

P E R S P E C T I V A S

HISPANIC THEOLOGICAL INITIATIVE
OCCASIONAL PAPER SERIES
ELEVENTH ISSUE, FALL 2007
10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Arturo Chávez, editor

Ulrike R.M. Guthrie, visiting editor

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PERSPECTIVAS: OCCASIONAL PAPERS

EDITOR

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The Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI) began the publication of *Perspectivas: Occasional Papers* in 1998 to feature the scholarship of Latina/o scholars in theology and religion, and to address the scant number of journals dedicated to featuring the contributions of Latinas/os an important and critical means to stimulate further dialogue and research in theological education.

Our past and present issues feature the work of HTI mentors, fellows, HTI Summer Workshop Lecturers, and HTI Regional Conference speakers. The present publication is the eleventh in the series and our 10th Anniversary issue. This issue includes testimonials from HTI Scholars, Mentors, Editors, and Pastors, some of the many voices who have experienced first-hand the positive impact HTI fellows are making in the academy and the church. Also presented in this issue are numerous dissertation abstracts from a diverse group of dissertation fellows in the HTI pipeline. These abstracts give us a foretaste of the new scholarship we will be experiencing in the academic halls of theological schools, seminaries and university religion departments across the nation.

We trust you will find *Perspectivas* insightful, and we invite you to share comments and responses to any of the articles. Please look for current and past issues of *Perspectivas* in seminaries, religion departments at universities, and other institutions throughout the United States, and Puerto Rico. If you like your own issue please e-mail us at hti@ptsem.edu for a free copy.

Joanne Rodríguez
Director, HTI



FROM THE EDITOR

It is truly an honor to present this eleventh issue of *Perspectivas*, as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Hispanic Theological Initiative. In this short time, we are already reaping the harvest of HTI's mission to increase the number of Latina/o scholars, and help make their voices heard in both the church and the academy. Many of these men and women have successfully completed their doctoral studies and are teaching, preaching, and making systemic change in their particular institutions and in society at large. Others are still in the process of completing their studies and are experiencing firsthand the networking and mentoring support of HTI.

In this issue, you will hear their voices in an eclectic collection of articles from seasoned scholars, *testimonios* from beneficiaries and supporters of HTI's legacy, and dissertation abstracts from up-and-coming scholars who bring such vibrant promise and hope to our community. The two articles by Luis Rivera-Pagán and Daniel Ramírez continue *Perspectivas'* excellent track record of providing insightful, theological reflection on the "signs of the times" from a Hispanic perspective. Both authors (Rivera-Pagán as mentor, and Ramírez as mentee) participated in the first HTI mentoring class of 1997 and are now fully engaged as scholars and teachers who speak boldly on the complex issues stemming from colonization, globalization, and immigration.

In the first article, Luis Rivera-Pagán provocatively addresses the Society for Pastoral Theology during their annual study conference in 2007 that took place in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He calls the participants and each of us to a critical awareness of how the historical experience of Latina/o colonization continues to manifest in the post colonial realities of personal estrangement and systemic alienation. Only an honest and rigorous contextualization of our theological reflection can yield new insights and strategies

for pastoral ministry that are truly liberating. Similarly, Daniel Ramírez's article was originally delivered as a keynote address at the HTI West Regional Conference in 2004. In a powerful reflection on Naomi and Ruth's experiences of being strangers in strange lands, Ramírez challenges all of us to see the faith and determination of so many "invisible people" who are forced to leave their homes searching for a way to survive in a transnational economic system that relies on their silent consent to labor under inhuman conditions and live as shadows among us.

I join my voice with those of my colleagues and fellow co-workers in thanking the Hispanic Theological Initiative for bringing us together and inspiring us to form community. Personally, I know that without the support of HTI, my present role as the president of the Mexican American Cultural Center would probably not have been possible. HTI gave me and so many of us the courage to believe that we had something to say—and the tools to use our voices confidently. As we celebrate this milestone in our history, may it renew our determination to create communities where those whose voices are ignored or silenced by the assimilative forces of the dominant culture might one day resound! *¡Que viva HTI!*

Arturo Chávez
Editor

Pastoral Theology in a Post-Colonial Context: Some observations from the Caribbean

Luis N. Rivera-Pagán

**Lecture given in San Juan, Puerto Rico
on June 14, 2007 at the Society
for Pastoral Theology Conference**

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

“My hope for the twenty-first [century] is that it will see the first fruits . . . of the process of “re-storying” peoples who had been knocked silent by the trauma of all kinds of dispossession.”

—Chinua Achebe

Postcolonial theory in a colonial situation

The main theme of this 2007 annual study conference of the Society for Pastoral Theology is “Doing Pastoral Theology in a Post-Colonial Context: Intercultural Models of Pastoral Care and

Theology." I find it highly ironic to converse about postcolonial perspectives in Puerto Rico, a Caribbean island that has been aptly described by one of our foremost juridical scholars as "the oldest colony of the world."¹ Christopher Columbus claimed possession of the island for the crown of Castile in November of 1493 and it remained part of the Spanish empire till 1898, when it was conquered by the United States.

The transfer of sovereignty from Madrid to Washington was accomplished through the two classical ways of solving conflicts among powerful nations: war and diplomacy. War was perpetrated in the tropical Caribbean and the Philippines; diplomacy was negotiated later in elegant Paris. No need to consult the natives: Washington, Madrid, and Paris were the sites of privileged historical agency. In early 1898 Puerto Rico was a Spanish colony; at the end of that fateful year, it had become a colony of the United States. These were the initial stages of imperial *pax americana*. From the Philippines and Guam, in the Pacific, to Cuba and Puerto Rico, in the Caribbean, the American ideology of manifest destiny, with its strong religious undertones, was transgressing national boundaries.

We have learnt much from Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and Walter Dignolo about *colonial discourse*.² And even before these four distinguished émigrés, there were the critical analyses of colonial ideology and mentality drafted by Franz Fanon and Albert Memmi.³ The colonized subjects providing theoretical paradigms to their colonizers? Dislocated, "out of place"⁴ Third World intellectuals giving lessons to the masters of the world? Quite a paradox of these postcolonial times!

Colonial discourse mystifies imperial dominion. It crafts by persuasion what the mechanisms of coercion are unable to achieve: the fine-tuned consent and admiration of the colonized subjects. It diffuses and affirms imperial, ideological hegemony. Its greatest creation is what V. S. Naipaul has called *mimic men*.⁵

When the U.S. troops invaded Puerto Rico, their commanding general, Nelson Appleton Miles, of notorious reputation due to his participation in the Wounded Knee massacre, made the following proclamation “to the Inhabitants of Porto [*sic*] Rico”:

“In the prosecution of the war against the Kingdom of Spain by the people of the United States, in the cause of liberty, justice, and humanity, its military forces have come to occupy the island of Porto Rico. They come bearing the banner of Freedom . . .

We have come to promote your prosperity and bestow upon you the . . . blessings of the liberal institutions of our government . . . the advantages and blessings of enlightened civilization.”⁶

In 1493, and more firmly in 1508, the Spaniards came to Puerto Rico with the proclaimed purpose of converting its idolatrous inhabitants to the one and only true religion, Christianity, and to teach them how to live according to the European norms of a civil and ordered society. In 1898, the Americans came to impart upon us, poor tropical barbarians, the blessings of liberty, justice, humanity, and enlightened civilization. To crown its generosity, in 1917, without consulting “the Inhabitants of *Porto Rico*,” (again, who cares about the views and feelings of colonized subjects?) Washington bestowed upon us the gift of American citizenship. That citizenship has allowed our people to participate in the military adventures of Washington to extend its “empire of freedom,” from the First World War trenches to the streets of Baghdad and Fallujah. As an added bonus, we do not need to mess with any of the crucial decisions regarding our political condition and fate through the burden of voting. We can rest assured that those decisions, usually important dimensions of democratic sovereignty, are well taken care of by the wisdom and benevolence of the powers that be in Washington. How fortunately colonial we Puerto

Ricans have been!

If we are going to converse seriously about postcolonial perspectives for pastoral theology, let us first be aware of our specific actual site of enunciation: a place where colonial discourses are not merely a matter of historical memory, but where the coloniality of power still prevails and shapes the lives and subjectivities of Puerto Ricans.⁷ A place where the empire is not nameless or incognito. You happen to be its citizens.

For two main reasons it is important to identify specifically the site where this study conference is taking place. First, to be aware of the dissonance between the main theme of the event—"Doing Pastoral Theology in a Post-Colonial Context"—and its location, a colonial context whose residents are still deprived of the political rights basic to any democratic sovereign state. Second, just as there can be no doubt about the identity of the empire exercising hegemony over this island, this Society for Pastoral Theology must not evade the challenge recently raised in its journal by Ryan La Mothe as to whether the U.S. ecclesiastical profession of pastoral theologians will collude or collide with the ways and goals of its national empire.⁸

I am not trying to suggest that your Society selected the wrong place to discuss postcolonialism. If the connotations of the so much in vogue and debated prefix "post" (as in postmodernism, post-structuralism, post-Christendom), are not restricted to a temporal sequence, that which comes after, but rather signify the geopolitical mechanisms of dominion and control, and, dialectically, the counter processes of resistance and defiance, then, curiously enough a modern colonial situation like Puerto Rico might be the best place to analyze postcoloniality. Here classical structures of colonial subjection, neocolonial processes of economic and financial control, the mimicry and mockery of colonized mentality, and the different patterns of national self-affirmation, resistance, and disobedience, converge in peculiarly promiscuous ways.

Still, what a curious and delightful irony that I, a colonized subject, have been invited to talk about pastoral theology in a post-colonial context to citizens of the empire that rules over my people! Maybe this is another occasion to reiterate Gayatri Spivak's famous question, "Can the subaltern speak?"⁹

Coloniality and diaspora

To the ambivalence of this postcolonial colony, whose residents as citizens of the empire can claim in the courts the civil liberties of their citizenship but not its political rights, we should add the crucial fact that approximately half of the Puerto Rican population resides in mainland United States.¹⁰ Legally, those Puerto Ricans are not migrants. Psychologically and culturally, they are. They belong to the history of modern diasporas, which in turn, are the source of the bewildering multiculturalism of the postmodern mega cities.

Migration and diaspora are crucial dimensions of Puerto Rico's modern history.¹¹ It is an experience shared by colonial peoples all over the world, which nowadays has also become an important theme in postcolonial cultural studies.¹² But, as Homi Bhabha has stressed, diaspora is an important object of critical analysis because it is the sociohistorical and existential context of many displaced Third World peoples: "For the demography of the new internationalism is the history of postcolonial migration, the narratives of cultural and political diaspora. . . the poetics of exile. . ." ¹³

Diaspora entails not only dislocation and displacement, but also a painful and complex process of forging new strategies to articulate cultural differences and identifications. In the Western cosmopolis, with its heterogeneous and frequently conflicting ethnocultural minorities that belie the mythical *e pluribus unum*, the émigré exists in ambivalent tension. The diasporic person frequently feels, alas, "like a man without a passport who is turned

away from every harbour," the anguished dread that haunts the persecuted priest of Graham Greene's magnificent novel, *The Power and the Glory*.¹⁴

Often, nostalgia grips his or her soul, in the beautiful words of a biblical lamentation:

"By the rivers of Babylon –
there we sat down and there we wept
when we remembered Zion.

. . .

How could we sing the Lord's
song
in a foreign land?"

Psalm 137: 1, 4 (NRSV)

Frequently, however, and sometimes simultaneously, the displacement of migration creates a new space of liberation from the atavistic constraints and bondages of the native cultural community and opens new vistas, perspectives, and horizons. To repressed persons, exile in a metropolis like London, Paris, or New York could convey an expansion of individual autonomy, even if its sinister hidden side might turn out to be despair or death.¹⁵ Diasporic existence, as Bhabha has so forcefully reiterated, questions fixed and static notions of cultural and communal identity. In the diaspora, identity is not conceived as a pure essence to be nostalgically preserved, but as an emancipatory project to be fashioned, in an alien territory, in a foreign language, as a polyphonic process of creative imagination. In many instances, "the restoration of a collective sense of identity and historical agency in the home country may well be mediated through the diaspora."¹⁶

As Walter Mignolo has so provocatively asserted,¹⁷ diaspora, as a site of critical enunciation, compels the rethinking of the geopolitical distinction, so dear to many Third World thinkers, between center and periphery, and elicits a border thinking that changes

not only the content, but also the terms of intellectual global dialogue. The émigré's cultural differences engender subaltern significations that resist the cultural cannibalism of the metropolitan melting pot. Diasporic communities are, to quote Bhabha once more, "wandering peoples who will not be contained within the Heim of the national culture and its unisonant discourse, but are themselves the marks of a shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation."¹⁸

The existential dislocation of diaspora, its cultural hybridity, recreates the polymorphous ethnic and racial sources of many migrant communities. When asked to whom she owes allegiance, Clare—the Jamaican protagonist of Michelle Cliff's novel *No Telephone to Heaven*—replies: "I have African, English, Carib in me."¹⁹ She is a *mestiza* moving between Kingston, New York, and London, searching for a place to call home, torn between the quest for solidarity in the forging of a common identity and the lure of solitude in a strange land. To be part of a pilgrim diaspora is a difficult and complex challenge. To avoid utopian illusions, it must be faced with the superb irony of that master of twentieth-century skepticism—also a displaced wanderer—James Joyce, who states: "We were always loyal to lost causes . . . Success is for us the death of the intellect and of the imagination."²⁰

From the margins of empires and metropolitan centers of powers, in the crossroads of borders and frontiers, in the proximity of heterogeneous and frequently conflictive cultural worlds, in the maelstroms of the global mega cities and the virtual imagined communities of the internet, arise constantly new challenges to the international structures of power and control.²¹ There, colonial discourse meets its nemesis: postcolonial defiance. In the ecumenicity of diaspora, to quote Bhabha again, "we must not change merely the narratives of our histories, but transform our sense of what it means to live, to be, in other times and different places, both human and historical."²²

It is usually there, in the counter invasion of the others, the colonized barbarians, in the realms of the lords of the world, that the silenced peoples find the sonority of their voices and reconfigure their historical sagas into meaningful human stories. The savage shadows of *Heart of Darkness*²³ dare to disrupt the imperial monologue. They hybridize the language of the colonizers to reshape and narrate their own histories. As Chinua Achebe, engaged in a critical dialogue with the haunting specter of Joseph Conrad, so eloquently has written in a text significantly titled *Home and Exile*, "My hope for the twenty-first [century] is that it will see the first fruits . . . of the process of 're-storying' peoples who had been knocked silent by the trauma of all kinds of dispossession."²⁴

For the early Christian communities, diaspora was a constant perspective in their way of living and understanding their faith, as expressed in a letter written by an anonymous Christian author of the second or third century: "They [Christians] take part in everything as citizens and put up with everything as foreigners. Every foreign land is their home, and every home a foreign land."²⁵ The Bible itself, as a canonic sacred text, is a literary creature of the diaspora,²⁶ for the Old Testament was born from the sufferings of the dispersed Hebrew nation and the New Testament was written in the koine Greek, the lingua franca of many diasporic peoples of the Hellenistic age. The New Testament faith is in many ways a devout endless wandering to the unreachable ends of the world and ends of times, in search of God and human solidarity. The concept of diaspora could thus be a significant crossroad of encounter, a dialectical hinge, between postcolonial cultural studies and theological hermeneutics.

Puerto Ricans constitute an important part of the U.S. Latino/Hispanic population, that sector of the American society whose growth, in the view of many, enriches multicultural diversity, but has also led Samuel P. Huntington to warn that it constitutes a "major potential threat to the cultural and possibly

political integrity of the United States."²⁷ How interesting that the former prophet of the "clash of civilizations," beyond the frontiers of the American colossus,²⁸ has now become the apostle of the "clash of cultures," within its borders. According to this eminent Harvard professor, the main problem of Latino/Hispanics is not the illegality which many of them incur to reside in the U.S., but rather the threat they represent to the American national identity and its traditional "Anglo-Protestant" culture.

In that clash of cultures, Puerto Ricans have displayed quite an impressive array of survival techniques, what James C. Scott has aptly called "weapons of the weak."²⁹ We excel in the "double consciousness," the transculturation, and the border thinking that Walter Mignolo has so suggestively retrieved from the African American W. E. B. Dubois, the Cuban Fernando Ortiz, and the Chicana Gloria Anzaldúa. In Puerto Rico, we take delight in our Spanish language. In the mainland, we share the linguistic fate of the diaspora and experience what the Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot describes as "the pain and perverse pleasure of writing in a second language."³⁰ The experience of *heteroglossia*,³¹ of thinking, speaking, and writing in a different language, opens unexpected spaces for a heterodox understanding of the hybridizing encounters of peoples and cultures.

The colonial situation—encompassing its ensuing cultural symbiosis, its political and juridical dissolution, and its persistent socioeconomic inequities—constitutes and mediates the historical matrix of many modern diasporas. Thus, it is the source of the multicultural collisions in the imperial metropolitan centers. In the words of William Schweiker, University of Chicago professor of theological ethics,

"International cities are a 'place' in which people's identities, sense of self, others, and the wider world, as well as values and desires, are locally situated but altered by global dynamics . . . The compression of the

world found in massive cities is thus a boon for the formation of new self-understandings, especially for dislocated peoples . . . This is especially pointed when those ‘others’ are implicated in histories of suffering. The compression of the world confronts us with the problem of how to live amid others, even enemies.”³²

In the borderlands a new poetic of political resistance is developed, as the late Gloria Anzaldúa so hauntingly perceived:

“In the Borderlands
you are the battleground
where enemies are kin to each other;
you are at home, a stranger . . .

To survive in the Borderlands
you must live *sin fronteras*
be a crossroads.”³³

Herein can be found the roots of one of the main themes of this study conference: how to develop intercultural models of pastoral care and theology? The postmodern and postcolonial mega cities compress times and spaces into borderlands of cultures, religiosities, traditions, and values. There, it is impossible to evade the gaze of the others, and the crucial biblical question—“Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10: 29)—acquires new connotations. A new sensitivity has to be forged from the ambivalences, sorrows, and joys of the diasporic existence of peoples who live day and night with the uncanny feeling of being gentile aliens within the gates of holy Jerusalem.

Theology and postcolonial studies: a critical observation

It is not surprising that Bible scholars—Fernando Segovia, R. S. Sugirtharajah, Stephen D. Moore, Musa Dube, Roland Boer, Tat-Siong Benny Liew, and Richard Horsley, among others—have

been the first among the theological disciplines to pay close attention to postcolonial theories.³⁴ After all, it is impossible to evade the pervasive ubiquity of empires, imperial conquests, and anti-colonial resistances in the Jewish-Christian sacred scriptures. The geopolitical expansions or contractions of the Egyptian, Chaldean, Assyrian, Persian, and Roman empires constitute the main historical substratum of the entire biblical corpus.

