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PERSPECTIVAS: OCCASIONAL PAPERS

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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 fifth in the series.

Perspectivas is sent to seminaries throughout the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico, 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 Rodriguez
Director, HTI

FROM THE EDITOR

"Therefore friends, select among yourselves seven men of good standing, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we appoint to this task..." Acts 6:3

The dynamics of an older, established community accepting a newer community that is larger—and ethnically and linguistically more diverse—can be found at the very heart of the Christian experience. *The Book of Acts* describes the tensions arising between the older "Hebrew" disciples and the newer "Hellenists." Significantly, the solution called for the *new community* to select among *themselves* people of good standing, leaders who would serve and teach. Our rapidly growing Latino /Hispanic communities present the same challenge to today's churches and educational institutions.

Accepting and fostering newer communities impacts on the shape of theology itself. US Hispanic communities challenge academic institutions not only to open up opportunities for theological education but also to understand new sources and methods for theological reflection. As Loida Martell-Otero writes so eloquently:

The ongoing challenge for academia, then, is to create an environment that is as welcoming and nurturing to Latina and Latino theological scholars as it has been to more traditional groups in the past. It will not suffice to include a book on Latin American liberation theology in a class list of required reading. It will not suffice to

grudgingly accept two or three Hispanics who have had to jump through the hoops just to apply. The tent must be enlarged. Seminaries must become truly multicultural centers of learning... Thus, the challenge for theological institutions is to “walk the walk” and implement...elements of equity. It is to understand that Latina and Latino theologians speak English in Spanish. It is to be open to different methods of theological reflection. It is also to be open to accept those whom the Hispanic community identifies as theologically credible scholars and not measure them solely by the traditional standards of academia. It means not lumping us together with, as if indistinguishable from, Latin American liberation theologians, and it means recognizing that Hispanic Americans have a long theological history on this continent, and that we are rooted in our places of origin.¹

This issue of *Perspectivas* focuses on the task of fostering leadership in rapidly growing Hispanic/Latino communities through theological education. The articles in this issue are written from diverse points of views—the experience of a student, a recent immigrant having to cope with the challenges of the academic world; the views of a funding agency (HTI), researchers, and schools that have successfully implemented policies to foster a Hispanic presence among faculty and students. Although much progress has been made over the last ten years, we hope that this issue will spur on everyone—students, faculty, administrators, as well as the Hispanic/Latino communities themselves—to continue to move in new directions.

¹ Loida I. Martell-Otero, “The Ongoing Challenge of Hispanic Theology” from *Teología en Conjunto: A Collaborative Hispanic Protestant Theology*, edited by José David Rodríguez and Loida I. Martell-Otero. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997, 152–3.

CRUZANDO LA FRONTERA CREANDO COMUNIDAD

Socorro Castañeda

Socorro Castañeda is a doctoral student in Sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is research assistant for the Hispanic Churches in American Public Life research project. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology with a minor in Women's Studies and one in Ethnic Studies from Santa Clara University. She also holds a Masters of Arts degree in Sociology from UC Santa Barbara. Her interests focus on urban religion and Latinas/os faith-based social networks. Her area of research is sociology of religion with an emphasis on Latino/a voice and socio-political agency, race, class and gender and community studies. She is an HTI awardee.

Poverty and feudal living conditions force many of us to flee our countries of origin and risk our lives for the sake of better opportunities. As one struggles to make the host country a new home, one finds oneself having to learn a new culture, way of life, language, and educational system—often in the midst of race, class, and gender discrimination.

I come from a working-class family. My father never had the chance to obtain an education; my mother attended up to the fourth grade and then dropped out to work and help her family. It was into this circumstances that I was born in Ciudad Juarez Chihuahua, Mexico. In Mexico, life was harsh: We barely had

enough to survive, and my sister and I suffered from malnutrition and anemia. Our faith and desire for a better life were all we had when we risked our lives and crossed the border illegally. I was nine, and my sister was six years old.

We migrated to San José, California where my family still lives. Life in the United States was different from life in Mexico. We no longer had to worry about what we were going to eat—there was so much food. However, I felt very strange. This country did not feel like home. People spoke a different language, and I was profoundly lonely at school. Even the Latina/o kids whose parents had crossed the border illegally were embarrassed to be seen playing with me. My summers were spent in the agricultural fields of Northern California, for the most part picking plums. Every time I think back to those days, I can still feel the hot sun hitting my face, and my parents telling my sister and I to think that this way of life would soon be over and that “*cada ciruela era un penny*.”¹

The U.S. educational system was a puzzle for my parents and I, not least because none of us spoke English. So I had to learn a new language as well as a new educational system—alone. Unfortunately, by the time I learned how the system worked, it was too late to work the system, and I was placed in the lower track curriculum and ended up in a community college with others like me who were perceived as incompetent. Inadequate counseling and discouragement at the community college led me to complete the transfer requirements in six years. You are probably thinking, “But how can someone take so long? Why couldn’t she just go up to the counselor and demand that she be advised properly?”

Unfortunately, like many Latinas/os, particularly working-class immigrants, college seems like an inaccessible fairy-tale world. Although my parents had always encouraged my sister and I to go to college, we lacked the necessary support networks that could make college a possibility.

One day I had the courage to confront my counselor and tell him that I wanted to transfer to Santa Clara University, and his

response was, "Socorro, you know, Santa Clara is very intellectual. Why don't you apply somewhere else?" His words tore my heart and the little courage I had into pieces.

However, I was fortunate to find a true mentor in Father Mateo Sheedy who taught me how the educational system worked. With his advice and the moral support of my parents and parish community, I was able to believe in myself and in my potential. It was through the strong support system and social networks that I gathered in my family and parish community that I gathered the courage to continue striving until I qualified to attend Santa Clara University. I graduated with honors and then pursued doctoral studies.

But why am I giving so much detail about my past? Simply because it seems imperative to share with you the past struggles which inform my life today. At the same time, my experiences as an immigrant adjusting to a new home country reflect the struggles that I have gone through as a doctoral student.

Pursuing doctoral studies has been like *vivir bajo el sol y la sombra a la vez*.² It has been like migrating to a new country for a second time, a country where once again I had to learn a new culture, way of life, language and educational system, all this still in the midst of discrimination. I sometimes have the same feeling I did when I crossed the border illegally at the age of nine with my sister by my side, not knowing what awaited me *en el otro lado*.³

Graduate school for me entailed learning a new language. This is the language of how to survive doctoral studies and how to prepare for a career in academia. Only a strong support system can help one master this. Whereas doctoral studies for our white graduate colleagues are typically merely the next step in their educational career, for us Latinos (and particularly Latinas) they are the arrival in a new country after years of sacrifice and of fighting against the negative stereotypical notions of who we are. One white graduate colleague, puzzled to see that there were two Latinas in her cohort, did not hesitate to approach us and tell us

that we were the first Latinas she had ever met that were not farm-workers.

But stereotypes do not end there. Attending a public university can be a challenge for those of us who study religion. Often, our graduate colleagues and professors falsely perceive us, on one hand, as not being "critical enough" of our Latina/o realities and therefore push us to the margins of academic discourse and academic networks. On the other hand, and often in the same breath, these same colleagues downplay the importance of studying Latina/o communities.

I have gone to bed many nights wondering if it is all worth the sacrifice, doubting if there is a space for me in this country called graduate school, asking myself, "Why do I continue to be here? Why do I insist on pursuing this dream if the process is frightening?" But then as I get ready to head to school the next morning, it only takes one glance at Our Lady of Guadalupe right above my desk, one glance at the many pictures of my family and my parish community friends back home to conclude that it is the commitment to myself, *mi familia*, my Latina/o community and my faith that keep me going.

As a devotee of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I believe that Juan Diego lives in me. I am Juan Diego. Regardless of our faiths, Juan Diego, I argue, can represent those who make a critical choice to go against conservative institutions. Juan Diego in my worldview represents commitment, endurance and conviction in the midst of fear.

But, how can one maintain a commitment to the call to become a scholar of religion in a place we are not welcomed? We do it by building strong collegial networks grounded in a deep and honest commitment to our Latina/o communities. It is precisely in these types of social networks that I have found the support that has carried me throughout my educational career.

Doctoral studies have not been easy as I struggle to find a place in academia. However, when I entered the program I was fortu-

nate to meet three other Latinas who like me were determined to help create change and together *creamos comunidad* in the midst of uncertainty.⁴ This is how I was able to survive my first year in graduate studies. I have also been fortunate to find support for my research from the Center for Chicano Studies and the faculty affiliated with it. The Hispanic Churches in American Public Life national research project and the Hispanic Theological Initiative have made a lasting impact on my life as a graduate student and in my own scholarship. HTI has not only provided me with financial support, academic networks and mentors like Luis Leon and Milagros Peña but also with a community of committed Latina/o scholars of religion. We all know that doctoral studies are a very lonely process and only by *creando comunidad* can people like you and I make it.

