

HISPANICS IN THE CHURCH:
INCLUSION IN MAINLINE DENOMINATIONS

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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BY

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November 29, 2010

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I am submitting herewith a project report and thesis written by Luis C. Bernard
Entitled "HISPANICS IN THE CHURCH: INCLUSION IN MAINLINE
DENOMINATIONS."

I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content and recommend
That it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Ministry.

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ABSTRACT

Project Director: Francisco Lozada. This research project examines the outputs/outcomes of three Hispanic Ministry programs within three historic mainline Protestant denominations in order to gain insight into whether inclusion of Hispanics has increased. Given the new cultural context of openness to plurality in post-modernity and the increased presence of Hispanics in the United States evidence of increased Hispanic inclusion in Christian churches was expected. The research found that the level of Hispanic inclusion in the three mainline Protestant denominations was low and flat but that other Christian denominations were experiencing moderate to high levels of Hispanic inclusion.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Importance of the Study

European empires rose to dominate the world after the discovery of new continents in the second millennium.¹ As a result, rising countries in the new world lived under European colonial domination for over two hundred years bringing political, economic, and cultural influences, such as religion, to these new territories that would have lasting colonial effects on the peoples of North and South America.² These historical colonial developments of the modern period (1500-1900) made Eurocentric thought and its way of life the established norm in the United States.³

Now, as we enter the third millennium, these Eurocentric norms of the modern period are being contested by post-modern's principle of diversity and pluralism.⁴ For instance, in the United States the shift away from cultural and racial homogeneity towards plurality is undeniable by the growing presence of peoples from developing countries. Some say that the recognition, arrival, and inclusion of voices from their

¹ Juan Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America* (New York, New York: Penguin Books, 2,000), 3.

² Ibid.

³ Steven M. Tipton, "Globalizing Civil Religion and Public Theology," in *Religion in Global Society*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 49-67.

⁴ Post-modern and post-modernity in this paper refers to the shift away from the Eurocentric worldview of the modern period. For additional explanation of these terms see pages 16-17.

world or less developed countries have de-centered the old Western center.⁵ This openness toward plurality and global relationships creates today a new cultural context and space in which Hispanic citizens who have been historically excluded (Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans) and marginalized Latino(a) residents can work towards inclusion within church and society in the United States.⁶

Unfortunately, Hispanics in spite of living in the postmodern era of global, pluralistic relationships, continue to share with past generations of Hispanics the common struggle of not being welcomed, accepted, or belonging in the United States.⁷ According to Hispanic/Latino theologians, social isolation, marginalization, and subordination are the shared common experiences of all Hispanic/Latino ethnic groups.⁸ Nevertheless, the Hispanic community in the United States is living in the midst of a new historical context.⁹ Hispanics may benefit from this postmodern shift towards plurality and inclusiveness if, for example, the inequality gaps in education, employment, and housing are closed. Moreover, inclusion of Latinos into mainline Protestant churches, which is the focus of this paper, could also be a possibility.¹⁰

The question facing Christian churches and American democracy today is whether

⁵ Fernando F. Segovia, *Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2000).

⁶The U.S. government began to utilize the term Hispanic in 1970 to refer to persons from Spanish speaking countries or of Hispanic American heritage living in the United States. Hispanic and Latino/a will be used interchangeably in this paper. See page 13 for an expanded explanation.

⁷ Gonzalez, introduction to *Harvest of Empire*, xviii-xix.

⁸ Justo L. Gonzalez, *Santa Biblia: The Bible Through Hispanic Eyes* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 31-55.

⁹ Joyce Oldham Appleby, Lynn Avery Hunt, and Margaret C. Jacob, *Telling The Truth About History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995).

¹⁰ The term mainline Protestant denomination refers to Protestant churches that historically represented the dominant presence in the United States. For a fuller description see page 18.

they can embrace this new pluralism in the United States.¹¹ Mainline Protestant churches in the United States have been leaders in ministries of justice and social transformation. At the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century, the United Methodist Church in 1992,¹² the Presbyterian Church (USA) in 2002,¹³ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1992 created national offices and strategies for Hispanic Ministry.¹⁴ After several decades of ministry with Hispanics, what have been the results of their efforts? This research study will examine current levels of Hispanic inclusion¹⁵ within three mainline Protestant denominations. Increased levels of Hispanic inclusion would signal the emergence of a plural community within the three mainline churches. Moreover, the development of a mature and fully integrated Hispanic constituency is critical for the emerging post-modern plural community in America. An integrated multicultural religious institution would enable Hispanics to make additional contributions to the Hispanic community and to participate in American public life.

As such, this research study will argue that increased levels of Hispanic inclusion are expected to be found in three mainline Protestant denominations due to the new

¹¹ Ronald F. Thiemann, *Religion in Public Life: A Dilemma for Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996). “American” in this paper refers to the United States of America.

¹² “National Plan for Hispanic Ministry,” United Methodist Church, Accessed September 21, 2010, <http://gbgm-umc.org/programs/hispanicmin/plan2.html>.

¹³ “Strategy For Ministry With The Hispanic-Latino Constituencies in the Presbyterian Church (USA),” Presbyterian Church (USA). Accessed June 12, 2010, <http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/hispanic/pdf/strategy.pdf>.

¹⁴ “Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries: Recursos,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Accessed June 12, 2010, <http://obrahispana.org/index.php?nid=113150&s=rs>.

¹⁵ Inclusion in the churches will be measured by a holistic approach that considers, outreach, diversity, and incorporation of Hispanic leadership. See also pages 15-16.

cultural context of openness to plurality in post-modernity, and the increased presence of Hispanics, as reflected in census data, in the United States.

Historical Background

Spanish speaking outposts existed throughout North America one hundred years before the Mayflower arrived.¹⁶ In fact, Spanish was the first known European language spoken in the new world, including North America. However, as the thirteen British colonies became a new nation, and began to expand their borders, they carried with them their policy of social exclusion.¹⁷ For instance, the growing nation drove out or pushed away Native Americans, Spanish speaking persons, and others who were different.¹⁸ For the majority of the nineteenth century, Spanish speaking persons in the United States were concentrated in the Southwest.¹⁹

In the Southwest, the historical experiences of the Alamo, the Mexican-American war, the continual border scimmages, and manifest destiny strained the relationship with Spanish speaking persons in the United States and in Latin America.²⁰ The cultural consequences, for Hispanics in the United States, were additional social distance and marginalization. Meanwhile, the emerging American empire continued to expand westward and southward. In 1898, after the sinking of the Maine at Havana

¹⁶ Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 27-30

¹⁹ Gonzalez, *Harvest of Empire*, 81. See also, David G. Gutierrez, ed., *The Columbia History of Latinos in the United States since 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), xix, 1, 6, 44.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

harbor, the United States declared war on Spain and invaded the island of Puerto Rico. As a result, Puerto Ricans involuntarily became citizens of the United States in 1917.²¹ The new American citizens, the Puerto Ricans, in time, began to settle into the Northeast region of the United States.²² The record of the twentieth century shows that Puerto Ricans also experienced social isolation, exploitation, and discrimination, similar to the experiences of Mexican Americans in the nineteenth century.²³

The growth of the Hispanic population during the first half of the twentieth century was very slow. Hispanics were concentrated in the Southwest and in the Northeast regions of the country. This limited size of the Hispanic population, its confinement to two geographical regions, and the fact that the vast majority of Hispanics were Roman Catholics did not encourage Protestant denominations, or other churches, to develop a national response to the presence of Hispanics. However, the makeup of the Hispanic landscape would change during the 1960's and it would impact church and society in the United States until the present.

After the 1959 Cuban revolution hundreds of thousands of Cuban refugees came to Florida and the United States.²⁴ Their arrival in the 1960's broke the established geographical barriers for Hispanics. Large numbers of Hispanics now lived in another region of the country, the Southeast. Moreover, the Cuban presence marked the first time the US government had invited and allowed a Hispanic group into American

²¹ Ibid., 62.

²² Gutierrez, ed., *The Columbia History of Latinos*, 1.

²³ Ibid., 246-267.

²⁴ Ibid., 108-116.

society. Cubans rapidly became the third major Hispanic group in the country.

Americans could no longer generalize about Hispanics but had to account for their ethnic diversity and presence in church and society.

In addition, in 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act amendment removed the national origin limitations. This fundamental change in official government policy cleared the way for non-European immigrant groups to have greater access into the country.²⁵ This is the initial background for the dramatic Hispanic influx of the following decades.²⁶ Table 1 reflects the number of Hispanics in the U.S.A. since

Table 1. U.S. Hispanic Population Since 1940

Year	Hispanic	Total Population	%Hispanic
1940	1,858,024	131,669,275	1.4
1950	3,918,132	150,697,361	2.6
1960	5,917,665	179,323,175	3.3
1970	9,589,216	203,211,926	4.7
1980	14,608,673	226,545,805	6.4
1990	22,354,059	248,709,873	8.9
2000	35,305,813	281,421,906	12.5
2010	49,775,176	309,162,581	16.1

²⁵ Gutierrez, ed., *The Columbia History of Latinos*, 3-5.

²⁶ Gonzalez, introduction, xvi.

1940.²⁷ In later decades globalization added to Hispanic immigration.

European immigrant groups developed ethnic churches or denominations during the early history of the United States.²⁸ These immigrant European churches provided a place of belonging and support for their particular ethnic group. Moreover, the European ethnic church empowered the group to act on its behalf to overcome social exclusion.²⁹ Unfortunately, Latinos lack identifiable regional or national churches in which Hispanics can embrace and address their concerns. Meanwhile, mainline Protestant denominations have had disparate responses to the increasing presence of Hispanics in the nation.

The most positive response by some mainline Protestant denominations to the growing Hispanic presence has been the development of Hispanic Ministry programs. Hispanic Ministry programs reach out, attract Hispanics, and provide social services to their membership. On the one hand, these mission and outreach ministries indicate good ministry practice; on the other hand, they may be dealing with the social symptoms and not the real issue, the systemic place and social location of Hispanics in American society.³⁰ What is needed is a transformational practice that includes Hispanics as visible citizens of our community and affirms their participation in the

²⁷ "Historical Census Statistics," US Census Bureau, Accessed December 29, 2009, <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/twps0056.html>. See also "Hispanic Population in the United States," US Census Bureau, Accessed December 29, 2009, http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/files/Internet_Hispanic_in_US_2006.pdf.

²⁸ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland, Ohio: A Living Age Book (Meridian) published by The World Publishing Company, 1957), 200-235.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 200-201.

³⁰ Edwin I. Hernandez, Milagros Peña, and Kenneth Davis, eds., *Strengthening Hispanic Ministry Across Denominations: A Call to Action* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke Divinity School, 2005), 23.

church. Fortunately, the vision or mission statements of the largest mainline Protestant denominations express a desire to achieve inclusiveness.³¹ Moreover, the articulated social positions of these mainline Protestant denominations call for the integration into church and society of all its members.

Research Question

What is the present status of Hispanic inclusion within the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)? To answer this research question, this study will examine the outreach, diversity, and incorporation output/outcomes of the Hispanic Ministry programs within these three mainline Protestant denominations. The study will also shed light upon related research questions. For example, (1) what is the distribution of Hispanics in the three Protestant denominations? (2) Which Hispanic Ministry programs are making progress towards inclusion? (3) Which of the three Protestant denominations have met the stated inclusiveness goals with Hispanics? (4) Which best practices for Hispanics can be identified? And, (5) what future directions for the practice of ministry with Hispanics can be suggested?

³¹ For a review of the vision and mission statements of the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) see chapter four.

Thesis

This research study will argue that increased levels of Hispanic inclusion are expected to be found in three mainline Protestant denominations due to the new cultural context of openness to plurality in post-modernity, and the increased presence of Hispanics, as reflected in census data, in the United States.

Rationale for this Study

The response of mainline Protestant denominations to the increasing presence of Hispanics in American society has been the development of Hispanic Ministry programs. This research project aims to examine the interaction between mainline churches and the Hispanic community in the United States. The context of ministry is not the local parish but a wider ecclesial community. The study, therefore, intends to explore the practice of ministry with Hispanics of three mainline Protestant communities. The three mainline Protestant denominations are the United Methodist Church, The Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). These denominations represent mainline Protestant churches with longstanding historical mission experience in Latin America and with Hispanic persons in the United States.³² In addition, to enable comparison and applicability of

³² Ed Sylvest, "Bordering Cultures and the Origins of Hispanic Protestant Christianity", in *Protestantes/Protestants: Hispanic Christianity within Mainline Traditions*, ed. David Maldonado, Jr. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999).

findings, they represent the three types of ecclesiastical polity within Christian churches, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational.³³

Several potential benefits are anticipated from the evaluation of the Hispanic Ministry practices of the three Protestant denominations. The findings should:

- 1) Fill an information gap and thus make a contribution to the lack of understanding and practice of ministry with Hispanics;
- 2) Discover best ministry practices that can be useful to other practitioners of Hispanic ministry;
- 3) Provide a better understanding of the process of inclusion;
- 4) Identify the location of Hispanics in the three Protestant denominations and recommend future directions for Hispanic ministry.
- 5) Discern potential applications for other ministry contexts;
- 6) Consider how ministry evaluation can enhance Hispanic ministry; and
- 7) Encourage further study/research on Hispanics and Hispanic Ministry by ministry practitioners.

Research Design for the Study

The purpose of this research study is to examine the outputs/outcomes of three Hispanic Ministry programs in order to gauge the levels of Hispanic inclusion in three

³³ Steven B. Cowan, ed., *Who Runs the Church: 4 views on Church Government* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004). See also, Edward Leroy Long, *Patterns of Polity: Varieties of Church Governance* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2001).

mainline Protestant denominations. This study will evaluate where these three mainline Christian denominations are in achieving inclusion with Hispanics. Because theology cannot be divorced from practice, this research project anticipates that the principle of inclusiveness espoused by Jesus, and affirmed in the vision/mission statements of the three Protestant denominations, will be reflected in their ministry practices with Hispanics. As a result, the research project expects to find evidence of progress in the levels of Hispanic inclusion within the three Protestant churches.

This is a practical theology research project that integrates theory and methods from social research. The intellectual theory behind the evaluative research method is the program evaluation paradigm.³⁴ In the program evaluation paradigm, no one model of evaluation exists. Therefore, the design is to be flexible, evolving, and emergent in order to tailor the evaluation to suit the needs of the research project. This study will utilize concepts from outcome evaluation and ministry evaluation in the design of the research methodology.³⁵

Limitations/Scope

This research study will examine the inclusion outputs and outcomes of three Hispanic ministry programs from three mainline Protestant denominations. One aim

³⁴ The professional practice of the program evaluation field has historically emphasized the quantitative scientific paradigm to systematically collect and analyze information about the inputs, processes, and outputs of programs. See page 17 for a fuller explanation and Jody L. Fitzpatrick, James R. Sanders, and Blaine R. Worthen, *Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*, 3rd edition (Boston: Pearson Education Inc., 2004).

³⁵ No other Hispanic inclusion studies or output/outcome evaluations were found for these three Protestant denominations.

of the research project is to take a holistic look at progress towards integrating Hispanics in mainline Protestant denominations. The research study will not conduct an evaluation to determine the effectiveness of any particular Hispanic Ministry program. The research project will also not assess the inputs, process, and general outcomes of these programs. In addition, this research project is not about determining the effectiveness of any of the ecclesial systems. Moreover, the project will not look at program participant achievement or other results that the programs produced.

The researcher has control of the sample size, program comparisons, evaluation criteria, and the timeline of the project. The researcher has limited the information sample to three Hispanic ministry programs in order to emphasize depth and not breadth of information. However, the researcher expanded the evaluation of Hispanic Ministry programs from one to three in order to triangulate the information sources and increase validity and reliability.

The design of this research study intends to answer the question: To what extent has the goal of increasing Hispanic inclusion been attained? The goal of the research study is not to describe, or explain, the process of how Hispanic ministry programs arrived at their present location but to map the levels of Hispanic inclusion in each of the three Protestant denominations.

Definitions of Terms

The term Latin American, in Spanish *Latino Americano*, was first utilized by the French during the 1862-1867 occupation of Mexico to refer to persons who traced their origins to the French and Spanish Empires. The abbreviated form of the term in Spanish is simply *Latino*. In 1970 the U.S. government began to utilize the term *Hispanic* to refer to persons from Spanish speaking countries and people in the United States who are of Hispanic American origin. Both terms are limiting and exclude persons and countries from non Spanish speaking backgrounds in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America, for example, indigenous languages in many South American countries and the Portuguese language of Brazil. Moreover, the terms *Latino* or *Hispanic* do not identify the race or ethnicity of the multiple groups and persons involved. Due to these complex and difficult issues the U.S. Census now encourages persons to self identify if they consider themselves *Latino* or *Hispanic*. This ability to self identify has led many to prefer to be identified by national origin, for example, Mexican-American or Puerto Rican American. The debate about the origins of these terms and the arguments over their limitations are many. As such, there is no consensus on the use and definition of *Hispanic* or *Latino*. Acknowledging the limitations and inadequacies of these terms this research project will utilize the terms *Hispanic* or *Latino/a* interchangeably. Both terms describe what most Americans use to refer to persons from Spanish speaking countries or of Hispanic American heritage living in the United States.

Racism is an evolving ideology.³⁶ Racism changes and adapts to historical conditions and circumstances. In the United States, for example, racism has taken different forms at different times, from early slavery, to Jim Crow segregation, to institutionalized discrimination.³⁷ In its present form racism is perpetuated and justified through a social system that is racialized.³⁸ The racialized society is one in which we are aware of the race of a person with whom we interact. It is a society that allocates different economic, political, social, and psychological rewards to groups along racial lines. The socially constructed racial lines produce limited intimate associations, educational disparity, residential separation, and socioeconomic inequality.

Racialization refers to racial practices that produce racial division in the United States.³⁹ These practices avoid direct racial terminology, operate in covert fashion, are embedded in the normal operations of institutions of church and society, and are invisible to most whites. It is a framework where racism is not an individual act of prejudice or discrimination but a collective misuse of power that results in diminished life opportunities for some racial groups.⁴⁰

This research project will utilize the term *racialized society*.⁴¹ In our present context, it is a more useful term than prejudice or racism. Because racialization is

³⁶ Michael O. Emerson, and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7

embedded within normal everyday life, people are not aware how the unintended consequences contribute to racial division and inequality. In the systemic racial structure of the United States, individual acts of racism, or overt discrimination, are not necessary for racilization to reproduce social inequality.⁴²

There are different ways that people and organizations define inclusiveness. This research project has taken the insights from the American Humanics Workforce Diversity/Inclusion Plan of Action⁴³ and the Inclusiveness Project from The Denver Foundation⁴⁴ to develop a holistic approach to inclusiveness. Inclusiveness is therefore conceived as a comprehensive effort composed of three different aspects.

