

As regards authority issues, we must consider not only the theological dimension but also the cultural and socio-political realities that inform theology. The expression and exercise of authority in the church have been informed by a socio-political context of dictatorship and colonialism. This is a cultural anthropology that mitigates against asking questions. The "why" question is a not acceptable in a culture that does not question authority and where God's authority is a received orthodoxy. We cannot simply start asking questions all of a sudden.

"Caciquismo" and "caudillismo" are the words used by the participants of the study to describe the model of authority that has existed in the mainline and newline Latino church. The word "cacique" was the name used by the Taínos to refer to a prince, a noble, or any leading inhabitant of a small town or village.[17] Caciquismo refers to the tendency to have chiefs or persons in

whom resides authority and to whose authority everyone yields without question. "Caudillismo" refers to the practice of having caudillos or commanders of an armed troop to whom one responds with the faithfulness of a soldier taking orders.[18]

One institute sought to handle this issue by redefining the authority of the teacher. To do this they emphasized the communal authority Paul describes in the letter to the Corinthians. Authority is a gift of the Holy Spirit with the purpose of fulfilling God's mission. Those with the responsibility of teaching in the church must see their authority as a corporate authority. This makes the teaching/learning setting the place where the community of faith together discerns the will of God throughout the Scriptures, the tradition, and one's daily experience with the Holy Spirit in order to carry out God's will. Teachers and students become learners together in this process. The role of the teacher in this setting is no longer that of sole interpreter or keeper of the doctrine or the tradition, but of one with the responsibility for reflecting on the illumination of the Spirit. The teacher's role is now to be a model and facilitator of critical thinking; as such, the teacher models and nurtures questioning in the classroom. The truth can then be tested against the wisdom of the gathered community. This allows a non-hierarchical and communitarian epistemology to emerge, important for education in a post modern context.

Latinos now are living in a world where they must rebuild community not only because of immigration, but because of the postmodern context itself, a context in which the solidarity and meaning of concrete and cohesive communities once taken for granted as an essential part of history is in severe decline. In this context traditional beliefs lose force and morality becomes a matter of individual attitude in a society where people see their lives as an unending series of opportunities. All interest is placed on the future because life expectancy has been prolonged and existing technology is rendered obsolete more quickly by rapid technical innovations. History and traditions, therefore, are of no importance or of little value. To structure these spaces for critical thinking in this postmodern moment is how Latinos can intentionally become counter-cultural. This is done not for the sentimental or psychological survival purposes of re-creating and preserving the past for reasons of comfort in the midst of a hostile process of accommodation. Instead, it is about creating an awareness of time that places interest not only in the future, but on how history has fashioned their present so as to take their own future into their hands.

In this context Orlando Costas proposes remembering as a source for the theological method of a liberating Hispanic-American theology. He states:

> Without the recovery of their historical and cultural roots, Hispanics will not be able to transcend their alienated consciousness interjected by the dominant sectors of North American society through many years of conquest and domination… Whether Catholic or Protestant the Hispanic religious past is filled with powerful symbols of resistance, survival and hope…One of the first tasks of a liberating Hispanic-American theology is to read anew, from within, and restore the "subversive" and "liberating" memory of Hispanics in North America.[19]

Such a remembering of the past enables Latinos to reflect about a future informed by their own sources yet also in dialogue with those around them. Such remembering and reconstruction offers tremendous empowerment. Yet it is also the gospel message that is seen as a central source of empowerment for the communities I interviewed because it infuses this process with wisdom and the truth of Jesus, and it is precisely these virtues that offer true hope and clear-sightedness in understanding the unjust relationships

that structure Latinos' existence, providing a corrective process of its transformation toward the future. This reflection allows us to re-name the authorities that shape our destiny.

Dinámica de la Sensibilidad/Sensitivity

Moving toward critical thinking is itself a transformational experience and demands from the teacher particular sensitivity. A teacher must deal responsibly when bringing students from a place of no questioning into a place of questioning; from a place of authoritarian authority to a place of communal authority. Critical thinking and exposing persons to different perspectives can be transformational and one must process the experience itself, as well as the integration of the new and the old. Because the very foundations of a person's life are being changed and redefined the teacher must be particularly sensitive to the pace at which this takes place and to the places of disjuncture. Helping the students integrate their new perspectives with their previous ones and helping them to take action in accordance with their new understandings is part of the responsibility of leading persons into critical thinking. Just as Jesus was sensitive to what his hearers were able to receive, teachers in this situation must exercise a pastoral sensitivity in their teaching.