I could have written a more detached version of my experience in graduate school, but instead I chose to share with you how my experience in graduate school mirrors my experience as a working-class Mexican immigrant woman. For the experience of being an immigrant is what makes me stay grounded in the lived experience and struggles of *nuestra comunidad*.

NOTES

¹ Each plum was a penny.

² Living under sun and shade at the same time.

³ On the other side.

⁴ Together we create community.

TOWARD RECRUITING AND RETAINING LATINO STUDENTS AND FACULTY: GAUGING COMMITMENT

Zaida Maldonado Pérez
Director, Hispanic Theological Initiative

As director of the Hispanic Theological Initiative, I have had many opportunities to visit academic institutions and to hear our awardees and mentors reflect upon their experiences as Latino students and faculty in their academic settings.¹ The quality of their experience has often depended on the degree to which their schools are committed to racial/ethnic diversity. There are many different understandings of this “commitment.” Often, commitment is confused with empathy for ethnic/racial concerns or good desires and intentions on the part of an institution. This is not what we understand by “commitment,” and it is also not enough to bring about the kinds of institutional changes that will help attract and retain the Latino student and/or faculty member. It is important, therefore, that schools examine their understanding of commitment over against what is truly needed. It is equally vital that they also discern the best way to develop and invest in that commitment given their particular context.²

In order to help schools discern where they are and where they would like to be in the “commitment spectrum,” I am including four characterizations drawn from a recent report by the Center for Social and Religious Research of Hartford Seminary.³ The report broadly classifies four types of seminaries by “their stage in institutionalizing Hispanic theological and ministerial learning

opportunities in their curricula.”⁴ Although these are only characterizations, they can provide a kind of “commitment thermometer” to help schools gauge their own level of commitment and determination in the process of recruitment and retention of Latinos. I refer to these below borrowing only that which pertains to the topic of recruitment and retention and expanding on it to include the experiences of HTI awardees and faculty and my own experience as a Latina graduate and post-graduate student. I use the last characterization to bring to the fore factors that have a positive impact upon commitment, recruitment and retention.

1. *“Interested But Uninformed:”*⁵

The first category includes those seminaries

in which a dean or senior faculty member is very interested in doing something in the area of educating Latinos/as and others to minister in the Hispanic community near the seminary, but neither these individuals nor anyone else in the seminary faculty and staff know how best to relate to this community; initial efforts have not panned out as they hoped.⁶

An institution under this category approaches the task of diversification somewhat haphazardly. At its worst, it may even attempt to implement ideas without serious consideration or knowledge of the issues, the communities and the consequences involved. I call this the *al azar* method: they try their luck here and there and then hope for the best. While the intentions are good, lack of careful long-term strategic planning can adversely affect any initiative, institution and constituency, Latino and non-Latino. Without proper guidance and the support of other faculty, administrative staff and denomination(s), this will turn out to be a half-hearted effort that may be setting itself up for failure.

2. *“Involved on the Rim, Almost Invisible at the Core:”*⁷

The second category characterizes commitment that is involved at the rim but is almost insignificant at the core. Typically, these

seminaries run a certificate or summer program for Latinos that has little or no connection with the main campus.⁸ I call this the *resuélveme* way of providing a quick but temporary solution to a long-term imperative. Even with the existence of a "Hispanic Program," there is nothing that touches, engages and transforms the make-up and ethos of the institution to reflect deep commitment to diversity in any significant way. Unlike the first characterization, these institutions have more information but may lack the heart and passion (it is not always about financial resources) to transform ethnic/racial diversity from a *border* issue—still an item on the agenda being "explored"—to a *core* reality of the life and mission of the institution.

3. "*Touching the Core Electively*"⁹

In the third characterization, diversity touches the core only electively. In this category are schools that include, for instance, an elective course or two, usually in English, that deal with issues of diversity or that attempt to relate the material to the particular ethnic contexts represented in the institution.¹⁰ They may even go as far as including selective field education experiences for Latinos and non-Latinos.¹¹ Most of the time, they are schools that, for varied reasons, are interested in attracting Latinos or have Latino students attending by default. They are usually located in areas with a high density of Latinos to whom the school may be their only recourse for theological training. In summary, their commitment to diversity and the method used may be described as *miti-miti*; that is, it is "neither fully here, nor fully there." This brings us to the last characterization.

4. "*Institutionalized at the Core, Tentatively Speaking*"¹²

Institutions that are doing the best work at attracting and retaining Latino/a students/faculty are inevitably those that are "committed to the core." These are seminaries that

for some years have conducted Hispanic ministry tracks or recognized course concentrations in one or more of their

graduate level degree programs, typically accompanied by an array of Hispanic field work, intern and immersion opportunities. At least some of the degree courses are offered in Spanish and/or by Latino/a core faculty, which helps in the recruitment of Latino/a seminarians and making the Hispanic concentration a more secure seminary emphasis.¹³

Schools with “more boldly institutionalized” Hispanic ministry programs have an established M.Div. and/or D. Min. degree as well as other important factors that will be mentioned below.¹⁴ They are committed to the core “tentatively speaking” because it is possible, particularly where development of commitment to Latinos is fairly new, that this commitment may dwindle or end when, for instance, either the main movers and shakers leave or with the end of special funding.¹⁵

Toward Recruiting and Retaining Latino Students and Faculty: Some Key Factors

Schools that are committed to the core reinforce ethnic/racial diversity at every level of the institution—from the President, the Board of Trustees and administration to its faculty, staff and so on. They are schools that understand diversity as part of who they are or want to become. Several important factors distinguish these schools from the others mentioned above. Schools in this category have taken the time to explore the question of diversity both as a question for institutional self-reflection (e.g. Why should we, as an institution, address the issue of diversity?) and as a question for praxis (How does someone who enrolls in our school experience that commitment?).¹⁶ They understand diversity as a theological and moral imperative that makes certain demands upon their life and work as an institution, and they are committed to that kind of transformation. In light of this, they have dedicated time and effort to exploring the needs of the communities they serve by engaging its community servants in serious dialogue. Too often, I

have seen institutions with good intentions neglect the guidance and advice of the very people they seek to serve. The result is a kind of haphazard or misinformed attempt that is reminiscent of the good-intentioned but misguided missionary efforts of old. The outcome is different, however, when commitment is based on a spirit of mutuality that seeks to build the kind of collaboration foundational to the success of any institution. This spirit of collaboration should include outside colleagues and institutions that can provide further expertise and guidance.¹⁷ This intelligent approach to diversity also honors the other by seeking to acknowledge and build upon each other's gifts and strengths.

Schools that are committed to the core usually have integrated efforts at multiple institutional levels. I will include here some of the most important.

Administrative Level:

A key factor in the process of recruiting Latino students is an aggressive Latina/o recruitment officer who is willing to follow-up all inquiries and applications. As is expected of recruitment officers, this person seeks out potential students by visiting the different congregations and/or other institutions. Because our communities are often leery of seminary training, congregational visits take on added significance.¹⁸ For this reason, the recruiter should be able to "speak their language." By this, I mean knowing and addressing those fears and concerns head-on and, if need be, passing a church's preaching (teaching or ministering) "litmus" test often used to determine credibility. Schools can facilitate the work of this recruitment officer by providing them with an office, access to a secretary and a travel budget.¹⁹

Schools that are committed to diversity have an admissions officer who is not a "gatekeeper but an advocate."²⁰ In some cases, this might mean advocating for skills, abilities and experiences that normally do not fall within admission categories but serve as important indicators of a candidate's potential to succeed. This does not

mean, however, a lowering of the standards for admission. Rather, it means including other standards that determine success. One school's Latino Vocational Director expressed it this way:

Most admission departments and selection committees are not aware of the contexts from which our Latino students come. Many take longer to attain their bachelors and many come via the community college and state schools. This does not mean, however, that they are less capable academically. In fact, these are students that come to us with an incredible sense of commitment because their faith has been tested, they have been through the fire. This should be valued as well.²¹

Latinos who pursue graduate and post-graduate studies are usually older second-career students with families.²² For this reason, institutions committed to attracting and retaining Latino students must offer good scholarships and flexible schedules.²³ Because most schools do not offer the kind of scholarship funds required to support a family with children, the issue of flexible schedules becomes especially critical. Even when the spouse works, most Latinos will not be able to accommodate financially to the kind of full-time schedules required of some schools, especially some of those in the Ivy League. Not only does this kind of exclusion impoverish the education of our communities, it also impoverishes—by their absence—the quality of interaction that could take place in the classroom and in particular academic communities. There are seminaries, however, that have decided to express their commitment by exploring new ways of being that do not compromise quality for quantity. These schools, for example, will offer the kind of schedule that will allow the student to come in only one full day of the week for courses. Others will offer important core courses during the evening hours to accommodate for commuters and part-time students.