The first aspect of inclusion is the recruiting of minorities. This necessary first step intends to attract and increase the number of minority persons in the organization. The ideal recruitment strategy moves beyond token representation. The goal is to welcome, accept, and increase minority prevalence. In the church, recruitment is identified as outreach.

The second aspect of inclusion is diversity. Organizations that want to progress toward diversity will want to retain sufficient people from diverse backgrounds. The labor force of an organization achieves diversity when they reflect the racial and

⁴² Ibid., 11

⁴³ “Workforce Diversity/Inclusion Plan of Action,” American Humanics, Accessed December 28, 2009, http://www.humanics.org/site/c.omL2KiN4LvH/b.2157037/k.2110/Workforce_Diversity_and_Inclusion_Committee.htm.

⁴⁴ “The Denver Foundation Inclusiveness Project,” The Denver Foundation, Accessed December 30, 2009, www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org.

ethnic composition of the communities it serves. This is demographic proportional representation.

The third aspect of inclusion is the advancement and incorporation of minority leadership. This is an intentional step that values minority persons and their contributions. It, therefore, seeks to foster the leadership development of minority persons in the structures of the organization. Moreover, the organization seeks the active participation of minority persons in its leadership.

Progress towards inclusion is a journey that encompasses all three aspects. A piecemeal approach does not achieve inclusion. One or two Hispanics, for example, in the organization is not diversity. Likewise, having several minorities without leadership roles is not incorporation. Each individual aspect is important but it is the whole, all three aspects taken together, that leads to inclusion. Assessment of inclusion in this research project will consider these three aspects: outreach, diversity, and incorporation of leadership.

In this paper, the postmodern period should be understood as a movement away from the Eurocentric emphasis of modernity. The modern period was characterized by the autonomous individual, the primacy of reason, the belief in objective truth, the historic human drive towards progress, and the certainty of the grand universal narratives. Post-modernity, on the other hand, is characterized by another worldview. Among the trends of post-modernity are global awareness, alternate ways of knowing, plurality, particularity, diversity, and inclusion. The terms postmodern and

post-modernity are utilized interchangeably in this study to refer to the movement away from modernity.

Practical Theology engages in the critical theological reflection of the acts of ministry involved and discerns if they are patterned after the Gospel.⁴⁵ The method of interpretation of situations of practical theology may be brought to bear on any issue worthy of consideration.⁴⁶ The scope of practical theology, therefore, comprehends the web of life. In addition, practical theology is contextual in nature in that it involves the examination of a situation in context. Finally, practical theology also includes material from the human sciences because it has an understanding of ministry that is holistic.

Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and output/outcomes of programs.⁴⁷ The data can be used by specific people to reduce uncertainties, improve effectiveness, and make decisions with regard to what those programs are doing.⁴⁸ Program outcome evaluation is a type of program evaluation that uses designed planned activities to measure program outcome effectiveness and to compare actual results with expected results or program standards of success.⁴⁹ Religious organizations, ministries, and religious programs are

⁴⁵ Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003).

⁴⁶ Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), x.

⁴⁷ Michael Quinn Patton, *Utilization Focused Evaluation*, 2nd edition (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1986), 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Kristine L. Mika, *Program Outcome Evaluation: A Step-by-Step Handbook* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Families International, Inc., 1996), 2.

also evaluated.⁵⁰ Ministry evaluations, in addition to program criteria, have theological criteria. Ministry evaluations will reveal how well the ministries are fulfilling their commitments to Christ, the church, and each other.⁵¹

Mainline Protestant denominations are those Protestant denominations that represented the vast majority of Protestantism in the United States during the 1700s, 1800s, and early 1900s. The term *mainline* once implied a certain numerical majority or dominant presence in mainstream society. From 1958 to 2008, mainline church membership declined from over 50 percent to 15 percent of all adults in the United States. The seven largest mainline denominations, referred to as the Seven Sisters of American Protestantism, are the American Baptist Churches USA, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ (Congregationalist), and the United Methodist Church.

Church polity refers to the model of church governance that a Christian church employs in the administration of its operations. There are three historical polity models within the mainline Protestant tradition, Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational.⁵² Rule by Bishops best describes the Episcopal model of church polity. It has patristic origins due to the fact that it emerged after the apostolic age

⁵⁰ Kathleen A. Cahalan, *Projects that Matter: Successful Planning & Evaluation for Religious organizations* (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 2003).

⁵¹ Jill M. Hudson, *Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations* (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 1992), 2.

⁵² Cowan, *Who Runs the Church*. Long, *Patterns of Polity*.

during the third, fourth, and fifth centuries.⁵³ With no apostolic successors, or eyewitnesses with a direct commission, the Episcopacy is seen as a continuation of the office of an apostle in regards to the ministry of oversight. There are three types of Episcopacy, Monarchical, Managerial, and Pastoral.⁵⁴ Regardless of type, the emphasis is on preserving a particular Christian Heritage and ordering the churches according to that tradition. This strong connection to the past helps to explain why Episcopal traditions are the most resistant to change. There is also a strong emphasis on the present connection which leads to the development of strong bureaucracies to maintain them. Bishops appoint ministers to a place of service. Pastors are sheltered by the appointment process from the hiring and firing whims of local congregations.

Rule by designated representative best describes the Presbyterian model of church polity. The designated representatives are a combination of elected lay and ordained elders. The cultural tradition of Israel in the Old Testament provides the biblical framework for the rule by elders. Presbyterians also see elders in the New Testament participating in the oversight role. The elected elders carry out the ministry of oversight performed by bishops in the Episcopacy. Formed during the Protestant reformation, this polity model stresses decision making by a group of representatives while also emphasizing the connectional system.⁵⁵ Presbyterian polity is structured in local sessions, area presbyteries, and regional synods. Local pastors are called or

⁵³ Cowan, *Who Runs the Church*, 24.

⁵⁴ Long, *Patterns of Polity*.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

appointed however, presbyteries retain veto power. This style of governance by committee is characterized by a highly structured legal parliamentary process.

Rule by congregational decision best describes the Congregational model of church polity. The Free Church movement emerged in the 16th and 17th centuries as a reaction against politically established and centrally controlled religion.⁵⁶ Some Congregationalist churches have organized into associations for mutual support and accountability. Others prefer to retain their independence and autonomy and have no overarching church structure. The emphasis is on the regeneration of life of all members with the expectation that they reach spiritual maturity. In the congregational polity model, the focus on spiritual development allows local members to conduct their affairs in ways that are faithful to the gospel. Each member has the freedom to live out their convictions in response to the gospel. Pastors and deacons are the only church officers identified in the New Testament and are accountable only to God and the congregation. Congregational churches believe that authority resides within the body of believers as they strive to live the Word and follow the will of God.

Assumptions

This research project makes several assumptions. First, that we live in an era in which post-modernity is contesting modernity. As a result, the American cultural context reflects openness to plurality. Second, the use of the term *Spanish speaking*

⁵⁶ Ibid., 121.

persons in this paper includes Hispanic/Latino Americans and undocumented Hispanic immigrants. Any attempt to try to determine the legal status of the Hispanic population is beyond the scope of this paper. Finally, the use of the terms *Hispanic* or *Latino* makes no distinctions of the great variety of Hispanic ethnic groups. For the purposes of this research project the use of these umbrella terms do not erase the social/cultural realities of each individual Hispanic ethnic group.

Preview of Remaining Chapters

Four additional chapters form the remaining body of this research project. Chapter two is a literature review that examines four aspects of the relationship between Hispanics and the church. The four aspects are: (1) the Hispanic Protestant tradition, (2) trends of the Hispanic church experience, (3) the reason for Hispanic exclusion/inclusion, and (4) the response from the scriptures.

Chapter three describes the research procedures of this study. The theoretical and theological orientations of the study are presented. The research method is explained. Evaluation criteria are described. Finally, data collection and data analysis procedures are given.

Chapter four is a presentation of findings. A summary of Hispanic ministry outputs/outcomes for the United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) are presented, analyzed, and compared. Theological insights in relation to Hispanic ministry are provided. The researcher will also evaluate the research design, the findings of the study, and the research

experience. The self evaluation will help to determine what to keep, change, delete or add if the project was repeated. Unexpected findings, if any, are shared and reflected upon.

Chapter five presents a summary of key findings from the research experience. In addition, suggestions for further research are made. The implications, conclusion, and recommendations of the research project are provided. The study will help to discern weaknesses and strengths of the inclusion efforts. Implications for future practice, implications for other contexts of ministry, and implications for the broader community are given.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter will utilize the theological resources of tradition, experience, reason, and scripture to explore four aspects of the relationship between Hispanics and the Protestant church in the United States.⁵⁷ First, the origin of Hispanic Protestant tradition is traced: the Historical Background of Hispanic Protestantism. Second, the present Hispanic church experience is reviewed: Hispanic Protestant Affiliation Trends. Third, the reason(s) for Hispanic exclusion/inclusion is examined: Hispanic Integration in Post-Modern America. And fourth, the witness of scripture is explored to answer the question: Where is the Gospel? Additional questions considered in this chapter are: Who are Hispanic Protestants? How many Hispanics are Protestants? Where do they worship? And, when is inclusion possible?

Tradition: Historical Background of Hispanic Protestantism

According to Ed Sylvest the dominant heritage of the Protestants who initially evangelized Hispanics can be traced to the borderlands of Northern Britain.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward, *Theological Reflection: Methods*, (London: SCM-Canterbury Press Ltd., 2005), 12. See also Charles J. Scalise, *Bridging the Gap: Connecting What You Learned in Seminary With What You Find in the Congregation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 13-14.

⁵⁸ Ed Sylvest, "Bordering Cultures and the Origins of Hispanic Protestant Christianity", in *Protestantes/Protestants: Hispanic Christianity within Mainline Traditions*, ed. David Maldonado, Jr. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999). 21.

Therefore, for Sylvest, some knowledge of Anglo-Celtic roots is required to understand Hispanic Protestantism.⁵⁹ In Northern Britain the mix of Scots, Irish, and English people developed a common culture and a common ecclesiastical ethos. Most who came from Scotland and Ireland were Presbyterians.⁶⁰ English borderers were mainly Baptist and Methodist.⁶¹ This ethnic and culturally mixed Anglo-Celtic community emphasized religious experience and the working of the Holy Spirit. In addition, in the highlands of the northern borderlands, far away from the established cultural centers, the border communities had prayer societies, love feasts, and practiced field meetings.

The mixed Anglo-Celts of the Northern borderlands also developed an informal but communal approach to church. To the Northern borderer communities, no matter their social background, everyone belonged to the egalitarian fellowship of the Christian church. This was in sharp contrast to the way church was practiced in the distant cultural centers. The institutional religion practiced by the socially established was characterized by high church formalism. Ecclesial authority was in the hands of the learned and cultured and never under the control of common people.

The immigration of millions of Europeans to the United States from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries brought the mixed Anglo-Celtics and their

⁵⁹ Ibid, 22. For additional exploration of the early historical background of Irish, Scottish, English, and other religious influences in Britain and the United States see Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitfield and the Wesleys*, A History of Evangelicalism: People, Movements and Ideas in the English-Speaking World, Volume 1 (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

⁶⁰Ibid., 26.

⁶¹Ibid., 27. The term borderer is used by the author, Ed Sylvest; to refer to people that formed a mixed culture and a particular religious ethos in the borderlands of Northern Britain and the United States.

particular religious practices to the United States. However, the mixed border people and their religious culture were not well received in America by the more cultured eastern establishment.⁶² A good number of Anglo-Celts eventually settled into the American backlands, the Appalachian and trans-Appalachian frontier.

In the American frontier the borderer communities replicated the cultural and religious patterns of Northern Britain. The camp meeting, the Christian love feast, evangelical preaching and revivalism developed in the Northern borderlands of the British Isles resurfaced in America. Meanwhile, two Presbyterian ministers of the early nineteenth century, Thomas Campbell in Pennsylvania and Barton W. Stone in Kentucky, were in revolt against the dry and mechanical Calvinism practiced in the Presbyterian Church at the time.⁶³ This hunger for a more personal, individual encounter with God provided the momentum for the revival that sprung from the Cane Ridge camp meeting in Kentucky.⁶⁴ Soon after this revival, the Scottish-Irish Presbyterians became the great frontier church of the last half of the eighteenth century.⁶⁵

With the American frontier expanding further West during the nineteenth century, persons from the mixed border communities began to move across the Mississippi

⁶² Ibid., 24.

⁶³ Daisy L. Machado, *Of Borders and Margins: Hispanic Disciples in Texas, 1888-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 60.

⁶⁴ Sylvest, "Bordering Cultures," 28.

⁶⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland, Ohio: A Living Age Book (Meridian) published by The World Publishing Company, 1957), 157.

river and into Texas and the Southwest.⁶⁶ Methodist, Presbyterians, and Disciples played key roles in bringing the Protestant faith to Latinos in the Southwest.⁶⁷ By the eighteenth century the blend of diverse religious traditions, puritan, pietism, evangelical, as well as established religion, had reached the Southwest. However, the early Protestant missionary effort to Hispanics in the Southwest was predominantly infused with the religious ethos of borderer religion. The emergence of Hispanic American Protestant Christianity in the United States was therefore initially impacted by the borderer culture and religion of Northern Britain. Later, Protestant missionaries introduced the gospel into the Caribbean and other parts of Latin America.⁶⁸ Latin American Protestantism is, therefore, also the product of the historic Protestant missionary movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, in the United States, as the Western frontier kept moving further West, the old frontier transitioned into becoming part of the established American society.⁷⁰ In time, the theological influence of the cultural elites of the Eastern establishment and the modern ideas of the liberal Enlightenment began to tame the flames of revivalism and borderer religion.⁷¹ The new emphasis was on academic

⁶⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁷ David Maldonado, ed., *Protestantes/Protestants: Hispanic Christianity within Mainline Traditions* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 13.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Niebuhr, *The Social Sources*, 145, 162.

⁷¹ Another perspective views the loss of revival enthusiasm as a process of institutionalism. See George A. Rawlyk, and Mark A. Noll, eds. *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1993), 119.

education and reason. Moreover, the emergence of the ideology of manifest destiny in American culture imposed Anglo-Saxon culture over gospel in many of the borderer churches.⁷² Nevertheless, the ethos of borderer religion survives and can still be found in some Presbyterian, United Methodist, Baptist, and Disciples churches.⁷³ In fact, later in American history the suppressed borderer religion would manifest itself in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements.⁷⁴

The shift from the primary ethos of the borderer religious movement to Anglo-Saxon manifest destiny culture had a significant impact on Hispanics in the United States. Daisy Machado describes the Disciples camp as having active missionaries outside their national borders since 1851 but unable to develop a comprehensive theology of homeland missions within their national borders.⁷⁵ In Texas, millions of Hispanics remained invisible or simply nonexistent to the Disciples.⁷⁶ Hispanic pastors, ignored and neglected, in the Southwest and in the United States, lacked the support, education, and training to progress towards ordination and become integrated into mainline Protestant denominations. Hispanics Protestant pastors, historically kept at the margins, have participated less in the leadership of denominational structures.⁷⁷

The historical understanding of Ed Sylvest frames the initial Hispanic American Protestant religious tradition as one that was significantly impacted by the borderer

⁷² Sylvest, "Bordering Cultures," 31-34.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Machado, *Of Borders and Margins*, 109.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Maldonado, *Protestantes/Protestants*, 14.

religious heritage. In addition, other early religious influences and Protestant traditions, regardless of their different polities and theologies, were engaged in outreach with Hispanics during the nineteenth century and they too left their impact on Hispanic Protestantism.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, these initial engagements with Hispanics in the Southwest were slowed or became non-existent as later developments in American culture, such as manifest destiny, played an invisible role in fostering more rigid patterns of exclusion in the church toward Hispanics and other minorities.⁷⁹

Experience: Hispanic Protestant Affiliation Trends

In 1965, the US Immigration and Naturalization Act lifted the national origin quota restrictions. As a result, in the late twentieth century increasing waves of Hispanic immigrants began arriving into the United States. Many were Roman Catholics that attempted to fit in within the American brand of Roman Catholicism. Others were Protestants who attempted to blend in within the mainline Protestant denominations. Traditionally it has been difficult to map the logistics of the Hispanic religious landscape. In 2006, the Pew Hispanic Center and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life collaborated to conduct over 4,600 interviews to explore the complex nature of religion among Latinos.⁸⁰ This is one of the largest data collection

⁷⁸ Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George A. Rawlyk, eds. *Evangelicalism: Comparative Studies of Popular Protestantism in North America, the British Isles, and Beyond, 1700-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁷⁹ Niebuhr, *The Social Sources*, vii, 16-17.

⁸⁰ Roberto Suro, and Luis Lugo, *Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2007). Accessed May 6, 2009. <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/75.pdf>.

efforts conducted on this subject. The findings of the Pew Research Center, and other research sources on Hispanic religious life, reflect the same basic distribution.⁸¹

Below, in Table 2, the 20% of Hispanic Protestants are distributed into Evangelicals (15%) and Mainline Protestants (5%).⁸² This study has chosen to take a

Table 2. Hispanic Religious Distribution

Denomination	Percentage of Hispanics
Roman Catholic	68%
Protestant	20%
Other Christians	3%
Other Faiths	1%
Secular	8%
Total	100%

look at the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) within the mainline Protestant denominations. For analysis purposes, the distributions of the three mainline denominations will be compared with the distributions of the Evangelical and Pentecostal churches.⁸³ The forms of church polity in the Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations; Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational, are also found in the mainline Protestant tradition.

⁸¹ Ibid., 8.

⁸² Ibid., 9.

⁸³ Suro and Lugo, *Changing Faiths*, 7.