From the Exodus saga to the anti-Roman apocalyptic visions of *Revelation*, only a fruitless strategy of hermeneutical evasion could suppress the importance of imperial hegemony in the configuration of human existence and religious faith in the Bible. Even a comprehensive study of gender and sex in the Bible has to take into consideration the different ways in which Esther and Judith use their female sexuality in historical instances in which the fate of the children of Abraham is dangerously threatened by a powerful empire. How can we forget that Jesus was executed on a Roman cross as a political subversive? Any theory of atonement that eludes the intense political drama of the last days of Jesus transforms into an abstract and unhistorical dogma, or into a display of tasteless masochism à la Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

Thus, it is no great surprise that biblical scholars were the first in the academic fields of religious studies to incorporate the emphases on geopolitical hegemony and resistance provided by postcolonial theories into the array of other contemporary hermeneutical perspectives. The question raised by R. S. Sugirtharajah, however, is poignant indeed:

“One of the weighty contributions of postcolonial criticism has been to put issues relating to colonialism and imperialism at the center of critical and intellectual inquiry . . . What is striking about systematic theology is the reluctance of its practitioners to address the relation between European colonialism and the field.

There has been a marked hesitancy to critically evaluate the impact of the empire among systematic theologians."³⁵

To be fair, some theologians are beginning to give serious consideration to crucial issues of geopolitical power. Among them, Catherine Keller, Mark Lewis Taylor, Kwok Pui-lan, Wonhee Anne Joh, and Joerg Rieger have begun to face with intellectual rigor and rhetorical elegance the challenges raised by postcolonial studies.³⁶ Though I do not have the expertise to assess the situation in the disciplines of practical and pastoral theology, this study conference seems to be a clear indication that a meaningful, fruitful, and critical dialogue is beginning to emerge between its practitioners and postcolonial theories. For that dialogue, the Caribbean, just where you are meeting right now, might be the best place to start.

Why the Caribbean? Fernando Segovia has written a precise and concise exposition of the convergence between biblical scholarship and postcolonial studies.³⁷ Never an uncritical reader, Segovia raises several poignant critiques to the latter. Two of them are particularly relevant to the argument I want to develop here. First, the lack of attention, by most postcolonial intellectuals, to the Latin American and Caribbean Iberian imperial formations as they developed between the end of the fifteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth.³⁸ Second, the scarcity of analysis of religion as a crucial dimension of the imperial-colonial ideological frameworks. To quote Segovia on this second issue:

"It is almost as if religious texts and expressions did not form part of the cultural production and as if religious institutions and practices did not belong to the social matrix of imperial-colonial frameworks. I would argue . . . that religion is to be acknowledged and theorized as a constitutive component of such frameworks,

and a most important one . . .”³⁹

The existential relevance of both issues for Segovia, a Cuban-born person who describes himself as “a student of religion in general and of the Christian religion in particular,” seems obvious. As another Caribbean-born student of religion in general and of the Christian religion in particular, I share both concerns. It is hard to deny that Segovia is partially right, for he is referring to the postcolonial cultural studies as they emerged from the twilight of the European empires developed in the wake of the Enlightenment. What some historians have named the classic age of Empire is the basic matrix from which the critical texts of Said, Bhabha, and Spivak emerge.⁴⁰

In many postcolonial texts, we learn much about the multifarious resonances of the notorious 1835 Macaulay’s Minute on Indian Education, but almost nothing about the intense theological, juridical, and philosophical debates by the likes of Francisco de Vitoria, Bartolomé de las Casas, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and José de Acosta during the sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of the Americas, despite the fact that they anticipate most of the latter colonial and anti-colonial discourses.⁴¹ The discussion by Vitoria about the justice of the wars against the Native Americans foreshadows all later arguments on the legitimacy of imperial wars.⁴² The dispute between Las Casas and Sepúlveda about the rationality of the Native Americans and the adequacy of conversion by conquest inaugurates a long series of similar controversies.⁴³ The lengthy treatise of Acosta on the Christianization and civilization of the New World “barbarians” is the paragon of subsequent analogous, imperial justifications.⁴⁴ In these texts and debates, Aristotle’s concept of “barbarian” is resurrected and transmogrified to denote peoples who were assessed as uncivilized and heathen by Christian Europeans and can thus be subject to conquest and dominion.⁴⁵

Even a very useful introductory text in the field, *Post-Colonial*

Studies: The Key Concepts, edited by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, proceeds as if the sixteenth-century Iberian empires never existed or as if religious discourses have never been used as motivation for conquest and colonization.⁴⁶ The end result of those analytical occlusions is the homogenization of imperial experiences and, therefore, also of colonial defiance.⁴⁷

Segovia is thus right in his critique of mainstream, postcolonial studies. Yet, his critique reiterates that same mistake. He also excludes from the rather porous and vague boundaries of post-colonial studies authors who give serious attention to both the Iberian sixteenth-century imperial formations and to the role of religious discourses in those geopolitical structures of dominion. The initial shaping of European imperial expansion in Latin America and the Caribbean during the sixteenth century, in conjunction with the emergence of early modernity, capitalist accumulation, transatlantic slave trade, the proclamation of the Christian gospel as imperial ideology, and the “othering” of non-European peoples, have been topics of rigorous academic publications by two Argentinean émigrés, Walter Mignolo and Enrique Dussel.⁴⁸ Lewis Hanke⁴⁹ and Anthony Pagden⁵⁰ have also dealt extensively with that complex configuration of themes, engaging frequently in a comparative critical analysis with more recent empires.⁵¹

To expand the analytical horizon of the postcolonial discussion, let us briefly do a “contrapuntal reading” (Edward Said) of one of the first documents in which the European eyes gaze lustfully at the place in which this annual study conference takes place: the Caribbean.

Columbus and the Rhetoric of possession

The last decades of the fifteenth century and the entire sixteenth were times of adventurous European overseas explorations. Ships from Portugal and Castile were constantly

encountering exotic lands and peoples. The European elite desired to know about them. Designing strategic plans for political dominion, economic enrichment, and religious mission required information. Cupidity for knowledge, gold, spices, and souls to redeem was the order of the day. Letters frequently provided that knowledge. They conveyed expeditiously to the European ruling sectors the wondrous impressions of travelers, explorers, and conquerors. The epistle was the door by which many of those recently found lands and communities were registered in European literary historiography. Paradoxically, that literary inscription was the source of the historical annihilation of many of those communities.

Many of those letters became the substratum of subsequent historical works, as was the case with Peter Martyr of Anghiera's *Decades of the New World*, which was built upon his correspondence to several highly placed Renaissance dignitaries. One of Amerigo Vespucci's epistles, the famed "novus mundus" letter, was the peculiar source for the general name of the lands that we inhabit, the Americas. Hernán Cortés's epistolary is still a model of the literary construction of colonial conquest.⁵² The dawn of modernity was accompanied by territorial expansion and a new literary passion.

A letter written by Christopher Columbus, on February 15, 1493,⁵³ was the first window of perception regarding the islands and peoples encountered during his first exploration of what is now called, thanks to one of his many linguistic confusions, the Caribbean. This brief epistle forged the first images of those lands and communities in the European Christian mentality. It is a founding text, a primal document that initiates a literature of imperialism. Columbus's letter shrewdly constructs a lasting vision of lands and peoples; it is one of the first instances of colonial discourse and imperial gaze.

Samuel Eliot Morison titled it "The letter of Columbus

announcing the discovery of America." A careful reading of the text, however, disturbs the certainty of that traditional title. First, the epistle never refers to "America": Columbus simply writes that he had "reached the Indies" [219/7]. In his mind, his "triumph" is in opening a new and profitable route of navigation to the "Indies," not discovering a new continent. But, more important, Columbus never uses the term "discovery" or the verb "discover." The concept of the "discovery of America" was a later invention, as Edmundo O'Gorman exhaustively demonstrated in lengthy monographs.⁵⁴ The event has been named "discovery of America" as a way of beautifying its image and silencing its tragic dimensions. Naming it "discovery" is nothing but a semantic asepsis of the event.⁵⁵

What does Columbus want to narrate by his letters? "Sir . . . I reached the Indies . . . And there I found very many islands filled with people without number, and of them all, I have taken possession . . . of all I have taken possession for their Highnesses . . ." [219, 223/7, 12]. The letter does not narrate a discovery, but an *event of taking possession*. This, for Columbus, is the core of his enterprise: the act of taking possession of the lands and peoples he encounters.

Stephen Greenblatt rightly terms Columbus's performance of taking possession a linguistic act, a discursive, scriptural operation. "For Columbus, taking possession is principally the performance of a set of linguistic acts: declaring, witnessing, recording."⁵⁶ But, we need to be more precise: it is a linguistic act that is not merely inscribed in a literary text—the epistle. It is also registered in the appropriate legal archive. It is a juridical linguistic act by means of which a formal declaration of appropriation is rendered. Columbus carefully registers the data he believes to encounter (much of it monumental confusions) in a protocol with fateful juridical consequences. As a juridical inscription, he is scrupulous about inscribing that the proper ceremony of taking

possession has been performed—“by proclamation and with the royal standard displayed”—registering that nobody contradicted it—“and nobody objected” [219/7].

The literary act of taking possession is thus also a juridical linguistic act and a liturgical enactment or ceremony in which royal banners are displayed and some kind of religious ritual is performed (prayer, invocation of the divine name, erecting a cross), for it is in the name of God, and not only of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand that the event takes place.⁵⁷ Thus, at the beginning and the end of his epistle Columbus expresses gratitude to “the eternal God, Our Lord,” the author of “the great victory which has crowned” his expedition. The text in which the possession of the encountered lands and peoples is narrated has a juridical dimension and a theological justification.

The Spanish scholar Francisco Morales Padrón has meticulously studied this issue and concluded that: “Discovery was always followed by the act of taking possession,” therefore, “discovery and conquest are part of one and the same process.”⁵⁸ Morales Padrón, however, disregards an important dimension: every act of possessing is also an act of dispossessing. Yet, he correctly emphasizes that Columbus’s acts of taking possession have a religious background, as would be reaffirmed by Pope Alexander VI in his 1493 decrees regarding Iberian expansion overseas.⁵⁹ The lands have heathen princes, but such authorities do not possess authentic sovereignty. Thus the first Christian nation to encounter them has the theological and juridical rights to claim them. This principle will be disputed, both in Vitoria’s 1539 lecture on the wars against the “Indians” and in the 1551 Valladolid debate between Las Casas and Sepúlveda. But, obviously, those later disputes did not resonate in Columbus’s possessing paroxysm.

If heathen lands are taken possession of, they have to be baptized. Christian baptism, let us not forget, traditionally implies the act of renaming. That is exactly what Columbus does. He baptizes

and renames the lands he finds, for it would not be proper to register them with their infidel names. Christening the lands, Columbus exercises the power of naming and confers to them new Christian names. Thus, they are inscribed in the European chronicles and archives with their Christian names, following both church dogma and royal sycophancy: "El Salvador," "Santa María de la Concepción," "Fernandina," "Isabela," "Juana." Greenblatt affirms that this "act [of naming] . . . is a cancellation of an existing name."⁶⁰ What truly is erased is the faculty of the native inhabitants to name their place, as also their authority to name their culture and deities will soon be denied. The sacrament of baptism traditionally contained a rite of exorcism: the protection of the baptized from the dominion of the demons. The native deities will soon be called demons.

The letter proceeds to "describe" the lands and the people. Those descriptions would be their first inscriptions in European literature and would forge their initial construct in Western, Christian imagination. Columbus's text becomes euphoric: the islands are a paradise whose beauty, splendor, and magnificence are unsurpassed. The possessed lands also enjoy incomparable wealth. They contain immense and valuable resources: cotton, spices, gum mastic, rhubarb, cinnamon, aloe wood, and "a thousand other things of value." Above all, the lands have incredible amounts of gold: "their Highnesses can see that I shall give them as much gold as they want . . ." writes Columbus [225/14]. Gold abounds everywhere in the possessed islands, according, at least, to Columbus's alchemist eyes.

Gold in this epistle is a symbol of material wealth. In other texts of Columbus, it would soon also acquire spiritual and transcendent value, so that by his last writings American gold has become the means to wage the final and decisive crusade to repossess the Holy Land, which would be triumphant if he, the divinely elected *Christopherens*, leads it. In his feverish 1503 letter from Jamaica,

after reiterating to the Crown that he has discovered King Solomon's mines, the richest possible source of gold, Columbus even confers redeeming efficacy to gold: "Gold is most excellent . . . it is even able to put souls into heaven."⁶¹

Natural splendor and gold do not exhaust the riches of this earthly paradise found and possessed by Columbus. There is something else of great value: "people without number" [219/7]. His observations about the people are significant. They comprise four basic points: nakedness ("all go naked, men and women, as their mothers bore them"), military weakness ("they have no iron or steel or weapons"),⁶² docility ("show as much love as if they were giving their hearts"), and a favorable disposition towards the Christian faith ("their conversion to our holy faith, towards which they are much inclined") [221-223/9-11]. There are other inhabitants of the islands that he had not seen but of whose existence he is certain: people born with tails, hairless people, amazons, and cannibals [223-225/11-14]. Thus are born Western ethnography and anthropology, cradled by the most exotic archaic mythology!⁶³ From then on, the cannibals and amazons will entertain the European imagination as objects of fascination and fear.

Right in the middle of the paragraph in which Columbus summarizes the riches of the Caribbean islands comes the first and fateful suggestion to enslave American natives: "their Highnesses can see that I shall give them as much gold as they want . . . and slaves, as many as they shall order . . ." [225/14]. To Columbus belongs the doubtful honor of the first proposal to enslave them, the first military campaign to enact the enslaving intention, and the first trans-Atlantic shipment of native slaves.⁶⁴ He is not well versed in juridical and theological niceties, but he knows that the proposal to enslave natives has to be conceptually validated. Who are to be enslaved? The answer is laden with theological density: "idolaters" [225/14].

Idolatry, uttered in this epistle for the first time regarding indigenous peoples, will have a long history. Columbus invoked idolatry as a justification to begin the American slave trade, Hernán Cortés to legitimate the conquest of Mexico,⁶⁵ and the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in the Andes to aggressively expunge indigenous religiosity.⁶⁶ The condemnation of idolatry, spiced with biblical quotations and theological references, becomes the benchmark for the Christianization, the enslaving, and the annihilation of many native communities. Idolatry is the theological banner used to theologially purify the cruelties of war, slavery, and destruction of native religiosity.

The epistle ends in a paean of Christian exaltation: "All Christendom ought to feel joyful and make celebrations and give solemn thanks to the Holy Trinity with many solemn prayers for the turning of so many peoples to our holy faith." But the last word belongs to the promising economic gains: "...and afterwards for material benefits, since . . . all Christians will hence have refreshment and profit" [226/15]. Columbus's letter reveals an extremely complex conjunction of material and spiritual forces that while striving for the salvation of the soul of the autochthonous Caribbean inhabitants, might simultaneously enslave, and even annihilate their bodies.⁶⁷ An ontological inequality emerges from this letter and its subsequent immediate readings: some human beings,—the Christian Europeans—are possessors; others, the natives, are possessed. And the voice of the indigenous peoples whose fate has been thus textually inscribed in the Christian European domineering will? As in another historical context so elegantly written by Edward Said, "the natives had neither been consulted nor treated as anything except as pretexts for a text whose usefulness was . . . to feel oneself as a European in command . . . of . . . history, time and geography . . ." ⁶⁸

Paradise, in Columbus's epistolary fiction, has been found and possessed, in the name of the European Christian God. Paradise

will soon be lost. Gold will be hard to find and extract. The docile natives will fight and die for their lands and liberty. Between 1494 and 1506, Columbus's fate will be a pilgrimage of bitterness and tribulations, almost as tragic as that of the native communities whose existence he had inscribed in European literary history.

The history of modern European imperialism had begun, in the name of the Christian Trinity and the crucified Christ. Right here, where this annual study conference of the Society for Pastoral Theology takes place, in the Caribbean.⁶⁹

NOTES

¹ José Trías Monge, *Puerto Rico: The Trials of the Oldest Colony in the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998); Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, & Colonization* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1995).

³ Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1968); Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965). Earlier there was the powerful text of C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the Santo Domingo Revolution* (New York: The Dial Press, 1938).

⁴ Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Knopf, 1999).

⁵ V. S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (New York, Macmillan, 1967).

⁶ Nelson A. Miles, *Serving the republic: memoirs of the civil and military life of Nelson A. Miles, Lieutenant-General, United States Army* (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1911), 301-302.

⁷ A very perceptive analysis of the ways hegemonic juridical discourses have shaped colonial mentalities and identities in Puerto Rico is provided by Efrén Rivera Ramos, *The Legal Construction of Identity: The Judicial and Social Legacy of American Colonialism in Puerto Rico* (Washington, D. C.: The American Psychological Association, 2001).

- ⁸ Ryan La Mothe, "Pastoral Theology and Empire: Collusion or Collision of Identities," *The Journal of Pastoral Theology*, Vol. 15, No. 2, Fall 2005, 49-71.
- ⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the subaltern speak?," *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313. Said dares to answer it affirmatively: "Indeed, the subaltern can speak, as the history of liberation movements in the twentieth century eloquently attests." Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (25th anniversary edition) (New York: Random House, 2003), 335.
- ¹⁰ Angelo Falcón, *Atlas of Stateside Puerto Ricans* (Washington, DC: Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration, 2004).
- ¹¹ As Princeton University professor Arcadio Díaz-Quinones has beautifully shown, in his book *El arte de bregar: ensayos* (San Juan: Ediciones Callejón, 2000), Puerto Rican culture cannot be genuinely assessed if the creativity of its diaspora community is neglected or its significance diminished.
- ¹² Elazar Barkan and Marie-Denise Shelton, eds., *Borders, Exiles, Diasporas* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
- ¹³ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 5.
- ¹⁴ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* (London: Penguin Books, 1990, orig. 1940), 102.
- ¹⁵ This was the case for two creative Caribbean writers, marginalized and despised in their homelands, the Cuban Reinaldo Arenas and the Puerto Rican Manuel Ramos-Otero, who found in New York a wider horizon for their literary talents, a greater realm of personal freedom, and AIDS related death. Cf. Rubén Ríos-Avila, "Caribbean Dislocations: Arenas and Ramos Otero in New York," in Sylvia Molloy and Robert M. Irwin, eds., *Hispanisms and Homosexualities* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 101-122.
- ¹⁶ Elazar Barkan and Marie-Denise Shelton, "Introduction," *Borders, Exiles, Diasporas*, 5.
- ¹⁷ Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- ¹⁸ Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 164.
- ¹⁹ Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven* (New York: Plume Books, 1996, orig. 1987), 189.
- ²⁰ James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Random House, 1946, orig. 1914), 131-132.
- ²¹ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).
- ²² Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 256.
- ²³ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 175: "They shouted periodically together strings of amazing words that resembled no sounds of human language; and the deep murmurs of the crowd . . . were like the responses of

some satanic litany.”