Faculty Level:

An institution's capacity to deal with Latino issues depends largely upon the presence of Latino faculty.²⁴ However, it is common knowledge that there are just not enough Latino faculty to go around. Even with the Hispanic Theological Initiative's success in helping to increase the number of Hispanic faculty, Hispanics continue to be seriously underrepresented among faculty and administration.²⁵ What is worse, the discrepancy between Latino faculty representation and the Latino population in general will become larger as we enter into the next decades. At present, there are less than 40 schools, out of 243 ATS schools, that have any kind of minority faculty representation.²⁶ The numbers become even more grim when we consider that these schools include the historically black schools, Korean seminaries and the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. The paucity of Latino candidates for faculty positions, however, should not deter those schools that are committed to ethnic/racial diversity. In fact, this presents an opportunity for that commitment to shine by allowing for other creative strategies. One strategy of which schools have not yet taken full advantage is developing or "home-growing" Latino candidates for faculty positions.²⁷ Institutions can determine whether they have Latino students at the masters level with Ph.D. potential. Or perhaps the school can identify doctoral students for whom the school or denomination can create a "win-win" situation by paying their way and having them commit to a number of years of teaching service (e.g. to denominational schools). Hiring ABDs at the dissertation level—while allowing for the kind of teaching load that would permit them to finish their dissertation during their first year—has proven fruitful for several schools that have hired HTI awardees. Inviting visiting professors for a semester or two is another option. This, however, should be viewed only as a temporary solution in the process. Connecting with another institution or forming a consortium or alliances may also alleviate

financial concerns. On the other hand, it may also raise other political matters that can be foreseen and allayed by consulting with other schools that have or are currently employing this alternative. Likewise, one should not rule out being able to “share” professors between campuses via technology.²⁶

Finally, hiring Latino professors and keeping them there are different matters. For racial/ethnic professors, this is not just a matter of a return on the institution’s investment; it is a matter of justice and compassion.

I began this section by stating that the presence of Latino faculty enhances an institution’s capacity to deal with Latino issues. However, schools that are committed to the core hire qualified Latino faculty for their gifts and expertise rather than as a *resúelveme* that will take care of all of their Latino concerns. Issues of racial/ethnic diversity are instead viewed as a call for action best executed through the collective wisdom and creativity of all those involved—including members of the faculty, administration and so on. Conversely, schools not committed to the core tend to view issues of diversity as a burden and feel that they are “done” with their commitment once they have hired their token Latina/o. One HTI student expressed it this way, “Usually we get one ‘token’ professor who is made to concentrate on liberation theology and that is also where we get the one ‘token’ book.”

One important contributor to Latino faculty burnout is directly tied to unrealistic and unfair expectations from the academy and/or the member’s denomination. Latino professors face many challenges for which they usually receive little support. Among these challenges are a desire to be of service to the community that helped them discern their call and supported them throughout the journey. This is in addition to writing the books required for tenure, teaching well and being a prophetic voice in the institution and/or denomination by raising Latino and other ethnic minority concerns. They are also often asked to direct or begin a Latino program, be part of other professional committees, mentor other

Latino junior scholars and counsel Latino students—whether or not they are assigned to them.²⁹ “In almost all cases,” one Latino professor observed, “the Hispanic faculty ends up playing the role of legal, emotional, academic advisor, translator and overall ‘go between’.”³⁰ If an institution values their racial/ethnic professors, they will be cognizant of the tendency to ‘unload’ racial/ethnic concerns on these professors. They will also find ways to help professors honor their (and the school’s) commitments to their communities by recognizing and valuing their achievements in the tenure process.

Student Level

Most Latino students are attracted to schools where their particularity as Latinos is affirmed, encouraged and celebrated. Latino faculty are an important part of this attraction but so too is a curriculum that includes minority voices. Commitment at the core means enriching curriculum with Latina/o (and other racial/ethnic) scholarship and encouraging minority perspectives in classroom discussions and papers. This kind of invitation to reflect on the material through their particular experiences provides the kind of contextual grounding that all students need to remain relevant to the communities they seek to serve. For most Latinos, a higher education, for instance, inevitably puts them in a different economic and, at times, ideological class. This is not merely a perception but a social and economic fact. Latino professors and some pastors not only enter a higher economic bracket than most Latinos (mind you, not much higher for some), they are also considered part of the religious elite. This distancing is exacerbated by a training that often does not relate to the needs of their communities of origin. Such a predicament may be attributed to the institution’s inability to address the questions raised by the community(ies) because it is either not aware of what these questions are, or worse, it thinks that the answers they purport are, in any case, universal—“one size fits all!” This kind of episte-

mological ethos often tends to render the Latino's service ineffective and their presence in the community awkward at best.

A mentoring component that pairs students with a professor in the same area of studies is another important strategy that has been especially valuable for its effectiveness with HTI awardees. These mentors, usually senior scholars, help students deepen their understanding of the subject and further develop critical thinking skills. They also introduce the students into their own network of colleagues in different institutions and to various professional associations where they are encouraged to participate as presenters and panel members. Mentors pass on the wisdom they have gleaned not only in the classroom but also from years of learning the political intricacies of academic life.

Similar ideas include creating a "buddy" system that pairs "senior" students with incoming students. This will not only help the Latino (or non-Latino) student, it will also alleviate some of the burden of Latino professors who end up helping the student navigate the system.

Anyone who seeks to build or create anything must consider what is needed and how best to go about building it. No matter how beautiful a vase, for example, if it has a hole here and there, the water will leak. So it is also with strategies at recruiting and retaining Latino students and professors. An aggressive recruitment officer that gets the students to the institution will not be enough to keep them there if the other components are missing. Having a Latino professor who is doing all s/he can to recruit and retain Latinos will likewise not be sufficient and will likely result in teacher burnout. Other holes need to be plugged in at different levels if the vase is to be used to its full potential: hiring or home-growing Hispanic faculty, investing in an aggressive recruitment officer that "speaks the language," providing adequate financial resources and scholarships, bringing in the Latino voice through curricular changes and through visiting Latino scholars and

speakers, creating schedules that will attract the part-time or commuter student and, most of all, creating and building allegiances with the communities you seek to serve as well as with other institutions that are engaged in the task of racial/ethnic diversity. All of these must work in tandem. All are indispensable for the commitment to become truly concrete and long-term.

Anything worth going for involves work and sacrifice. Whether racial/ethnic diversity in your school is something you consider worthy is yours to decide. Also yours to decide is whether your commitment will be a half-hearted intent or whether it will involve the kind of *corage* and intentionality that will yield good and lasting fruit. As one admissions director put it, we need to be about "making diversity part of who [we] are, not part of what [we] do."³¹

NOTES

¹ This paper is based largely on various interviews and conversations I had, especially during the years 2000–2001, with HTI awardees, Hispanic faculty, admission directors and deans as well as my own experience in the academy.

² I use the word "discernment" because discernment is never done isolated from the community to which one belongs or seeks to work with and on its behalf.

³ This report was conducted by Efraín Agosto and Adair Lummis in consultation with Carl Dudley and David Roozen from the Center for Social and Religious Research of Hartford Seminary for The Pew Charitable Trusts in February, 1999. It is used with permission from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

⁴ In the report's *Synopsis of Major Findings* (no page number). See also p. 21 in the report.

⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 22.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 23.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ This is especially likely in seminaries "where Hispanic ministry courses and opportunities for immersion and ministry in Spanish-speaking churches and

communities are relatively new development (sic.) in the degree programs, or where all the Hispanic programming is short-term adjunct-taught or an off-campus certificate program" (p. 18).

¹⁶ See exercise sheet *Exploring Commitment to Diversity* included at the end of this article.

¹⁷ This is a slower process that requires patience, stamina and vision on the part of those involved. The results, however, can be more promising.

¹⁸ Many Latino Protestant congregations, for instance, do not necessarily encourage a Masters of Divinity. Bible institutes and hands-on training from pastors have traditionally played the role of seminaries by providing the flexibility, role models, affordability and accessibility not usually available at seminaries. In addition, a Masters of Divinity degree often means that the one person in the family that broke the odds and attained a college degree will need to hang-up the probability of making an economic difference in the lives of that family. Not only will such Latino leaders find themselves overeducated, the odds of finding a decent-paying church will be slim. It is not surprising that Latino pastors and their communities have to be very enterprising and business-minded.

¹⁹ This is critical, according to Otto Maduro, professor of Latin American Christianity and of World Christianity at Drew University Theological School and Luis Rivera Rodriguez, Associate Professor of Theology, McCormick Theological Seminary. This was also one of the factors used in the *Hartford Report to The Pew Charitable Trusts* to identify seminaries that are "committed to the core."

²⁰ This view was shared by Rev. Dr. Robert Duncan, Jr., Director of Admissions for the Theological School of Drew University, which is noted for its aggressive recruitment of Latinos.

