NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

LISTENING TO STRANGERS:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO HEARING
NAZARENE LATINX IMMIGRANT PASTORS IN THE US HEARTLAND

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AN ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH TO HEARING
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Thousands of Spanish-speaking immigrants have moved into the rural towns of the U.S. Heartland, eschewing the metropolitan Latinx communities of West and East Coasts to settle in the central farming regions. Because of language and cultural barriers, these Spanish-speaking persons find themselves as outsiders, even after several years here. While this is true in the communities where they live, it is more troubling that it is true in the church. Latinx immigrant pastors struggle to be included. They need mentorship and resources. This project seeks to sensitize the Church of the Nazarene to the experiences of the Latinx pastors in this region by presenting both historical, contextual and qualitative data. Analyzing these, several themes emerged and included finding a mutual distrust that was created by centuries of propaganda by both sides. Ethnographic interviews and grounded theory analysis revealed that these pastors feel isolated, rejected, overwhelmed and disconnected.

Chapter One

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction: A Personal Journey

Every day I talk with Latinx adult students and applicants who come to study at my university. I have been the Bachelor degree program director at Nazarene Bible College for almost ten years, and I work with Spanish-speaking students who are seeking a Pastoral Ministries degree in Spanish. Our conversations usually center around the students' call to the ministry and their desire to prepare themselves for ministry. These Spanish-speaking men and women tell me that they have been called by God to be pastors and Christian ministry leaders and that they want to pursue a college degree in pastoral ministry – which my university offers. Very often they speak of their inability to find the ministerial preparation that they desired near

them. The two primary reasons that they sought the degrees that my university offered were, first, they needed it in their primary language, Spanish, and second, they needed it online, through the Internet, so that they could be trained and equipped right where they lived, worked and ministered. This was essential because most of these students were married, had children and were already in the midst of their vocational careers, and many of these students were already pastoring congregations.

These conversations pushed me to find out more about them, their living conditions and the resources available to them where they lived. The *first* thing I noticed was that most of them did *not* live in the areas in the United States where most Latinos live, either in large metropolitan areas like Los Angeles, New York City or Chicago, or in areas where there was a large Latinx presence like California, Texas or Florida. Quite a large number of the students were living in the central rural and farm region of the United States. This is an area known as the US Heartland which, broadly speaking, is the farmlands of the Great Plains and the Midwest. The *second* characteristic that was evident was the fact that most of them lived in areas where they were a small percentage of the local population. That is to say, their presence was scarcely noticed and their needs were barely recognized in the communities where they lived. The *third* aspect that was apparent was that there was a gap of understanding between the host community and the Latinos, most likely caused by language and cultural differences. This gap was evidence that the immigrants were having significant difficulty in their acculturalization and assimilation into the American society.

On one side, the Latinx immigrants, like all humans, had a God-given, universal desire to be recognized, included, and allowed to fully participate in the life of a new community. On the other side, most Americans living in the US Heartland would say that they generally welcomed

those who were strangers to their area, and they sincerely hoped that they soon become integrated into the community. However, there were few ethnic Hispanic or immigrant families in the rural areas here until the last half of the twentieth century. Then, hundreds of thousands of Spanish-speaking immigrants moved into the rural towns throughout the US Heartland. They eschewed the metropolitan Latinx communities of West and East Coasts to settle in the central farming regions. The problem was that assimilation into the community was not quick and easy because of language and cultural barriers. These Spanish-speaking persons were still considered as outsiders. Some felt this way even after decades of being here. While this awkwardness or disconnection was unfortunately true in the communities where they lived, it was more troubling that the immigrants felt this same tension within the church community. Spanish-speaking pastors in particular struggled to find inclusion, understanding, mentorship and resources.

Goals of This Dissertation

It is the purpose of this dissertation to examine the prevailing situation of Spanish-speaking pastors of Nazarene Latinx congregations in the smaller to mid-sized communities in the US Heartland. This project seeks to reveal to the Church of the Nazarene some of the experiences of their own Latinx pastors from this particular region. To do this, it is essential to investigate the social, historical and cultural environment in which they arrived. It is necessary to discover where they migrated, and what they found there. In addition to reviewing the published research about the general Latinx population in the US Heartland, is imperative to do qualitative research to hear the experiences of this particular group. Through these stories given through this research, people can begin to glimpse into their lives, into their living situations, and into the things that are challenges for them. All of this would be for the purpose of understanding what

they are going through, to then be able to help them in their ministry. This research will be a tool that could be used later on to help the Church understand both the challenges of these pastors in their settings and the God-given strengths and gifts that they themselves offer the Church.

Audience of This Dissertation

It is the intention of this dissertation to barely scratch the surface of a vast undertaking that should have been done decades ago: to try to understand the experience of Hispanics who live in the United States. I am not a Hispanic. I, and I suspect many other people like me in the Church, need to learn from them about how they see themselves, what are their similarities and differences, how were they treated in the past, and how have they been treated lately. Most of the authors that I have read for this project are US Hispanics themselves, and they share their own research and experiences, so they are excellent sources.

In my case, after reading thousands of pages from some very interesting books, I was shocked and appalled by what I found. None of my thirty years of working and ministering in Spanish had really informed me of the particular history of the Hispanics in the US. I had spent years living in Spain, Argentina and Chile, knowing, working and serving with hundreds of Hispanics, but they were living as citizens in their own countries, and I was the permanent resident alien. Living here in the United States now, I realize that my Latinx brothers and sisters have been far too polite to tell me about the working conditions and prejudices they have faced every day. During this research, I received a phone call from a cherished Latinx colleague, and I, quite disturbed by my readings, directly questioned him about his own experience as a Latinx naturalized citizen living here in the United States for decades. My friend quietly but emotionally confirmed the experiences mentioned in these brief pages of investigation. This was not something that happened hundreds of years ago in another land. It is here, and it happens now.

This was a confirmation that the American Church, like me, needed to be sensitized to the situation of our Latinx brothers and sisters.

The Significance of *Sensitizing* the Church

I had the privilege of growing up in Pasadena, a South Texas town outside of Houston, where many of my classmates were Hispanics. I did not realize that they were any different from me because I never heard them speak Spanish nor did they talk with an accent. At the very end of Walnut Lane, the short two-block residential street on which I lived with my family, there stood two, tall radio towers. They watched over my neighborhood for the entire eighteen years that I was there. Every day, radio shows of music, news and sports were broadcast from those towers, reaching the homes of over 100,000 people in that town. The radio station was well-respected and popular there. Yet, its broadcasts were entirely in Spanish. And, in all my years growing up there, I never learned Spanish, so I never learned of the US Latinx experience.

Overview of the Dissertation

Chapter One is a brief introduction in which I have explained the project, its goal, its audience, and the significance of the research, and I have given an overview. In Chapter Two, I will look at Biblical considerations from the Old and New Testament to understand about the treatment of the people who immigrate and attempt to join in the culture and ministry of the American Church. Suffice to say, in Chapter Two, it would be impossible to ignore Jesus' words in Matthew 25, "I was a stranger and you welcomed Me… I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me."

The immigrant pastors' difficulties have been blamed on their lack of English language or on cultural differences, both of which are factors in their adjustment and assimilation into

American society. However, there have been repeated indications of much deeper issues at play. I determined to research the literature of the last twenty years and to ask questions of those people who have experienced this personally. These answers would illuminate the true issues and sensitize the Church to them so that we could all work together better as an inclusive Church family. I am not "my brother's keeper," but the Latinx immigrants are certainly my brothers and sisters, and not "strangers, foreigners or aliens," nor merely my neighbors. To research deeper meant exploring current studies about their situation. In Chapter Three, I will look at specifics and examples of the US Heartland situation, and general aspects behind their experience in that region. I will examine who they are and what they face.

It has also become apparent that the reception of the Latinx immigrants followed more historical attitudes than simply following the words of politicians in the current political climate. In Chapter Four, I will outline how centuries of historical antagonism between England and Spain had a significant contribution to the situation in the United States, and in particular, how it influenced the American attitudes towards Latinx immigrants.

Present-day demographics, sociological studies and historical background research could only inform from the outside. To get deeper, though, I felt it imperative to hear the words of the immigrants themselves. In Chapters Five and Six, I will present methodology and findings for ethnographic interviews with people who live in the Heartland and who know well the experience of the US Latinx immigrant pastors in this region. In Chapter Seven, I will bring the themes from the interviews together with the themes from the literature and history, so that I am able to explain the implications of these together. I will offer suggestions to address the situation.

