



Common Ground Journal

Perspectives on the Church in the 21st Century

Volume 12 Number 1 – Spring 2015

ISSN: 1547-9129

Hispanic and Asian North American (HANA) Consultation on Theology and Congregational Ministries

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ISSN: 1547-9129

Editor: Mark Simpson

ePrinted in the United States of America.

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Gospel after Christendom: New Voices, New Cultures, New Expressions (Baker Academic, 2012); *Vivir y servir en el exilio: Lecturas teológicas de la experiencia latina en los Estados Unidos* (Kairos, 2008), and *Pasando la Antorcha* (Kerigma, 2005).



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Christianity Reader (Cammauf & Tseng, 2009); contributions to *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Abingdon Press, 2006); "From the Sacred to the Profane: Teaching Scripture in the Classroom" in *Diverse Strands of a Common Thread* (Chuen King Lecture Series 11, 2014) and forthcoming a chapter in *Asian American Young Adult Primer: Navigating Life in North America*.



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Exordium to the HANA Reflection Papers and Track Reports

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Cha, Peter T. 2015. *Exordium to the HANA Reflection Papers and Track Reports*. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 8-10. Keywords: cha, hana, reflection, track.

Abstract An introduction to the 2013 HANA Reflection Papers and Track Reports generated as a result of the first HANA (Hispanic–Asian North American) consultation on theology and ministry.

INTRODUCTION

In June 2013, the first HANA (Hispanic–Asian North American) consultation on Theology and Ministry was held on the campus of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Co-sponsored by the Carl F. H. Henry Center¹ and the Catalyst Leadership Center,² this historic gathering brought together sixty evangelical HANA theologians, pastors, and other ministry leaders to learn more about what God is doing in and through HANA churches, to engage with issues that are significant to both immigrant communities of faith, and to build collaborative partnerships between these two growing communities.³

In light of the goals mentioned above, the leadership team of the project (Linda Cannell, Armida Belmonte Stephens, Juan Martínez, and Peter Cha) decided not to have a conference gathering where the audience would listen to presentations offered by a few experts. Instead, we designed a consultation model that would encourage fruitful interactions among the invited participants who come from diverse backgrounds, and would facilitate the process of constructing new insights and ideas that might be helpful to HANA churches. The following article by Linda Cannell, “The Consultation: A Guided Conversation Among Leaders in Changing Times,” outlines reasons for and benefits of this interactive approach that deeply enriched our shared experiences.

During the June consultation, two primary methods of interactions were practiced. In the morning sessions, the sixty participants met together to engage in historical, theological, and missional reflections of HANA immigrant churches. Each morning, a pair of Hispanic and Asian North American presenters highlighted certain key themes from their papers (drafts were distributed to all the participants before the consultation), providing a framework in which group reflections and conversations could take place. After a period of table conversations, each presenter then engaged with the participants, having opportunities to interact with insights and questions that emerged from the small and large group conversations. The presenters then were encouraged to expand and revise their papers, incorporating the many perspectives offered by their HANA colleagues.

¹ henrycenter.tiu.edu

² www.catalystleadership.org

³ More detailed information about the first HANA consultation can be found on the Henry Center website: <http://henrycenter.tiu.edu/the-hana-project/>.

The six reflection paper articles presented in this journal are the fruits of this collaborative process. Juan Martínez's, "Historical Reflections on the 'In-Betweenness' of Latino Protestantism," and Russell Jeung's, "The Globalization and Racialization of Asian American Churches," offer historical reflections that engage with key social and cultural developments that shaped the experiences of the two immigrant communities of faith. Marcos Canales', "Latino/a Theologizing: Shared Reflections and Experiences," and Soong-Chan Rah's, "A Theology of Lament for the Immigrant Community," provide insightful theological reflections that demonstrate how HANA churches, as communities of faith, theologize their collective identity and their shared experiences. Finally, Silvina Kosacki's, "Latino/a Pastoral Reflections," and Peter Cha's, "Pastoral and Missional Reflections of Asian North American Congregational Experiences," identify a set of key issues and challenges HANA churches encounter today. Together, these six articles aim to offer readers a deeper understanding of the historical, social, and spiritual contexts in which HANA congregations serve and grow.

During the afternoon hours of the consultation, HANA participants engaged in another type of group interaction by meeting in the following six different tracks: "Intergenerational and Intercultural Issues," "Nurturing the Next Generation," "Formation of Lay Leadership," "Theological Education in Pastoral Formation," "Public Witness and the HANA Community," and "Migration and Global Missions." Each track, co-facilitated by a Hispanic and an Asian North American leader, aimed to identify a set of key issues that affected a particular ministry of both immigrant churches and how these two faith communities engage with them. These afternoon track sessions aimed to provide a space for theologians and ministry leaders to do their collaborative work of integrative thinking and creative imagination in addressing key challenges. Each track had a seminary student who served as a note taker, carefully transcribing the conversations. The co-leaders (or a member, in one case) of each track then produced succinct track reports, capturing key insights and perspectives that emerged from their track conversations. The final section of this journal edition includes all six track reports.



Participants in the first HANA (Hispanic–Asian North American) consultation on Theology and Ministry at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, June 2013

From the very beginning, this HANA project had multiple partners who collaborated at many different levels. We are grateful to the Carl F. H. Henry Center for its generous grant and its logistical support that enabled us to have our 2013 consultation and this writing project. Linda Cannell has made an invaluable contribution to this project by providing her expert guidance in designing our consultation and for

connecting us with the *Common Ground* journal. We are indebted to HANA colleagues who have contributed articles and track reports in the midst of their very busy schedules, communicating rich insights and perspectives that emerged from our consultation gathering. We would like to offer thanks to Ray Chang, Jessica Chang, Joshua Joseph, Lauren Kim, Mary Nikoo, Patrick Shin, and Luke Zheng for taking careful notes and for serving as gracious hosts during the consultation gathering. Special thanks also to Vicki Tsui for carefully editing the drafts for this journal, and to the editor of the *Common Ground* journal, Mark Simpson, who has graciously allowed us to use the entire Spring 2015 edition of the journal, allowing the HANA project writings to be accessible to many audiences. Finally, we want to thank all the HANA consultation participants (see the group photo below) whose insights and wisdom deeply enriched the articles and reports presented in this journal. It is our hope that these writings will encourage and inform readers from HANA and broader North American churches. It is also our hope that these writings will be useful in our preparations for the next HANA consultation, which is scheduled to take place in 2016.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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A Guided Conversation Among Leaders in Changing Times

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Cannell, Linda. 2015. A Guided Conversation Among Leaders in Changing Times. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 11-25. Keywords: conversation, consultation, hana.

Abstract A discussion of the HANA conference and consultation formats with benefits and limitations indicated for each.

INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Common Ground Journal* consists of papers that were produced at the HANA Consultation described elsewhere in this issue. This gathering of North American leaders—30 from Asian immigrant communities, and 30 from Latino/a immigrant communities—was designed as a consultation because the challenges faced by these communities cannot be addressed effectively through presentations, nor can these challenges be understood without input from men and women with varied experience who represent different organizations, cultures, and/or sectors of society.

HOW THE CONFERENCE AND CONSULTATION DIFFER

The pervasive temptation of leaders is to make structures and systems the channels of development rather than people. If working with people, rather than managing systems, becomes the root task, then essential processes become those embedded in conversation and consultation (e.g., framing questions, discerning patterns and trends, reflecting on experience, and designing proposals for responsible action).

Peter Cha and I have learned that an effective consultation requires significant attention to process. For the HANA Consultation, and with Armida Belmonte Stephens and Juan Martinez as partners in planning, we refined some processes and added others. More on that after a description of how a consultation differs from the conventional conference format:

1. A consultation is not a conference. In other words, the intent is not to invite “special speakers” to share their knowledge while others listen—often with little understanding of how people are listening, what they are taking away from the event, or even if they are listening! Certainly, the conference format serves some purposes well, but if the intent is to enlighten understanding, stimulate reflection on experience, and foster action/response, the consultation format is typically more effective.
2. The consultation format requires a different approach to planning. While the details of venue, accommodation and meals, technological support, promotion, and so on are essentially the same for both the conference and consultation, consultation planning differs in some respects. To plan an effective consultation, a team must meet every few months and, as was the case of the HANA Consultation, may need to meet over 2–3 years to discuss the overall theme, issue, or problem common to a group of people, plan ways to incorporate diversity, determine subject areas for focused

interaction, create facilitated exercises for both large group and small group settings, design questions to prompt thought and interaction and to lead to consideration about appropriate action, discern experiences that will strengthen relationship and consequently interaction, consider ways to and determine areas of knowledge and/or practice where input from one or more specialists may be needed.

3. For both the conference and consultation the venue is important. It should be accessible, with suitable tables and chairs, and equipped with all that will be needed to support the presentations, group work, and other events. However, if possible, the venue for the consultation should be larger than what is required for exhibits and seating at speakers' presentations and workshops. At a consultation, space is needed for both seating and the display of work that results from the group interactions. In addition, participants need room to walk around—to interact without feeling crowded, to move from table to table as the work of the consultation requires, and space to engage the various planned exercises. As a “rule of thumb,” a consultation will require about one-half to twice as much space than is considered suitable for a conference—depending on the activities planned and interaction expected.
4. At a conference it is customary to organize the meetings around presentations (sometimes including workshops or “breakout” groups) and to include a number of “things to do or see while you’re at the conference.” At a consultation, relationships and subsequently interaction are strengthened when experiences such as observation of exemplars (sometimes external to the venue), worship, storytelling, sharing of personal experience relative to the overall purpose, small group problem solving, and so on are as integral to achievement of consultation outcomes as discussion and building on the input of one or more specialists and/or scholars.
5. A well-designed conference will extend one’s understanding of a subject and possibly lead to differences of perspective. Typically, conference organizers are more concerned with presentations than outcomes. They trust that understanding will result and that potential difference(s) will be examined responsibly. A well-designed consultation will extend understanding; but along with intellectual engagement, the planners intentionally include unstructured interpersonal time for informal conversation, as well as time within formal sessions for facilitated exercises. Such time is needed because the issue or problem of the consultation inevitably prompts differences of perspective and expression of attitudes. The facilitator(s) fosters dialogue and examination of attitudes and perspective, creating opportunities for all participants to learn, in a welcoming context, how to engage women and men from various cultural and organizational backgrounds. Hopefully, this engagement will result in the construction of new insights and perspectives, and proposals for responsible action.
6. Conference planners may be intentional about who is invited to participate in the events of the conference. Consultation planners more often than not will limit the number of participants using certain criteria for attendance (e.g., by specifically inviting participants known to have experience or interest in the theme of the consultation). The planning team also will discuss and determine criteria for those who are invited to serve as leaders of focused group interactions. In other words, a conference tends to focus on *specialist* sharing of information that may or may not be known to participants, and participants typically self-select which presentation(s) to attend; a consultation is organized to make use of the diverse experience and difference of perspective of *participants* in relation to a particular problem or issue.

Because of the pervasiveness of the conference format among academic, mission, and congregational leaders, a consultation can be stereotyped as a “sharing of ignorance.” In other words, some are reluctant to “waste time” at a gathering where the focus is not on a speaker(s) whose expertise and knowledge matches or exceeds their own. And some specialists and/or scholars will not accept an invitation to present their expertise or focused information where their input is seen (simply) to be

supportive of (or secondary to) the interaction of the participants. And, like students we have known, some participants just want to sit and listen to a speaker with no expectation of response.

If a consultation is not well planned, if attention is not given to who should participate, and if the team fails to design a variety of appropriate processes to facilitate interaction and encourage response, the criticisms are deserved.

PROCESSES TO FACILITATE INTERACTION AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSE

In *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*,¹ Randall Collins traces the history of thought and reveals a sociology of intellectual change. He argues that the ideas we often attribute to one or a small group of individuals were in reality constructed out of the spirited interchange of ideas across wide-ranging intellectual, and often cultural, networks—a global consultation across time if you will.

In *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future*,² Margaret Wheatley proposes a return to ancient traditions of conversation where people talk about what is important to them. Central to the process of conversation as she describes it is sharing and listening, seeking together to understand, commitment to responsible action, and reflection together on that action. Similar to what Collins discovered in his research, Wheatley notes that most of what we would consider significant events in history began with clusters of people talking. However, “conversation” in this case is more than just coffee break interaction. A critical skill of leaders is to share their perspectives clearly, but it is equally important that they listen to one another. To listen well requires the ability to frame the sort of probing questions that will help people respond with something that is worth listening to by others—in other words, something that will actually help move thought, plans, and decisions forward.

In keeping with the insights presented by Collins and Wheatley, an effective consultation will include many, if not all, of the following processes:

Elicit input from among those who will become participants. Invite their feedback on how the purpose was described; questions they believe are important related to that purpose; and ideas for themes for the working groups at the consultation.

1. Invite some participants to assume responsibility in areas that will have significant impact on the work of the consultation (e.g., mealtime ambiance, promotion and displays, blogging the events of each day, technological support, welcome and hospitality, worship planning and leadership, preparatory research, and so on). Planners must maintain contact with those who accept responsibility to ensure integrity with the overall purpose and to be available to help.
2. Tailor planned, facilitated exercises to both the purpose and the participants. For example, the HANA planners understood that leaders of different ethnicities who were not acquainted with each other would be reticent to mingle and interact. And, indeed, at the beginning of the consultation, Asian leaders congregated at some tables and Latino/a leaders sat together at other tables. The facilitator replaced the often overused “get acquainted” activities with a prepared simulation game that placed the participants in situations where they had to work together to solve a simulated but real-to-life problem. After the simulation the table groups were mixed and remained so for the duration of the consultation. Throughout the consultation, the facilitator(s) involved participants in various large and

¹ Randall Collins. *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).

² Margaret Wheatley. *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future* (San Francisco, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002).

small group experiences related to the purpose and themes of the consultation—exercises designed to promote thought, discussion, relationship, and response.

3. Provide the work group leaders with a document that identifies 4–5 facilitated exercises and a few questions they can use as needed. For the HANA consultation this document was distributed in advance, but we didn't expect the leaders to read it carefully beforehand. Only as they experienced some exercises at the consultation, and only as they began to understand the particular dynamics of their group, would they see the possibilities of using an exercise or question(s) designed to further dialogue and decision-making.
4. Establish criteria for participation and identify those who meet those criteria. To avoid the tendency to simply invite those who are familiar (e.g., friends, colleagues, those from our own context and culture, well-known leaders in the particular community) ask others to suggest leaders who could contribute to and profit from the consultation.
5. Seek out some who have experience and skills in facilitation. They will either serve as consultants and trainers of others who will be the consultation facilitators, or they will serve as facilitators throughout the event. Effective facilitators know that consultation requires time to reflect, synthesize, observe, and identify patterns. They know that the participants must be encouraged to become dialogue partners and mutual decision-makers.
6. Determine what background information is needed to support collaboration and decision-making. Seek out specialists and/or scholars who will accept a supporting role. They must understand that their presentation(s) is not to be the centerpiece of the consultation. They will provide essential background in specific areas to inform interaction and proposals for action. It is important that the invited resource person(s) plans to stay for the entire consultation to respond to questions from the working groups and/or to interact informally with participants.
7. The expectation of response. Therefore, plan a concluding exercise or series of questions to prompt ideas for action. Include also take-away ideas/questions for evaluation of that action. (As an example, see under Case Examples below.)

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF A CONSULTATION EXPERIENCE

Over many decades, the persisting direction of organizational theory has been toward the recognition that organizations are affected by people's behavior, commitments, and feelings about the organization; and that organizations, in turn, affect the development of people and the ways in which they work out their vocations individually and in working teams. In any organization, fundamental tasks of leadership are to discern the capacities of people, and to foster an environment where they can test their capacities and learn. Charles Handy³ has observed that organizations typically operate on the assumption of *incompetence*. Instead of developing people, leaders seek to control; they give directives and attempt to exert power over the other. Resolution of conflict or difference is managed by memo and/or a policy statement, neither of which is developed collaboratively. When an organization functions on the assumption of *competence*, on the other hand, paying attention to the development of people and the release of creative imagination is at least possible.

As organizations confront the forces of change, many leaders recognize the necessity of providing opportunities for people to practice skills such as inquiry, collaboration, accepting and working across difference, observing patterns and trends, decision-making, and so on. Leaders build strength in organizations when they think and act developmentally—which means investing in building the capacities

³ See Charles Handy, *The Hungry Spirit: Beyond Capitalism, a Quest for Purpose in the Modern World* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998).

of colleagues and in the analysis and shaping of systems that affect them. Organizations function best when people are respected and helped to do better the sorts of things that give organizations their energy and effectiveness.

Participating in a consultation experience could foster the sort of skills that are increasingly valued in organizations. In *Getting to Maybe*,⁴ Westley et al. describe the skills of social innovators. Many of the skills they illustrate are important practices for members of organizations and communities committed to consultation and action. And these skills can be developed in effective consultation experiences. Some examples follow:

- Skills common to social innovators include the capacity to see patterns, big picture thinking, and “knowing how to interpret information and convert it to knowledge you can use to move forward.”⁵
- Social innovators in complex systems recognize that the effort to create specific, measurable objectives can lead to tunnel vision. “In contrast, when astute social innovators tackle an issue or a problem, they realize that they don’t yet know enough to set specific goals or measurable targets; they also understand that different participants have different aims in the change process—and that those participants themselves should play a major role in goal setting.”⁶
- It will never be possible to have all the data necessary for a complete picture before action is taken. Similarly, evaluation is flawed when viewed as a snapshot at a point in time. Evaluation is an ongoing process and functions best when members of the organization are empowered to ask questions and suggest areas of inquiry. Teams reflective of the diversity of the organization are created to examine progress on complex issues. “[O]ngoing data collection and assessment [help] policy makers adapt their decisions and implement their principles in the face of changed conditions.”⁷

A CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

When organizational practices are shaped by the presumed need to compete for resources, leadership behavior devolves to managing for scarcity rather than managing for opportunity. Fear drives out the possibility of creative input, alternative perspectives are limited, and new ideas, especially those from within the organization, are less welcome; innovation is stifled, and the organization becomes increasingly rigid.

In contrast, Ted Ward once asserted that the challenge of the 21st century would be for institutions to learn how to relate to and work with other institutions across human boundaries. He was correct. In *The Necessary Revolution*, Peter Senge states what should be obvious by now—the world is shaped by networks or webs of organizations.⁸ Participation in well planned consultations will assist the development of the behaviors and attitudes that make significant partnerships across agencies possible.

⁴ Frances Westley, Brenda Zimmerman, and Michael Quinn Patton, *Getting to Maybe: How the World Is Changed* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2006).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁸ Peter Senge, Bryan Smith, Nina Kruschwitz, Joe Laur, and Sara Schley, *The Necessary Revolution: How Individuals and Corporations are Working Together to Create a Sustainable World* (New York: Doubleday, 2008), pp. 9–10.

RESOURCES TO ASSIST CONSULTATION INTERACTION

The following are not listed in any order of priority. They share fundamental qualities that are useful for consultation experiences: They recognize the importance of human engagement, listening to one another, respecting the diverse ideas and experiences of participants in the process, releasing the creativity of people, giving people a voice in development, idea sharing, and evaluating—using criteria all have had a part in developing.

Stimulating Conversation: *The World Café*⁹

The World Café is a hospitable space to explore questions that matter. The process encourages broad contributions from the team, connecting of diverse perspectives, listening and sharing collective discoveries with a view to responsible action. The World Café design incorporates *focused dialogue around substantive questions, shared stories, and case studies; a structured inquiry task; and one or more plenary sessions for synthesis and decision-making*. In the rounds of dialogue, ideas build on one another while participants explore questions and issues that matter to them in their life and work. Though possible outcomes are often identified, conversations are not focused, at least initially, on finding solutions. The more important outcome, and one that happens best in conversation, is to discover suitable questions to ask in relation to an issue. Though not necessary, some have found it helpful to have a presentation from a specialist/scholar prior to the three rounds of conversation. In the plenary session(s), after the rounds of conversation, connections among ideas are explored and questions are clarified. Knowledge sharing, possibilities for further inquiry, and opportunities for research and action may emerge.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Rather than look for problems or weaknesses, look for what is working, or what has promise. Recognize the creative capacity of people to reflect on current realities in light of an imagined future—to capture the life-giving elements of the past to energize the present and the future. Key to AI is the formation of significant questions.¹⁰ Cooperrider and Whitney suggest that human systems grow in the direction of that about which they persistently ask questions.¹¹ Therefore, inquiry is encouraged and time allowed for people to talk together and explore ideas.

Looking Differently at Our Problems

The way we talk about a problem or situation is part of the problem. Part of the solution is to talk about it differently. Name two or three of the most frequently talked about problems in relation to the theme of [this] consultation.

⁹ See Juanita Brown with David Isaacs and the World Café Community, *The World Café: Shaping our Futures Through Conversations That Matter* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005).

¹⁰ Juanita Brown (*The World Café*, 91) tells the story of two different approaches to asking questions in a community development effort: The less dynamic question was “Have you thought about cleaning up the river?” Apart from being in the generally unproductive yes/no form, the question would not take the people to useful thinking that leads to action. In this case, the more useful questions were, “What do you see when you look at the river? How do you feel about the condition of the river? How do you explain the situation with the river to your children?” This approach is more risky for the community development specialist because it leaves open the possibility that the people will see the problem (and hence possible solutions) differently. But, the reality is that it is most often the people who live with the situation who can see the way through the problem more clearly. The advantage of an outsider’s perspective, of course, is when the insider has been blindsided by bias, tradition, or familiarity..

¹¹ See David Cooperrider and Diana Whitney, *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2005); Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom, *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2003).

- What assumptions are present in the way the problems are discussed?
- How might we talk about these problems differently?
- In what ways does thinking differently allow us to view the situation differently?

Case Examples

Ask participants to write a brief case example that reflects the issue addressed by the consultation. Discuss the examples, looking for patterns and reflecting on action. In the process people are often able to identify blockages. Use thought questions rather than yes/no questions. For example: What do you perceive happened in this situation? Why? How is this situation or problem similar to or different from other situations or problems? What do you want to start doing, stop doing, continue doing? What went well, what didn't work? What happened? Why? What will we do differently next time? (Note: These questions could also be used as "take-away" ideas for evaluation of the action planned at the end of the consultation.)

Concluding Options for the Consultation: Stewarding Our Conversations

- In what ways will you continue and expand the conversations that took place at this consultation? With whom? How?
- Suggest one or more concrete ideas for a partnership with (name the relevant organizations or groups).
- How might you continue productive conversations about important matters raised in this consultation?
- How many different ways can you suggest for collaboration—how might we help?
- In what ways can ideas or findings from this consultation be disseminated in your communities? What are you willing to do to help disseminate findings—to whom and for what purpose? How might we help? Whom might you contact to share ideas and insights from your work at this consultation?
- What potentially fundable issue and/or project derived from the work at the consultation could you suggest?

Sharing Questions

Use one or more of the following to stimulate personal reflection on the experience with one or more of the themes:

- Tell at least one story from your ministry that illustrates questions or doubts or particular feelings about this theme.
- Describe an event or realization related to this theme that stimulated your desire to pass on something of worth to others in your context.
- Tell us of a time when you were conscious of being significantly influenced by someone else in relation to this theme.

- What support, training, or coaching in relation to this theme do you wish you had in the early years of your ministry?

Rank Order

Put the situations we have been discussing in order from the least to most comfortable for you. Explain your choices.

Private Reflection

Reflect on the following questions privately:

- How does this theme make me *feel*?
- What do I *think* about the basic premises behind this theme?
- What do my reactions to the theme tell me about *myself*? About others? About *God*?
- What, if anything, does our work on this theme make me want *to do*?

Following Through After Work and/or a Discussion¹²

1. To follow through on ideas.
 - What will happen now?
 - Who is or was affected?
 - What problems could arise?
 - What are the positive and negative consequences?
 - What factors might have changed the outcome?
2. To summarize at the end of a session.
 - What were the main points of our conversation/work?
 - What are the most important results of our session?
 - What still needs to be considered?
3. To identify examples or analogies.
 - What else is this like?

¹² Adapted from Kenneth Chuska, *Improving Classroom Questions* (Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, 1995, 2003).

Response After a Period of Conversation/Discussion¹³

In light of our conversations today, respond to the following questions. Use the sheets of paper and markers at your table to record your ideas.

- If there was one thing that hasn't yet been explored but is necessary in order to reach a deeper level of understanding or clarity, what would that be?
- What requires further thought before we can commit to action?
- What action(s) are we ready to take in the next 3–4 months? Describe 1–2 essential steps in relation to the action(s).
- What will require our immediate attention as we move toward our next steps?

Note-Taking Pairs

As you begin the session, ask participants to work in pairs to synthesize information from their notes and/or observations during the specialist's or scholar's presentation. Alternatively, ask them to create an improved synthesized version of their individual notes.

Send-a-Problem/Question

Place a substantive question or a concisely written problem underlying the theme in envelopes—enough to give one envelope to each person in your work group. Provide time for each person to reflect on the question or problem, generate possible responses, and record his or her best response on a 3x5 card and place it in the envelope. Call time and instruct the participants to pass their envelope to the next person. Repeat as often as needed. Participants consider the responses as they receive them and uses them to refine and improve upon their original response—adding another 3x5 card to the envelope each time. At the end of the activity, discuss the final responses and determine what might be of value to the work of the consultation.

Concept Formation

A neglected task in critical thinking is the intentional linking of ideas to other ideas. Concept mapping (or concept webbing) is a commonly used exercise to help sharpen this skill. Provide a large sheet of paper or access to a whiteboard. Identify one essential and central concept that has emerged from the conversation about your theme. Using this concept as the starting point, create a “conceptual map” that shows *graphically* how the starting concept links to other concepts. Typically, the starter concept will be printed in the middle of the paper or whiteboard. From this starting point extend lines out to other related concepts. The graphic can take a hub-and-spokes form, a web, a spiral, or other shape. Once the concept map is completed, examine it for inconsistencies, implications, gaps, insights, and so on. What has the conceptual map contributed to understanding of the theme? What action steps are suggested?

Dear Diary, Today I...

Ask participants to think of an incident related to the consultation theme. They are to imagine that the incident happened that day and they are now, in the evening of that day, writing a diary entry that captures their thoughts and feelings about the incident. “Dear Diary, Today I...”. Call time and invite some to read their entries, which you may or may not use as prompts for discussion. Tip: Avoid the tendency to fill the silence too soon. You might allow a full minute to go by before you say something like,

¹³ Adapted from The World Café.

“No one is expecting Pulitzer Prize winners, so...”. Or, “If you wish to keep your diary entry private that is not a problem, but if any wish to share...”. If no one responds, convey that that is okay, and then move on to the next thing. However, it is likely that someone will break the silence and offer to read. Acknowledge the reading with a nod, or “Thank you, anyone else...”. Do not launch into a speech about *your* response to the diary entry. If discussion seems warranted, facilitate it.

Brief Encounters: Facilitator’s Guide (time required: 30–40 minutes)

Adapted from a simulation by Andrea MacGregor.¹⁴ (Numerous commercially developed simulation games are available. Some may be adaptable to the theme of the consultation.)

Introduction

- Everyone has a culture. It shapes how one sees oneself, others, and the world.
- Behavior is affected in large part by cultural beliefs and values.
- Culture is like an iceberg. Some aspects are visible; others are beneath the surface.
- Invisible aspects influence and may cause the visible aspects.

In *Brief Encounters* participants explore the interaction of two cultures—one outgoing and casual, the other more reserved and formal—with different social norms. Cultural-norms sheets (see below) have been created for the Pandya and Chispa cultures.