- ²⁴ Chinua Achebe, *Home and Exile* (New York: Anchor Books, 2000), 79.
- ²⁵ “The Epistle to Diognetus,” in Johannes Quasten and Joseph C. Plumpe, eds., *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, vol. 6 (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1961) 139.
- ²⁶ Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002).
- ²⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 243.
- ²⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).
- ²⁹ James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
- ³⁰ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), xv.
- ³¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 263.
- ³² William Schweiker, *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics In the Time of Many Worlds* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 6-7.
- ³³ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1999), 216-217.
- ³⁴ Stephen D. Moore and Fernando Segovia, *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2005); R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); R. S. Sugirtharajah, ed., *The Postcolonial Biblical Reader* (Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); Musa W. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000), Richard A. Horsley, *Jesus and Empire: the Kingdom of God and the New World Disorder* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003); Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997), Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2004).
- ³⁵ R. S. Sugirtharajah, “Complacencies and Cul-de-sacs: Christian Theologies and Colonialism,” in Catherine Keller, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera, *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 22.
- ³⁶ Catherine Keller, *God and Power: Counter-Apocalyptic Journeys* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); Mark Lewis Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right: Post-9/11 Powers and American Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005); Kwok Pui-lan, *Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005); Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: a Postcolonial Christology*

- (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006); and Joerg Rieger, *Christ & Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007); Keller, Nausner, and Rivera, *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire* (2004).
- ³⁷ Fernando Segovia, "Mapping the Postcolonial Optic in Biblical Criticism: Meaning and Scope," in Moore and Segovia, *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism*, 23-78.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, 74-75.
- ⁴⁰ Edward Said (*Orientalism*, 333) dates the beginning of modern global European imperialism to Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt.
- ⁴¹ Luis N. Rivera-Pagán, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville, KY: Westminster - John Knox Press, 1992).
- ⁴² Francisco de Vitoria, "On the American Indians" (De indis, I), *Political Writings*, trans. Jeremy Lawrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 231-292.
- ⁴³ Bartolomé de las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, trans. Stafford Poole (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1992).
- ⁴⁴ José de Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute* (2 vols.), translated and edited by G. Stewart McIntosh (Tayport: Scotland, UK: Mac Research, 1996).
- ⁴⁵ Vitoria (op. cit., 233): "This whole dispute . . . has arisen again because of the barbarians in the New World, commonly called Indians, who came under the power of the Spaniards."
- ⁴⁶ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998). Sometimes their disregard for the sixteenth-century imperial formations leads them into egregious mistakes, like asserting that "in 1503, Bishop Las Casas . . . proposed . . . systematic importation of blacks" as "an alternative to indigenous labor" (*ibid.* 212). In 1503 Bartolomé de Las Casas was not yet a bishop and he did not propose to bring Black slaves to the new Spanish territories till the middle of the second decade of that century. Cf. Luis N. Rivera-Pagán, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster - John Knox Press, 1992), 180-195. See also Luis N. Rivera-Pagán, "Freedom and Servitude: indigenous Slavery in the Spanish Conquest of the Caribbean," *General History of the Caribbean. Volume I: Autochthonous Societies*, edited by Jalil Sued-Badillo (London: UNESCO Publishing and Macmillan Publishers, 2003), 316-362. Several of their statements regarding Latin America are not to be trusted ("the slave system . . . persisted in the Caribbean and some South American areas until the 1830s" [*ibid.* 214] – whereas slavery was not abolished in Puerto Rico until 1873, in Cuba until 1886 and in Brazil until 1888), which only shows the lack of attention of some postcolonial scholars to the colonial history of Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean.
- ⁴⁷ Curiously, Chinua Achebe is mentioned once in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin's textbook, but his 1958 classic novel, *All Things Fall Apart*, one of the foremost literary assessments of the convergence between European colonization of African and Christian missions, is not even alluded to.

- ⁴⁸ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance and Local Histories/Global Designs*; Enrique Dussel, *Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other" & the Myth of Modernity* (Continuum Publishing Co., 1995).
- ⁴⁹ Lewis U. Hanke, *The Spanish Struggle for the Justice in the Conquest of America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949); Lewis U. Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1959); Lewis U. Hanke, *All Mankind is One; A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de Las Casas and Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974).
- ⁵⁰ Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c.1500 - c.1800* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).
- ⁵¹ Among theologians, Joerg Rieger is a distinguished exception. He devotes a long fourth chapter of his most recent book to a critical analysis of Bartolomé de las Casas's Christology in the context of the sixteenth-century imperial expansion. *Christ & Empire*, 159-196.
- ⁵² Peter Martyr of Anghiera, *De orbe novo*, 2 vols., ed. Francis Augustus MacNutt (New York: Burt Franklyn, 1970); Américo Vespucio, *El Nuevo Mundo, cartas relativas a sus viajes y descubrimientos* (textos en italiano, español e inglés, estudio preliminar de Roberto Levillier) (Buenos Aires: Editorial Nova, 1951), 171-195 (in Italian and Spanish), 295-306 (in English); Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico (1520-6)*, translated and edited by Anthony R. Pagden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).
- ⁵³ "Carta a Luis de Santángel," in Cristóbal Colón, *Textos y documentos completos*, ed. Consuelo Varela, *Nuevas cartas*, ed. Juan Gil (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1995), 219-226; Christopher Columbus, *A New and Fresh English Translation of the Letter of Columbus Announcing the Discovery of America*, translated and edited by Samuel Eliot Morison (Madrid: Gráficas Yagües, 1959), 7-16. I will cite Columbus's letter giving first the page number of the Varela/Gil edition, and second the page number of the Morison translation. As John Boyd Thacher wrote in his biography of Columbus: "We know of no other work which in the short space of ten or twelve months at the close of the fifteenth century passed through thirteenth editions . . ." John Boyd Thacher, *Christopher Columbus: His Life, His Work, His Remains* (New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1967, orig. 1903-1904), 72.
- ⁵⁴ Edmundo O'Gorman, *La idea del descubrimiento de América: Historia de esa interpretación y crítica de sus fundamentos* (México, D. F.: Centro de Estudios Filosóficos, 1951). See also Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America: An Inquiry into the Historical Nature of the New World and the Meaning of its History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 1961).
- ⁵⁵ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 114: "The naming of the 'fact' is itself a

narrative of power disguised as innocence . . . To call 'discovery' the first invasions of inhabited lands by Europeans is an exercise in Eurocentric power that already frames future narratives of the event so described."

- ⁵⁶ Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 57.
- ⁵⁷ Alejo Carpentier, who always wants to make fun of the Admiral, calls it ironically a "sacra rappresentazione." Alejo Carpentier, *El arpa y la sombra* (México, D. F.: Siglo XXI, 1979), 160.
- ⁵⁸ Francisco Morales Padrón, "Descubrimiento y toma de posesión," *Anuario de estudios americanos*, Vol. 12, Sevilla, 1955, 321-380, quotations from page 379 and 328.
- ⁵⁹ Latin transcripts and English translations in Frances Gardiner Davenport, ed., *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies to 1648* (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1917), 56-83.
- ⁶⁰ Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*, 82.
- ⁶¹ Varela, *Textos y documentos completos*, 497.
- ⁶² Columbus's observation about the nakedness of the Caribbean natives raised an interesting initial theological question: is their nakedness representation of innocence or of savagery? The enigma is slightly suggested in Pope Alexander's 1493 *Inter caetera* bull that mentions both the nakedness and the vegetarian diet of the natives. This seems an implicit allusion to Adam and Eve before original sin. When the Spaniards discovered that the natives were willing and able to fight and kill for their lands and freedom, the theological controversy ceased: nakedness became a sign of savagery. Queen Isabella ordered that they be clothed and prohibited their daily baths in the rivers—a deadly decree.
- ⁶³ W. Arens, *The Man-eating Myth: Anthropology & Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
- ⁶⁴ Jalil Sued Badillo, "Christopher Columbus and the Enslavement of Amerindians in the Caribbean," *Monthly Review*, vol. 44, no. 3, July-August, 1992, 71-102.
- ⁶⁵ Cortés's Tlaxcala military ordinances invoke idolatry as the main cause for the war against the Aztec kingdom: "In as much . . . the natives of these regions have a culture and veneration of idols, which is a great disservice to God Our Lord, and the devil blinds and deceives them . . . Let us go to uproot the natives of these regions from those idolatries . . . so that they will come to the knowledge of God and of His Holy Catholic faith . . . I affirm that my principal motive in undertaking this war . . . is to bring the natives to the knowledge of our Holy Catholic faith." Hernán Cortés, *Documentos cortesianos, 1518-1528* (ed. José Luis Martínez) (México, D. F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México - Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), 165.
- ⁶⁶ Pierre Duviols, *La lutte contre les religions autochtones dans le Pérou colonial: l'extirpation de l'idolatrie entre 1532 et 1660* (Paris-Lima: Institut Français d'Études Andines, 1971).
- ⁶⁷ Cf. Henri Baudet, *Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-*

European Man (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965).

⁶⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 86.

⁶⁹ The author wants to acknowledge the comments to previous drafts of this paper by professors Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, Pamela Couture, and Jaco Hamman. Their observations and suggestions enriched it substantially.

“Call Me ‘Bitter’”: Life and Death in the Diasporic Borderland and the Challenges/Opportunities for *Norteamericano* Churches

Daniel Ramírez

**Delivered to the Hispanic Theological Initiative West Regional Conference
“Leaving the Village, Changing the World: The Challenge and Promise of
Transnational Christian Movements for North American Churches”.
Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, February 28, 2004.**

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So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, “Is this Na’omi?” She said to them, “Do not call me Na’omi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Na’omi, when the Lord has afflicted me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me? ”

—(Ruth 1:19-21)

Introduction

This ancient story about a returned migrant women, a *bracera fracasada* (to paraphrase an old *norteño* ballad) rings familiar in our era of globalization. An economic refugee, whose subaltern status and plight as an older woman has worsened with recent widowhood, Naomi assumes a new identity upon return to her community of origin. Hers is not an Horatio Alger tale. Unlike some folks today who return to Jalisco and Zacatecas in brand new SUVs, laden down with appliances and Christmas gifts, Naomi is weighed down by the burden of failure, the memories of cultural dislocation, and the melancholy sadness of loss. Bereft of husband and sons and lacking any *bracero* earnings, she faces the prospect of a bleak old age. Her lamentable situation is softened only by the loyalty of Ruth, her also recently widowed daughter-in-law, who accompanies Naomi to Naomi's home country, pledging her fealty to Naomi's people and God. Once again, in compelling fashion, Hebrew Scripture reminds its readers of the experience of the stranger (Naomi in Midian and Ruth in Bethlehem), of the imperatives of solidarity with the sojourner, and, through Ruth's rather unconventional agency, of the glorious prospect of spiritual and material abundance through the renewal and creation of new social identities and kinship networks. What a contrast to modern Malthusian notions of zero-sum politics and economics.

I propose to use the discourse of Naomi and Ruth as a starting point for dialogue. Among the conversation partners I seek to include are two too often discrete sets of academics that rarely take time to compare notes with each other; namely, migration researchers and religion scholars, or (as colleagues in Mexico would put it) *los migrólogos y los teólogos*. Both groups are comprised of overlapping disciplines: history, anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, etc. They even share some methodologies. But as a title search in Oaxaca City's Welte Institute Library (the foremost anthropological collection in south-

ern Mexico) demonstrated to me, the encounters and conversations are too rare. A search there under the separate rubrics of “migration” and “religion” yielded almost two hundred hits apiece, but no cross-references.

The story of Naomi and Ruth may not serve as the perfect example of ancient transnationalism. Although it’s highly probable that the former certainly pined for her native land, weeping on some riverbanks, there is scant evidence that Ruth’s ties to Midian were maintained. It all depends on perspective. The ostensibly Hebrew-centric narrative does carry Ruth’s name. In any case, the story of a Hebrew woman “pushed” to Midian by economic exigencies, “pulled” back to Palestine by tragedy, and sustained through the devotion and conversion of her Gentile daughter-in-law, can remind us of the multi-layered significance of transnational experience as it impacts upon ethno-religious life and communities. Naomi and Ruth’s story contains many elements of what we are understanding transnational life to be: 1) displacement due to economic exigencies; 2) cultural contact with an “Other”; 3) prospective return; 4) cultural flux; 5) female agency; and 6) solidarity amidst claims to justice.

In what follows I hope to offer a reflection on the urgency of the matter today and on more long-term considerations. In my adopted state of Arizona, folks are toying with the notion of punitive legislation a la Proposition 187 (a recent bitter memory in California). Grim news about deadly border crossings through the Sonoran desert and startling news about smuggler drop houses in affluent Phoenix neighborhoods reach us on a regular basis. In the meantime, undocumented immigrants—and their documented kin and friends—keep a wary eye and ear out for news of proposed federal legislation that may regularize their status. In other words, not all the bulletins are negative. Indeed, as I will also suggest, the experience and presence of sojourners in our midst may prove instructive for our religious and political life. It may even

prove, as seen in Ruth's insertion of herself into the messianic lineage of her adopted nation, redemptive in the end. Contrary to Samuel Huntington's warnings about Hispanic barbarians at the gates of Anglo-Saxon Rome, these sojourners offer salutary words and ways of annunciation as well as denunciation.

La Frontera

Perspective matters. In August of 1996, I accepted an invitation to observe the biennial conference of the *Iglesia Apostólica* in Mexico. Not yet flushed with the funds of a Duke graduate student (or with HTI fellowship monies), I opted for the overland route via Baja California, Sonora, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Colima, and Jalisco. I flew southward, in reverse over the Camino Real mapped by Junipero Serra two centuries earlier. A friend from Tijuana retrieved me at the San Diego airport and deposited me at his city's bus terminal, where I boarded a "*primera clase*" midnight bus for the 36-hour ride to Guadalajara. As I located my assigned window seat in the middle of the bus, I noticed that the darkened rear interior was relatively full...with all male passengers. The gendered seating pattern struck me as odd, even for *machista* Mexico. No matter. I settled into my perch, happy at the prospect of not having to jostle elbows with a seatmate, flicked on the overhead light for some catch-up reading in Mexican journalism, and occasionally peeked out at the passing scenes: silhouetted neighborhoods, TV-lit and *novela*-watching homes, dim street lights, brightly lit maquiladora assembly plants, and finally, the stretch of rural landscape between Tijuana and the state capital to the east, Mexicali. Some forty-five minutes into the ride, at the midway point, Tecate, our driver braked and pulled over to the side of the country highway. A low whistle and command, "*Orale. Vámonos!*" roused me from my drowsy reading in time to witness the cluster of travelers behind me slip swiftly and quietly off the bus. A waiting pick-up truck on a nearby incline flashed its parking

lights. The men and boys melted into the border darkness. I barely had time to gather my thoughts and dispatch a sotto voce blessing, “*Vayan con Dios,*” as the idling motor revved up and our bus, now half empty, continued along the border highway to Mexicali, across the panhandle to San Luis Rio Colorado, where we would hang a right around the Sea of Cortez and enter the vast Sonoran desert. There was much to ponder in my now fully awakened state: the startling possibility that our driver and bus line were in full cahoots with a *coyote* operation; the hostile, stony precipices that awaited the pilgrims (dangerous terrain that my government had pushed them towards in a cynical attempt to weed out women and children from the undocumented immigrant flow); the possibility that one or several of them could wind up as anonymous dehydrated or frozen cadavers in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands; and the fortuitous inscription of my name on a U.S. passport—which no one had bothered to review in Tijuana.

Anonymous cadavers: the antitheses of life, memory, and social and personal identity. Today’s Arizona-Sonora border marks a geographical and political territory, whose boundaries the sojourner—Naomi’s child—ignores to her peril. According to a recent survey by *La Jornada* of Mexico City, 205 died or were killed in the Arizona desert during the fiscal year ending September 30, 2003. 2,626 have died or been killed along the U.S.-Mexico border since the Clinton administration instituted Operation Guardian in 1995. Of these, 700 “Juan and Juanita Does” now rest in anonymous gravesites in U.S. cemeteries.¹ Along the Arizona-Sonora border, which bisects the Tohono O’odham nation, formerly endearing topographical nomenclature, La Nariz, Las Flores, El Durazno, El Chango, Las Chabelas, El Guero, La Osa, La Nopalera, La Virgencita, now bespeak places of horror and tragedy.² Still, they keep coming, driven, as Naomi and her family were, by the exigencies of survival.

As Canadian and Midwestern snowbirds migrate southward to

Puerto Peñasco (Rocky Point), Sonora and other destinations, desperate migrants continue to alight in the Hermosillo airport, or arrive via the busload from Mexico City's Central Camionera del Norte to Altar, Sonora's bus station, herded, often ruthlessly by human predators and efficiently by entrepreneurs, into *casas de huespedes* for the next hop northward.³ The differences between the two migrant streams sometimes seem as vast as the chasm separating animal species. In the Borderlands, territory and legal status matter.

Three days before the *Jornada* articles, the Arizona Republic published a remarkable set of stories, "Death in the Desert: 205 Migrants Die Hard, Lonely Deaths." Reporters Susan Carroll and Tessie Borden offered a glimpse at some of the lives of families and communities behind the growing number of Arizona border deaths. Equally impressive, in journalistic terms, was Carroll and Daniel González's two-page compilation of the 205 documented cases, drawn from reports from the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection; Mexican consulates in Tucson, Yuma, and Douglas; the Arizona Department of Public Safety; various sheriff and police departments; and medical examiners. Unfortunately, the Republic's reportage on recent, deadly smuggler rivalries and highway robberies and chases, along with expanded federal enforcement, may have eclipsed the "human interest" approach represented in the first set of articles. Still, a close reading of the October 16 roster reveals several interesting features of the interior and familial and religious lives of folks braving elements, both criminal and environmental, in search of a better life.