In Table 3 the distribution of Hispanics reflects a certain preference for churches with a low-church ethos. In addition, the emergence of the independent Hispanic ethnic church is observed. Hispanics in large numbers and through the various generations are seeking the Latino-oriented church with a style of worship that

Table 3. Hispanic Protestant Distribution

Denomination	Percentage of Hispanics
Pentecostal	6.9%
Baptist	3.1%
Independent/Nondenominational	3.0%
Congregational/Church of Christ	0.7%
Methodist	0.3%
Presbyterian	0.3%
Total	14.3%

emphasizes personal religious experience and the presence of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁴ In fact, this trend is not limited to Protestant congregations. In the Roman Catholic Church, 54% of Hispanics are self described charismatics.⁸⁵ Finally, the research also indicates that Latinos are switching their institutional religious affiliation. The trend is toward the more evangelical traditions. For example, over several decades, the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 32.

percentage of Hispanic Roman Catholics has dropped from 80% to 68%.⁸⁶ This 12% drop is mostly composed of 2nd and 3rd generation Roman Catholics who have switched their church affiliation to the more evangelical churches.⁸⁷

How many Protestant Latinos are there in the United States? According to the US Census Bureau, there were approximately a total of 48,419,324 Hispanics in America in 2009.⁸⁸ If one adds the 4 million Hispanic citizens from Puerto Rico the total

Table 4. Hispanic Religious Numeric Totals

Denomination	Percentage of Hispanics	Total Members
Roman Catholic	68%	35,360,000
Protestant	20%	10,400,000
Other Christians	3%	1,560,000
Other Faiths	1%	520,000
Seculars	8%	4,160,000
Total	100%	52,000,000

⁸⁶ Harold J. Recinos, "Mainline Hispanic Protestantism and Latino Newcomers," in *Protestantes/Protestants: Hispanic Christianity Within Mainline Traditions*, ed. David Maldonado (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 194. See also Edwin I. Hernandez, Milagros Peña, and Kenneth Davis, eds., *Strengthening Hispanic Ministry Across Denominations: A Call to Action* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke Divinity School, 2005), 17.

⁸⁷ Gaston Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda, "Hispanic Churches in American Public Life: Summary of Findings," *Interim Reports*, 2nd Edition (March, 2003): 15, Accessed January 12, 2010. <http://latinostudies.nd.edu/cs/r/research/pubs/HispChurchesEnglishWEB.pdf>.

⁸⁸ "Hispanic or Latino by Race, 2009 Population Estimates," U.S. Census Bureau, Accessed August 23, 2010, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-ds_name=PEP_2009_EST&-lang=en&-mt_name=PEP_2009_EST_G2009_T004_2009&-format=&-CONTEXT=dt.

Hispanics in the United States is 52 million. Utilizing the distributions from the Pew Research Center, table 4 illustrates the numeric breakdown of Hispanic Christians in 2009.

Of the 52 million Hispanics in the U.S.A., 20% or 10.4 million are Hispanic Protestants. Of these, 15% or 7.8 million are evangelicals, and 5% or 2.6 million are mainline Protestants. The following table illustrates the distribution by denominational family of the major Hispanic Protestant Christian groupings.

Table 5. Hispanic Protestant Numeric Totals

Denomination	Percentage of Hispanics	Total Members
Pentecostal	6.9%	3,588,000
Baptist	3.1%	1,612,000
Nondenominational	3.0 %	1,560,000
Church of Christ	0.7%	364,000
Methodist	0.3%	156,000
Presbyterian	0.3%	156,000
Total	14.3%	7,436,000

The Hispanic Protestant distribution of Table 5 indicates that there are a total of 676,000 Hispanic Protestants within the major mainline denominational families and ten times as many, or 6,760,000, in the evangelical denominational families The

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC), an organization committed to serving born again Hispanic Christians, states on its website that it serves a total of 25,434 Hispanic congregations in 75 denominations.⁸⁹ Considering that Hispanic Protestants are the product of Protestant missionary efforts, how do we explain this shift toward a more evangelical ethos?

Both Roman Catholic and Protestant Hispanics share a preference for Hispanic ethnic churches with a Latino “style” of worship. What these Hispanics have in common regardless of denominational polity or theology is an interest in a religious ethos that more closely resembles the borderer religious ethos. There is a preference for informality, spontaneity, personal religious experience, the presence of the Holy Spirit, and an egalitarian church environment. Evangelical and Independent congregational churches are attracting Hispanics because of their low-church borderer style of religion. Whereas, mainline Protestant denominations, as established religious organizations, employ a more formal and structured high-church religious culture.

Reason: Hispanic Integration in Post-Modern America

To understand the present experience and context of Hispanic exclusion in the United States, we need to first trace the historical developments that led to our present socio-cultural environment. Before colonialism began, Europeans encountered people from diverse cultures through trade and conflict with Asians, Africans, and other

⁸⁹ National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC), Accessed November 11, 2009, www.nhclc.org.

Europeans. These encounters, however, were not racialized. That is, people did not explain their human differences and their social order with race categories.⁹⁰ Pre-modern Europeans used language, custom, region, and religion to define in-groups and out-groups.

Race first emerged as a legitimization for colonialism.⁹¹ As Europeans searched for new trade routes in the late fifteenth century, they encountered new lands and others inhabiting those new lands. In this encounter, the Western commercial world saw the newly discovered lands and others as a source of goods, labor, and profit.⁹²

English settlers in Jamestown assumed they would use other Europeans as indentured servants and workers to develop a stable labor force.⁹³ The surplus people and undesirable populations of the British Isles were shipped to the American colonies to provide labor. Irish, Scottish, and poor English people were the first people to serve as colony laborers. However, this first attempt to secure a stable labor force was not successful. The white European laborers had the ability to run away and assimilate into the other colonies.⁹⁴ A second attempt to develop a stable labor force was made with Native Americans. But, they also had the ability to run away and

⁹⁰ Jenell Williams Paris, "Race: Critical Thinking and Transforming Possibilities," in *This Side of Heaven: Race Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford Press, 2007), 20.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹² Paul G. Hiebert, "Western Images of Otherness," in *This Side of Heaven: Race Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford Press, 2007), 100. See also James Perkinson, *White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 2004), 70.

⁹³ Curtis Paul Deyoung et al., *United by Faith: The Multiracial Congregation As An Answer To The Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 43.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 45

reconnect with family in the interior of the North American continent.⁹⁵ Finally, the transport of African slaves became the solution for a stable labor force. The Africans were unable to run away to familiar surroundings and could not assimilate into other colonies.⁹⁶

European exploration and expansion dominated much of the world for the next five centuries. In the end, two-thirds of the world was ruled by a few European countries.⁹⁷ During the process of European global expansion the new global order was explained and justified⁹⁸ until the necessary domination of the many by the few was assumed.⁹⁹

The idea of race and racial categories emerged in piecemeal fashion throughout America.¹⁰⁰ It first developed informally through vocabulary, cultural norms, with local nuances and meanings.¹⁰¹ Eventually, color became a symbol of social status. Whites were of superior value and free, but blacks were of inferior status and slaves. Race was then utilized to create social boundaries including segregation and subordination.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Ibid., 44-45.

⁹⁶ Paris, "Race," 21.

⁹⁷ Hiebert, "Otherness," 104.

⁹⁸ Paris, "Race," 20.

⁹⁹ Hiebert, "Otherness," 104.

¹⁰⁰ Paris, "Race," 20-22.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 22.

¹⁰² Eloise Hiebert Meneses, "Science and the Myth of Biological Race," in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford Press, 2007), 43.

As modernity advanced, the age of the Enlightenment turned to the scientific study of humans to discover the natural differences of the races.¹⁰³ Racial science examined the biological and physical characteristics of the races and the white race emerged superior.¹⁰⁴ Race classification, which emerged as a folk category, was now codified in science. The newly gained credibility and authority of racial science formalized the cultural understandings of racial categories that became a fundamental part of the American worldview.¹⁰⁵ The dominant community armed with the created racial categories imposed them on the powerless.¹⁰⁶

Americans labeled black, or a person of color, continue to live in a society in which they are viewed in racial terms. For example, when slavery ended with emancipation, race labeling did not.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, soon after emancipation new racialized laws developed that kept black people in a subordinate position.¹⁰⁸ After almost a century of struggle the Civil Rights era brought Jim Crow legal segregation to an end. However, integration did not occur in many aspects of life. Segregation, while not legally required, still continues by cultural custom and personal choice.¹⁰⁹

After two world wars and the rise of anti-colonial movements in the twentieth century, the Enlightenment project was called into question. The prolonged anti-colonial engagements increasingly led to the recognition of others as fully human.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 100-105.

¹⁰⁴ Paris, "Race," 22-23.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁶ Hiebert, "Otherness," 103.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 27.

However, embedded Western Enlightenment thought concluded that others were equal but, nevertheless, other.¹¹⁰ The others now became natives who were fully rational beings having their own autonomous cultures. The post-Enlightenment view of others is an improvement over the arrogance and oppressions of the past, but it leaves others as simply others. There continues to be an insurmountable wall between us and them.¹¹¹ Racial categories may be the legacy of the modern world, but these categories persist in postcolonial and post-modern America.¹¹²

People in America, for example, are socialized to perceive themselves and others as belonging to a race group. You are classified as White, Black, Hispanic, or Asian. Each member of American racialized society must be aware of his or her own race and the race of people around him or her. However, American society has taken steps to move away from overt discrimination. In addition, each person is free to adapt or resist the social meanings of those categories.¹¹³ Nevertheless, racial categories are still employed today in the United States.¹¹⁴

The dream of new immigrants continues to be Americanization and incorporation into the American community. However, the experience of immigrant communities varies enormously depending on how they are racially categorized in the American setting.¹¹⁵ Indeed, traditional North American race categories were not designed for

¹¹⁰ Hiebert, "Otherness," 105.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹¹² Paris, "Race," 25.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹¹⁵ Robert J. Priest, and Alvaro L. Nieves, eds., *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

these multiple new groups but for those groups most intimately involved in early American history.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, we are, who our society says we are, and it is the dominant culture and its established racial categories that define who we are.¹¹⁷ As Americans, we belong to a community with a shared past and a continually evolving culture.¹¹⁸

Latin Americans, for example, who immigrate to the United States of America, find themselves being categorized as Hispanic upon arrival.¹¹⁹ This classification erases their prior distinctive cultural identity and heritage. In addition, the new citizens are not identified as Americans but as Hispanic or Latino. Such a marker identifies a person as something other than white.¹²⁰ They now join the ranks of the minority.¹²¹ Latin Americans resent the Hispanic/Latino categorizations because they consider it a social class demotion. Even worse it places them into second-class citizenship status.¹²²

The current racial categorization of Hispanics in America is dehumanizing.¹²³ Tagged as outsiders, they experience exclusion from community. Isolated from the social networks that could enable upward mobility, they become a marginalized group. Unfortunately, Hispanics/Latinos may become a fixed economic underclass. In

¹¹⁶ Paris, "Race," 22.

¹¹⁷ Hiebert, "Otherness," 97.

¹¹⁸ Priest and Nieves, eds., *This Side of Heaven*, 10.

¹¹⁹ Carlos Piozzi, "Race, Ethnicity, and Color among Latinos in the United States," in *This Side of Heaven: Race Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford Press, 2007), 56.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Deyoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 114.

fact, some describe Hispanics/Latinos as modern economic slaves. Moreover, there is the concern that the next generations of young Latinos may be inheriting this group underclass status. Hispanics find themselves in America economically exploited, politically excluded, and racially humiliated. This exclusion from the center of American social life results in a dehumanized existence.¹²⁴

For people of “color” it is often relatively easy to perceive racialization because people of “color” are reminded daily how race affects their efforts to survive and thrive in society. Perceiving the presence and dynamics of race is frequently more difficult for white citizens. Whiteness is the American norm, the invisible standard against which all persons are compared.¹²⁵ Furthermore, most in the majority group take for granted a level legal playing field. The common belief is that Hispanic Americans, as American citizens, are afforded the same legal privileges as any other Americans. From a legal perspective this is correct. Hispanic American citizens can claim legal rights at any time. However, in the Hispanic/Latino experience, legal citizenship does not lead to inclusion, fairness, and opportunity. Puerto Ricans, for example, have been legal American citizens since 1917 but continue to struggle to find their place in the American community.

Even when the American legal system guarantees the legal rights of Hispanics de facto, segregation and discrimination of Hispanics continues by cultural custom and

¹²⁴ Harold Recinos, “Evangelization and Church Growth: A Lesson from the Barrio,” in *Considering the Great Commission*, W. Stephen Gunter and Elaine A. Robinson (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 109.

¹²⁵ Priest and Nieves, eds., *This Side of Heaven*, 9.

personal choice. As each new generation of Hispanics attempts to fit in, and to belong, they eventually come face to face with the deeply embedded colonial legacy of racial categorization. Americans now live in the post-modern age of pluralism and diversity.¹²⁶ However, these colonial racial patterns have survived and have found new ways of expression in post-modern American society.

Scripture: Where is the Gospel?

In the New Testament, we find Jesus introducing a new inclusive community with the mission of reaching out to the outcast and the disinherited. Everyone was to be invited and welcomed into the family of God. The Christian movement saw the nations as one human family that were being reconciled in Christ (Acts 17:26). According to Pauline tradition Jesus Christ eliminated the wall of religious-socio-economic/cultural separation with his actions (Ephesians 2:14-16 NIV). The sin of separation and the hostility of hierarchical subordination were overcome by God's invitation into this new alternate Christian community. Loving each other is the critical sign that a disciple belongs to the inclusive community of Jesus Christ (John 13:35).

The apostles were, therefore, commissioned to expand the circle of inclusiveness by making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). In the book of Acts, we see evidence of how the early church began to accomplish its mission of inclusion. The

¹²⁶ Michael O. Emerson, and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2006), 191.

Holy Spirit led the Christian preachers to the Samaritans, the Greeks, and the Romans. When cultural tensions arose (Acts 6:1-7), the apostles moved swiftly to engage and remove any attempt of exclusion by the dominant group.¹²⁷ Antioch became the first true multicultural church.¹²⁸ It was this inclusive multicultural church model that Paul utilized in his church planting mission trips.¹²⁹

Do we have inclusive multicultural churches in the United States? Yes, there are some but they are the exceptions.¹³⁰ The predominant pattern for Sunday morning worship in the United States is the homogenous fellowship.¹³¹ Many have called the Sunday religious experience as the most segregated time in America.¹³² Theologian H. Richard Niebuhr observed that Christian denominations closely followed the national, racial, and economic castes of human society.¹³³ In Niebuhr's view, the Christian denominations had chosen accommodation to the American nation state.¹³⁴ This collusion with secular interests undermines the transformative power of the Gospel in the Christian churches.¹³⁵ Niebuhr, therefore, concluded that the compromise with the world order, where culture trumps Gospel, resulted in Gospel

¹²⁷ William J. Larkin, *New Testament Commentary Series: Volume 5 Acts* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 98-102.

¹²⁸ Deyoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 27.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹³⁰ Emerson, and Woo, *People of the Dream*, 23, 28.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 23-29. See also Deyoung, *United by Faith* 100.

¹³² Lewis T. Tait, and A. Christian Van Gorder, *Three-Fifths Theology: Challenging Racism in American Christianity* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, Inc., 2002), 140.

¹³³ Niebuhr, *The Social Sources*, 6.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Emerson, and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 154.

ineffectiveness, Christian ethical failure, and hypocrisy.¹³⁶ Eighty years after Niebuhr wrote the *Social Sources of Denominationalism* in 1929, it is still common for Christians to say that they desire integration, but the research shows that like in other spheres of life, American Christians continue to voluntarily segregate.¹³⁷ Though most churches claim openness and have statements of inclusivity, few have avoided the racialized patterns of American society. Unfortunately, the history and legacy of racial categorization has been systemically institutionalized, and, therefore, normalized, in American church and society.

To recover some historical balance, it must be noted that the Christian church, at different times in American history, has spoken out against this form of social oppression.¹³⁸ In colonial times, Christian voices spoke out to recognize blacks as persons of worth. During the period of the Civil War, many Christians stood for emancipation. And during the Civil Rights era Christians openly marched against Jim Crow laws and segregation. Christians have understood the clear witness of scripture and have recognized that the distorted structuring of human society is not God's plan for humanity. The structuring of American society by race or ethnic group is not the inclusive multicultural Gospel community that Jesus intended.

However, Christians are members of the societies in which they live. Like other American citizens, American Christians have been shaped by the social world that

¹³⁶ Niebuhr, *The Social Sources*, 3-35.

¹³⁷ Paris, "Race," 27.

¹³⁸ Emerson, and Smith, *Divided by Faith*, 22-28. See also Emerson, and Woo, *People of the Dream*, 9-23.

emerges around them.¹³⁹ For example, during modernity, white Western Christians were deeply influenced by Enlightenment.¹⁴⁰ As a consequence of this historical relationship between modernity and religion, Christian congregations in America have been implicated in the racialized patterns of American society.¹⁴¹ Enlightenment attitudes were utilized to justify segregated churches, slavery, and the world mission movement.¹⁴² In spite of significant opposition efforts by the Christian community, the forces of modernity won the day, and gradually America became a racialized society. Unfortunately, perceiving this embedded structural racialized system remains elusive. It is an invisible influence that exerts itself without the consent of its citizens. Because racialization is cloaked within the American cultural system, the majority of American Christians today are unaware how they, their congregations, and denominations participate in the systemic racialization of others.

Where does the mainline Protestant church stand on this issue today? Why do we not hear the word of the Lord from the pulpits, challenging the present racialized culture? Where is the Gospel? There are no prophetic voices heard from American Christian pulpits. The liberal rhetoric of justice is absent and appears not to apply when it comes to Hispanics. In the minds of Hispanics, and others, this silence

¹³⁹ Hiebert, "Otherness," 105.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Priest and Nieves, eds., *This Side of Heaven*, 12.

¹⁴² Hiebert, "Otherness," 105.

represents the silence of collusion. Silence, it is believed, is the power exerted by the majority not to assist the powerless.¹⁴³

Lack of awareness of this invisible systemic foe has dire consequences for Hispanics. For example, it is commonly believed that the master-slave relationship of the past has been eradicated. In colonial America, and throughout American history, black Christians were segregated within the local church,¹⁴⁴ segregated into racial local churches,¹⁴⁵ or segregated into special districts or conferences.¹⁴⁶ However, these patterns of the past continue to endure within the Christian denominations.¹⁴⁷ These same colonial patterns, for example, can be observed today when Hispanics relate to the American Protestant church. Hispanics in local congregations are perceived as outsiders and excluded from the group (de facto segregation). Hispanics are placed in separate Hispanic missions (racial local churches). And Hispanics may fall under the oversight of a separate denominational Hispanic ministry program (separate districts or conferences).