Instructions

1. Print sufficient cultural-norm sheets for the Pandya and Chispa cultures (see below). About half the large group will be Pandya, the other half Chispa.
2. Remove all furniture from the center of the room. Explain to participants that they will adopt the cultures of two unfamiliar groups, interact with each other, and then examine their reactions.
3. Divide the participants into Pandya and Chispa groups. The groups should be about the same size, balanced for gender as much as possible, and diverse in terms of ethnicity or other group factors.
4. Select a group of about 4–6 to serve as observers. The observers are to watch closely as the Pandyas and the Chispas interact. They may move among the participants, but they may not touch or speak to them. They will share their observations during debriefing.
5. Send the Pandya and Chispa groups to opposite corners of the room. Give each group a copy of their cultural norm description. Ask the members of each culture to become as familiar as possible with their particular characteristics and behavior. Give the two cultures the following instructions:
 - Seek out members of your own and the other “culture.” You may not avoid interaction with the other “culture.”
 - Attempt to engage members of your or the other “culture.” (Suggest 2–3 questions that are relevant to the purpose of the consultation.)

¹⁴ Go to http://www.acadiau.ca/~dreid/games/Game_descriptions/Brief_Encounters.htm. See also Proposal to Peace Corps, Appendix A, at <http://obtc.org/conference/index.php/2013/2013/paper/download/303/96>. Last accessed October 20, 2014.

6. Have one of the observers visit the Pandya group to emphasize the importance of staying in character, and that males in their culture should be chaperoned at all times. Remind them of the Pandyas' reserved behavior and their reluctance to initiate contacts with people of other cultures.
7. Have one of the observers visit the Chispas and emphasize the importance of staying in character, and that members of this culture make several brief contacts rather than a few lengthy ones. Define a "contact" as eliciting a verbal or a nonverbal response from a member of the other culture. Remind them of their friendly, outgoing nature and their eagerness to meet people from other cultures.

The Simulation

1. Announce that two groups from imaginary countries have been invited to a party sponsored by an international organization. The party organizers hope the two groups will get acquainted and learn about each other. Introduce the cultures as Panyas and Chispas, providing no more information about their respective characteristics. Invite the groups to interact (if desired, play background music).
2. The observers should walk among the groups, looking for behaviors that can be described and discussed during debriefing. After 10 to 12 minutes, call time and end the party. Each culture group returns to their respective corners to discuss what they learned. Observers meet to compare notes.
3. Give each group about 10 minutes to prepare their observations. The Chispas' report will describe Pandya behavior and the values that people could expect to encounter if they visited the Pandya nation. The Pandyas will create a similar description of the Chispas' culture.

Debriefing

Use questions such as the following to guide discussion of how our own cultural biases influence the way we view other groups. Be sure to ask the small group of observers to give their views on the participants' attempts to communicate across cultures and to maintain cultural norms.

1. How did you feel about the behavior of the members of your own group? Of the other group? Did your group's report use positive, negative, or neutral terms to describe the other group?
2. Ask participants to discuss whether or not they agree with each of the following statements:
 - People have difficulty describing the behaviors of other groups in non-judgmental terms.
 - People acquire cultural norms fairly quickly.
 - Most cultural norms are maintained through peer pressure.
 - The same or similar behavior can be perceived differently depending on one's group norms. For example, what appears friendly to Chispas seems pushy to Pandyas.
3. What real-world situations were illustrated during the *Brief Encounter*?
4. What lessons from this activity would you want to keep in mind if you were going to spend time with people from an unfamiliar culture?

Pandya Cultural Norms

- Pandyas are reserved and do not initiate conversation, speaking only when spoken to.
- Pandyas have formal speech patterns, using “sir” and “ma’am” or other titles.
- Pandya women have more status than men. Men are chaperoned by Pandya women.
- Pandya men avoid eye contact and respond through their chaperones.
- Pandya men do not speak directly with women from other cultures.
- Pandya men can talk to men from other cultures. They can maintain eye contact with men from other cultures.

Chispa Cultural Norms

- Chispas are informal and friendly.
- Among Chispas there are no gender roles. Men and women behave the same way.
- Chispas are outgoing. They love to make contact with people from other cultures.
- Chispa contacts are brief and casual. A response is elicited and the Chispa person moves on.
- Chispas are democratic and call everyone by his or her first name.
- Chispas value cross-gender contacts more than same-gender contacts.

The following exercises are adapted from Stephen Brookfield, *Teaching for Critical Thinking* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2012).

Closing Reflection

At what moment were you most engaged as a participant?

At what moment were you most distanced as a participant?

What action that anyone took in the group did you find most helpful?

What action that anyone took in the group did you find most confusing?

What surprised you most about the group?

Circle of Voices

In the first round, no one interrupts the speaker. Then the person to his or her left speaks for about a minute—but is required to incorporate elements of the first speaker's comments into his or her remarks. This process continues around the circle, with every speaker responding to the immediately preceding speaker's comments. The circle ends with the first speaker, who responds to the immediately preceding speaker's comments as well. Following the cycle, the group can engage in open conversation—seeking clarification, asking questions, offering additional contributions.

Structured Silence

Every 15–20 minutes call for 2–3 minutes of intentional silence—a reflective pause. Participants are asked to think quietly about one of the following questions (different questions are chosen by the facilitator for each pause):

- What was the most important point made in the last 15–20 minutes?
- What was the most puzzling or confusing point made in the last 15–20 minutes?
- What question do we most need to address in the next period of our discussion?
- What new perspective or interpretation was suggested for you in the last 15–20 minutes?
- What assumptions that you hold about this topic were confirmed in the last 15–20 minutes?
- What assumptions that you hold about this topic were challenged in the last 15–20 minutes?

Give participants 3x5 cards to keep track of ideas or insights. Invite response before proceeding with the discussion.

The Appreciative Pause

At least once in every discussion, the facilitator calls for a pause of about 1–2 minutes. During this time the only comments allowed are from participants who acknowledge how something said by another participant contributed to their learning, whether

- A question that was asked suggested a new way of thinking
- A comment clarified something that until then was confusing
- A comment opened up a new line of thought
- A comment helped identify an assumption
- A comment identified a gap in reasoning that needed to be addressed
- A comment was intriguing and had not been considered before
- A comment showed the connection between two other ideas or contributions when that connection hadn't been clear
- An example that was provided helped increase understanding of a difficult concept.

To Generate Multiple Perspectives

- “Let’s look at this issue and start with a different premise. For example...”
- “What would this issue look like if we began from a different starting point?”
- “Try to imagine you have no experience with this matter. Where would your instinct tell you to start?”
- “Try to think of the most unlikely ways of understanding this matter—the weirder the better. What would they be?”
- “Who or what perspective is missing and what would it look like if that perspective was included?”
- “What radically different examples can you give of this theme? In what different directions could these examples take our analysis?”
- “What questions or issues have been raised for us today? What remains unresolved or contentious about this issue?”

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Historical Reflections on the “In-Betweenness” of Latino Protestantism

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Abstract “Historical Reflections on the ‘In-Betweenness’ of Latino Protestantism” offers historical reflections that engage with key social and cultural developments that have shaped the experiences of Latino immigrant communities of faith. The perspectives on Latino Protestantism provides a deeper understanding of the historical contexts in which HANA congregations serve and grow.

Martínez, Juan Francisco. 2015. Historical Reflections on the “In-Betweenness” of Latino Protestantism. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 26-30. Keywords: hana, in-betweenness, latino, mestizaje.

INTRODUCTION

Latinos¹ are now the largest minority group in the United States. That change has been a long time coming, though demographic growth has not yet translated into political, social, economic, or religious power of the same proportions. Part of the reason is that the term *Latino* comprises a multitude of people that have little in common. People whose historical background includes any of over twenty countries (including the United States), people whose ancestors were in the Southwest before Jamestown was established, and the person who just crossed the border today, all are called Latinos. Because of the strange relationship between the United States and Latin America, a person born as a U.S. citizen on U.S. territory (Puerto Rico), becomes an immigrant when they move to the mainland United States. Nonetheless, Latinos will continue to grow faster than the U.S. population at large; we have higher birthrates than other groups in the United States, and the unique relationship between the United States and Latin America means there will likely be some level of continual migration from south to north into the foreseeable future.

Latinos are more religious and more Christian than the U.S. population at large. About 20% of the Latino population is Protestant, though there are countries in Latin America that have a higher percentage of Protestants. Latino Protestants have a very diverse history, often being doubly marginalized. Historically, they have been marginalized for their faith by Latino Catholics while U.S. Protestants have marginalized them because they are Latinos. This means that Latino Protestants have often lived in an in-between space ethnically, religiously, and socially. We want to explore this space through a historical reflection on the history and development of Latino Protestantism.

AN IN-BETWEEN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES

Juan González argues in his book *Harvest of Empire* that there is a direct relationship between U.S. intervention in Latin America and the subsequent migration north. The U.S. seizure of the Southwest from Mexico in 1848 made 100,000 Mexicans U.S. citizens (though second class) and began patterns of

¹ I will use the term “Latino” in this paper, though many others use “Hispanic.” I use the terms interchangeably.

Mexican migration that continue to this day. (There are now places in Mexico where people have been migrating to the United States to work for more than four generations.) The war with Spain made Puerto Rico a colony and eventually Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens (though with no direct political representation), able to freely move to the mainland United States. That same war created a strange relationship with Cuba, which would later create its own migratory patterns. U.S. military interventions in the Dominican Republic and Central America created other migratory patterns.

Latinos have found themselves constantly in a place between presence and migration. The Mexicans who were in the Southwest when the United States took over became foreigners in their own land, because the new migrants from the East were now the “citizens.” So even though today the majority of U.S. Latinos were born in the United States, we are eternally foreigners. And the relationship between the United States and Latin America continues to be a complicated one, in that we can anticipate more U.S. intervention, which will create new migratory patterns. The late nineteenth-century Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz stated that Mexico’s biggest problem was that it was so far from God and so close to the United States. Nonetheless, we are linked, and this in-between relationship is likely to continue.

AN IN-BETWEEN IDENTITY

Latino identity, as it now exists, began in the violent encounter between European conquerors, indigenous peoples and the later forced migration of peoples from Africa. There would also be other migrations from other parts of the world into Latin America, but it was these violent encounters that produced the *mestizo*² identities that define what it means to be Latin American, or U.S. Latino, today.

That original *mestizaje*³ experienced a second type of *mestizaje* with the U.S. takeover of the Southwest and Puerto Rico. This encounter, also violent at the beginning, created new types of relationships. The “white” majority had a very inconsistent way of dealing with the Latino minority. On the one hand, the lighter skinned land owners become “honorary whites.” But their poorer and darker skinned relatives were treated as “Mexicans.” A few, mostly rich Latinos, married into the majority, but most remained separate. They had to learn how to “fit” in the society of the conqueror, even as they redefined their identity in this new reality. In practice most Latinos developed some type of polycentric identity, learning to fit in more than one cultural space, moving between the various cultural, ethnic and social poles that defined their lives.

The situation became more complex as Latino migration diversified. Today one of the most significant challenges is the fact that many Latinos live in places where the growing populations are other minority or immigrant communities. Another challenge is that there are a growing number of places where Latinos are the majority and newcomers need to understand how to “adapt” to their presence and cultural influence. Many younger generation Latinos face this in-betweenness as the experience of being polycentric in a multi-centric world.

AN IN-BETWEEN CHRISTIAN FAITH

Christianity arrived in Latin America with the Spanish and Portuguese Catholic missionaries that arrived in the late 1400s and the beginning of the 1500s. The faith was imposed mostly by military force, resulting in outward conversions but an underground continuance of many of the traditional indigenous

² *Mestizo* literally means to be of mixed race, specifically, European and indigenous. “Mulatto” is used to refer to people of mixed European and black African background. Historically, neither of these terms was used in a “neutral” or “scientific” way, but have always had a negative connotation. Nonetheless, U.S. Latino theology has taken the term to describe “Latinoness.” In post-colonial literature it is a specific form of hybridity.

³ In Spanish *mestizaje* refers to both the process and the result of the mixing of racial groups.

and African religious practices. In practice the result was an official Catholicism and a popular Catholicism that reflected a syncretistic combination of Catholicism and previously practiced faiths.

This was the faith practiced by the Mexican faithful at the time of the U.S. takeover of the Southwest. Both the American Protestants and Catholics challenged these religious practices. The Protestants only saw paganism, while the American Catholics saw a simplistic, childlike faith with little theological framing. Both worked very hard to change the Mexican Catholics. American Catholics removed most of the existing Mexican priests and worked very hard to Americanize the Mexicans. Protestant missionaries also evangelized and Americanized. U.S. Protestant missionaries were convinced that “Americans” were the new Israelites that had been given a new Canaan. Of course, in that interpretation the Mexicans were Canaanites who no longer had a right to the land and who would soon disappear. Nonetheless, many missionaries felt that the Mexicans should be evangelized before they completely disappeared as a people.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, 3-5% of “Mexican”⁴ population of the Southwest was Protestant. It seemed like the Mexicans who wanted to “fit” in the new reality of the American Southwest thought becoming a Protestant would help. But Latino Protestants were already becoming a doubly marginalized community. U.S. Protestants wanted them to convert, but did not feel comfortable with having them in their churches. And several small Latino communities in the Southwest literally split into Catholic and Protestant sections.

But several important things happened in the first part of the twentieth century that redefined Latino Protestantism. On the one hand, by the 1930s most Protestant denominations had ministry among Latinos, with the evangelical groups growing faster than the historical denominations. But the most significant event was the birth of the modern Pentecostal movement at the Azusa Street Revival beginning in 1906. There were many “Mexican” converts at Azusa Street and they took the Pentecostal message back to Latin America and the Latino USA.

There was slow, but steady, growth among Latino Protestants through the middle of the twentieth century, with Pentecostals slowly becoming their largest group. The next major change occurred after 1965 when the United States changed its immigration policy and began to allow more people from Latin America to move into the country. While this change was happening in the United States, Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement were changing the face of Christianity in Latin America. So when new migrants came, many of them were already Protestants. They came from dynamic churches and many brought their own pastors and churches, something that had not happened with earlier migrations. Because the percentage of Protestants in Puerto Rico, Guatemala, and El Salvador was higher than the percentage of Latino Protestants in the United States, the Latino Protestant population continued to grow as a percentage of the population. Tied to the continuing uneasy relationship between “American” and Latino Catholics, Latino Catholics in the United States continued to convert to Protestantism, particularly Pentecostalism.

The traditional interpretation among sociologists, and many Catholics, was that Latino conversions to Protestantism were part of the assimilation process into U.S. society. But numerous studies have demonstrated that at least Latino Pentecostals have higher ethnic identity maintenance than Latino Catholics. Nonetheless, the issue of structural assimilation affects Latino Protestants. Today one finds *Protestantes* and Latino Protestants, the former being people where ethnic and religious identity are closely linked and the latter being people whose Christian commitment is fairly separate from their ethnic identity (or they have a low Latino ethnic identity).

⁴ Through most of the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries all Latinos in the Southwest were called Mexicans, even if they were born in the United States. During the massive deportations of the 1930s many U.S. citizens of Mexican descent were deported to Mexico.

Currently Latino Protestants clearly reflect various “in-betweennesses.” For example, Latino Protestant churches are growing, but many Latino Protestants do not attend predominantly Latino churches. Mainline churches claim to believe in diversity and openness toward Latinos, but Latinos, on the whole, are much more interested in Pentecostal and evangelical churches. Though two-thirds of Latinos have a Mexican background, Latino Protestants are much more likely to be of Puerto Rican or Central American descent, since Mexico is the most Catholic country in the world. This tendency is so strong that most of the nationally recognized Latino Protestant leaders are Puerto Rican.

Latino Protestants continue to grow in the space between migration and structural assimilation. They also inhabit a predominantly Pentecostal world that makes them very different from the majority of U.S. Protestants. This in-betweenness would seem to indicate that Latino Protestants will likely follow several trajectories as they look toward the future. Migration and proximity to Latin America will continue to be part of the equation even as Latino Protestants negotiate being a part of life in the United States.

LIVING AN IN-BETWEEN LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES

Latinos continue to live in an in-between space in the United States. Politically, most identify with Democrats, though the Obama administration has deported more undocumented Latinos than has any other presidency. Latino Protestants tend to be more socially conservative than other Latinos, but find that Republicans are not sure that they want them in the party.

New Latino immigrants are continuing to redefine and reframe the story of Latinos in the United States. Most of the time these new immigrants do not know the history of U.S. Latinos and they bring their Latin American past into the U.S. Latino experience. At the same time some Latinos are structurally assimilating and are disconnecting from the story. Latino identity continues to exist in the bookends between migration and structural assimilation.

MAÑANA—A WAY OF BEING A FAITHFUL BELIEVER IN AN IN-BETWEEN PLACE

The term *mañana* in its idiomatic usage means more than “tomorrow.” In practice it only means “not today.” In some circles it can become a form of escapism, a focus on a tomorrow that will never come. But *mañana* is also a powerful eschatological term. To believe in *mañana* is to believe in God’s future. The present may seem hopeless at times, but *mañana* is in God’s hands. *Mañana* invites us to live the reality of in-betweenness in hope, believing that God will bring justice and peace through Jesus Christ. Because we believe in *mañana* we can believe in a future where our polycentric identities will not merely be tools for survival, but will be recognized as gifts to more effectively serve the God who calls us to live in the in-betweenness of “already and not yet.”

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The Globalization and Racialization of Asian American Churches

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Abstract “The Globalization and Racialization of Asian American Churches” offers historical reflections that engage with key social and cultural developments that shaped the experiences of Asian American immigrant communities of faith. The perspectives on globalization and racialization of Asian American churches offer readers a deeper understanding of the historical contexts in which HANA congregations serve and grow.

Jeung, Russell. 2015. The Globalization and Racialization of Asian American Churches. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 31-38. Keywords: asian, hana, multiethnic, panethnic, transnational.

INTRODUCTION

A congregation that I consider one of my home churches, Grace Fellowship Community Church, originally was made up of members from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in San Francisco’s Chinatown. That church was founded in 1894, when the Woman’s Board of Missions sent Mrs. Naomi Sutton as a missionary to Chinatown to teach English and care for sick children. Eventually, the congregation called its own Chinese minister, Rev. Gam Sing Quah, to lead it in 1904.

Even while Chinese faced discrimination and segregation, that congregation grew as members raised their families in Chinatown. By 1950, most ministries in all the Chinatown churches were conducted in English as the second generation acculturated to their American setting. After the 1965 Immigration Act, Chinese-speaking newcomers filled the pews. As Cumberland grew to become the largest church in Chinatown, differences between the English-speaking and Chinese-speaking congregations, along with new visions and purposes, led to planting of Grace Fellowship in 1983.

While Grace Fellowship aimed to be a multiethnic church for the city, its core members and leadership were mostly pan-Asian American professionals. Its initial numerical growth through personal networks, then, was made up primarily of other Asian Americans, including those of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino descent.

In 1992, the congregation relocated to the Mission District of San Francisco, a primarily Latino neighborhood facing gentrification, to further its calling to “serve the most vulnerable.” Today, Grace Fellowship continues to wrestles with the question, “What does it mean to be the Church in San Francisco?”

The story of Grace Fellowship neatly reflects the intersecting processes of globalization and racialization that have long shaped Asian American Christian identities and communities. Globalization, in which the world’s economy becomes increasingly interconnected, spurs the flow of capital, labor, and cultures across borders. For example, flows of culture and labor have long influenced Asian American

Christianity. Just as Western missionaries have brought their cultural model of Christianity to Asia, Asians migrating to America bring their political, social, and cultural agendas to the churches in the United States. Cumberland and Grace Fellowship, as congregations serving immigrants, develop ministries to newcomers who arrive with different forms of capital and who receive various degrees of welcome.

As Asians enter the United States, the government, schools, and even churches racialize them in that Asian Americans are perceived through new, ascribed identities and specific, cultural characteristics. Currently, the U.S. census categorizes the predominant racial distinctions as African American, Asian American, American Indian, Pacific Islander, and White.¹ It also sets apart Hispanics as a separate ethnic category. Such discourse not only affects how Americans identify individuals and groups, but also how they interpret and interact with them. Currently, Cumberland Presbyterian Church targets Asian Americans while Grace Fellowship and its members prefer not see themselves in racial terms. Nevertheless, others continue identify Grace as an Asian American congregation simply because of its membership and leadership.

Asian American Christians have adopted identities and built congregations within five sociohistoric periods of transnational flows and racial discourses.² The first period, *Orientalist Paternalism*, characterized how Asians were perceived and evangelized in the 1800s. Not surprisingly, Asian American Christians resisted such treatment as inassimilable foreigners and started their own Christian organizations. The first half of the twentieth century saw nationalist movements in Asia and two world wars. Asian American church members, segregated from mainstream American society in this second period, held to *Transnational Christian* identities and supported movements in China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. With the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, ethnic caucuses promoted *Ethnic Family Churches* during the third period, where members maintained bicultural approaches to identity and ministry. A movement toward *Asian American Panethnic Church Growth* emerged in fourth period of the 1980s, as the second, third, and fourth generation of Asian Americans found that they shared more in common with each other than with the new immigrants. By 2008, with the election of President Barack Obama, Americans called for a post-racial society where we are to be tolerant of everything but discrimination and segregation. Corresponding to this discourse of this fifth period, more Asian American ministers have sought to establish *Asian American-led Multiethnic Congregations*, where churches reflect the diversity of the Kingdom of God and racial reconciliation takes place at both a personal and institutional level. While a plurality of congregational forms and individual identities has existed in each period, this article spells out major trends to highlight the significance of globalization and racialization in shaping how Asian American churches conceptualize their identity, mission, and organizational structure.

This article is limited in scope in that it cannot cover each Asian ethnic group, religious tradition, or region. Instead, it offers a broad, historical overview of the development of Asian American congregations.

ORIENTALIST PATERNALISM (1850–1900)

The very parallel ways that the first Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrant churches have developed demonstrate how the same racial ideologies and capitalist forces structured these communities. The first migrants from Asia in the 1800s were primarily men from rural China, Japan, and the Philippines. Large-scale migration began as railroad and agricultural capitalists required thousands of contract laborers to

¹ David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

² Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

lay their tracks and harvest their fields. Flows of laborers circulated the Pacific Rim as most did not plan to settle in the United States, but rather to return to their home villages with their wages. Within these settlements, Western missionaries initiated their work of Orientalist paternalism.

European Americans depicted these first Asian immigrants as “heathen idolators,” a “debased race,” and “free hired servants.”³ Such characterization exemplifies Orientalism: the way in which Asia, its peoples, and its cultures have been understood and represented in the West. More specifically, these essentialized representations depict Asian societies as static and undeveloped, while Western ones are seen as rational, progressive, and superior.⁴

Employing such assumptions, white American missionaries saw the first Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino immigrants as uncivilized and inassimilable. Introducing Christianity to these groups did not aim just to save their souls, but also to help civilize their cultures, free their nations from authoritarianism, and develop their economies. White missionary societies, mostly women, entered their communities to teach English and to evangelize. They did not expect their converts to integrate into their congregations, but hoped that they would return to their home countries to evangelize there.⁵

In response to virulent anti-Asian violence and discrimination, as evidenced by the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, Asians in the United States drew together in reactive solidarity and saw themselves foremost as Chinese or Japanese Christians. Wanting a measure of self-determination and autonomy, the Chinese organized their own Christian organization, including the *Youxue Zhengdao-hui*, which had 30 branches in 12 states by 1890. The Japanese Christians similarly formed their own organization, the Japanese Christian Church Federation, in 1910.

TRANSNATIONAL CHRISTIANITY (1901–1945)

The first Asian American Christians were encouraged to return to Asia, so not surprisingly their churches supported nationalist movements there. Unable to become naturalized as Americans, these Christians focused their attentions on the moral uplift and national development of their home nations. Indeed, Asian congregations in the United States were instrumental in providing institutional and ideological support for revolutionary and wartime movements in China, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea. For example, Sun Yat-Sen repeatedly made trips to Chinese Christian congregations in Hawaii and California in order to raise funds for the Chinese Revolution of 1911. Japanese Christians during the Sino-Japanese War collected and sent care packages for the Japanese soldiers stationed abroad.

The first Korean American Christians also illustrate how immigrants used the church as an institutional space for transnational politics. In 1919, Philip Jaisohn partnered with Henry Chung and Syngman Rhee to establish the Korean Congress in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to advocate for Korean independence from Japan. Mobilizing through churches, they appealed to the broader American public by calling on their common Christian values. The Korean Congress drafted a letter to Americans, “An Appeal to America,” that drew on nationalism and Christianity to garner widespread support:

We know you love justice; you also fought for liberty and democracy, and you stand for Christianity and humanity. Our cause is a just one before the laws of God and man. Our aim is

³ Timothy Tseng, “Ministry at Arms’ Length: Asian Americans in the Racial Ideology of American Mainline Protestants, 1890–1927” (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1994).

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

⁵ William Speer, *China and California: Their Relations, Past and Present; a Lecture* (San Francisco: Marvin and Hitchcock, 1853).

freedom from militaristic autocracy; our object is democracy for Asia; our hope is universal Christianity.⁶

Beyond the use of Christian rhetoric, Korean American nationalists had strong networks with white Protestant missionaries, such as the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, who provided critical support in increasing public awareness and influencing foreign policy. From 1919 through 1921, over 9,700 editorials were published that were sympathetic to the Korean cause in American newspapers and periodicals. Despite their disenfranchisement, Korean Christians' religious partnerships with Protestants gave them leverage in increasing awareness for their cause.

Locked out from full participation in mainstream American society, these Asian American Christians merged their Christian identity with an ardent transnational orientation. Consequently, much of their focus on evangelism and missions was oriented toward their Asian homelands.

ETHNIC FAMILY CHURCHES (1946–1980)

During World War II, the American government interned Japanese American Christians (along with the rest of their ethnic community) in camps as they were all suspected of being disloyal to the United States. In 1946, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Rescission Act, which barred benefits to Filipino veterans who fought for the United States. As the Cold War began, Chinese Americans were interrogated by the government as Communists and illegal aliens, continuing the policies of treating Asian Americans as outsiders to be suspected. These acts of racialization marking Asian Americans as “forever foreigners” clearly impacted the community as they continued to remain institutionally segregated within their own ethnic communities. These institutions included community newspapers, sports organizations, and churches. At the same time, to join in America's postwar prosperity, Asian Americans sought to adopt American ways as much as they could. American reaction against the Civil Rights movement coincided with the upward mobility of Asian Americans and led to another stereotype of Asian Americans, that of the “model minority.” Unfortunately, this identity pitted Asian Americans against other impoverished minorities, as the latter became blamed for their status.

The growth of Asian ethnic congregations was tempered with the expectation that these groups would assimilate and join mainstream congregations, thereby obviating the need for them. Immediately after the war during the baby boom, Asian American congregations flourished as they ministered to growing families. In the 1950s, Cumberland had grown so large that they hosted twelve youth groups for different ages. Likewise, Japanese American churches constructed new facilities as they rebuilt their communities after internment. Nevertheless, sociologists expected that these ethnic congregations, like other white immigrant ones, would eventually decline as the groups assimilated.⁷

The processes of globalization and racialization again impacted these Christian communities to prevent their disappearance. Recognizing that their immigration policies were discriminatory in the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the U.S. Congress passed the 1965 Immigration Act. This act not only opened up the possibility of family reunification for people throughout the world, but it also gave preferential status to those with particular professional and educational backgrounds. Subsequently, immigration from China and the Philippines rose dramatically, and congregations received newcomers into their pews. The number of Chinese churches in the San Francisco Bay Area, for example, increased from 15

⁶ Richard S. Kim, “Diasporic Politics and the Globalizing of America: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and the 1919 Philadelphia Korean Congress,” in *Asian Diasporas: New Formations, New Conceptions*, ed. Rhacel S. Parreñas and Lok C. D. Siu, 208 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

⁷ Frederick Bird, *A Study of Chinese Churches in the Bay Area* (Berkeley: Bureau of Community Research, 1968); Mark Mullins, “The Life-Cycles of Ethnic Churches in Sociological Perspective,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 14, no. 4 (1987): 321–334.

in 1950 to 158 by 1996. Immigration from Japan, however, remained stable as Japan itself benefitted from globalization and its increased economic production.