The year-old remains (found October 26, 2002) of Armando Saldivar-Flores, 38, from Veracruz, were covered by a New England Patriots T-shirt and were accompanied by a prayer card with a calendar. The skeleton of Jane Doe, about 25, was discovered on January 13, 2003, with a nearby T-shirt bearing a picture of Jesus that said, "*Resucitó*" (He is Risen), evidence, perhaps, of

Mexican *evangélico* identity and community. Elia Pérez Ramírez, 38, of Puebla, was identified among a collection of five skulls and incomplete skeletons discovered scattered over a 300-yard area on February 12. Among the material evidence: an embroidered U.S. flag (someone had attended to the symbol of civic identity); a tattered Tweety Bird sock (someone had consumed a multinational symbol of Warner Bros. identity); eye shadow (someone evidenced concern for body image); an envelope that said, "*Te quiero, Hijo*" (someone had secured a maternal blessing for the trip); and a prayer card (someone had invoked heavenly succor). Fidel Velásquez Pérez's cactus-spine covered body, discovered on May 24, carried a pendant with the Virgin Mary on one side and Jesus on the other. Authorities emailed a photo of the 21-year-old Guatemalan migrant's body to his brother and aunt in Florida for positive identification. Sergio Mejía Pérez, 26, from Michoacan, discovered on June 17, carried his devotions closer to his heart than did Velásquez Pérez. His back displayed tattoos of the Virgin of Guadalupe and Jesus. On July 1, Adrian Díaz Dionocio, 35, of Mexico City, was found face-down, with three symbols of economy, state, and religion: a \$1 bill, a birth certificate, and a prayer card. On that same day, 16 year-old Keila Velásquez González, from Chiapas, was found 23 miles north of the border wearing red socks, and carrying a backpack containing a comb, hair clips, a colorful scarf, and a Bible. Two weeks later, John Doe was discovered with a rosary around his neck and his eyes wide-open. The following day, the severely decomposed body of Sergio Benítez Hernández, 39, from Sonora, was found after a family-instigated search. His forearm bore tattoos of the Virgen de Guadalupe and a cross. Fellow Sonoran Mauricio Salas Guerra, 38, shared Benítez's devotional proclivities, but combined sports with religion. "*Atlética*" (a soccer team) and the head of Jesus wearing a cross of thorns were tattooed on his right shoulder. He also carried 70 pesos, three phone cards, and some aspirin. Finally, on August

12, Manuel de Jesús Sánchez Rodríguez, 25, of Durango, was airlifted from the desert to a Tucson hospital. His rescue proved too late. Underneath Sánchez Rodríguez's garments: a green scapular attesting to personal, familial, or communal Catholic devotion.

One can only imagine the final whispered pleas and prayers of these pilgrims. The old pseudo-epistemological knot about trees falling in the forest comes to mind. The more important question for us, though, may be: is anyone listening? Mexican and Central American immigrant deaths are commonly reported in the Spanish-language press throughout the country. But except for egregious circumstances (e.g., fatal highway chases, suffocations in truck trailers, botched medical operations, sheer numbers) rarely, do they garner discussion in the U.S. local and national mainstream media, which still persist in employing pejorative nomenclature ("illegal") to describe undocumented immigrants. If you doubt this, just tune in to CNN's nightly Lou Dobb Report. Yet, in communities of origin in Mexico and Central America, pilgrims are mourned, theodicies tested, saints remonstrated, and rituals enacted.

Increasingly, U.S. citizens and residents in cities such as Phoenix, Tucson, Houston, and Los Angeles have organized memorial masses and undertaken rescue operations in line with ancient and deeply held religious beliefs about the just treatment of sojourners. The Sanctuary Movement of the 1980s seems to have re-encountered its vocation, this time with Humane Borders placing relief water for migrants in the Arizona deserts. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has joined with some Protestant ministers in pressing for an amnesty for undocumented immigrants and for more humane border enforcement. The deaf political ears still chattered by the calamitous event of September 11, 2001 may be unstopping soon. Several tepid legislative proposals have been unveiled, running the gamut from safer and regularized flow of work forces to limited amnesty. Sadly, it may take

many more deaths for the U.S. body politic to come to grips with the matter.

On the other hand, the public commemoration of certain deaths serves an important ritualistic purpose in its reinforcement of U.S. civic religion, the uniquely American form of civil religiosity studied by Robert Bellah and others. From Oklahoma City to the Twin Towers to early Iraq War casualties, the United States seems to have entered a cycle of patriotic mourning. That mourning has, in turn, paved the way for governmental actions, ranging from compensation to retribution to vengeance and to fear-mongering. When rendered grave by death, the American public square finds itself filled with religiosity. The contrast with the meaningless border deaths could not be starker. The exceptions have been non-citizen soldiers awarded posthumous citizenship. For non-citizens military death serves as the threshold into the public square.

Several questions present themselves at this point: Why this difference in significance? How is the meaning of death differentially assigned? Who gets to assign meaning in the public square(s)? How do non-citizens of a polity gain recognition in their final passing? If culture, as Clifford Geertz has suggested, is that web of practices signifying meaning for groups of people, what are we to make these decidedly different observances?⁴ More importantly, taking up Talal Assad's trenchant critique (*Genealogies of Religion*) of Geertz, what purpose does the very enactment and reiteration of the practices serve in transmitting meaning to those who are involved in or witness these? For example, in the case of the 9/11 victims, what role was ascribed, if any, to the deaths of anonymous undocumented Mexican workers in the Twin Towers' restaurants? Did their families and communities experience the process of grief and mourning and recovery differently than those tied to U.S. citizens? A new binational research project, "God, Saints, and Death in the Borderland," based in ASU's new center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, will seek

to answer these and other questions.

Before turning to more positive news from the borderlands, perhaps we could pause here to consider this most extreme challenge that the transnational movement represents for U.S. churches. I think it is a very simple one: presence. The Jericho Road is traversed by Pilgrims, thieves, assassins, smugglers, scoundrels, religious and lay leaders, and...marginal Samaritans. At times, though, it seems as if our religious institutions have become comfortably imbedded in the religious and political fabric of Jerusalem or Jericho, the end-points of the journey. While they may be able to articulate prophetic defenses of the sojourner from those points, Jesus' parable seems to call for a pastoral accompaniment, one that may prove costly in the end. The solidarity can stain the Samaritan with the blood and other bodily fluids of the wounded traveler, may expose him to the violence of smugglers and thieves, may incur the disapproval of civil and religious authorities, as well as a heavy financial burden. But as our national policy and their economic exigencies continue to funnel people northward through deadly terrain, North American churches are being presented with an opportunity to remember their own sojourning anew. In other words, the increased awareness of the transnational nature of social and religious circuits may help North Americans dislodge loose a few calcified memories of their own time as sojourners.

So, what would an earnest dialogue look like? What might be some of its components? Since most in the HTI community are privy to the exciting new turns in Latino theology and religious studies, I will concentrate mostly on reporting on findings and methods from the field of migration research that may help inform pastoral, theological and other work. Two developments, in particular, may prove relevant to our interdisciplinary conversation; 1) a clearer understanding of migration as culture; and 2) of culture as migrating. These two rubrics, in turn, may be

unpacked and applied to several pressing questions of demography, identity, and conversion. Since other, more competent folks (e.g., the Hispanic Church in American Public Life and Pulpit and Pew projects) are presenting fresh statistics on the first question, I will limit my remarks on demographic trends to Mexico, and tie these to the urgent questions of transnational identity and religious change.

For this I draw upon my larger research project, which inquires into the religious cultural practice of historical agents in the face of perennial and multiple marginality (gender, ethnic, class, religion, etc.): Can these practices be said to mirror faithfully those notions of identity and practices insisted on by more centrally placed actors? How does migration impact affinity or loyalty towards received religious, cultural, and political identities in the nation or community of origin? In the nation or community of settlement? Are the agency and identity acquired and exercised in one site leveraged in favor of cultural, religious, and civic rights in others? How do members of a mobile and transnational proletariat avail themselves of expressive repertoires of identity? May religious communities function as anterooms to the public square? Does their experience challenge us to re-think public squares as transnational or multi-sited spheres?

Migration as Culture

Theologians, religion scholars, and pastoral agents need to know about, among other resources, the longstanding (since 1982) binational Mexican Migration Project (MMP) based at the University of Pennsylvania and the Universidad de Guadalajara. For several years now, MMP researchers, employing both sociological and ethnographic methods, have honed in on complex social processes (e.g., networks, identity formation, border crossing lore, use of remittances, etc.) of the migration phenomenon and the knitting of ties between “sending” communities in west-

ern Mexico and “receiving” communities in the United States. Rather than viewing Mexican migration to the United States in terms of old tropes (e.g., “escape valve,” “melting pot” acculturation, etc.), researchers have been interested in the assimilation of the very phenomenon of migration itself into communities’ ways of life during many decades.⁵ Researchers conduct interviews with returned migrants during the winter season in the communities of origin, and complement these with surveys of settled (non-returning) migrants in the communities of destination.⁶ The scholarly output has been considerable.⁷ For example, Victor Espinosa’s wonderful ethnography, *El Dilema del Retorno* (Zamora: El Colegio de Michoacan, 1998), provides a window into the utility of the MMP project. He describes a Jalicense family of long and prosperous residency in Los Angeles, whose notions of identity prove to be continually in flux, and whose ultimate decisions to stay or return are determined by generational status and other factors, especially gender. Espinosa’s choice of epigraph is telling. “*La Jaula de Oro*,” songwriter Enrique Franco’s hit song, made famous by *Los Tigres del Norte* in 1985, captures the father’s melancholy realization that his triumphal retirement to Mexico may, in the end, be a solitary experience: “*Mis hijos no hablan conmigo/otro idioma han aprendido/y olvidado el español/Piensan que son americanos/niegan que son mexicanos/aunque tengan mi color....De qué me sirve el dinero/si estoy como prisionero/dentro de esta gran nación./ Cuando me acuerdo hasta lloro/que aunque la jaula sea de oro/no deja de ser prisión.*”

For all its wealth of data, the MMP did not pose explicitly religious questions until 1999, when the initial questionnaire was adjusted to query, “In your trips to the United States, have you belonged to a social/religious association? Previously, researchers had asked, “In your last trip to the United States, did you belong to any social Association?”⁸ While the open-ended questions about networks, contacts, and solidarity may yield data about the roles

of congregations, the project has yet to present substantive findings on the role of religious networks. Not that the variable is unimportant to the researchers. Jorge Durand and Douglas Massey's catalogue of migrant ex-voto *retablos* (attesting to miraculous healings, interventions against border-crossing dangers, and salvation from calamities in the United States), collected from shrines throughout Mexico, augurs hopefully for a long-overdue thematic shift in this valuable research enterprise.⁹

Several obvious candidates for MMP collaboration can be found within the growing corpus of localized studies of *cambio religioso* (religious change and pluralism) in Mexico, especially *cambio religioso* ushered in by returned migrants.¹⁰ The scholarship on religious change in Mexico, in turn, awaits comparative work among Latinas/os in the U.S., which would allow scholars in both countries to overlay and mesh the religious cartographies (new sightings and soundings, as it were) of transnational religious life. Among these, Alberto Hernández's 1987 inventory of 983 Protestant congregations in the three border municipalities of Tijuana, Ciudad Juarez, and Matamoros,¹¹ begs comparative study in the adjoining border cities/zones of San Diego-San Ysidro, Juarez, and Rio Grande Valley. The same need obtains in the case of transnationally tied congregations in further-flung diasporas, although here the findings of several research initiatives are yielding fruit; for example: The Religion and Immigration Project at the University of San Francisco; the Religion, Ethnicity and New Immigration Research (RENIR) Project at the University of Houston; and the earlier work of researchers led by Stephen Warner. Particularly pertinent to our concerns here are the contributions to the first two projects by Mexican anthropologist Patricia Fortuny, whose work on religious ethnic diasporas (Yucatecos in San Francisco) and on religious diasporas (the Luz del Mundo church in Guadalajara and Houston) bears noting.

Given my primary disciplinary formation, I would seek to

press all the above on the need for historical contextualization. For example, the otherwise splendid ethnographies of transnationally tied congregations in Houston compiled in Ebauh and Saltzman's second anthology emerging out of the RENIR project suffer from the lack of a broader and longer historicization beyond the narrow confessional boundaries of the congregations. For the editors religious flows between congregational networks have their point of origin in the immigrants' countries of origin, and reverse their direction over time and generations.¹² The flow of Latin American and Latino Protestantism and Pentecostalism has been more variegated in its origins (e.g., U.S. to Latin America to U.S.). Clearly, historians, anthropologists, and sociologist of migration and transnationalism need to stay in conversation with one another.

In terms of our conversation here, and as a result of my research among Mexican and U.S. Latino Pentecostals, I have argued that the examination of the contemporary expansion of religious pluralism among Latin American and U.S. Latino populations requires a careful historicization that takes into account the experience and agency of migrating people, the impact of migrating cultural and symbolic goods (e.g., religious remittances), and institutional, communal, and individual responses to these. My project is testing at least three related hypotheses; 1) that certain religious cultural practices and goods "carry" more easily than others, and thus, require a lower level of institutional support and management; 2) that the portability of Pentecostal-like practices has allowed these to emerge as prime carriers of borderlands and diasporic religious culture; and 3) that the creation and performance of religious musical culture has provided an important field of contestation over traditional and evolving cultural identities.

The *Oaxacalifornio* story reminds us of the need for North American religious communities and institutions to realize that folks are already living consciously in a global ethnoscape. They bring with them a culture of migration. If given the chance, they

would welcome the facility of travel back-and-forth. When separated by capricious laws and anti-family values labor arrangements, they nevertheless seek to reinforce the ties that bind, using electronic and other means to communicate with loved ones. The most material proof of those ties: the \$12-14 billion (and growing) wired or transferred to Mexico and the roughly \$40 billion wired or transferred throughout the Americas each year. The variegated conduits of transfer, and the variegated decision processes for their expenditure within kinship and communal webs take us, of course, to the realm of the cultural and symbolic.

Culture as Migrating

It has become increasingly clear to researchers that conscious bodies are not all that migrate. So do cultures. And in that process, cultures change.

Douglas Massey and Emilio Parrado's interesting study of *migradollars* and the impact of monetary remittances in the micro-economies of communities of origin prompted me to think in terms of *religious remittances* and of the need to explore their catalytic and supportive role in expanding religious pluralism in Mexico. I understand *remesas religiosas* to mean those symbolic goods sent or brought home by migrants to leverage or maintain their relatives' and friends' conversion and new religious identity. Here, financial resources sent to shore up ministries and congregations or to pay for religious events (e.g., a *quinceñera* celebration) clearly fall within the categories explored by Massey and Parrado; conversely, so, too, do migrants' proscriptions against certain expenditures of financial remittances (e.g., financing patron saint festivals).¹³ (In the case of San Juan Yaée, a Zapoteco village in Oaxaca's Sierra Juárez, the introduction of religious dissidence by means of transgressive new religious music—tejano gospel trio music, to be precise—proved catalytic in promoting Pentecostal growth and in precipitating strong reaction in defense

of traditional “*usos y costumbres*”.)

Peggy Levitt’s study of “social remittances” and “cultural diffusion” within Dominican-Boston migration led Helen Ebaugh and Janet Chafetz to coin the term, “religiously relevant resources,” to describe the flow of resources between Houston immigrants congregations and congregations in their home countries.¹⁴ One of the more relevant points to keep in mind about remittances—both financial and symbolic—is that they flow within networks, and their disbursement and expenditures (or savings) is determined by complex processes in kinship and communal webs. Thus, even ostensibly non-symbolic, or material remittances acquire a symbolic significance and impact in cultural ways.

Overlapping Migratory Circuits and New Directions in Cambio Religioso

The contemporary surge of Pentecostalism and other *evangélico* streams among indigenous populations in southern Mexico and Central and South America has attracted considerable recent scholarly attention, especially among anthropologists and sociologists. Too often, however, such treatments reflect the chronological constraints of these disciplines. Also, a basic conundrum had arisen as recent census counts have documented higher rates of conversion in Mexican southern states than in western ones (e.g. Michoacan and Jalisco). Since the latter had historically contributed more migrants to the northward flow (to the U.S.), it seemed puzzling that regions only recently integrated into the international migratory labor flow should evidence rates of conversion as high as Baja California or Chihuahua.

I believe we have progressed in understanding such seeming conundra. In my study of Pentecostal growth within contemporary Oaxacalifornia, I have had to consider the impact of earlier migratory movement within Mexico (to Mexico City, And Veracruz, Sinaloa, and Baja California states) on the Oaxacan

homeland and identity. The project now charts a series of overlapping migratory circuits: a primary, or international one, linked to a secondary, or domestic one. Religiously motivated migrants, religious resources and remittances have often flowed through primary migratory circuits to such places as Guadalajara, Mexico City, Veracruz and Acapulco, to then travel from there—again, usually borne by migrants—to regions tied to these cities by secondary circuits. The impressive growth of religious dissidence in southern—and indigenous—Mexico,¹⁵ then, can be seen as less a matter of *gringo* missionary intervention and more as a phenomenon related to domestic migration (of people and symbolic goods), which is, in turn, tied to international migration (of people and symbolic goods).

Transnationalism: Its Challenges and Opportunities

My research has allowed me to wrestle with the concept of transnationalism in terms of: 1) directionality; 2) religious institutions and movements; 3) economic and cultural behavior; and 4) gender. (1-3 are somewhat tied, as are 2-4.) The particular Catholic-Pentecostal binary I am exploring in the Oaxacan diaspora allows for an interrogation of the current debate over whether and when transnationalism can be considered as “from above” or “from below.” In some instances, Roman Catholicism can be said to represent the former, especially when institutional prerogatives are exercised. In other instances, the growth of religious dissidence can be seen as emerging from below, especially in the absence of missionary intromission. But does Pentecostalism in the hemisphere always represent a transnationalism from below? Does female agency obtain more frequently in transnational behavior from below and male agency in transnational behavior from above? How do different religious contexts (e.g., Catholic Oaxaca vs. Protestant Portland) change the position of migration, indigenous Catholic practitioners, both male and

female? For example, when the Virgin of Guadalupe is carried by the *Antorcha Guadalupeña* runners from Tepeyac (where she is central) “illegally” across the border and up to Washington, D.C. and New York (where she is peripheral), what does that say about differential power? When the bulk of *evangélico* religious literature is written, translated, and published in the North for consumption in the South, but is leveraged by dissident religious minorities against locally hegemonic majorities, what does that say about agency?

Such questions bring the matter closer to home. I think most of us here would agree that in the U.S. case, the prerogatives and levers of social and economic power are closer to our grasp than they are to those recently arrived *hermanos* and *hermanas* with whom we may be sharing the pew. For most of the HTI constituency this translates into a sense of responsibility, vocational service, and prophetic advocacy vis a vis powerful religious and academic institutions. Hence, the challenges of transnational life, beginning with that basic one of presence and solidarity alongside and with the sojourner. Add to this the need for more equitable arrangements in the production of knowledge—theological and otherwise—between North and South, and the pressing need for a radical de-centering of the Euro-American religious historical narrative.

The marvelous thing about the Naomi and Ruth (and Boaz) story is its mutuality. Service and blessing flow in both directions. Let us briefly outline another way in which transnational agents are shaping the future contours of Christianity. To begin with, they and their progeny are breathing fresh wind into Catholic and Protestant congregations, allowing these to boast of continual growth. I use the pneumatic metaphor deliberately. As the recent HCAPL data has shown, not only do Pentecostals comprise a strong majority of Latino Protestants, but Charismatics comprise a strong minority of Catholics. Taken together, these pneumatic

expressions may represent a third of all Latino Christians.