Conclusion

The geography of "nearly 1.1 million square miles—roughly one-third of the national landmass" of the nineteen states of the US Heartland are not the problem. The presence of many Latinx immigrant pastors and congregations throughout the Heartland is not the problem. They are not the problem. The American Church in the Heartland does not see nor welcome the Spanish-speaking pastors. The Nazarene Latinx pastors are struggling to be included and to offer their gifts to the Church, and the problem is that the Anglo Church is not interested. The struggle is difficult, frustrating, and is happening in every corner of the region. The problem is not simple, nor are the reasons behind it.

Chapter Two

BIBLICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

My dad and mom had a great love for the Bible, which was passed on to me. I first was a believer in Jesus Christ, as a child. Then, as a teenager, I was asked to teach a Sunday School class. I taught Sunday School classes on and off through my college years and young adulthood and one day was asked to pastor a small congregation. God had been calling me to the ministry longer than I realized. Before I was a Sunday School teacher, pastor, missionary, seminary teacher or college program director and faculty member, I had the conviction that God was always talking to His people through the Bible. If there was some major human issue that needed to be discussed, it would be found in the Bible. If a subject was mentioned only a few times and only in a particular context, it certainly would be interesting to study and regard. If a subject was introduced many times in many contexts and in both the Old and the New Testament, this would

be something very worthy to investigate and understand. This chapter will be focused on what the Bible says about the immigrant and on how the people of God should respond to the immigrant. According to Dr. Jerry Porter, the most used Biblical words concerning strangers and foreigners point to the word we use as immigrant.

The word “immigrant” does not occur in the New American Standard Bible (2020), nor in the New International Version, the English Standard Version, the New Revised Standard Version, the New King James Version, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, the International Standard Bible, the American Standard Version or the New Living Translation. The words are: “stranger,” “foreigner,” “alien,” “sojourner,” “foreign resident,” and “outsider.” In most of these cases, the words used are attempting to describe someone who has arrived in the area now known as Israel having come from somewhere else. It is important to point out that the significance to the research here will be whether the term used affected the way that the newcomer was treated by the people of God. For example, a person who was settling in the country, establishing a vocational career, becoming an active participant in the community life, and embracing the worship of God and following His commandments, would be viewed entirely different than a tourist or a trade merchant. In modern usage, this would be a “resident alien.” Likewise, it is important for the purposes of this study to consider that an immigrant could have arrived from their former land as a refugee, leaving their former life and depending on the goodwill of the people of the new country for protection. This implies that they were looking for the opportunity to provide for their own needs, economical, physical and social. The differences in the Biblical words will demonstrate the differences of treatment by the hosts, including special treatment of the stranger commanded by God.

In the Old Testament, there are three Hebrew words that were used to describe a person who could be considered an immigrant. In the New Testament, there are two principal Greek words used which refer to the foreigner-alien-stranger. There are two other Greek words which are only used one time each. Using all four Greek words, the word picture of a foreigner, alien or stranger occurs only twenty-three times.

Old Testament Words and Consideration of Foreigners

According to Hans-Georg Wuench, the three Hebrew words that are most often used to describe a person whom we might call an "immigrant" are *zar* (זר), *nochri* (נכרי) and *ger* (גר).

The Hebrew Word zar (זר)

The Hebrew word *zar* (זר) occurs seventy-seven times in the Old Testament, and is a general term for "stranger." This word is general in nature, without any further hint of negative or positive meaning indicated. Wuench says, "It is often used for peoples who are relatively accepted where they are, although they bear the mark of not really belonging to the place where they live. Therefore, the aspect of distance is also prominent in the noun." An example of the singular form of *zar* (זר) is in Proverbs 11:15. "One who is a guarantor for a *stranger* will certainly suffer for it." This exact thought is repeated in three other verses (6:1; 20:16; 27:13). In this example, it is not implied that the borrower is foreign, only that the borrower is not known personally by the guarantor/lender. On the other hand, sometimes this word is used to express that the people have come from distant lands, or, more specifically, that they are not from the

area where they actually live. There is a sense of a person's being where they were not normally or being where they were not even supposed to be. There are examples where an Israelite layman is found among the priests. He was in places where he did not belong (Leviticus 22:10, 12, 13; Numbers 1:51; 3:10, 38). The word here, too, is *zar* (זר).

The Hebrew Word nochri (נכרי)

The Hebrew word *nochri* (נכרי) occurs forty-five times in the Old Testament, and is translated thirty-six times into English as the word "foreigner." In Deuteronomy 29:22, we see, "the *foreigner* who comes from a distant land…" It is also translated as the word "alien." Wuench says that this word has negative connotations and that a warning of danger is implied by this word. A person who was a foreigner, *nochri* (נכרי), was forbidden to be king of Israel, nor would they be included in the national religious festivals. In fact, they were not allowed into the sanctuary. Douglas and Tenney add, "The *nokhri* was a foreigner who did not have religious fellowship with Israel, since his allegiance was claimed by another people and another deity." In Ezekiel 44:6-7, God said that the people of Israel took foreigners, *nochri* (נכרי), into the temple, which was an action that profaned it:

> You shall say to the rebellious ones, to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Lord God says: "Enough of all your abominations, house of Israel, when you brought in foreigners (*nochri* נכרי), uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to profane it, My house, when you offered My food, the fat, and the blood and they broke My covenant—this in addition to all your abominations."

Also, one of the prophetic signs of the judgment of God upon the people of Israel is that foreigners, *nochri* (נכרי), will take them away from the land as captives in Obadiah 1:11. Certainly this word is the description of a stranger-foreigner who is someone to be kept at a distance, under a watchful eye, and never included in the religious worship and sacred

assemblies of the people of God. Wuench says that it is an identification that one would never want.

The Hebrew Word ger (גר)

The Hebrew word *ger* (גר) is the word most often used for the concept of "stranger" in the Old Testament, where it occurs ninety-two times. It is translated as "alien" fifty-one times, and as "stranger" thirty-two times. Although in current English usage it seems that the word "alien" is most often referring to imagined extraterrestrial beings, that is not the case here. This type of "stranger" is one who has arrived from somewhere else, has no land – which would have been inherited from ancestors – yet has settled in the community and is attempting to assimilate into the culture. Thomas J. King sees *ger* (גר) as a "sojourner" or "resident alien," which sounds similar to an immigrant with permanent residency status. Wuench notes, "The term גר (ger, guest) is used very positively." This word signifies a person that the community does not view as a danger or threat, but as a participating, productive member of the community, albeit a first-generation one. To this "stranger" are conceded rights among the people of God. The verb form of the word makes this clear. Wuench explains:

> The verb גור denotes a person (or a group of people), who leaves his or her home, mostly for political or economic reasons, to stay and live in a foreign country or area, to which he or she does not belong. They are not full citizens, but are nevertheless so integrated into the surrounding that they have political and religious status, which grants them certain rights and protection.

These strangers were actively engaged in the business and civic activities and had been accepted by the people. These resident aliens were allowed closer to the religious events of Israel because they were already demonstrating that they were taking the first steps of believing in the God of Israel. They observed the Sabbath day of rest. They were allowed into the outer part of the temple area, where they were permitted to offer sacrifices, provided that they were obedient

to the requirements, as stated in Leviticus chapters 17, 18, 20 and 24. Even though according to the Law, this stranger was not allowed to buy property of his own, he was allowed to celebrate the Passover and was free to celebrate it in his own house. He was not required to be under the spiritual authority of an Israelite; he could prepare and lead the entire Passover service for himself and his family (Exodus 12:48-49). The only extra requirement for Passover for the *ger* (גר) was the requirement by God that every male in the family be circumcised. This emphasizes the foreigner's spiritual commitment to God. This type of resident alien was one "who put himself under the protection of Israel and of Israel's God." This relationship is essential to understanding this word and the significance of the promises made by God and Israel to the resident alien. Wuench points this out:

> One important aspect of the stipulations concerning the stranger (גר) has not been looked at yet. It consists of a major percentage of the OT texts concerning the stranger (גר). The stranger (גר) is under special protection by Yah-weh himself. God cares for them (Ps 146:9). Therefore, they should not be exploited or oppressed (Exod 22:20; 23:9; Lev 19:33; Deut 27:19; Jer 7:6; 22:3; Zech 7:10).

Consideration of the Welfare of Foreigners in the Old Testament

In light of the importance that God placed on the care of strangers, one example of God's message illustrates His concern. In Leviticus 19:33-34, God gave a three-point message for His people Israel about the resident alien. He first stipulated, "When a stranger (גר) resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong." This was a serious warning not to take advantage of the newcomer. God's second point was about identity and equality: "The stranger (גר) who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you…" This was an injunction to treat the alien exactly as a member of their own tribe. The last point, which was immediately followed with God's special identifying declaration to give more emphasis to it, was the highest call of all three: "and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers (גר) in the land of Egypt; I am

the Lord your God." God's final point here was a clear charge to the people of God to broaden and deepen their relationship with the resident alien. They were to do much more than merely not harm or take advantage of the stranger; they were to do more than to treat the alien like a full member of their culture; they were challenged by God to love the foreign-born newcomer like they loved themselves!