Whether openly avowed or unconsciously accepted white churches have taken these patterns for granted.¹⁴⁸ The colonial models of relating to others have become an unquestioned social tradition and are maintained unchallenged.¹⁴⁹ The present re-

¹⁴³ Tait, and Van Gorder, *Three-Fifths Theology*, 129.

¹⁴⁴ Niebuhr, *The Social Sources*, 253.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 240.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 236-253.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

enactment of the master-slave relationship can be rationalized and defended.¹⁵⁰

However, there is no theological justification for ethnic discrimination. This divisive dogma has an anthropological etiology.¹⁵¹

How have Hispanics theologians responded to the racialized context of American church and culture? Hispanic theology is marked by the theological anthropological shift to the human person.¹⁵² In addition, the founders of Hispanic theology and subsequent generations of Hispanic theologians have been concerned with contextual theology.¹⁵³ As such, Hispanic theology explores, analyzes, and attempts to understand the American social-cultural context and the place of Hispanics in that specific public context.

Different Hispanic theologians have produced works that reflect their own religious and ethnic backgrounds. The many Protestant, Catholic, Pentecostal, Independent, and popular religion perspectives all speak to the experience of cultural oppression. Hispanics, like their South American counterparts, have also embraced in their discourse a prophetic stance with respect to the church and society.

Formally, there is no one Hispanic public theology.¹⁵⁴ To be fair, each one of the Hispanic/Latino theologies can be categorized as public theologies. They all address the public social context in which Hispanics find themselves. Hispanic theological

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 236.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Eduardo C. Fernandez, *La Cosecha: Harvesting Contemporary U.S. Hispanic Theology 1972-1998* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 58, 92.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 95.

¹⁵⁴ Miguel A. De La Torre, and Edwin David Aponte, eds., *Introducing Latino/a Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2001), 14.

reflection points out the etiology of American cultural systemic sin, and they describe how this type of cultural oppression has had negative consequences on Hispanic people. However, Latino theologies do not offer an explicit relational strategy to navigate across the boundaries towards social change.¹⁵⁵

The challenge for Hispanic theology today is to situate Hispanics in the broader context of American society.¹⁵⁶ Hispanic theology has been concerned with its preferential option for the culturally oppressed. However, there is a need today for Hispanic theologians to develop a contextual discourse for the United States. Hispanics need a theological orientation that can lead all who share the American experience into a true plural community that is characterized by social inclusion. This implies that Hispanic theology needs to make an intentional effort to guide Protestant Christian denominations, and American society, back to the inclusive community theological framework of scripture. In addition, Hispanic theology can help create awareness in the larger Christian community that it cannot serve two masters, God and culture, for it will love one and despise the other (Matthew 6:24). In the same fashion, the church must recognize that it cannot serve both God and money (Luke 16:13). The above reflection leads to the conclusion that the inclusion and well being of Hispanics into the Church in America hinges on the ability of the church to recapture a theological vision of life in community.

¹⁵⁵ Benjamin Valentin, *Mapping Public Theology: Beyond Culture, Identity, and Difference* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2002), 69.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 76.

Conclusion

It is beyond the scope of this research study to develop a comprehensive strategy for the liberation and restoration of the American church from the world order. However, Niebuhr believed that a good starting point for the church was to recognize and acknowledge the secular character of its denominationalism.¹⁵⁷ Christian denominations must be committed to fostering an inclusive Christian community in order to transcend its current practice. One goal of the American Christian church could be to move Hispanics from survival at the margins of society to life in community. Inclusion is what faithful disciples of Jesus Christ are called to do.

While not all Hispanics will become Protestants it is in the best interest of mainline Protestant denominations to pay special attention to Hispanic demographic trends. Some projections estimate that by 2025 half of all Latinos will be Protestant.¹⁵⁸ However, many Hispanics may choose not to join mainline Protestant churches if these denominations do not take proper steps to overcome the social apartheid of our times. Social healing and wholeness must be sought for an ethnic group that has been victimized from the conquest of the Americas until the present day. Unfortunately, social service efforts seem to be dealing with the symptoms and not the real issue, the systemic place and social location of Hispanics in American society.¹⁵⁹ What is needed is a transformational practice that will affirm Hispanics as visible citizens of our American community and welcome their inclusion and

¹⁵⁷ Niebuhr, *The Social Sources*, 25.

¹⁵⁸ Pozzi, "Race among Latinos," 58.

¹⁵⁹ Hernandez, Peña, and Davis, *Strengthening Hispanic Ministry*, 23.

participation in American public life. The chosen strategy must be cognizant that to bridge the gap of Hispanic exclusion, diverse perspectives, like American individualism, must be included, but transcended. In addition, a comprehensive strategy needs to take into account group, church polity, institutional, and cultural factors.

One possible comprehensive strategy is the development of a Hispanic Public Theology. Public Theology has a long tradition in American public life.¹⁶⁰ Yet, Public Theology does not mean the same thing to each scholar.¹⁶¹ In addition, each religious tradition has its own brand of public theologies. Nevertheless, it is an orientation where each theologian attempts to transcend his/her social-religious group to inform the public whole. A Hispanic Public theology could make significant contributions to the American community. However, we must also be aware of some of its limitations.

Public Theologies came about as a result of the democratic experiment of the Enlightenment.¹⁶² The liberal autonomous individual was free from state tyranny but was expected to be a participant in the shaping of the cultural whole, the common good, of American society. The different religious traditions became influential movers and shakers of American society. As a modernist enterprise, public theologies are therefore meta-narratives for the American people. Implied is the fact that both

¹⁶⁰ Mark G. Toulouse, *God in Public: Four Ways American Christianity and Public Life Relate* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

¹⁶¹ Valentin, *Mapping Public Theology*, 85.

¹⁶² Ronald F. Thiemann, *Religion in Public Life: A Dilemma for Democracy* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996), 19.

liberals and conservatives are invested in the present system. Their task is not to tamper and change the national way of life but to be guardians and protectors of the American way of life. This tendency towards cultural homeostasis in public theology needs to be recognized. Attempts to preserve the status quo will result in silence and resistance in the justice discourses. Nevertheless, there is hope in the fact that the American experience is an ever evolving project.

No doubt, there are promising possibilities and big challenges ahead for the Hispanic community and American society. However, the Christian church has the spiritual resources to engage church and society with good ministry practices. Christians must not conform to the patterns of this world (Romans 12:2). The truth has the power to set free individual persons, groups, denominations, nations, and the world (John 8:32). American culture and institutions can be transformed when the embedded ways of thinking are renewed (Romans 12:2). Brought out into the light, the taken-for-granted patterns of thought can be examined, deconstructed, and reconstructed. The Gospel has good news of Hope for humanity. In chapter three, the search for the truth about three Hispanic ministry programs within three mainline denominations will begin.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH PROCEDURES

The Research Challenge

The aim of this research study is both to examine the present levels of Hispanic distribution and to reflect on the status of Hispanic inclusion within three mainline Protestant denominations. A research challenge of this study is to obtain pertinent Hispanic frequency data. The data will be analyzed and interpreted to assess if denominational Hispanic Ministry initiatives are achieving the desired inclusion goals.

Another research challenge of this study is to maintain the focus on Hispanic inclusion. Churches and denominations are each very different from each other. Churches vary, for example, in governmental structure, theology, and practice. Accounting for all the variables and differences within the Hispanic ministry programs is not an aim of this research study.

A further research challenge of this study is to develop indicators that will shed light on the status of Hispanic inclusion within the three mainline denominations.¹⁶³ A holistic approach to inclusion has been chosen in this study. No particular aspect of

¹⁶³ Michael Quinn Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1978), 152.

inclusion will be isolated and highlighted. To meet this research challenge, a mixed quantitative/qualitative research procedure will be outlined in this chapter.¹⁶⁴

Research Question and Thesis

What is the present status of Hispanic inclusion within the United Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)? Given the new postmodern cultural context and the increased Hispanic presence in the United States, an increase of Hispanic representation and inclusion in the three Protestant denominations is expected. This study will collect, analyze, and interpret existing Hispanic Ministry Program output/outcome data to answer the research question and confirm or disconfirm the thesis.

Research Method

The selection of the research method begins with the intent to measure the levels of Hispanic pervasiveness and inclusion in three Protestant denominations as a result of ministry practice.¹⁶⁵ According to the evaluation literature, mature programs measure outputs and outcomes.¹⁶⁶ Mature programs are not new programs but

¹⁶⁴ Jody L. Fitzpatrick, James R. Sanders, and Blaine R. Worthen, *Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*, 3rd edition (Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc., 2004), 304-307, 318-320.

¹⁶⁵ Michael Quinn Patton, *Practical Evaluation* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1982), 186-209. See also Daniel L. Stufflebeam, *Evaluation Models: New Directions for Evaluation*, A publication of the American Evaluation Association number 89 spring 2001 (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001), 25.

¹⁶⁶ Kristine L. Mika, *Program Outcome Evaluation: A Step by Step Handbook* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Families International, Inc., 1996), 7, 48.

programs that have existed for a number of years and have produced results. The researcher, after examining different research models, found program evaluation to be a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about programs.¹⁶⁷ This research study will, therefore, utilize the program evaluation paradigm for its evaluation methodology.¹⁶⁸

Moreover, the programs under examination in this study are programs from religious organizations.¹⁶⁹ The research study will, therefore, also consider the ministry practice by Hispanics of religious organizations.¹⁷⁰ From the review of research models, it is concluded that within the program evaluation paradigm, Program Outcome Evaluation was a good fit for this research study because it was able to measure the rate of Hispanic levels, inclusion goals, and could be applied to ministry situations.¹⁷¹

The evaluation literature also suggests that it is best to start by examining existing data. If the information sought already exists, there is no need to generate new data.¹⁷² This study will compile and examine existing data in three steps. First, the study will survey denominational vision/mission statements from all three mainline Protestant denominations. These official church statements will reveal their theological purpose

¹⁶⁷ Stufflebeam, *Evaluation Models*, 41.

¹⁶⁸ Stufflebeam, *Evaluation Models*, 97-112.

¹⁶⁹ Kathleen A. Cahalan, *Projects That Matter: Successful Planning and Evaluation for Religious Organizations* (Bethesda, Maryland: The Alban Institute, 2003).

¹⁷⁰ Jill M. Hudson, *Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1992).

¹⁷¹ Mika, *Program Outcome Evaluation*, 2-3. Fitzpatrick, *Program Evaluation*, 71-87.

¹⁷² Charles J. Woods, *User Friendly Evaluation: Improving the Work of Pastors, Programs, and Laity* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 1995), 28. See also Fitzpatrick, *Program Evaluation*, 265, 335-336.

as well as their intended inclusion outcomes.¹⁷³ In addition, the vision/mission statements will provide a theological framework, or theological goal, for this study on Hispanic inclusion in the churches.¹⁷⁴ Second, the study will survey the output/outcome data of the Hispanic Ministry programs from the three mainline Protestant denominations. The research study will examine existing output/outcome data that are relevant to the inclusion of Hispanics in the church.¹⁷⁵ This review of current practice shall entail both compiling and interacting with existing data from denominational programs and other electronic sources of information. Third, this study will analyze and compare the output/outcome data to assess current strengths, weaknesses, gaps, and discrepancies.¹⁷⁶ Given that most research depends on comparison of differences to establish conclusions, the goal is to assess program output/outcome data on several dimensions in order to discover, describe, and understand current practice and recommend future directions.¹⁷⁷

Within the program evaluation paradigm, there are a diverse number of evaluation approaches. However, they all share three major areas of emphasis. The evaluator can emphasize inputs, process, or outputs/outcomes.¹⁷⁸ The input models examine and evaluate the various resources needed to organize and run the program effectively. These resources could be money, facilities, staff, and others. Process models examine

¹⁷³ Robert L. Shalock, *Outcome Based Evaluations* (New York, NY: Plenum Press, 1995) 28-29.

¹⁷⁴ Mika, *Program Outcome Evaluation*, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Fitzpatrick, *Program Evaluation*, 265.

¹⁷⁶ Stufflebeam, *Evaluation Models*, 128.

¹⁷⁷ Michael Quinn Patton, *Creative Evaluation* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1987), 19-22, 101-103. See also Roger Sapsford and Victor Jupp, *Data Collection and Analysis* (London, UK: Sage Publications, LTD., 1996), 13. Fitzpatrick, *Program Evaluation*, 176.

¹⁷⁸ Stufflebeam, *Evaluation Models*, 98.

and evaluate how the programs are carried out. These models look at structure, practices, and activities among others. The outcome models examine and evaluate the outputs or results of the programs. The programs can produce benefits, units of service, number of members, or other effects and impact on members.

The output/outcome model of evaluation is a positivist approach.¹⁷⁹ It seeks to conduct program evaluation based on criteria that is objective, observable, and measurable.¹⁸⁰ The outcome evaluation approach thus necessitates aspects of the program that bear quantitative data to be examined.¹⁸¹

The outcome evaluation research method has several advantages. It is a flexible model that allows the researcher to organize an effective strategy that fits the research needs. Studying existing output/outcome program data also saves time and costs. The data are available and accessible. In addition, the practitioner/researcher becomes the research instrument in that the researcher organizes the research project, implements the research, interacts with the data, and produces the findings. The findings are to be presented in a summative evaluation format, that is, a full report presenting data, interpretations, and recommendations.¹⁸²

However, this research study is not just a program evaluation project. It is also a ministry practice research study. The Hispanic Ministry Programs involved are religious in nature. Therefore, the study will not only conduct an output/outcome

¹⁷⁹ Fitzpatrick, *Program Evaluation*, 60.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 160.

¹⁸¹ Sapsford, *Data Collection and Analysis*, 21.

¹⁸² Fitzpatrick, *Program Evaluation*, 16-20.

evaluation but also consider the practice of ministry from a theological reflection perspective. Both are systematic inquiries in that both are systematic data-based inquiries. However, the religious/theological interpretations of the data will add a qualitative component.

The comprehensive evaluation of a single Hispanic Ministry Program in order to make specific ministry improvement recommendations was considered. However, this choice would have led to a different research method, action research. Action research is ideal for process evaluation. It is a qualitative approach that seeks participant involvement, perspective, and interpretation. This sort of feedback is well suited for insights, problem solving, and to suggest program improvements. Nevertheless, the focus that is chosen for this research project is to map the present location of Hispanic inclusion within three mainline Protestant denominations and then to make recommendations for future ministry directions.

Population

The sample population will be output/outcome data information samples from the Hispanic ministry programs of three mainline Protestant denominations.¹⁸³ The three mainline Protestant denominations are a representative subset of the larger Protestant denomination set. Protestant denominations are a branch of the larger universe of Christian churches. There were three criteria for their selection. First, the three

¹⁸³ Patton, *Qualitative Methods*, 18.

denominations are historical denominations with a mission tradition with Hispanics in the United States and in Latin America. Second, the three polity types of church governments in Christian churches are embodied in the three Protestant denominations. Third, all three denominations have publicly accessible existing data about their denomination and their Hispanic Ministry programs.

The output/outcome data information samples will focus on Hispanics in mainline Protestant denominations. Hispanics are a subset of the social system in the United States. Because the research study examines only existing output/outcome program data, the study will not require the intervention of human subjects or informed consent forms. Hispanics can be of any nationality, race, and ethnic group. This study does not differentiate among these categories. Instead this research study intends to take a holistic look at the prevalence of inclusion of Hispanics in the church.¹⁸⁴

Procedures for Collecting the Data

This study will collect existing data from valid publically available sources to examine the outputs/outcomes from Hispanic Ministry programs.¹⁸⁵ Public sources include online, research studies, and published data. This methodology of utilizing publically available existing data has three advantages: 1) the information already exists and is easily accessible; 2) large amounts of information can be gathered at very little cost; 3) there is less concern about the credibility or bias of the data.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 17-18.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 7, 89-90.

Relevant existing data include demographic data, vision/mission statements, religious affiliation data, denominational information, and Hispanic Ministry program data.

The data will be identified, collected, organized, screened, and reviewed. The research study will utilize both primary and secondary sources. Primary data will include denominational information and Hispanic program output/outcome data found in denominational records, annual reports, and web sites. Secondary sources will include published reports, studies, and written literature. The identified data and documents that will be reviewed and analyzed will generate information rich, quantitative data that will illuminate present Hispanic inclusion prevalence and give insight into the other related research questions.

Once the sources of information are identified, the data will be collected. Working with existing data has its advantages. However, it also has its challenges. When there is wealth and breadth of information surveying and identifying data or sources of information may become a time consuming endeavor. In addition, in spite of the availability of the data there may be topics or areas where the data may be incomplete. Finally, when working with existing data, the researcher is restricted to the data that already exists.

The data will be organized around three main clusters. The first data cluster is the denominational vision/mission statements. The goal is to discern denominational beliefs and expectations.¹⁸⁶ In addition, the vision/mission statements provide the

¹⁸⁶ Brian M. Stecher, and W. Alen Davis, *How to Focus an Evaluation* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1987), 12.

theological framework that guides the practice of the ministry programs. Finally, the vision/mission statements provide the organizational inclusion statements. The second data cluster is the output/outcome data from each Hispanic Ministry program.¹⁸⁷ The output/outcome information will help to describe, understand, and map where the programs are in terms of outreach, diversity, and incorporation of Hispanics. The third data cluster will be the data from other denominations. This cluster of data compares the outputs/outcomes from three Protestant denominations in a wider ecclesial context.

The data will be screened for invalid or missing data as well as inspected and corrected for any errors. In addition, the data will be verified and confirmed as valid. A final review will be conducted to verify the completeness of the data.

Inclusion Evaluation Criteria

Three inclusion performance indicators, outreach, diversity, and incorporation were selected to best describe inclusion prevalence. The evaluation criteria to assess Hispanic inclusion in mainline Protestant denominations are objective, observable, and measurable.¹⁸⁸ The researcher found the concepts for the three inclusion

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 27.

¹⁸⁸ Jean A. King, and et al., *How to Assess Program Implementation* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1987), 27. See also Stecher, *How to Focus an Evaluation*, 58.

performance indicators in the literature of two non-profit organizations dedicated to diversity and inclusion work in the United States¹⁸⁹.