²¹ Stated by Rev. Victor Aloyo of Princeton Theological Seminary. Schools that understand the Latino experience are also aware of the impact of migratory patterns on academic transcripts. A transcript showing several academic transfers, for instance, is usually not attractive to admission departments and selection committees. Several Latino faculty members also expressed an institutional bias against Latin American universities versus, for instance, European schools. This also results in a setback for many students pursuing graduate degrees.

²² Although this is the norm for most seminary students, it is especially true of Latinos. *The Association of Theological Schools' 2000-2001 Fact Book*, p. 42-43, Table 2.14 shows most students entering seminary between the ages of 25-29 and 40-49. HTI data on our awardees, for example, shows that the majority of our students entering and pursuing graduate studies are between the ages of 35-49.

²³ Roberto Goizueta, Professor of Systematic Theology at Boston College, adds that when considering Latinas/os for financial aid, it is important to know that beyond the immediate (nuclear) family, many Latinos are also providing for their parents or other family members who are either abroad or, in many cases, living in their homes.

²⁴ This observation was included as part of an Interim Evaluation of the work of the Hispanic Theological Initiative by Daryl G. Smith, an independent consultant for The Pew Charitable Trusts (1999).

²⁵ It is only recently, for example, that a Latino Protestant became president of a seminary (Dr. David Maldonado became president of Iliff Theological School in June 2000). Latino Roman Catholic presidents are also rare.

²⁶ See ATS' 2000–2001 *Fact Book*, p. 70, 72–73. The ATS *Fact Book* reports a total of 243 member schools during the 2000–2001 academic year (p.v).

²⁷ This is a solution that I have heard Justo L. González propose often.

²⁸ Asbury Theological Seminary, one of the seminaries featured in this issue, makes efficient use of technology by creating a “virtual campus” that unites both their Kentucky and Orlando campuses and allows for diversity both at the student and faculty levels. The virtual campus also allows for the kind of flexibility many of our Latinos students need.

²⁹ Several Latino faculty I interviewed voiced these issues.

³⁰ Otto Maduro expressed this in an interview I had with him concerning this topic in the Spring of 2001.

³¹ Rev. Dr. Robert Duncan, Jr., Director of Admissions for the Theological School of Drew University said this in a conversation I had with him around this topic.

APPENDIX

The following exercise is intended to help a school begin to address issues around the recruitment and retention of ethnic/racial students. It should be done in community (i.e. include all institutional levels). The questions can be changed to elicit response from the students' perspective (e.g. How do I see, experience this school's commitment to diversity—against, for instance, what it states in the mission statement? Is it consistent?).

Who are we (i.e. as an institution)? What do we want? How badly do we want it? Why? And, How are we to accomplish it?:

EXPLORING COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

1. What is the school's commitment to diversity (particularly to people of color, and in this case to increasing the number of Latino/a representation? (e.g. Is this commitment included in your mission statement?)
2. Why strive for this diversity at all? (Or, why should we, as an institution, address the issue of diversity?)
3. At what institutional levels is the desire to diversify most prevalent? (e.g. Administrative, faculty, student body.) In

other words, is everyone owning and committed to the desire to increase the number of Latino representation?)

Note: This question also refers to the schools willingness and commitment to diversify all of its institutional arms—administrative, faculty, Board of Trustees, student body, but also curricular change, etc.

4. How is our institution presenting our commitment to the public? (e.g. In our catalog, through public relations, etc.) How does someone who walks into our school see that commitment? How does someone who enrolls experience that commitment?
5. What steps have been taken to begin the process of diversification? And, who has been included or excluded in this process? (e.g. Has the institution consulted with the Latino community of scholars, pastors, community leaders, others? Use your resources!)*
6. What has worked? What have been some of the impediments?

Zaida Maldonado Pérez

* *Note:* The Association of Theological Schools' work through its Committee on Race and Ethnicity (C.O.R.E.) is also an important resource and a critical contribution to this process.

FROM SACRED TOWER TO BEACON OF HOPE: OPENING INSTITUTIONAL DOORS TO FOSTER HISPANIC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Edwin I. Hernandez, Ph.D.

Kenneth G. David O.F.M. Conv.

Statistics from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) provide strong arguments for restructuring the world of accredited theological education in order to graduate sufficient Hispanic leaders. Although the *Fact Book on Theological Education 2000–2001* shows a small increase in both the numbers of Hispanic students enrolled between 1996 and 2000 (Table 2.12) that increase is infinitesimal when compared to the explosion of the Hispanic population in the United States during the same period of time. Likewise the *Fact Book* (Table 3.1) indicates a tiny increase in the number of Hispanic full-time faculty, but the percent of that increase is actually less than that of Latino/a students.

That data, therefore, presents both a blessing and a challenge. The blessing is the presence and willingness of Hispanic religious leaders who wish to enhance the theological discourse by articulating a unique intellectual vision rooted in that same Latino/a community. The challenge to seminaries and schools of theology

is to embrace that blessing by graduating well-trained, broadly prepared, insightful, and committed Latina/o religious leaders who will help sustain their communities in crisis. Otherwise a leadership vacuum in virtually the only stable institutions in the barrios (i.e., the churches) will affect U.S. society in the twenty-first century.

This article looks at the role that seminaries and schools of theology could fill if they wished to embrace the blessing and challenge of graduating numerous and better educated Hispanic religious leadership in the U.S. The recommendations are directed toward various institutions and groups that contribute significantly to the accessibility and enhancement of theological education. Hopefully, these various individuals, groups, and institutions will cooperate on many fronts (financial, social, cultural) toward this common goal: the preparation of the Hispanic religious leadership needed for our country's churches.

The Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion (<http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/index.html>) offers expert consultants for one to three days to visit campuses to "lead seminars and workshops on teaching and learning requested by the particular department or school." Roberto W. Pazmiño is one of their consultants. The center also offers grants such as one recently provided to the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest for "Teologia en Conjunto: Hispanic Perspectives in Theological Education" directed by Diana Sellers and Paul Barton. Similar to a grant given to the Hispanic Summer Program, it helped to train the seminary's faculty "in Hispanic perspectives by directly working with Hispanic theologians to foster culturally inclusive courses for the M. Div. curriculum."

Research on the doctoral education of minorities shows that African Americans, Latino/as, and Native American receive lower percentages of research and teaching assistantships than Euro-Americans. Yet support by universities for other foreign students is disproportionately high (Coyle).

Research on school desegregation indicates that good race relations, high standards of academic achievement, and personal development among all students are most likely when school policies are based upon a model of integrated pluralism, rather than on one of assimilation.

Recommendations to private foundations

(1) Project 1000 (<http://mati.eas.asu.edu:8421/p1000>) is an effort to increase the participation of Latinos and Latinas in graduate schools. Consider expanding the resources of Project 1000 to include seminaries and graduate programs of religion. Several major universities with strong graduate programs in religion already participate, including: University of Colorado, University of California at Santa Barbara, Emory University, The University of Chicago, Boston University, The University of Michigan, Princeton University, Fordham University, Georgetown University, Duke University, and Union Theological [the only theological school].

The benefits of linking any initiative or fellowship program with the Project 1000 include:

- A simultaneous application process to multiple institutions is facilitated, increasing probabilities of admission.
- Project 1000 already provides useful information on the value and role of the Graduate Records Exam for Latino/as in the United States. Such information can be helpful to educational institutions as well as for students.
- Students, therefore, save money, time, and paper work in their application process to multiple institutions.
- Applicants receive important information about the nature of graduate education.

Including the religious category as one of the areas of study supported by the Project 1000 could enable others to enter religious studies.

Many minority students are the first in their family to graduate from college and sometimes are not prepared to plan beyond that degree. They often tend to make that decision at a later point in their lives. Research shows that the longer students postpone graduate study, the harder it is for them to return to school. Various programs should be funded that attempt to expose, inspire, inform, and network Latino/a students at different stages of life to give serious consideration to graduate theological education.

2) Implement a Latino Youth Theology Institute patterned after the Youth Theology Institute funded by the Lilly Endowment. The month long program, located on a college or university campus, would provide 17-year-old students with an opportunity to be mentored, inspired, engaged, and challenged by leading Latino/a theologians and ministers. The Institute would encourage Latino/a youth to consider theological reflection and commitment as an important, liberating, and meaningful area of study.

3) Initiate a Young Latino Scholars program to bring community college students to a university for two to three weeks to do academic course work. The program would be designed to educate and motivate students to either train for the ministry or for a theological career. Established Latino/a scholars and religious leaders would facilitate the course work that would count for credit at their host institutions. The difference between the Latino Youth Theology Institute and the Young Latino Scholars program is in degree of intensity and purpose. The latter would focus more on orienting and preparing students for graduate education by taking graduate level courses for credit, and orienting them to the graduate application process. The former is aimed at potential undergraduate students of theology or religious studies. In both cases, bringing scholars and ministers together with young Hispanics would provide a unique opportunity to integrate concerns of ministry with theological reflection, and model an integrative perspective that sees both as indispensable.