God gave two reasons for this charge. They were to love the stranger because they knew how it felt to be a stranger (גר) when they were slaves in Egypt. God had loved Israel, and had delivered Israel out of slavery and brought her out to freedom and to form a uniquely intimate relationship with Him. Now He wanted Israel to exhibit the same redemptive love and care that He showed them. The second reason was because God was the Lord their God, and they were being called to display the love and character of God to this resident alien. This is an important principle for all of God's people to remember: as God's people, they are to look and act like God in His attributes. He wanted Israel to accept the foreigner, and love and bless them. Then, the foreigner would praise God and desire to worship Him.

This was exactly what Christopher J. H. Wright says. God's people should be like God and should reflect His desires. One of His desires is to treat people faithfully, righteously and ethically. God wants to include all those who are left outside. His character is compassionate and merciful. He wants to redeem and bless all creation, and He had already redeemed Israel out of Egypt. Now, Israel needed to receive the foreigner in her midst, just like God would. Wright said:

> In the light of and in response to that great demonstration of divine justice and compassion, Israel should do likewise. Redemptive history thus becomes a very powerful motive for practicing social justice. Ethical principles are concretized around emulating the known history of the actions of YHWH. This is part of what it means to "walk in the way of the LORD."

Likewise, in *The Mission of God's People*¸ Wright said that God's people are "to be the means by which God's blessing comes to others… to participate in God's promised mission of bringing people from all nations on earth into the sphere of God's redemptive blessing…" The plan of God to take care of the resident alien was to use the people of the faith community who would not exploit the one who had just arrived, but would welcome and treat them with equal respect, and would love them.

Another aspect of the Old Testament word *ger* (גר) that warrants attention are the multiple passages when God spoke identifying those people who needed special care because of being poor. Another one of God's desires is to help and take care of those who are weak and defenseless, like the widow, the orphan and the foreigner. These groups all suffered personal loss. The strangers, orphans and widows are singled out as needing food (Lev 19:10; 23:22; 25:35; Deut. 14:21,29; 16:11; 26:11-13). A widow suffered the death of her husband and the parents of an orphan died. Why was the resident alien in this list? The resident alien left their home country and had no extended family to help. The alien had no tribe, no clan and no family. They, like the orphans and widows were all alone. Therefore, God gives them special attention.

In Deuteronomy 24:

> 14 "You shall not exploit a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your **strangers** who are in your land in your towns.
>
> 19 "When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you are not to go back to get it; it shall belong to **the stranger, the orphan, and to the widow**, in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat the olives off your olive tree, you are not to search through the branches again; that shall be left for **the stranger, the orphan, and for the widow**. 21 "When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you are not to go over it again; that shall be left for **the stranger, the orphan, and the widow**. (emphasis mine)

Prominent Old Testament Examples of this Hebrew word, ger (גר) *"Strangers"*

This Hebrew word, *ger* (גר), most often translated as "alien" and "stranger," is also used to describe some of the most important figures in the Old Testament:

Abraham was a stranger in Canaan. When Abraham left his home country, which was told in Genesis 12:1-4, he traveled and lived in Canaan. He was not a citizen there and had no property. When his wife Sarah died, he had to ask permission of the elders of the territory to buy land in which to bury her body. Abraham clearly expressed his status as a stranger among them. In Genesis 23:4 "I am a stranger and a foreign resident among you; give me a burial site among you so that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

Joseph was a stranger in Egypt and a victim of human trafficking. General Superintendent Emeritus Dr. Jerry Porter, in a year-long series of messages to Nazarene District Assemblies spoke on the issue of immigrants and highlighted Jacob's son and Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph, who was sold to become a slave by his brothers. This story is found in Genesis 37:18-28. Joseph's owners transported him to Egypt and resold him to an Egyptian officer (Genesis 37:36), where he remained. He was a slave forced to live far from his family.

The children of Israel were strangers. Years afterwards, during a period of years of severe famine, Joseph's father Jacob and all of his brothers and their families migrated to Egypt (Genesis chapters 46 and 47). Their descendants lived in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years, according to Exodus 12:40-41. Those descendants were commanded to not mistreat the stranger (*ger* גר). They were identified as strangers and were challenged to remember the experiences they had as strangers. In Exodus 29:3, it says, "You shall not oppress a *stranger*, since you yourselves know the feelings of a *stranger*, for you also were *strangers* in the land of Egypt." Dr. Porter observed that human slavery was still a serious problem, and that people are still

migrating to be able to survive in various places throughout the world, on almost every continent.

Moses identified himself as a stranger. First, he was a foreigner as a Hebrew living in Egypt. Second, when he fled Egypt to the land of Midian, he married a woman of Midian, and he acknowledged his status as a stranger there by naming his son Gershom, which is a form of the word *ger* (גר). In Exodus 2:22, it says, "Then she (his wife) gave birth to a son, and he (Moses) named him *Gershom*, for he said, "I have been a sojourner (*ger* (גר) in a foreign land."

Ruth identified herself as a foreigner. Ruth, the great grandmother of King David, lived in and was a citizen of the country of Moab (Ruth 1:4), and was clearly identified five times in the book of Ruth as "Ruth the Moabitess" (Ruth 1:22; 2:2, 21; 4:5, 10). She met and married a man from the tribe of Judah who had immigrated to Moab with his parents. Nevertheless, when her husband died, she accompanied her mother-in-law Naomi back to the land of Israel and accepted the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16-19). Later in her story, when a relative of Naomi from the tribe of Judah treated her with kindness and respect, Ruth was surprised. In Ruth 2:10, she identified herself as a foreigner (*ger* (גר). "Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a *foreigner*?"

New Testament Words and Consideration of Foreigners

Four Greek words are used in the New Testament to describe the foreigner. The word that occurs three times more than any other is the word *xenos* (ξένος), which almost always is translated as "stranger." The second word is *paroikos* (πάροικος), which is used to denote "alien." The third word is *parepidemos* (παρεπίδημος), which the New American Standard Bible uses as "those who reside as strangers" (1 Peter 1;1), with the sense of sojourners who are just

passing through one place and going on to another place. The last word, *allogenes* (ἀλλογενής), refers to the "foreigner" and literally means "of another race."

The Greek Word allogenes *(ἀλλογενής)*

The fourth Greek word, *allogenes* (ἀλλογενής), only appears once in the New Testament, but it is very significant because it is in the story of Jesus healing ten lepers found in Luke 17:17-18. "But Jesus responded and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine—where are they? Was no one found who returned to give glory to God, except this *foreigner*?" It is notable that Jesus drew attention to the foreigner who expressed gratitude and praise to God for the miracle of healing done by Jesus. Liefeld and Pao quote Dennis Hamm's observation that this word *allogenes* is only used here in the entire New Testament but it is the same important word posted in a declaration in Greek at the entrance to the temple which forbid any foreigner from walking into worship there. Under penalty of death, foreigners were allowed only up to a certain point, after which they were prohibited from continuing. It is interesting that Jesus highlighted the foreigner's praise and worship.

The Greek Word parepidemos *(παρεπίδημος)*

The third word is *parepidemos* (παρεπίδημος), and it can be found in three texts of the New Testament and in every case, it is translated differently. In Hebrews 11:13, the phrase used is "strangers and exiles on the earth." In this phrase, the word "strangers" is *xenos* and the word "exiles" is *parepidemos.* The context of the verse is an extensive history lesson about the faith and obedience of many individuals whose stories are told in the Old and New Testament. In this verse they are all characterized as strangers and exiles on the earth, implying that the Christians' real residence is elsewhere, that is, in heaven.

In 1 Peter 2:11, it says, “Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.” In this phrase, the word “foreigners” is *paroikos* and “strangers” is *parepidemos.* As was noted earlier, in 1 Peter 1:1, *parepidemos* is translated as “those who reside as strangers.” Ralph Earle suggests that *parepidemos* can be translated “strangers” in all three verses and the meaning would be consistent. This was what was done in the translation for the New International Version.

Daniel G. Powers calls attention to the unsettled situation of resident aliens when looking at this first verse in the Peter’s First Epistle. The recipients of Peter’s letter were believers who were “scattered strangers in the world.” They were aliens and strangers in the world’s view because they did not go along with the plans and programs of the world. Powers remarks that these words are similar to Jesus’ prayer for His disciples in John 17:15-16. Jesus did not pray to take His disciples out of the world; He wanted them in the world, but they were “not of the world.” Powers asks the question of this passage:

> But what does it mean practically to be “resident aliens” in the world? …The faith in Christ of the original readers of this Epistle had already led to their estrangement from their society and culture. This often led to their public and programmatic persecution. (They were) embattled and oppressed believers…”

The first-century Christian believers were residents here in the world but they were no longer accepted in their original homelands because of their declarations of faith. They would be strangers in the very places where they used to be citizens.