Multiple Constructions of Knowing

The student bodies at Bible institutes represent a wide range of educational backgrounds that extends from persons with no formal education to persons with doctoral degrees. Knowledge, or in this case, knowledge of the Word, comes through gathering of the community's life together through fellowship, Bible study, service and through its worship. Worship here signifies not only the liturgy but the spiritual worship referred to in Romans 12:1, which means one's lived faith. Knowledge of the Word, therefore, comes through one's everyday walk of faith as well as the liturgy

and formal teaching. This knowledge does not depend on literacy alone, since it may come through the illumination of the Word in the oral interpretation which takes multiple forms including the hymnody, "coritos" or spiritual songs, testimonies, and poetry. The Spirit gives insight not preconditioned by literacy. Recognition of this leaves open the possibility that those who have not previously received a high level of formal education may nonetheless be chosen by the Spirit to have knowledge and wisdom, and those with degrees understand that there is a source of knowledge beyond that represented by their degree.[20] This makes them open to receiving this "knowledge beyond" in the learning dynamic. This openness to a "knowledge beyond" is a door to working with the tradition in order to expand it.

In Bible institute communities it is understood that it is the through the moving of the Holy Spirit that one is led to consider the limits of one's existing beliefs and led to new understandings. This is the work of critiquing the tradition.

Discontinuity with the Tradition

Critiquing the tradition involves both a continuity and a discontinuity with the tradition. Mary Boys indicates that the tradition exists to make transformation possible.[21] In an immigrant community, tradition is needed for grounding one in one's history, values, and beliefs. Tradition is necessary for establishing identity and for creating a community consensus. In the church, tradition honors the living faith of those who are no longer with us. Upon coming to a new context, tradition gives us a base from where we ask: "How shall we live and express our faith in this new land?" It is important to come to understand ourselves and our new situations.

Boys also makes a helpful distinction in defining tradition, a distinction between the content of the tradition which she calls *traditium* and the process of handing it down which is a *traditio*.

The *traditium* has shaped our faith and needs to be a part of the curricula at Bible Institutes. It is the *traditio* which I suggest needs to be expanded to include a critical thinking dimension in order that the teaching may be more liberating and so that the tradition is not simply quoted but critiqued.[22]

To simply quote the tradition leads to legalism and the idolizing of the tradition. To critique it leads to affirmation or preservation of those elements in it which continue to be life giving in our new situation and to change and extend its limits so that it can address the new situation. Boys borrows from Gerhard Von Rad to describe this process as a reactualizing process. The prophets selected, combined, or rejected particular components of the tradition and used them in different times to bring a message to the people. To reactualize is to use the ancient traditions not to invoke the past, but to see what they reveal about the present and the future. The tradition then interprets present experience, "the past speaks to the present for the sake of the future,"[23] thus creating a dialectic between the three. The tradition then becomes a living tradition that fosters liberation.

How did Jesus deal with the tradition? To look at this is to ask how Jesus as teacher approached this task. One way he did this was through the parables. The parable takes the tradition and the familiar—or the consensus of the people—and uses it to bring out the unfamiliar. It turns the tradition upside down. The tradition is then seen as unfinished and therefore opens up the possibility of transformation. This leaves room for exploration. It is this type of understanding that is needed for transforming the tradition. The very realities of immigration, for example, continuously confront us with the limits of our own traditions, and also confront us with the traditions of a new land. As we examine these new traditions against our existing values, we may find that they also are in need of transformation. The traditions are reactualized in order to help us live our relationship with God, neighbor, and the cre-

ation. It is for the edification or in the literal sense, for the building up of the community. Transferring this insight to the context of Bible institutes, it becomes a critical task of the religious educator to maintain a tension between the continuity and discontinuity of the tradition. The continuity entails handing on or transmitting the tradition. At the same time, the very nature of the tradition requires that we critique it in order to reactualize it; hence, we teach to create a new world.

Earlier I spoke of the dynamic of intuitive reflection. I want to use that dynamic of the theological reflection of the people to introduce new elements that can serve as sources for doing theology. I am once again indebted to Hispanic theologian Samuel Solivan for his work in this area.[24] Allow me to briefly define the term *orthopathos*.