Just as the churches were impacted by global immigration policy, the 1960s civil rights movement racialized them as well. In response to the demands of African Americans, denominations institutionalized racial and ethnic caucuses to acknowledge their presence within their bodies and to further their growth. Asian Americans also demanded denominational support, which came in the form of staffing for church planting, training of ethnic ministers, retreats and camps, and curriculum support. In San Francisco, Cumberland joined congregations of other mainline denominations in the Chinese Christian Union. This union helped establish many ministries and organizations to serve the low-income immigrant population in Chinatown, such as through housing, employment, and health non-profits.

While these broader processes were reinvigorating the Asian American church, the congregations themselves often operated as ethnic extended families, where they preserved customs, transmitted cultural values and language, and encouraged bicultural identities. Not only were members inculcated with American Christian values of love, grace, and freedom, but they were encouraged to maintain strong Asian values, such as filial piety, collectivist loyalty, and love of learning. This congregational model—an Asian immigrant congregation with a smaller English ministry (EM), which is mostly for the youth—is the dominant form of Asian American church to this day.

ASIAN AMERICAN PANETHNIC CHURCH GROWTH (1981–2000)

The Vietnam War and its aftermath brought major changes to the Asian American community, as it diversified with the influx of Vietnamese, Cambodian, Hmong, and other Southeast Asian groups. The Vietnamese have since become the fourth largest Asian ethnic group in the United States, following the Chinese, Filipinos, and Indians. The 1990 Immigration Act accentuated changes incurred by the 1965 Immigration Act, as the former prioritized skilled workers for immigration even more. Consequently, the Asian American community saw more immigrants of professional status and the corresponding development of ethnoburbs.⁸ As one of the few ethnic institutions in the suburbs, Asian ethnic congregations grew rapidly and often operated as the community center for the new groups.

By this time, Ethnic Studies programs had been established on many college campuses, especially in California, and Asian American students taking these courses became racialized as Asian Americans, not just as ethnic Americans. Coming together on campuses, they learned of the common history and oppression of Asians in the United States, as well as of their oft-shared experiences as children of immigrants. Asian American Christian Fellowships, campus organizations which also began to emerge, further created Asian American networks which reinforced panethnic identities.

These networks made Asian Americans a viable spiritual target market for evangelicals. With the success of Evergreen Baptist Church in Los Angeles in the 1980s, more congregations began to identify themselves as Asian American churches for the sake of church growth. By moving away from the immigrant congregation model with an English ministry for children, the panethnic church model also enabled congregations to introduce new worship styles, to gain autonomy over church governance, and to initiate new ministries that were not only focused on ethnic communities. In fact, by 2000, ten percent of Bay Area Asian American congregations studied self-identified as being pan-ethnic rather than as ethnic specific. Cumberland, which had initiated a new church plant in Daly City, a suburb of San Francisco, was one of those congregations.

While evangelicals reached out to Asian American networks for evangelism and church growth, mainline denominations also established Asian American congregations, as well as seminary centers and

⁸ Terrance J. Reeves and Claudette E. Bennett, "We the People: Asians in the United States" (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

publications, to promote issues of social justice. Acknowledging that Asian Americans face common stereotypes and face similar racial issues, the mainline churches tackled issues of affirmative action, anti-Asian violence, and immigration reform. This pan-ethnic church model often is the de facto form of congregation for second generation Asian American churches, even if they seek to be multiethnic.

ASIAN AMERICAN-LED MULTIETHNIC CONGREGATIONS (2001–PRESENT)

Currently, most of the United States endorses a multicultural discourse which encourages respect for diversity and tolerance of cultural and racial differences. Ironically, because of a recession and job losses due to globalization, the U.S. has also seen an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment and legislation. The anti-immigrant policies of the Republican Party have not gone unnoticed by the Asian American and Latino populations, who overwhelmingly voted for President Barack Obama in the 2012 election. The desire to gain entrance into mainstream politics, culture, and society, while also maintaining ethnic and racial pride, is the current thrust of Asian American Christians, especially their ministers. Indeed, instead of establishing ethnic-specific and pan-Asian American congregations, most Asian American church plants are now multiethnic in target, as churches seek to reflect the Kingdom of God in its diversity.⁹

Asian American ministers of multiethnic congregations often employ a color-conscious approach, rather than a color-blind one, to unify their churches and to deal with race relations. They believe that Asian Americans are uniquely suited to be bridge-builders between racial groups in that they are less threatening than other minorities to whites and can relate to the structural discrimination faced by other people of color. Indeed, these ministers are much more likely to acknowledge the barriers posed by institutional racism and inequality than their white counterparts. Consequently, they acknowledge “multicultural racialization” by which they celebrate ethnic differences and acknowledge the salience of race in people’s life chances.¹⁰

Despite their intentions, many of these congregations remain predominantly Asian American in membership due to continued racialization and church growth by networks. Racialization shapes the membership of these multiethnic congregations through the process of the sociological “niche edge effect.”¹¹ When non-Asian Americans enter a predominantly Asian American church with an Asian American minister, they might first assume that the congregation is Asian American rather than multiethnic. Later, as they attempt to enter church life more fully, non-Asians likely would continue to feel like the minority despite the good intentions of the church. When non-Asian Americans identify the core of church leadership or small group fellowships to be Asian American, they would be more likely to be on the edge of the core. With less friendships and congregational ownership, non-Asians are thus more likely to leave the congregation than Asian Americans might. Even with mixed success in creating multiracial congregations and in reaching out to diverse neighborhoods, Asian American-led multiethnic churches are now the dominant model for new church plants by Asian American English-speaking ministers.¹²

Just as Asian American Christians have a diversity of church options now available, they also hold identities that are simultaneously diverse and flexible. Asian Americans may see themselves as ethnic, as Asian American, as ethnic American, as American, or solely as Christian depending on the situation.

⁹ Sharon Kim, *A Faith of Our Own: Second-Generation Spirituality in Korean American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

¹⁰ Katherine Garces-Foley and Russell Jeung, “Asian American Evangelicals in Multiracial Church Ministry,” *Religions* 4 (2013): 190–208.

¹¹ Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided By Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford Press, 2000).

¹² Garces-Foley and Jeung, 196.

Whether they see themselves as authentically Asian or American oftentimes depend on their transnational networks or how they were racialized.

In sum, globalization and racialization have shaped the identities and congregations of Asian Americans differently according to the sociohistoric context. The early first generations maintained Asian identities since they were seen as perpetual foreigners. Even the early second generation, who were bicultural, looked to the East because they were limited in their access to mainstream society. After the Civil Rights Movement and the Immigration Act of 1965, however, the new second generation claimed ethnic American and panethnic Asian American identities to assert ethnic pride and to distinguish themselves from burgeoning immigrant congregations. Today, Asian American churches hold to a multicultural racialized discourse, in which they recognize both ethnic and racial distinctions as gifts of the Kingdom.

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Latino/a Theologizing: Shared Reflections and Experiences

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Abstract “Latino/a Theologizing: Shared Reflections and Experiences” explores theological reflections that demonstrate how HANA churches, as communities of faith, theologize their collective identity and their shared experiences.

Canales, Marcos. 2015. Latino/a Theologizing: Shared Reflections and Experiences. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 39-44.
Keywords: evangélicos/as, hana, latinamente, latino/a, teología.

INTRODUCTION

Latino/a perspectives on theological discourse emerge from the particularity of the Latino/a context. Latino/a theology contains a variety of theological expressions and themes in correlation to the stories, experiences, and communities that form and impact each Latino/a theologian. As a result, Latino/a communities in the U.S. context provide a locality for a reconsideration, reformulation, and re-reading of traditional theological sources and propositions. This level of interaction weaves God’s transcendent and historically situated gospel with the communal and individual stories of Latinos/as in the U.S. context. For Latino/a theology, the who, where, and how of this task are equally important. The role of the Latina community and the narratives found within it continue to be the starting place for doing theology *latinamente* (“the Latina way”). This approach of a “lived theology” raises a variety of voices that are impossible to identify as a homogenous phenomenon.

Ultimately, the Latino/a community hosts shared experiences of *teología en conjunto*, marginality, and *mestizaje* and *mulatez*, which enrich and influence Latino/a theology and its ongoing task. A brief overview of these common themes and experiences will provide points of reference for the lived theology of the Latino/a Protestant church.

TEOLOGÍA EN CONJUNTO

Latino/a theology is nurtured, re-formed, and sustained through the interaction between God, context, and members of a Latino/a community. The concept of *la comunidad* (the community) conveys multiple layers of relational, familial, and cultural ties which form a sense of identity as well as responsibility for the individual. This is more clearly seen in major celebrations such as *quinceañeras*, weddings, funerals, and any major life event or transition in a family’s story. *La comunidad* is for the individual both the source of cultural competence and the reminder of values and commitments. Thus, any God-talk in the Latino/a context is a collaborative and shared undertaking between *la comunidad* and the individual, and

vice versa. Latino/a theology names this influence of community upon theological discourse and method as the practice of *teología en conjunto*: a collaborative theology.¹

As a Costa Rican that is ethnically Peruvian, I engage this particular collaborative task in dialogue with the people, the stories, and the experiences found within specific communities that I have inhabited. I was born in San José, Costa Rica, when my parents, who are ethnically Peruvian, were completing their seminary studies. My parents, Ada and Wilfredo Canales, served as pastors, seminary professors, and missionaries for the Church of the Nazarene for over seventeen years throughout Latin America. In 1992, my parents were some of the first Latin American Nazarene missionaries to be commissioned by the denomination. What I know about Christ's love, Christian discipleship, and pastoral ministry, I have seen modeled and lived within the context of the Church of the Nazarene in Latin America. My family ties to this denomination go back over six generations of Peruvian Nazarenes. As a pastor and missionary kid, I experienced the constant elements of packing and moving throughout my childhood and adolescence. I have lived in Lima, Peru; Quito, Ecuador; San José, Costa Rica; Asunción, Paraguay; and Miami, Florida. As an adult, relocation did not cease: my undergraduate studies took place in San Diego, California, and my first pastorate was in the city of San Fernando, California.

Each of these places intricately informed, qualified, and evaluated any and all of my reflections about God, the gospel, and the church throughout my seminary studies. Each of these places provided an opportunity to meet, love, and learn from faithful disciples embodying God's liberating and transformative gospel. That formative role of *mi comunidad*, across borders and geographies, impacted my seminary and pastoral reflections about God's activity within the communities that I left but also the communities to which I arrived. As a Latino Nazarene pastor, I have encountered the intersection of vibrant theological education as well as embodied Latino/a stories of faith and faithfulness that have reframed discussions about the mission and agency of the Church.

As a result of these mutually formative discussions, I believe that *testimonios* (testimonies) of God's sustaining and transformative grace when spoken, lived, and re-told from the Latino/a reality nurture a theological memory and imagination in *lo cotidiano* (everyday life). Primary agents in this process of witnessing to God's transformative power are Latina women.² My *abuelita* (grandmother) Ester, a public teacher in Peru, paved the way for my theologizing about the meaning of perseverance in *la lucha* (the struggle) as a single mother of four. Julia, a double amputee whose funeral I recently conducted, instructed me in the disciplines of contentment and thanksgiving since every breath "*es un regalo de nuestro Dios*" (is a gift from God). Countless others could fill the pages of a communal memory book that I carry and which I bring to the task of theologizing. These women engaged a lived theological reflection that ultimately benefits the entire community. Once again, a *teología en conjunto* involves a communal work of mutually constructing from, within, and for the Latina community testimonies of God's activity along the margins of society.

MARGINALITY

As mentioned above, *teología en conjunto* emerges with a serious commitment to cooperative theological discourse and to the particularity of the Latina community—a community that hosts and witnesses to shared experiences of marginality within the U.S. context. To be marginal is to be on the periphery, away from the centers of political, economical, cultural, and ecclesial power. This common experience is nuanced according to Latinos/as' relationships within a polycentric society: Latinos/as stand both at the margins of the dominant culture and at the center of other relationships according to

¹ José David Rodríguez and Loida I. Martell-Otero, *Teología En Conjunto: A Collaborative Hispanic Protestant Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997).

² Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 69.

social mobility, and at other times they self-impose marginality to preserve cultural identity.³ Latino/a *evangélico/a* theology is influenced by this marginalization as it presents a unique reading of Scripture and an assessment of traditional discourses on Christology and salvation.

First, when Latinos/as *evangélicos/as* draw near to Scriptures, we lean in expecting to encounter and interact with the God of the Bible. Juan Martínez suggests that “Latino Protestants consider the Bible vocative,” as a responsive and dialogical source that begins all God-talk, addresses all matters for faith and life, and evaluates personal, familial, and communal realities.⁴ The Bible’s vocative nature is grounded within the marginal contexts that Latinos/as inhabit. Marginality ultimately brings forth a re-reading of Scripture capable of questioning the Church (both ancient and contemporary) of its commitments to the centers of power and influence; and it also assesses the dangers of silencing the margins as a practice that limits the Church’s understanding of its mission.⁵ As a result, Latino/a *evangélicos/as* recognize that when reading the Bible, this “Good Book” includes our realities of exclusion, poverty, suffering, movement, oppression, and the commoditization of people. But at the same time, the inclusion of these marginalized narratives into God’s redemptive story infuse Latino/a theology with an eschatological hope of *mañana*.

Thus, in light of a re-reading of Scriptures from the margins, Jesus’ own marginalization as a Galilean is identified. Jesus’ Galilean marginalized community connects with the Latino/a reality but it also reaffirms God’s preference to intimately interact and to be present amongst the poor and the marginalized of this world.⁶ This truly invigorates Latino/a theological reflection. The region of Galilee embodied marginalization, regardless of who was in power, since it stood in religious, political, and economical dissonance with the prominence of Jerusalem. Yet it was out of Galilee that Jesus began his ministry and where God decided to break in with the nearness of God’s Kingdom.⁷ This solidarity with the marginalized deepened as Jesus’ death and suffering took place outside the gates of Jerusalem: a decisive act in a forsaken locality. For Orlando Costas, God’s decisive act shifted the *locus theologicus* of salvation: from the centrality of the Jerusalem temple to the peripheral dumpster of carcasses.⁸ Therefore, the locality of God’s presence and activity on the margins proclaims the gospel with subversive and transformative hope, re-forming our understanding of salvation, mission, and Christian service in the power of the risen Christ.⁹

In continuity with this shift, Latina *evangélica* theologian, Loida Martell-Otero adds that the “God, who is present in Jesus, continues to save through the Holy Spirit,” concerning all aspects of daily life.¹⁰ Latina *evangélica* theologizing occurs in the midst of marginal places of powerlessness and voicelessness. Therefore, for Latina *evangélicas* God’s salvation continues to be a daily experience and reality as the Holy Spirit empowers, affirms, and notices their personhood and dignity. This dynamic and perceptive

³ Justo L. González, *Santa Biblia: The Bible through Hispanic Eyes* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 30–35.

⁴ Juan Francisco Martínez, *Los Protestantes: An Introduction to Latino Protestantism in the United States* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011), 100.

⁵ González, 41–55.

⁶ Virgilio P. Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983), 49–52. Elizondo identified Galilee as a multicultural, repeatedly conquered territory, home to “lenient” religious Jews, mixed marriages, and simple farmers with thick accents. These realities resembled the Latino/a tensions and realities lived in his experiences of the U.S.’s Southwest region.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁸ Orlando E. Costas, *Christ Outside the Gate: Mission Beyond Christendom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 188–194.

¹⁰ Loida I. Martell-Otero and others, *Latina Evangélicas: A Theological Survey from the Margins* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013), 39.

understanding of the Spirit's presence as salvation and as recognition of the *imago Dei* in the lives of *evangélicas* "prevents an *evangélica* understanding of salvation from being solely Christocentric. It is a functionally Trinitarian event."¹¹

Given these points, Latino/a theology as a "theology of places," often marginal places, stands as a witness of God's intersecting and redeeming activity.¹² For instance, when I coached an inner city soccer team, one of the players had the idea that I should pray—both as their coach and their "priest"—for one of the guys who was mourning the death of a loved one. Together we knelt down in the middle of the soccer field in one of the most violent parks of our city, and we encountered the presence of God. God's provision dwells upon the fundraising efforts of the Barragan family, as they sell tacos to neighbors and friends for the funeral of a family member in Mexico. The liberative and transformative practices of the Kingdom of God are often found away from the "spotlight" and the centers of ecclesial activity.

MESTIZAJE AND MULATEZ

Another influential element in the development of Latino/a theology, closely related to the experience of marginalization, is the complexity of a multiracial community. Latinos/as are a *mestizo/a* and *mulato/a* people, in that Latinos/as are the offspring of multiple cultural, ethnic, and racial encounters—between the conqueror and the conquered.¹³ These encounters often emerged out of violent clashes and mixing between Spanish and Amerindian people (*mestizo*), as well as Spanish and African descendants (*mulato*). Other Latinos/as experienced the colonizing powers of the U.S. expansionistic agenda and for generations were identified as outsiders in their own land.¹⁴ Virgilio Elizondo referred to this as a double *mestizaje*, producing a reality lived in the hyphen (Mexican-American), existing between two cultures, not belonging fully to either.¹⁵ However, the acceptance of *mestizaje* and *mulatez* must be seen as a blessing, a sign of divine predilection, and the birth pangs of the new creation.¹⁶

The multiracial reality of our community influences Latino/a theology by providing a "non-innocent" reading of history and Scriptures.¹⁷ Justo Gonzales argues that the realities of *mestizaje* and *mulatez* provide a hermeneutical lens that does not avoid or read over the lament, the loss, and the suffering involved in Christian discipleship.¹⁸ This reality allows for Latinos/as to read Scripture alongside the complicated drama and failures of people, families, and ethnic groups for the sake of understanding our very own "difficult passages in the pilgrimage of obedience."¹⁹ *Mestizaje* and *mulatez* are not foreign themes to the biblical narrative since God's story moves toward the periphery through the inclusion of *mestiza* and *mulato* people for the sake of God's mission.²⁰

The role and impact of *mestizaje* and *mulatez* at the "borderlands" of the U.S. context moves from imposed constructs towards localities of mutual interaction. The traditional geo-political construct of a "border" involves the demarcation of sovereign nation-states, the exclusion of the "other," and the

¹¹ Ibid., 40.

¹² Miguel A. De La Torre and Edwin David Aponte, *Introducing Latino/a Theologies* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 53–55.

¹³ Martínez, 105.

¹⁴ Arturo J. Bañuelas, *Mestizo Christianity: Theology from the Latino Perspective* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 7–27.

¹⁵ Ibid., 9–17.

¹⁶ Elizondo, 91–102.

¹⁷ Justo L. González, *Mañana: Christian Theology from a Hispanic Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 75–80.

¹⁸ Ibid., 77–78.

¹⁹ Ibid., 87.

²⁰ González, *Santa Biblia*, 84.

attempt at self-preservation. Yet, in the complexities of *mestizaje* and *mulatez* the reality of borderlands creates points of interaction, dialogue, and mutual enrichment between “two realities, two worldviews, and two cultures.”²¹

In fact, this mutuality and permeability of the borderlands has impacted my personal journey as an immigrant in the U.S. I have married a beautiful Hawaiian woman with Swedish and Spanish blood, and we now continue to figure out how to navigate our relational existence between two different communities. As we have children, another layer of *mestizaje* will emerge. Tensions of “living in the hyphen” will continue to arise through our family’s generations, but our hope is that the Latina church will continue to host, celebrate, and engage the multiple values, realities, traditions, and identities that our children will embrace.

After all, borderlands are fertile grounds where the Latina church can recover a sense of mission for the twenty-first century. For it is within the locality of borderlands that *testimonios* of God’s *mestizo/a* communities are told (and re-told) concerning God’s ongoing presence and activity in the world. Such dynamism between borderlands, *testimonios*, and *mestizaje* within a Latino/a context, serves as a missional-historical matrix for God’s redemptive work in the entire cosmos and the transmission of the Christian faith to both current and future generations.²²

CONCLUSION

I continue to have a sense of responsibility to those who modeled and are modeling for me the meaning of Christian service and faithful discipleship. As I continue to engage contemporary academic Latino/a theologizing, it appears that those committed to the task have focused on assessing the Latina community as a whole (and at times from afar) while assigning a secondary role to Latina faith communities and their corresponding subjects. Hence, the pages above contain a brief overview of shared themes and realities that impact the task of doing and living theology “*latinamente*.” Recognizing the multiple contexts that various Latinos/as inhabit within the United States, specific points of reference have been laid out as “launching pads” that will further the discussion concerning Latino/a theology—its discourse and its interlocutors.

In my case, to be uprooted from the Latina *evangélica* community—at the intersection of the borderlands—is to cut ties with the very companions and witnesses who instructed me in the ways of doing theology “*latinamente*.” Ultimately, every theologizing effort from my Latino *evangélico* reality serves to redirect me to my sending community as a better listener of God’s redemptive acts amongst the marginalized and the *mestizo/a*.

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²¹ Ibid., 86–87.

²² Juan Francisco Martínez Guerra and Lindy Scott, *Iglesias Peregrinas En Busca De Identidad: Cuadros Del Protestantismo Latino En Los Estados Unidos* (Buenos Aires: Kairos Ediciones, 2004), 233–248.

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A Theology of Lament for the Immigrant Community

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Abstract “A Theology of Lament for the Immigrant Community” provides insightful theological reflections in the form of a Lamentation on how HANA churches, as communities of faith, theologize their collective identity and their shared experiences.

Rah, Soong-Chan. 2015. A Theology of Lament for the Immigrant Community. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 45-52. Keywords: hana, immigrant, lament, triumphalistic.

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2011, I was returning from a year-long sabbatical. My first day back at the office, I spent the entire morning opening and tossing out accumulated junk mail. There was one particular item that caught my eye. It was a nicely packaged DVD from a U.S.-based NGO with the words, “The poor will not always be with us” emblazoned on the cover. As a seminary professor and former pastor, I am always intrigued when Scripture is twisted to meet the needs of the communicator, so I opened the package to examine the contents.

The intent of this material was to challenge the church, specifically the church in the United States, to end extreme poverty within this generation—a noble and worthwhile effort I support. However, the more subliminal message was that the U.S. church was responsible for fixing the problem by using American gumption, ingenuity, and know-how. The DVD material exemplifies the American church’s self-perception of privilege. Our standing as the saviors of the world is assumed and not challenged. This type of exceptionalism and triumphalism conflicts with the biblical call for humility as evidenced by lament. The practice of lament in the Bible confronts our American Christian assumptions.

The narrative of exceptionalism is embedded in the American dream, which has been embraced by many in the Asian American community. The Asian American community is often portrayed as the model minority and elevated by the dominant culture as the example to follow. “If the Asians could pull themselves up by the bootstraps, why can’t other ethnic groups?” TV talk show host Bill O’Reilly reflects this ignorance in his comments as the controversy surrounding the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, unfolded. In challenging the reality of white privilege, O’Reilly invoked the tired adage of the Asian as the model minority.

[T]he Asian American community is not a troubled situation, as everybody knows, their academics are better than whites, okay. They have language to overcome. While black Americans don’t. It all comes down to families, culture, personal responsibility, all of these things, which we don’t hear anything or much about.¹

¹ “Watch Bill O’Reilly And Megyn Kelly Spar Over The Existence Of White Privilege,” Media Matters for America, last accessed November 11, 2014, <http://mediamatters.org/video/2014/08/25/watch-foxs-megyn-kelly-educate-bill-oreilly-on/200545>.

O'Reilly manipulates the Asian American narrative in the context of the American dream to further oppress another minority group. The elevation of part of the Asian American story reveals the desire by the dominant culture to assert the possibility of attaining the American dream. In turn, the Asian American community has willingly embraced this narrative.

In contrast, the Hispanic American community has often been left out of the dominant narrative of the American dream. In the example of immigration laws, there has been an actual deliberate exclusion of the Hispanic American community. (Historically, there has also been the exclusion of Asian Americans with laws like the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. However, in recent years, Asian immigration, particularly East Asian and South Asian immigration, has been more welcomed in the United States.) In regards to educational and economic opportunity, the current expression of the American narrative often places Hispanic Americans outside of these opportunities.

Both communities, therefore, have had a dysfunctional relationship with the dominant narrative of triumphalism and exceptionalism in American society. Immigrant churches are particularly to the narratives of dominant culture. Biblical lament calls for honesty and truth-telling about the broken state of society and the individual. As such, the excessive triumphalism of American society has nearly quashed a practice as countercultural as lament.

In *Hurting with God*, Glenn Pemberton notes that lament constitutes 40 percent of all psalms, but in the hymnal for the Churches of Christ, laments make up 13 percent, the Presbyterian hymnal 19 percent, and the Baptist hymnal 13 percent.² Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) licenses and tracks church usage of contemporary worship songs. CCLI's list of the top 100 worship songs in August of 2012 reveals that only five of the songs would even remotely qualify as a lament.³ Most of the songs reflect themes of praise: "How Great is Our God," "Here I Am to Worship," "Happy Day," "Friend of God," "Glorious Day," and "Victory in Jesus."

Majority culture's infatuation with success narratives and the American church's avoidance of lament results in a severe deficiency in our ecclesiology and the loss of the underlying narrative of suffering. We forget the reality of suffering and pain. For immigrant communities, our stories of suffering may be shameful reminders of a history we would rather forget. Instead of offering up an essential ingredient necessary for a robust North American theology, the Hispanic and Asian North American communities may distance themselves from the important practice of lament.

The fullness of the story of God's work requires a remembering of suffering and a willingness to enter into lament. Lament calls for an authentic encounter with the fullness of truth. The triumphalistic tendency of American evangelicalism cries out for the introduction of lament from immigrant communities. An alternative narrative is required to stretch the theological imagination of a Christianity that has too deeply drunk from a cultural captivity to triumphalism.

SUFFERING, CELEBRATION, AND THE NEED FOR LAMENT

The cultural captivity of American Christianity to the narrative of exceptionalism and triumphalism presents a challenge to the immigrant narrative and theological ethic of the Hispanic and Asian North American (HANA) churches. Both these Christian communities, however, have an evangelical value of a high view of Scripture. The common ground that shapes both communities is that they recognize the Bible as a central authority. Theological and ethical engagement therefore, must arise out of biblical reflection. Lament theology, as it emerges from our study of Scripture, presents an important contrast to

² Glenn Pemberton, *Hurting with God: Learning to Lament with the Psalms* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press: June 10, 2012), Kindle locations 441–445, Kindle edition.

³ "CCLI Top 100," PraiseCharts, accessed August 2012, <http://www.praisecharts.com/ccli-top-100>.

the narrative of American exceptionalism. Lament presents an opportunity for the unique context and experience of the immigrant community to contribute to the larger American evangelical theological narrative. The marginalized and suffering immigrant community can teach and serve the dominant culture.