The Greek Word paroikos (πάροικος)

The second word is *paroikos* (πάροικος), which is translated four times as the word “alien.” Because the word is a compound word made by two words: “*para”* which means “alongside” and *“oikos”* which means “house,” the meaning of *paroikos* is similar to the concept

expressed by resident alien. The resident alien is not a citizen; one might live nearby a citizen, but one is not really a part of the community family. Detzler defines *paroikos* as "a foreigner who lives alongside the people of any country." In other words, one's presence does not change the status of their citizenship. Interestingly, in Acts 7:6, in Stephen's sermon in which he retells the history of Israel, he quotes the prophecy given to Abraham by God in Genesis 15:13 that "his descendants would be strangers in the land." The Greek word translated "aliens" in Acts 7:6 corresponds to the Hebrew word "strangers" in the original Hebrew in Genesis 15:13. The word *paroikos* is used for *ger.*

The Greek Word xenos (ξένος)

The first and most commonly found word, *xenos* (ξένος), is translated "stranger" in all but one of the thirteen places that it occurs in the New Testament. In Ephesians 2:19, "So then you are no longer strangers (*xenos*) and foreigners (*paroikos*), but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household." There is a beautiful arc here demonstrating relationship. In the entire second chapter, the Apostle Paul contrasts the life of the Gentile Christian before Christ and after, by a series of comparisons, with examples such as "dead-alive," "Uncircumcision-Circumcision," "far off-near," "Gentiles-Israel," and "excluded-included." In verse nineteen, there is a contrast as well, which highlights the relationship that the believer enters into through salvation by faith in Christ. The "strangers and foreigners" are clearly outsiders, which contrasts sharply with "fellow citizens and members of God's household." Citizens are the active participants in the society and enjoy all of the rights and privileges of their citizenship. Members of a household are members of a family, and enjoy all of the privileges of being in a family. The salient point here is that, through Christ's sacrifice and God's grace, these people have a complete change of status. "*You are no longer* strangers and foreigners… *you are*

fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of God's household." The work had been done. Now they are family.

Consideration of the Welfare of Foreigners in the New Testament

The Greek word *xenos* (ξένος) combined with the word for friend *philos* (φίλος) forms the word *philoxenia (*φιλοξενία), which means "friendliness to strangers," or "eagerness to show hospitality." In Hebrews 13:1-2, the Church is exhorted to be friends to strangers. "Let love of the brothers and sisters continue. Do not neglect hospitality to strangers (*philoxenia*), for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." Instead of concentrating only themselves, their interests, their households, their families and friends, they are to look out for others. The normal tendency is to love their friends and family and be friendly to those that they know well. However, God's call here is to be eager to be hospitable towards people that they did not know. They are to be attentive and generous towards strange people (*xenos*), of whom they might be afraid. They are supposed to be "friendly to strangers" – *philoxenia.*

The sense of *philoxenia* is not the implementation of a program in the Church to expand its influence or to win new friends. The focus is not on the inside but on facing and embracing those on the outside. In Luke 14:12-14, Jesus charges the believers to extend their hospitality beyond their circle of friends. He specifically tells them to invite those who could never repay the favor. Jesus says:

> Now He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "Whenever you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor wealthy neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you to a meal in return, and that will be your repayment. But whenever you give a banquet, invite people who are poor, who have disabilities, who are limping, and people who are blind; and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

The mission of God's people is to seek to allow God to bless all creation through them. God's people are supposed to care about those who God cares about. The people who are poor, who have disabilities, who are limping, and who are blind are those people who God cares about. God wants them to be included. God wants to bless them. They must be sought after and welcomed. Special care will have to be taken so that they can come. Special arrangements must be made so that they can join and participate. This is such a clear, easy-to-understand, unmistakable command to seek those who need the most help and an equally clear prohibition to not keep only to ourselves and our friends.

The Greek word *xenos* in Luke 14:12-14 gives Jesus' call to "be eager to be friendly towards those who are strangers or foreigners," with the instruction by Jesus to invite and celebrate with those who cannot repay. However, perhaps the most well-known example of the Greek word *xenos* is the words about final judgement that Jesus told in Matthew 25:31-46. The verses 35-36 are: "For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger (*xenos*), and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." The people who need help in these verses are the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger (*xenos*) on the outside, the naked, the sick and the incarcerated. This time, Jesus is clearly identifying Himself with the neediest and He is calling the believers to serve Him by serving those who were the neediest. Unlike Luke 14 where the believers are to *invite* those with needs to a banquet, in the Matthew 25 passage, Jesus recognizes that the believers' service has been full of action, including visiting those in prison and visiting the sick in their homes. The love and compassion of the believers have not been confined by having to wait for the needy to come to them. This time, the believers have been active out in the community.

Of special relevance to this project is the specific notice of the welcoming and inviting in of the stranger (*xenos*). The stranger is to be brought inside and to be made to feel a genuine part of the family. The action word used there, *sunago* (συνάγω), is translated in other passages as "gathering together." The Greek word for synagogue comes from this word. The action that Jesus describes is much more than giving a greeting of welcome or showing a sign of hospitality. It is action being seen in the acts of lowering barriers of protection and separation, opening the door to the outside, and inviting and bringing the outsider into the fellowship of the family. These actions are similar to those that are seen in both Luke 14 and Ephesians 2:19.

Certainly, by intention, the form of the passage underlines the truth that Jesus proclaims. The repetition of the needs of the helpless, the use of question and answer, both affirmative and negative, impress upon the hearers the importance of the message and gives them the opportunity to dwell on its meaning. In the first part, verses 34-40, Jesus honors those on His right who took care of Him, telling exactly how they took care of Him. The righteous reply in total surprise, "When did we see You or do this for You?" Jesus reveals that when they did anything "for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of Mine, you did it for Me.'" In the second part, verses 41-46, He then turns to those on His left, banishing them from His presence to eternal fire because they did not take care of Him, and He repeats the list of needs, personally expressed: "I was hungry, …I was thirsty, …I was a stranger, …naked, …sick, …in prison." He even emphasizes, "you gave Me nothing to eat; …nothing to drink; …you did not invite Me in; …you did not clothe Me; …you did not visit Me." The accursed people reply also in total surprise, "When did we see You or not do this for You?" Jesus' answer is "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for Me, either."

The setting of the King and judgement would have been familiar and totally understood by the audience. However, the shock of the story, with the King identifying with the helpless would have been stunning. Also, the severity of the judgement would have been shocking. The expressive language in verses 41 and 46 makes clear Jesus' condemnation, "Depart from Me, you accursed people, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; …These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

This passage also echoes the neediness of those people. As was noted in the Old Testament passages concerning the believers' response to the neediness of the widow, the orphan and the stranger in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, in Matthew 25, there is a judgement of the believers' response to the neediness of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick and those in prison. The issues that communities face such as famine, drought, adequate clothing, illness and criminal justice have been universally understood for centuries. There have been campaigns to solve and abolish these issues for centuries. However, the social justice of including the stranger into the fellowship has been missing. The fear of the stranger has been much more evident throughout all cultures than the welcoming and including the stranger, which Jesus highlighted here.

There are many applications to the simple phrase of "welcoming a stranger." It would mean to take the stranger into the house, giving the stranger the full protection of the family. It would mean to enable them to become part of the family, to share the family's resources of food and shelter. It would include being concerned over the health and well-being of the newcomer, the family now willing to be exposed to any sickness or illness that the new arrival brought, but also implicating the family in the care and treatment of the newcomer. As was noted earlier concerning Leviticus 19:33-34, the newcomer was not just invited into the dwelling place but

was to be loved, welcomed, embraced and sacrificially given special treatment by the family. To invite in a person who was not part of the family also implied including them in the daily spiritual activities of the family. This was specifically mentioned earlier concerning the celebration of the Passover feast, a special family event throughout the centuries of the Old Testament record. In summary, this compassionate invitation by a host to an outsider to be a part of the family sincerely impacted both the stranger and the family, and this concept was brought by Jesus to His teachings on ministering compassionately to the ones who were the neediest of the people. Clearly, God's people are supposed to care about those who are on the outside. This was important to Jesus. Jesus calls God's people to display God's character and love. It should not be surprising that when Yahweh personally revealed His name, His glory and His goodness to Moses in Exodus 34:6, the first attributes He ascribed to Himself were "compassionate and merciful." God cares for those in need.

Prominent New Testament Examples of Being a Stranger, Foreigner or Refugee

Although the Greek words that were studied are not found often in the New Testament, the concepts of being a stranger, an outsider, a foreigner, an alien or a refugee are certainly present.