Orthopathos makes use of the two terms *ortho* and *pathos*. Pathos, in the classical Greek understanding, refers to the experience of suffering or anguish that can result in self-alienation. In the early Christian tradition, the understanding of pathos was self-empowering particularly as presented in the climax of the Christian message where God is the one who loves to the point of suffering. The term orthopathos makes the distinction between suffering that results in self-alienation and suffering that becomes a source for liberation and social transformation. It is looking for a way to transform human suffering into a resource for liberation.[25] Orthopathos is doing theology by engaging with those who suffer. Solivan names this as a conjunctive theological method. He presents orthopathos as a way to appropriate pathos as an epistemological resource.[26] It bridges the truth claims of orthodoxy and the liberating engagement sought by orthopraxis. Orthopraxis is an action upon a reflection of a past action whose priority is approximation to God's reign.

The pathos of the Bible institute community is found in the sharing of their journeys. These journeys represent "la queja, el

grito, el dolor, el clamor de la gente."[27] People speak of their experiences of suffering and the personal and emotional dimensions of these journeys; however, when it comes to the political dimensions of the suffering or the pathos these are spiritualized. This is because our Protestant missionary legacy did not permit us to speak of the political elements in relationship to our theology. Politics were separated from the sacred. Anything therefore, that has the sense of the political is allegorized.[28] Likewise, we tend to spiritualize our action. We say, "Let's pray," instead of "Let's go to a march." We therefore need an intermediary language or a theological scaffold for bridging the reflection of the people and their theology. Such a language would integrate the political realm with the theological and would therefore help the Bible institute make meaning out of the interplay between the religious experience and the political dimensions of people's lives. When politics becomes part of the theology and the sacred it can become a legitimate Christian activity.[29]

The Bible institutes are the community of the poor engaging their own and their neighbor's suffering through their ministries. In their learning process they seek to integrate correct doctrine with correct action. However, as a first generation immigrant community, they lack an understanding of the socio-political and economic structures as well as critical theological tools for questioning and re-interpreting the scriptures in light of their own experiences and insights. This prevents them from becoming orthopathic communities.

Journeys of Suffering as Hermeneutical Insight

In order to use these journeys of suffering as hermenuetical insight, teachers at Bible institutes need to become aware of the spiritualizing dynamic so that they can point to it and help students unpack it. The scriptures, especially the Old Testament, are a rich resource for helping us to unpack spiritualized journeys and

for recapturing the political social dimensions of their life. The stories of Moses, Daniel, Nehemiah, and Esther are just some of the passages that would be helpful toward this end.[30] Lifting up the political dimensions of these passages would stimulate discussion of parallel issues today. Another way that the institutes could lead the way in developing a common language is to widen the language of love to neighbor.

The testimonies or faith stories and the preaching of the gospel are the people's attempts in Hispanic congregations to share a journey from alienation to wholeness. When the journey includes only the spiritual or psychological dimensions, they point to only a part of that wholeness. For example, an ex-addict may share his journey to wholeness by referring to his addiction as sin and showing how Jesus, through salvation and the power of the Word, guided him to breaking his addiction. However, he has not mentioned what drew him to the addiction in the first place. This is where issues of oppression and marginalization are found. Educators are in a unique position to draw out this discussion.

This understanding promotes the next phase to which intuitive reflection needs to be moved, and that is pastoral action or praxis. Community action ministries are already present through after school centers, AIDS ministries, drug rehabilitation programs, counseling centers and others. Some churches are becoming involved in faith-based community organizing. Sharing the experiences and journeys as well as reflecting critically on this action will move ministerial practice to orthopraxis. It is the leading of the Spirit, characterized as orthopathic, that can move these communities from practice to praxis because it is this leading that can empower them to question and reinterpret the Scriptures in light of their own experiences and insights. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is a pre-requisite for a hermeneutical shift that births a ministerial shift in Bible institute communities.[31]

Structural Issues

Theology structures our worldview. In their evaluation of themselves, Bible institutes have begun to give consideration to a redefinition of the focus of the nature of the church from one that emphasizes the "salvation of souls" alone to one that also includes communal transformation. This led them to a discussion of the transformation of their very structures. In this dialogue, three points were raised: 1) the need to create an educational ecology through partnerships with other institutions, 2) issues of equal partnership, and 3) the need to change the structure of their curriculum.