Walter Brueggemann writes about the contrast between a theology of the “have-nots” versus a theology of the “haves.” The “have-nots” develop a theology of suffering and survival. The “haves” develop a theology of celebration. Those who live under suffering live “their lives aware of the acute precariousness of their situation.” Worship that arises out of suffering cries out for deliverance. “Their notion of themselves is that of a dependent people crying out for a vision of survival and salvation.” Lament marks the story of suffering.⁴ Those who live in celebration “are concerned with questions of proper management and joyous celebration.” Instead of deliverance, they seek constancy and sustainability. “The well-off do not expect their faith to begin in a cry but rather, in a song. They do not expect or need intrusion, but they rejoice in stability.” Praise marks the story of celebration.⁵

Praise seeks to maintain the status quo, while lament cries out against existing injustices. Christian communities arising from celebration do not want their lives changed, because their lives are in a good place. Tax rates should remain low. Home prices and stocks should continue to rise unabated, while interest rates should remain low so more money can be borrowed to feed a lifestyle to which we have become accustomed.

Lament recognizes the struggles of life. The status quo is not to be celebrated but instead must be challenged. Tax rates should not favor the rich, but instead hope should be offered to the least in our society. Redistribution of wealth would not be a catastrophe, but instead, a blessing. Lament challenges the status quo of injustice.

American Christians that flourish under the existing system seek to maintain the status quo and remain in the theology of celebration over and against the theology of suffering. To only have a theology of celebration at the cost of a theology of suffering is incomplete. The intersection of the two threads provides the opportunity to engage in the fullness of the gospel message. Lament and praise must go hand in hand.

Walter Brueggemann asks the question:

“What happens when appreciation of the lament as a form of speech and faith is lost, as I think it is largely lost in contemporary usage? What happens when the speech forms that redress power distribution have been silenced and eliminated? The answer, I believe, is that a theological monopoly is reinforced, docility and submissiveness are engendered, and the outcome in terms of social practice is to reinforce and consolidate the political-economic monopoly of the status quo.”⁶

According to Brueggemann, the dominant culture seeks to maintain existing power structures—insuring the ongoing cultural captivity of the American evangelical church. Toward that end, lament must be suppressed by the dominant culture.

For American evangelicals riding the fumes of a previous generation’s Christendom assumptions, a triumphalistic theology of celebration and privilege rooted in a praise-only narrative is perpetuated by the absence of lament and the underlying narrative of suffering that informs lament. The suffering narrative is

⁴ Walter Brueggemann, *Peace* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001), 26–28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 28–32.

⁶ Walter Brueggemann, *Psalms and the Life of Faith* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995), 102, Kindle edition.

considered inferior and should be ignored or removed from the dominant narrative of success. Stories of successful church plants and growing megachurches with huge budgets are front and center in how we tell the story of American Christianity. Conferences must bring in big name speakers—usually young, hip, white pastors who meet the ideal of a typical American success story as entrepreneurs and “thought leaders.”

These trends further perpetuate the triumphalistic narrative of white American evangelicalism. Other forms of Christianity can be portrayed as inferior to the successful formula for ministry put forth by white evangelicals. A narrative of success propels white evangelicalism over and above other expressions of Christianity like the Hispanic American and Asian American Christian communities. These tendencies may explain the dominant culture’s embrace of the model minority myth caricature of the Asian American story and the disposable labor narrative of the Hispanic American community.

For the complete biblical narrative to take root in our community, lament has to become a part of our story. Praise and lament must intersect. Lament calls us to examine the work of reconciliation between those who live under suffering with those who live in celebration. Lament challenges our celebratory assumptions with the reality of suffering. The very real struggles experienced by the HANA communities should not be swept under the rug, but instead embraced as an important aspect of the gospel that is emerging in the next evangelicalism.

THE HOPE OF LAMENT

The book of Lamentations offers an example of the application of lament in our contemporary context. The book arises from the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of its residents. The community responds to this tragedy with lament. Lamentations reveals that our suffering is not in isolation, but experienced as a community. As the body of Christ, suffering in one part of the body means suffering exists in the entire body. Communal lament calls the ones living under the blessings of celebration to engage with those living under the pain of suffering. Our understanding of the gospel is incomplete if both suffering and celebration are not embraced. The stories of suffering that arise out of the immigrant experience reflect an essential narrative for the fullness of the American Christian story. The immigrant church offers an important balance to the dominant narrative.

Lamentations offers both communal and individual laments to reveal the breadth of suffering. The communal experience is affirmed by individual laments. Individual laments are not spoken in isolation, separate from each other. F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp notes a reason for the range of individual voices in Lamentations. “These very concrete and specific instances of suffering have been intentionally gathered together, each strung, as it were, like individual pearls on a necklace...ensur[ing] that they mean [something] cumulatively as well as individually.”⁷ The individual laments in Lamentations points to the communal grieving experienced by the entire community.

A central characteristic of the book of Lamentations is the employing of a myriad of voices. While seemingly reflecting the perspective of Jeremiah, the text draws from the spectrum of Jerusalem’s residents to reflect the full story of Jerusalem’s fall. As Adele Berlin notes: “In order to show how far-reaching the suffering was, the poet refers to its effect on various elements of the population, for example, young and old, priest and prophet, women and children.”⁸ In other words, the fullness of the biblical testimony requires a variety of voices.

⁷ F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, *Lamentations in Interpretation* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2002), 41.

⁸ Adele Berlin, *Lamentations in The Old Testament Library* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 13.

Furthermore, much of the suffering in Lamentations reflects a woman's voice. Jerusalem is personified as a woman who has experienced tremendous suffering and pain. Kathleen O'Connor states that "the poetry focuses on her (Zion's) female roles—widow, mother, lover, and rape victim.... By making Jerusalem a woman, the poetry gives her personality and human characteristics that evoke pity or disdain from readers."⁹ Lamentations may prove to be the most important book of the Bible with a feminine voice. In the face of tremendous suffering, the voices of women rise up to express the depth of sorrow experienced by the community. The voices of suffering women can offset the triumphalistic tendencies of American Christianity.

In recent years, the attempt to silence the voices of women in the church has resulted in a severe loss for the church. Dominant male voices have dictated the rules of behavior for evangelical leadership. The dominant ethos of evangelicalism has reflected this overwhelmingly male perspective. The evangelical use of silly terms like "muscular Christianity" reveals a masculine insecurity. The desire to associate evangelical Christianity with a culturally warped form of masculinity reveals a culturally captive Christianity rather than a biblical one.

The book of Lamentations gives us a clear example of the necessity of the woman's voice to speak from among God's people. I am not attempting to deal with the New Testament application of the role of women in the church. But clearly in the book of Lamentations, women's voices stand front and center. Lamentations does not survive without the female voice. By silencing women's voices, we project our inadequacy upon our understanding of the biblical message. We gravitate toward the silly triumphalistic tendencies of an unfettered masculinity without the necessary balance of alternative narratives found in the Bible.

The expression of suffering through the genre of lament does not imply hopelessness. While Lamentations does not end with a happy resolution, the possibility of hope remains. The presence of lament actually gestures toward the presence of hope. To lament before God is to petition the Almighty. Hope is built into the practice of lament. Lament breaks the narrative of an oppressive triumphalism. In the same way, our presence as the HANA Christian community in the context of American evangelicalism may actually represent hope to a culturally captive Christianity.

The very real suffering of God's people is presented in Lamentations in vivid, even gory details for the world to hear. But in the process of expressing that suffering, hope is offered. Recognizing suffering is an affirmation that God is still there and still concerned with His people. Even if the explicit promise is not offered, the freedom to voice despair portends hope. "Lamentations' very bleakness expresses fidelity. Its bitter accusations reveal profound yearning for God.... It voices truth without which relationships cannot prosper."¹⁰ The hope is in the relationship. Not merely words spoken or promises made, but that God offers reconciliation to even His most bitter enemies. The hope of reconciliation rests in a relationship with God.

Hope is not found in the human ability to come up with the solutions. Hope is found in the steadfast character of God. Lamentations 3 reminds God's people that the steadfast love of the LORD never ceases and that His mercies never come to an end. Despite the suffering expressed throughout the book of Lamentations, the character of God remains unchanged. The confirmation of God's character leads to the possibility of appealing to God. Equipped with a deep belief and faith in YHWH, the voice of Jeremiah moves towards a corporate confession. "Let us examine our ways and test them...Let us return to the LORD" (Lam. 3:40), "Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven and say: We have sinned and rebelled" (Lam. 3:41, 42). The beginnings of spiritual renewal emerge as God's people engage in a

⁹ Kathleen O'Connor, *Lamentations and the Tears of the World* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002) 14.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

corporate confession of sin. A sincere repentance moves the community toward a changed and renewed life.

The communal lament offers the possibility of moving from suffering to celebration. The petition of lament has the very real promise of becoming a psalm of praise. Claus Westermann notes that “the beginnings and transitions to praise of God are seen even in the laments of the people and of the individual.”¹¹ Lament leads to petition which leads to praise for God’s response to the petition. Brueggemann summarizes that “the intervention of God in some way permits the move from plea to praise [and]...the proper setting of praise is as lament resolved.”¹² Praise follows lament. However, in a cultural context that upholds triumph and victory but fails to engage with suffering, praise replaces lament. We thus skip the important step of lament and offer supplication in a contextual vacuum.

The absence of an immediate promise of restoration should not be taken as a lack of hope. The power of the lament is the ability to sustain a deeply troubled narrative. Implicit in the privilege of expressing that suffering lies the hope that the speaking of that suffering is not in vain. In a triumphalistic world, Lamentations makes no sense. The theology of celebration will always be more attractive than the theology of suffering. But if lament were offered to a suffering world, the hope that is weaved into lament will lighten our darkness and offer the possibility of genuine reconciliation.

CONCLUSION

Several years ago, one of my friends who was working on a documentary on immigration, asked if he could film parts of my family’s story. My friend wanted to return to the neighborhood where I grew up. When I was in elementary school, with our dad’s exit from our family, my family moved to an inner-city neighborhood in Baltimore. The neighborhood was comprised of poor blacks, poor whites, and recent Korean immigrants. My friend and I drove around the neighborhood and the low-income apartment complex that was still standing. We shot some stock footage around my old apartment building. At the end of the day, we visited my mom who now lived in a senior resident building to interview her about her experience as an immigrant.

My mom had suffered much as an immigrant to the United States. She had followed her husband with four kids in tow to come to this foreign country. She had come to pursue the American dream, but when her husband abandoned her, she did everything in her power to prevent the dream from becoming a nightmare. Her resolve and commitment kept her family together and in many ways we were able to achieve aspects of the American dream. But there were certainly parts of the story that were nightmarish.

As a single mom with limited language skills, she worked long hours at two different jobs. During the day, she would work at a Baltimore inner-city carryout—frying chicken, making steak subs and fish sandwiches. She would work a twelve-hour shift until right before 11 p.m. From that job, she would head over to work the graveyard shift at an inner city nursing home as a nurse’s aide. She would change the bedpans and keep watch through the night at the nursing home. She would return home in time to wake up her children, make us breakfast and catch a short nap before returning to work at the carryout.

I was looking forward to the on-camera interview with my mom. Memories from childhood are always fragmented and I hoped to fill out aspects of my childhood. The actual interview, however, proved to be extraordinarily frustrating. The cameras and lights were all set up perfectly. My friend knew how to stage my mom’s senior citizen apartment in an artistic way. My mom, however, was not very forthcoming. I was serving as the interviewer. I would ask her to describe her experience of raising four kids in an inner-city

¹¹ Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 155.

¹² Brueggemann, *Psalms*, Kindle edition, 1151 and 1158 of 4119.

neighborhood as a single mom. I would ask her to talk about what it was like to work impossibly long hours. I asked her to talk about her experiences of suffering.

Each time I would raise a question about a hardship experience, she would deflect with effusive comments about how thankful she was that her children were doing well. That whatever happened, had happened a long time ago and that what was more important was how thankful she was that her children were doing well.

After about two hours of this fruitless exchange, my friend and I left my mom's senior citizen's apartment and got into my car. There was a strange silence. As we drove away, I remarked to my friend, "I'm not sure what happened. I'm really surprised at how unwilling she was to talk about our experience. It's almost like she's forgotten about all of the hardships we went through as a family. She seemed to ignore our whole family story."

The fruitless interview with my mom reminded me that immigrants don't often have the opportunity to share their stories. And in my mom's case, for some reason, she was unwilling to share her story. Maybe the pain was too great, maybe she wanted to keep things bottled up like she had for so many years, maybe she really had forgotten all of the details, or maybe she was just used to nobody listening or caring about her story. But I realized that often stories of struggle like my mom's story have a great deal of difficulty being told in the triumphalistic modern context of American Christianity.

A few years ago, my mom, now in her eighties, was diagnosed with the early stages of dementia. As of this writing, a woman who has always been one of the sharpest-witted women I know, is responding at an increasingly slow rate. The memories of her struggles and the stories of her journey are in danger of being lost and remaining untold.

My deep disappointment in American evangelicalism is that stories like hers are deemed less worthy than the stories of the latest evangelical superstar with a megachurch. We love to hear from the hotshot pastor with the hip haircut, tattoos, cool glasses and Ed Hardy shirts. We worship at the altar of the latest and greatest American evangelical icon, who regales us with stories of the exploits of their cutting-edge ministry. Our ears have been tuned to hear the call for successful pastors who will go and conquer the world with a muscular Christianity. Meanwhile, we ignore the stories of suffering and oppression (oftentimes the voices of women oppressed by their own communities). We have a deficient theology that trumpets the triumphalistic successes of evangelicalism while failing to hear from the stories of suffering that often tell us more about who we are as a community. This deficiency is to our great loss as a Christian community.

A theology of lament challenges the Hispanic and Asian North American communities to contribute to the larger stream of American Christianity. The immigrant stories of hardship and struggle, oftentimes reflected in the stories of women, must be heard. A theology of lament recognizes that God is at work not only in the success stories of Christians who have attained the American dream but in the stories of immigrants and their progeny whose struggles reveal the full breadth of the Christian story.

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Latino/a Pastoral Reflections

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Abstract “Latino/a Pastoral Reflections” identifies a set of key issues and challenges HANA churches encounter today. The article also aims to offer readers a deeper understanding of the spiritual contexts in which Latino/a congregations serve and grow.

Kosacki, Silvina. 2015. Latino/a Pastoral Reflections. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 53-59. Keywords: community, forces, hana, hispanic, influence.

INTRODUCTION

“What else do we need to have? I am wondering: if we have a good and well-prepared worship team, a beautiful place to gather, a Bible-based sermon, and a wonderful organizational structure...what else are people looking for?” These words came from a preacher of a church that I visited not long ago. This question arose in the context of a sermon in which the speaker was wondering why people were not attending church as they used to do. This got my attention because the identity of the pastor was Dante Gebel. He is a Hispanic pastor (an immigrant from Argentina) ministering in the United States, who is pastoring one of the most iconic churches in California, the Crystal Cathedral, and in just three years grew a congregation from a small group to 3,000 people.

His words show that the challenge we face as ministers is not a matter of where we are ministering, or what country we come from. It has nothing to do with the size of our congregation, or the kind of building we have. The truth is that we are all in the same situation of facing the same challenges and learning how to handle the issues that we encounter while we do ministry in the Hispanic context in the United States.

In my experience of over twenty-seven years working with Hispanics residing in the United States—almost twenty of them as a pastor—I encounter the same situation over and over in the life stories that are shared with me: stories of loss, of uprooting, of broken dreams. When I reflect on these stories of life, I can tell that they are stories that hide both a deep desire to go back as well as painful memories of what was lost. I discern a dark cloud over the once-taken decision of crossing the border, now that they realize that a higher price was paid, way higher than the one they once imagined.

In order to minister correctly in the context we are talking about, it is necessary to take account of the forces or influences, both emotional and spiritual that exist and are present in our midst. They inevitably guide and shape the life experiences of people who are part of the Hispanic community living in the United States. Dr. Juan Martínez points out that “Yet, when we look into our communities we also need to identify and challenge the signs of death and self-centeredness. Part of our missional task will need to be prophetic. We need discernment to name the principalities and power that influence the places where God has called us to serve in His name (Martínez 2012).

When we talk about forces that shape our experiences in our communities of faith, we are talking about those influences that surround us, with which we struggle, and that somehow affect our lives, the decisions we make, and the ways in which we act.

Of course, I am not pretending to exhaust the list of all the forces that move in the midst of our realities, but I would like to focus on some of those that definitely will mold and define in a great way the decisions that the members of our communities will make in their lives.

SPIRITUAL FORCES

As Christians, we are aware of the spiritual realm. We learn from the Bible about the fight we have against the army of darkness, the prince of this world, fallen angels, evil forces, or demons, or whatever you wish to call them. The importance resides not in the name, but in realizing that these are real, they exist, and they influence not only Christians, but every human being living on this earth.

There is a spirit, in most cases, that influence immigrants to leave their land, their roots, and their culture. It is not, as it was in the biblical case of Abram, “God’s calling.” That God later uses in His divine providence exile and diaspora to fulfill His missional purpose, does not mean that the spirit that pushes the great majority of Latin American immigrants in its massive movement toward the northern country is a response to a dream from God. It would be better identify this force as the “American dream.”

The spirit that prevails in the radical decision of what we can call “uprootment” comes from the *American Dream*, selling the idea of a better life, a better economy, and better opportunities. The spirit of the American Dream whispers continuously in the ears of those who want to hear: *In the northern land everything is better. What their country of origin does not offer, the northern country has in abundance. The closed doors, lack of opportunities, and negativities that people encounter in their daily lives in their home country are transformed into open doors, limitless opportunities, and positive responses in the United States.*

Now, when these people find themselves in the United States, they encounter other spiritual forces that impact their lives, since in the search to reach their American dream, the immigrants will be impacted by the spirit that gives impulse to other spiritual forces: avarice, materialism, selfishness, accumulation of riches, consumerism, and individualism. This is the spirit of the god *Mammon*, which is exposed in the Bible through the Sermon of the Mount, in the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:9–13, Mt. 6:19–21, 24).

Further, there is no need to prove that the imperialistic force that drives the United States in its economical politic, converts the country in an empire. Obviously, all of those that decide to come to the United States to make their lives in this country, have decided to be part of an Empire. Every empire is an empire in base of the conquering and colonization that are driven by the spirit of enslavement and domination. The fact is that living in this country as an immigrant will be to be not a conqueror but a conquered one, not a dominant part but a dominated one. In that way, the immigrant will experience oppression and marginalization.

It is important to point out that the spirit that has moved to the United States to conquer is the spirit of *Manifest Destiny*. It sees itself as a nation destined to expand—to the detriment of the rights and freedom of other countries—with every right to achieve this end at whatever the cost, because ultimately the result will be positive for those other countries, as they will develop skills and will enjoy growth. The basis for this choice, according to those who support this doctrine, lies in the virtue of the institutions and the citizens of the United States, and this image must be reproduced in the world. It is easy to reach the conclusion that a spirit of a nation that makes to see itself as a superior one and a chosen one, will also make it to be intolerant to other people. This will produce, as an obvious result, racism and discrimination.

EMOTIONAL FORCES

The forces that drive a person to make decisions are not only spiritual, but also emotional. We act according to our feelings. We make decisions based on our emotions. The circumstances that we face in our daily lives will impact the way we feel, and those emotions will shape our experiences and realities.

One emotion that I have seen in every single immigrant that I have ministered to, is the *sense of loss*. The immigrants that have decided to leave their country to live in the United States will experience several losses: loss of identity, loss of roots, loss of family and affective relations, and loss of culture.

Insecurities will come, as a product of numerous deficiencies in the person of the immigrant: lack of language skills to communicate, lack of a legal status allowing him or her to reside legally in the United States, lack of skills to navigate a different and unknown society. There are also insecurities that come from the presence of negative stereotypes connected with being an immigrant, from the lack of knowledge of the mechanisms of this new society in which the immigrant will live in, and from a lack of secure employment. These are only a few of numerous inabilities that an immigrant will suffer when encountering a new, unknown, and different culture.

Another emotional force that will affect the experiences of the immigrant is the *sense of disappointment*. How disappointed one must feel when they realize that the most valuable things cannot be bought with money! How impotent one must feel when their emptiness is not filled with the fulfillment of worldly desires and pleasures! How painful it must be to find oneself with a life which has been destroyed, a family that has been lost, and a marriage that is in tatters, and with only a useless credit card to restore them!

It is crucial to understand that the spiritual forces mentioned above make them vulnerable to suffering, because it changes them into individuals that are isolated and abandoned. Selfishness and individualism have separated them from the community, affective liaisons, and significant and meaningful social webs. Instead, they have put them up in the vulnerable position of a fictitious independence.

What hope is left when all else has failed? Unfulfilled promises, broken dreams, an endless race without a prize, an emptiness that is unable to be filled. Empty hands. The spirit that boosted them to come to this country will never deliver “the better” it promised, and not even give answers or hope.

THE CHALLENGE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

As Pastor Dante Gebel asked himself, each of us that form a part of these communities of faith, each of us who are called to minister to these people in exile, has to ask ourselves, “What else do they need? What else are they searching for? What else do we have to offer?”

I would like to suggest that what they are searching for is not a well-organized structure, or a nice building, or even a tidy and well prepared sermon. What they are looking for is what they still have not found: right guidance. They need to encounter a new, renovating, and positive Spirit. This Spirit will both guide them to detach from those spirits that molded their wrong decisions and that will guide their lives toward the real dream, the dream of God revealed in Jeremiah 29:11 which says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

In coming to this country, immigrants got a new identity, a new citizenship (although in most cases this is just virtual, not legal). This “citizenship” did not give to them what they expected. As communities of faith, we can offer to them a *new citizenship*: A citizenship in the Kingdom of the God that assures a Kingdom of justice, peace, and joy. This justice does not support racism, oppression, or marginalization. This

perfect *shalom*, which the Old Testament describes, translates into prosperity, integral health, physical and spiritual well-being, and harmony with God, with our neighbor, and with creation.

I would like to suggest that the concept of *shalom* from the Old Testament is complimentary to the idea of *koinonia* from the New Testament. The *koinonia* of the Kingdom of God translates into communion, harmony, fruitful interpersonal relationships, and fraternal love and care. *Shalom*, as an attribute of the Kingdom of God, should be fundamental to *koinonia* and *koinonia* should not have any other end than to sustain, feed, and expand *shalom*.

As believers, we live in the Kingdom of God and have been given power to enjoy its benefits: shalom from the Old Testament, and joy, peace, and justice from the New (Rom. 14:17). But as we exercise the privilege of that enjoyment, we also have a responsibility: to administer gifts and mercies in a way that will reveal our identity as children of the Kingdom. We should play an active part of the *koinonia* that foment and sustains the *shalom*, not only inside the Kingdom, but outside its boundaries. We have, as children of God, not only the opportunity but the responsibility to experiment and defend the justice of the Kingdom in our own environment, promoting a style of life that will coincide with divine values.

These are what we have in our hands to offer to the Hispanic communities in the United States. A new Spirit, a new citizenship, new rules according to the Kingdom of God. *Shalom. Koinonia. Hope.*

Jesus painted a beautiful portrait of hope in the well-known story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10. In the picture painted by Jesus, where there were injuries, violence, and blood, there were also bandages, oil, and affection. Along with the characters that were hurried and indifferent, is a character that stops, cares, shortens the painful distances, and takes charge, making himself responsible for person's affliction. Along with the lament, hope is lifted up. The pain and brokenness are not only shared, but can be healed. It only takes someone who is willing to assume the challenge.

And even in the midst of the 21st century, this parable is brought to life on every corner of Los Angeles where Hispanics offer their *elotes* and *chicharrones*; in the fields of Arizona, where bent backs are only a part of the scenery; in the neighborhoods of Virginia, where the father of a working family is a delinquent for not having a card that validates him as a human being; in the colonies of New York, where the Puerto Ricans are guilty of every wrongdoing. In every city there are hundreds of people on the side of the road that have had their goods vandalized, been hurt in their identity, and covered by the mud of abandon and disinterest.

Villafane expresses this reality well when he says that the Hispanic church in the United States is the "church of the poor," a people living on the margins, for which God manifests His presence in the midst of those that society has rejected (Villafane, p. 95). In every city and neighborhood in the United States, a spirit of *koinonia* needs to be exercised as a lifestyle by the people of God, where shalom has to be present as a result of it. Christian communities that count on the Holy Spirit to empower them to be witnesses of the Good News. Even in the midst of their conflict and tensions provoked by the economic, social, and political systems it is possible to show a style of life that will keep alive the belief in the project of God.

EMERGING TRENDS

The tendencies that are surging, and that cannot be ignored, are various and promising:

Multicultural Churches. Over the last few years, the Anglo church has observed the necessity to implement multicultural churches. They have realized that in the cultural mosaic that is the United States, there needs to be a place for those cultures to form part of their communities, in an attempt to reverse

the situation of declining membership.¹ In this, they have encountered a problem. They do not know how to do it.

The model that they have habituated is that of conquest, authoritarianism, and paternalism. And because it has “worked” in the past, they keep on attempting it in the present. But times have changed, and the realities they encountered in the past are not the same today. This model is not working anymore, and yet they have not found a solution.

In the Hispanic church, however, it is vice versa: we are living multiculturalism from the moment we step into this country. Congregations have been multicultural since their planting. Mexicans, Argentineans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, Salvadorians (I could keep naming other Latin American countries)—we have formed faith communities to the rhythm of salsa and mariachi, cumbia and tango, to the flavor of *pupusas* and *enchiladas*. It is not something that needs to be learned because we are already living that experience.

The Second and Third Generation. United with the previous subject—to be accustomed to our multicultural identity—comes the subject of the second and third generation of Hispanic Americans, children of Hispanic immigrants that were born in the United States. The descendants of Hispanics born in this country will definitely have a different culture than their parents or ancestors. But because of their multicultural experience, their mentality has been already shaped, the cultural breach is shortened, and differences are accepted. It is seen as just another culture that needs to be ministered to. There is no tension or prejudice; for, like in the Mexican *peceras* or Argentinean *colectivos*, where whenever someone new climbs on the bus, everyone just presses in a little tighter and makes room for one more.

Increasing Hispanic Communities. According to statistical projections, the Hispanic population is destined to be in the not-so-distant future, the first “minority” in the majority in the United States. This places us in a place of privilege, not only as a missionary camp but also as agents of the *Missio Dei*.

Spanish as a Common Language in Most Places. We find today that Spanish is a language that is now being used naturally and commonly in many places in the United States. This is a problem for the Anglo that finds himself today with the challenge of a language barrier to complete God’s mission—for the Hispanic is a super powerful tool. Speaking the same language—Spanish—allows us not only communicate, but also to destroy the emotional barrier that produces insecurity due to the lack of a “common language,” that is becoming not English, but Spanish.

Hispanics in Areas of Influence: Politics, the Workforce, and Media. Hispanics in positions of hierarchy are more and more common today in the United States. In politics, in professional careers, in commerce and through communication, Hispanic names are multiplying at an accelerated pace. This brings power, influence, and a platform for the expansion of faith communities that really support and seek the *shalom* and the *koinonia* of the Kingdom of God for the society.

¹ See the following articles on declining church membership:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-shook-phd/churchgoers-now-a-minority_b_1537108.html

<http://www.churchleadership.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=42346&columnid=4545>

<http://www.leaderu.com/ftissues/ft9303/articles/johnson.html>

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/pcusa-decline-in-churches-members-continued-in-2013-120725/>.

FINAL REFLECTION

“Hear this, you elders; listen, all who live in the land. Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your forefathers? Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation” – Joel 1:2–3

Every moment cannot be repeated and is unique. God prepares for each generation events that will impact and will leave an imprint in the hearts of those that experience them. What happens today has been prepared for our generation, in the part of the history of humankind that we are living, so that what God wants to happen, happens, according to His plans. It is important to know the story. It is important to know our past. It is important to know where we have come from, our roots. But it cannot determine our lives, because God has new things for us every morning.