Jesus was a refugee, and a foreigner and stranger. In Matthew 2, the national political authorities attempted to murder Jesus when they were made aware of His existence. Jesus' parents immediately fled out of their country to escape. The other male babies found in the area were killed.

> **13** Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to kill Him."

14 So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt. **15** He stayed there until the death of Herod; *this happened* so that what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

16 Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent *men* and killed all the boys who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi. **17** Then what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

18 "A voice was heard in Ramah,
Weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children;
And she refused to be comforted,
Because they were no more."

Although the New Testament does not precisely indicate the amount of time that Jesus and His parents lived in Egypt, it would be evidently months or years. They made a journey of hundreds of miles on foot, crossing a national border, search for a place where they could keep a safe distance from those who wanted to kill Jesus. Additionally, it was a change in cultures and the local language. Jesus and His parents would have been foreigners and strangers in Egypt. They would have felt the ostracism and isolation of being in the minority. They would have been seen as the aliens there, being alone and not a part of the Egyptian community. Undoubtedly, Mary and Joseph felt fear and stress about the safety of their baby, Jesus.

The believers in the Jerusalem Church were refugees. In the years shortly after Pentecost, as the groups of believers in Jerusalem grew to several thousand members, as seen in Acts 2:41, 4:4 and 6:7. After Stephen preached, many opposed him and brought him to the Jewish high priest and the Council (Acts 6:9-12). After listening to Stephen's defense, which is found in Acts 7, the crowd stoned him to death (Acts 7:58-60). This was the start of a time of repression and persecution of the believers, which was found in chapters eight and nine of Acts.

In Acts 8:1, it said, “Now Saul approved of putting Stephen to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles.”

This was only the first persecution of many. The leader of the Jerusalem church, James, the brother of John was beheaded by King Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1-2). In fact, some say that the book of Acts itself was a written defense in view of Jewish and Roman persecutions, which seemed to come in waves. However, the notable point here was the scattering of the believers to the neighboring areas. Later, they were dispersed throughout the entire Roman Empire, as was evidenced by rest of the New Testament. As was mentioned in earlier sections, the Christians became people living in the world but without having safe, stable, and protected situations because of rejection and persecution. First, the Jews and then the Romans persecuted the Christians. They were forced from their homes and lands, and they became the outsiders, refugees and strangers.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, it is necessary to return to the idea of welcoming, gathering in, including and encouraging to participate in the life and ministry of the Church the immigrant-foreigner-alien-outsider. *This issue must be addressed because the practice of this by the people of God is far from what it should be.* This is both self-evident as well as anecdotally revealed in later chapters of this project. The message of God on this point is consistent and the threads of the various aspects begin to come together. The messages of Jesus about serving the needy and welcoming the stranger (Luke 14 and Matthew 25) were in the early days of Christianity. God continued this message through Paul (Ephesians 2), Peter (1 Peter 2) and the writer of Hebrews

(Hebrews 13). The current climate of calls for social justice for all people and for inclusion of all people in society are steps in the right direction. All people should be protected and all people should be permitted to speak.

Moreover, it is clearly against Biblical commands if the attention of the Church is only focused on the insiders and those who are already part of the family. The calls to compassionately welcome the stranger and embrace the immigrant are commands to the Church to focus outwardly on the well-being of the stranger and to actively facilitate the incorporation and assimilation of the stranger into God's family. The mission of God's people is "to be the means by which God's blessing comes to others." That is, God working to bless all people through His people who are focusing on the people around them, especially on the needy people around them. Making oneself the center of attention is diametrically the opposite of what God is doing, and is the opposite of Jesus' example and His command. In Luke 9:23, Jesus said that a disciple of His "…must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Jesus' example of a self-denying, servant attitude was stated by Him in Luke 22:27: "I am among you as the one who serves." The Church must be "a community who follows the way of Jesus by serving the needs of others out of a heart of sacrificial love." The believers should welcome the foreigner with open arms. The towel and basin will be used to heal and comfort. The stranger will be welcomed to be included, fed, given water, given healing, restoration and encouragement to participate in the life of the Family.

In light of all these Scriptures, it is clear that separation, isolation and rejection can never be excused among the different ethnic groups within God's people. Language and cultural barriers cannot be sufficiently powerful to practically ignore the command to welcome the immigrant. Self-centeredness cannot be the reason that God's people would prohibit the worship

and praise of God by those who come to the Church with culturally appropriate worship styles from their home countries. Nationalism, in any form or from any ethnicity, cannot be the basis of discriminatory practices in the Church. All believers are equal before God. God does not show favoritism anywhere (Romans 2:11; James 2:1). Israel was called by God to minister to the world and to be witnesses to the world of the character of God. Their failure was worse when they concentrated only on themselves and when they claimed a special relationship with God without faithfully following where He was going. The disciples of Jesus and the Early Church struggled with accepting and welcoming people from other cultures. First, they could not understand how God could accept Samaritans into the Church (John 4 and Acts 8). Later, they could not understand how God would save and sanctify Gentiles (Acts Chapters 10 and 15). Nationalism is found in every country, but the Christian believers were supposed to be welcoming everyone.

The Scriptures are clear and God's message is obvious and understandable: God's people are called to love and worship and bring praise to Him. They are called to love their neighbor. They are called to love the stranger and foreigner. They are called to open the doors and invite in everyone that would come. They are called to go out and seek those who are hurting. They are called to be involved with God in His mission to bless all of creation. The Church should be such an integral part of the community that everyone in the community would know that they could come in and be welcomed, included and served. The Church should be such an integral part of the community that any person in the community of any ethnicity would know that there are people similar *to them* in the community of faith. The Church should care about people "from every nation and all the tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches were in their hands," as noted in Revelation 7:9, talking about Heaven. All ethnicities should be welcomed. The people of God should reflect

the character of God, Who is compassionate, gracious, merciful and inclusive. Anything less than this from God's people dishonors Him and is disobedient to His commands.

However, as obvious as this would seem to be for Bible-believing Christians, this practice of welcoming the stranger has fallen distantly short of the mark. This will become clear in the next three chapters of literature review, history and original research.

Chapter Three

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE US LATINX IMMIGRANTS

Introduction

There are several factors to investigate to be able to understand the experiences of the Latinx immigrant in the context of the US Heartland. In this chapter, first I will show the overall context in the United States by explaining the sociological and demographical characteristics of the Latinx population in the United States. Then, I will focus attention on the Latinx population in the context of the US Heartland. Both the overall nationwide picture and the specific context of the central region within the country are essential to full comprehension of the situation.

Who They Are

The US Latinx population is an enormous ethnic group within the United States. According to the latest figures available, in 2017, there were 58.8 million people self-identifying themselves as Latino/Hispanic. By itself, this population would be listed within the top 25 countries in the world by population. Within the United States, Hispanics are the largest ethnic minority. Reports from the US Census have shown a substantial growth in this population over

the past decade. There were 50 million Latinos/Hispanics in 2011, 56 million in 2015, 57.4 million in 2016, and 58.8 million in 2017.

Although Hispanics are portrayed often as one unified and homogeneous group, they do not see themselves this way. According to them, their nationalities or country of origin matter more than any other factor. They do not call themselves Latinos or Hispanics. They say that this is only identifying their race, similar to Americans identifying as Caucasian or Asian. They identify themselves as Mexicans or Mexican-Americans, as Puerto Ricans, Cubans, or whatever nationality that they are. This is true even if they were born in the United States. Almost always, they prefer to acknowledge their national heritage. Their nationalities are: Argentine, Bolivian, Chilean, Colombian, Costa Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Ecuadorian, Equatorial Guinean, Guatemalan, Honduran, Mexican, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, Spaniard, Uruguayan or Venezuelan. If one questions many of these Hispanics about their identity, many would further identify themselves by the part of the country from where they or their ancestors came, such as Chiapas (Mexico), Guerrero (Mexico) or Cali (Colombia). This is similar to the regional pride within the USA of New Englanders, New Yorkers or Texans. They only identify themselves as Hispanics or Latinos to non-Hispanics. They never ever use the term "Latinx" because "Latino" o "Latina" are Spanish words that they use; "Latinx" is not a word in Spanish.

Since to the Hispanic, nationalities matter a great deal, US-born and recent immigrants maintain close ties with their homelands. This is similar to other well-known immigrant communities like the Jewish, Polish, Greek, Italian and Irish immigrants. The recent immigrants have been *accepted* into the Latinx community and have been *helped to assimilate* into the US culture. It is common to see neighborhood festivals commemorating the independence days of

Mexico or of various Central and South American countries. Each year, there are annual food festivals featuring native specialty dishes, parades with native music, and dancers in national costumes. These are found in the metropolitan areas with the highest concentrations of Hispanics. In these native celebrations taking place in the United States, it is a matter of prestige that some of these foreign musicians and celebrities come from the original countries to participate.