The educational ecology is for increasing avenues of access to resources such as faculty, facilities, libraries, accreditation, and validation of courses toward a degree. This latter one is important for persons who have bi-vocational ministries. This ecology requires partnerships not only with other theological schools but with denominational entities for it is also related to the recognition of ministerial credentials. Equal partnership entails the sharing of resources with the purpose of facilitating effective ministry that is characterized by an emphasis on social justice. This links the congregations from different racial and class groups. This partnership also recognizes the authority of the Latino leadership so as to include them fully in the decision making process. The denominational structures that have controlled curricular and financial decisions need to create the space for Latinos to exercise self determination. One can see that at issue is a new understanding of the sharing of the resources of a denomination or educational institution. Allow me to give a snap shot of what this could look like.

One small mainline denomination, the Evangelical Covenant Church, saw the change of demographics in southern California as an opportunity to explore equal partnership with Latinos. When a building was sold in the inner city by the Anglo congregation, the funds were invested in the purchase of property for a

Latino church and Bible institute and for an endowment of one million dollars for that Bible institute. The board of the institute is composed of both Anglos and Latinos with the directorship in Latino hands. The institute is linked to the resources and educational pipeline of the college and seminary of the denomination so as to facilitate a furthering of degree work by its students. The structure of the curriculum is totally in the hands of Latino leaders and therefore reflects the needs that pastors have named in their ministries. The curriculum includes the tools and theology that enable community transformation and its teaching philosophy is pervaded by a liberative pedagogy.

Conclusion

The foregoing ideas represent some of the main issues of religious education in the Hispanic immigrant community and are some suggestions for those of us engaged in the education of the church. I have shown the importance of taking seriously the historical and cultural location of persons in order to facilitate their own theologizing out of that context. I have explored a basis for a culturally responsible theological pedagogy that engages the educator and the participant in a self-conscious partnership in a process of intuitive reflection and new ministerial action.[32]

Yet though some readers may have found this interesting, they may be asking what this has to do with non-Hispanic communities or with those who are not involved with Bible institutes in any manner. Religious education today is about how we speak about the eternal nature of the gospel and God's love in a culture which is characterized as constantly and rapidly changing. This rapid and continuous change also characterizes the dynamic of immigrant communities. Looking at the problems of religious education in the Hispanic community serves as a case study for helping us consider educational approaches in similar contexts. How so?

We've given consideration to how to appropriate and expand

the sources of authority, how to discern the context of post modern life, and how to encourage the use of critical thinking skills. We have discussed issues pertaining to the continuity and discontinuity of the tradition and how to think about and incorporate new elements. As a part of this, we have discussed what the role and authority of the educator is in this learning process, the social historical context of the knower, and the multiple ways of knowledge which function in a single context. We have looked at how to travel from the biblical text to the text of persons' lives and we have identified wherein lie the epistemological insights of the people in order to draw out a transformative hermeneutic. All of these explorations offer religious educators ways of understanding and carrying out their tasks.

There is another reason for presenting this discussion. Orlando Costas, former dean and professor, said that the mission of theological institutions should be to prepare women and men to "lead the church in its ministry to, with and among the 'sinned-against'- the victims, the vulnerable, the poor, the oppressed, and the powerless- bringing the promise of liberation, justice, and God's Kingdom to them in word and deed."[33] Theological education is about partnerships. Religious educator Robert Pazmiño lays out the framework of a paradigm that embraces multicultural and multi-contextual realities.[34] The new paradigm is a "multicultural model that assumes each contributing ethnic group can equally share their heritage with that of others in a climate of mutual respect."[35] This affirms both one's God given ethnic and cultural identity and the identity of our "neighbor."[36] Finally, such a paradigm challenges us to take risks in exploring partnerships that will build ways to make available theological education to those who have not participated in the past.