The repercussion of this on Church life and liturgy are notable, and raise exciting questions about a future Spirit-led (vs. institution-managed) ecumenicity. Of the borders I have studied, those of confessional and liturgical identity often seem the porous, as discomfiting as they might prove to ecclesiastical authorities who insist on demarcating orthodoxy. During a May 2000 overnight pilgrimage to Cuquío in Jalisco's Los Altos region I recorded the ways in which popular Catholics perform their own type of bricolage. They combined readily recognizable Marian prayers with...Pentecostal music. While a world away the Vatican was finally recognizing locals' longstanding veneration of priests martyred during Mexico's *cristero* Wars of the 1920s and 30s, the subaltern *alteño* pilgrims were borrowing from their *aleluya* cousins' musical culture—forged decades earlier—to give deeper meaning to the arduous mountain trek. On a return trip back to Oaxaca City from a 2002 Easter morning baptismal service in a mountain stream, I recorded Apostolic bus riders singing the very same choruses as the *alteño* Catholic pilgrims. Clearly, someone is not minding orthodoxy's store. The sound of Pentecostal *coritos* now reverberates in the Oaxaca and Jalisco mountains, as well as in urban spaces such as Mexico City's Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe. By the time Vatican II opened the doors and windows of the mass to vernacular languages and sounds, the *aleluya* siblings and cousins of Catholics had prepared an engaging repertoire for the ready borrowing, probably via the Charismatic Renewal. Once again, folks inhabiting migratory circuits and borderlands of religious belief and practice proved themselves adept and creative agents. The difficulty in tracing precisely the origin and dissemination of most Latino pentecostal hymns and choruses (how, for example, did "*Alabaré a Mi Señor*", "*No Hay Dios Tan Grande Como Tu*", and "*Mas Allá del Sol*" travel from Pentecostal to mainline Protestant and popular Catholic hymnody?¹⁶) suggests

that these ride in the luggage and in the hearts of a very mobile religious proletariat that often does not bother to check in with civil (immigration), ecclesiastical, and academic authorities. In the end, in the circuitous and diasporic Borderlands, popular Pentecostalism and popular Catholicism may have more in common than commonly assumed. As Allan Figueroa Deck presciently observed several years ago, the continuities seem as important as the discontinuities.

Still, those discontinuities remain as powerful as ever. Upon returning to the United States after a year's research in southern Mexico, I felt as if I had returned from the 16th Century, so deep were the confessional antagonisms, so high seemed the stakes. Any ecumenical desires that we, who have been formed in the tolerant North and supported by well-meaning mainline agencies, may wish to protect upon religious communities may have to be tempered with the reality in the pew. Put simply, the Hispanic Theological Initiative may not be able to get off the ground in Mexico today. This is the formative context from which many new parishioners are arriving. Our ecumenical sensibilities will be foisted with difficulty on to our communities in such a way that they stifle the ability of the subaltern to speak, even intolerantly of each other: Catholics of sheep-stealing *aleluyas*, Baptists of idolatrous *Guadalupanos*, and Pentecostals of cold Mainliners. We may have to await with patience the organic growth of the ecumenical tree. In the meantime, much tilling and labor await us.

Las Buenas Nuevas

I would like to close with more positive reports from the borderlands. Since death and the risk of death and injury occupy a considerable portion of the lore of border crossing and survival in *el Norte*, many migrants visit shrines of saints known to specialize in migrant welfare (e.g., the Basilica of Guadalupe in Mexico City, Virgen de San Juan de los Lagos, Jalisco, Virgen de la Salud in

Patzcuaro, Michoacan, th Virgen de Zapopan in Jalisco, the Niño de Atocha in Plateros, Zacatecas) to plead for succor.¹⁷ And apparently, in contrast to the bleak stories above, sometimes God and the Saints do answer. Many pilgrims have left material evidence of heavenly interventions against calamity. The medieval *ex-voto* tradition took root and continues to thrive in Mexican Catholicism by means of the *ex-voto retablo* practice. These rectangular tin sheets, on which are painted scenes recollecting the calamity and intervention along with the representations of the Saint or Virgin responsible, are left in rooms set aside for their collection in the basilicas and churches. Migration scholars have finally turned their attention to their significance. They, together with photos, scrawled notes of prayer and thanksgiving, and tiny memorabilia, complement in colorful fashion the data and anecdotes gathered by scholars of the migration phenomenon.

In one, dated May 1, 1966, Oliverio Trinidad Nuñez of Irapuato, Guanajuato, testifies: "I wanted to go to work in the United States, but in the middle of the desert the smuggler abandoned me and a friend. Without food or water we walked a long ways. We were lost, our strength gave out, and we were at the point of dying. The miraculous action of the Sacred Mother Guadalupe sent help our way, which rescued us from the claws of death, and gave us a new opportunity to live. Thank you, dear Virgin." Apparently, heaven's store is still open. In late October 2003, I snuck away from a conference on Migration and Development, held in Zacatecas, to visit the nearby basilica of the Santo Niño de Atocha in Plateros. There a local historian and migrant advocate showed me two recent photos attesting to the Niño's protection during military service in...Iraq.

Finally, in a fresh instance of the convergence of factors outlined by Peter Brown in his study of the rise of the cult of saints in the Middle Ages,¹⁸ Toribio Romo has emerged at the front of the pack of twenty-seven newly canonized (2000) Mexican saints. His

meteoric trajectory owes much to the apocryphal tale of a border crosser from Michoacan being assisted by a handsome *giüero* pilgrim, who proffered valuable travel and job advice and invited the sojourner to visit him in his hometown after “making it” in *el Norte*. Years later, a grateful prodigal visited his benefactor’s small village outside of Jalostitlan, in Jalisco’s Los Altos region, where the 300 or so inhabitants all shared the surname Romo. A kindly local finally showed the frustrated pilgrim a framed picture of a locally revered (later beatified and canonized) priest, who had died at the hands of soldiers in 1928. According to local lore, the migrant exclaimed that the venerated priest-martyr had indeed been his guardian. Today, the small settlement of Santa Ana boasts a large church and chapel, a Martyrs’ walk connecting the two (akin to the Via Appia, complete with busts of the twenty-five Mexican priest-martyrs and with piped in high church music), a retreat center for priests, and numerous restaurants and shops. Buses by the score disgorge pilgrims on a daily basis. Many of the hundreds of private vehicles bear U.S. license plates. Dollars are left as frequently as pesos in the offering plates and collection boxes. Although fellow martyr Cristobal Magallanes headed up the list of candidates during the beatification and canonization processes (devotees would appeal to “*Cristobal Magallanes y los Beatos/Santos Mexicanos*” in their supplications), Toribio Romo’s cult has emerged as the more popular, and lucrative, owing as much to his greater sex appeal (racism and ageism are endemic to the Los Altos region of Jalisco), as to the migrant connection, and as to the business savvy of Santa Ana’s guardian priest-*empresario*, Padre Gabriel.

Illegal Testimonies: Transnationalism and Citizenship

Clearly, religion counts in the conflicted Borderlands. As with theism in foxholes, faith matters to folks on the move. To complement the Catholic stories above, I now offer one of a number of

transgressive narratives, *testimonios ilegales* (my term for public and semi-public accounts of “illegal” border crossings by members of Latino Pentecostal congregations) that I have collected in my research. It exemplifies, I believe, many of the claims to citizenship and strategies underscored by political scientist Jesús Martínez in his study of *Los Tigres del Norte*, and anthropologist Renato Rosaldo and others in their examination of *cultural citizenship*.¹⁹ Also, when accompanied by the exchange of more material goods (housing, employment, “love offerings,” advice, contacts and other elements of the social processes outlined by migration researchers) or when set in the frame of Pentecostal liturgy, these symbolic *testimonios* articulate a public voice for a community otherwise thought to be apolitical and voiceless.

Many of these clandestine narratives describe a conflicted border zone. Yet, in many of these illegal *testimonios* the zone has been transformed into one of fraternal solidarity. Gospel parables of lost sheep and Good Samaritans come easily to mind for the many *hermanos*—including U.S.-born parishioners—celebrating news of loved ones’ safe arrival. U.S. Border Patrol agents are consigned bit parts as relentless persecutors whose morality ranks slightly above that of Jericho Road thieves. The legalistic caution of the comfortably situated Pharisee is of no use in this grey zone of ethical engagement. The quiet solidarity exercised within multi-generational (and multi-legal status) congregations expands the political paradigm, or simply reminds us that politics remains the art of the possible. Although Latino Pentecostals may not have been invited to the immigration policy table, they certainly have not acquiesced abjectly to its decision nor settled for its crumbs.²⁰

When necessary, the band of pilgrims provides anonymous protection from the heavy and capricious hand of officialdom. Such protection can buy valuable time and carve out breathing space for important personal reconstruction:

In 1994, a member of a San Francisco Bay area con-

gregation was struck and killed by a speeding car while he was bike riding to work. *Hermano* Efren, a fifty-two-year-old undocumented immigrant, whose thirty-year alcoholic habit had devastated his life, family and body, had joined the congregation ten months earlier and discovered not only a new purpose in life but a new and large family as well. His sudden death took everyone by surprise. Calls to the Mexican consulate and the California Highway Patrol were of little avail; he was bereft of both U.S. and Mexican documents. A man without a country. Legally absent in one jurisdiction and illegally present in another. An unsent letter found in his meager belongings yielded the address of an aged aunt in Guadalajara who had given him up for dead many years ago. Anticipating her relay of power of attorney, the pastor and households in the congregation assumed legal and financial responsibility for recovery and burial of Efren's body. As the casket was lowered into the manicured Silicon Valley cemetery plot to the words of the melancholy, but hopeful hymn, "*Mas Allá Del Sol*," the women of the congregation wept and embraced. After the ceremony the *hermanos* recessed to the church's *comedor* for the traditional post-burial chicken mole dinner. *Hermano* Efren's sudden passing was deeply felt and ritualistically commemorated, and he—who in his earlier life could have starred in one of Pete Wilson's darkly alarmist "They Keep Coming" commercials—would be sorely missed.

Given the historical backdrop of *capricious* nation-states erecting borders and of powerful elites obsessively pursuing a totalizing capitalism,²¹ and given the far-off possibilities of formal political enfranchisement for many like *Hermano* Efren, our

inquiry into the challenges and opportunities of transnationalism should press the point: was the rescue, embrace, and empowerment of a marginal laborer by a marginal faith community and less relevant than that community's formal engagement at the various levels of civic life? *Hermano* Efren's case offers a stark reminder in our age of economic globalization. It exemplifies poignantly the postmodern human condition: atomization, dislocation, and fragmentation. This situation obtains not only in the crowded mega-cities and abandoned countrysides of subordinated countries, but also in the lives of millions of American citizens. As the national public square disintegrates into a cacophonous multiplicity of digital venues (albeit venues controlled by fewer and fewer economic interests), faith communities in the United States may need to focus more intently on what the late liberation theologian Richard Shaull, in his study of Brazilian Pentecostals, characterized as "the reconstruction of human life beginning at the most basic level."²²

In memory of *Hermano* Efren, and for the sake of Naomi, Ruth, and even for our own sake, that seems like a good place to begin.

NOTES

1 "Los fríos numéricos," Masiosare, *La Jornada* (Mexico, D.F.), October 19, 2003, 6. Prior to Arizona's prominence as a conduit, an early comprehensive binational academic study conservatively placed the number of U.S.-Mexico border fatalities at 1,600 for the years 1993-1997. See Karl Eschbach, Jaqueline Hagan, Néstor Rodríguez, Rubén Hernández-León, and Stanley Bailey, "Death at the Border," *International Migration*

- Review 33, vol. 2 (Summer 1999): 430-454.
- 2 "La ruta del sueño y la muerte." Masiosare, *La Jornada*, op. cit., 6-7.
- 3 Alberto Najar, "El reino de la migra y los polleros," Masiosare, *La Jornada*, op. cit., 3-7.
- 4 "The concept of culture I espouse ... is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of a law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical." Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973),5.
- 5 Jorge Durand, *Más allá de la línea: patrones migratorios entre México y Estados Unidos* (Mexico, D.F.: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1994). See especially chapter 7, "Patrones culturales y migración."
- 6 Douglas S. Massey, Rafael Alarcón, Jorge Durand, and Humberto González, *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from West Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).
- 7 Jorge Durand, *Más allá de la línea*, op. cit.; Douglas Massey and Emilio Parrado, "Migradollars: The Remittances and Savings of Mexican Migrants to the United States," *Population Research and Policy Review* 13 (1994):3-30.; Douglas Massey and Audrey Singer, "The Social Process of Undocumented Border Crossing Among Mexican Migrants," *International Migration Review* 32, vol. 3 (Fall 1998): 561-562.
- 8 (<http://lexis.pop.upenn.edu/mexmig/>)
- 9 Jorge Durand and Douglas S. Massey, *Miracles on the Border: Retablos of Mexican Migrants to the United States* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1995).
- 10 The several CIESAS (Centro de Investigación y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social) regional research units, along with the several regional Colegios (de Michoacan, de Jalisco, de la Frontera Norte, and de Mexico), the Universidad de Guadalajara, and the Universidad Autónoma de México-Iztapalapa, have proved fecund sites for research in this latter field in Mexico. See Luis R. Moran Quiroz, *Alternativa religiosa en Guadalajara: una aproximación al estudio de las iglesias evangélicas* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1990); Miguel J. Hernández Madrid, "Los movimientos religiosos poscristianos en perspectiva global y regional," *Relaciones: estudios de historia y sociedad* 18, vol. 72 (otoño 1997): 157-178; and Aída Hernández Castillo, "Identidades colectivas en los márgenes de la nación; etnicidad y cambio religioso entre los mames de Chiapas," *Nueva Antropología* 13, vol. 45 (abril 1994):83-106.
- 11 Alberto Hernández Hernández, "Sociedades religiosas protestantes en la frontera norte: estudio sociográfico en tres localidades urbanas," *Frontera Norte* 8, vol. 15 (enero-junio 1996): 107-132.
- 12 Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, eds., *Religion Across Borders: Transnational Immigrant Networks* (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002).

- 13 Massey and Parrado, op. cit.
- 14 Peggy Levitt, "Social Remittances: Migration Driven, Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion," *International Migration Review* 32:926-48; Ebaun and Chafetz, op. cit.
- 15 *Evangélicos* were reported to comprise 22% of Chiapas's population, 19% of Tabasco's, 18% of Campeche's, 16% of Quintana Roo's, 11% of Yucatan's, and 10% of Oaxaca's and Morelos's: rates as high as quadruple the national figure, and matched only by Baja California and Chihuahua states. Clearly, geographical proximity to the country's Protestant northern neighbor cannot explain the surge in the south. Indeed, Mexico's other northern border states (Sonora, Chihuahua, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon) rank closer to the national average. "Población de 5 años y más por entidad federativa, sexo y religión, y su distribución según grupos quinquenales de edad," Instituto Nacional de Información Estadística y Geográfica de México, 2000, www.inegi.gob.mx. Accordingly, demographer Olga Odgers Ortiz has argued for more regional and historical particularities in Mexico's diverse religious diversities. Olga Odgers Ortiz, "Dinámica y distribución del cambio religioso en la region fronteriza México-Estados Unidos," (unpublished paper, delivered to Tercer Congreso Internacional de Latinoamericanistas en Europa, Amsterdam, July 6, 2002).
- 16 The 1989 Spanish-language Catholic hymnal, *Flor y Canto*, includes, among others, old Pentecostal standards such as "Una Mirada de Fe" ("A Glimp of Faith"), "Alabaré" ("I Will Praise"), and "La Mañana Gloriosa" ("The Glorious Morning"), the latter an anonymous *evangélico* hymn from Colombia. Owen Alstott, ed., *Flor y Canto* (Portland: Oregon Catholic Press, 1989). Edwin Aponte's discussion of *coritos* as "Religious symbols in Hispanic Protestant popular religion" can, thus, be expanded to include their resonance in popular Latino Catholic religiosity. Edwin Aponte, "Coritos as Active Symbol in Latino Protestant Popular Religion," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*, Vol. 2:3 (1995), 57-66.
- 17 Durand and Massey, op. cit.
- 18 Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981).
- 19 William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space and Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1981).
- 20 The several accounts were first compiled and redacted for a column syndicated by Pacific News Service in the wake of Proposition 187: Daniel Ramírez, "Acknowledging a Borderless World," *The Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, CA), February 23, 1995. The informants and congregations remained anonymous for attribution.
- 21 The flux in immigration policy (e.g., the massive repatriation of one million Americans and Mexican Americans during the 1930s, the seductive *Bracero* guestworker program of 1942-64, the punitive Operation Wetbacks of the 1950s, the Immigration Reform Acts of 1964, 1976, 1978, 1986, and 1998, the scapegoating ballot initiatives and criminalizing border enforcement measures of the 1990s) continues to bedevil—or energize—American politicians. In spite of amply documented abuses in the *Bracero* program, President George W. Bush, prior to the events of September 11, 2001, voiced preference for the broad expansion of guestworker programs over a

general amnesty for undocumented immigrants. "Fox y Bush acuerdan impulsar nueva política migratoria," *La Jornada*, Mexico, D.F., February 17, 2001. On repatriation, see Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995). On the *Bracero* program and Operation Wetback, see Ernesto Galarza, *Farm Workers and Agri-Business in California, 1947-1960* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1977); and Julian Samora, *Los Mojados: The Wetback Story* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1971).

- 22 Richard Shaull and Waldo Cesar, *Pentecostalism and the Future of the Christian Churches: Promises, Limitations, Challenges* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 116.

HTI's Role in Empowering Presbyterian Laity and Lay-Commissioned Pastors

Victor Aloyo, Jr.

Rev. Victor Aloyo Jr. is Director of the Office of Multicultural Relations at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS). After receiving his MDiv from PTS in 1984, he became the Senior Pastor at the Presbyterian Church of the Redeemer of East Brooklyn, a multilingual, multicultural congregation. He has served churches in New York and New Jersey, and also was the organizing pastor of La Promesa Presbyterian Mission, an outreach effort of the Redeemer Church in 1997. From 1999 until 2007, he was Director of Vocations at PTS, and for fifteen years he was Program Director of the Hispanic/Latina(o) Leadership Program under the auspices of the Center of Continuing Education. He is a member of the board of trustees at New York Theological Seminary and has served as moderator of the Presbytery of New York City. Since 2003, Rev. Aloyo, Jr. also pastors The United Presbyterian Church and Misión Presbiteriana Nuevas Fronteras in Plainfield, NJ.

Identifying and empowering the talents and gifts of a group of people and finding the appropriate means by which they can be nurtured is a constant challenge in the church and in my ministry. Leading people who have been taught that they are “nobodies” by the injustices of our society to the realization that in Christ they are “somebodies” is one of the primary goals of a theology of servant leadership. But to whom could I turn for teaching resources? Of great help to me have been such fine theological organizations as La Asociación para La Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH) and Hispanic Theological Initiative (HTI). They have supported and nurtured rising theologians and church historians, keeping them deeply embedded in the practicality of ministry.