In addition to this erroneous perception of one singular Latino identity, there are two distinct – and often confused – groups within the same Latin community: one group is the US-born Hispanics and naturalized US citizens, and the other is the foreign-born Latinx immigrants or those who maintained their original citizenship. Both are called Hispanic or Latino, but they are significantly different from each other and their collective experiences are very different.

First, there is the difference in number. The US-born Hispanics and naturalized US citizens are more numerous. The US Census of 2010 indicated that of the 50 million Hispanics in 2010, 42 million were US-born or naturalized citizens. In 2016, of the 57.4 million people who self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, 34% (19.6 million) were foreign-born. Between 1980 and 2000, most of the Hispanic growth was due to the arrival of immigrants. During those years, the Latinx immigrant population expanded from 4.2 million to 14.1 million. From 2000, however, this situation began to change as the number of Latinx births in the U.S. began surpassing the number of arriving Latinx immigrants. In the years from 2000 to 2010, there were 9.6 million Hispanics born in the US. During the same period, the total Latinx immigration was much less with 6.5 million people entering the country as immigrants. This trend continued and grew more pronounced in the years from 2010 to 2015 with 5 million Hispanics being born in the US, and only 1.9 million foreign-born Hispanics arriving.

These differences in the cultural identity are important to understand. It would be incorrect to confuse recent Latinx immigrants with US-born or naturalized Latinx citizens for two primary reasons: the first is that millions of these US-born or naturalized Latinx citizens have been in the United States for *multiple* generations. The Latinx presence in the United States pre-dates the existence of the United States as a country. This history will be explored briefly later in Chapter Four.

The second reason is that it is necessary to recognize that most immigrants came into this country before 2000. Using Mexican immigration as an example, Mexico being the largest immigration source, 94% of the Mexican immigration occurred before 2010. 63% of these immigrants arrived prior to 2000, 31% between 2000 and 2009, and only 6% in 2010 or later. The media seems to focus on this relatively small number of people who recently immigrated while ignoring the large percentage of the Latinx population who have been residing here from between 20 to 400 years. In 2014, 27% of the 11.7 million Mexican immigrants who resided in the United States were naturalized citizens, and most Mexican immigrants who obtain lawful permanent residence in the United States (also known as receiving a green card) did so because they were close relatives of US citizens.

It is not well known that the US Latinx population is a young population. The median age of Hispanics is much lower than the other ethnic groups. In 2014, the median age of Hispanics was 29 years old. The median age of African-Americans was 34, the median age of Asian-Americans was 36, and median age of non-Hispanic Whites was 43. In the US Public schools, Latinx kids are already the largest ethnic/racial group. Currently, Latinx children are 1 out of every 4 students. In the next generation, by 2050, Latinx children will be 1 out of every 3 students.

What They are Facing

For hundreds of years, Hispanics in the United States have been fighting against stereotypes. Many are caricatures and far from the truth, such as, that all Hispanics are or were recent immigrants. It was interesting that two of the authors used as principal sources for this research were Hispanics whose families have been in the United States for four or more generations: Ricardo Ramirez (*Power from the Margins*) is a 4th generation US-born, retired Catholic bishop from Bay City, Texas; and Juan F. Martinez (*Walk with the People*) is a 5th generation US-born, former Director at Fuller Theological Seminary, from South Texas/Central California.

Many people think that US Hispanics cannot speak English, even though they went through all twelve grades of the US education system in English, as their parents and even their grandparents might have done. Nationwide, when Hispanics have been given tests for their ability in English, 70% speak English "well" to "very well." Likewise, these Hispanics faced discriminatory attitudes about jobs, paying taxes and social assistance programs, even though they were full US citizens.

The Latino/Hispanic experience had much more to do with *race* than it did with language. US-born Hispanics were silent and almost invisible. They often chose to maintain a low profile due to racism against them. Their *citizenship* was often questioned, even for 2nd, 3rd, 4th generation Hispanic-Americans. The *color of their skin and their facial characteristics* were often used to identify them for discriminatory reasons. Even into the 1960's, there were "separate but equal" laws throughout the United States for Hispanics concerning public restrooms, public schools, and even churches, both Catholic and Protestant.

Racial attitudes are common against US Hispanics, especially Mexican-Americans, with stereotyped images such as dishonest, poor, slow, inept and dull-witted, being accepted as facts. American politicians in the first half of the nineteenth century were on public record declaring the following:

- When the future 15th President of the United States was still a US Senator, James Buchanan said: *"Our race can never be subjected to the imbecile and indolent Mexican race."*
- Sam Houston, when talking about the Texas war against Mexico said: *"(It is) between the glorious Anglo-Saxon race and an inferior Mexican rabble."*
- When considering admitting Texas into the Union, John C. Calhoun, the Vice President of the United States said: *"...we have never dreamt of incorporating into our Union any but the Caucasian race, the free white race."*

These attitudes prevailed among non-Hispanic White Americans throughout the United States, but especially, in all of the states which had history as Spanish/Mexican territories: California, Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, and Florida. The irony of all of this was that the arrivals of many of these Latinx families pre-dated the arrival of English-speaking settlers in those Spanish/Mexican territories by *hundreds* of years. The English-speaking settlers were the immigrants there. However, later, when they eventually outnumbered the Hispanics, they changed the language of commerce and education, took the land and resources of the Hispanics through political maneuvers, took their jobs and began attempting to remove them, as can be seen through the history of mass deportations.

The US government has deported large numbers of Mexican-Americans, including their US-born family members, several times throughout history. During his term in office, US

President Herbert Hoover sent over 600,000 Hispanics to Mexico in what was called the Mexican Repatriation. In this deportation, an estimated 60% of the deportees were US-born citizens. In the single year of 1952, President Truman sent 727,000 Hispanics back to Mexico. In 1954, in Operation Wetback, President Eisenhower sent 1.1 million Hispanics back to Mexico. Smaller deportations took place during the Reagan administration and in the two Bush administrations, and each year, President Obama deported 400,000 Hispanics. The policy of deporting hundreds of thousands of Latinx immigrants at a time is nothing new. It is merely repeating with regularity what has happened multiple times particularly to the Mexican immigrant group within the Latinx community.

There is another significant historical issue: Hispanics, feeling the discriminatory attitudes and racism against them as seen from 1800-1980's, desired to be identified as "White," and any "whiteness" was respected. In the 1960 US Census, for the first time a classification was created clearly addressing US Hispanics. According to Robert W. Buechley, from the 1930's the US Census used the classification "White person of Spanish surname" to identify this group. Increasingly, even to the latest Census, millions of US Hispanics stopped identifying themselves on US Census reports as Hispanics, and referred to themselves as White. In another attempt to avoid discrimination, the 25% of all Hispanics who had African ancestry, primarily those who were Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban, more recently identified themselves in the Census as African-American, due to their skin color.

In the recent years, there has been a continuation and an increase of discrimination. There are US companies that knowingly contract unauthorized immigrants because of their willingness to work for below-minimum wages or because of their ignorance of those employment laws. Those companies have been able to make large profits because of the cost of cheap labor.

Although most Hispanics had an excellent work reputation in diligence, trustworthiness and consistency, they have often been exploited with low wages, no benefits, no health coverage and no job security. Some employers have actually terrorized the unauthorized immigrant employees that they hired using the prospect of being turned in and removed by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency to take advantage of them, ignore their rights and make more profit at their expense.

The exploitation of employment of Hispanics, even those who are US-born or naturalized citizens is similarly seen in the low wage scale, longer required weekly hours and avoidance of tax law. The specifically odious employment designation of "migrant worker" or "seasonal worker" to mean a "temporary" hire was done so as to avoid compliance with minimum wage laws, occupational worker safety laws and employment benefit laws. Under these laws, a worker could work several *months* of 60-hour weeks and could still be considered a "part-time worker."

Nevertheless, Hispanics are known to be very willing to work. In 2014, counting both naturalized and unauthorized immigrants, about 69% of Hispanics were in the civilian labor force, the highest percentage of active workers of any ethnic group. There are 1.2 million Hispanics who have served in the US Armed Forces, and there are high percentages of Hispanics serving in each branch of the US Military. The distinguished service of Hispanics in the US Military dates back to the Revolutionary War. Over 10,000 Hispanic soldiers served on both sides of the Civil War. Famous Civil War Admiral David Farragut, the highest ranking US naval officer, was a US-born Hispanic. There have been 45 Hispanic US soldiers who have received the Medal of Honor, with more pending.