In this essay, I have presented a case study and the possibilities of new models and paradigms for religious education in communities experiencing change. I have represented their struggles and

questions alongside suggested theoretical frameworks. Strong theoretical statements may be temporarily inspirational and provocative; however, the prophetic for me lies in the people's striving and questioning. The very act of looking at this together is the transformative piece. Imagine for a moment holding a piece of a puzzle in your hand but not having any of the other pieces to the puzzle. Imagine yourself in a room with many others each of whom holds one piece of the same puzzle. Like the others in this imaginary room, I have but one piece of the puzzle of a vision for religious education. You each have another piece and it is only when we come together that the full vision can emerge. This metaphor of the piece of the puzzle is symbolic of a call for us to continue the reflection toward a partnering action that has the potential for transforming each of us and the communities of theological education to which we belong. It is a transformation that embraces a multicultural world and that affirms educational equity and justice for those still under-represented in the halls and classrooms of theological schools and seminaries.

NOTES

[1] See Arturo Bañuelas, "El Bautismo: Nuestro Llamado al Ministerio," in *Camino a Emaús" Compartiendo el Ministerio de Jesús* eds. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, Timoteo Matovina and Nina M. Torres-Vidal (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), pp. 7-14.

[2] Mary Field Belenky et. al. *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice and Mind* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1986), 18.

[3] Teología y Ministerio: Diálogo y Reflexión, Conference of the Orlando E. Costas Hispanic Program at Andover Newton Theological School, Newton, Ma., April 1995.

[4] Samuel Solivan, "Sources of a Hispanic/Latino American Theology: A Pentecostal Perspective" in *Hispanic/Latino Theology: Challenge and Promise* eds. Ada María Isasi-Díaz and Fernando F. Segovia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 145-146.

[5] Ibid., 146. This was confirmed by Rev. Brixeida Marquez, Rev. Ana Falcon and Sandra Cruz-Serrano, three women who participated in a panel of Hispanic women in ministry at Hartford Seminary held on March 1996. For further discussion also see Loida I. Martell-Otero, "Women Doing Theology: Una Perspectiva Evangélica," *Apuntes* 14:3 (Fall 1994): 67-85.

[6] Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, "Hispanic Protestant Spirituality" in *Teología de Conjunto: A Collaborative Hispanic Protestant Theology"* eds. José David Rodríguez and Loida I.

Martell-Otero (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 141.

[7] See Fernando Santillana, "Theological Education," D.Min diss. Claremont, Ca.: Claremont School of Theology, 199_, chapter 5.

[8] Jurgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993; originally published 1977), 7.

[9] Justo L. González, *The Theological Education of Hispanics* (New York: The Fund for Theological Education, 1988).

[10] Ibid., 69.

[11] Roberto Rodríguez, in "President's Hispanic Education Commission releases Report," *Black Issues in Higher Education* (October, 1996): 6-7.

[12] Ibid., 100.

[13] Jeff Bass, "Bible Institutes in Boston: Appendix E" in *Understanding Christian Education in Boston*, 5-6.

[14] This category was named by one of the Bible institutes that participated in the study.

[15] Samuel Solivan, personal interview (Newton, Ma., September 16, 1997). The following section contains insights gleaned from a conversation with Samuel Solivan about these issues.

[16] Interestingly, the issue of expertise did not arise in the discussions about authority. Expertise is related to spiritual authority since it is believed that knowledge of the things of God is revealed by the Holy Spirit to those who have a relationship with the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 2: 11-16). Even at the Bible institute where the pastor and director of the institute has an MDIV and is working on a DMIN, this dimension of authority was not named. It is assumed however, that the pastor of the church will gain understanding about the tradition and become able in his/her handling of the scriptures (2 Tim. 2:15). This is necessary for one to become ordained and thus related to one's authority. Perhaps because it is assumed, it was not openly named.

[17] Marian Velázquez de la Cadena, Edward Gray and John L. Iribas, T*he New Revised Velázquez Spanish and English Dictionary* (Clinton, N.J.: New Win Publishing, Inc., 1985), 124. For a fuller understanding of Taíno tribal organization and hierarchy see Jalil Sued-Badillo, *La Mujer Indígena y su Sociedad* (Puerto Rico: Editorial Cultural, 1989).

[18] Ibid., 152.

[19] Orlando E. Costas, "Liberation Theologies in the Americas: Common Journeys and Mutual Challenges," in *Yearning to Breathe Free: Liberation Theologies in the United States*, eds. Mar Peter-Raoul, Linda Fredrick Forey and Robert Fredrick Hunter, Jr. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1990), 38-39.