For example, when I directed the Hispanic Leadership Program of the Center of Continuing Education at Princeton Theological Seminary, one of the greatest challenges was identifying monographs, articles, and textbooks that could be used in our classes. Since the initiation of HTI, locating resources has become less of a burden and we now have more resources in Spanish and English and have used several books in the curriculum of our Commissioned Lay Pastor's Program, books such as Justo Gonzalez' *Historia del Cristianismo* and Ediberto Lopez' *Cómo se formó La Biblia*. These resources as well as many others are providing our students with sound exposition on church history and biblical hermeneutics.

In the task of equipping "the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ," the Hispanic Theological Initiative is a vital and viable organization. I am most grateful for the partnership I have experienced with them, and look forward to future contributions.

An Appreciation of HTI

Edwin David Aponte

Dr. Edwin David Aponte is Professor of Religion and Culture and Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Seminary at Lancaster Theological Seminary in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Dr. Aponte is an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church, USA, (PCUSA). He presently serves as a member of the Pastor Initiative Cluster of the Re-Forming Ministry Initiative, a national project of the Office of Theology and Worship, PCUSA. The author of several publications, Dr. Aponte is a historian of religion in the United States interested in the interplay between religion and culture, particularly Hispanic/Latina(o) religions, African-American religions, North American religious history, and congregational studies. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of the History of Christianity Section, a section of the American Academy of Religion.

I have deep affection for the Hispanic Theological Initiative and a personal appreciation for its mission and work. It is no exaggeration to say that I would not be where I am now in my ministry and work without HTI. Some years ago I was an ABD graduate student also employed full-time as an administrator and professor at North Park University. Like many others, I had taken a position before I had finished my dissertation, thinking that I could eke out the time to write alongside my teaching responsibilities. Instead, I quickly became overworked and soon began to think I would never be able to complete my doctoral project. It was at that providential moment that HTI came into being. At the urging of other Latina and Latino sisters and brothers, and with the encouragement of non-Latino colleagues and friends, I applied and was accepted into the first group of HTI dissertation fellows.

Certainly the scholarship enabled me to relinquish some of my

responsibilities at North Park University in order to complete my dissertation at Temple University, but what was most helpful, was being part of a community of Latina and Latino scholars who supported and encouraged each other in that final push across the PhD finish line. We talked about and critiqued each other's projects, we shared our hopes and dreams of work in the academy, we prayed with and for each other, and we celebrated together. Without the HTI support system, I could not have finished my dissertation at Temple University.

Finishing my doctorate led to eight fruitful years of service at Perkins School of Theology, which in turn, opened the way for me to serve in my current position as Vice President of Academic Affairs at Lancaster Theological Seminary. The mentoring, networking, and community building that I began while an HTI fellow continue to support me in my current tasks. HTI has not only helped my scholarship and academic career, it has also strengthened my personal connection with Latino faith communities. My story is repeated by many others as HTI continues to make a positive impact on theological education, religious studies, Latina/o studies, congregations, and denominations across the United States.

There may have been some changes in the program over the years, but HTI remains focused on contributing to both the academy and the church and is doing so exceedingly well. The gains already achieved in the number of Latina/o scholars, faculty, and administrators in seminaries, schools of theology, universities, and accrediting agencies would not have been possible without HTI. Fundamentally, I understand HTI to be a gift of God's grace, to both the Latino church as well as to the wider church and community. It is a living expression of *teología en conjunto*, collaborative, communal theology, the best of scholarship and teaching and always connected to *nuestra comunidad*. It is my great joy to be a part of the HTI community.

In Tribute to the Hispanic Theological Initiative

Jon L. Berquist

Dr. Jon L. Berquist is Executive Editor for Biblical Studies at Westminster John Knox Press. He holds a PhD in Hebrew Bible from Vanderbilt University, and is the author and editor of nine books in biblical studies. He has been a writer's workshop leader and a dissertation editor since 2001.

On this tenth anniversary of the Hispanic Theological Initiative, I find myself amazed at how much of a positive impact this institution has had in a relatively short period of time. HTI began strongly, reaching out to a large number of scholars from the first days, widened its circle and its influence without abandoning its first participants, and now stands as a shining example to theological education and religious scholarship of what possibilities lie ahead.

The contributions of the Hispanic Theological Initiative to the Hispanic community of religious scholars have long been obvious to our wider academic guilds. Over this last decade, dozens of new scholars have experienced HTI's support as they have trained to become top-notch scholars. The books and articles produced by these HTI scholars have invigorated scholarship in all theology disciplines. The exciting growth in numbers of Hispanic scholars in biblical studies, theology, ethics, history, and other specialties enrich the discourse throughout our shared work. The scholars who have been part of HTI have also helped Hispanic churches and Latina/o communities grow and develop, and these myriad local effects are impossible to measure. It's also remarkable that HTI has been from the start an ecumenical endeavor, providing a rare opportunity for scholars to work together for the benefit of the wider church across denominational gaps as well as

across national and linguistic boundaries. Catholic and Protestant scholars have worked together to understand and to strengthen each other's religious traditions, and HTI participants have shared in discussions of a wide diversity of Christian and non-Christian religious practices.

But HTI is much more than a gift to Hispanic communities. The Hispanic Theological Initiative has not only changed the resources available to Hispanic scholars, but is teaching all of us in the academy new expectations, fresh hopes, and loftier dreams for what we can be and do.

HTI's driving concern with creating *comunidad* has done much more than networking and association. Of course, HTI's community has given significant support to many, not only financially, but also in the interchange of ideas and the moments of encouragement that can make all the difference in a scholarly career. HTI's *comunidad* teaches the value of working together, a value that religious studies has rarely understood or practiced. This also means accountability to each other, both in the content of our scholarship and in how we do that scholarship. The ethical dimensions that HTI has demonstrated are transforming all of religious scholarship, providing us with new questions and suppressed concerns that must shape our work. Concerns such as accountability and relevance to other scholars, to the religious communities that nourish us, and to the many contexts that give us life.

HTI has also been teaching an interdisciplinarity that has reached out far beyond the people who have been formal participants in HTI events. Repeatedly, I find that HTI members are leading their own guilds and their other colleagues in finding new ways to blend theological scholarship, and to combine the shattered fragments of theological education into a whole. These scholars are leading their schools in rethinking the curriculum in a more integrative fashion. They are listening to their colleagues across the boundaries of discipline and specialty, continuing the

habits they learned while listening to projects in other disciplines from the start of their HTI experience.

I could never say enough about the role of HTI in modeling mentoring for all of theological scholarship. HTI's mentors have not only given of themselves for the sake of the next generation, they have developed themselves into better teachers and better examples for everyone. Good scholars are learning that they must take new responsibility for teaching others how to teach and showing others how to learn. Mentoring was at the core of HTI at its genesis, and this core value has been one of the best changes to occur in theological inquiry over the last decade.

The Hispanic Theological Initiative has been a gift to the academy and the church in every aspect of our being. Furthermore, HTI holds the promise now to take this wave of initiative and to continue to transform our discipline, our habits, our institutions, and our lives in permanent ways that will redound to the benefit of all. Those of us who have had the privilege of being part of this first decade have known the benefits, and now know deep inside the responsibilities and challenges—and also the immense joy—of continuing this reformation.

HTI's Collaborations at Princeton and Beyond

Peter Casarella

Dr. Peter Casarella is Professor of Catholic Studies at DePaul University. He serves on the Selection Committee for HTI and is former president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians in the United States. (ACHTUS). He co-edited a volume with Dr. Raúl Gómez Ruiz entitled *Cuerpo de Cristo: The Hispanic Presence in the U.S. Catholic Church* (New York: Crossroad, 1998) and edited *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance* (Washington: Catholic University Press, 2006). He is currently working on a book which has the working title: *Von Balthasar: The Centrifugal Politics of Culture*.

From April 19-21, 2007, I had the distinct pleasure of accompanying HTI scholars Néstor Medina (Toronto School of Theology) and Jacqueline M. Hidalgo (Claremont Graduate University, California) to an international gathering of theologians as well as several influential religious journalists. The meeting took place at the Center of Theological Inquiry (CTI) in Princeton. HTI and CTI are neighbors, both located on the campus of Princeton Theological Seminary and separated only by Speer Library. Our journey across the street, so to speak, represents one of a few recent collaborative initiatives that have brought these two institutions closer together. It was also a good opportunity for me to evaluate firsthand the uniqueness of HTI's mentoring program.

The scholars at CTI were largely unfamiliar with HTI, so I underscored the fact that HTI is the only venue in the U.S. where Latina and Latino doctoral students receive active mentoring in their field. I explained that the students come from diverse institutions in which they are being trained in Systematic Theology, Biblical Studies, Christian Ethics, Philosophical Theology, and

other specializations. In a few cases, a doctoral student may have one or even two Latina or Latino professors at their own institution. In many cases, however, the student's only real contact with Latina/o theologians is through HTI. So the stipends, the funding for visits by the Latina/o mentors to the students' home institution, and the week-long summer program in Princeton serve to build up a community that supports the personal, intellectual, and spiritual formation of the future theologian. Without HTI the entire discipline of Latina/o theology would be greatly impoverished. With HTI there is a *comunidad* that can nurture these young individuals with wisdom, resources, and support at a critical juncture in their lives and careers.

At CTI, I emphasized the thoroughly ecumenical aspects of HTI. Mentors and students include Latina/o Presbyterians, Evangelicals, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, and many other Christian groups. HTI is a compelling witness to the breadth of Latina/o theology. That breadth is equally cross-cultural and interdisciplinary. A Canadian Latino with a Guatemalan heritage such as Néstor might find himself in conversation about postcolonialism with a Costa Rican New Testament scholar from the Midwest such as Jackie. Jackie brings her considerable expertise in Biblical hermeneutics to the study of the apocalyptic dimensions of *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*.

In the context of HTI, one witnesses a free exchange of the differences that mark the Latina/o community in the U.S. as a group whose diversity is barely captured by the term multiculturalism. At HTI sharp differences are shared and become part of the experience of enrichment. HTI shuns the label of the monolithic Hispanic and works actively to encourage doctoral students to consider the vastness of Latina/o experiences and the rich possibilities for collaboration with non-Hispanic theologians.

I suspect that the theme of intra-Latina/o diversity was a new idea to many of the participants at the gathering at CTI. I also

think that when many HTI scholars find jobs, they will face the new challenge of imparting their ecumenical experiences from HTI to older colleagues in seminaries. These scholars may not have had such intensive collaborations of this sort in their formative years.

Another noteworthy point of convergence between the two Princeton neighbors concerns the global perspective. All recipients of HTI grants are encouraged to explore the work being done in their field by scholars in Latin America. As a consequence, new alliances like that of Latina feminism and indigenous theology move to the center of their research. The work of HTI thus extends, complements, and enriches the global perspective that has been a hallmark of CTI. With such shared goals in view, the prospects for future collaboration seem both rich and timely.

Scholarly Contributions in the Lutheran Church

Samuel Cruz

Dr. Samuel Cruz is the Senior Pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Brooklyn, New York a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic congregation. His most recent publications include *Masked Africanisms: Puerto Rican Pentecostalism* and journal articles including "A Post Colonial Re-reading of Puerto Rican Pentecostalism." Additionally, he has published several journal articles, and contributed book chapters on Latina/o religion. He is a member of the Immigration Task Force of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and has been actively organizing around the issues of immigrant rights in Sunset Park, Brooklyn as a participant of the New Sanctuary Movement. Dr. Cruz is currently a lecturer on religion, culture, race/racism, oppression and diversity for the Latino and Hispanic Caribbean Studies Department at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

As a Latino man, pastor, scholar, and social activist, I keep abreast of the different organizations, philanthropies, scholarship programs and other resources of support that may be available to enhance the Latino population in the United States. Yet, it is the work of the Hispanic Theological Initiative that has particularly affected me.

Of the many Latino scholars, pastors, and administrators who have benefited from HTI, two have particularly enhanced my ministry in the church and the academy, and both, were recipients of HTI dissertation fellowship: Dr. Benjamín Valentín, Associate Professor of Constructive Theology at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, and Dr. Miguel De La Torre, Associate Professor of Social Ethics and Director of the Justice and Peace Institute at Iliff School of Theology. Dr. Valentín authored the

book, *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity and Difference*, a work that I have used on two occasions while teaching courses on the church and its social context. This book, which was awarded the HTI Book Prize in 2002, not only sketches a road map for a public theology of the church and theological enterprise in general, but it also makes important contributions to the understanding of Latino theology within the U.S. Latino context. Because of the context from which Dr. Valentín writes (that of a Latino man), the text was extremely valuable to the students of my class who were Latino pastors.

As many have experienced over the years, it has been very difficult to read and recommend theological works written by Latina/o U.S. scholars. During my seminary training, I never had the opportunity of having a tenured/full-time or adjunct professor who was Hispanic. Given the current U.S. demographics, I consider this to be a serious gap in my education as well as that of others, including non-Latinos. Thanks to the work of scholars like Dr. Valentín and with the help of HTI, this gap is beginning to be bridged.

More recently Dr. De La Torre came to my rescue in quite a different manner. Together with some colleagues in 2005, I became involved in conversations about the need to address the issues of the church and sexuality—particularly homosexuality—within a Latino cultural church context. We dreamed of putting together a conference to discuss this important topic, one that would be conducted in Spanish by speakers who were well-trained scholars and also sensitive to and informed about the Latino evangelical church culture and ethos.

Our committee approached Dr. Miguel De La Torre, who was both well connected with the Latino evangelical culture and ethos and also capable of providing solid scholarship on ethical and biblical matters, and sexuality. Dr. De La Torre offered an excellent workshop on the bible and homosexuality, and this contributed to

the conference's success and benefited my colleagues as well as me. His approach was scholarly, yet culturally sensitive to the participants.

In addition to Dr. De La Torre's conference presentations, I have benefited from his written works. I am currently using his book entitled *Doing Christian Ethics from the Margins*, as a resource for a course I am teaching to deacons on Christian ethics for the Metro New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. I am deeply grateful for the vision of HTI, because the human resources they have nurtured over the past 10 years are not only benefiting the academy, but pastors and communities across the United States and beyond.

Impact and Growth of Latina/o Scholars in the Catholic Church

Orlando O. Espín

Dr. Orlando O. Espín is Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of San Diego. He has been a member of HTI's Selection Committee and a mentor to a number of HTI fellows. His published works include, among others, *Power and Memory: Toward an Intercultural Theology of Tradition* (Orbis Books, 2006), and *Futuring Our Past: Explorations in the Theology of Tradition*, coed. with Dr. Gary Macy (Orbis Books, 2005).

Soon after the birth of HTI, I immediately became more actively involved in its activities as a member of the Selection Committee, as a mentor, and as a speaker at various summer sessions. After all of these years, I have seen HTI blossom into a first-rate, successful, and respected program. It has been a privilege for me to serve seven years on the Selection Committee, and to have been a mentor to six younger colleagues.

U.S. Latina/o theology, Protestant and Catholic, would not exist as it does today were it not for the work and support of the Hispanic Theological Initiative. This collaborative enterprise was exhibited via organized national and regional meetings, papers delivered by tenured professors and junior scholars, the co-editing and co-writing of books and articles, and the networking among scholars of several generations.

As president of the Academy of Catholic Hispanic Theologians of the United States (ACHTUS), I recognize that most of our younger members joined the profession thanks to HTI. The future of Catholic theology among Latinas/os owes much to the work and support of HTI.

I also recognize that many of the most important ecumenical conversations among Latina/o Protestant and Catholic theologians have taken place under HTI sponsorship, or as a result of friendships established during HTI activities.

My thanks to HTI, to its extraordinary director and staff, to the colleagues who dedicate so many hours to the next generation, but especially to the young scholars who are willing to invest life and talent for the service of our people through the adventure of scholarship and education.

Perspectives on HTI

Ismael García

Dr. Ismael García is Professor of Christian Ethics at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He teaches ethics courses including Introduction to Christian Ethics, Philosophical and Theological Conceptions of Justice, Biomedical Ethics, Theological and Ethical Perspectives of Racial Ethnic Minorities. He also serves on Medical Ethics committees for various hospitals and hospices in Austin, Texas. He is a board member of the Hispanic Summer Program, and a member of the Fundraising team of Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana (AETH).

It seems like only yesterday that a number of us were sitting around a table dreaming about how to create what today is known as the Hispanic Theological Initiative. Those gathered there were keenly aware that the Hispanic/Latino churches had an urgent need for better trained pastors and that we Latinas/os were barely represented in theological seminaries, universities, and other institutions of higher learning. We knew first hand how difficult it was for Hispanics to be admitted into prestigious theological seminaries, divinity schools, and universities. We knew that even when a Hispanic student was admitted, these academic institutions were so alien to us that it was difficult for many of us to complete the program of study. Thanks to the laborious work of some of the members of this group, we did secure funds and began the process of making our vision of HTI a reality.

I have had the privilege of serving HTI as a member of the Advisory Committee, the Selection Committee, the Book Prize Selection Committee, and as a mentor. I recall the serious and meticulous way the Advisory Committee took upon itself the task

of formulating its vision and its guiding policies and procedures. The exchanges around the table were honest and there were strong disagreements and intense debates about particular policies and procedures. However, in spite of our differences, our shared commitment to responsibly allocating the precious financial resources we had just acquired and to identify the most worthy candidates enabled us to arrive at a consensus. We discerned and deliberated in "*conjunto*" to find a proper balance between candidates who had demonstrated academic excellence, who promised to complete what they had started, and most important, who had an uncompromising commitment to serve the Latino churches and the larger Hispanic community. We intentionally aimed for fairness regarding denominational, national, gender, geographic, and other criteria, and sought the most inclusive way to provide a rewarding academic opportunity to those who traditionally had been denied. We were equally uncompromising in seeking candidates who understood that they were selected not only because of their promise and demonstrated academic talent but also because they understood the expectation that they continue to serve their churches and community quite intentionally.

As a member of the Selection Committee, I had the opportunity to make the vision of HTI concrete. The debates and deliberation of the Selection Committee were inevitably both challenging and frustrating. It was extremely rewarding to see the breadth and depth of the pool of candidates. There was great joy in knowing how much talent was out there and how willing these students were to serve our churches and our community. Yet our joy was always dampened by having to say no to worthy candidates. I have found great consolation in the fact that the vast majority of the candidates we selected to receive fellowships have completed their program of study and that the number of Latino faculty members in our theological seminaries and universities has increased significantly during the last ten years.

As a member of the Book Prize Selection Committee, I also experience the tension between joy and frustration of every final decision made. Yet experiencing first hand the original and creative work being done by a new generation of Latino/Hispanic scholars, is so rewarding as I study these new works and now use them in my own classes.