The research project will measure the prevalence of Hispanic inclusion in the church in three steps. Each step will measure one of the chosen performance indicators. The chosen evaluation metrics are performance indicators that yield detailed observations that illuminate the research question. A brief description of the three steps is as follows:

Step 1- The number of Hispanics adherents attracted into each program will measure the outreach of the Hispanic Ministry programs. The size of the number of members will measure growth and development in numerical terms. The outreach outputs indicate over time if there are any significant membership shifts. Membership can increase, remain unchanged, or decline. Moreover, outreach outputs from one program can be compared and contrasted with the outreach outputs of other Hispanic programs to discover membership trends in a wider context.

Step 2- Hispanics represent over 15% of the general population of the United States. The percentage of Hispanics members in the three mainline denominations will be

¹⁸⁹ “Workforce Diversity/Inclusion Plan of Action,” American Humanics, Accessed December 28, 2009, http://www.humanics.org/site/c.omL2KiN4LvH/b.2157037/k.2110/Workforce_Diversity_and_Inclusion_Committee.htm. See also “The Denver Foundation Inclusiveness Project,” The Denver Foundation, Accessed December 30, 2009, www.nonprofitinclusiveness.org.

determined and compared with the general population distribution. The percentage of Hispanic representation in the denominations should be comparable with the general population. A satisfactory level of Hispanic proportional representation in each denomination would indicate progress towards diversity in the ecclesiastical organizations. The attained proportional representation of Hispanic membership will measure the level of diversity.

Step 3- Hispanic leadership development and incorporation is another indicator of inclusion. Progress in Hispanic leadership development will be measured by the numeric amount of ordained Hispanic ministers. The integration of Hispanic leadership into the ecclesial system signifies that the vision for inclusion has been incorporated into the work of the church. Hispanic leaders, pastors, and theologians that are participating in the denominational decision making process are working in a collaborative environment with others in the church and are making contributions to the life of the church.

Hispanics may be excluded, placed in parallel structures, or integrated into the ecclesiastical system. The first two models are the most commonly observed. This research study wants to identify progress towards the third model, the inclusion model.

Procedures for Analyzing the Data

The modes of analysis to be performed by the practitioner/researcher will be inductive analysis, critical reflection, and theological reflection. The analysis of the data will involve inductive analysis in that the practitioner/researcher will discover patterns, themes, and categories in the data as the findings emerge from the analyst's interactions with the data. The analysis shall also include critical reflection. The examination of the existing data will lead to a reflection on comparisons, discernment of strengths, weaknesses, gaps, best practices, and other unexpected findings.¹⁹⁰ Finally, the analysis will involve theological reflection because the project intends to reflect on a current practice of the church. Moreover, the viewpoint of the practitioner/researcher is that of an insider. The researcher is Hispanic with a Hispanic Theology orientation. Hispanic Theology is a practical theology, a contextual theology, and a postmodern theology. Analysis of the data will yield interpretations of what the data mean.

The findings of each mainline Hispanic program will be compared with the findings of the other programs. In addition, outreach and diversity program data from the mainline Hispanic programs will be contrasted with data from non-mainline denominations to help map the location of Hispanic distribution. Consideration will be given to Roman Catholic, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Mainline churches in order to make comparisons, contrast the contexts, and discover best practices.

¹⁹⁰ Sapsford, *Data Collection and Analysis*, 13-24.

This data analysis utilizes a mixed quantitative/qualitative research approach. The numeric program outputs/outcomes (quantitative data) will be reported utilizing descriptive statistics to convey the “what is” of the programs. The quantitative data and document content (qualitative data) will be interpreted to reveal the “what it means.” The results that emerge will be confirmed as authentic and appropriate by the evidence, examples, reasons, and explanations. In addition, external verification via public data will be provided. When objectives are stated in easily measurable terms, the whole assessment process is simplified and fewer advanced statistical techniques are needed.¹⁹¹ Unanticipated outcomes or unexpected findings, if any, will be identified.

Theological Analysis

This research project entails the examination and evaluation of a current ministry practice of the church, inclusion. Moreover, ministry evaluation feedback is sought to understand and interpret our present ministry practice of inclusion. The findings of the ministry evaluation will provide us with a snapshot of how we are living together in the church.¹⁹² Ministry evaluation is a tool for Christian growth that can enable the pursuit of excellence in the work of ministry. In addition, ministry evaluation enhances our ability to effectively carry the gospel into the world.¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Stecher, *How to Focus an Evaluation*, 28.

¹⁹² Hudson, *Evaluating Ministry*, 4.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 8.

At times, the task of evaluating a practice of ministry may not be solely about quantitative results or outputs. Evaluating, for example, ministerial leadership as it facilitates transformation is hard to assess. The evaluation of this practice of ministry needs to take into account the discernment of God's leading and the skillful ability of the ministry practitioner to enact the transformational power of the Gospel. This high level practice of ministry may be an art form that an experienced ministry practitioner develops.

However, ministry output/outcome evaluations can confirm that the ministry is on the right track. If the findings are positive, results are celebrated and reflection about how to expand the practice of ministry is conducted.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, when the findings reflect that the practice of ministry is off track, feedback is utilized to focus on areas that may need more attention.¹⁹⁵ Without proper corrections in ministry, frustration may build, complaints can increase, and the perception of failing to fulfill the call of ministry is risked. Finally, in examining and evaluating the practices of ministry, attention must be given to the objective and measurable but also to the subjective and interpretive. There is room for improvement on both the how and why of doing ministry.

While output/outcome evaluation is informed by the program evaluation paradigm, the practice of ministry is grounded in theology.¹⁹⁶ In ministry, what is done and why it is done is informed by theological reflection. Therefore, as the

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 2.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 6.

practices of ministry are examined ministry practitioners can reflect on how well the ministries are fulfilling their commitments to Christ, the church, and one another.¹⁹⁷

There is a theological rationale for the church to practice Hispanic Ministry. The church is called to proclaim the *Kerygma* while seeking justice and resisting evil. The church is also called to live in *Koinonia* as a Christ-centered inclusive fellowship. Moreover, the church is to practice the ministry of *Diakonia* as it serves the world in need. The evaluation of Hispanic Ministry programs for inclusion is an attempt to assess if the church is being faithful to God's calling of inclusion. Hispanics, as a marginalized people, are the responsibility of the entire church.

Among the theological questions that the study wants answered are: Where is God in this situation? Is our ministry response adequate to the challenge? Are there other biblical/theological insights available to resource Hispanic ministry programs? Theological insight alone is not enough for the practice of ministry but theological insight can lead to transformative pastoral action. Practical Theology, Hispanic Theology, and the Contextual Theological Reflection Method will illuminate theological reflection in this study and inform pastoral decision making.

The church of the first century, as I read it, decided that no group was to be marginalized or excluded from the Christian community (Acts 6:1-7). The theological justification for their pastoral action was the need to maintain the inclusive unity of the body of Christ. In similar fashion, no group is to be excluded from the Christian church of the twenty first century. This model of an all inclusive community is the

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 2.

model of Christian community that God intends for the church. It is the Gospel benchmark for authentic Christian community. If the church is not practicing inclusive community, then reductionist human practices are to be transformed by the gospel.

Validity and Reliability

Internal validity is concerned with the accurate representation of information, data, and findings. To establish validity, the credibility and truthfulness of representations must be insured. The best way to meet this standard is by adequate data collection procedures. Data that produces solid, coherent, and consistent evidence that supports findings will safeguard the research project from bias, impartial reporting, distortions, and personal feelings. The strength of the evidence will increase the accuracy of the study and its conclusions.¹⁹⁸ In addition, comparisons put forward as findings, supported by evidence as well as arguments, are a central device for establishing validity.¹⁹⁹

External validity concerns itself with the applicability of the findings. Can other practitioners of ministry implement the insights of our study? Are the findings transferable to other contexts? Will the findings generalize to the wider community? Two strategies are utilized in this study to augment external validity, program triangulation and data comparison.

¹⁹⁸ Sapsford, *Data Collection and Analysis*, 1-2.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

The gathering of data from multiple sources strengthens the transferability of findings to other contexts. Without sacrificing depth for breadth this research study increased the number of Hispanic Ministry programs to be evaluated, from one to three, to improve the applicability of the findings.²⁰⁰ In addition, the study will compare data from three mainline Protestant programs with data from other denominations. The three ecclesial polity models of the Christian churches are represented in all the compared denominations. This polity comparison expands the ability of the study to generalize the findings to the wider Christian community.

Reliability addresses the issue of the study yielding consistent results. If the study is replicated, will it measure the same thing? Will the new study attain the same results? Will the findings remain consistent in different settings and at different times? Do the findings carry the same meaning to all programs or denominations? Unfortunately, the context of ministry practice is a dynamic, ever changing environment. In a highly mobile society, church membership and community demographics are altered significantly in a short span of years. These shifting population trends influence ministry programs and alter the context of ministry. Reliable information may not remain so, for example, after seven years when neighborhoods and contexts have changed. This constant flux of ministry settings renders present reliable information reliable only for the present study. To extend the reliability of the findings, ministry evaluations need to be repeated every three to five

²⁰⁰ Michel Quinn Patton, *How to use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation* (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1987), 161-162.

years. In conclusion, due to our changing communities, it is more likely that this research study will attain high validity and short term reliability.

Conclusion

The findings of this research study are significant in several ways. The findings increase and deepen our understanding of the prevalence of Hispanic inclusion. The findings are confirmatory in the sense that they are consistent with the observations and experience of Hispanic persons within the denominations. The findings also help to break new ground by creatively recommending new avenues of approach to Hispanic ministry. Finally, the findings are critical to the evaluation purpose of the research study.

Hispanic Ministry output/outcome evaluation provides current information about the levels of Hispanic inclusion. Output/Outcome evaluation findings are used to recommend future directions of programs, whether programs should be continued, revised, expanded, or eliminated²⁰¹. Each individual denomination must make its proper determinations about their Hispanic ministry programs. This study will make recommendations on how to improve the inclusion ministry practice of the church with Hispanics.

This research study is not about congregational life. It is also not about programs that serve the local community. The focus of this research study is the ministry of justice in and within the wider community. The study examines the degree of

²⁰¹ Mika, *Program Outcome Evaluation*, 3-4.

Hispanic inclusion, identifies the status of this ministry of justice, and recommends future directions for mainline Protestant denominations and the wider community.

Program growth and success can be measured by program outputs and outcomes. However, the church is to measure progress and success from a theological framework of doing God's will. There will always be a gap between expectations and the reality of a fallen world. Nevertheless, God expects nothing short of the church doing mercy and justice.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Introduction

The response of mainline Protestant denominations to the increased Hispanic presence of the second half of the twentieth century was to develop national Hispanic strategies. What have been the results of these national efforts? How much progress has been made? This chapter will examine the outputs/outcomes of three Hispanic Ministry Programs for outreach, diversity, and incorporation. The data will be compared and contrasted to each other and to other Christian denominations to consider Hispanic prevalence and inclusion in a wider ecclesial context.

The aim of the study is to examine a practice of ministry of the church, inclusion. To enable such an examination the practitioner/researcher has enlisted the use of the program evaluation paradigm and the output/outcome evaluation method in particular. I do not hold professional expertise or certification in the evaluation research field. These approaches are employed as heuristic tools and strategies to begin to explore the topic of inclusion. In addition, the primary intent of this study is not sophisticated statistical data analysis but theological reflection. In other words, the data will be utilized as a point of departure to examine and explore questions about Hispanic inclusion and reflect on the macro implications of these findings.

Reflection and analysis of the vision/mission statements of the three mainline Protestant denominations will be provided in the conclusions segment. Analysis will

reflect on the significance and implications of the vision/mission statements for the practice of ministry with Hispanics.

United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church was formed by the union of several churches in 1968.²⁰² The UMC operates with an Episcopal polity. In 2007, the total membership was 7,853,955, with 34,660 congregations, and 32,659 ordained elders in full connection.²⁰³ The UMC traces its mission and work with Spanish speaking persons to the early nineteenth century. This includes ministry with Hispanics in the United States and Latin America.

Mission and/or Vision Statements

Why does the church exist? Based on Matthew 28:19-20, the UMC has stated its purpose: “The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”²⁰⁴

The UMC combines personal and social piety. In the Book of Discipline are also included the “Social Principles” that serve as a guide for official church action and individual witness. In regards to the social community the Social Principles state:

“We affirm all persons as equally valuable in God’s sight. We reject racism and assert

²⁰² “History: Our Story,” United Methodist Church, Accessed June, 2010, www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4knN1tH/b.1720691/k.B5CB/History_Our_Story.htm.

²⁰³ “Statistical Review of the United Methodist Church,” United Methodist Church, Accessed July 21, 2010. www.gcfa.org/data_resources.html.

²⁰⁴ “Mission and Ministry,” United Methodist Church, Accessed June 21, 2010, www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4knN1tH/b.2295473/k.7034/Mission_and_Ministry.htm.

the rights of racial minorities to equal opportunities in employment, education, voting, housing, and leadership.”²⁰⁵ The Book of Resolutions of the UMC adds the following statement: “The United Methodist Church believes God’s love for the world is an active and engaged love, love seeking justice and liberty.”²⁰⁶

Hispanic\Latino Ministry

In 1992, the UMC adopted the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry.²⁰⁷ The role of the national plan for Hispanic Ministry is to enable the creation of Hispanic faith communities and new church starts. In addition, the national plan provides training, resources, and consulting services to United Methodist conferences involved in Hispanic Ministry.²⁰⁸ As of 2009, there were 64, 857 Hispanic members in the UMC, 357 Hispanic congregations, 660 ministers, of which 366 are ordained Hispanic Elders in full connection.²⁰⁹

Presbyterian Church, USA

The Presbyterian Church divided over the civil war in the nineteenth century. In 1983, the two largest branches were reunited to form the Presbyterian Church

²⁰⁵ “Church and Society,” United Methodist Church, Accessed June 21, 2010, www.umc.org/site/c.lwL4knN1Lh/b.2294683/k.B1A4/Church_and_Society.htm.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ “National Plan for Hispanic Ministry,” United Methodist Church, Accessed June 21, 2010, <http://gbgm-umc.org/programs/hispanicmin/plan2.html>. Accessed 21 September 2010.

²⁰⁸ “National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries,” United Methodist Church, Accessed June 21, 2010, <http://new.gbgm-umc.org/plan/hispanic>.

⁸ “Lay Membership-Racial/Ethnic/Gender, and Clergy Membership-Racial/Ethnic/Gender,” United Methodist Church, Accessed December 12, 2009, http://www.gcfa.org/data_resources.html.

⁹ “History,” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 21, 2010, <http://gamc.org/ministries/101/>.

(U.S.A.).²¹⁰ The Presbyterian Church (USA) is a mainline Protestant denomination with a Presbyterian or representative form of government. Its present membership is 2,140,165 million in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.²¹¹ It has 10,751 congregations and a total of 13,462 active ministers.²¹² The PCUSA traces its mission and work with Hispanics in the United States and Latin America to the early nineteenth century.²¹³

Mission and/or Vision Statements

The Constitution of the PCUSA consists of The Book of Confessions and the Book of Order. Presbyterians in the 21st century have a vision of ministry that reflects the love and justice of Jesus Christ. The denomination has set four mission priorities for the next phase of the life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). One of those priorities is Justice and Compassion: “We are called to address wrongs in every aspect of life and the whole of creation, intentionally working with and on behalf of poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people as did Jesus Christ, even at risk to our corporate and personal lives.”²¹⁴

10 “Research Services: Statistics Report and Articles, and The Top 10 most frequently asked questions about the PC (USA),” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed June 3, 2010, <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/research>.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ “Hispanic/Latino-a Congregational Support,” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed June 3, 2010, <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/hispanic/about/>.

²¹⁴ “Who are we?” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 21, 2010, <http://gamc.org/ministries/101/whoarewe>.

The Book of Order states:

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression of the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church (G-4.0403).

The Great Ends of the Church states:

The great ends of the church are the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind; the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the maintenance of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness; and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven to the world (G-1.0200).²¹⁵

Hispanic Ministry

In 2002, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) adopted a national strategy for ministry with the Hispanic-Latino Constituencies at the Louisville, Kentucky, General Assembly.²¹⁶ The role of the national strategy is to provide insight and resources for the local and regional entities involved in Hispanic Ministry. In 2008, Hispanics represented 1.4% of the total membership (2,140,165) of the Presbyterian Church (USA).²¹⁷ This totals to 29,962 Hispanic members in the PC (USA), 21,875 stateside

²¹⁵Ibid.

²¹⁶ "Strategy For Ministry With The Hispanic-Latino Constituencies in the Presbyterian Church (USA)," Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 21, 2010, <http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/hispanic/pdf/strategy.pdf>.

²¹⁷ "The Top 10 most Frequently Asked Questions about the PC (USA)," Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 21, 2010, <http://gcmc.pcusa.org/ministries/research/10faq>.

USA, and 8,087 in Puerto Rico.²¹⁸ In addition, the PCUSA has 330 Hispanic congregations, 257 stateside USA, and 73 in Puerto Rico.²¹⁹ Hispanic ministers represent 2.3% of the total active ministers in the PCUSA (13,462).²²⁰ This results in a total of 310 Hispanic Presbyterian Ministers, of which 186 are ordained.

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is a mainline Protestant denomination with a congregational polity. At present the CCDC has around 691,160 members with 3,754 congregations and 3,399 total active clergy.²²¹ The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) also traces its mission and work with Hispanics to the early nineteenth century. This includes ministry to Spanish speaking persons in the United States and Latin America.

Mission and/or Vision Statements

The statement of identity of the CCDC states: “We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord’s Table as God has welcomed us.”²²²

²¹⁸ “Comparative Statistics 2008 Table 3,” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 21, 2010, <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/research/10faq>.

²¹⁹ “Hispanic/Latino-a Congregational Support.”

²²⁰ “The Top 10 FAQ PC (USA).”

²²¹ “The Disciples Today,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Accessed June 12, 2010, <http://www.disciples.org/AboutTheDisciples/TheDisciplesToday/tabid/68/Default.aspx>.

²²² “About The Disciples,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Accessed June 12, 2010, <http://www.disciples.org/AboutTheDisciples/tabid/67/Default.aspx>.