4) Create a bureau of key religious leaders and scholars who

could speak to youth groups, retreats, and conferences about the need to increase the numbers of Hispanic religious leaders. This could be coordinated through denominational networks of youth leaders and others. The choice to engage in a religious vocation is a very personal experience, and religious leaders at the local and national level can be positive role models that inspire and challenge others to take religious vocations and scholarship seriously.

5) Establish a Research Assistantship/Mentor Program linking Doctoral fellows with an established Latino/a scholar in the student's field. Program participation could be awarded on a competitive basis. The purpose is to create research opportunities for fellows with established Latino/a scholars who may not be located in the same institution. The mentor and student could make contact on a periodic basis to discuss both the endemic anxieties of graduate school and the relation of the student's field to his or her research interests. In addition, both could work on a research project that would lead to a professional presentation or publication.

6) Support a national conference on Hispanic/Latino theological education. Gather Latino/as involved in theological education to explore common experiences, goals, and opportunities. Such a consultation would generate various documents and monographs for publication as well as new ideas and strategies.

7) Establish a long-term fundraising program to help support these initiatives into the future. At the current time all major initiatives have depended on foundation support, primarily from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the Lilly Endowment, Inc. However, present and future needs will require other funding sources. Specific recommendations for enhancing fundraising capacity follow:

- Hire and train fundraising specialists to develop a strategic plan with specific goals, timetables, and tactics for creating an endowment.
- Organize alumni of the previous Fund for Theological Education and similar programs to participate in an annual

fundraising campaign.

- Establish a committee with representatives of the previously mentioned alliance for long range stewardship planning.
- Facilitate a consultation of Latino and non-Latino leaders from all denominations to support such an initiative by disseminating research findings and speaking or preaching about common problems and opportunities related to theological education among Latino/as.
- Establish a committee of Latino/a business, civic, artistic, and political leaders who are committed to religious communities and who could provide significant influence and assistance in such fundraising activities.

(8) Found a faculty development and interchange program to facilitate interaction and cooperation among Latino and non-Latino faculty on individual campuses as well as across institutions. One component would be research enhancement seminars and workshops, short and long-term faculty exchanges, joint and visiting faculty appointments, collaborative research activities, and other opportunities to expand Latino/a faculty participation. As the research findings and discussion above have shown, Latino and Latina faculty are overextended in large part due to self-imposed and institutionally proscribed constraints that affect their opportunity for advancement in the academy.

A second component of this recommendation is the need to enhance the awareness and sensitivity of non-Latino scholars to the theological perspectives, history, and contributions of the Latino/a community. The development of a program that systematically educates faculty in their various fields to those contributions would help create needed curricular changes.

(9) Support ongoing research to identify trends, needs, and successful strategies that reduce educational barriers. Data gathering efforts are important for evaluating ongoing strategies designed to increase educational opportunities. Tracking students as well as faculty across their careers enables program officers to assess the

viability of a degree program. Data gathering gives funding sources accurate information on which to make decisions. When initiatives and strategies are based on demonstrable evidence, ongoing and increasing support becomes more viable. Such data gathering becomes even more pressing when various religious groups, organizations, and institutions cooperate in some of the larger and more complex alliances and national consortiums we have outlined. That information helps redirect future funding strategies or create new initiatives. Since a conversation among various constituencies is needed to maintain high levels of efficiency, data from a common source, using agreed upon procedures, will facilitate this dialog. It will identify further needs and the data to support the funding of them.

(10) Documenting the work of Bible Institutes and Diocesan Training Institutes' role in theological education within the Latino/a community is another important research initiative. Such research would provide information to guide those crucial initiatives focused on improving non-formal education and linking it to accredited educational institutions.

(11) Fund a Visiting Scholar Program to support one or two year visiting scholars, particularly recent Ph.D.s, to enable their placement in higher education institutions. Such a program gives academic experience, provides research and writing time, and presents mentoring opportunities. All this enhances access to academic positions.

(12) Organize a national forum of Latino and Latina scholars from various fields to discuss the nature of religious life among Latino/as from an interdisciplinary perspective and to develop a research agenda. Latino and Latina scholars of sociology, demography, political science, psychology, history, ethnic studies, literature, etc. might be intellectually attracted to studying religious experience and the ways it influences the Latino/a community. While funding has been available for particular projects, we do not have the financial support or the professional network to sus-

tain such a cross-disciplinary study of religion within the Latino/a community. The research agenda could be coordinated and enhanced by creating centers of excellence in various educational institutions across the country dedicated to high levels of scholarship, mentoring of scholars, and disseminating research findings. The Program for the Analysis of Religion Among Latinos could provide a model for such a forum.

(13) Partner with Latino owned and non-Latino owned businesses that are committed to improving the quality of life in the barrios. There is a very close connection between religious institutions and the health of the Latino/a community. Funding should be provided to help organize committees of business leaders, both nationally and regionally, for the purpose of enlisting their support for the various educational initiatives outlined in this book.

(14) Foundations should consider funding studies and research activities that will identify barriers to the appointment and promotion of people of color, particularly Latino/as, to executive roles in seminaries.

Most Hispanic religious leaders belong to a particular denomination. Those denominations would be served by advancing those leaders to executive positions as well. Hence our recommendation to churches and congregations follow.

Recommendations to Denominations

(1) Denominations can help support theological education by increasing recruitment, retention, and development of their own Hispanic clergy.

(2) The Gonzalez (1988) report recommended training first generation Latino/a pastors in the new realities of ministry in the United States. To a large extent this recommendation has gone unheeded. Denominations, in coordination with other professional associations, national initiatives, or seminaries, could coordinate the establishment of intensive courses of study to facilitate a smooth transition to the new realities that life in the United States

presents immigrants.

(3) Denominations need to become more accountable for the theological education of Hispanics. Working committees should study ways to help Latinos and Latinas obtain graduate theological degrees, in order to increase their representation within the leadership of educational institutions owned or operated by denominations. Among many denominations the main or the only reason for church growth is Latino/as who are immigrating in large numbers or switching denominational affiliations. Greater participation on the part of denominations for the theological education of this burgeoning sector of the church is simply a matter of justice. Denominations can provide financial support, collaborate with educational institutions, create opportunities for community building and networking among Hispanic religious leaders, facilitate identification of future leaders and scholars, and collaborate with other denominations to assure a solid theological foundation for Latino/as in the United States and Puerto Rico.

(4) Denominational leaders should gather to consider common concerns and challenges facing the Latino/a community. This was also one of Gonzalez's (1988) recommendations that has never materialized. Such a forum can facilitate common, rather than solely individual, efforts. Denominational leaders representing the fields of ministry, minority concerns, higher education and others should assemble to consider the challenges and opportunities that Latinos and Latinas face in theological education.

(5) Denominations can seek to support and collaborate with larger theological education initiatives such as the Hispanic Theological Initiative, the Hispanic Summer Program, and the Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana.

(6) Denominations can help develop top scholars and leaders by creating their own programs and strategies for identifying candidates for theological training. Denominations should increase both their support for and expectations that Latino and Latina pastors get an accredited seminary degree.

(7) Lack of denominational support leads many graduate students to take on extra jobs or to drop studies altogether. Denominations can affirm the value of seminary education by allowing sufficient time for degree completion without the burdens of pastoring or other employment.

(8) Denominations should seek to foster greater understanding and tolerance across religious lines in order to cooperate on shared interests, foster theological education, and facilitate research projects. This could create opportunities for leadership training, support the development of religious education materials, and leverage influence on schools to become more inclusive and representative.

Summary

These recommendations are meant to create an agenda for the future and to ignite the present imagination regarding what could happen if there is commitment and cooperation. They do not exhaust all possibilities but invite dialog about facilitating greater and better-prepared Hispanic religious leaders. Such a dialogue could lead to greater collaboration among institutions of higher learning, denominations, foundations and community-based organizations. Perceived barriers sometimes prevent such collaboration. However, if a common goal of all Christians in the United States is to develop leaders who will represent with distinction and commitment communities of color, then these recommendations need to be considered. The creation of such alliances is our single most important recommendation.

"Ivory Tower" is a cliché often used to describe academe whose work is unconnected to life beyond campus. Seminaries are likewise critiqued as "Sacred Towers." Towers can be keeps, the last bastions of elitism. Or they can be observatories, remote heights of cold analysis. For too long the sacred tower has acted like a keep or an observatory. But the sea change that crashes upon us is the challenge and blessing of diversity. Persons of color, women and

men, whose ancestry is not solely European still value the sacred tower. They want to enter it and offer their hearts and hands to the light.