However, to my mind none of these roles equals the experience of serving as a mentor to our PhD candidates. To me, this is the purest expression of what HTI is all about. Ultimately, beyond the financial and the other resources the HTI provides, all of us are equally gifted with a sense of belonging to a community of senior and junior scholars working together to enhance Latino Hispanic ministry and scholarship. As participants in a number of the national and regional professional and peer meetings, the yearly HTI Summer Workshop that gathers all the fellows and provides them with an occasion to talk about what they are doing, while also participating in writing, research, publishing and other workshops has cemented the experience of belonging to an academic organization that both challenges me and provides support and care.

As a mentor, I have been blessed with the opportunity of getting to know our PhD candidates in a more individual way. I have experienced first hand the process of how a scholar is formed. I have been impressed with the way they grow and mature as scholars and with the creative and unique way they approach traditional questions. Equally important, I have come to know them in a holistic manner as friends, parents, spouses, church members, and members of other voluntary organizations. This experience of seeing the students grow and mature is quite unique: at one stage, one gives advice and counsel; at another, one becomes the person seeking advice. This transition from faculty/student relationship to peer relationship is one of the most rewarding experiences of the mentoring process. Beyond that, I have also benefited from the

relationships I have established with each student's academic advisor and with the school in which they study. The students I mentor give me the opportunity to share what I have learned in my long career, but also the joy of knowing that they will carry the torch beyond my possibilities. In them one discovers why the Apostle Paul saw faith hope and love as the basic Christian virtues. In the end, mentors are the ones who ought to express gratitude to their students for the opportunity they give us to do what we so enjoy doing!

Of the many projects in which I have been involved in the course of my long career as a professor, the time dedicated to the formation and continuing services provided by the HTI has been among the most rewarding and successful. Very few ventures have given me the deep gratification of knowing I have done something that makes a difference in the life of the Hispanic community and the Hispanic Church—a contribution not only for the present, but the long-term future.

Ten Years of HTI Writing Workshops and Editing Dissertations

Ulrike R.M. Guthrie

For 21 years, Ulrike Guthrie has worked as an editor with various university and denominational presses. She now has her own editing and translating business, and continues to work mainly with students and scholars of religion. She has worked with HTI since its inception. Ulrike lives with her family in Bangor, Maine, and can be contacted through www.ulrikeguthrie.com.

Peek into one of the Hispanic Theological Initiative's summer writing workshops and you might be surprised to find the fellows curled up in lounge chairs formulating a thesis on weather, or changing patterns of communication, or moving, or perhaps you'd find them working on the opening paragraph of an argument on the effects of climate change on artistic media like clay or oil paints and their drying speed, or outlining an essay on how their dispersed family's relationship has changed thanks to web cams, or on how moved they were on feeling the first *in utero* movements of their child.

What does this have to do with theological writing? Everything! Brainstorming ideas, developing a thesis, outlining an argument, writing to communicate, learning how to make transitions and conclusions, how quite simply to start the often difficult task of actually starting a written piece, of working alone and in group, of learning to critique others' work and thus, to do the more difficult work of critiquing and improving one's own, students are exercising the same skills used in theological and religious academic writing.

However, the creation of this non-threatening space where stu-

dents work collaboratively and fears are shared allows students to leave energized, more confident of their abilities to write, having experienced the pain and joy of having their writing admired and critiqued by peers who know just as well as the professional editor does, whether a piece of writing works and may just need some encouragement to make it a better articulated and argued piece of work.

In their wisdom, HTI founders made learning how to write and teach well, a central part of its program, from HTI's inception in Atlanta. For these two core competencies of most academic jobs are often assumed rather than taught. Knowing that each generation of scholars learns from its teachers, Justo L. González while in Atlanta took advantage of the skills provided by the Abingdon Press academic editors (Rex Matthews, Bob Ratcliff, and I) along with Professors Nancy Eiesland and Gail O'Day (from Candler School of Theology at Emory University). We evolved 10 years of writing workshops, and edited every single HTI dissertation, joined later by such editors as, Jon Berquist and Patrick Alexander.

Our work has changed considerably over this first decade, though the core ingredients of the writing program have remained the same. We still work with dissertation scholars over the course of a year, from formulating a thesis statement and outlining chapters to the finished dissertation. We also teach writer's workshops during the summer and these include: how to make an argument, how to write in well-constructed paragraphs, how to conclude, how to write book reviews and articles, how to produce when it seems impossible to begin.

My involvement in the writing component of the HTI program continues to be a highlight of my work as an editor. Why would working with scholars so early in their careers be such a joy? For an editor, it's a delight to accompany any author, to be a part of their personal growth, and help with the evolution and formation of their ideas from the early stages of their career. It is evermore

enriching when you are working with bright and interesting scholars coming through the HTI pipeline! These students work really hard and want to learn; to my astonishment there have been few summer workshops when my students have not asked to come back to continue working on their writing after an abbreviated meal time, or during free time, and often, well into the night.

Of course not all our work is done together at Princeton, but more often quietly by email with HTI fellows on opposite sides of this vast continent. My editorial colleagues who have doctorates know personally, and I know, from having accompanied my spouse, that even remote accompaniment is better than the utter desolation of working alone on a dissertation.

Writing is hard work. HTI fellows learn that it is also a thrill. It will be interesting to see how those who have benefited from programs at HTI will equip their own students for the work of expressing their ideas in writing.

Sustaining the Vision through Collaboration

Edwin I. Hernández

Dr. Edwin I. Hernández is the Research Director for the DeVos Family Foundations. Previously, he directed the Center for the Study of Latino Religion within the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame, where he continues to serve as a Research Fellow. As a sociologist of religion, his research interest has focused on the impact that congregations have on their community, with special attention to the role that religious leaders play in sustaining the life and commitment of socially engaged congregations. Dr. Hernández has published numerous reports and articles, such as “Answering the Call: How Latino Churches Can Respond to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic” and “Leadership Matters: The Role of Latino/a Religious Leadership in Social Ministry.” His most recent books include *Emergent Voices, Urgent Choices: Essays on Latino/a Religious Leadership* (co-authored with Dr. Milagros Peña and Dr. Kenneth G. Davis, 2006), and *Reconstructing the Sacred Tower: Challenge and Promise of Latina/o Theological Education* (co-authored with Dr. Kenneth G. Davis, 2003).

I join my colleagues from the HTI Advisory Committee and the whole HTI family in celebrating this momentous occasion in the history of this signature program. Few of us dreamed that 10 years after the first HTI grant was awarded the long-term future of HTI would look so bright. Usually grant-funded programs have a beginning and an ending. But thanks to the hard work, commitment, and vision of so many individuals and institutions, the work of HTI will continue into the future.

The national recognition and outstanding reputation of HTI is due to the outstanding work of the leaders and staff who have

managed the program and nurtured the vitality of the community. I have had the privilege of being associated with HTI since its very beginning; it was my research that showed the need for HTI. Later, together with Justo L. González and a group of Latina/o scholars, I helped to design the program. But it is one thing to design a fellowship program that looks good on paper, and quite another to give it life, form, and sustainability. The leadership and administrative staff of HTI throughout the years have taken what was a good plan on paper and made it into a national beacon of excellence. A special thanks to Daisy Machado, Zaida Maldonado Pérez, Joanne Rodríguez, and their respective staffs for their outstanding leadership, and particularly to Justo L. González who has provided invaluable guidance from the beginning to the present.

Getting a major signature program like HTI funded for such a long period is not an easy proposition and should not be taken for granted. Foundations have many competing interests, and the Latino religious community and their leaders, especially scholars, are unfortunately not a priority for most of them. Foundations are increasingly demanding in their expectations, rigorous in their evaluations, and require greater accountability. The bottom line is that there are not many foundations interested in funding enterprises on religion let alone the development of Latina/o scholars in religion or theological studies. Presenting a major proposal like HTI for funding at a foundation like The Pew Charitable Trusts (Pew) required very careful planning, research, program design, identifying best practices, and dealing with the politics of the institutions—in short, it was an extremely complex process. As someone who was there and saw it first hand, I can say that each dollar given to HTI represents an arduous and even providential process and that we are indebted to many whose generosity of time, skills, and money continue to make it possible.

Accordingly, The Pew Charitable Trusts deserves credit and

our collective appreciation for their philanthropic support. Particular thanks are due to Joel Carpenter and Luis Lugo, directors of the religion program, who supported and insisted on creating the best program possible. And, in a special way the leadership of Danny Cortés, program officer at Pew, who was instrumental in the early planning stages of HTI. Danny served with distinction for over a decade to advance the cause and development of Hispanic religious leadership in the country. I am privileged to have followed Danny at Pew, and to have helped to support and advocate for the renewal of the HTI grant and the sustainability of its program.

The excellent evaluative work of Dr. Daryl Smith, Dr. Caroline Sotello Viernes Turner, and Dr. Milagros Peña showed that HTI not only works well by supporting, sustaining, and helping to graduate Latina/Latino scholars, but it is among the very best of such programs in the country. Noting such success, the increasing need to support Latina/o scholars, and declining philanthropic support, Lilly Endowment in 2003 contributed over \$850,000 for doctoral fellows, and in 2002 Princeton Theological Seminary, under the leadership of Tom Gillespie followed by Iain Torrance, stepped up to the challenge in a significant way and embraced the mission of HTI. The seminary has committed to becoming the organizational home for a new HTI consortium-model.

Thank you, Princeton Theological Seminary, Lilly Endowment Inc. and other collaborating seminaries and universities, for your vision and commitment to HTI. You are making history by joining forces and supporting a new consortium model of collaboration that serves the growing need of developing the intellectual *human resources* of our Latino community.

Ultimately, the success of HTI can be attributed to the scholars who with much dedication, sacrifice, diligence, and brilliance have completed, or are committed to completing their degrees in the service of their community. Congratulations to all of you HTI

scholars: your success has helped to create a sustainable model for the future of HTI that will serve many more scholars in the years to come.

Looking Back: Ten Years of Memory

Daisy L. Machado

Dr. Daisy L. Machado has been a vanguardist since 1981, when she became the first Latina ordained in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). In 1996, she became the first Director of the Hispanic Theological Initiative, setting up the structure and introducing its first cohort of Latina/o masters and PhD students in 1997. She missed teaching, and in 1999 she became the Associate Professor of History at Brite Divinity School, where she also launched the first center for Borderland Studies. In 2005, she moved to Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky and was named the first Latina to become a Dean of a theological education institution. Lexington was an excellent opportunity for Dr. Machado, but her strong passion for teaching won in the long run, and in 2007 she returned to teaching as Professor of Church History, at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Her publications include, *Borders and Margins: Hispanic Disciples in the Southwest, 1888-1942* (Oxford University Press) and she is co-editor of *A Reader in Latina Feminist Theology: Religion and Justice* (University of Texas Press), in addition to numerous chapters in anthologies and encyclopedias.

I still remember the first time I walked into the empty space in Turner Village on the Emory University campus. The space would become the offices of a brand new theological program called the Hispanic Theological Initiative. It was August 1996. I had in my hands, the over 150- page proposal recently funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, and I had until April 1997 to assemble the first group of students that would be interviewed by the still to be determined Selection Committee. Those early days of HTI were filled with excitement, anticipation, and a nervous energy that

helped to fuel the long hours of work and travel. This optimism made it possible for the first class of HTI scholarship recipients to be selected and announced by June of 1997.

As an historian I believe it is good to look back and to remember. Remembering is a powerful act, a return to the womb of our familial and intellectual ancestors. The act of remembering for a community like ours—a borderlands community, whether we have been born in this country or are immigrants,—is an important and empowering process in maintaining our identity. The nurturing environment created by HTI has helped many of us see each other and understand that journeys involve innumerable travelers and that these travelers are separated by only a few degrees of difference. In the journey we not only receive greater clarity about who we are, where we come from, why we travel, and where we hope to go, but the journey helps us see with more clarity important core issues that are critical for a borderlands people's survival. Issues such as solidarity, *acompañamiento*, hope, spirituality, and most important our connections to community. How does the value of community fit into the founding vision of HTI?

The goal of HTI was simple—to increase the number of Latina/os teaching in Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accredited institutions. But what has made HTI unique and successful is its focus to help nurture public scholars, men and woman willing and with the intellectual capacity and commitment to address the pressing needs of life and religion in the United States. This focus on community building and the value given to the communities of faith has helped to shape the HTI fellows. Added to these was a strong mentoring component for doctoral students, and it is this that truly made HTI stand shoulders above other scholarship programs. The idea that solidarity and the role of the public intellectual needed to be modeled gave shape to how mentors were selected and how they were prepared

to work with the individual student. The visits of mentors to the various campuses to meet with students, the idea to have those Latina/o scholars be in conversation with the faculty teaching HTI fellows, the focus on Latina/o theology and concerns within the academy, all these pieces gave the mentoring relationship a depth of meaning that made the completion of doctoral degrees a constant reality for the students. As word got out that the HTI mentoring program/vision was actually working and increasing the number of Latina/o PhDs entering the academy, I began to receive numerous invitations to speak at national conferences on strategies for the recruitment/retention of racial ethnic students (e.g., School of Education at the University of Minnesota), allowing the HTI mentoring program/vision to be on the map. By fostering a sense of hope and of *acompañamiento* through the mentoring program, HTI was obviously modeling a new understanding of how academic life is to be lived out, which had been previously overlooked or simply dismissed.

HTI has completed its first decade of service and there is much to celebrate. But as HTI contemplates its second decade, we do need to ask how will it continue to be effective? What has been learned in the journey of the last ten years about what core values to foster and preserve?

Those are questions for the current HTI leadership to critically examine, but allow me to share some ideas. The society for which we continue to prepare Latina/o faculty has become ever more divisive and fractured. Hierarchy and patriarchy in the academy continue to be formidable forces as is a pervasive though denied racism that more often than not influences faculty searches as well as hiring/promotion policies.

This is the reality HTI fellows face. So what can HTI do? While HTI has and should maintain a presence at ATS and the American Academy of Religion (AAR), HTI should also continue to strengthen its mentoring program. Mentoring is a key contribu-

tion for HTI to hold on to its vision of shaping new generations of Latina/o scholars by informing their teaching and scholarship with solidarity, *acompañamiento*, hope, and spirituality, and most important, to nurture their connections to their communities.

For the prevalent model given to ethnic scholars is one of competition, of scholarship done in isolation, one of big egos, and little concern for those (colleagues and students) who do not help us get to the proverbial “top.” Yet we know very well that the public intellectual, the scholar who understands that her/his education is also about the work of liberation and empowering a community by providing a spoken and written voice that may not otherwise be heard. This voice is still very much needed in the academy, our educational institutions, and the wider world.

I have been teaching for over thirteen years; I have served as Academic Dean of an institution; I have served on numerous ATS and AAR committees; I have participated in many workshops on race and teaching; and I have been a part of many faculty search committees. I am convinced that in all these positions, in all these venues, in all these doings, the values of solidarity and community must continually be nurtured and maintained if we truly want the teaching and writing we do as Latina/o scholars to have meaning and give hope, and keep our very souls alive. The wisdom of the *abuelas*, the prayers of a congregation, and the understandings of God we were given by our communities. Those are the things we need to re-examine and reclaim.

The ever-present challenge facing HTI is to promote stronger *acompañamiento* and to build a strong sense of solidarity amongst its fellows that can sustain them as they move into faculty positions. I have no doubt this can be done. I have no doubt it will make a difference in the kind of Latina/o scholars that will join the academy. I knew in June 1997 HTI would work, it would make a difference, and community was possible. Times have changed, but the basic needs of doctoral students in many ways have not—to be

successful in their programs without losing their souls. This continues to be our greatest challenge.

Foundations for a Hispanic Pentecostal Christology: A Constructive and Liberative Approach

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Despite the centrality of Jesus in Pentecostal worship, belief, and practice, from an academic perspective Christology has been an underdeveloped theological theme in Pentecostalism. And yet, just because Pentecostals have concentrated almost exclusively on pneumatology does not mean that Pentecostalism lacks a distinctive Christology. From its origins, Pentecostal hymnody, sermons, and testimonies reveal a unique way of thinking about the person and work of Jesus Christ, one which stresses the continued active presence of the second person of the Trinity in the life of the church and the believer. Pentecostal Christology affirms that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8); this same miracle-working preacher, prophet continues to manifest his presence through the Spirit today.

This study inquires about the foundations needed to construct a Hispanic Pentecostal Christology. Although traditionally, Pentecostal Christologies have been anchored in a two-nature Chalcedonian model, I propose that Spirit Christology is a more suitable paradigm for constructing a Hispanic Pentecostal Christology provided it is grounded in the experience, faith, and worship of its community and oriented toward liberative praxis.

My method is as follows: The first two chapters focus on Spirit-Christology as a model for Pentecostal Christology. Chapter one outlines early Pentecostal Christology establishing that the move toward Spirit Christology is legitimate because it corresponds with our Pentecostal heritage. Chapter two looks at recent approaches to Spirit-Christology and argues that though it is a useful model for constructing a Pentecostal Christology in general, for it to be a viable model for Hispanic Pentecostal Christology it needs to be contextually grounded and oriented toward liberative praxis.

Chapter three examines the contributions of Latina/o Christology—particularly, its more significant Christological models—as resources for contextually grounding Spirit Christology and orienting it toward liberative praxis. Due to the social location of Hispanics (Catholic and Protestant alike), and particularly the demographics of Hispanic Pentecostals, the Christological contributions of Latina/o theologians will prove essential for developing a Hispanic Pentecostal Christological method that aims to integrate faith and lived experience of Jesus in a context of economic hardship, transnational ambivalence and continual marginalization.

Chapter four develops a historically grounded Spirit Christology of liberative praxis out of these findings. The central metaphor of this Christology is *El Divino Compañero*, for in our pilgrimage through this world it is Jesus our Divine Companion who through the Spirit guides and nurtures us on the way back home. Essentially I look back at the Christological reflection of early Pentecostals and at the contemporary turn to Spirit-Christology, and then construct a Christological model that is born out of the Hispanic Pentecostal reality but also rooted in the broader Pentecostal Christological imagination and informed by the Pentecostal way of doing theology. I believe that a Hispanic Pentecostal Christology has the potential to model a new way of

doing Christology: an approach which is globally conscious and praxis-oriented that attempts to conceptualize the meaning of the person and work of Christ with ecumenical openness and biblical centeredness.

Ethnic Negotiations: The Theological Function of Race and Ethnicity in Acts 16

Eric Daniel Barreto

Emory University

Advisor: Carl Holladay

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Historical studies of the ancient world have embraced race and ethnicity as critical historiographical lenses and not anachronistic impositions upon the ancient world. However, the complexities of race and ethnicity had long either foreclosed their inclusion within biblical studies or invited unsophisticated applications. The recent “irruption” (Segovia) of ethnic minorities within the guild has certainly brought fresh, critical perspectives upon the question.