The mission statement of the CCDC states: “To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).”²²³

The vision statement of the CCDC states: “To be a faithful growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice (Micah 6:8).”²²⁴

At the 2001 General Assembly, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) adopted the 2020 vision, which contained four priorities that would guide the Church through the first two decades of the 21st century.²²⁵ One of the priorities is to become a pro-reconciling/anti-racist church. The pro-reconciliation/anti-racism initiative was founded upon the need to make visible God’s beloved community. It invites the church to listen to the once silenced voices of its racial/ethnic communities, learn from their wisdom, and gain insight from their leadership.

Hispanic Ministry

The Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries was created by the CCDC in 1992.²²⁶ The role of the Hispanic Central Pastoral office is to be a resource for the multiple regions of CCDC as they perform ministry with Hispanics. In addition, the National Hispanic Minister is to be an advocate for Hispanic causes. The National

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ “The Four Priorities of the Church,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Accessed June 12, 2010, <http://www.disciples.org/AboutTheDisciples/TheDisciplesToday/tabid/68/Default.aspx>.

²²⁶ “Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries: Recursos,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Accessed June 12, 2010. <http://obrahispana.org/index.php?nid=113150&s=rs>.

Hispanic Minister is elected by the DOC Hispanic membership to serve a six year term. There are about 7,500 Hispanic members within the DOC, with about 155 Hispanic congregations.²²⁷ In addition, there are 221 Hispanic ministers, of which 104 are ordained ministers.²²⁸

Data Analysis

Several descriptive analyses will be performed, utilizing the numerical outputs from the data sample, to determine if there are significant differences in Hispanic outreach, diversity, and incorporation in the three mainline denominations. The quantifiable measures that are to be examined are the following:

- 1- Outreach: The total number of Hispanic persons compared to the total number of White/Caucasian persons.
- 2- Diversity: The total percentage of Hispanics persons compared to total percentage of the white/Caucasian group.
- 3- Incorporation: The total number and percentage of Hispanic clergy representation in all three denominations.
- 4- Summary Statistics of Hispanic representation of all three denominations.

²²⁷ “The Four Priorities CCDCC.”

²²⁸ Howard E. Bowers, and Watkins, Sharon E., *Year Book and Directory: Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Published by The Office of the General Minister and President, 2009), 591-701.

- 5- The comparison of mainline Hispanic representation with Hispanic representation of several non-mainline denominations.

Outreach

With an increasing Hispanic population, access and membership to mainline Protestant denominations is essential. In addition, the total numerical size or prevalence of the Hispanic membership becomes relevant for the purposes of this study. The number of Hispanics by denomination is shown in Table 6. For presentation, Hispanics are compared as a group to the total membership in each mainline Protestant denomination.

Table 6. Hispanics by Mainline Denomination

Church	Hispanics	Members
UMC	64,857	7,853,955
Presb	29,962	2,140,165
DOC	7,500	691,160
Total	101,357	10,685,280

Observations

What do the numbers in Table 6 mean? A simple observation indicates that access to membership is available to Hispanics. However, the size of Hispanic membership in these denominations is extremely low when you consider that the available pool of

Hispanics in the United States number is over 50 million. Interestingly, during the same past several decades, the general membership in mainline Protestant denominations has been in a steady downward decline. However, this downward trend in membership decline in mainline Protestant denominations has not discouraged outreach to the emerging Hispanic presence. Nevertheless, the overall size and growth of Hispanic membership in mainline Protestant denominations has been modest at best.

Another observation is that the larger the denomination, the greater the number of Hispanic membership. This relationship can be explained by the larger denominations having a more comprehensive national presence and, therefore, more access points for Hispanics. It must be noted that the Presbyterian Church (USA) includes in its Hispanic membership the membership from congregations in Puerto Rico. The UMC and the CCDOC do not include congregations from Puerto Rico in their membership. The explanation for not including the congregations from Puerto Rico in their total membership is that both the UMC and the CCDOC in Puerto Rico are independent and autonomous churches. The Presbyterian churches in Puerto Rico continue to be part of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The membership of the mainline Protestant denominations in Puerto Rico is the following: Presbyterian 73 congregations and 8,087 members,²²⁹ United Methodist 100 congregations and 12,000 members,²³⁰ Disciples of Christ 105 congregations and 24,000 members.²³¹

²²⁹ “Comparative Statistics 2008:Table3.”

Finally, the three Protestant denominations do not identify where Hispanics have placed their membership. Do they belong to stand-alone Hispanic congregations? Are they part of Hispanic ministries within Anglo church structures? Are they members of Anglo congregations? Hispanic membership in each denomination is lumped together and discernment of where growth or loss of Hispanic membership is occurring cannot be determined. The distinction of membership placement could prove to be helpful in determining the level of progress being made by Hispanic ministry programs.

Diversity

Over a period of time denominations that continue to practice outreach to Hispanics expect to increase the numerical size of their Hispanic membership. Expansion and retention of this Hispanic membership should translate into proportional representation. As of July of 2008, Hispanics represent 15.43% of the general population in the United States of America.²³² The percentages of Hispanics by denomination are shown in Table 7. For presentation, Hispanics are compared to total membership and the white/Caucasian group to determine if proportional representation (15.43%) has been achieved in each denomination.

²³⁰ “Quienes Somos,” United Methodist Church in Puerto Rico, Accessed July 22, 2010, <http://www.metodistapr.org>.

²³¹ “Que de los Discípulos de Cristo en Puerto Rico,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Puerto Rico, Accessed July 22, 2010, http://discipulospr.org/2010/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19&Itemid=27.

²³² “The 2010 Statistical Abstract: USA Statistics in Brief; Population-Race, Hispanic Origin,” US Census Bureau, Accessed July 22, 2010. <http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/brief.html>.

Table 7. Percentage of Hispanics by Mainline Denominations

Church	Hispanics	Total Members	%Hispanics	%Whites
UMC ²³³	29,962	7,853,955	.825%	91.4%
Presb ²³⁴	64,857	2,140,165	1.399%	91.4%
DOC ²³⁵	7,500	691,160	1.085%	91.4%
Total	102,319	10,685,280	.957%	91.4%

Observations

None of the denominations have achieved proportional representation with the general Hispanic population in the USA (15.43%). In fact, all three mainline denominations have an extremely low Hispanic proportional representation: UMC .825%, Presb 1.399%, and DOC 1.085%. This huge gap implies that our local mainline churches and denominations remain homogeneous religious organizations, overall 91.4% white. This homogenous pattern within mainline Protestant denominations runs contrary to the increasing pluralist presence in the United States.

Moreover, Presbyterian research services reports that the percentage of Hispanic membership has basically stayed the same since 1995 while the percentage of ethnic minority membership has gone down since 2006.²³⁶ Overall, the Presbyterian Panel

²³³ “Lay membership-Racial/Ethnic/Gender (2004-2008).”

²³⁴ “Comparative Statistics 2008 Table 14,” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 22, 2010, <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/research/10faq/>.

²³⁵ “The Disciples Today CCDC.”

²³⁶ “Presbyterians Today-Go Figure-Measuring Progress on Diversity,” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 21, 2010, <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/presbyterians-today-go-figure-measuring-progress-d/>.

found that the racial-ethnic makeup of people in the denomination has changed little in the last three decades.²³⁷ Likewise, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) of the UMC found that overall racial minorities have not decreased or increased since the year 2000.²³⁸ Instead, the number and percentage of racial minorities increased at some times and decreased at others. The implication is that the homogeneity in mainline denominations has been maintained by a leveling of minority representation. For Hispanics, this means that their membership percentage has been around 1% and will remain about the same level for the foreseeable future unless these mainline denominations change the homogenous pattern. Mainline Protestant denominations could be resisting the shift to diversity by remaining homogenous religious organizations.

The data presents a complex picture. Gains in Hispanic membership and in Hispanic new church development have been reported. Nevertheless, Hispanic percentages have remained at the same level. It may be that Hispanic gains are being reported, but Hispanic losses are not. The gains could be compensating for Hispanic turnover and losses. The other possible explanation for why Hispanic membership has not increased beyond 1% during this period of time is that mainline Protestant denominations began with an extremely low, less than 1%, Hispanic representation.

To achieve proportional representation (15.43%), the mainline Protestant

²³⁷ “Presbyterian Church (USA). The Presbyterian Panel: Religious and Demographic Profile of Presbyterians, 2008,” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed July 22, 2010. <http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/research/pdfs/fall08panel.pdf>.

²³⁸ “Racial Minority representation in the Annual Conferences of the UMC,” United Methodist Church, Accessed July 22, 2010, http://www.gbhem.org/atf/cf/%7B0bcef929-bdba-4aa0-968f-d1986a8eef80%7D/PUB_MinorityRepresentationResearch2009.pdf.

denominations in this study would have to increase Hispanic membership to the following numbers: UMC 1,211,865; Presb 330,227; DOC 106,645.

Incorporation

Access to membership and proportional representation in the church should lead to Hispanic leadership development. The participation of Hispanic ordained clergy in the decision making process of the organized communities of faith is vital to the inclusion process. This study now takes a look at the relationship between pew and pulpit. For presentation, ordained Hispanic clergy are compared to the total clergy in each mainline denomination.

Table 8. Hispanic Clergy by Mainline Denomination

Church	Hispanic Ordained	Total Clergy	% Hispanic Ordained
UMC	366	32,659	1.1%
Presb	186	13,462	1.38%
DOC	104	3,399	3.0%
Total	656	49,520	1.32%

Observations

Hispanics have voice and representation in all three denominations. However, the size of Hispanic membership and clergy representation in each denomination is very

small. This means that when the votes are cast in congregational, regional, or national structures the voice, preferences, and concerns of Hispanics will be lost in the huge sea of the majority.

Moreover, regardless of denominational polity, for ordained Hispanic clergy to participate in local, regional, or national denominational positions of leadership Hispanic clergy would have to be nominated, elected, or appointed. However, Hispanics are only 1.32% of the total ordained clergy, including ordained clergy who do not hold a Master of Divinity degree. The implication is that there is bound to be a shortage of Hispanic leadership in each mainline Protestant denomination. Evidence for such a conclusion is found in the historical void of Regional or Episcopal Hispanic leadership. At the time of this writing, the CCDC has one interim Hispanic regional minister and the UMC has a few Hispanic Bishops. One consequence of such a gap in denominational leadership is that Hispanic concerns may be perceived as not meriting priority action, when establishing budget priorities. This lack of integration into the denominational decision making processes hinders the incorporation of Hispanics.

Without the ability to advocate effectively for Hispanic preferences and concerns, from the assembly floor or from within denominational leadership structures, what recourse do Hispanic members have? One strategy has been the creation of a Hispanic Caucus within the denomination in order for Hispanics to have their own space to voice their joys and concerns. Another is to turn to the respective National Hispanic plans and attempt to channel priorities through them. However, both

initiatives have limited budgets, staff, and resources. As a result, a number of Hispanic members and clergy feel isolated, marginalized, and subordinated.

Summary Statistics

The data analysis in Table 9 communicates if there are statistically significant differences in the Hispanic representation of the mainline denominations. With three data points of Hispanic representation entered (.825, 1.399, and 1.085) the descriptive statistical analysis for the Hispanic mainline denomination sample includes measures of central tendency and dispersion.

Table 9. Summary Statistics

Central Tendency		Dispersion	
Count	3	Minimum	.825
Sum	3.309	Maximum	1.399
Mean	1.103	Range	.574
Standard Error	.16594	Standard Deviation	.28742
Median	1.085	Variance	.08261

Observations

The statistical analysis reflects the following: The continuum of the Hispanic sample is UMC (.825%) Minimum, DOC (1.085%) Median, and PCUSA (1.399%) Maximum. With a range of .574, there is not much distance among the values.

The central tendency or mean is 1.103. The mean is sensitive to very high or very low values and can, therefore, be influenced to either extreme. With no extreme values this mean (1.103) is close to the median value DOC (1.085%).

The percentages of Hispanic representation in all three mainline denominations are very similar to each other. The statistical analysis shows that there is little variance (.08261) or deviation (.28742) from each other. Without much variability, the values are not widely dispersed and remain close to the mean.

Other Denominations

Looking exclusively at mainline Protestant data may limit our ability to discern Hispanic Ministry practices in other contexts and obscure our perception of the wider Hispanic Ministry landscape. Looking beyond the mainline framework will enable comparisons, provide a point of reference to other denominations, and help avoid reductionism. Exploring other denominational Hispanic Ministry contexts will also assist in the discovery of best practices. The Hispanic Ministry outputs of three additional denominations, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the Assemblies of God (AG), and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) in the United States are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Hispanic Participation in Non-Mainline Denominations

Church	Hispanics	Worship/Mass	%Hispanics
SBC²³⁹	191,438	6,148,868	3.11%
AG²⁴⁰	293,000	1,662,632	17.62%
RCC²⁴¹	2,579,659	37,232,485	6.92%
Total	3,064,097	45,043,985	6.8%

Observations

Hispanics in these non-mainline denominations worship in religious organizations with the same three types of ecclesial polity found in mainline Protestant denominations. The Southern Baptist Convention has a congregational polity, the Assemblies of God a representational polity, and the Roman Catholic Church an Episcopal polity. In other words, the ecclesial structures for Hispanics in non-mainline churches and Hispanics in mainline Protestant churches are similar.

In 1995, the SBC offered a public apology for its history of bigotry.²⁴² By 2005, 3.11% of those attending worship in the SBC were Hispanic. Because information in

²³⁹ “Annual of the 2009 Southern Baptist Convention,” Southern Baptist Convention, Accessed July 23, 2010, <http://sbcec.net/bor/2009/2009SBCAnnual.pdf>. See also “Analysis: What do the Numbers Mean-is the SBC in decline Part 1,” Southern Baptist Convention, Accessed July 23, 2010, <http://bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=30656>.

²⁴⁰ “Office of Hispanic Relations,” Assembly of God, Accessed July 23, 2010, <http://asambleasdedios-conciliogeneral.org/?TargetPage=AE6A661B-6647-4667-899C-7CCCFB05654C>. See also “2009 Vital Statistics Summary,” Assembly of God, Accessed July 23, 2010, <http://ag.org/top/About/statistics/index.cfm>.

²⁴¹ “Data on Hispanic Arch/Dioceses,” U.S. Catholic Church, Accessed July 23, 2010, http://www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs/parish_survey.pdf#4a.

the SBC is captured by congregational statistics and not individual membership, it is difficult to know the exact ethnic composition of the SBC. However, a growth trend projection from 2005 to 2010 would place the total participating Hispanic presence near 500,000 or at 8% of the participating membership.

The AG has a history of involvement with the poor and minorities. In fact, there are more AG members in Latin America than the USA. Nevertheless, in the United States they have achieved Hispanic proportional representation (17.62) in their membership and at worship.

Hispanics represent 35% of all Catholics in the USA.²⁴³ In a church with a total membership of 68,115,001, Hispanics total 23,840,250 in membership.²⁴⁴ More impressive is that there have been 40 ordained Latino Bishops, 28 are still active. This represents 9% of all Bishops in the United States.²⁴⁵

The Hispanic membership trends in the non-mainline denominations are more aligned with the general trend in America towards a more plural society. While the outreach and diversity outputs of these non-mainline denominations indicate progress towards a heterogeneous church environment, we cannot conclude that all have achieved Hispanic clergy or leadership incorporation. However, if we were to map Hispanic ministries on an inclusion continuum matrix, these denominations would be

²⁴² “Southern Baptist Diversifying to Survive: Minority Outreach Seen as Key to Crisis,” Southern Baptist Convention, Accessed July 23, 2010, <http://www.lifeway.com/article/167986/>.

²⁴³ “Statistics on Hispanic/Latino(a) Catholics,” U.S. Catholic Church, Accessed July 23, 2010, <http://www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs/demo.shtml>.

²⁴⁴ “The Catholic Church in the United States at a Glance,” U.S. Catholic Church, Accessed July 23, 2010, <http://www.usccb.org/comm/catholic-church-statistics.shtml>.

²⁴⁵ “Statistics on Hispanic/Latino(a) Catholics.”

on the more successful end of the spectrum. Their ministry practice with Hispanics proves that ministry with Hispanics works. Statements and declarations that Hispanics simply will not come or join are proven to be baseless by the Hispanic outputs/outcomes accomplished in these denominations. Mainline Protestant denominations need to be open to learning more about their strategies and best practices with Hispanics.

Conclusion and Theological Reflection for Ministry

The findings suggest that the three mainline Protestant denominations examined in this study have low Hispanic membership, have not reached the expected proportional representation of Hispanics (15.43%), and have not integrated Hispanic clergy leadership into their denominational leadership structures. The collective mean for Hispanic membership of the three mainline denominations is at 1.103%. These mainline denominations remain predominantly homogeneous in the midst of a diverse pluralist society. The disparity in Hispanic proportional representation is further compounded by the realization that Hispanic, and/or ethnic minority, representation may have remained flat, at these same low levels, for a number of years. This may imply a generational perpetuation of the diversity disparity. This is not good ministry practice. It is also not good Christian practice. Changes are needed in order to reach the expected Hispanic ministry goals.

How can the disparity between theory and practice, theology and ministry output, be accounted for? Theory informs practice and Christian theology informs Christian

ministry practice. The theological purposes designed to guide the practice of ministry are expressed in the denominational vision/mission statements. The vision/mission statements of all three denominations examined in this study specify their intent to work towards inclusiveness, justice, reconciliation, healing, and wholeness in the church or body of Christ. The disparity between the articulated goals in the vision/mission statements and the actual Hispanic ministry outputs are a reminder that there is a need to revise theology and/or practice of ministry if the stated theological goals are to be met.

Some may argue that the vision/mission statements reflect an ideal, the best that the church can hope for, but that the realities of life will dictate a different set of results. The experiences of life do create the awareness that many times an ideal will not be reached. However, the danger with this line of thinking is accepting and surrendering to the status quo. Transformative change will not come about unless there is a willingness to examine and explore stated theology and/or practice of ministry. Well crafted vision/mission statements may be well intended, but, if de facto exclusion is occurring in churches and denominations, then that practice of ministry will ring hollow and be judged as an exercise in hypocrisy.