“Lighthouse” might be a better metaphor for the tower of sacred learning. Those inside a lighthouse do have a privileged place from which to observe reality because they are afforded better perspective. But they realize that they exist, not to hoard that light, but rather to offer it as a beacon to all.

The sacred tower of the seminary is not a keep, and Hispanics are not outside hoards of barbarians. Nor should the seminary be a remote place dedicated only to cold analysis. Seminaries in this new century must be lighthouses. They are not situated in some trackless desert, serving the same dusty thoughts but exist on the dangerous shoreline where faith crashes against the shoals of a post-modern world experiencing sea change. They must be lighthouses, beacons for a pilgrim people navigating those shoals, and know that they must either navigate together or perish apart. Our recommendations are simply suggestions about how to open the door to them.

This article is an excerpt from a forthcoming book published by the University of Scranton Press, The Leaning Sacred Tower: The Challenge and Promise of Latino/a Theological Education by Edwin I. Hernandez, PhD, and Kenneth G. David O.F.M. Conv.

**ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY:
WHERE THE HEART AND MIND GO
HAND AND HAND**

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For Latino/as there is no place like home, and when we enter through the doors of Asbury Theological Seminary that is how we feel—at home. J.D. Walt, Dean of the chapel at Asbury wrote in his monthly newsletter:

“One “BIENVENIDO” Welcome Sign	\$55.00
Seeing Hispanic Church Leaders prepare for ministry	Priceless
The Latino-Latina Studies Program	Priceless”

“Priceless” is the value that this seminary has for so many of us who are faculty, staff or students at Asbury. When students share their experiences at Asbury, their stories have a similar ring. Many of them would describe their experience as “an answer to my prayers,” “God heard my prayers,” or “Asbury is a dream came true.” For this reason we can affirm that Asbury Seminary is a blessing for the Hispanic community in Central Florida.

The vision that brought Asbury and the Hispanic community in Central Florida together began more than six years ago, when

President Maxie Dunnam started to explore options for internationalizing Asbury Seminary in Kentucky. After searching for God's direction and conducting a careful sociological study, Florida was the most viable option since it had all the characteristics and elements for the expansion of the seminary. The president's vision was to provide and deliver theological education in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-denominational community, although no one could really define what it would take to make this vision a reality. Three years later, Asbury Florida opened its doors in the fall of 1999 in Orlando, Florida. The president's vision was fulfilled, but it was also a dream come true for many others.

This dream has unfolded gradually and is still in its early stages. The very first sign that was placed on the outside of the building (and is still there) said in big, bright, blue lettering: "BIENVENIDO." This sign was a symbol of Asbury's desire to connect with the fast-growing Hispanic community, and that it did! The seminary was not yet fully open for business when a local Hispanic pastor drove by and read the sign. Taking it literally, he made himself at home and *bienvenido*. He and others responded to the invitation by contacting the seminary leaders. Dr. Steve Harper, Vice President and Dean, and Dr. Burrell Dinkins, Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling, welcomed them. Amid much excitement, the pastors believed that this was happening in response to their prayers and soon their interpretation of Asbury's presence was understood as a response to a call from God.

The providential opening of Asbury-Florida was a response to the need for theological education in Spanish. Drs. Harper and Dinkins soon discovered that these local pastors were members of the Hispanic Pastors Association in Central Florida, an organization that serves and leads more than 250 Hispanic congregations in the area. Soon the connection between the Association and Asbury was formalized, several meetings were planned and potential programs discussed. Within a few months, Asbury began offering a pastoral counseling course in Spanish. The Latino/

Latina Studies Program was organized to coordinate this and other possible programs.

This first Spanish course was intended as a “test run,” but due to its success and growth, it has become a fully approved program by the board of trustees of the seminary. It provides a way for Hispanic pastors and laity to obtain a Spanish Certification in Theological Studies from a Latino/a Perspective. This program not only serves pastors and lay leaders in Central Florida, it also brings students from other states and places as far away as Caracas, Venezuela. Students, who are willing to travel a long distance to be part of Asbury, would agree that Asbury is more than a place to study; it is a home away from home.

Hispanic students feel at home from the moment they enter the building. For example, they find a directory on the wall that is in both Spanish and English. A bilingual directory may sound simple, but for Hispanics it is a sign of affirmation. Almost every office has a bilingual sign so students go to the “*biblioteca*” to study and know where to find “*el baño*.” Dr. Justo González, who provided valuable suggestions like these, accurately gauged the reaction of the Hispanic community. In his role as consultant, Dr. González was instrumental in helping Asbury Seminary become a *hogar*/home for Hispanics. At Asbury, we work hard to let our Hispanic sisters and brothers know that “*nuestra casa, es su casa*.”

If speaking English is a problem, there is no need to worry—at Asbury 25% of our staff and faculty at the Orlando campus are fully bilingual. For many, Spanish is their first language. Furthermore, a large portion of our staff/faculty who are not of Hispanic descent have learned the language. They understand the Hispanic culture as a result of missionary experiences, intercultural marriages and other cross-cultural experiences.

It is very difficult to come into our community and not be exposed to the multi-cultural setting. For example, our weekly “Campus Calendar,” which keeps the student body informed about the happenings in our theological community, is a bilingual publication.

Another element that we have incorporated and embraced is the Latino worship experience. During chapel services students from different cultures sing songs in Spanish or hear Biblical texts read in languages different from their own. M.Div. students are accustomed to listening to invited guests that only speak Spanish and need someone to interpret into English. For students, staff and faculty, it is evident that the body of Christ includes diversity in unity. Both are celebrated at every chapel service.

Diversity is found not only at chapel services, but also in the faculty, staff, students and books in the library. With over 600 books in Spanish, our seminary is continually working to obtain Spanish resources so that our students have the opportunity to select between texts in English and/or in Spanish. The library has compiled a comprehensive list that contains all Spanish titles for books, periodicals and journals and indicates their location at the library for easy access. They are easily accessible for Spanish speakers but strategically placed to encourage student awareness of the merging of cultures around us.

While we see the need to provide Spanish theological education in a setting which is hospitable and embraces the Hispanic cultures, we promote the unity of one body. On Monday evenings, Hispanic students participate in the Latino/Latina Studies Program better known as LLSP. At the same time we offer a "Conversational Spanish Class" for non-Spanish speaking individuals who understand that they need to become familiar with the language. Everyone takes a break at the same time and the conversation between these two groups begins, creating a wonderful bridge between two cultures and two communities. The first pioneers of this bridge-building experience were the students in the "Spanish class." These "bridge builders" were members of the faculty, staff and their spouses.

Another effort to build bridges has been the relationship between Asbury and the Hispanic Pastors Associations which created a network with denominational and conference leaders.

Through these relationships, Asbury has gained the trust and support of many congregations and their pastors. Asbury has an LLSP Advisory Committee which is made up of Hispanic Latino Pastors, key leaders and business people who help steer the program in the right direction. Within the seminary there is a faculty and staff committee that allows them to fulfill their goals and respond to the recommendations of the Advisory committee. The seminary President, whose office is in Kentucky, has attended 2/3 of our meetings held with the community leaders and has been a guest speaker on several occasions. Our Vice-President makes every possible effort to establish contact with each student.

The seminary's commitment to the Hispanic community is also evident as one tunes in to the local Spanish radio station and hears an ad about its courses. A Spanish ad is also placed in the magazine, *Vida Cristiana*. Next May, Asbury will advertise its programs at EXPOLIT. The booth will display available Spanish and bilingual literature.

Asbury trains Hispanic students with the purpose of equipping them to be leaders of excellence where God has called them to serve. Our continuing education certification program offers students the opportunity to specialize in five different areas without completing a Bachelors degree. Many of our students, pastors and lay ministers expressed an interest in obtaining or completing their Bachelors degree and a desire to pursue graduate studies. To respond to this request, Asbury has established a partnership with a college in Mexico. We continue to pursue similar partnerships with other schools so that we can refer students who enroll in the degree completion program. If the student is fluent in English, we offer them options and referrals and provide them with the admissions package for other schools. For students interested in our Masters program who understand English but cannot speak or write it well, we offer the opportunity to take courses with one of our bilingual faculty members so they can respond and write in Spanish.

Students who obtain a Certification of Advanced Theological Studies from Asbury will receive a complete educational experience. Professors who teach in the Masters program offer a similar course in Spanish to our LLSP students. The course is similar because it is not translated but is literally offered from a Latino/a perspective. All of the professors in the continuing education program are Latinas/Latinos (or have worked extensively with the Hispanic Latino community) and hold a graduate degree. That is the "signature" of the school. This program demonstrates the high quality theological education a student can receive at the seminary.

At Asbury, we actively promote missions and offer three multicultural trips annually so that students visit and experience the culture of other countries. Two of the three mission opportunities are to Spanish-speaking countries: Cuba and Guatemala. Students return from these trips with a different perspective that adds to the distinctiveness of the seminary experience.