[20] See Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as We are Known: A Spirituality of Education* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), 6-10. Parker Palmer links knowledge with compassion and love. This is in contrast with how knowledge is gained through applied empirical and analytical study where one seeks to control a body of knowledge. The knowledge that goes is connected to being known by God and leads beyond ourselves to being in community with one another. It moves one toward love for society and the world. In his discussion about epistemology, Robert Pazmiño comments on Palmer's understanding of knowledge and relates it to Paul's description of knowledge in 1 Corinthians 8:1-3. See Robert W. Pazmiño,

Foundational Issues in Christian Education: An Introduction in Evangelical Perspective, 2d ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 94.

[21] Mary C. Boys, "Access to Traditions and Transformation," 14. Also see *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (Kansas City: Shed and Ward, 1989) 193-205 and Walter Brueggeman, *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

[22] Mary C. Boys, *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (Kansas City, MO.: Sheed and Ward, 1989), 194.

[23] Ibid., 20.

[24] See Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

[25] Ibid., 91.

[26] Ibid.

[27] "the complaint, the scream, the pain, the clamor of the people." (Bible Institute #2, Participant #10)

[28] Samuel Solivan, Personal interview, January 28, 1998. I believe this is reinforced in countries where there is political repression and violence.

[29] Ibid. Walter Brueggemann calls this the language of transformative imagination. He also shows how the prophets embrace the pathos. See Walter Brueggemann, *A Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978). Also see chapter three of Walter Brueggemann, *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia; Fortress Press, 1982).

[30] Other passages are Lamentations, Job and the Psalms.

[31] Samuel Solivan, *Orthopathos*, 235.

[32] See Benjamín Alicea-Lugo, "Salsa y Adobo: Latino/Latina Contributions to Theological Education" USQR 52, 1-2 (1998): 129-144.

[33] Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1982), 169.

[34] Robert W. Pazmiño, *Latin American Journey: Insights for Christian Education in North America* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1994), 102.

[35] Ibid., 119.

[36] I do not use the term "other" for it reflects alienation between persons. Instead, I use the term neighbor for it reflects the more biblical understanding of who we are to one another.

Response to Dr. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier

Robert W. Pazmiño

Dr. Pazmiño is the Valeria Stone Professor of Christian Education at Andover Newton Theological School in Newton Centre, Massachusetts where he has served since 1986. He is the author of seven books, including *Foundational Issues in Christian Education* (1997), *By What Authority Do We Teach?* (1994), *Basics of Teaching for Christians* (1998), and *God Our Teacher* (2001). He is ordained in the American Baptist Churches and serves as a national consultant for the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion.

Having experienced the joy of serving as Dr. Conde-Frazier's dissertation director at Boston College, I celebrate the descriptive and groundbreaking study upon which she has based some of her reflections.[1] Her work models for other scholars in the field the use of grounded theory to explore the particulars of religious education as shown in "Religious Education in an Immigrant Community: A Case Study." Her work reminds us that with some noteworthy exceptions, the United States is a nation of immigrants. Her work also reminds us that Latinos and Latinas are seriously underrepresented in the halls of theological educational institutions and emphasizes the need to attend to the formative work of Bible institutes.

The immediate setting for this lecture, a theological seminary, poses a number of questions, among them: How might faculties of universities, divinity schools, and theological seminaries learn from the educational experiences in Bible institutes? In responding to Conde-Frazier's work, I follow some of the broad areas she has discussed while posing a number of questions.

The Process of Immigration

Foundational to imagining how other theological institutions can learn from the insights of Bible institutes is the experience of immigration and immigrants. So we stop to ask: How does the process of immigration affect diverse immigrant groups? Two examples show the range of possible responses. Thom Hopler in his work *A World of Difference* describes how certain immigrants' values are more readily embraced by the mainstream culture of the United States. He suggests, for example, that for Mexican immigrants it takes three generations to enter the mainstream, but only six months for an English immigrant.[2] In *The Problem of the Third Generation*, Marcus Lee Hansen points out that a central task of the third generation of Swedish-Americans became to remember what the second generation had forgotten in striving to adapt to U. S. culture.[3] The speed, desire, and necessity of becoming accepted into the new culture's mainstream varies and is affected by many factors including individuals, cultures, social dynamics, and world events. What distinguishes the dynamics in the Hispanic community? How does this group's commitment to the community highlighted by Conde-Frazier in her lecture affect acceptance? How might this commitment be suggestive for the wider search for community across cultures in the U.S.?