Looking back serves no purpose, if it is only to convince me that things will always remain that way. In the Bible, we see that the Pharisees were so tied by the past that it prevented them from recognizing their own Messiah and the new age that was already among them. Christ had something new and renovating. But many people lost the opportunity to enjoy it because they looked back and tried to put Christ into the frame of the Law, of tradition, and of what they had suffered for 400 years. They also kept looking at their past of captivity, and this kept them tied down. They were stuck in the past. God had given to one generation the Law, and now He was giving to this generation His only begotten son.

God uses every moment to do NEW THINGS. It is essential to discern the Lord’s timing, knowing how to understand the new things that come. Knowing beforehand that the path is long and not always easy. God asks: Has this happened in our days, or in the days of your father? No! What God does today is new, is different, and is unique. Let us learn from the past and what God has done but let us also rejoice in what he wants to do today! And let us look at the future with hope!

Of this you will tell your children.

And your children to their children.

And their children to the next generation.

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Silvina Kosacki was born in Argentina, but has resided in California for almost thirty years. Along with her husband Javier, Silvina helped established nine new Hispanic congregations and trained through the V.I.D.A. Bible Institute (which they founded in 2001) more than 100 Hispanic pastors, church planters, and leaders for the local churches. She is an ordained minister from the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, earned her M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary and at the present is enrolled at PRODOLA (Latino Doctoral Program) toward to her PhD in Ecclesiology. She is member of the Board of the FTL (Theological Latino Fraternity) and is author of two books (*Hermeneutics and Homiletics*, and *The Christian Worker and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*) published by the ICFG Media. She has three children: Julian (21), Jonathan (17), and Nathalie (14).



Pastoral and Missional Reflections of Asian North American Congregational Experiences

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Abstract “Pastoral and Missional Reflections of Asian North American Congregational Experiences” identifies a set of key issues and challenges HANA churches encounter today. The article aims to offer readers a deeper understanding of the spiritual contexts in which Asian North American congregations serve and grow.

Ca, Peter T. 2015. Pastoral and Missional Reflections of Asian North American Congregational Experiences. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 60-66. Keywords: american, asian, hana, missional, pastoral.

INTRODUCTION

Post-1965 immigration has greatly reshaped the religious landscape of the United States, including that of Christianity. Currently, more than two-thirds of immigrants identify themselves as Christians, regularly participating in ethnic-specific immigrant churches. This phenomenon contributes to what one sociologist calls the “de-Europeanization of American Christianity.”¹ If so, why do such a significant number of recent immigrants and their children choose to participate in their ethnic immigrant churches? In particular, how do these congregations assist their members and their children with the precarious project of identity construction, as they seek to understand how their racial/ethnic identities intersect with their spiritual identity? Finally, given their unique social location, how do Asian American churches understand their mission in today’s world of racialization and globalization?

SERVING FIRST-GENERATION IMMIGRANTS: MULTIPLE ROLES OF THE CHURCH

While local churches may function solely as centers of worship in their home countries, Asian immigrant congregations play a far wider range of roles as they seek to assist their members with adapting in a new land while preserving their ethnic identity. As a spiritual institution, one of the vital functions the Asian immigrant church performs is to enable its members to find meaning and a source of strength in their experience of “dislocation.” Both the frequency and intensity of spiritual gatherings help congregation members to overcome the various challenges of immigrant life, as they are regularly reminded that God has a special calling for them and their immigrant congregations.²

In addition to its spiritual function, the Asian immigrant church also performs a number of critical “non-religious” functions to meet the particular needs of its members. First, it provides its lonely immigrant members with a deep sense of belonging and psychological comfort. As they gather regularly for both

¹ R. Stephen Warner, “Coming to America: Immigrants and the Faith They Bring,” *The Christian Century*, February 10, 2004, 20–23.

² Sang Hyun Lee, “Called to be Pilgrims: Toward an Asian American Theology from the Korean Immigrant Perspective.” In *Korean American Ministry: A Resource Book*, Sang Hyun Lee and John V. Moore, 1993, 90–120. (Louisville: General Assembly Council, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. 1993.)

official and informal gatherings, immigrant members and their children are able to deepen their relationships with others from the same ethnic background and to enjoy their shared cultural practices and artifacts. Because they are often the only ethnic institutions that meet regularly and frequently, for many Asian immigrant families, their ethnic immigrant churches serve as their most important, if not the only, ethnic community to which they belong.

In addition, the Asian immigrant church also functions as a key social service agency, providing a wide range of services ranging from providing information about employment and housing opportunities to classes that help its members prepare for the U.S. citizenship examination. Particularly, most churches are intentional about meeting the multigenerational needs of immigrant families, recognizing many significant pressure points these families encounter. Many congregations, therefore, provide services for their elderly members. These programs aim to offer a sense of connectedness and of being honored to the aging, a group of individuals who feel particularly isolated and often neglected in a foreign land. At the same time, these churches also offer programs for second-generation children, seeking to introduce them to various aspects of their ethnic culture and to help them develop a positive view of their ethnic heritage and identity. For many second-generation adolescents, the Asian immigrant church and its youth ministry play a particularly seminal role in their formation of ethnic identity.

REACHING OUT TO THE SECOND GENERATION: A REVERSAL OF THE “SILENT EXODUS”?

Since the majority of current Asian immigrants came to the United States after 1965, the first wave of their American-born children have entered adulthood. Influenced by American culture and its social values, these young adults are asserting their ideas, claiming their rights, and even challenging their parents' traditional value systems and practices. Many embattled Asian Americans and their families turn to their ethnic churches for guidance and direction; many immigrant churches are, however, unable to help since they are also embroiled in similar intergenerational conflicts. Discouraged by their current church experiences of subordination to first-generation leadership and bleak future prospects without hope of change, many frustrated second-generation Asian American church leaders and members have begun to desert their immigrant churches in growing numbers since the early 1990s.³

Recent studies indicate that while the “silent exodus” of second-generation young people is continuing, many young people are not permanently disassociating from their ethnic churches. While some are joining pan-Asian American churches or predominantly white mega churches, a significant number of them are intentionally affiliating with a growing number of English-speaking Asian ethnic congregations that are independent from their ethnic immigrant churches.⁴ These congregations are growing in many U.S. metropolitan areas as they attract a growing number of second-generation young people who are seeking a community in which they can continue their spiritual journey in their own way while also working on their bicultural ethnic identity. Corporately, these emerging congregations also seek to develop their own distinctive congregational identity and mission, selectively appropriating certain theological and cultural resources from Asian immigrant churches as well as from the broader ecclesial community. While holding on to their unique second-generation Asian American congregational identities, these autonomous English-speaking congregations also seek to welcome those who come

³ Helen Lee, “Silent Exodus: Can the East Asian Church in America Reverse the Flight of Its Next Generation?” (*Christianity Today*, August 1996, 50–52.)

⁴ Sharon Kim, *A Faith of Our Own: Second-Generation Spirituality in Korean American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

from other ethnic/racial backgrounds, thus gradually expanding the group boundary and incrementally reshaping their group identity.⁵

Surprisingly, there are also indications that a growing number of second-generation adults who have previously attended predominantly white congregations or pan-ethnic Asian American churches for many years are returning to their ethnic congregations, including the aforementioned English-speaking congregations that are a part of a larger Asian immigrant church.⁶ One significant reason why second-generation Asian Americans have an evolving relationship with their ethnic church is because as they go through different life stages, their view toward their own ethnic identity and thus toward their own ethnic community of faith continuously changes. As second-generation Asian Americans who are parenting children entering adolescence, a period in which the construction of identities—including ethnic identity—become significant, many are returning to Asian immigrant churches to offer their children a community in which they can explore and develop their own ethnic identities. Furthermore, as they play an increasing role in caring for their aging first-generation parents, these second-generation adults look for churches that can meet the needs of the multiple generations in their families.⁷

For the moment, many second-generation Asian American congregations, whether they are independent of or connected to Asian immigrant “mother” churches, are experiencing steady growth. Based largely on the past experiences of European immigrant churches, many had assumed that Asian American churches would either gradually disappear as the number of first-generation immigrants declined or they would become significantly “de-ethnicized.” However, unexpected growth and signs of the reversal of the “Silent Exodus” cause one to pause and think more reflectively about the complex intersection of race, ethnicity, and religion in the United States and the future of Asian American churches.

ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND PASTORAL IMPLICATIONS

For first-generation Asian immigrants—those who came to the United States as adults—their identity is strongly anchored in their Asian traditional cultures, having been reinforced by their growing-up experiences in their homeland. For most American-born second-generation young people, however, their understanding of “who I am” is not a given. For in a racially diverse setting like the United States, one’s identity formation involves the dialectical process of self-ascription and the ascription of others, an ongoing labeling and negotiating process engaged in by oneself and others.⁸ To put it differently, one’s identity construction involves a continual negotiation between the designation of outsiders (“what *they* think your identity is”) and one’s own self-assertion (“what *you* think your identity is”).

More importantly, for “visible” minorities living in a racialized setting like the United States, this dialectical process can be costly and detrimental since the identity designation of outsiders often contests and even negates one’s own self-ascription.⁹ During the past two centuries, Asian Americans have encountered

⁵ Antony W. Alumkal, *Asian American Evangelical Churches: Race, Ethnicity, and Assimilation in the Second Generation* (El Paso: LFB Scholarly Publishing, 2003).

⁶ Peter Cha, “Constructing New Intergenerational Ties, Cultures, and Identities among Korean American Christians.” In *This Side of Heaven: Race, Ethnicity, and Christian Faith*, eds. Robert J. Priest and Alvaro L. Nieves (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁷ Peter Cha, “The Reversal of the ‘Silent Exodus’?” (paper presented at the Conference of Sociology of Religion, the University of Illinois at Chicago, 2007).

⁸ Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992); Joane Nagel, *American Indian Ethnic Renewal: Red Power and the Resurgence of Identity and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁹ Mary Waters, “Ethnic and Racial Identities of Second-Generation Black Immigrants in New York City,” in *The New Second Generation*, ed. Alejandro Portes, 171–96 (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996).

various forms of racism, experiences that have directly shaped their identities as well as their understanding of their own social location.¹⁰ As Asian Americans continuously heard voices from mainstream society which sought to categorize them and label them—ranging from “yellow peril” to “model minority”—their personhood was assaulted again and again.¹¹

From their early childhood years, many Asian Americans internalized various messages of racism, becoming convinced of their “inferior” identity status in American society. A third-generation Japanese American Christian leader, reflecting upon his formative experiences, writes:

On that 1–10 scale many of us live by, white folk were always a 10. I was convinced, as an Asian American, that the highest I could ever hit was a 7. I grew up in a predominantly white suburb in the San Francisco Bay area. It was clear to me, even as a child, that whites set the standards and I had to fit into their society if I was going to prosper, or even just survive.... I was embarrassed by my Japanese heritage. I wanted to be as white as I could. White was right. Japanese was not.¹²

His painful experience of racial self-hatred and denial, regrettably, is not an isolated phenomenon. The negative self-image many Asian American youth have of themselves, according to Asian American psychologists, is one of the most critical counseling issues that face Asian American communities.¹³

Asian Americans do not cease to wrestle with these challenges when they move into young adulthood and adulthood; many continue to struggle with them, albeit in different ways and forms. In a highly racially stratified society like the United States, the identities of individuals in racial minorities change in a complex manner, according to variations in the situations and audiences encountered.¹⁴ Always carrying a “portfolio of ethnic identities,” these individuals learn to put on a socially and culturally defined “appropriate” identity for a given setting. In other words, “who they are” is often determined by “whom they are with” at the moment. While many Asian American individuals may appear to succeed in this “land of opportunity,” feelings of emptiness and existential angst mount as their understanding of who they are continually shifts and evolves and as they struggle to resist and negotiate with the “outsiders” designation of who they are.

Given the socio-cultural setting in which many Asian American individuals struggle to form and negotiate their identity described above, what are some of the theological and pastoral implications for the Asian American church? In his works, Sang Hyun Lee, a first-generation Korean American theologian, argued that the theology of an immigrant church must seek to answer the existential question, “What is the real meaning of our immigrant existence in America?”¹⁵ If indeed the theology of first-generation immigrants is guided by the question of “why are we here?”, the primary question with which second-generation Asian Americans are struggling is an even more fundamental one, namely one of identity: “Who am I as an individual and who are we as a corporate group?” The vulnerable and precarious nature of their identity formation project makes the church’s support and response even more urgent. Given the context and the critical need, how can the church serve and assist their members with their formation of identities? At the

¹⁰ Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from A Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989).

¹¹ Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999).

¹² Paul Tokunaga, “Introduction: Learning Our Names,” in *Following Jesus without Dishonoring Your Parents*, Jeanette Yep et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 9–10.

¹³ Laura Uba, *Asian Americans: Personality Patterns, Identity, and Mental Health* (New York: Guilford Press, 1994), 113–14.

¹⁴ Felix M. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

¹⁵ S. Lee, 40.

same time, how should Asian American congregations work on their own distinct corporate identities that reflect God's unique calling for them?

ASIAN AMERICAN CHURCHES' MISSIONAL ENGAGEMENT: FROM LAMENT TO HOPE

Many Asian American evangelical churches have often uncritically identified themselves as "American evangelicals," thus embracing the white evangelicals' political ideology as well as their theological ethos.¹⁶ One of the consequences of that identification is that these congregations, much like white American evangelicalism, tend to have a truncated vision of the mission of the church, seeing it primarily, if not exclusively, as that of the saving of souls through evangelism (Emerson and Smith, 2001). This religious phenomenon is particularly disturbing since, like other racial minority churches in the United States, Asian American churches did not participate in what Martin Marty called the "Two Party Split," the fragmentation of the American Protestant church into a socially active liberal wing and an "other-worldly-focused" fundamentalist wing, a fragmentation which has significantly shaped today's evangelical ethos and practice. Many Asian American "evangelical" congregations' theological identity and their missional orientations, in short, have been largely shaped by a historical experience that is not their own.

As mentioned earlier, Asian immigrant churches have historically offered a wide range of vital ministries, including the provision of various social services, to meet the needs of not only their church members but also of their ethnic communities at large. At the same time, due to language and cultural barriers, ministries of these immigrant churches were often confined to their own ethnic settings. With the emergence of English-speaking Asian Americans and of Asian American churches, however, this restriction can and should be lifted, enabling Asian American churches to provide holistic ministry to any individual or people groups that are in need. Having experienced the pains of being marginalized and of feeling powerless, Asian American Christians and churches particularly can offer ministries of mercy and justice to those who are in need with empathy and humility.

Indeed, one of the encouraging developments within the Asian North American Christian community is the growing number of younger ANA Christians and churches that are intentionally embracing the "Wholistic Gospel," committed to the task of both evangelism and the ministry of justice. During the past two decades, for instance, two evangelical communities that have experienced a dramatic growth of Asian Americans in their midst are InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, a collegiate parachurch organization, and the Evangelical Covenant Church, a relatively small but growing denomination.¹⁷ It is not coincidental that these two evangelical organizations explicitly and prominently express their deep commitment to the whole Gospel; it is not accidental that a growing number of Asian Americans hold prominent leadership positions in these two evangelical communities.

In the final chapter of the Book of Genesis, Joseph tells His older brothers who had sold him to merchants many years before, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives" (Genesis 50:20). The Asian American church and its members, having been shaped by personal and corporate experiences of marginalization, are perhaps uniquely positioned to be used by God as a "channel" of His grace, healing, and Shalom in today's broken world. Our collective memories and experiences of pain point to the hope of how God might redeem these experiences for His Kingdom purposes. Indeed, for Asian American churches to serve as

¹⁶ Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

¹⁷ In 1990, there were approximately 25 full-time IVCF staff workers who came from Asian American backgrounds. By 2006, this number had increased to 145. In 1997, the first English-speaking Asian American church joined the Evangelical Covenant Church. Since then, more than forty Asian American congregations have decided to join this denomination.

“wounded healers” may be a significant part in the process of the de-Europeanization of American Christianity.

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Intergenerational and Intercultural Issues

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Abstract “Intergenerational and Intercultural Issues” identifies a set of key issues that both Hispanic and Asian North American churches face, and how these two faith communities engage with intergenerational and intercultural issues.

Conde-Frazier, Elizabeth, and Andrew Y. Lee. 2015. Intergenerational and Intercultural Issues. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 67-74. Keywords: hana, intercultural, intergenerational, track.

WHAT ARE SOME KEY ISSUES YOUR TRACK ADDRESSED? WHY ARE THEY SIGNIFICANT?

One of the foremost issues shared by our Hispanic and Asian North American (HANA) participants was the **pain of lament** that cut across the spectrum, from the first to the 1.5 to the second generations. There was a common bond of experienced suffering. (The lament of the third generation is for the loss of language and identity as they search for their roots.) These pains are heavily shaped by the forces of immigration and political colonization.

In their native lands, people suffered under the hands of colonization whether the oppressor was Spain, Japan, the United States, England, France, etc. Foreigners ruled the land and dictated policy, imposing their standards and values as the norm where desired. Thus, many had to endure the pain and humiliation of being outsiders in their own homeland, marginalized and displaced from the center of power.

Even when one gets the opportunity to immigrate to the United States and reside in the heart of the Empire, paternalism was still present. Being of a different color, culture, and tongue leads to a different form of ostracization and prejudice. We are still ignored. Our needs are still unmet. We are not understood. We remain second-class citizens.

Entry into the United States leads to a life of double (or more) marginalization. One was neither accepted in America nor any longer in one's homeland. A native Puerto Rican female is called by the pejorative term, *spic*, when in New York, but labeled a *gringa* upon her return to Puerto Rico.

It is this question of **identity** that also emerged as a major element of the group's discussion. As 1.5- and second-generation persons, one is always the “perpetual foreigner” with a foot in two places but no firm ground on which to stand. A common tactic of immigrant children is to seek to adapt and assimilate to western ways. Though they may not have the tools to analyze their situation in a critical manner, they do implicitly recognize the power structure in place, so they naturally aspire to be like the majority and adapt to American culture.

The second generation learns English, serving as translators for their parents, and sometimes even handling bills and official correspondence for their home. Some do not wish to speak the language of

their parents as they desire to identify with the surrounding culture and fit in with their peers. In fact, children are encouraged to assimilate so that they can do well in America and demonstrate that they belong in this country.

The price of successful assimilation is confusion of identity. With whom do they belong? Westernized Asian Americans are pejoratively referred to as “bananas” or “twinkies.” Their Hispanic American counterparts are known as “coconuts” (a term also applied to Mexicans, Indians, and Filipinos). Fair-skinned Hispanics, such as some Argentinians and Cubans, are favored over those who are darker skinned, another vestige of European colonialism.

The landscape of church life is littered with horror stories about internecine clashes. Within HANA church culture, there are intercultural and intergenerational disagreements over matters of language, music, liturgy, polity, etc. Typically the immigrant generation takes center stage as the driving force behind planting churches. As children are born, ministries are begun to meet their needs. In most bilingual congregations, Spanish or an Asian dialect remains the official language of the church. Sermons are translated into English. Teaching is conducted from a first generation perspective so that the English speaking are not spiritually fed. Some churches refuse to allow translation and hold on to the mother tongue in an effort to replicate the church experience in their homeland.

Even when ministries are developed in English in parallel to those in the host language, as is the case in many ANA congregations, the second generation still feels as if they are second-class citizens with neither the power nor the privileges of their parents. The English speaking are often relegated to the margins and experience yet again the emotional pain of being outsiders as they are “different.”

This disparity is even more pronounced when comparing their roles in the worlds of work and church. Second generation adults may hold responsible positions in the secular world; they can be leaders in their companies and balance multimillion dollar budgets. But on Sundays, they are still viewed as children, even if they are married with children themselves. They are unable to make monetary decisions for even petty amounts due to church policies. Thus they find themselves in a powerless position. Even when some are appointed to the governing boards of the church, they find themselves in the familiar position of being the underrepresented minority. What voice they have is silenced by the vote of the majority.

Authority and control of the church are still tightly held by the parent generation. Senior pastors, with rare exception, are born overseas. Those who are brought to America to lead their churches are not savvy regarding their new cultural context. They need to first adjust to American immigrant church life. The gap in their understanding of the second generation is even greater due to their lack of experience in the American context.

With no remedy in sight for a malady that has afflicted HANA congregations for decades, young adults feel they have little choice except to leave. (Some have been threatened with blacklisting if they do leave.) It is no surprise, then, that the “silent exodus” that began in the 90s in ANA churches continues today and afflicts the entire HANA community.

HANA young adults leave the churches that birthed and nurtured them for greener pastures elsewhere. These range from churches that are English-speaking monoethnic H/ANA, to pan-H/ANA, to multicultural multiethnic, to monoculturally dominant churches (especially popular megachurches). This, in turn, prolongs the cycle of pain experienced by both generations.

The first generation sees their children leave and lament for this loss. They made many sacrifices in order to plant and grow their church but now they feel the second generation is deserting them and that their authority is disregarded and disrespected. They feel misunderstood by the second generation and conclude that the English speaking are an ungrateful generation.

On the other hand, the second generation lament the fact that their hybrid identity is not accepted by the parent generation. They cannot exercise all their gifts and fully contribute to the life of their church, as leadership is insufficiently shared. They are not accepted in general society and they discover that they are not accepted at church either.

The following is a second generation poem of lament.

*I came to church as a child
And I eagerly embraced the message of God's love for me.
I came to church as a teen
But the only place you had for me was still in Sunday School.
And you would only speak to me in a language I could not understand.
I came to church as a young adult
And the only place I was accepted was among my peers
Or through service by helping those younger than me.
I came to church as an adult
And little had changed.
"Speak only when spoken to."
"Don't rock the boat."
"You can't do that here."
"The table is already set. There is no place for you here,"
You would say, not with words but by your actions.
I came to church
And all I was fed were spiritual crumbs.
I went to church, an American church.
And there I was fed. I grew. I flourished. I found my voice.
But the longing in my heart is still for you.¹*

The following is a first generation poem of lament.

*Yo no queria estar aca
pero aca me trajiste
yo no queria venir
por que lo hiciste?
me sedujiste
me convenciste
me atrajiste
y me atrapaste;
y aqui estoy en tierra extrana
en tierra aborrecida
en tierra bendecida,
enterrada.
Extrano mi tierra
mi tierra aborrecida
mi tierra amada
donde estaba enterrada.
Mi pasado y mi historia,
mis raices y memorias
las rendi delante de tu trono
El Reino y sus propositos!*

¹ Written by Andrew Lee.

*El Rey y sus planes!
 Luchando, peleando,
 humillada y herida,
 diferente a todos
 a todos parecida.
 Quien me diera de beber
 del agua del pozo,
 del pozo de Jerusalem!
 exclamo David y tres
 corrieron a servirle.
 Yo clamo por mi pozo
 y por mi agua,
 pero no hay camino de retorno,
 la suerte esta echada...
 y mientras aqui vivo y aqui sufro
 sufro por mi esposo
 y su anoranza,
 por mis hijos,
 por mi iglesia,
 por mis hermanos latinos
 y su tristeza.
 Gimo, lucho y desespero.
 Espero, proclamo y deseo.
 Avanzo, abrazo y aguanto...
 Hasta cuando, Dios mio,
 Hasta cuando!²*

The author of this lament describes her experience as being in a land where she was brought to by God. God seduced her. This is a land where she is now trapped, a strange land that is hated and blessed at the same time. She misses and cries out for the land of her own wells and waters, her own history and memories. Yet she gave these up for the plans which God has for God's Kingdom. Like David she cries out for the waters of the wells of Jerusalem and while she lives in this new land she cries out, struggles and despairs, proclaims, advances, embraces and holds on while asking, "How long, Lord, how long?"

The pain for the familiar causes the first generation to make the church a place for holding onto the yearned and beloved past and to seek to recreate the different pieces of their country of origin. **Power and authority** are caught up in these purposes along with the evangelizing goals of the evangelical missionaries who taught them.

For the second generation the church is also an extended family that began the task of nurturing them, but when their journey of growth requires that they integrate the hybridity of their identity and that they make sense of it, they are met by rejection by the first generation. Their ideas, and therefore opportunities for contribution, are not accepted. They cannot grow their identities either as persons or as servant leaders. They find themselves in a community of persons that they both love and are deeply hurt by at the same time. They are welcomed when they need to translate and interpret the world for their parents but these very abilities are frowned upon in the church. The role reversal they live out with their parents, where they lead them into the processes of this new land countered by the first generation's grasping for control in the church, creates for the second generation an ever-growing wound.

² Written by Silvina Kosack.

While pain and lament characterize both generations, there is a **deficit in understanding** of each other by both parties, which results in further mistrust. Without the ability to communicate between the cultures, both generations suffer in pain and silence. The lack of forgiveness in the HANA churches is quite pronounced.

The undercurrent of grief and anguish in HANA churches stands in sharp contrast to the spirit of victory and triumphalism that permeates evangelical theology and thinking. Bigger crusades, growth numbers, large modern church facilities, and huge budgets are all attributed to God's blessing. These stories of triumph are held up as a paradigm to be imitated at conferences. Once more, those in the minority attempt to imitate those in power.

Yet another area of deep pain lies in the **gender disparity** between men and women. In HANA cultures, there is a top-down hierarchical polity that has been in place for several millennia. In both Confucian and machismo societies, men lead and women support. This has resulted in women being further marginalized in servile roles.

In modern western society, women have been striving for full equality in all areas of life. But within church life, changes to the existing power structure have been slow in coming. English-speaking females are less apt to be accepting of the status quo, leading to further conflict. Second-generation females find this gender discrimination in both worlds at different levels. In the western world they must learn to be more assertive and confident, which is surely considered disrespectful in their parents' world.

WHAT ARE SOME SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN HOW HISPANIC AND ANA CHURCHES EXPERIENCE AND ENGAGE WITH THESE ISSUES?

There are many similarities between the two groups, even in their ways of non-engagement of the major issues as detailed above. One reason is that neither have a strong language of emotional discourse. The routines of survival do not afford the time for one to internally reflect and process, much less with one another. The need to be strong for one another also compounds the situation. Their inner lives are a secret to one another. Confucian philosophy emphasizes fulfilling one's role and doing what is right and virtuous. One is not prone to speak about emotions and feelings. Likewise, a machismo society emphasizes the virility of a man who acts and leads. Kindness, truthfulness, and compassion are considered feminine, and thus, weaker, values.

Both communities need to find the vocabulary to express their intergenerational stories so that each generation can hear each other's stories of lament and hope.

One difference between the two communities lies in the area of social justice. While the poor exist in HANA populations, those from the ANA group have an overall higher per capita income, with a number residing in affluent areas and maintaining a corresponding lifestyle. On the whole, evangelical ANA communities do not speak out enough for social justice and neglect the poor. They need to learn from Hispanic churches how to better engage in this area.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES THAT BOTH GROUPS FOUND HELPFUL IN LIGHT OF THE ISSUES AFOREMENTIONED?

Finding common strategies was not easy. We listened at great length to each other. There was much empathy as we listened. The subject at hand was one where life or death was at stake. We made a list of the subjects which the different group members felt were important to talk about. The list covered personal, cultural, and historical issues that led to immigration and its effects. Different group members began the conversations and we all joined in with insights and knowledge. These conversations gave us context for the task of finding ways to help both generations speak to one another.

Practices from the different communities represented by the members were offered for discussion and critique. The group was composed of both first and second generation members so that the discussion at hand was in itself a practice in exploration. We found that a spiritual gift to be developed for the second generation was patience, and for the first it was humility so as to listen to the second.