Although these are wonderful efforts and have been a blessing for many, our main goal is to establish a complete Masters program in Spanish. We are aware of the need; statistics concerning the Hispanic population speak for themselves. As the numbers of students continue to increase, we will also continue to dream. Asbury is a school that is "Standing Firm and Moving Forward" and a place "*Donde el corazón y la mente van mano a mano.*"

RECRUITING LATINAS/OS FOR ATS SEMINARIES

Otto Maduro

Otto Maduro is a professor of World Christianity at Drew University Theological School. He is a member of the team that fosters the recruitment and retention of Latinas/os at Drew.

Introduction

There are thousands of Hispanic ministers out there, serving and procreating Latina/o congregations in a wide variety of Christian traditions across the United States. While their numbers thrive, within and without seminaries, one fact is salient: the number, proportion (barely 3%) and growth of Hispanic students in ATS-accredited seminaries lags well behind the trends of both the general population and the churches of the nation.

Why is this?

A decade of recruitment work at Drew University—initiated in 1992 by the first full-time, tenure-track Latina professor in our Theological School (first, too, in our Graduate School), Dr. Ada María Isasi-Díaz, and pushed boldly ahead by our first Latina M.Div. graduate in a decade, the Rev. Lyssette Pérez-Salgado—might hold some clues to that question.

I will try to spell out some of those clues from my own participation in and analysis of our recruitment labors with their multiple fortunes, failures, fortés and fragilities.

What is unique about recruiting U.S. Hispanics ?

Let us be bold even at the risk of sounding offensive. Predominantly “white” seminaries—as the society and churches behind and around them—habitually suffer from the toxin of white supremacy; they normally do not need, want, understand, appreciate or hold as normative something other than a white constituency. If they ever move from white supremacy to some timid form of racial/ethnic diversification (as near half of ATS seminaries seem to be doing these days, thanks be to God and to a few prophetic leaders of all races who have had the courage to move in that direction), they can hardly avoid doing it in a sluggish, clumsy, unstable dance to-and-fro.

That’s the nature of the beast. Pun intended.

For starters, I want to suggest that a large part of the issue is that ATS-accredited schools—as predominantly urban, middle-class, Anglo institutions—have a mammoth hindrance within their own culture. They are unable to grasp and seriously and effectively tackle the challenge of recruiting, welcoming, serving and retaining Hispanic (or African American or Asian) students. Their administrators have a hell of a time realizing that attracting Latina/o seminarians has very few similarities with recruiting U.S. Anglo or African-American candidates for U.S. seminaries or even with persuading born-and-raised Puerto Ricans in the island to join a seminary in Puerto Rico.

The “problem” is not Hispanics in the abstract. It’s not a racial or ethnic issue per se. It’s not even, strictly speaking, a question of being ‘aliens’ or not—although this is part of the issue. What is unique about Latinas/os is their concrete social, historical, cultural, economic, legal, political, linguistic and religious location in

the contemporary U.S. And let me summarize some of the traits of this location which, in my eyes, make the recruitment of Hispanic seminarians quite a different task from the recruitment of Anglo or even African-American candidates for ministry (and probably more similar to that of recruiting Asians in the U.S.).

(1) **Citizenship.** Truth: Latinas/os were here well ahead of the Mayflower; a much larger chunk of the contemporary U.S. was “Hispanic” long before any “Anglos” invaded it. Most U.S. Latinas/os are as U.S.-born-and-raised citizens as any U.S.-born-and-raised WASP. However, the fact of the matter is that a Hispanic surname, a Latin look, a “Spanish” accent or having Spanish as one’s second, first or sole language are enough for one to be consistently treated for life as an “illegal alien,” a suspect, a third-class citizen—the more so, the less your features let you “pass” as WASP. This is part of what Latinas/os experience and therefore expect from any mainstream U.S. institution and what scares many of them away from predominantly “white” seminaries.

(2) **Language.** Spanish is a cherished part of the emotions, memory, dreams, relations and identity of a large segment of the Hispanic community. It is often the first or sole language of many first-generation Latina/o immigrant pastors. It is the everyday language of family, friends, neighbors, colleagues and congregations—and for many it is hard to feel at ease and at home in English-only environments. Again, Hispanics know for a fact that “normal” seminaries are English-only institutions, habitually ignorant of and hostile to those whose English is not “good enough,” who have an “alien accent,” who speak their language among themselves and who prefer to deal with administrators familiar with their language rather than with English-only personnel.

(3) **Time, energy and trust.** As often is the case among African Americans, the reality of Latina/o communities in the U.S. is such that those in ministerial functions are simultaneously on call 24 hours a day, having to work a second job outside of ministry in order to make ends meet and constantly pulled back into an

extended family plagued by emergencies requiring attention. Where is a Hispanic pastor going to get the time and energy to dedicate to full-time theological studies? And if s/he finds them by some miracle, where are they going to find a source of trust in their own ability to succeed in such endeavor if the U.S. churches and the larger society consistently perceive and treat them as worthless?

(4) **Financial support.** Money is short in most of the U.S. Latina/o communities, churches and families. Independent Hispanic churches rarely have funds exceeding day-by-day survival while Latina/o pastors of mainstream denominations are typically underpaid and rarely supported in their dreams of furthering their ministerial education. Thus, even if surmounting all odds, a Latina/o decides to go to seminary, who is going to foot the bill? Financial aid is rarely available for most Hispanic candidates—and if it is, the red tape and the bureaucratic culture make it inaccessible for most.

(5) **Home & community.** Latinas/os are often stereotyped as too family-attached, too emotional, too gregarious. As in all stereotypes, there is a lot of oversimplification and overgeneralization here—and a bit of truth, too. Part of the fact is that Hispanic traditions frequently place a high emotional and ethical value in close personal relations (family, neighbors, friends & colleagues), a value that intensifies under circumstances of migration, isolation and environmental hostility. These are the precise conditions in which human relations turn into crucial networks of protection, relief and survival. Distancing oneself from such networks in order to daily navigate a predominantly pragmatic, impersonal, cold, business-like seminary environment (and where one is constantly subject to invisibility, patronization or disdain, to boot), is not an alluring prospect for a Hispanic candidate.

What is unique about Latinas/os as potential candidates for seminaries is that, thanks to their location and experience, they know for a fact that they are not really wanted, welcome, under-

stood, appreciated or supported in most U.S. educational institutions, churches or seminaries. They suspect they will not be able to surmount the racist, bureaucratic, linguistic and financial obstacles they will find in seminary. They conclude that at best the price they would have to pay (financially, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, as well as in terms of sacrificing family and ministry) would be too high to be worth the risk. So why bother?

What is unique about recruiting Hispanics for ATS seminaries is the degree of love, care, conviction, identification, time, energy and skills that are necessary on the part of the recruiter(s) to override the knowledge, suspicions and conclusions hindering Latina/o ministers from embarking in theological studies in an ATS seminary.

What is unique about recruiting Latina/o candidates to study in predominantly white ATS seminaries is that too many changes are required on the composition and culture of seminaries' staff, administration, faculty and students so that minority candidates are increasingly persuaded that they are honestly welcome. This means they feel deeply respected, carefully listened to, taken seriously; perceived, taught and evaluated as equally intelligent members of the same human race; as well as genuinely appreciated as equal partners with specific contributions to the life of both the Christian churches and U.S. society.

A Few Concluding Remarks

Probably because in 2001 we graduated what appears to be the largest Hispanic class so far among continental ATS seminaries, I am repeatedly asked nowadays what works—and what does not—for recruiting and retaining Latina/o candidates for ATS seminaries. I think it might be too early to dare to give an answer, but I will share a few hunches. But please don't swallow them without very critical examination and do likewise with the rest of these pages.

I think that what works best for recruiting Hispanic candidates

are, among others, these conditions:

(1) Cultural affinity between recruiter and candidates; the wider that affinity, the better.

(2) The sincere care of the recruiter for the whole person, family, congregation, culture and circumstances of the potential candidate—knowing that all of these are immensely more important than the institution hiring the recruiter or than the prospects of the candidate really applying to that institution or not.

(3) The time, energy, patience and insistence on the part of the recruiter to understand and help surmount the obstacles hindering the candidate from furthering her/his education.

(4) Constant, caring follow-up.

These conditions cannot be faked nor are they normally acceptable for institutions recruiting on the basis of measurable investment/return market criteria. They require a radical change in the concept of what recruitment for ministry requires which is precisely the uniqueness of Latina/o seminary recruitment.

Beyond recruitment, I believe that that which works best for retaining Hispanic seminarians—and turns them into effective, spontaneous, volunteer recruiters—is the creation of a genuinely welcoming environment for Latinas/os:

(1) A critical mass of Hispanic students who confirm being a thriving community, in numbers and proportion, definitely, but also in salient, shared spirit, spaces, times, activities and symbols.