Deepening and Expanding the Theology

Similarly, the Hispanic community's commitment to social justice that Conde-Frazier notes is another aspect of Hispanics' exclusion—even though the largest minority group in the United States. Piano-key theology and arrangements that only play black and white themes fail to recognize a wider diversity that includes Hispanics and others. Conde-Frazier rightly critiques the recent evangelical tradition in the United States for ignoring social justice issues, yet wider and global evangelical tradition particularly in the nineteenth century did address the affairs of the world in

prophetic ways. As is the case with Bible institutes, it is important to note the exceptions even when reappropriating one's tradition as they may provide a key for transformation. Conde-Frazier helpfully points out the exceptions of female pastoral leadership in asking new questions of the evangelical tradition.

Role of Theological Education to Effect Change

Yet while using the experience of persons—such as women in pastoral leadership positions—as a theological source is important and can serve as an entry point, drawing on experience alone can result in a narrow personalism or even contextualism that fosters the isolation of persons and communities. The need in theological education is for informed and examined experience. With Conde-Frazier I affirm the need to question tradition, but we must ask ourselves how can we be loving critics of our own traditions? How can our theological and church traditions, as much as they need to be questioned, also hold the very seeds of transformation, as Mary Boys suggests and Conde-Frazier helpfully cites?[4] Theological education in Bible institutes makes accessible traditions that can invite transformation if offered with open hands and minds that allow for the questions, in particular of young adults and youth across the generations.

The Source of Experience in Theological Construction

So Conde-Frazier suggests that and models how experience needs to be informed by tradition, Scripture, and critical and creative reason. With the emphasis upon incarnation she calls for a reappropriation of experience. She is right to call for a transformation of the missiological understanding of the Hispanic Church and more broadly the Christian Church. Her choice to focus on Bible institutes is timely because they are the primary sites for theological education of lay and clerical leaders within the Hispanic community. I know that she agrees that this focus cannot negate

the proactive efforts of organizations like the Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) to increase Hispanic representation among students, faculty, and administration in theological education at the graduate level. Yet, to avoid the deficits that can be present as Hispanic students enter formal schooling for the first time in their educational journeys, this also requires advocacy for pre-school education.

Discernment: Critical Thinking

As educational journeys advance to higher levels the matters of discernment and critical thinking emerge. How does discernment operate? Conde-Frazier notes that institutes are providing for ministry reflection indirectly with intuitively and serendipitously raised questions being connected to ministerial action. What is spiritual about the discernment? What is the orthodox model she hopes to change? How can orthodoxy as right and true belief actually foster orthopraxis and the change she proposes? I wonder how can the Scriptures and the affirmation of pneumatology, as orthodox entry points in Bible institutes, foster the longed for change and transformation? Conde-Frazier's work provides insights for exploring such questions.

"Caciquismo": Issue of Authority

One persistent question in relation to ministry is the issue of authority. Where is there accountability to the past as well as addressing the present and the future? How the expression and exercise of authority have been informed by a sociopolitical context of dictatorship and colonialism that mitigate against asking questions is a pivotal issue. With the preacher and teacher vested with authority, I wonder how women and men alike can be equipped to pose questions and problems, Paulo Freire envisioned a pedagogy that poses such questions and problems and is thus one resource we can draw on. How can the authority of the

teacher be seen in terms of communal authority? How can authority be seen as a gift of the Holy Spirit with the purpose of fulfilling God's mission and for the common good of both the Hispanic community and the wider public? Conde-Frazier's proposals for an educational ecology that connects Bible institutes with theological seminaries can foster such inquiry.

Discontinuity with the Tradition

Another area of inquiry is how we relate to tradition with points of continuity and discontinuity. How do we expand a tradition, to use Boys' term, to include a critical thinking dimension?[5] I have a concern for the formation of loving critics in Bible institutes and theological seminaries who care enough to confront, and not just dismiss, traditions in our critical age. A great teacher of the church from North Africa, Augustine of Hippo, described the past, present, and future in distinct terms to refute the notion of three separate times. He suggests that the present of things past is memory, the present of things present is intuition, and the present of things in the future is expectation.[6] How might the past or memory lead us to reveal issues not addressed in our curricula and gaps in our present experience of God?