In the general population, Hispanics are much more likely to be employed in service work, like restaurants and food service (31%); in mining, housing construction, cleaning and

maintenance jobs (26%); and assembly, transport, and excavation, bridge and road construction (22%). Over half of *unauthorized* immigrants pay US taxes. Every year, even the *unauthorized* immigrants pay into the US Social Security system. In 2016, they paid over $13 billion dollars into the system.

Although the difficulties that the US Hispanics and Latinx immigrants face daily have been increasingly documented, they have not been well-publicized. That is the case in places where many Latinx families live, such as California and the Southwest. On the other hand, it is doubtful that in the US Heartland that many people, outside of sociologists and social workers, are aware of Latinx immigrants' situation. Here now is a more focused look at the US Heartland and the Latinx immigrants who settled there.

The Description of the Latinx Situation in the US Heartland

Specifics and Examples

The US Heartland consists of the states of the Midwest and a few other central states where farming is the primary use of the land. The US Census Bureau defines the US Midwest as being made up of twelve states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. According to the Walton Family Foundation and the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, there are nineteen states in the US Heartland, adding Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky. With the exceptions of the large metropolitan area of Chicago and a few larger cities found in each state, for example, Detroit in Michigan, the Heartland is generally a rural region with tens of millions of acres of farmland in each of these states. The reasons that Hispanics migrated to the Heartland will be discussed later, but it is sufficient here to say that they came to work in the agricultural and meat-producing industries found in these rural states.

The only towns and communities who experienced a growth in Hispanic residency were those who offered employment opportunities. The focus of this research is on these nineteen states.

Iowa has been the choice of many Hispanic immigrants. In 1910, only 1.9% of Iowa's population identified themselves as Mexican. Now, according to Grey and Woodrick, Iowa's largest minority population is Hispanic, bypassing the Afro-American population there by 20,000 people. During the decade of the 1990's, the Latinx population in Iowa grew by 153%. Many Mexican immigrants were recruited to work in meatpacking plants in the state. There were also turkey and chicken processing plants throughout Iowa. One of the reasons that Hispanics were sought after was that they were known to recruit their friends and family members to join them in the same plant. This encouraged the natural establishment of teams in the workplace and boosted employee morale. This also meant that there was little turnover in workers.

In some plants, there were immigrants from Guatemala. The first Guatemalans migrated north to the United States to escape from the horrors of the thirty-year-long Guatemalan civil war. The first to be employed were two men from the same area of Chimaltenango, Guatemala. They spoke their indigenous language as well as Spanish. This reinforced the personal connections that they shared with each other, and when they communicated with their families and friends in Guatemala telling them of the work available and the promises of good living conditions, many people from their extended families joined them in Iowa.

On the other hand, there were difficult moments as well. *Iowa* was also the site of one of the largest Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids in the US history. In May, 2008 ICE agents raided the Agriprocessors meatpacking plant in Postville, *Iowa*. Hundreds of Latinx workers were arrested, charged and convicted of aggravated identity theft and misuse of social security numbers, and deported immediately. The only ones who were not deported were female

employees who had children at home. In addition, the authorities exposed many child labor law violations by the owners, because many Latinx families worked together in the plant when it was raided. By the end of the year, the Agriprocessors plant in Postville was closed and the owner was imprisoned. Since many of the workers who had been arrested were mothers with dependent children, an additional social crisis was created. In response, to help the families of these mothers, the local Catholic congregation, St. Bridget's, raised almost $1 million. The local community continued to work on behalf of these women and their families for many years afterwards. The impact of the raid was felt throughout the Hispanic population in the Midwest.

Further East, a pork processing plant in Beardstown, *Illinois* hired hundreds of Hispanic workers beginning in 1990. This happened after Oscar Meyer closed the plant and sold the property to Cargill-Excel. Over five hundred higher-paying jobs at Oscar Meyer were eliminated. Months later, Cargill-Excel reopened the plant hiring Hispanics for minimum wages. This was a new strategy. The industry-wide cost-cutting policy was to operate these types of plants in small rural towns as a profit-making effort, because it was cheaper and easier to maintain a good supply of animals year-round, while shortening time and costs of transportation. It also enabled them to eliminate workers who might be part of a labor union, a fact which was more likely in the cities. This allowed them, instead, to employ non-union workers, in this case, recent immigrants who were willing to work for less money and with few benefits.

The rural farmlands of *Indiana* also proved attractive to Hispanic immigrants who came from rural farmlands in Central Mexico. Two brothers from the rural region of Zacatecas, Mexico came and settled in Lafayette in 1956. News spread back to Mexico of the reputation of this area as a safe, peaceful place to live. This message created a steady stream of friends and relatives who began traveling and settling there in the decades of the 60's, 70's and 80's. They

came, settled and stayed there. Several generations of families from those original settlers remain living in Lafayette to this day.

Ligonier and Wheelerton, *Indiana* were small towns, 4,000 people or less in each, in northeast Indiana that experienced a large influx of Latinx families in the 1990's. These families grew, up to the point that they became more than a third of the towns' total population. Almost three-quarters of the Hispanic adults worked in the local economy, and almost all the Hispanics were fully settled and expected to stay there long-term. The small towns accepted the Hispanic families, and in turn, the families felt comfortable there and engaged in the community life.

To the North, in *Michigan*, Mexican immigrants were recruited and employed as early as the World War II years, specifically in manufacturing jobs, because they replaced workers who had joined the US Armed Forces during the war. They were given special residency work visas and better wages. After the war, in the agricultural sector, many immigrant workers were still needed, and the visa program there was extended for almost twenty years longer. According to the state and local governments, the Hispanics in the work force had made such an impact that they could not be replaced if they left. Because of this acceptance, they stayed, worked, raised families and became part of the community.

Even years later, from 1980 to 2005, immigrants chose *Michigan*, Georgia and North Carolina as more favorable places to settle, rather than California or New York. The high cost of living in those two states contrasted with the much cheaper prices found in the farming communities. The immigrant families could afford to buy larger houses, and more land. Many were able to buy small farms, too. The crime and traffic problems of the big cities especially discouraged Hispanics who had come from smaller farm towns in Mexico. Although the immigrants might have crossed over the border in the US Southwest, they did not feel

comfortable with the size of the enormous metropolitan areas. They did not feel safe there because of the gangs and violence. Furthermore, they did not have the financial means to be able to stay there and settle. Many Latinx immigrants said that they worked more hours, received lower wages, and paid higher prices in general in California. The entertainment world, large shopping malls, famous beaches and amusement parks of California simply were not affordable for them. Therefore, they moved on to the US Heartland.

In the 1990's, the population of people in *Minnesota* who had been born in other countries increased by 50% and the population increase of Hispanics in Minnesota was 166%. For decades before, Latinx migrant farm workers had come to Minnesota each harvest season, and they left when the harvesting was finished. However, when owners and employers of the light industrial manufacturing plants and new meat processing plants began recruiting and offering better wages than the farms, many migrants accepted the new jobs, brought their families north and settled there. In Minnesota today, the Latinx presence is considered critically important to the dairy industry. Minnesota Milk Producers Association president Bob Lefebvre was quoted as saying, "about half of the cows that are milked in Minnesota are milked by someone of Latinx descent."

In *Nebraska*, the sugar beet industry recruited Hispanic workers from the beginning days. According to the historical reports, this was a conscious decision made by the first owners. By the 1920's, the industry's workforce were largely Hispanics, called *betabeleros* (beet workers). Many of the first workers had been born in Texas, then they came to Nebraska for the work in the sugar beet plants and settled there. Not only were they eagerly recruited by the sugar beet companies to be employees, but those companies helped the workers to acquire property to build homes there. For many years, recruitment trips to Texas and Mexico were made annually by

employers to seek more Latinx workers. Likewise, the sugar beet industry in Missouri and Kansas relied heavily on a Latinx workforce beginning shortly after 1910. In these three states, Latinx workers have been recruited and working for more than one hundred years as long-term employees, not as migrant workers.

It would surprise many people to know that today, in some of the towns of western *Kansas*, the Hispanic population is more than 50% of the total populations. The meat processing plants of southwestern Kansas employ the most people of any industry, and the Hispanic presence in each community is clearly visible and obvious. In the 1990's, immigrants from El Salvador, Ecuador and Guatemala joined the Mexican immigrants who had settled there earlier. Historically, few people from these countries had immigrated before then.

Considering the Midwest in particular from 1990 to 2000, the 2000 US Census had indicated that there had been a very large immigration from Mexico and Central America into the United States and that the percentages of growth of Hispanics throughout the country were significant. The greatest surprise, however, had to be in the recognition of the states where they had settled. Looking just at the data for *Mexican* immigration, the states of Iowa, Indiana and Nebraska had an increase between 500 percent and 600 percent in those ten years, and in Arkansas and Minnesota, the growth was more than 1000 percent. These Midwest states were never considered the "gateway states" where Latinx immigrants might be expected to move. California, Texas and Florida have centuries of Spanish-speaking settlements, and in those states, any new immigrants could join sizeable Latinx communities.