LAMENT AND COMING TO KNOWLEDGE

The journey of lament into hope led us to the histories that shaped the individual stories of the generations. We realized that the pain of lament, felt across the spectrum of the generations, was shaped by immigration and political colonization in our respective countries of origin. Lament became a way of coming to a knowledge that moved to understanding. When the generations express their hurts to each other they come to an understanding of their common journey. Lament is a way of looking into the life of the other and feeling connected to each other so that we can struggle together and not against each other. We found that this common struggle led to solidarity—their suffering is a shared experience. There is wisdom in the communal memory of our storytelling.

Shifting Toward Hope

This is an important shift toward hope. Our group spoke about several ways to come together in a new way. Both generations can speak of God in their stories. Better yet, we thought about creating a setting where both could experience God together and share their “God talk.”

A practical example for making this happen is an intergenerational mission trip where both generations experience God’s power together in serving. After the experience, the reflection of what took place during the trip is a way of continuing to share testimonies and how they have grown in their faith. This creates an appreciation for the faith and gifts they both have and how these can form their community as a congregation. Trust begins to take place differently because of this type of appreciation.

Another example offered by the group was to hold a baptism service between the two congregations, in instances where the generations have formed separate language-based congregations. Once again, sharing faith stories and serving each other would help people see each other as real, each with a name and a participant in God’s work. Group members who had been a part of such experiences spoke of how respect emerged.

Respect is key for the ongoing relationship and for building toward hope. Respect leads to honor—the second generation honoring the first. Respect also leads to empowerment where the first empowers the second generation by releasing their (the first generation’s) power so that the next generation can share in the legacy of the calling to serve God. In this we learn acceptance, remaining with each other instead of running from each other and we trust both God and each other.

Even for young people who may lack authority, there is still the opportunity to be creative. For example, some of our group members suggested doing a talk show during Valentine’s Day, bringing in the first generation to speak in front of the second about their relationships and the struggles and hopes of love. The attempt here is to create a safe space for both to speak candidly with one another in order to build some trust.

As we considered the issues of power and authority and the ways that cultural practices keep these in place, we concluded that a leader in authority from the first generation is needed who can lead the first generation into creating a space for the second to find its expression and to contribute to the making of the community of the whole congregation. This leader needs to use their power and authority to persuade others of the first generation of the value of the contributions the second generation can make for all in this new land.

This leader must also spend much time truly listening to and earning the trust of the second generation. The conversation between the leader and those perceived as youth will become a new space where the two generations encounter each other. This space is where the elements necessary for creating a place for negotiation and new birth between and for both generations begins. In this space, hybrid significations are created using the symbols, memories, pain, and hopes and dreams of both generations. It is a very slow and precarious journey into the future together.

The preaching, teaching, and strategic planning of the leader in advisement with leaders from both generations is essential. The scriptures have much to offer us in this way. Much of the Old Testament takes place or is redacted during the experience of the exile when Israel also needed to find ways to maintain its language, culture, and values which were embedded in their religious practices. It is believed that when they were far from the temple and unable to maintain the worship experience of sacrifices and such, that the synagogue emerged as a teaching and worship center. A first-generation leader who wishes to lead the congregation into a viable future that maintains its second and subsequent generations must interpret the scriptures in ways that will open up the future and the life that it can hold. Faith is redefined in light of understanding its purpose. Mission is refashioned so that the meaning of evangelism is expanded to include economic empowerment and/or social service. New symbols will emerge that will embrace the new meanings and ways for both generations to live, worship, and serve together.

How does such a first-generation leader emerge? How does someone attain the capacity to listen empathetically to a second generation while being and experiencing the writhing pain of the first generation and thus experiencing the writhing pain that everyone else is experiencing? Here is where culturally appropriate theological education becomes a resource. Bible institutes offer traditional skills and areas of knowledge while seminaries offer a decontextualized education for these communities. Workshops, courses, and conferences that are not interruptive to life schedules and help people reflect on the issues discussed are most effective. Pastoral care for the leaders that helps them deal with how the trauma of immigration has affected them and their families, while also teaching them the skills for working with their own communities, can be a resource.

In our group there were also second-generation leaders. One had been mentored for the position. He and his father (a first-generation pastor) had found a way to struggle through and transition into the passing of power from one generation to the other. Another leader with a strong empathic heart had learned to be pastoral to the first generation, understanding the sacrifice it would mean for him and for his generation. If there is isn't a *vínculo* or special bond between the two generations in the creation of leadership and passing of the baton, then life does not have a way of passing between the two.

During our time together as a group, the two different generations spoke candidly, and the pain which accompanies anger emerged. There were moments of separation between us as well as being at a loss as to what to do. It made us meek. Meekness is when we have power but we restrain our power and our defenses so that mercy may walk through. Mercy makes us wise.

As we reflect on what took place, a word that is difficult to swallow comes to mind—longsuffering. It invites us to great patience in moments when we are impatient, intolerant, oversensitive, and angry due to the trauma of immigration. It is the type of patience that leads to restraint so that we can listen. It invites us to speak softly because we are all hurting. It invites us to trust God between us when we can't trust one another. This means that we will follow God's leading so that we can repent, so that repentance can continue to open the way for us to forgive one another and to continue to walk together in reconciliation. Reconciliation means finding constructive ways to approach one another. It is a two-way street. It cannot take place if all parties are not actively engaged in the process.

SIGNS OF HOPE

When these steps in the journey take place, hope begins to take form. Our group defined the signs of hope in our midst in the following ways:

“You are precious where you are,”

“Accept where you are,”

“Fellowship is taking place,”

“Accept who you are as well as who others are,”

“Bear fruit,”

“We are a becoming countercultural church that shows the values of the *basileia*,”

“We understand that different seasons will take place and we are willing to weather them.”

Hope comes through lament and from lament. The possibility of hope comes from collaboration, trust, faith, and learning from each other. Hope waits while preparing, and praying continuing in patience. “[T]herefore put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering, bearing with one another, forgiving one another...” (Eph. 4:1-3).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Nurturing the Next Generation

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Abstract “Nurturing the Next Generation” explores a set of key issues that both Hispanic and Asian North American churches face in nurturing next generation involvement in the faith community.

Stephens, Armida Belmonte, and Greg Jao. 2015. Nurturing the Next Generation. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 75-82.
Keywords: generation, hana, nurture, track.

INTRODUCTION

The Hispanic-Asian North American (HANA) Consultation, a gathering of Hispanic and Asian American evangelical theologians and ministry leaders, was held in May 2013 to give special attention to the present state of affairs and the key issues both these immigrant faith communities are facing. Topic-specific tracks were a part of the consultation to engage specific themes common to both groups.¹ One of these tracks, “Nurturing the Next Generation,” focused on exploring how churches and ministries nurture the formation of youth and young adult leaders in both Asian American and Latino contexts.²

KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED AND SIGNIFICANCE

Our time together was spent exploring issues falling under the areas of ethnic identity formation and spiritual formation of the “next generation.” In particular, our hope was to tease out the process in which ministries address the points of intersection of these two topics: how does ethnic identity influence spiritual formation and how does spiritual formation shape ethnic identity?³ Keeping in mind that “ethnic

¹This is a report of what was discussed during the HANA “Nurturing the Generations” track time and is not intended to speak for or to be representative of all Hispanic and Asian Americans as our communities are certainly not monolithic. Gerardo Marti reminds us for the Hispanic context, for example, that “We must be continuously reminded that Hispanics are not a homogenous group; they differ immensely in origin, race, customs, education, religion, and even in language. Instead, it is more important—particularly in the case of Latinos in the United States—to look closely at the context of religion “on the ground” and to pay attention to the concrete dynamics played out in particular congregations.” See Gerardo Marti, “The Diversity-Affirming Latino: Ethnic Options and the Ethnic Transcendent Expression of American Latino Religious Identity” in *Sustaining Faith Traditions: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion among the Latino and Asian American Second Generation*, edited by Carolyn Chen and Russell Jeung (New York: University Press, 2012), 31.

² Track members also included: Young Lee Hertig, Mitch Kim, Danny Martínez, Elizabeth Tamez Méndez, Gideon Tsang, and Tim Tseng.

³ The reciprocal relationship between faith and ethnicity has been noted by ministry practitioners and scholars alike. Sociologists Russell Jeung et al note, “Asian Americans and Latinos, including those involved with faith-based organizations and congregations, have taken these racial categories and rearticulated them as self-determined, empowered racial identities. . . . Religious leaders and institutions have also mobilized around these identities to build their congregations, to relate to other groups, and to engage their sociopolitical environment.” Cf. “Religious, Racial, and Ethnic Identities of the New Second

identity is not an end in itself but a means to getting all the pieces of our lives in order so that we are in a better place to love ourselves, our neighbors and our God,⁴ these questions are ultimately important for developing mature leaders and building healthy churches and ministries that can contribute to a continually changing society in a meaningful and constructive manner.

Track participants shared about significant experiences and mentors that had shaped their ethnic identity and self-understanding, as well as situations and events that helped catalyze self-awareness of how ethnic identity and faith formation were in constant and dynamic conversation. These experiences and realities were then situated in broader ecclesial contexts (e.g., a “home church”) that further impacted and nurtured their sense of self. This included reflecting on both the affirming and negative ways these spaces had shaped us, leading us to voice our lament, while also sharing positive memories of the many ways in which God worked to use them as beacons of hope and resurrection in our communities. As a result, our conversations dealt with thinking through ethnic and ecclesial inheritances and working out what gifts needed to be reclaimed and what aspects needed to be let go. Our times together ended with discussion on what it means for the next generation to lead “latinamente” or “Asianamente.” These questions of identity, then, involved digging into the relationship between first and second generations within our immigrant ecclesial communities, while also taking into consideration socio-cultural influences and their corresponding struggles.⁵

Three principal themes, then, emerged from these discussions: 1) the intergenerational rift and cultural gap in the relationship between first and second generation immigrant communities; 2) social and ecclesial systems and structures that often exposed or resulted in multiple marginality for next generation Christians; 3) the expressed need for meaningful ways to affirm, encourage, and prepare future leaders.

Experiences of brokenness and alienation reflected in these themes often lead next generation Christians to a deep sense of displacement in first-generation contexts and in the wider American majority culture.⁶ Moreover, whether an architect wrongly labeled as a construction worker, or looking the part but not fitting the culture, each participant expressed the various ways in which stereotypes and totalizing messages imposed false narratives that obscured realities, whether good or bad, and created further distance amongst communities. Every person expressed how even within their own ethnic and ecclesial groups, there was particularity that didn’t fit the mold or stereotype. This “hyphenated” existence, the attempt to straddle two very different worlds, often led to feelings of not fully belonging in either community summed up in a phrase often used in Hispanic American contexts: “No somos ni de aquí, ni de allá” (we don’t have a place here nor there). The starting point of “lamenting” these principal

Generation,” *Sustaining Faith Traditions*, 8. Relatedly and conversely, Milagros Peña and Edwin Hernández point out that “Latinos, those who have newly arrived and those who have lived within the U.S. borders for generations, are reshaping the U.S. cultural, political, economic, and social landscape. As faith engages the lives of individuals, religious institutions through their leaders become a part of this dynamic. Thus religious affiliation continues to provide a means by which ethnic groups articulate their ethnic identities by engaging their social locations.” See “Second-Generation Latin@ Faith Institutions and Identity Formations,” *Sustaining Faith Traditions*, 110.

⁴ Orlando Crespo, *Being Latino in Christ: Finding Wholeness in Your Ethnic Identity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 145.

⁵ This process unintentionally reflects what Kay Higuera Smith describes as the construction of identity in an ethical manner without “othering.” She suggests “three approaches that can be implemented at the social, institutional and ecclesiological levels: (1) that we interrogate and change how we construct power, including how we objectify others; (2) that we collectively and consciously work to involve ourselves with others at all levels of the social spectrum; and (3) that we explore the social memories of others and seek to uncover the conscious social “forgetting” of others’ stories within our own cultural narratives.” See Kay Higuera Smith, “Embracing the Other: A Vision for Evangelical Identity,” in *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations: Global Awakenings in Theology and Praxis*, edited by Kay Higuera Smith, Jayachitra Lalitha and L. Daniel Hawk (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 198.

⁶ For further discussion: Gideon Tsang and Soong-Chan Rah, “The Disillusioned Generation: Ecclesiology from the Margins” and Mitchell Kim and David Lee, “Intergenerational Ministry: Why Bother?” in *Honoring the Generations*, edited by M. Sydney Park, Soong-Chan Rah, and Al Tizón (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012).

themes before working our way to “hope” is aptly expressed in a poem shared by track participant Gideon Tsang:

The songs of laughter mask the hidden whimpers of sorrow

*Of unfaithful fathers
Overworked mothers
To misunderstood sons and daughters*

*Of companies that rape our land
To outsource the raping of lands
Institutions that raise the powerful
While schools are boarded up and
Overworked educators burn*

*Of overstimulated, overloaded technologies
Rings and vibrations of next appointments
Or news we don't need to hear about or simply to want to hear
While we wander in loneliness*

*The songs of the church cry
To God
For God*

*May the songs of our sorrow
Find God
With our weeping
With our sorrow
God with us*

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ASIAN AMERICAN AND LATINO FAITH COMMUNITIES

Both groups’ experiences as immigrant faith communities revealed commonalities and shared features, as well as areas of uniqueness. During one of our track times, each group met in “ethnic caucuses” to discuss perceptions of similarity and difference with the other community before a time of sharing together. In both the Hispanic and Asian American ecclesial contexts, there is a feeling of “disconnection” between the generations. For next generation individuals who must not only navigate but also adopt the cultures of “two worlds”—home (immigrant) and majority cultures—there are often linguistic and cultural barriers often present that make communication and connection difficult, such that each generation misses out on hearing the stories of previous generations: about significant experiences, wounds and healings, as well as the struggles and dreams. Participants expressed the need for younger generations to hear the stories of older generations to create spaces of mutual vulnerability, lament, hope, and understanding. The importance of shared narrative, *testimonios*, and storytelling helps both generations arrive towards a better understanding of their history, shared ethnic and spiritual identities, and common values.

Both ecclesial communities have a history of exclusion and marginalization from the majority culture, experiences of pain and struggle in a new context, and a history of looking to their faith community for various forms of support and a place of belonging, and encouragement to persevere despite difficult

circumstances.⁷ For many, these ecclesial spaces have provided diaspora Christians with a spiritual family that is present for times of challenge, joy, and important milestones.⁸

Also common to both Hispanic and Asian American communities was the felt-need by younger generations for the expression of respect and significance from older generations. Shaped by minoritizing experiences in a white-majority culture, younger generations often feel unseen and invalidated, especially needing the affirmation and support of older generations and authority figures. Relatedly, participants explained how this absence of feeling acknowledged or respected often resulted in an individual's limited understanding of their ministerial calling. Whereas the majority culture can often deliver "totalizing messages" of what individuals in our communities *cannot be*, sometimes our own ethnic and/or ecclesial communities deliver "totalizing messages" of what we *should be*. For some, the pursuit of the "American Dream" has resulted in a limited or narrow view of acceptable or desired professions. For others, gender expectations have limited the roles for women in ministry. Both of these examples show the need for freedom, uniqueness of an individual within the broader framework of the need for respect and finding one's place and role in the Kingdom of God.

Finally, the need and desire to contextualize ministry models for the needs of a younger generation was also voiced as a common concern. Younger generations often feel that ministry contexts reflect the culture and values (language, music, programming, etc.) of older generations in a manner that doesn't resonate with them or take their bi-cultural nature into consideration. As a result, participants expressed the desire for more inclusivity in intergenerational spaces, as well as increased openness to various models of ministry that can accommodate for varying needs and cultural expressions within the generations.

While both Hispanic and Asian American participants found many areas of similarity, there were of course differences as well. One significant contrast that emerged was the social acceptability of expressing pain and lament in Latino culture, which is often experienced as a normal part of Sunday worship. Asian American participants on the other hand, observed that this aspect is often more hidden as such expressions are associated with shame. However common these expressions of lament may be in ecclesial contexts for Latinos, it was noted that this practice was not necessarily a common practice in intergenerational dialogue, perhaps in a desire to shield younger generations.

Another difference that rose to the forefront early in our conversation was the realization that the average age of leadership is higher for Asian Americans than it is for Latino/as. Although a shared feature for both communities is a "proving period" of service in ministry before an individual is officially considered a leader, it seems that perhaps due to fewer resources as well as an earlier cultural initiation into adulthood, the "next generation" of leaders is younger in Latino contexts than in Asian American ones.

Although trends for Latinos entering higher education are on the rise, the difference in the average age of leadership is likely also influenced by the varying levels of education, since for most Asian American churches a Master of Divinity degree is a requisite for higher levels of leadership. Additionally, cultural differences in perceptions of time and pressures towards busy-ness was also pointed out. Asian American track participants noted their perception of Latinos as valuing relationships and generously giving others of their time, whereas they felt pressured to fulfill the "American Dream" and to increase productivity as busy-ness was culturally perceived as a higher value and even a virtue. As a result, it seems that Latino leaders are given more freedom to explore or pursue calling once it is understood,

⁷ For an excellent discussion of the history of the Hispanic Protestant church in the United States, see Juan Francisco Martínez, *Los Protestantes: An Introduction to Latino Protestantism in the United States* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011).

⁸ Edward Flores gives an interesting account of how church community gatherings, however informal, can provide what he calls an "infrastructure of community and belonging" for at-risk youth. Cf. "Latinos and Faith Based Recovery from Gangs," in *Sustaining Faith Traditions*, 120.

whereas Asian American participants felt little affirmation and constrained by cultural expectations to succeed instead in secular vocations.

One final difference between the two communities regards the issue of contextualization. Asian American participants observed that given that Spanish as a language is common to almost all Latino communities; it is perhaps easier to talk about a “pan-Latino culture” whereas in Asian American contexts a “mother-tongue” amongst many is not shared. Approaches to contextualization, therefore, may prove to be different as well.

KEY INSIGHTS FOR THE HANA CHURCH AND THE BROADER NORTH AMERICAN CHURCH

This rich time together of relating our histories and experiences of struggle and lament also gave way to sharing our hopes and vision for the next generation and future of our respective immigrant churches. This common space of dialogue spurred our group’s imagination about areas that can be improved in order to better nurture our next generation of Christian leaders:

- ***Reclaim the power of storytelling and shared narratives to strengthen and honor intergenerational relationships***

One of the key themes that emerged in the track discussion was the importance of acknowledging and validating the role that suffering and lament has in the lives of individuals, families, and ecclesial communities. Both communities expressed that experiences of exclusion and marginality led to deepened faith that shaped and strengthened spiritual formation in very meaningful and effective ways for coping with life’s challenges within a majority culture. Similarly, these experiences of dislocation revealed the importance of family relationships that created much needed spaces of cohesion and unity that sustained them in the midst of otherwise isolating or alienating forces. In many cases, it was a church community that fulfilled the role of “extended family,” nurturing relationships and providing care in various ways. On the other hand, as previously discussed, next generation Christians have not felt understood or affirmed in these same spaces. Therefore, the church has simultaneously worked as a cohesive social group that has provided a space to provide safety in the face of social rejection from the majority culture in providing cultural memory to cope in difficult times when carrying the burdensome label of “foreigners” while also perpetuating feelings of alienation in younger generations when they are not affirmed, recognized, or included. Reclaiming the power of storytelling is a tangible means of shared culture creation by both older and younger generations to bridge the intergenerational cultural gap felt by all involved. The resulting shared narratives not only provide a way to lament together but also to celebrate our people—historical, present, and future—giving a broader vista of the beauty of the meta-narrative of God’s providential work throughout the generations to accomplish God’s purposes. Reclaiming the power of storytelling in order to build intergenerational bridges and mutual understanding will require training of mentors and youth workers who can translate and mediate the faith community’s story and legacy. This process should be interactive, including food, rituals, and shared experiences, perhaps in historical locations to inspire learning.

- ***Recognize the blessings and advantages of living as a hyphenated and/or polycentric Christian***

Despite the hardships that come with it, participants also mentioned the benefits of “hyphenated” identities and experiences. Living in the tension between majority and immigrant cultures necessitated that next generation participants learn to think from multiple points of perspective as they navigated both worlds, often playing the roles of cultural translators and bridge-makers while inhabiting the space in-between. The negotiating of multiple identities beyond faith and ethnicity in a dynamic society necessarily leads one towards a polycentric perspective on the world, characterized by openness not only to one’s own group but to other individuals, groups, and the gifts others may bring. An enriched recognition of these blessings and advantages requires making spaces to explore who we are and to work towards

self-understanding. This may include creating new or renewing old rituals and rites of passage suffused in meaning that is relevant and significant for the next generation. Renewing the arts, traditional, innovative, or both, is one such avenue to examine hyphenated identities.

- ***Resist totalizing messages and areas of obstacle to move forward as a healthy next generation***

Despite the struggles and gifts that come with being a part of immigrant ecclesial communities, the challenge of overcoming imposed narratives, at individual and corporate levels alike, arose as a major concern. Resisting totalizing messages (from outside as well as within our ethnic, ecclesial communities) was discussed with respect to two main areas: theological education and gender.

The call for theological training that includes immersion into other cultures as a way to explore identity and to expose students to wider theological conversations that go beyond the major recognized figures was addressed. Relatedly, others added that teaching and learning activities could use historical locations and/or cultural artifacts as a means to teach, model, and encourage the practice of prayer not only in ecclesial but academic contexts as well. The necessity of learning how to be multi-context Christians was emphasized as significant for next generation Christians and beyond that cannot afford to live within their own particularities only in an increasingly globalized world.

Both Asian American and Latino participants saw the call for more attention to be given to issues of gender not only in theological education, but within their respective ecclesial communities as well.⁹ Increased support and affirmation of women in leadership was a strongly voiced concern, as well as providing new images and metaphors (biblical and otherwise) for strong women. The desire to see pastors intentionally advocate, create opportunities, and develop women for service was also expressed.

In light of these insights, several proposals for “areas of celebration” were suggested:

The Celebration of Children

In order to make the most of the gift of intergenerational ecclesial communities, it was pointed out that children should be not only present during worship services, but also thoughtfully included as a part of the Body in order to help build connections from an early stage in a child’s development.

Celebrating the Diversity of Church Typologies

As mentioned before, track conversations were marked both by shared realities and differences as well. One such difference that was acknowledged was the diversity of church experiences participants represented.¹⁰ Differences in denomination, ecclesial polity, and models of ministry were discussed.

⁹ Cf. Peter Cha and Grace May, “Gender Relations in Healthy Households” in *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009) and *More Than Serving Tea: Asian American Women on Expectations, Relationships, Leadership, and Faith* edited by Nikki A. Toyama and Tracy Gee (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006). For a history of evangelical Latina American women in Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches in the United States. See Nora O. Lozano, “Fieles en la lucha: Una perspectiva histórica de la mujer evangélica hispana en los estados unidos” in *Iglesias Peregrinas en Busca de Identidad: Cuadros del protestantismo en los Estados Unidos* (Buenos Aires: Kairos, 2004).

¹⁰ Juan Martínez provides a summary of the various models of Latino churches in the United States: churches that function as a “gateway” to the majority culture; those that work as a vehicle from the transmission of Latino values and language; imported churches that are extensions of churches in Latin America; “sister churches” that meet in the same building of a majority culture church, but serve different cultural/ethnic groups; and intentionally multiethnic churches. Moreover, the picture is further expanded when one considers the diversity of language used in any given church (Spanish only, intentionally bilingual, mixed use). Cf. “Aculturación e iglesia evangélica latina en los EEUU” in *Iglesias Peregrinas en Busca de Identidad: Cuadros del protestantismo en los Estados Unidos*, 154-162. Daniel A. Rodriguez affirms the need for English-only models of church within the Hispanic American community for those who do not speak any Spanish. Cf. *A Future for the Latino Church: Models for Multilingual, Multigenerational Hispanic Congregations* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011).

These realities suggest that the diversity in the various models and “ways of doing” church are not only good, but ought to be celebrated as gifts that contribute to the good of the Body in their own right. These “rich descriptions” of ecclesial experiences lend texture and depth to the picture of immigrant churches in the North American context today. Additionally, these (in)formal network of church communities provide wells of experience and wisdom from which to draw in contextualizing efforts by Asian American and Latino communities as they not only learn from one another, but also join in collaborative efforts to serve together.

Celebrating Life Decisions and Rites of Passage

The lack of intentionality in recognizing, affirming, and celebrating the major life decisions, as well as rites of passage of the next generation was a keenly felt need for Asian American participants. Formalizing traditions that celebrate vocational call for men and women alike was suggested as a means to improve intercultural connection between older and next generations, as well as to provide and broaden early examples of not only acceptable, but honored, paths of service to children. More generally speaking, participants hope to see the creation of a culture of affirmation of both individual and group’s gifts and calling where healthy generation can be built up in their identity in Christ while honoring their ethnic heritage for the service of Christ, the church, and the world.

The shared space and time together of Latino and Asian American track participants was instructive in a number of ways. We were reminded of our call to fellowship with other faith communities different than our own to reflect the unity of the Body of Christ and to build deeper bonds of friendship with one another. We also saw that the vulnerable practice of sharing and confessing our stories with one another can be fruitful ways to engender trust and transparency. The gifts of conversation and family fellowship reflect Orlando Crespo’s thoughts well: “Only in an environment where people are encouraged to pursue a healthy ethnic identity is diversity possible, since diversity is about equally affirming all the cultures and ethnicity that are present. ... Healthy diversity can be used by God to bring affirmation, wholeness and life to all.”¹¹

Asian American and Latino churches have much to share not only with each other, but also with the broader North American church. Both communities have rich histories that beautifully testify to the deep and gracious care of God during times of struggle and joy alike, and have been shaped and marked by these experiences to uniquely reflect the character of Christ in meaningful and influential ways in the contexts in which they have been divinely placed. Highlighted among these gifts is the very shared experienced that brings these two groups together--the immigrant experience that is not only a metaphor for the spiritual life but also provides instruction for the way the church ought to live before finding our ultimate rest at home in the New Heavens and New Earth: crossing borders while not only seeking, but also depending on God while yearning for “home”; imitating Christ while taking risks aware for the need to contextualize ministry in new spaces; learning to live in the midst of various tensions while employing the advantages of perspectives gained for the purposes of God’s Kingdom; demonstrating the Spirit’s inclusivity and hospitality while away from “home” and nurturing the creation of a new spiritual family; and helping each other in tangible, concrete, and material ways during times of trouble and need. These are only a few ways in which immigrant churches and the next generation reflect the providential work of the triune God who works, renews, and builds up the church for glory and honor of God and for the inheritance of His people.

¹¹ Crespo, 85.

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Formation of Lay Leadership

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Abstract “Formation of Lay Leadership” reflects on a set of key issues that both Hispanic and Asian North American churches face in the formation of lay leadership in the faith community.

Sugikawa, Nancy, and Dina González-Piña. 2015. Formation of Lay Leadership. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 83-89. Keywords: formation, hana, leadership, track.

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HISPANIC AND ASIAN NORTH AMERICAN EXPERIENCES

A gathering of Hispanic North American (HNA) and Asian North American (ANA) Christian leaders in May 2013 brought to light several similarities and differences with regard to the identification and development of lay leaders in and beyond church contexts. Stories of economic struggles in their parent countries, the diversity of languages and cultures, and disconnections between generations, brought common understanding and empathy. However, stories of how potential young leaders are identified, encouraged, trained, and empowered for ministry were very different. These similarities and differences led to many shared learnings both of each another’s ethnic lenses as well as the different ways our biblical narrative is lived out culturally.

Many ANA families, especially those from East and Southeast Asia, are second- or third- generation Americans, so their recent history of immigration deeply shapes their personal and vocational values and goals. Like other ethnic groups, many Asians immigrate to North America in search of a better life and future. First-generation ANAs often endure seasons of economic struggle, language challenges, prejudice, and menial jobs in order for their children and grandchildren to enjoy the benefits of North American citizenship and economic stability.