The Acts of the Apostles has been a natural home for exegetes hoping to conduct ethnic analyses of biblical texts. In Acts, we find a book which thematically advocates the universal dimensions of the gospel and its spread in the early years of the church and thus naturally invites reflection upon the question of ethnicity in the ancient world. African American scholars such as Byron, Martin, and Snowden have especially brought critical attention to the pericope of the Ethiopian eunuch, establishing an African presence in Acts (8:26-40).

This study, however, focuses less on the presence of particular individuals of specified ethnicities but on the negotiation of multiple and even hybrid ethnicities. The conclusions of the apostolic council in Acts 15 seem to suggest that Christian identity has been cemented, clarified in a world teeming with various *ethnoi*—a conclusion thwarted in the very next chapter. I argue that Luke’s

description of pliable ethnic boundaries is a vital part of his theological project.

The rich text of Acts 16 invites the kind of ethnic analysis I propose; its textured language and enigmatic narratives provide important glimpses into the internal logic of Luke's ethnic constructions. First, is a pericope that has baffled scholars: 16:1-5 reports that Paul circumcises Timothy despite the conclusions of chapter 15. The rationale of Paul's actions centers upon the negotiation of problematic ethnic boundaries. Who is a Jew? Who is a Greek? What are the identifying marks of these ethnicities? Next, Luke leads us to the city of Philippi, a metropolis characterized in 16:11-40 by its "Romanness." At the close of this narrative, Paul's claim of Roman identity requires further study. How does Luke construe the boundaries of Roman and Jewish ethnic identities? How are these same boundaries transgressed for political and/or theological advantage?

Current study of Acts, curtails a full appreciation of Luke's expansive theological vision by either neglecting racial and ethnic categories or construing them as relatively static designations. I contend instead that race and ethnicity were theologically vital yet flexible notions in Acts, referring to a wide array of cultural factors amenable to shifting contexts. Acts does not erase ethnic difference but employs the flexible bounds of ethnicity in order to illustrate the wide grasp of the early church movement. Such a conclusion would lead both historians of the ancient world as well as contemporary readers of scriptures, to reassess whether and how the pliable bounds of ethnicity impinge upon biblical studies.

Resolviendo: Narratives of Survival in the Hebrew Bible and in Cuba Today

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The story of Rahab in Joshua 2 has traditionally been interpreted as the account of a foreign woman and low-status prostitute who changes the course of her life when she converts to Yahweh, the God of Moses. In return for her faithful act of saving the spies sent by Joshua to search the land of Canaan, Rahab along with her family obtains salvation once her city of Jericho is destroyed. Rahab reappears in the New Testament where she is remembered in Jesus' genealogy in the gospel of Mathew 1:5.

The story of Jael in Judges 4:17-23 has commonly been read as Jael's violent act of killing Sisera, King Jabin's commander in chief, with a tent peg to his temple while he is asleep. She is also identified as someone who fails to fulfill the hospitality codes of her society.

The story of Jephthah and his unnamed daughter in Judges 10:6-12:7 describes the tragic event in which Jephthah makes a foolish and horrible vow offering his innocent daughter in sacrifice to God. Typically this text is read as Jephthah being immensely irresponsible and his daughter being the poor victim who pays for her father's oath.

Such interpretations of these stories are widely accepted within the scholarly biblical guild. But perhaps there are also other ways in which they can be read. In this dissertation, I propose that the stories of Rahab, Jael, and Jephthah can be particularly

enriched and give hope to contemporary contexts of hardship when they are read through the Cuban notion of *resolviendo* (survival).

The word *resolviendo*, meaning to find an answer or solution, was first used this way in Cuba at the beginning of the 1990s. It was then that Cuba began to suffer the economic consequences of the fall of socialist countries from which a great part of its resources and economic help had come during the previous four decades. Without subsidies Cuba and its people had to create new economic opportunities. It is in this context that the words *resolver* and *resolviendo* began to have a special meaning for Cubans. *Resolver* in many ways became synonymous with struggling to survive, making do.

I read these biblical stories using narrative criticism as the main methodology along with different contemporary approaches to the texts including feminist, post-modern, and post-colonial approaches. I hope that my readings of the biblical narratives from a perspective of *resolviendo* can offer insights in the struggle for survival many Cubans face today. Last, I explore the implications that a reading through the notion of *resolviendo* or survival can have to other contexts in contemporary societies where survival is at stake.

**Standing in the No-Place:
Utopias, Scriptures, and the Unhomeliness
of Empire in Aztlán, the New Jerusalem,
and California**

Jacqueline Hidalgo

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Dr. Erin Runions, and Dr. José Rabasa

DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

Fernando Segovia once described Latina/os in the United States of America as having “two places and no place on which to stand.”¹ This dissertation considers the “no-place”—one possible translation of the word *utopia*—as in fact a place in which identity is rooted and negotiated. Utopian narratives are often an aspect of broader scripturally based mythologies of time and space, and this dissertation’s specific textual considerations are of literature that some scholars would consider “apocalyptic.” I focus on the relationship of these narratives to the socio-cultural politics of constructions of identity and community, especially within and in relationship to the power dynamics of empires. Apocalyptic narratives and rhetorics act as mythologies of complex interacting worlds and as part of a larger mythological worldview for reading self, world, and history. Scriptures, a site in which some apocalyptic narratives have been placed, function as more than just the texts we term “the bible,” and I consider them here in terms of a broad range of performative practices—as both the “no-place” and the “real” home of identity formation, contestation, and negotiation of imperial power.

Because this project seeks to examine interactions between

multiple complex phenomena (scriptures, apocalyptic, home, utopia, identity, power, and empire), it could not be limited to only one historical period, community, figure, or text. Instead, in it I consider the phenomena in different historical moments, but the moments are intimately related through the narratives deployed. It is a study of the relationship between “revealed” apocalyptic narratives with their imagined utopias, complexly situated in time and space, and the constructions of communal identities and boundaries, and I examine them in the context of early Christian communities, the Spanish settlement of California, as well as in one of the founding documents of the *Movimiento Estudiantil Chicana/o de Aztlán*, *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*.

The power dynamics of empire are complexly approached as well. I consider the roles of utopian narratives in identity formation among groups besieged by empires, but also the deployment of these narratives as authorizing texts of imperial settlement projects.

This project includes sociological and literary analysis and interpretation of historical documents, as well as theoretical approaches rooted in postcolonial, postmodern, and feminist perspectives. Though, the examples engaged in this study provide glimpses of the role of apocalyptic narratives as they can be used in other contexts, I am still choosing three very particular, located instances. Yet these specific locations could provide fertile ground for other scholars who examine narratives, religion, society, and culture. Thus, I hope my findings will have implications for other issues and problems in the study of “scriptures,” religions, and the narration of history more broadly as these vectors relate to the ongoing process of community construction and identification both on local and global scales.

NOTES

¹ “Two Places and No Place on which to Stand: Mixture and Otherness in Hispanic American Theology,” *Listening* 27 (Winter 1992), 26-40.

Violence and Ignacio Ellacuría's Theology of Historical Reality

Salvador Leavitt-Alcántara

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The rampant post-civil war violence permeating every aspect of life in El Salvador has made it the most dangerous place in the Western hemisphere with a homicide rate of 62 per 100,000 inhabitants and a murder rate of twelve persons per day in a country the size of Massachusetts. Although the country reached a peace agreement in 1992 that put an end to twelve years of civil war, violence in the forms of rape, murder, gangs, vigilante justice, robbery, and criminal mafias continues to undermine the country's hope for progress and peace.

How does systematic theology understand and respond to violence such as genocide, domestic violence, and ecological destruction in this century? What prevents it from being effective?

The emergence of liberation theology, with its understanding of structural and not just personal roots of violence, marked a change in the theological approach to violence. It brings attention to the underlying socio-economic injustice, militarization of society, uneven distribution of wealth, poor access to education and health, poverty, unemployment, and global economic policies that benefit only a small portion of the world's population and push a person to resort to violence.

Yet, critics of liberation theology contend that its concentration

on structural analysis reduces violence to a socio-economic phenomenon. They argue that liberation theology naively assumes that a transformation of socio-economic realities results in an automatic transformation of the realities of violence affecting Latin American societies, and that its socio-political analysis ignores cultural and gender analysis, subsuming both into the category of politics. Such critics contend that liberation theology therefore responds ineffectively to violence related to race, culture, and women.

Into this theological gap stepped Salvadoran Jesuit Ignacio Ellacuría, who dedicated a large part of his life to understanding violence during the Salvadoran civil war from 1980 to 1992, and it is to his theology I turn. Ellacuría centers his study of violence in its historical roots and promotes historical actions to confront the problems. Thus he seeks to understand the ideological and material ways in which violence becomes active and present in society, stresses the need for practical religious dogmas to confront the reality of violence, and, in a Christological power-reversal, grounds his entire theological inquiry in the perspective of the victim, the oppressed.

Due to his brutal assassination, Ellacuría only applied his theological vision within a context of a civil war. He did not live through the ensuing years of youth gang violence or social crime, nor the arms race among the civilian population, which accounts for eighty percent of the murders in El Salvador. How does Ellacuría's theological vision help us understand the causes and then decrease the rate of violence? I look at twenty-first century post-war El Salvador and evaluate the validity and importance of Ellacuría's thought for societies dealing with crime.

“Race,” Culture and Faith (Re)Mapping the Development of *Mestizaje* in Theology

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

My dissertation is a critical study of the way *mestizaje* was proposed as a theological category by U.S. Latina/o theologians. I trace the subversive and innovative ways in which these theologians appropriated the condition of biological and cultural intermixture (*mestizaje*) and turned it into a powerful framework for articulating the experiences of faith of the Latina/o communities. I illustrate the innovative and revolutionary character of *mestizaje* in theology by highlighting some of the important contributions these theologians have made in the areas of biblical hermeneutics, popular religion, and the consideration of the central role of culture for theological reflections.

As Latina/o theologians engaged and appropriated the violent history of *mestizaje*—the result of the Spanish and Portuguese invasions—these theologians and scholars drew only from the Mexican and Mexican-American intellectual tradition and experience. They failed to engage the larger history of *mestizaje* in Latin America. To show this, I enter into conversation with prominent Latina/o scholars and theologians who in their work use *mestizaje* substantially to articulate their views.

The discourse of *mestizaje* in Latin America has mutated so

much that there is no single way of understanding the condition of *mestizaje*. In identifying Latina/o theology as distinctively *mestiza/o*, Latina/o theologians unwittingly reinscribed the historical silences of the indigenous and African peoples by not entering into conversation with their own intellectual and religious traditions. I support my claims by drawing from current criticisms of *mestizaje* as characteristic of the ethnonational and cultural identity of the Latin American countries. These criticisms come from the indigenous, African, and women scholars who indict *mestizaje* as a social, political, economic, and ideological agenda promoting the homogenization of the population and culture, while privileging the *mestiza/o* elite, especially those who claim to be of lighter pigmentation. Contrary to popular beliefs, I claim that the discourse of *mestizaje* in Latin America and the U.S. has not brought about the inclusion of historically marginalized voices, has not removed the problem of racism even among Latina/o communities, and has not removed the privilege ascribed to whiteness.

In identifying the problems and difficulties inherent in the use of *mestizaje*, I propose that Latina/o theologians must engage the larger context of Latin America to properly address some of the most damning criticism of the use of *mestizaje*. The discourse of *mestizaje* must be understood in the plural, and any use of the term must first be qualified and placed within its historical context. Finally, the reality of ethnocultural diversity among the Latina/o communities calls for new ways of understanding and thinking about ethnocultural and religious identity construction. The alternative is to adopt an intercultural theological approach which seems better suited to helping us identify and understand the dynamic interaction between peoples and groups. It also provides a discursive platform for creating revolutionary new spaces for the voices that have historically been silenced.

The Holy Ghost Beyond Church Walls Latino Pentecostalism(s), Congregations, and Civic Engagement

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

In what ways is Pentecostalism a catalyst or an inhibitor of congregational and congregant civic engagement among U.S. Latinos? How does this compare to other religious traditions, specifically Catholicism, Evangelicalism, and mainline Protestantism?

Against the backdrop of recent social scientific debates about social capital, civic skills, and civic engagement, this dissertation considers the U.S. Latino Pentecostal community to see whether in fact some of the most disadvantaged members of society (immigrants, the urban poor, single mothers, minorities, etc.) actually gain civic skills and opportunities for civic engagement within and beyond the walls of the church, skills and opportunities that ultimately contribute to the health of society. Now that the Latino community is the largest ethnic minority in the U.S., understanding the power and transformative potential of this community, particularly when it disrupts stereotypes and assumptions, is more important than ever.

Undergirding my research is the dataset collected in the last three years through the Chicago Latino Congregations Study conducted by the Center for the Study of Latino Religion of Notre Dame University. In this study, a random stratified sample of 100 Latino congregations was chosen from a universe of 606 Latino

congregations. Seventy-two of the 100 churches participated in all of the data collection phases (leadership interview/survey, self-administered leadership survey, adult survey, and youth survey). Twenty-six of the thirty-two Pentecostal churches participated in the study.

To answer the research question of this study, I developed typologies of Latino Pentecostal congregations, of congregational civic engagement, and of congregant civic engagement, being careful to identify the congregation type effect. Finally, I compare the civic engagement of Latino Pentecostal congregations with the civic engagement of Latino Catholic, Evangelical, and Mainline congregations.

The dissertation argues that Latino Pentecostal congregations, depending on a variety of reasons such as demographics, congregational place of origin, and leaders' education, can either be very conservative, inward looking, and otherworldly, or activist and this worldly—in addition to many other options along this continuum. Such findings are particularly important, given the common social scientific research assumption that Latino Pentecostal congregations are generally conservative, inward looking, and otherworldly. After surveying over twenty-five Pentecostal pastors and over 1000 members, I found that significant numbers of Pentecostal churches are involved in various causes. Some of the causes include, providing social services to their members and surrounding community by the distribution of food, clothing, emergency financial help, and job placement. Other congregations participate in protests and marches, such as the immigration marches that recently swept the country. And still others connect their members and the surrounding community with structured networks of social services provided by nonprofits, or the government; or become partners with nonprofits to provide health fairs, basic educational services, and financial and economic development training.

The Life and Work of Millard Richard Shaull A Presbyterian Missionary to Latin America, 1919-2000

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Dissertation Committee: Dr. Dana Lee Robert,
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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a historical and missiological study of the life and work of Richard Shaull, one of the foremost North American Protestant missionaries to Latin America in the second half of the twentieth century. Richard Shaull's life had myriad connections with significant theological and political issues of the day in his roles as missionary, political activist, human rights advocate, theologian, seminary professor, ecumenicist, and editor of different scholarly journals. What core beliefs unified and integrated his variety of interests? What associations and influences helped to shape his identity and thought? How did Shaull's understanding of mission develop in dialogue with his multiple contexts?

Chapter One presents Shaull's ministry in Colombia, South America from 1942 to 1950, a ministry that revealed his belief that the Gospel of Jesus Christ should engage all realms of human existence. He unionized factory workers, creating better opportunities for them through the foundation of a Worker's Center; he was a leader for the Presbyterian youth; he worked in a literacy program; he combined Christian spirituality and social activism to formulate ways of Christian involvement in the transformation of Colombian society; and he was one of the first missionaries to put

into practice the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as an advocate against religious and political persecution.

Chapter Two documents Shaull's missionary career in Brazil from 1952 to 1962. In a context of rapid social changes, he was a leading founder of the Sector of Social Responsibility of the Church in Brazil sponsored by the World Council of Churches and worked as an ecumenical leader for the World Student Christian Federation, apart from being a professor of church history at Campinas Seminary.

Chapter Three presents Shaull's theology of revolution as the forerunner of Latin American liberation theology through his involvement in Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina (ISAL).

Chapter Four describes various frameworks of Shaull's missiology: as main speaker at the Conference of Church and Society of the World Council of Churches in Geneva in 1966; as participant in the New Left with radical students; in the formation of North American Congress for Latin America (NACLA); and as Chairman of the World Student Christian Federation.

Chapter Five addresses three ongoing motifs in Shaull's missiology from 1980 to 2000, particularly: the poor and oppressed of Latin America as the heralds of a "new Reformation;" the formation of biblical alternatives to U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America; and the re-creation of life in the midst of total ruins through neo-Pentecostalism in Brazil.

Throughout, the dissertation's most important contribution is its alternative view to the well established scholarly interpretation of North American missionaries as cultural imperialists and political backers of the status quo.

Truth, Justice, and Forgiveness: Reconciliation in the Christology of Jon Sobrino

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

The twentieth century's legacy is one marked by social conflict and war: more than 200 million people killed as a consequence of systematic repression, political revolution, ethnic or religious war. How can Christians begin to address the roots of such conflict, heal the wounds of the victims, and engage in the task of constructing a socio-political order that fosters peace and reconciliation among broken communities?

I propose that Jon Sobrino's Christology offers the basis for a Christian spirituality and a theology of reconciliation that promotes both the mending of historical reality, and also the reconciliation of human beings with God and among themselves. It does so by prioritizing the perspective, role, and contribution of the victims in the process of reconciliation; by insisting on the need both for personal forgiveness and for a social restoration of justice inspired by Jesus' merciful praxis; and by arguing that Christian discipleship must foster a ministry of reconciliation aimed at the eradication of structural sin, the corresponding humanization of its victims, and the rehabilitation of the oppressor.

To this end, I first examine the current theological conversation on reconciliation exemplified by the works of Miroslav Volf and John de Gruchy. Their theologies stress different moments in the reconciliation process; while Volf stresses the importance of personal forgiveness, de Gruchy emphasizes the demand of social

justice. This analysis begets the critical question of what results when one of these values is emphasized at the expense of the other.

Acknowledging the contextual character of all theologies, I next examine the development of Jon Sobrino's theology within his historical context and intellectual history. The conflictual character of recent Salvadoran history, the development of Latin American liberation theology, the influence of Monsignor Oscar Romero and particularly, Ignacio Ellacuria's intellectual legacy. All help explain Sobrino's theological method, his understanding of the purpose of the theological task, and his foundations for a Christian spirituality. Sobrino's spiritual foundation outlines the basic structure that should orient the human person's relationship to reality. I flesh out this structure with the theological contents that ensue from his Christology.

I then move to this study's central task: to identify and examine those elements in Sobrino's Christology that are important for developing a spirituality capable of fostering a ministry and a theology of reconciliation: his treatment of Jesus' life, message, death, and resurrection interpreted from the perspective of the victims and the hope in God's Kingdom as the hermeneutical principles that allow us to draw closer to Christ's reconciling revelation.

Finally, I suggest a constructive theology and discipleship of reconciliation rooted in Sobrino's Christology and brought into conversation with the theological projects of Volf and De Gruchy.