One example of such a gap in our experience is the lack of Sabbath and solitude apparent for many in the United States. While I celebrate the communal depth of the Hispanic church, I wonder how we can nurture Sabbath and solitude, and honor the place of contemplation in responding to our suffering and that of others. To be more specific, suffering can result in self-alienation. Suffering can also become a source of liberation and social transformation in the faith and wider community. How might this happen in Bible institutes? I think that suffering is shared communally in testimonies and even in *fiesta*. Popular wisdom captures this dynamic in the following sayings: A sorrow shared is half the sorrow, and a joy shared is twice the joy. Vulnerability

and celebrative reluctance can typify the wider community in the United States where Latinos and Latinas present an alternative. The pathos or orthopathos of the Bible institute community is found in the sharing of their journey. We are indebted to Conde-Frazier for sharing the journey of Bible institutes. This sharing can become "transformative suffering" using Solivan's term.[7]

Transformative suffering can lead to wrestling with wider social and political realities. We can see this invitation to rejoin the political with the sacred in the work of David Abalos.[8] In other words, I wonder how it might become possible for Hispanic persons in Bible institutes to both pray and march? To even pray prior to, while, and after we march rather than separate the praying and marching in responding to an orthodox or evangelical tradition? The reflection upon the praying and marching along with their relationship can nurture critical thinking and a new sense of public life in Bible institutes.

Conclusion

Finally, I want to share what I personally have learned and relearned from Conde-Frazier. I have learned how the "other," namely the Hispanic immigrant in Bible institutes, needs to become more fully "neighbor" in working for educational equity in theological education. A new understanding of the prophetic as the people's striving and questioning together in community is proposed in her work. The prophethood of all believers is honored in a broad communal sense through her application of grounded theory. A transformation that embraces a multicultural world and feast is now possible in theological education that affirms educational equity and justice for those who are still under-represented in the halls and classrooms of theological schools and seminaries. Thank God for efforts such as HTI to make a difference and embrace the present of the things that are still future in the expectation of equitable Hispanic representation

in the theological education of this nation.

My great grandfather, Felicísimo López, an immigrant from Ecuador, came to this nation in 1900 to find a better life and education for his extended family. I celebrate Conde-Frazier's contributions to making that better life and education the experience of every Latina and Latino in the Bible institutes of this nation, but beyond them as well to include **all** immigrants.

NOTES

[1] Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, "A Case Study of Two Hispanic Bible Institutes in Massachusetts: Their Mission, Educational Philosophy and Pedagogy" (Ph. D. diss., Boston College, 1998).

[2] Thom Hopler, *A World of Difference: Following Christ beyond Your Cultural Walls* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1981), 165-66.

[3] Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Problem of the Third Generation*, A republication of the 1937 address with introductions by Peter Kivisto and Oscar Handlin (Rock Island, Ill.: Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center and Augustana College Library, 1987).

[4] Mary C. Boys, *Educating in Faith: Maps and Visions* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 193.

[5] Ibid., 194.

[6] Augustine of Hippo, *Augustine's Confessions* (Grand Rapids: Sovereign Grace, 1971), 114.

[7] Samuel Solivan, *The Spirit, Pathos and Liberation: Toward an Hispanic Pentecostal Theology* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 102.

[8] David T. Abalos, *Latinos in the United States: The Sacred and the Political* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1986).

HTI DISSERTATION COLLECTION AT PTS' SPEER LIBRARY

On Monday, July 15, 2002 a ribbon cutting ceremony at Speer Library marked the opening of the HTI Dissertation Collection. Doctoral dissertations written by graduates of the HTI program, or dissertations dealing with Latino issues written by other individuals, are now available to patrons on campus for a two-hour period with renewals available as long as no one else needs them. For patrons off campus, they may search the online catalog via the web (http://catalog.ptsem.edu). To access and view the list of dissertations online, these can be found under the titles HTI or HTI dissertation collection. They may also visit their local library and request an interlibrary loan through OCLC in order to have the material shipped. This material would be available for a four-week loan period with in-library use only.

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Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth	A Case Study of Two Hispanic Bible Institutes in Massachusetts: Their Mission, Educational Philosophy and Pedagogy