Second-generation ANAs are often told to study hard, attend universities, and obtain white-collar jobs. Education is often seen as the key to economic mobility, so many young adult ANAs grew up working diligently to achieve good grades and higher education.¹ They carry with them the pressure to provide for their parents financially in appreciation of the sacrifices made for them. Status and financial prosperity became a sign of filial piety, the culturally Confucian virtue of duty, obedience, honor, and care of one’s parents.

Over the years, marginalization and the pressure to be a “model minority” often led ANA families to join local Christian churches, forsaking their Buddhist or Confucian backgrounds. The local church became

¹ In *Pulpit & Pew: Asian American Religious Leadership Today* (Durham: Duke Divinity School, 2005), p.9, T. Tseng reports that in 2000, almost half of ANAs earned a bachelor or graduate degree compared to only 30% of non-Hispanic Whites. ANAs as a whole were also reported to have the highest household income of any American racial group.

the center of cultural gatherings and social and professional networking. For older ANAs the local church provided a means of regaining the social status, community respect, and honor they lost by immigrating to a new country.

As for the Hispanic North American community, we can find a diverse immigrant experience that can vary from being a fifth generation born in the United States where our roots to this land can be traced back to when this land was Mexico, to the constant flow of recent immigrants from Mexico, Central, and South America. We find Latinos fully acculturated and assimilated into dominant society as well as finding communities of Latinos who are monolingual Spanish with limited interaction with dominant society. The immigrant community has come north with the hope of working and sending remittance to families left behind as they struggle financially in their native land. First-generation Latinos often work in low-wage, undesirable jobs in order to save as much as possible to pay for their loved ones to also make their way north.

Most Latinos come from a traditional Catholic faith and it is in their North American experience that they encounter an evangelical faith that empowers them to experience Christ in a more personal way. Second- and third-generation Latinos have often made their way out of high crime, low-income housing communities, and through their efforts have found some hope in attaining the American dream. We find the center of the Latino community to be around family. For those who have committed to a church, it is the church members that become the extended family.

AFFIRMING THE CALL TO MINISTRY

Church roles and positions such as that of Pastor, Elder, or Deacon are held in high esteem in the ANA community, often a reflection of the Asian cultural values of hierarchy and patriarchy. However, the call to full-time ministry often comes at a cost. Full-time church work does not usually provide financial income comparable to other professional vocations, such as engineering, medical, or business professions.² The need to raise funds for full-time missionary work is often seen as something shameful, as though one were “begging” from friends and relatives. When ANA lay leaders feel led into full-time ministry, they must overcome feelings of shame or dishonor and wrestle with their sense of duty to provide financially for their parents as part of their “American Dream.”

Therefore, when young ANA leaders merely explore full-time ministry, one of their greatest deterrents is how their parents will respond to their choices. Even faithful ANA Christian parents wrestle with wanting their children to be fully devoted to God and yet fearing that their children will experience the same economic challenges their parents or grandparents endured. These Christian parents cannot help but feel a sense of concern, sadness, and even anger when their adult children disclose their desire to be in campus ministry, the pastorate, or on the mission field. Parents feel their children are “throwing away” their education and potential in order to work in lesser-paying jobs. Some parents will see a decision to move into full-time ministry as “dishonoring” the sacrifices they have made to give their children expensive college and even post-college education.

Much of the Asian community is not Christian, so friends and family will often view seminary and full-time ministry as irresponsible, frivolous, and a waste of the sacrifices a family has made for their children. Christian parents may endure the criticism and pressure of their peers and pass these criticisms on to their children. Therefore, young ANA Christians often pursue the call of full-time ministry without their parents’ full affirmation or blessing.

² In *Honoring the Generations* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2012), 174-5, J. Chung and A. Tizon describe the ANA quest for the American Dream and commitment to a work ethic that promises prosperity, security, comfort, and self-actualization. This goal of financial success is often in direct opposition with the call to full-time ministry.

There seems to be a significant contrast here with the Hispanic community in North America. The HNA Christian community consists primarily of first- and second-generation Americans who often do not have the option of full-time ministry or the resources to attend seminary or even college. It is much more common for young HNA leaders to be called into bi-vocational ministry than into the mission field, campus ministry, or full-time pastorates. As a result, these potential pastors do not face the same kind of financial challenges or expectations from their families.

Unlike the Asian community, the Hispanic community is largely sympathetic to the Christian faith, whether Catholic or Protestant. So when a young HNA adult feels led into bi-vocational ministry, their calling becomes an added blessing to their communities. The parents of these young leaders seem to feel honored by God, as they release their children to do Kingdom work and support the saying, “Nothing is better than ministry.” Those in bi-vocational roles in the church usually continue to work in local businesses or in jobs that develop their communities. Their faith community therefore rallies behind such individuals and families, celebrating with them and expecting God to bless them for their faithfulness.

What can we learn from these two different responses to God’s calling of young leaders into ministry? What would happen if ANA Christians adjusted their expectations for financial success, comfort, and security, learning to bless and develop their cities and neighborhoods as well as their families? What if the Asian faith community developed more bi-vocational rather than full-time ministry opportunities? What would it look like for ANA Christians to truly believe Jesus’ call in Matthew 6:24–34 to “seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well”? On the other hand, what are we to learn from the ANA lay leadership style of calling? The seriousness and the commitment one takes in preparing for leadership roles is a reflection of one’s desire to be responsive to God’s calling by willingly sacrificing one’s own time, money, and financial security.

IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL LEADERS IN THE CHURCH

The ways that potential leaders in the church are identified, encouraged, and supported by the Hispanic faith community also differs from that of the Asian faith community. The potential of a HNA youth or young adult is often first identified by fellow church members, including youth workers or spiritual matrons in the community. These young leaders are then quickly taken to the local pastor for discipleship and mentoring. The pastor takes time to get to know the youth or young adult and brings them along to various activities such as church outreaches and home visitations. The potential leader is given several opportunities to minister alongside their pastor, learning to preach and share the gospel as well. Discipleship and mentoring of young leaders is often done one-on-one with a local pastor or evangelist. Young leaders are often prayed over and commissioned early so that the entire faith community can come alongside them, providing encouragement, training, and counsel for them as well as for their families.

The spiritual gifts of senior pastor Urias Mendoza were identified by his faith community when he was only fifteen years old. He had quickly discerned God’s calling upon his life after his conversion. He was discipled by a local pastor until he felt sure of his commitment to become an evangelist himself. This process of conversion, calling, and conviction often happens quickly with in the HNA church.

Urias says, “The most important part of being a pastor is one’s calling. Calling is more valuable than [formal] education.” This calling must be recognized by the community through a consideration of that person’s spiritual gifts and “anointing” as well as their sense of leading from the Holy Spirit. Self-appointment or one’s personal sense of calling will not be effective without affirmation by the church. In fact, sometimes the church community and leadership recognize an anointing on someone before they do themselves.

Senior pastor Rene Molina agrees that calling should then be supported by training, stating, “Neither calling without preparation or preparation without calling is good. Both are needed.” The development of

one's character and spiritual formation, however, is a process that takes time and attention from spiritual leaders. Urias models his own form of mentoring after the relationship between Moses and Joshua, Paul and Timothy, and between Jesus and His disciples.

Most HNAs in our track gathering agree that the order of ministry starts first with a conversion, then the calling to ministry, then direct involvement in the ministry, and finally formal training to further develop their ministry.

In contrast, in Asian circles, the process of identifying potential leaders is more difficult and less public. Many Asian cultures value humility and conformity in ways that tend to hinder the affirmation of young leaders. ANA parents often place high expectations on their children to achieve good grades and excel at their extracurricular activities. In order to motivate their children, Asian parents often compare the successes of their children with the achievements of others. As a result, many ANA children grow up with feelings of inadequacy or the unshakable feeling that they must perform well in order to obtain affirmation or affection from others.³ Combined with the pressure to provide financially for their parents, many ANA youth and young adults find it difficult to explore ministry opportunities or even to see their own leadership potential. The fear of failure in a shame-based culture leads many potential ANA leaders to resist and even deny their gifts of preaching, teaching, and evangelism.

In ANA churches, when a potential leader is found, it takes some time before that person is publicly identified, both as a protection for them as well as church leadership. Not only do ANA potential leaders fear failure, but the pastors who mentor them are also cautious about affirming someone who has yet to be "tested." The potential leader is rarely disciplined, mentored one-on-one, or given leadership responsibilities until they have shown themselves faithful over one or more years. One-on-one discipleship and mentoring does not happen often, and when it does, it is usually done by lay leaders first.

Because of the lack of encouragement early in life, many potential leaders remain largely unaware of their strengths, spiritual gifts, or *charisma*. Even when they are, young ANA leaders are often unable to gain enough respect to bring needed change into their churches. Instead, these young leaders often learn and grow their spiritual gifts by observing other leaders, reading books, attending conferences, and taking the initiative to seek counsel on their own. Because their parents and families are often unchurched, many do not disclose their consideration of full-time ministry until they are much further along in their decision process.

What would happen if young, potential leaders in the ANA community were identified and celebrated earlier in life? How would God's Kingdom purposes be advanced if ANA leaders were less bound to the shame of failure as they were to the assurance that they are beloved children of God, regardless of their achievements?

THE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEXT GENERATION LEADERS

Although ANA pastors are comfortable in the pulpit, many have never been personally disciple or mentored themselves. As a result, most do not feel adequate to mentor or disciple others one on one. Some are reluctant to have younger leaders "shadow" them, afraid that their shortcomings or failures will lose them respect in their churches. So when young ANA leaders respond to the call to full-time ministry, they are often directed to other lay leaders or seminary for a solid theological education. Although some receive funds from their denomination or church, many take five to ten years to personally pay for and complete their seminary education. As a result, potential ANA leaders are reluctant to take on the time and financial burden of seminary training before having a clear sense of their gifts and call. This keeps

³ Ibid., p.65. In *Honoring the Generations*, S. Kim and M.S. Park describe the way ANA students struggle with self-worth in meeting the high expectations for scholastic success in a shame-based and performance-driven culture.

many faithful believers from even exploring a call to become pastors, teachers, or other types of spiritual leaders.

The path toward pastoring in the local Hispanic church, however, does not usually require seminary training or even a college degree. Instead, the character, faithfulness, and spiritual gifts of young HNA leaders are what qualify them for ministry leadership. In fact, it is often only well-established pastors who have the financial means, available time, and the desire to take time away from ministry to be enrolled in seminary classes. These pastors often leave the daily operations of their churches to the capable hands of their associates for up to 6 months while they take time away to complete seminary training. Taking classes is a way to supplement, deepen, and enlarge a pastor's knowledge and influence.

What if the ANA faith communities did not put as much emphasis on seminary education as they did on real-life mentoring? What if experienced ANA pastors dedicated a greater portion of their week to personally investing in and training up next-generation leaders? What if more members of the ANA faith community dedicated themselves to personally coming alongside and coaching young leaders, humbly risking failure for the sake of growth and encouragement in the next generation? On the other hand, we must also ask how difficult formal education may be for HNA pastors when they are leading congregations and are needed in areas of community leadership. How would having formal education have impacted their ministry had they had these tools earlier in their response to the calling?

WOMEN LEADERS IN THE CHURCH

Gender roles within the ANA church context are similar to those within the Hispanic church context with a few exceptions. Although the emerging generation is moving toward more egalitarian views, both Asian and Hispanic cultures are strongly influenced by hierarchy and patriarchy. In the ANA church context, leadership roles such as pastors and elders are seldom given to women, regardless of their gifts and calling. Some of this is due to theological perspectives, but the lack of women leaders in the church seems to have more to do with social and cultural sensibilities.

The Confucian value of submission to one's husband for Asians often leads ANA women to deny their own leadership gifts. They believe exercising leadership will somehow make them less "desirable" for marriage. Like in most cultures, married women in the Asian culture are still seen as the primary caregivers of the family unit, so ministry responsibilities become secondary to the needs of their families. Therefore, in order to honor the men around them and maintain harmony within their families, ANA women often feel they need to "hold back" from leadership roles to keep from "shaming" their Christian husbands. In the Korean language, for instance, the word *sa-mo-neem* is used to describe a male pastor's wife. However, no such term exists for a female pastor's husband.

Younger female ANA leaders must also contend with values of hierarchy that hinder them from speaking truth or embracing leadership roles involving the oversight of men or those older than them. Without significant affirmation from their Christian "fathers" or "brothers," or even their extended faith community, young women leaders will seldom live out their true leadership potential in the church. Instead, emerging women ANA leaders often look outside their churches for opportunities to grow in leadership and ministry experiences. Capable ANA women find leadership positions more readily accessible in campus ministries, academia, non-profit, and secular jobs. It is often only after they have achieved a significant level of experience, education, or credibility, that their contributions to the church are more readily recognized.

Values of hierarchy and patriarchy and a theological stance that limits women's roles can also be found in the Hispanic church context. Although Hispanic women may be "invited" into leadership discussions, their opinions may not be respected and valued as much as those of the men. The historical and cultural elements of Latin "machismo" form a traditional model of leadership that invites strong personalities,

usually male, in the form of “benevolent dictatorships.” Although Hispanic women hope for change, they acknowledge the deep cultural values present with the saying, “It is what it is. It is not heaven yet.”

At the same time, because HNA women are able to serve as leaders in the church on a volunteer or bi-vocational basis, Hispanic churches are more open to accepting women as leaders and influencers [than ANA churches]. Pastor’s wives and older women who are prayer warriors are given respect because of their spiritual keenness and faithfulness. The HNA church also values the ability of many capable women to encourage, exhort, mobilize, and nurture the community of faith. A shared understanding of the strength and stability Hispanic women provide to their families and community gives HNA women a type of public respect in their churches that is not often found in the Asian context.

It is important to note that the role of HNA women in the church also varies by denomination and the views of both the local leaders and congregants. Denominational leaders in traditionally unsupportive women-in-leadership structures may become open to the idea based the lack of available men to lead. At the same time we are finding more and more Latina women in seminaries preparing to be pastors, theologians, and academic scholars. A network of HNA women has been established through the Hispanic Summer Program to provide support for these non-traditional roles.

How can both the HNA and ANA church more intentionally and practically honor the role of women in leadership in Christ’s church? How will women not just be invited into leadership conversations, but be given the authority and resources to affect change in and through the church? How must the spiritual fathers, husbands, and brothers in our faith communities exemplify Christ’s humility and sacrificially advocate for women to grow in their leadership gifts beyond cultural norms? Until both Hispanic and Asian American men make a conscientious effort to challenge their cultural roles of privilege and serve women as Christ served the church, women in both contexts will continue to struggle to live into the fullness of their ministry calling. It remains to be seen what potential transformation lies in the church that harnesses the strengths and insights of both genders.

Both the HNA and ANA churches can help each other see where cultural values must give way to biblical ones, and where our ethnic lenses must be transformed by the love and truth of the gospel. Our next generation leaders can be better served by a greater commitment to put God’s Kingdom first, above and beyond ethnic, gender, and generational stories.

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Theological Education in Pastoral Formation

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Abstract “Theological Education in Pastoral Formation” identifies key issues that both Hispanic and Asian North American churches face in the theological education and formation of pastors and ministry leaders.

Cha, Peter T., and Oscar García-Johnson. 2015. Theological Education in Pastoral Formation. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 90-96. Keywords: education, formation, hana, pastoral, theological, track.

INTRODUCTION

According to a recent report provided by the Association of Theological Schools, the number of non-white students—which includes Hispanic and Asian North American (HANA) students—enrolled in U.S. and Canadian seminaries has increased 55 percent over the past two decades.¹ Furthermore, the same report indicates that 80 percent of Asian American students and 64 percent of Hispanic students chose to attend evangelical schools. As a growing number of HANA students enroll in predominantly white U.S. evangelical seminaries, how are they being shaped by their seminary learning experiences? What are some key challenges HANA students and faculty members encounter at these schools? What might be different about how Hispanic and Asian North Americans respond to their theological education in these settings? These are some of the questions that shaped our track conversation as we examined the role of theological education in the process of training HANA pastors. All participants in this track had done at least a part of their theological education in North American evangelical seminaries, and all but one currently work at a major U.S. evangelical seminary, either as a faculty member or an administrator.²

I. KEY ISSUES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

In examining the experiences of HANA students and faculty members in predominantly white evangelical seminaries, our group identified the following three key issues as being significant: experiences of displacement, lack of contextualization, and the definition of “successful” ministry.

EXPERIENCES OF DISPLACEMENT

For many HANA seminarians, a pervasive sense of displacement characterizes their seminary experiences in multiple ways. For one, their seminary learning is often disconnected from their church

¹ The Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, “Racial/ethnic students represent largest growth area for theological schools,” <http://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/documents/racial-ethnic-growth.pdf> (accessed October 10, 2014).

² Our track members serve at Talbot Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary, Seattle Pacific University’s School of Theology, and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

communities and experiences. Many HANA students received their calling to vocational ministry while participating in their own ethnic immigrant churches, churches shaped by particular histories, social locations, and faith traditions. For many, their plan is to return to these churches after they complete their theological education. Their desire to serve their own faith communities play a key role in these students' understanding of their "calling" from God and explain why they are going through the costly process of a theological education. However, their seminary courses are designed largely *by and for* those who participate in predominantly white ecclesial communities and carry on an Enlightenment/Western-centric logic, thus creating a profound and unsettling sense of displacement for many HANA students. Many HANA seminarians often wrestle with the question, "Why am I here?"

At the same time, evangelical seminaries, compared to their mainline counterparts, have not yet developed constructive approaches to engage cultural differences, issues of the power and privilege, and institutional racism. The lack of emphases in these areas, in turn, hinders these schools' ability to hear and process HANA students' concerns and perspectives. Even when there are discussions about race and racial reconciliation on these seminary campuses, these conversations are too often narrowly framed around the conflict between blacks and whites, thus displacing HANA members from such conversations. As a result, schools fail to optimize opportunities they have to forge meaningful partnerships with HANA students and faculty members in making constructive changes so that they can be more effective in training all their students for today's diverse and globalized world.

Finally, the absence of organized HANA learning communities on these campuses cause HANA seminarians to feel isolated during their theological education. During recent decades, many mainline seminaries have established "centers" for Asian American or Hispanic Ministries, intentionally providing a space for communal learning and mentoring for their HANA students while developing theological and ministry resources for HANA churches. Most evangelical seminaries thus far have not provided such institutional spaces for communal learning for the growing number of HANA students. Instead, what these students experience on their campuses is a culture of what one educator calls "insistent individualism."³ In such an institutional culture, where meaningful communal practices and values are rarely embraced, HANA students and faculty members often feel displaced, as if they are guests in someone else's house.

THE LACK OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

Intimately related to the issue of displacement is the lack of contextualization that characterizes many evangelical seminaries' approach to theological education. Given the growing enrollment and financial challenges they encounter, most seminaries are compelled to recruit students from all backgrounds, including HANA students. However, these theological institutions are not, on the whole, adequately prepared to equip students from diverse backgrounds for their future ministries. Theological reflections modeled on these campuses are primarily shaped by a set of questions and categories that emerged primarily from European and Anglo North American church contexts, often neglecting those issues and challenges that are significant to "other" churches, including HANA churches. Similarly, ministry courses that are offered often highlight pastoral and congregational ministry practices that might be effective in Anglo churches but may not work as well, or might even be counterproductive, in other settings.

Furthermore, in their seminaries, many HANA students do not have opportunities to reflect upon the history of their own faith communities, how their cultures and Christian faith intersect in their congregational settings, and what might be their particular calling in today's globalized world. Compared to mainline seminaries, evangelical schools have been slow to offer courses that focus on non-Anglo churches' histories, theological reflections, and ministry practices. Perhaps even more critically, evangelical seminaries have hired far fewer HANA faculty members, even though an overwhelming

³ John B. Bennett, *Academic Life: Hospitality, Ethics, and Spirituality* (Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, 2003).

majority of HANA students currently attend these schools. Consequently, many HANA students go through their theological education without mentors who understand their faith communities and the particular issues these congregations face, mentors who can teach and model contextualization.

The added complexity here is that not all HANA students feel called to serve in their ethnic churches; instead, many are preparing to serve in a variety of different cultural contexts. While many aim to return to their ethnic immigrant churches, some plan to serve in pan-ethnic churches (i.e., English-speaking multiethnic Asian American or Hispanic congregations), while others prepare to serve in multiracial or predominantly white churches. In fact, in today's increasingly diverse ecclesial contexts, all seminarians, not just HANA students, need to be equipped to serve in a wider range of cultural contexts. In the past, most seminaries offered at least a course or two in the area of contextualization, primarily seeking to prepare students for overseas missionary work.

As of today, the fact of the matter is that ethnic theologies are still being represented as subaltern theologies within the academic theological establishment of North America. They fall into an adjectival category: Korean-American, pan-Asian, Chinese-American, Hispanic, and so forth. Classical theologies and the like, on the other hand, fall into the substantival category and are referred to simply by totalizing nomenclatures: biblical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, Christian theology, or simply *theology*. Therefore, the naming of different theological discourses is more than appropriate when such names express self-reflection and self-representation. The point of criticism here is that we need the same to happen with Western discourse (i.e., Anglo-European Christian history and not merely Christian history; the same goes for British-German systematic theology, Western spirituality, etc.). In addition, today, seminaries need to think about requiring all their students to take courses on contextualization and, perhaps more importantly, encourage faculty members to intentionally model how theological and ministry contextualization is done in each course.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

The third issue with which HANA students and faculty members wrestle is the image or definition of vocational success that is explicitly and implicitly emphasized in their seminaries. Every organization, including academic institutions, has its own set of heroes, individuals who embody the institution's values and goals. For most evangelical seminaries, the heroes that they lift up before their students often are successful megachurch pastors who are known widely for their preaching and leadership expertise. These pastors are often invited to speak at special gatherings on campus and their books are often used as texts. While there are many non-Anglo pastors who have significant ministries in their own faith communities, these pastors are often overlooked. In such a setting, HANA seminarians, like their peers, are repeatedly exposed to a particular narrative of success, which many eventually internalize, even when the leadership style might not serve well in their own ethnic contexts. Other HANA seminarians, on the other hand, resign to the idea that they cannot be "successful" in their ministries because they cannot be the next Bill Hybels or Tim Keller.

Like their students, HANA faculty members are also under pressure to embrace a particular narrative of success as faculty members. In order to be hired, promoted, and to successfully attain tenure at these institutions, they are strongly encouraged to do certain types of research and publishing, typically those that meet the expectations of predominantly white academic communities, whether they be academic guilds or tenure committees. Consequently, these scholars feel pressured to do their scholarly works to address questions and issues that earn academic approval, even if they have little or no relevance to their own church communities. Many HANA faculty members lament that their activities of research and scholarship pull them even further away from their church communities. Furthermore, due to institutional policies and practices that tend not to affirm deep involvement in their congregations, HANA faculty members feel that they are often going against the current when they are regularly involved in congregational preaching and teaching ministries. Since many HANA faculty members began their

vocational journey in order to serve their churches, these institutionalized definitions of and pathways to success can create significant and ongoing inner conflict and angst.

II. HISPANIC AND ASIAN NORTH AMERICAN SEMINARY EXPERIENCES: EXPLORING POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES

DISPLACEMENT

Historically, both Hispanic and ANA communities have experienced a profound sense of displacement in U.S. society. Perceived as “perpetual foreigners” and “probationary Americans,” members of these two communities have often felt displaced in their own country even when their families had lived in the U.S. for many generations. Sadly, many Hispanic and Asian North American students, as mentioned above, continue to encounter similar experiences of displacement in their own evangelical seminaries, their Christian learning communities. Their shared experiences of being treated as strangers and outsiders in multiple contexts, including at their seminaries, can forge a common bond to bring together Hispanic and Asian North American seminarians and faculty members.

At the same time, due to differences in their histories, their social locations, and how they are perceived by the dominant group, members from these two communities also experience displacement somewhat differently. Hispanic seminarians often feel that they are greeted with a degree of skepticism from the seminary’s academic community because they are viewed as academically handicapped to go through graduate-level theological education. Consequently, Hispanic individuals who choose to attend U.S. seminaries feel the added pressure to prove their ability to perform academically—to work harder to demonstrate that they can be contributing members of the seminary learning community. Some Hispanic individuals, on the other hand, choose not to explore the possibility of pursuing a formal theological education, concluding “there is no place for us here.” This is further complicated by the historical awareness of those Hispanics belonging to communities that never migrated to the United States, as in the case of Chicanos and Puerto Ricans, who in spite of their status and history are treated as outsiders even by newer Anglo-American migrants.

Asian Americans, on the other hand, suffer from other stereotypes that can also marginalize them. There is a widely shared recognition that Asian North Americans come from cultures that prize educational achievement, reinforcing a perception that these students work hard to complete their theological programs at their seminaries. However, there is a stereotype that Asian and Asian North American seminarians simply care about the goal of attaining the highest academic degree, and that they are not interested in education per se. While recognized to be high achievers, Asian North American students, in the end, are also viewed as less-than-optimal learners. Such negative views formed against HANA students, whether it is as “unprepared under-achievers” or as “competitive over-achievers,” can further deepen the feeling of displacement for these seminarians.

THE LACK OF CONTEXTUALIZATION

The monocultural, Euro-centric nature of theological education found in most evangelical seminaries poses a challenge of contextualization to all students, including HANA students. However, our track conversation also highlighted the possible differences in how Hispanic and Asian North American seminarians respond to this issue of contextualization.

Among Hispanic members of the track group, there was a strong consensus that Hispanic theologians, pastors, and seminarians recognize the important role that their culture plays in understanding their beliefs and practicing their faith. One member summarized their widely shared conviction this way: “Our culture carries our faith, and the two cannot be separated.” On the Asian North American side, there

seems to exist a wide range of perspectives on the relationship between faith and culture. On the one hand, most first-generation Asian immigrant churches aim to hold on to both faith and culture, identifying that the task of maintaining ethnic culture and transmitting it to the next generation are important functions of their churches. Many second-generation congregations, on the other hand, react against this orientation, often seeking to “de-ethnicize” their churches. These Asian North American evangelical churches tend to over-spiritualize their understanding of the ethnic identity and ministry of their churches while at the same time uncritically adopting the ministry practices and values of mainstream evangelical churches.

Another important difference is the role ecumenical dialogues play in doing theological reflections in HANA faith communities. According to Russell Jeung’s study of Asian American congregations in the Bay area of California, one of the significant characteristics of these churches is that mainline and evangelical congregations have distinctly different ministry orientations and directions, and that most churches in these two theological camps tend not to dialogue with one another.⁴ His study found that while Asian American mainline congregations emphasize their racialized group identity and their calling to engage in the ministry of justice from their social location, Asian American evangelical congregations tend to focus primarily on personal faith and reaching out to those who are connected through friendship ties and shared cultural interests. To put it differently, Asian North American evangelical pastors and congregations seem to have little or no opportunities to do critical theological reflections that take seriously their multiple contexts of ministry.

Hispanic congregations, on the other hand, given their common history of colonization and evangelization in Latin America and the United States, seem to have identified common loci for their understanding of the ecclesial community. While they too have those congregations that are more evangelical and more liberal in their theological orientations, they are coming to the recognition of the importance of their shared (and longer) history, their common language (i.e., Spanish), their strong shared identity as a “*mestizaje*” (mixed/multiracial) people, and the church’s need to address both the spiritual and social needs of their people. Partly due to their ongoing and collegial dialogue with those who come from different theological heritages, Hispanic evangelicals, compared to their Asian North American counterparts, seem to have a more robust and developed understanding of the relationship between their culture and faith, therefore being more attentive to contextual factors as they do their theological reflections and develop ministry practices.