(2) An increasingly diverse and culturally sensitive faculty, administration and staff—including bi-lingual, bi-cultural Latinas/os—who spontaneously demonstrate their commitment and that of the institution to go against the grain of white supremacy.

(3) An expanding number of courses, educational programs, activities, religious services, etc., which embody and manifest the gradual self-transformation of the institution from a predominantly white one into a globalized, multicultural seminary in the service of a changing nation and world.

A daunting task for a new century. Too much to ask? Maybe

just the bare minimum asked of us by the Gospels. Maybe it is time for our seminaries to embody more boldly, more faithfully, the witness of Jesus. Maybe.

POSTSCRIPT: HEALING AN AVERSION TO STATISTICS: A COMMUNAL TASK

Zaida Maldonado Pérez
Director, HTI

A couple of months ago I received the latest edition of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) Fact Book. It contains all kinds of statistical information about enrollment in theological schools and it breaks it down according to racial/ethnic categories. Since very young, I have suffered from an allergic reaction to numbers, graphs, pie charts, ratios and percentages, so, you can imagine my perplexity when I found myself anticipating the latest edition of the *ATS Fact Book*, replete with numbers, percentages, ratios, graphs and pie charts. Why?

The category for Hispanics did not even exist until 1967 when we finally begin to see some statistics about Hispanic enrollment in ATS schools.¹ It is only then that we get a stark look at the percentage of Hispanics with Ph.D.s in theology and religion. The recent Fact Book tells us that there are more than 3,000 faculty members in seminaries and theological institutions accredited by the ATS. However, only 91 are Hispanics.² This constitutes only 2.7% of the total faculty population, representing a glaring 1:36 ratio.

What does it mean to be the largest ethnic/racial group in the United States with the lowest proportion of educated leaders, pastors and professors? In the year 2000, approximately one in eight persons in the United States were of Hispanic origin.³ Today, we outnumber non-Hispanic whites in the South and Southwestern

United States. We are the largest and youngest racial/ethnic group (35.7% are less than 18 years old) yet more than a quarter have less than a ninth-grade education. How do we and our denominations, their schools and seminaries, understand our call to faithfulness in light of an ethnic/racial group that has the highest high school dropout rate? How important is it to know that Hispanics are much more likely than non-whites to be unemployed or to work as operators and laborers, earn less and be more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic whites? How does this all translate into our teaching, preaching, and doing?

I have come to the conclusion that my aversion to the pie-charts and graphs in the ATS Fact Book does not only arise out of a penchant for things related to the right side of my brain; it is also a defense mechanism against a feeling of despondency. The fact is that Latinos remain sorely underrepresented as students, professors and administrators in our seminaries.

The Hispanic Theological Initiative was created by The Pew Charitable Trusts precisely to help increase the number of qualified Latino Ph.D.s in theology and religion available to teach in seminaries and other theological institutions. However, a study commissioned by PEW revealed that financial help alone would not be the solution to successfully recruiting and retaining Latino students.⁴ Experiences of isolation and adverse institutional climate would also need to be addressed. For this reason, HTI was conceived as a holistic scholarship program with the financial award being only one of its major components. Year-round mentoring, opportunities to meet with each other for encouragement and to network through regional meetings and summer workshops are only some of the pieces that have propelled our awardees to successfully complete their Ph.D.s and join the ranks of faculty and administrators (two of our awardees are now Deans). By the summer of 2002 HTI will have added at least 20 new Ph.D.s to this list and projects 45 or more in the pipeline.

This issue of *Perspectivas: Occasional Papers* celebrates HTI's

contribution by providing helpful suggestions, ideas, and insights on the recruitment and retention of Latina/o students and faculty. We are excited about what some schools and denominations are already doing in this area and offer our services in this endeavor.⁵

NOTES

¹ This information comes from the Association of Theological Schools' data bank and was shared at a Committee on Racial and Ethnic meeting of the ATS by its Executive Director, Daniel O. Aleshire.

² This number accounts for all of the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico!

³ Data regarding Hispanics/Latinas(os) in the United States is taken from Therrien, Melissa and Roberto R. Ramirez, 2000, *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 2000, Current Population Reports, P20-535*, US Census Bureau, Washington DC.

⁴ The study "The National Survey of Hispanic Theological Education" was conducted by Edwin I. Hernández in 1994-1995. An article on its findings was co-written by Hernández and Kenneth G. Davis in *The Journal of Hispanic Latino Theology* Vol. 8:4 (2001), pp. 37-59. According to its authors, this is "the single largest national study of Latino religious leadership ever conducted."

⁵ HTI is especially encouraged by the ongoing work of the Association of Theological Schools and its Committee on Race and Ethnicity in this area!

THE HISPANIC THEOLOGICAL INITIATIVE SERIES

The Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) and the University of Scranton Press (<http://academic.uofs.edu/organization/upress>) have established a book series concerning the religious experience of U.S. Latinas and Latinos. It is interdisciplinary and ecumenical.

The goals of this series include: (1) encouraging scholarly reflection on the religious experience of U.S. Hispanics and disseminating that knowledge to the wider public; (2) providing Latino/a scholars with a venue for publishing their work with an emphasis on the career of HTI's scholarship awardees.

The first goal is achieved by both the reissue of classic texts in the field of U.S. Hispanic religious studies as well as the publication of similar titles that the Latina/o community itself suggests. The second goal is accomplished through the annual HTI Dissertation Series Award. Latina/o junior scholars submit their dissertations for competition for the best doctoral dissertation dealing with U.S. Hispanics religious experience. Winners receive a \$3,000 cash prize and the opportunity to present their work during HTI's Annual Summer Workshop at Princeton Theological Seminary. Winning entries are also published in the Hispanic Theological Initiative Series.

Questions concerning application for the award should be directed to:

Hispanic Theological Initiative
12 Library Place, Princeton, NJ 08540

<http://www.htiprogram.org/>

Tel: (609) 252-1721

Fax: (609) 252-1738

Toll Free: 1-800-575-5522

Email: HTI@ptsem.edu

Questions concerning the series publication should be directed to the series editor:

Kenneth G. Davis, OFM, Conv.

200 Hill Drive

St. Meinrad, IN 47577-1021

Tel: (812) 357-6542

Fax: (812) 357-6792

HTI BOOK PRIZE AND LECTURESHIP

This award motivates junior scholars to publish by recognizing their efforts through a prestigious award that will highlight their name and their contributions to their fields. It is also meant to provide leverage opportunities for tenure. Other immediate and long-term goals include:

- Highlighting scholarly contributions by junior Latina/o scholars to the different fields in theology and religion in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.
- Impacting faculty use of Latina/o books in their selection of required and recommended bibliography for courses.
- Providing models who will inspire further contributions by Latina/o scholars.

The HTI Book Prize will provide an award of \$5,000 annually. The Prize will be presented during a major ceremony at Princeton Theological Seminary in which the winner will be featured as the guest lecturer during the annual HTI Summer Workshop. The media, faculty, students and the wider public will be invited to attend the ceremony and lecture. The Lecture will also be featured in HTI's *Perspectivas*, a series of occasional papers that is sent to all the ATS seminaries and theology departments in universities. The HTI website will devote a section to the Book Prize and include pictures of winners and their books, a summary of assessments, reviews and other important information.

HTI BOOK PRIZE

Submission Guidelines

Publisher

Submission must be a nonfiction book in English published in the United States by a Hispanic Junior Scholar (non-tenured faculty member).

Only two submissions from each publisher will be accepted. Additional submissions will not be considered and will not be returned.

Only the publisher's designated awards administrator may make a nomination.

A brief biography of the author must be included with submission.

The recipient will be required to attend the award ceremony. Please do not nominate a book if the author cannot be present for the ceremony.

All submissions must be received in the HTI office by February 1st. Recipient will be announced by the end of April.

Note: HTI will accept nominations by the wider scholarly community as long as the nomination falls within the guidelines stipulated below.

Subject Matter

Book must engage the Judeo-Christian intellectual tradition. We also invite books that engage this tradition from a sociological,

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Subject Matter

Book must engage the Judeo-Christian intellectual tradition. We also invite books that engage this tradition from a sociological,

anthropological or culture studies perspective. Submissions will be judged according to their scholarly excellence.

A book that is co-authored will be considered, but the volume must have a unifying theme and not simply be a collection of essays. Collections of previously published articles will not be accepted, although a volume that contains several chapters that were previously published in journals may apply, provided the volume has a cohesive theme.

Author(s)

The recipient of the award must be a Hispanic junior (non-tenured) faculty member of an academic institution in the United States.

The recipient will be required to attend the award ceremony.

The recipient will be required to give a lecture based upon the winning volume.

Submission Documents:

- Application form
- Brief biography of author
- Five copies of book or bound page proofs

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