A quick answer to solve the disparity between intent and results is to blame Hispanic Ministry programs for bad practice and bad ministry outputs. However, it would be a mistake to isolate the problem to the Hispanic programs. To be sure, Hispanic programs need to be evaluated and improvements need to be made. But, the religious cultural context under which the Hispanic ministry programs operate cannot

be ignored. Each religious organization has its own corporate ethos. This invisible but subtle institutional culture sometimes runs counter to the official public theological declarations of a religious organization. This study will, therefore, examine the denominational vision/mission statements from a religious corporate culture perspective.

Every religious organization has its own corporate operating theology and its official public theology. The corporate operating theology can be embedded²⁴⁶ or deliberative.²⁴⁷ Embedded theology is implicit and deeply in place. Over the years, for example, members have slowly adopted and internalized the corporate operating theological ethos of mainline Protestant churches. Persons then function with this unquestioned theology at work, at home, and at church. Deliberative theology, on the other hand, emerges from a process of carefully reflecting and examining embedded theological convictions. It is a theology that questions what has been taken for granted and armed with these new insights formulates new understandings.

Moreover, the framework by which Christians respond to the world around them may have different starting points. Theological reflection can stress the human (anthropological) side or the divine (God's revelation) side of faith.²⁴⁸ The human/anthropological theological track will focus on human experience within culture. A weakness of anthropological theology is that it may stress culture to the

²⁴⁶ Howard W. Stone, and James O. Duke, *How To Think Theologically*, second edition (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), 13-16.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 16-20.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 60-63.

point where corporate ethnocentric principles can be confused with the Gospel.²⁴⁹ The divine revelation theological track focuses on becoming more Christ-like and meeting God's standards. A weakness of a theology that stresses individual theological apprehension is that personal theological interpretation can be confused with the Gospel.²⁵⁰

In chapter two, it was noted how the early church in Acts 6:1-7 responded to the threat to unity. The Greek widows were about to be excluded by a group that today could be described as operating from an embedded corporate ethnocentric theological perspective. The dominant group was attempting to preserve its anthropological Jewish cultural standard. The apostles, on the other hand, responded from a deliberative divine revelation theological perspective. They chose to maintain the inclusiveness standard of the gospel for the church over the Jewish human cultural standard.

This study will argue that the official public theological vision/mission statements of the three examined mainline Protestant denominations reflect a deliberative divine revelation theological perspective. They are formulated to be aligned with the scriptural witness of the church and to meet God's standards. The focus is on what should be in the church compared to what is in our human social context. On the

²⁴⁹ Bruce W. Fong, *Racial Equality in the Church: A Critique of the Homogeneous Unit Principle in Light of a Practical Theology Perspective* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, Inc., 1996).

²⁵⁰ Robert J. Priest, and Alvaro L. Nieves, "Using and Abusing the Bible in Ethnic and Racial Contexts," in *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity and Christian Faith* (New York, New York: Oxford university Press, 2007), 163-240.

other hand, this study also argues that the operating theology in these mainline Protestant denominations is an embedded corporate theological perspective that focuses on an ethnocentric ethos.²⁵¹ These religious organizations are operating from an ethnocentric perspective that seeks to meet the ethnic standards of their culture. In American society the cultural standard is to be white or Caucasian.²⁵² The implication is that the disparity between vision/mission statements and the stagnation in ministry practice with Hispanics and other minorities is the result of the misalignment between the official public deliberative theology and the embedded operating theologies.

When the church adopts a Eurocentric standard, others are subsequently isolated, marginalized, and subordinated. The United States has developed a racialized society with a culture of white privilege.²⁵³ If mainline churches want to see progress in their outreach ministry to minorities and Hispanics, then the denominations need to be set free from their cultural captivity and operating ethos. No amount of denominational restructuring will help mainline Protestant denominations overcome their bondage to culture. The embedded cultural theology and operating ethos must be made visible and brought into awareness to be deconstructed. What is needed from these denominations is the recognition that this type of practice does not honor God. It is only then that they can begin to find ways to free themselves from their cultural captivity.

²⁵¹ Lewis T. Tait, and A. Christian Van Gorder, *Three-Fifths Theology: Challenging Racism in American Christianity* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2002).

²⁵² James W. Perkinson, *White Theology: Outing Supremacy in Modernity* (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

²⁵³ Michael O. Emerson, and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

This research project also proposes that when the operating theology of mainline Protestant denominations is aligned with the official public theology, their practice of ministry with Hispanics and other minorities will improve. For example, it appears that the more conservative denominations are making more progress in their practice of ministry with Hispanics. However, conservative denominations operate and function from a divine revelation theological perspective. The operating theological ethos of conservative religious institutions is closely aligned with their official public theology and/or vision/mission statements. The alignment of theology and practice in the conservative denominations results in a more congruent ministry with Hispanics. If mainline Protestant denominations do not align their practice with their theology, there will be little or no change in the diversity disparity or in the outputs/outcomes of Hispanic ministry.

In light of this reflection, how should mainline denominations respond to this crisis in their practice of ministry? There are at least two possibilities. First, the above comments may suggest that mainline Protestant denominations could adopt a divine revelation theological ethos to ministry. This certainly would represent a theological challenge for mainline denominations considering their anthropological theological heritage during modernity. Second, anthropological contextual theology in itself may not be the problem. It seems that the unreflective marriage with the racialized cultural standard is the main concern. If this embedded operating ethos can be exposed and discarded, the practice of ministry with Hispanics of mainline Protestant denominations would reflect a more congruent practice of ministry. However, it must

be recognized that the process of extricating the church from its cultural bondage will not be easy or quick

Theological schools play a determining factor in the theological formation of future ministers. Theological students and ministry candidates need to be informed and made aware of their theologies and how their theologies inform their practice of ministry. In addition, they need to reflect on how these theologies inform the practice of ministry of their churches and denominations. Theological schools must begin to equip a new generation of ministers to transform the exclusionary practices in the church. The denominations themselves should take the initiative and begin the journey of aligning their theology with their practice of ministry.

A contemporary religious trend among some Hispanics is to join Latino congregations. Other minority groups, for example African Americans and Asian Americans, at times also prefer to worship among their own. However, there are a number of Hispanics, and other minorities, that seek to belong to mainline Protestant denominations. To increase and diversify their membership mainline Protestant denominations have attempted to open their doors to include these minorities. At the same time it has been observed that the dominant pattern of fellowship within mainline Protestant denominations is the homogeneous fellowship.

It could be argued that majority and minority groups in the United States have the right to worship exclusively among their own. In fact, as private institutions operating in a secular society organizations do reserve the right to define and grant membership. Without a historical-biblical perspective one could be inclined to agree with such a

proposition. However, ecclesial institutions that perceive themselves as Christian churches operate within a theological framework. According to the scriptures the theological criteria for inclusion into the body of Christ is faith in Jesus, not ethnic or racial background (John 20:31; Acts 4:12; Galatians 3:26-27). In addition, scripture also indicates that the unity of the inclusive Christian community is to be maintained (1Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:1-6). The church is to be known as one (John 17:20-21). Fragmentation into ethnic subgroups is to be resisted (Galatians 3:28). This tradition, for example, of a universal Christian fellowship continues to mark the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church in its Christian fellowship has historically included persons from many parts of the world.

Unfortunately, in the United States the development of a racialized society has justified the separation of Christians by ethnic background. Indeed, secularized groups may believe that there is justification to exclusively worship among their own. However, mainline Protestant denominations are not among those groups. The vision/mission statements of mainline Protestant denominations affirm the theological criteria for an inclusive community of faith. Hispanic ministry programs signal one such effort to diversify their membership. Other efforts have been designed to attract the various minority groups. These are genuine efforts to reach out to everyone. No is forced to join and Hispanics and minorities may have multiple reasons for choosing not to join, but all are invited.

The postmodern shift towards plurality resembles in part the goal of the New Testament church to strive toward inclusiveness. However, one must observe that

postmodern diversity is a secular movement toward plurality. It is void of an overt and clear theological framework. In addition, while there can be agreement with postmodern culture on openness to plurality the Church must not confuse postmodern tendencies toward fragmentation and disconnection with a biblical or theological perspective on unity. Therefore, it would be a mistake to push mainline churches, or any other Christian church, to adopt the postmodern world view without discerning its impact on community. In fact, Christian denominations have found that in this postmodern period there is a need to strive toward personal and communal wholeness. The goal is to encourage all Christian denominations toward a biblical-theological stance. The church needs to avoid reductionism by withdrawing from culture but it also must not fall prey to cultural syncretism. The practice of ministry endorsed in this paper wishes to maintain its distinct Christian heritage and identity.

Moreover, this research study has argued that the legacy of racial categories continues to influence church and society in the United States. As such this study observes that mainline Protestant denominations have made sincere efforts to reach out to minorities but have been unable to overcome the harmful legacy of a racialized society. The good news is that this study was able to identify several Christian denominations that are making progress in inclusion.

Due to historical reasons there are no Hispanic denominations available in the United States for Hispanics to join. Unfortunately, the research conducted by this study shows that mainline denominations continue to be limited in their ability to attract new and diverse members. Nevertheless, today Hispanics and other minorities

have other alternatives to participate in Christian fellowship. In fact, as it has been indicated in chapter one, a recent trend for some Hispanics is to gravitate towards the more conservative or evangelical churches. If mainline Protestant denominations want to compete in the religious marketplace, to attract and increase their levels of Hispanic membership, and other minorities, there must be a willingness to examine their misalignment between theology and practice of ministry. In addition, the disparity between the internal homogeneous culture of these mainline denominations and the external multicultural society in which they practice ministry may in part account for the downward membership trend that mainline denominations have been experiencing. If this downward membership trend does not subside it may eventually bring organizational death to its religious institutions.

When mainline Protestant denominations align their embedded operating theologies with their official public theology, how will the new mainline denominations look like? They should look like the inclusive church of the book of Acts in the New Testament. They should look like a diverse body composed of members from all nations and all cultures. The transformational shift from homogeneity to openness and pluralism can be accomplished by accepting the biblical witness that we all belong to one human race and that we are all one in Christ. To facilitate this shift in operational theology, a new transformational practice of ministry could be developed to guide mainline Protestant denominations toward multicultural wholeness.

Some argue that progress is slow and that the church, in fact, has come a long ways. This is the “glass is half full” argument. Those that take this position prefer to take a more positive view of events in the church. This study does not deny that some measure of progress has been made. However, if Hispanic proportional representation (15.43%) is taken as a benchmark, then the “glass half full argument” would mean that mainline denominations should be close to 7.715% in Hispanic representation. They are at 1.08% in Hispanic representation. These facts indicate that mainline denominations are far behind and have a ways to go before they can make a case for the “glass half full” argument. Moreover, mainline Protestant denominations themselves report that the level of Hispanic representation has been flat at around 1% for decades.

Mainline Protestant denominations must resolve their theological identity crisis. As long as churches continue to operate in bondage to culture they will continue to serve the dictates of a secular culture. However, if they align their operational practice with the witness of scripture for the church, the inclusive community found the early church can be reproduced. This means that the best way to help the Latino membership, and other minorities, within the mainline Protestant denominations is to help restore the theological identity and health of the mainline Protestant denominations themselves.

Evaluation of Project

The aim of this study is to examine the total numeric size Hispanic membership in three mainline Protestant denominations and to be able to assess progress in Hispanic inclusion. To guide the project, the study relied on the program evaluation paradigm as its methodological approach. From program evaluation, the chosen design was the output/outcome evaluation method. The selected outputs or inclusion indicators examined were outreach, diversity, and incorporation. There was no need for the intervention of human subjects. Data collection consisted of publicly available information samples from the three mainline denominations.

The implementation of the study fulfilled the intentions of the research design. The execution of the design provided a current snapshot of Hispanic prevalence. Program evaluation theory was the correct theoretical model for the study. The examination of the inclusion indicators effectively answered the research question. The triangulated data provided valid results with no unintended outcomes. Analysis and comparison of the data content helped to map the present location of Hispanic inclusion in the three mainline Protestant denominations. In addition, outputs for outreach and diversity from non-mainline denominations were collected and utilized to generate adequate comparisons with the three mainline Protestant denominations. Moreover, the study allowed the researcher to explore and recommend possible future directions.

The design of the study did not require the use of outside sources of funding. The financial costs were minimal. In addition, the ministry context of the study was not the local parish and required no outside collaboration. The researcher provided the

leadership for the study by organizing the study, implementing it, evaluating the program outputs, and producing the findings. No new emergent problems were found and no changes are required to address new problems. The goals and rationale of the study proved to be adequate and require no revision.

The research project was more than a program evaluation study. It was an evaluation of programs within religious organizations. As a result, this study is also a ministry practice evaluation. The observable, objective, and measurable data content were subjected to theological analysis and interpretation to evaluate the ministry practice with Hispanics of the three denominations. The theological framework utilized by the researcher also proved to be effective and adequate in this study.

Learning Experience

The topic of Hispanic inclusion was chosen for this study because it is the overriding issue for Hispanics in the United States. In addition, it has been the most pressing issue in my personal experience. Cognizant of the gravity of our cultural location I felt compelled to engage theological reflection at the highest level. This study is an initial venture into exploring the topic of Hispanic inclusion in the church. The need exists for a pastoral strategy that can engage and transform the situation.

As a student, during my seminary training, the theological formation I received was Eurocentric. Nevertheless, students were also exposed to Latin American Liberation Theology. In spite of its many contributions, Latin American Liberation Theology did not provide a proper model of analysis for our cultural context in the

United States. During the last thirty years, Hispanic American Theology emerged as a powerful interpretive model for the contemporary Latino context in the United States. The practical theology and Hispanic Theology course work offered at Brite Divinity School provided me with new paradigms to interpret our Hispanic situation.

As I reflect and evaluate the process and outcome of the research study, I can see my personal evolution. At the beginning, I struggled. I did not have the clarity or depth that I would later acquire. The more I got into the research study the journey of exploration gave me the necessary insights into the subject matter. I am a better Hispanic practical theologian at the end of the project than at the beginning. In addition, I have grown as a person, as a Latino, and as a Hispanic minister.

There were many other additional materials that were examined for the study. Some of the material was relevant and many others were irrelevant. However, the distractions and pauses were all worth it because the long journey exposed me to a wide spectrum of writers and ideas on the subject matter. I am now in better position to articulate with competence the Latino situation and to formulate, as a Hispanic minister, proper pastoral responses.

The impact of the research study on my practice of ministry has been significant. The examination of the topic increased my understanding of the dynamics of Hispanic inclusion in church and society. In addition, it gave me the opportunity to explore and compare the practice of ministry with Hispanics within other major denominations. The findings and subsequent analysis have also helped me to integrate the various streams of knowledge contained in the study. Finally, I am pleased

because the study has addressed the ministry concerns of Hispanics within our churches and denominations.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings and Future Research

The aim of this research study is to examine the present levels of Hispanic membership within three mainline Protestant denominations and identify Hispanic ratios in outreach, diversity, and incorporation in order to locate and map where the denominations are in their progress towards Hispanic inclusion. The composite of the output/outcome data gave insight into Hispanic inclusion in mainline Protestant denominations. The findings made explicit that progress towards inclusion with Hispanics has been very slow within mainline Protestant denominations. However, the study also found that other denominations have been making inroads with Hispanics. Providing a descriptive report that lays out the Hispanic data helps to communicate to the church, and to other stakeholders, these findings. In addition, the findings have been useful in generating future directions that may be taken by the Hispanic ministry programs and the church.

There is a gap in the available literature on Hispanic Protestants and Hispanic Ministries. The lack of data represents a research challenge. This study was an initial venture to try to fill in some of the gaps on Hispanic Ministry. Without a doubt, research with Hispanics is a logistical challenge. Denominations may not have accurate records, may not keep proper records on Hispanics, or may not be willing to disclose their available data. In fairness to the denominations, it must be said that

working with such a highly mobile population is a major complication. Nevertheless, the growing Hispanic presence is real and demands our attention. To encourage further study of Hispanics in the Church, several recommendations for further research are made.

Each denomination, Roman Catholic or Protestant, can benefit from evaluating its Hispanic Ministry initiatives. By looking at their ministry goals for Hispanics, denominations can customize their evaluations to reflect their polity and theological heritage. Their ministry evaluations could ask: Where are we at this time? What are we doing? What is and what is not working? What hinders our work with Hispanics? Where is the resistance coming from? And, how can we improve in these areas? They will also be able to find their program strengths and build on them. This study has looked at Hispanic ministry outputs without attempting to grade each Hispanic Ministry program for effectiveness. To try to understand the why and how of each program's effectiveness, the denominations can conduct more comprehensive process evaluations that includes additional qualitative research.

Further research can also be done to identify reasons for the present disparity in Hispanic representation in denominations. For example, it may be important for denominations to inquire about how they have structured their relationship with Hispanics. Is the expectation that Hispanics be immediately assimilated into the majority? Should they be placed into parallel church ministries? Or should they be placed in separate Hispanic churches? These three models have implications and consequences of their own. Denominations can benefit from understanding how these

models are encouraging or discouraging Hispanic representation in the churches. The goal is to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the inclusiveness disparity.

Unfortunately, denominational Hispanic ministry programs are many times isolated from each other. But, research can be a useful tool to establish a communication bridge. For example, examining Hispanic Ministry best practices across denominations would enable programs and churches to learn from each other. Topics could include: What churches or denominations are best at attracting and retaining Hispanic? Which churches, and how, are providing Hispanics upward mobility into leadership positions? What church does well at applying the Gospel to every day Hispanic life and family experience?

Hispanic stakeholders could also be involved in the research. A qualitative study can provide insight into how Hispanics experience Hispanic ministry. They can share individual and community perceptions about what seems to be working and what does not seem to work and why. The feedback from their lived experiences within the denominations would illuminate the practice of ministry with Hispanics. Including Hispanic collaboration in the research process should help to improve and enhance the quality of the Hispanic ministry programs.

Moreover, we need to hear from the practitioners of Hispanic ministry. Their insights and contributions could encourage and strengthen the practice of others. Ministry Evaluation research is a vital tool for improving ministry practice with Hispanics. Practitioners of Hispanic ministry could assist their denominations by participating in periodic Hispanic Ministry evaluations, maybe every five years, to

assess progress and to make the necessary adjustments. There are other possibilities for conducting further research into Hispanic Ministry. However, these suggestions are made in the hope that we can expand the circle of Hispanic ministry research.