DEFINITION OF SUCCESS

Growing up in immigrant homes, many of us were constantly encouraged by our parents to pursue the “American Dream” as they repeatedly reminded us that this was the reason they decided to immigrate to the United States. For HANA seminarians who are preparing for vocational ministries, the narrative of the “American Dream” can easily be transformed into the narrative of “successful ministry.”

For many Asian North American seminarians, being successful pastors may mean leaving behind their ethnic faith communities. Starting in the 1990s, Asian North American churches experienced what is often called the “Silent Exodus,” as many frustrated second-generation Asian American church leaders and members left their ethnic immigrant churches to look for more autonomy and freedom in shaping their congregational ministries.⁵ Since then, many Asian North American seminarians have linked their “success-in-ministry” narrative with a version of the acculturation narrative. Most seminarians begin their ministry journey by serving as a part-time youth pastor at their ethnic immigrant churches. However,

⁴ Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004).

⁵ Helen Lee, “Silent Exodus: Can the East Asian Church in America Reverse the Flight of Its Next Generation?” (*Christianity Today*, August 1996, 50–52).

upon graduation, many hope to serve in broader ministry settings, envisioning the move to pan-Asian American and then ultimately to multiracial congregational ministries...and all the while moving to larger churches. In this success narrative, it can be said that one's success can be measured partly by the growing distance between one's ethnic church and oneself.

Similarly, Hispanic seminarians and lay leaders are expected to assimilate or mimic the pattern of success and progress proposed by Anglo Protestant missions. However, given the experience of five centuries of forced Western evangelization, many Hispanics have learned to resist such a pressure and created alternative ways to reconcile their ethnicity and their westernized faith. Many third- and fourth-generation Hispanic pastors continue to serve in their ethnic congregations, engaged in bilingual and bicultural ministries. Similarly, most Hispanic seminary faculty members also continue to participate actively in their ethnic churches. One of the Hispanic members of the track noted that a Hispanic theologian would lack credibility if she were not respected as a preacher in one's own ethnic church. The enduring commitment to and relationship with one's ethnic church, then, continually shapes Hispanic pastors' and theologians' understanding of what a successful ministry is.

III. CONCLUSION

How HANA seminarians experience displacement, the lack of contextualization, and the "success" narrative during their seminary years offer a number of helpful insights to seminary educators and to HANA churches. For those who are serving as administrators and faculty members in evangelical seminaries, it is important to find ways to welcome and embrace students and faculty members from diverse cultural backgrounds, not as "guests," but as fellow members of God's household (Eph. 2:19) so that theological reflections that are done and ministry stories that are told fully reflect the experiences of all God's people. With the racial/ethnic composition of minorities in the general U.S. population projected to grow to majority status by 2040, U.S. evangelical seminaries must start making these critical changes if they are to continue to carry out their mission in an increasingly multiracial and multicultural world. HANA faculty members and students can be invaluable partners in facilitating such changes.

For HANA churches, it is important that they think creatively and collaboratively about the task of providing a more optimal theological education to their future pastoral and lay leaders. What might be a constructive partnership between HANA churches and seminaries look like? Given the current budget and enrollment challenges they face, many seminaries are actively seeking to strengthen their ties with various church communities. With the help of HANA theologians and pastors, seminaries at a minimum might be able to identify and address certain blind spots that exist in their current practices of teaching and learning. Furthermore, recognizing that seminary programs by themselves cannot carry out the task of training future pastors, HANA churches can collaboratively create new spaces for learning and formation for their pastors, encouraging seminary graduates to find mentors and peers with whom they can continue their pastoral formation journey. Perhaps future HANA gatherings will play a strategic role in developing and expanding such spaces of mutual learning and partnership.

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Public Witness and the HANA Community

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Abstract “Public Witness and the HANA Community” explores key issues that both Hispanic and Asian North American churches face as part of public witness as a faith community.

Rah, Soong-Chan, and M. Daniel Carroll Rodas. 2015. Public Witness and the HANA Community. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 97-100. Keywords: hana, public, track, witness.

INTRODUCTION

The Hispanic and Asian North American (HANA) Christian community’s expression of public witness arises from the common experience as lamenting communities on an exodus-like journey. Both communities share a common immigrant narrative. Within this narrative there are significant stories of suffering that are often ignored in light of an American narrative of success and triumphalism. The immigrant church in both the Hispanic and Asian expressions have an opportunity to contribute a lived theological experience to the larger story of Christianity in North America. In particular, the immigrant story acknowledges a multi-layered experience within the North American narrative.

The church is called to bear faithful witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. For a significant portion of North American church history, Christian witness has been limited to an individualistic expression. To bear witness became synonymous with personal evangelism. Public witness, however, should be expressed beyond the individual realm. Public witness engages the public and not just the private world of the individual. Public witness presents a Christian voice and perspective into the world.

The public witness of the church requires recognition of the validity of the voice of the community. In the public sphere, voices are not heard unless they are expressed aloud. But as stated in the previous article on the theology of lament, the stories of the immigrant communities have remained hidden. In particular, the stories of the immigrant generation of both the Hispanic and Asian North American communities have been silenced.

On one level, this silence may reflect the desire of the immigrant generation (or the more popular designation of “first generation”) to remain under the radar and not make waves. First generation immigrants may often view themselves as guests in a foreign land, who should not have a voice in larger society. This silence, however, is to the detriment of authentic Christian public witness.

The first generation has struggled through the trauma of the immigrant experience. The loss of cultural identity, social familiarity, and a sense of security contribute to the social, psychological, and emotional trauma of the immigrant. The immigrant’s world is turned upside down. The familiar social order back home is upended in the United States. Even in dealing with one’s own family, the first generation immigrant experiences social and cultural dis-ease. Second-generation children can be elevated above their parents in North American society. The security of a familiar family dynamic is disrupted by the

elevation of the children above the parents. The first-generation immigrant with limited language skills may depend on the second generation to handle basic communication (with the school, the phone company, the government, etc.), which challenges the existing social order of the family. Migration to the United States often lowers the social standing of the immigrant generation. The immigrant generation experiences multiple challenges to family security in the process of immigration.

The physical act of an immigrant journey and the emotional, spiritual act of crossing over, whether across a vast ocean or a national boundary, parallels the exodus story of Scripture. The exodus experience of the Hispanic and Asian immigrant has proved to be a difficult experience. While acquiring the American dream may present as a noble goal, ultimately, the elusive nature of that dream can leave the immigrant disillusioned after much suffering and trauma. The immigrant community experiences the pain of being outsiders while also being continually taunted and tempted to become insiders. The liminal identity of the immigrant reflects their marginalization. As a community that will have a great deal of difficulty in being accepted as truly American, while at the same time, being lured to live the glorified lifestyle of the American, the immigrant suffers a marginalized, liminal existence.

The suffering of the immigrant generation does not have to be wasted. In a Christianity that honors the power of lament and the power of suffering in forming an authentic community, the voices of suffering are essential. Unfortunately, the narrative of suffering, which can serve as an important aspect of the public witness of the church, has been silenced in lieu of a triumphalistic narrative.

Even as the first generation has been silent, the second generation may have a greater opportunity to tell the story that the first generation has not been able to express. The second generation will often possess a more stable standing in society with a greater degree of assimilation. The assertion of the voice of the second generation could potentially serve as a prophetic public witness, and could reveal the voice of the first generation. The second generation could learn these stories of suffering and struggle beyond merely the outer expressions of cultures such as foods and holiday customs. The voice of the second generation, therefore, should not reflect the voice of the dominant culture or be co-opted by the expectations of majority culture.

For example, for the Asian American community, the exploitation of the model minority myth by the dominant culture has been detrimental to the Asian American public witness. The prophetic witness of the Asian American Christian community is stifled when that voice is seen as simply mirroring and affirming the values of the dominant culture. By reclaiming the stories of the first generation, the second generation can speak the prophetic word of lament and suffering into the North American context. In other words, the second generation should not so easily shirk the mantle of otherness. Otherness may actually serve as a prophetic witness to the dominant powers that so alluringly speak of accommodation and assimilation. A reminder from the first-generation immigrant narrative may prevent that temptation.

The immigrant has the burden of being portrayed as the other. The immigrant is often racialized as the foreigner and the stranger that must appease the dominant culture in order to find acceptance. The immigrant story can be co-opted by the dominant culture to further the mediating narratives of the systems and structures that work to perpetuate the American dream.

While both the Hispanic and Asian American communities are immigrant communities, the two communities have been perceived as having a differing engagement with the American dream. The perceived exclusion of one community from the American dream and the embrace of the other community of the American dream can present as a point of conflict and divergence between the two communities. However, in the narrative of suffering endemic to immigration, common ground can be found. In our mutually experienced racialized identity, solidarity can be found. Additionally, both communities hold family systems and structures in high esteem. The advocacy of the family can be an expression of public witness.

What would it mean, therefore, for both immigrant Christian communities to present a unified public voice? As both communities have been prevented from speaking as a prophetic voice, how could a common unified voice that emerges from the lament of marginalization present a prophetic public witness? As both communities have experienced suffering and the requisite response to suffering is lament, the outcry of lament from these marginalized communities could serve as the necessary prayer for an effective public witness.

WHY SHOULD WE ENGAGE IN PUBLIC WITNESS?

The Scriptures are a living text that informs all aspects of our lives, including public witness. The holistic narrative evident in the Scriptures still speaks to our experience today, even if the social-historical context differs in many ways. In pursuing a biblical, theological vision for public witness, we look toward the book of Exodus as an important scriptural touchpoint and as a text that reveals the character of God. The Exodus story exemplifies God's concrete revelation and the engagement of God with His people. This connects to the idea of public witness against the notion of simply a personalized and privatized faith. Importantly, the Exodus grounds the act of God's self-naming. We cannot know God, therefore, apart from this concrete public expression of God's person in His emotions, commitments, and action to His leader(s); His people; and the broader context. Exodus, therefore, offers an example of a holistic narrative. This narrative has social, political, economic, and religious dimensions, within the people of God and in the broader context.

The book of Exodus also calls us to consider the role of memory in public witness. Exodus reminds us not to forget the foundational history of suffering for the people of God. In ancient Israel this memory was nurtured through the retelling of the Exodus story in the feasts and also as the basis for an ethical life toward the vulnerable. Important questions arise as to how communities nurture memories. What are the mechanisms that have been put in place to achieve this? For example, in the church, we see the establishment of the Lord's Supper to remember that the body of Christ was broken for us and that the blood of Christ was shed for us. That remembrance spurs us to persevere in the life of faith. Can we do public witness without a clear memory of our experience and of God's stepping into that experience?

Why do certain parts of our communities not want to remember suffering? They see suffering as an event in the past that we have moved beyond. Immigrants came into this new land to leave their past behind—maybe they do not want to remember for a reason. Yet, would the loss of memory negatively impact the concept of public witness and the understanding of God? For example, in many Hispanic churches, the stories of the crossing of the border are rarely preached and reflected on biblically/theologically. Though the church will pray for those in deportation proceedings or for protection so that their members can live life without the fear of ICE or the police, the importance of memory is often not taken into account. Past memories do not interact with present reality.

A contributing factor to not wanting to remember may be that the memories are too painful and humiliating. This is the trauma of memory. There is also the possibility of distorted memory, as when the Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt, forgetting what their life had been like. Appropriate memory, therefore, is important for historical perspective, identity, and a better sense of life with God. The challenge then lies, in part, in creating space for memory and mechanisms of memory. We see this in the Old Testament communal feasts and in the familial Sabbath remembrances. Memory is crucial in Deuteronomy 6:4–9 to imparting identity and faith to the next generations. Indeed, memory is a key theme in Deuteronomy. In the absence of memory and if we forget the warnings of the law, it will lead to the abuse of the new outsiders. The collective national amnesia of the negative experiences of earlier generations of immigrants, have now turned against today's immigrants. Some harsh critics of immigrants are former immigrants who now have legal status.

HOW CAN WE ENGAGE IN PUBLIC WITNESS?

The public witness of the Hispanic and Asian North American can take many forms. With the necessity of lament and the reality of the exodus journey at the forefront of the immigrant experience, public witness becomes the out-loud expression of a people who have suffered and experienced much. The power of the immigrant story is that out of suffering and struggle, a strong voice may emerge that presents a prophetic challenge to dysfunctional narratives expressed in the American narrative. Both communities, therefore, should continue to embody a public witness as well as proclaiming the immigrant narrative that demonstrates a public witness.

The stories of the Hispanic and Asian American communities must be heard. We need to know, for instance, that Hispanic American Christians have launched education initiatives in a major urban center to provide higher educational opportunities for a marginalized community. We need to tell of how Hispanic American scholars, activists, pastors, and leaders have advocated for immigration reform in the public sphere, not only benefitting the Latino/a community but the Asian American community (which counts many undocumented individuals in their number) as well as American society as a whole. A predominantly East Asian American local church seeks to engage their neighborhood, searching for partnerships with the Latino community to serve the neighborhood together, and the public witness of the church is shared. A local church in an inner city neighborhood has both second-generation Hispanic Americans and Southeast Asian Americans growing and learning together, presenting a positive public witness as a unified and reconciled community. A Latina campus minister dedicates her time mentoring Asian American students and staff and extends hospitality and welcome from the Latino community to the transplanted Asian Americans. These stories and more tell of how the public witness of the church continues to arise from the Hispanic and Asian North American community. May this witness be received and the voices of this community heard.

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Migration and Global Mission

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Abstract “Migration and Global Missions” reflects on key issues that both Hispanic and Asian North American churches face in response to migration and global missions.

Yeh, Allen. 2015. Migration and Global Mission. *Common Ground Journal*. [v12 n1 Spring]. ISSN: 15479129. www.commongroundjournal.org. EDCOT. Form: eJournal. Pages: 101-106. Keywords: hana, migration, mission, track.

INTRODUCTION

Among the six meta-categories of racial/ethnic groups as delineated in the U.S. Census (Black, White, Asian, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Hispanic),¹ only two have major migration movements currently: Asians and Hispanics. Euro-Americans have largely forgotten their migration story. African Americans in large part tell the story of their forced migration. Native Americans have been here all along. However, the story of Hispanic and Asian North Americans (HANA) is a story of migration: Hispanics and Asian North Americans are the two groups that cannot tell our story without migration.

Migration, of course, has much to do with missions because both involve movements of peoples and crossing cultures. Some important questions arise, then, with regard to diaspora peoples in mission: 1) In what ways should today’s migration/immigration patterns inform how we should think about current and future global missions? 2) What might be God’s specific calling for our churches in terms of participating in His global mission? 3) What new missiological strategies/practices are emerging from our immigrant churches? Are there any lessons we can learn from one another? Are there any opportunities for collaborative partnership in this area? 4) As growing immigrant churches in the United States, what role can we play in helping the North American church develop a more effective missions partnership with the growing non-Western churches around the world?

I. KEY ISSUES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Theologically, migration—as opposed to settledness—should be the Christian reality. On the literal level, almost every hero from the Bible has some sort of migration experience. On a spiritual level, the journey to the Promised Land is not just an Old Testament theme but a New Testament one as well (e.g., Hebrews 11). The reality of the Christian is one of being a sojourner. We are aliens and strangers in this world, and our true home is in Heaven as we look forward to The Day (Heb. 10:25). In this sense, HANA people, with a cross-cultural lack of rootedness, perhaps have a better window into the Christian life than people who do not experience this sense of liminality. The danger, however, is the temptation to buy into

* At the June 2013 HANA consultation, Jeanette Yep and Juan Martínez functioned as the track leaders who co-facilitated this track conversation on Migration and Global Mission. Allen Yeh, a member of this track conversation, took on the role of the writing this article for the track.

¹ In the 2010 Census, the question “of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin” was listed separately from the other five racial categories (because of the conclusion that Hispanic is not a race). For the purpose of this report, I will consider it a sixth category, even while acknowledging one can be Hispanic and one of the other five at the same time. “About Race,” United States Census Bureau, last accessed October 23, 2014, <http://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>.

the “American Dream” and to find our treasure here on earth. There are three key issues for which migration has major implications: aging, economics, and mission.

AGING AND ECONOMICS

These are two separate issues, but I will consider them together because they have much synergy with each other. In Acts 2, the people at Pentecost are mainly retirees. The elderly had moved back to Jerusalem to die and be buried there, and inadvertently became the ones who started the Church and were there to experience the first move of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps there needs to be a rethink about who are the ones who drive change: is it always young people? In our present world, though aging is a major issue (especially in places like Japan and China where there aren't enough young people to support the older generation), life expectancy is increased and therefore we have more active retirees, so they can be regarded not merely as passive receivers.

Though the older generation may be doing better than expected, the younger generation is doing worse. Despite the youth percentage in this world shrinking, there is a growing rate of youth unemployment in this world. Therefore economics are a major driving force behind migration, especially as young people move elsewhere to find jobs. One manifestation of this is a “brain drain” where the best and brightest leave their (developing) home countries to go to developed nations. On the other hand, developed nations need people who are willing to do menial labor too—hence we find HANA people in the highest strata of society and wealth as well as the lowest. This means, however, that the divide between rich and poor becomes even greater, especially since rich countries have fewer children and poorer countries have more children. Immigrants often are viewed as self-serving; but as places like Europe are experiencing a mass exodus of people due to unemployment (the most obvious example being Greece), could it be conceivable that there is a future where nations are competing for immigrants as a commodity? The birth replacement rate of white Americans has dropped since the 1970s. It is actually immigrants and ethnic minorities that have kept the United States from facing a demographic population crisis. The United States receives the largest absolute numbers of international migrants in the world.² But laws are increasing in strictness even as immigration increases around the world, hampering some of the freedom of migration.

The trend is not just movement from poor countries to rich countries, but from rural to urban. It is worth noting that most of the world's megacities are not actually in the United States.³ HANA migrants want to move to any place which offers economic opportunity,⁴ therefore the BRIC and CIVETS countries are becoming increasingly appealing as well.⁵

GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY AND MISSION

As migratory peoples, HANA populations can be alternatively either the agents or targets of mission. What advantages and disadvantages do diaspora peoples have in being the missionaries themselves? How do missionaries reach peoples “on the move”?

² In terms of percentage, however, it is the Middle East which has the greatest international migrant population growth.

³ New York and Los Angeles are the only two Western cities that even make it into the list of the top 20 cities in the world, in terms of population.

⁴ Five hundred thousand American citizens leave the United States every year for various reasons (more employment openings abroad, marriage, better retirement plans, and socialized health care elsewhere), so the United States certainly does not have the monopoly on economic opportunities.

⁵ Economists coined these terms in 2001 and 2009, respectively, to identify the world's newest fastest-growing economies. They stand for: Brazil, Russia, India, China; and Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa.

Regarding the first question, multicultural people (which also includes Third Culture Kids and missionary kids) are already polycentric and thus are instinctively already better equipped for mission because they know how to “shift” between worlds. Bilingual people are better at learning a third language than monolingual people are at learning a second language, because they understand that language is not just about words, it’s about worldview. The knowledge of and engagement with other major world religions is a boon as well. HANA migrants often understand Islam or Buddhism in a way that the average American may not. HANA migrants are often also deeply religious themselves, and usually Christian. One implication of this pertains to morality, and the other to religiosity. Religious people are often more morally conservative, meaning that HANA migration may have ethical implications for North American society as a whole. And because white people tend to be agnostic/atheist, a strong HANA presence turns back the tide of secularism.⁶ This may be especially amazing if universities,⁷ long the bastion of humanism, become more religious over time. All these descriptors cohere with Philip Jenkins’s observation in *The Next Christendom* that “On present evidence, a Southernized Christian future should be distinctly conservative”⁸ and with Lamin Sanneh’s assertion that “Christianity has become *ambicultural* as the faith of multiple language users straddling national and social boundaries.”⁹

The second question poses some challenges in that it is more difficult to target a diaspora people if they are not concentrated only in their country of origin. However, this can prove to be an advantage because there is no need to move overseas to find HANA people; mission is in our own backyard. Diaspora peoples are not as diffuse as one might imagine. As mentioned in the previous section, HANA migrants tend to be drawn to major urban centers and in fact even cluster together within certain city neighborhoods, so even if they are small in number they are easy to find. HANA are also a field ripe for harvest. Increasingly, the largest churches in America are non-white and Pentecostal/independent. Ethnic minority Christianity is becoming non-white at a faster rate than even the U.S. population. To take one example, 25% of universities are non-white, but 35% of seminaries are already non-white. As we look into the future, this begs a whole slew of questions: What will happen when the United States has a potential divide between a white secular society and a non-white Christian society? Will this further politicize Christianity as a gatekeeper of public morality rather than being about the Gospel?¹⁰ Is a good use of our resources to channel them into privatization of faith issues such as abortion and gay marriage, or does doing so derail us from our main goals? What sorts of funding models are advantageous—how much does the tax structure incentivize faith-based organizations? Would a HANA Christianity result in a rise in Christianity but a decline in self-identified evangelicals?

II. HISPANIC AND ASIAN NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATION EXPERIENCES: EXPLORING POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES

Despite the fact that migration is so singular to the HANA experience, Hispanics and ANAs experience this phenomenon in different ways, not only with regard to the three issues outlined above, but also with the added dimension of transnationalism.

⁶ Soong-Chan Rah, *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009). Rah points out the fallacy of thinking that New England is the most secular place in America. Perhaps this is true among the white churches which are largely empty, but look down the back alleyways and you’ll find Haitian and Brazilian and Korean and Chinese churches bursting at the seams.

⁷ The largest freshman population of white students in America was in 2006, but the percentage continues to drop every year.

⁸ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.

⁹ Sanneh, Lamin, and Joel Carpenter, eds., *The Changing Face of Christianity: Africa, the West, and the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 214.

¹⁰ We have already seen this struggle in the Anglican/Episcopal Church where it has become a struggle over homosexuality, with the Africans taking the conservative stance and the Europeans and Americans taking the liberal stance.

AGING AND ECONOMICS

Asians, like whites, are an aging population, but this mostly has to do with socio-economic reasons. It is a near-universal trend that richer, developed nations have fewer children, and poorer, developing nations tend to have more children. As Asians' (both in Asia and in North America) average income soars, the number of children correspondingly declines. Hispanics, on the other hand, are getting younger in their average age.

Education could be a factor as well. Education tends to be a high priority for most ANAs whereas it is not necessarily one of the top priorities for Hispanics. This may have to do with the immigration mentality: many ANAs come to America to stay for good, while many Hispanics see themselves as temporary residents who are here to make money to send home. There is more of a desire to reunite with their family than to linger here, so there is less long-term investment in the United States.

GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY AND MISSION

Hispanics and ANAs have a high percentage of Christians and their churches are very large. There is a marked difference, however: the former is mostly either Catholic or Pentecostal, and the latter is mostly Protestant evangelical. Therefore the two groups may not actually agree theologically or have ecumenical partnerships, despite having so many similarities in other spheres.

With regard to being targets of mission: Hispanics are fairly monoreligious, so the biggest issue to address is nominalism; whereas Asians are very multireligious, and an understanding of major world religions is necessary to engage them. Hispanics may not actually have that much interaction with other faiths if they grew up in mostly all-Hispanic contexts. Asians, on the other hand, cannot escape the presence of a pluralism of religions. This may affect the missional strategies and effectiveness of each group.

TRANSNATIONALISM

For HANA migrants, it is culture and ethnicity that tends to be more of a unifier than nationality. However, this is expressed in different ways amongst Hispanics and ANAs.

Hispanics tend to unify around language and not ethnicity. As Hispanics can be racially white, black, brown, Asian, or almost anything else, it is language that binds them. Speaking Spanish makes one Hispanic, whether they are from Spain or the Caribbean or South America.

ANAs usually unify around ethnicity and not culture. Asian languages—even dialects of the same language!—are often mutually unintelligible. Yet the bond that exists between, say, Korean and Chinese, is one of race and physiological similarities. Or, the people within the same ethnicity who are from different countries will also find a bond—a Japanese person from Brazil will still feel a kinship with a Japanese person from Japan, even if the former cannot speak a word of Japanese.

III. CONCLUSION

There are three main conclusions that our track group gathered from our discussions. They are: Changing Contexts, Resources, and Strategies.

CHANGING CONTEXTS

An inevitability of being migratory people is that HANA demographics are continually shifting. What may be true today is not necessarily true tomorrow. An awareness of the most current trends is a necessity.

Keeping up with demographic shifts is difficult but if we fail to keep “up to speed” we may lose the missiological advantage we have by leveraging our diaspora nature. Some HANA groups move and keep moving; some move and settle; and still others are newly arrived. Migration is never static.

Even vocabulary continues to change. Our group decided that “migration” is the preferred word to “immigration” because the latter implies that the person is the object of the host society, whereas the former is someone who is the subject of the process. There is autonomy and self-empowerment found in the word “migration,” and it is a more missiological word as well.

There are many other factors which can affect migration as well, such as climate change and the growth of Islam. How do we respond carefully and wisely to such issues of the day, instead of just viscerally?

Up until now, the United States has been the richest and most Christian nation on earth. What happens, in the future, when we lose our primacy in one or the other? How will HANA communities take leadership in new and fresh ways? If we know that we will not be population minorities in the next thirty years (and especially in the church), how do we handle this transfer of power in the wisest way?

RESOURCES

Diaspora can imply the harnessing of horizontal resources of people across the globe, but we also have vertical resources that are unique to migratory people such as retirees. These are unique channels that we can avail ourselves of in creative ways. In the horizontal sense is the constant fresh flow of migrants who can provide not only more manpower but also new vision. There is also transnationalism: HANA people have a built-in network of people across the globe who can be our eyes and ears, as well as our hands and brains. In the vertical sense, with the importance of families in HANA cultures, elders are venerated and held in high honor in a way that is missing in white American culture. Retirees are a largely untapped resource.

Two other resources that have great potential are storytelling and technology. One is an ancient art and one is modern. Storytelling has stood the test of time because it is endemic to how we are wired—it has far more effectiveness than mere propositional truth. Technology, however, has the ability to either undo storytelling or complement it. Ironically, video and audio are actually causing us to become a less literate society by taking us away from the written word. However, it also provides alternative media through which to tell the old, old story, and can thus be very effective (e.g., the Jesus film).

STRATEGIES

There is preparation for the task as well as engagement in the task itself. Running through all of this are the threads of economic shifts, age shifts, and engagement of world religions and global Christianity. These are external foci. However, there also need to be internal foci, namely collaboration. HANA people need to learn from each other in the areas where they are deficient. Hispanics could be more effective in mission if they knew more about major world religions. This is not just a Hispanic problem; most Americans cannot articulate another world religion. But the understanding must go beyond even the textbook definition; many people we will encounter don't often follow the textbook definition in reality. Someone may claim they are Muslim but they may be just culturally so. ANAs could be more effective in mission if they knew more about Catholicism (the largest form of Christianity in the world) and Pentecostalism (the fastest-growing form of Christianity around the world).

This track has the most obvious missiological framing and therein lies its primary importance. The other five tracks do not naturally have missiology in it. We need to think in terms of Reverse Mission and other ways we can turn traditional power structures on their head. Mission is an issue of power, but what kind of power it is makes all the difference. Mission from migration and the underside of history is perhaps a more biblical model: it allows for a reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8) instead of on the

power of Christendom or money, which is how white Western Christians have done mission for most of their history.

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The *Common Ground Journal* (CGJ) is a resource for Christian leaders seeking to understand and faithfully live out their calling to serve God in the world as catalysts for growth in their ministries and communities. These leaders continually ask, “What does it mean to be a sign of the Kingdom of God in the world today?”

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Common Ground Journal
ISSN: 1547-9129
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