Relevance for other contexts of Ministry

In the past, Hispanics were quietly placed within certain structured denominational models. They could be assimilated and subordinated into the Anglo church. They could be isolated and marginalized into parallel Hispanic church ministries. Or they could be excluded into separate Hispanic missions. Today, a number of Hispanics are rejecting their designated places within these church models. They want to belong to the church and preserve their human dignity at the same time. They seek inclusion into the church, but they want inclusion with respect for their being. Unfortunately, according to the findings in this study, the process towards inclusion in the mainline denominations is too slow or it may not be happening at all. As a result, Hispanics are making different choices about their church participation preferences.

A growing number of Hispanics today are seeking a Latino church experience, with Hispanic Pastoral leadership, and a Latino worship style.²⁵⁴ The emergent trend with Hispanic Protestants seems to be towards independent and evangelical churches

²⁵⁴ Roberto Suro, and Luis Lugo, *Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion* (Washington, D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2007). Accessed May 6, 2009, <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/75.pdf>. A Latino worship style in this project refers to the preference for the informal and participative low-church style of worship over the formal and structured high-church forms of worship.

with a congregational polity.²⁵⁵ A congregational polity provides Hispanic church members with local ownership of their church decisions. No external denominational authority or majority group can come from the outside and interfere with their local Hispanic church decisions. This is a significant step towards ownership of their church experience.

Some view such a move by Hispanics as divisive. Hispanics are perceived as wanting to do their own thing and unwilling to join others. Mainline denominations are confused because in their eyes they have accomplished and progressed so much in race relations. However, what is not recognized is that race relations and inclusiveness programs within mainline denominations are approached from the black/white binary perspective.²⁵⁶ The literature on racism in the church also utilizes the black/white binary approach. It is not a pluralist approach. It is a dualist perspective that emphasizes the black/white racial experience. If a shift is not made from the black/white binary perspective to a pluralist approach, Hispanics and Hispanic concerns will continue to be ignored or excluded. From a Hispanic perspective, the unwillingness of mainline denominations to integrate Latinos speaks more about the mainline church than about Hispanics. Until Hispanics are taken into account, they will continue to make other church membership choices.

Another area of concern is that while Hispanics may be the largest minority in the United States, they are not the largest minority in the three mainline denominations

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

examined in our study.²⁵⁷ African Americans at 4.93% are the largest minority group in mainline denominations. Asian Americans are the second largest minority group represented in mainline denominations, 1.70%, surpassing Hispanics and growing. Hispanics are the third largest minority group in mainline denominations, but their growth has leveled off at around 1% for decades. This is a bewildering development that needs to be monitored more closely to understand its meaning. Hispanics do want to join mainline denominations, but they want to join as equals with others. The response from mainline denominations may not be what Hispanics expect.

There are a number of Hispanics who remain within mainline Protestant denominations. These Hispanics want to be faithful to their Protestant heritage and the faith inherited from their parents. They continue the good fight from inside with the hope that mainline denominations can be persuaded or transformed. They tend to address the issues of justice with a prophetic message. However, they are often looked at as trouble makers or complainers who will never be satisfied no matter what may be done for them. Meanwhile, their relationship within mainline denominations becomes a battle of the wills that is drawn out in a struggle of attrition on both sides.

The question for any context of ministry that wants to effectively reach out to

²⁵⁷ “Lay Membership-Racial Ethnic,” United Methodist Church, Accessed July 10, 2010, http://www.gcfa.org/Data_Resources/excel/Lay_Membership_RacialEthnicGender.xls. See also “The Top 10 most frequently asked questions about the PC (USA),” Presbyterian Church (USA), Accessed June 3, 2010, <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/research>. “The Disciples Today,” Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Accessed June 12, 2010, http://www.disciples.org/AboutTheDisciples/The_DisciplesToday/tabid/68/Default.aspx.

Hispanics is how is the church going to relate to Hispanics? The historic cultural contexts have changed and the old models do not work any longer. American culture has moved on to a pluralist model of society. The expectation of Hispanics is to find this postmodern cultural opening to plurality in the church. Therefore, to some, Hispanics in the church do represent a threat to the old order. However, Hispanics do not want to destroy American culture but to move forward to a new way of being in community. Hispanics believe that it is time for a new humanity, a new church, to emerge in the twenty first century. Change comes slowly and Latinos have waited five hundred years to overcome subordination, marginalization, and exclusion. Hispanics will continue to wait for a better future. They know how to persevere patiently, *en la lucha (in the struggle)*, until their redemption comes.²⁵⁸

Relevance to Hispanic Community

How are Latinos to relate to the Anglo churches? Recent trends indicate that a number of Latinos are not accepting the traditional arrangements made for them in the mainline churches. They are not accepting being assimilated into a subordinate status. They do not favor isolation in parallel Hispanic ministries. And they also resist exclusion in separate minority churches. Those Hispanics are gravitating towards independent or evangelical congregational churches. They are affirming their

²⁵⁸ Fernando F. Segovia, "Theological Education and Scholarship as Struggle," *Journal of Hispanic/Latino Theology*, Orlando O Espin and Roberto S. Goizueta, eds., (1994): 5-25.

autonomy while retaining their identity. These Hispanic Americans are resisting the last vestiges of colonial domination. They seek to reframe their relationship to church and society in terms that will honor their dignity and personhood. They also seek to establish interdependent relationships between persons of equal status. They will go to churches where these terms are acceptable and will avoid any church that rejects these new terms. Conflict with Latinos will reemerge whenever the attempt is to force them to comply with the colonial models of the past. The majority group may be surprised by the unexpected refusal of Hispanics to comply, but Hispanics are resisting the taken for granted colonial models established for Hispanics. It is hard to persuade the majority group of how unacceptable or harmful these models have been, and still are, when they have been the established norm for centuries. The damage these colonial models have caused, are for the most part felt by Hispanics but remain out of the awareness of the majority group. Complaints by Hispanics seem irrational or hysterical to the dominant group.

What can Hispanics do to improve their relationship with mainline churches? A conference of Latino leaders studied and pondered the Latino religious situation and recommended that there was a need to strengthen Hispanic Ministry across denominations.²⁵⁹ In particular, Hispanic leadership development was seen as the top priority.²⁶⁰ I agree with the conference results. However, I also see the need for a

²⁵⁹ Edwin I. Hernandez, Milagros Peña, and Kenneth Davis, eds., *Strengthening Hispanic Ministry Across Denominations: A Call to Action* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke Divinity School, 2005).

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

theologically informed Hispanic ministry practice that would help facilitate the inclusion of Latinos into the church. This could be a ministerial practice that would seek to foster the intercultural capacity of Hispanics and Anglos. Such a ministry practice could help to overcome misunderstandings, resistances, and lead the charge towards transformational change in our churches. This is a big challenge for such a team. But, it seems to me that a shift in church culture will not happen without an intentional effort. The difference between this practice of ministry and past racial reconciliation programs is that this initiative would not be based on the white/black binary. It would seek to promote a heterogeneous cultural framework, a true multicultural pluralist approach to church and society.

Early European immigrants in American history brought their religious heritage with them and established immigrant churches across the new nation.²⁶¹ These cultural based denominations played an important role in American civil society.²⁶² Immigrant churches helped to negotiate the location and status of their adherents in American culture. Hispanic immigrants do not have a national church. They do not have regional churches. The Hispanic church experience is different because Latino immigrants have been attempting to blend into established Euro-American Christian denominations in the United States. After several initial attempts at integration, into the church in America, some Hispanics begin to drop out, others transfer their

²⁶¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (Cleveland, Ohio: A Living Age Book (Meridian) published by The World Publishing Company, 1957), 200-235.

²⁶² Ibid.

membership to evangelical denominations, or seek independent Latino congregations. However, we have to monitor the new emerging trends within the Hispanic community to determine if Hispanics that are gravitating into independent Christian churches will eventually merge into regional or national denominations. In the past the fragmentation of the Hispanic community was an obstacle to unity. More recently it has been observed that there may be a shift towards a pan-ethnic framework within the Hispanic community.²⁶³ If a pan-ethnic identity emerges, then it is possible that a national Hispanic church or movement could be conceivable in the not too distant future.

The lessons that Hispanics have gained within mainline denominations are valuable to the Hispanic community outside the church or in society at large. The embedded institutional models in the mainline churches also exist in American society. These social inequalities must also be addressed. It is in the best interest of the Hispanic community in the United States that Hispanic Christian leaders learn how to address these inequities in the church. Hispanic Christian leaders can then provide their expertise to the Hispanic community at large and to American culture. It will be difficult to close the cultural gap unless we address the need for systemic changes. In this task, Hispanic Christian leaders must become primary stakeholders in the processes of cultural transformation of church and society.

²⁶³ David G. Gutierrez, ed., Introduction to *The Colombia History of Latinos In The United States Since 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), xix.

Certain sectors of the Hispanic community within American culture are employing a strategy of cultural citizenship to address the issues of social justice.²⁶⁴ They have taken great strides and made important contributions. However, a clear Hispanic Christian theological voice has been absent in those discussions. There is a need for a theological perspective to inform Hispanic cultural citizenship. We must remember that early European immigrants many times approached American civil society from a theological framework. Good ministry practice towards our neighbors is a responsibility that Hispanics share in the Reign of God. Moreover, good civic and social witness is a duty of Christian stewardship. Becoming participants in the transformation of American culture as we strive to inch closer to the values and principles of an inclusive community means that we must take ownership of the process.

Relevance for Future Ministry Practice

The implications for future ministry are significant and profound. Mainline denominations cannot continue to promote ineffective ministry practices with Hispanics. The usual ways of doing things are not producing the expected inclusion progress. It is time denominations examine the relationship between their stated goals and ministry outputs in a more critical light. This is not an indictment of denominational Hispanic Ministry programs. They are doing the best they can under

²⁶⁴ Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Cultural Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989). See also William V. Flores and Rina Benmayor, *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997).

the present circumstances. Meanwhile, we are losing many good Hispanic leaders to frustration and burnout. If our mission is to overcome exclusion and to achieve inclusion, the church must have in place a more deliberative ministry approach to Hispanics.

Without a doubt, there will be resistance to a new way of doing things. There will be complaints that emerge out of fear, the fear of losing the homogeneous group identity and the fear of losing group power. Indeed a multicultural approach to church is threatening to the homogeneous group. The stigma of being a *mestizo* person is clearly understood by Hispanics. However, we live in a new global, postmodern context that calls for the normalization of cultural pluralism. Hispanics are not to blame for this new development. Hispanics, however, need to help as many as they can to transcend irrational fears and to open their eyes to this wonderful new reality.

Another fear is the loss of group power. The attempt to retain control over American society is a challenge for the dominant group. Meanwhile, dominating others and maintaining a public image of fairness and inclusiveness is not possible. In the church, Jesus calls us to serve one another not to Lord over others. Sharing power with Hispanics might be a scary thought until it is realized that Hispanics are part of the Christian family. Hispanics belong in the church because the Lord died for the sins of every Hispanic person. The fear of loss of power is transcended when the situation is looked at from a theological perspective and not from an ethnocentric perspective.

From the survey of Hispanic ministry practices in other denominations, successful strategies were identified that could be useful for the future practice of ministry with Hispanics in mainline denominations. First, the Southern Baptist Convention did not have a good relationship with minorities in the past. But, from 1995 to 2010, the Southern Baptist Convention has been doing good outreach with Hispanics. The ability of the Southern Baptist Convention to attract Hispanics suggests an approach that is getting results. Second, the Assemblies of God in the United States has been able to attract and retain Hispanics in its fellowship. For decades the Assemblies of God has experienced a diverse multicultural environment in its denomination. The experience of achieving and maintaining proportional representation with Hispanics indicates that denominations can attain diversity and continue to grow. Third, the Roman Catholic Church in the United States has the largest Hispanic membership of the Christian denominations. More important is the fact that the Episcopacy of the Roman Catholic Church is almost 10% Hispanic. This amounts to the largest representation of Hispanic clergy leadership in all denominations. In addition, the College of Catholic Bishops has developed a pastoral plan for the inclusion of Hispanic Catholics that is laudable.²⁶⁵ The Catholic pastoral plan is comprehensive

²⁶⁵ “Hispanic Ministry Study,” U.S. Catholic Bishops, Accessed December 12, 2009, <http://www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs/studygomez.shtml>. See also “The National Plan for Hispanic Ministry,” U.S. Catholic Bishops, Accessed December 17, 2009, www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs/plan.shtml. “Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry,” U.S. Catholic Bishops, Accessed December 17, 2009, www.usccb.org/hispanicaffairs/encuentromission.shtml.

and has the best emphasis on Hispanic inclusion of any Christian denomination.²⁶⁶

These best practices in the non-mainline denominations indicate that Hispanics do respond, that Hispanic programs do work, and that progress with Hispanics is being made. The ability to identify best practices with Hispanics in other denominations, and examining their success, would help to get different results in mainline denominations.

The ultimate hope for the church of the twenty first century is the emergence of multiracial congregations. These are theological communities of faith in which ethnic and racial inclusion has been accomplished. Sociologists are studying the phenomenon of the multiracial church.²⁶⁷ Recent research has examined religious organizations that have been able to successfully reach integration.²⁶⁸ In addition, the research describes the obstacles and forces that coalesce to destabilize efforts to incorporate.²⁶⁹ Multiracial congregations are scarce, but the belief exists that, as more emerge and multiply multiracial congregations will have an enormous impact on the transformation of American church and society. The researchers recommend that future practice of ministry be engaged in the development of such multiracial congregations.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁶ “Study on Best Practices for Diocesan Ministry Among Hispanics/Latinos,” U.S. Catholic Bishops, Accessed January 14, 2010, <http://www.nccbuscc.org/hispanicaffairs/BestPractices2.pdf>.

²⁶⁷ Curtis Paul Deyoung, et al., *United by Faith: The Multicultural Congregation as an Answer to the Problem of Race* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

²⁶⁸ Michael O. Emerson and Rodney M. Woo, *People of the Dream: Multiracial Congregations in the United States* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005).

²⁶⁹ Brad Christerson, Korie L. Edwards, and Michael O. Emerson, *Against All Odds: The Struggle for Racial Integration in Religious Organizations* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

²⁷⁰ DeYoung, et al., *United by Faith*, 181-186.

Hispanic ministry programs, by themselves, cannot be expected to produce inclusion in mainline denominations. The efforts towards Hispanic integration and incorporation cannot be a one sided affair. The whole church must embrace openness. Just as marital reconciliation cannot be achieved with only one party carrying all the weight of the relationship, Hispanics cannot be blamed for a failed relationship when the other party does not give a fair effort. To address Hispanic exclusion, the wider church must participate in the journey towards inclusion.

The current challenge is to examine current ministry practice and, if necessary, choose a different future trajectory. There are three possible choices for future practice of ministry with Hispanics. First, the worst ministry practice scenario may be chosen. In the worst ministry practice scenario the church continues the exclusionary practices of the past. Second, the ineffective ministry practice option may be chosen. The ineffective ministry practice publicly states a position of openness to others but, in effect, keep the present status quo intact. Third, the best ministry practice alternative may be chosen. The best ministry practice begins to implement inclusion and integration with Hispanics. Change does not happen at once, but it unfolds as the change process is engaged. Congregations are needed that are willing to assert themselves within their sphere of influence. Engagement at the local level can start to make significant contributions to Hispanic Ministry, Church, and Society.

Conclusion: Relevance to the Wider Community

American society is living in the midst of a historical paradigm shift.²⁷¹ Modernity is slowly passing away. The postmodern era, marked by plurality, is emerging to replace homogeneous modernity. The new world emerging from post-modernity will be a diverse global environment where the dominance of one race over others will no longer be the norm. This postmodern plural ethos will without a doubt eventually be reflected in the Christian church. God, who has been guiding humanity throughout history towards a new way of being, is injecting from outside the church a multicultural environment that will replace the modernist homogeneous principle.

However, change is not easy and old habits die hard. Modernity survives and thrives in certain sectors of American society and can be found in social pockets of resistance to change. In the United States, for example, a racialized society developed and its embedded sense of superiority struggles to remain dominant. Organized communities of faith are caught in the middle of these historic shifts and struggles. Some denominations continue to live in the past while others are embracing the future. The implication for Hispanics is that their church experience will be determined by where they worship. Hispanics may find themselves within a modernist church or are they can be part of a postmodern church. Mainline churches were the dominant churches of modernity in the United States. Meanwhile,

²⁷¹ Joyce Oldham Appleby, Lynn Avery Hunt, and Margaret C. Jacob, *Telling The Truth About History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1995).

multicultural churches are becoming the dominant church model of post-modernity. The high volatility of Hispanic membership change could be an indicator that Hispanics are trading in the old modernist models for newer postmodern ecclesial models.

What emerges in American church and society is transition. American society is leaving behind the old modernist models and walking towards the future that God is opening for humanity in the new inclusive postmodern models. The United States, as a child of the Enlightenment, attempted to embody the best values of the modern period in the American experiment. However, human finitude, with all its weakness, produced a less than perfect union. Progress in race relations was made in the modern era. But, now, in the postmodern period, a radical inclusive restructuring of American society is taking place. This cultural shift towards multicultural integration represents a threat to the power and control of the old dominant group. Multicultural diversity is expanding in American society. Meanwhile, institutionalized control is still held by the dominant group. The embedded sense of privilege/superiority held within American institutions is an obstacle to the incorporation of Hispanics and other minorities. Allowing people to mix and mingle in the wider community, while retaining institutional power and control, is a form of social/racial apartheid. The Christian church should not imitate or follow the ways of the world. We should be leading culture into better ways of living in community. If the principles of inclusiveness are held to be true and beneficial for all citizens, America and the church have a lot to offer to the global community.

The bondage to racial/cultural ethnocentrism, superiority, privilege, and dominance is a human situation that the church must be delivered from. Faith envisions the future with hope and confidence. The Christian faith affirms that God is more than able to help us with our historical situation. The renewal of the church, the humanization of American society, and the well being of all people are all possible because God is guiding America and humanity towards the fulfillment of the divine purpose. The Christian Church and America will never be perfect. New problems and challenges will emerge. However, a climate of inclusion can provide a sense of belonging and egalitarian equality that are necessary to promote the well being of all of our children. Hispanics will continue to pray for, and anticipate, the transformation of all things, Maranatha (Come, O Lord) (1 Corinthians 16:22).

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