Nevertheless, they came by the thousands to the US Heartland. Poverty, unemployment or underemployment have been common in Mexico and Central America over the last several decades. Many Hispanics were certainly afraid *to stay*: there were incidents happening daily of

violent civil wars, wars between drug cartels and the countries' governments or between the cartels themselves, and murderous crime in the streets of even small towns in many of those countries. The local authorities in these countries were absent or powerless because of corruption. Considering this, the US Heartland region offered three things that appealed to the Latinx immigrant: first, a place to work, doing what they knew how to do, to be able to provide for their family; second, a place of peace and security for that family; and third, a place that helped them make connection with others like themselves and with their new neighbors.

Was it as they thought it would be? In the Heartland, were the conditions of workplace, school and home as good as what they had heard from those who immigrated before them? Did the promise of those things became a reality for the Latinx immigrants?

The Last Thirty Years in the US Heartland

The experience of Hispanics in the US Heartland has been both good and bad. In some communities, Hispanic immigrants were actively recruited for employment and happily welcomed. In several towns, an extensive effort was made by the host communities to assist the newcomers, offering free transportation for those who needed it, creating community gardens and international markets, and organizing cultural festivals and celebrations. Town governments offered free English classes for the Spanish-speakers and the employers paid for Spanish classes for the English-speakers. However, in other communities quite nearby, the opposite occurred, with vigorous overt attempts to reduce any Latinx presence in a town. Some landlords refused to rent or sell their available houses to Latinx clients. Some community leaders made numerous efforts to block their employment and prohibit their participation in the local economy. Yet, in some cases, there was a mixture of good and bad treatment within the same community, or even, a relatively abrupt change, for the better or for worse, in the local society. In other words, if one

sought a picture of the Latinx experience in the US Heartland, one could find a full spectrum of rejection-acceptance, often in the same location.

Parenthetically, an important point to remember in all of this is that it has been shown repeatedly that there is a wide disparity between the perspectives of the *Anglo* experience and the *Latinx* experience. For example, as noted earlier, Latinx workers were present in every state of the Heartland region for many decades as second- and third-generation Latinx families there easily attested. Some of them did not speak Spanish at all. However, to the non-Hispanic people in their communities, these families might not have been seen as actual members of the local society. They might still have been thought to be recent arrivals even though they, and their parents, were *born* in that community. In some cases, the Hispanics were completely disenfranchised in their own birthplace. The disparity in perspective could be characterized as if living in "parallel worlds." This was partially due to a societal segregation, where there were few community interactions between Anglo and Latino, each group shopped in their own stores, went to their own medical facilities, and socialized in their own establishments.

Similarly, the disparity of perspective was the same when one asked about racism and discriminatory attitudes towards Latinx immigrants. The perspective of most Midwesterners was to think that racial discrimination never happened, at least not in the Midwest. They felt that the Hispanic was always treated fairly and openly accepted by all. Yet in every single interview in countless studies, Hispanics swore that each of them had felt rejection and discriminatory attitudes, and, usually, each experienced this repeatedly.

Nevertheless, to get a wider perspective, in the following section I examined a few examples of places where Hispanics said that they had good experiences and one example of a place where there were bad experiences. Even considering the research about the states of the US

Heartland, these more specific examples were still only a brief glimpse into the Hispanic experience.

Beardstown, Illinois was an example of a good experience for Hispanics. Although the situation could not be called idyllic or perfect, the resident community mobilized to accommodate the new employees of a meatpacking plant there. Almost all of the newcomers were "outsiders." Faranak Miraftab spent ten years studying Beardstown, which she outlined in her book, *Global Heartland*. She wrote of a city-wide effort to reject racism and discrimination. The movement in the 1990's was called "Beardstown United" and she said that approximately 80% of the town's residents participated in this and were supportive of the movement. Various institutions of the town became significantly involved as well. The Roman Catholic diocese requested and was provided three nuns from Mexico to help the new arrivals in town. A bi-lingual minister was sought and installed as pastor of the local Church of the Nazarene, and he assisted translating for the families who only spoke Spanish. The school district created a new position of liaison between Salvadoran families and the schools. A local real estate agent began taking intensive classes in learning Spanish to be able to serve the Spanish-speaking families arriving.

The results of these efforts were substantial. The Catholic Church also opened a health clinic and a food pantry for the Latinx immigrants in Beardstown. The Nazarene pastor frequently went with the Hispanics as translator to the plant offices or to the doctors' offices to help facilitate understanding for both sides. The school district liaison was instrumental in diffusing a few cases of cultural misunderstandings and aided in an improvement in communications from the school with the families. The realtor taught seminars in Spanish every

Saturday at the plant, helping immigrant families understand mortgages, standard house repair and house purchases.

Marshalltown, Iowa was a second example of a good experience for Hispanics. Swift and Company was the primary employer for the town, and its plant was the third largest of its kind in the world, employing over 2,000 workers. The population of Marshalltown had begun declining in the 1980's. Many adult children left the town for urban centers seeking higher education and higher wage opportunities. Swift began to recruit Hispanic immigrants to work in the plant in 1989 and by 1997, the Swift workforce in Marshalltown was almost evenly divided between Anglo and Latinx workers. Five years later, three out of every four Swift employees were Hispanic. Historically, meat processing work has been a physically demanding job, and it has the highest occupational injury occurrence of any industry. These were the main two causes of a high turnover in jobs at the plant. However, since this job required little education and offered steady employment, many immigrants felt that this was a good place to begin. Many young men and families came from central Mexico during this time, and Marshalltown experienced significant growth. According to Grey and Woodrick, all these immigrants came from the same town, Villachuato, Michoacán.

Faced with this new reality, Marshalltown embraced the immigrant families and made a city-wide effort to integrate the newcomers into the community. With a favorable attitude towards the Latinx immigrants, many businesses were bought and restored by Latinx ownership. Those companies expanded to serve not only the Hispanics but the Anglos of the community. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes were offered throughout the town. In the schools, many Spanish-speaking children enrolled, and the school administration authorized classes that were specially developed for the Spanish-speaking children to teach them English. The town

leadership on many occasions confronted discriminatory attitudes towards the immigrants and defended their inclusion in community life in Marshalltown. The leadership acknowledged the fact that the Latinx newcomers revitalized the town and saved it from disappearing like many other small rural towns in the Midwest.

Contrasting with the good experiences for Hispanic immigrants in Marshalltown and Beardstown was the experience of Latinx immigrant families in Perry, Iowa. To be fair, this town had a major challenge of adjustment in a short amount of time, which would be a challenge to any community. In a span of twenty years, Perry's Latinx population went from less than 1% to over 35% of the population, and in 2016, the Latinx children in the elementary school became the majority ethnicity of all students. As in other Midwest towns, the largest company and source of employment in Perry was a meatpacking plant. It was built a few years after World War I, and although it had been owned by several different owners over the years, it was always active throughout the years and maintained a prominent presence and importance in the town. The meatpacking industry changed in the 1980's by changing their hiring practices. Wages were cut to minimums, and most American employees left. The meatpacking plant employers sought immigrant workers to come and work. They travelled to Texas and California to recruit recent immigrants. Soon, the lowest wage earners in Perry were all Hispanics who worked for the meatpacking plant.

The host community was not happy with the changes that the meatpacking company made. The experience of those Hispanics and their families was less than welcoming. They were made to feel as if they were, at best, temporary guests, and at worst, intruders. To simply live there seemed to "require a kind of tiptoeing around community space, so as not to bother or cause discomfort to "Americanos." The Latinx families were referred to as "problems," and were

not seen as part of the community. They certainly were not viewed as contributing members of the local economy. Their presence, and their money, may have kept businesses thriving and may have created new jobs in the town, but they themselves were still kept marginalized by the longtime residents. This produced resentment in the Latinx families. They were, after all, employed, all working fulltime jobs at the plant, performing difficult jobs. All their children were enrolled in the local schools. They established themselves as diligent and considerate neighbors, developing long-term business relationships throughout the town as well. They were faithfully connected to the local churches, participating and contributing as families and as individuals. However, they clearly felt hostility at times. They expressed their desire that the people of Perry would *"see them and engage them, not as strangers, but as neighbors."* This was the experience they had in Perry.

This characteristic of being hard workers, willing to do difficult jobs, was noted by employers throughout the US Heartland. Several employers and personnel managers expressed admiration for the work ethic of their Hispanic employees. They considered that the skills were secondary to the consistency of their work. One said, "(the Hispanics) work circles around the people here." This was cited as a reason why many companies changed their hiring practices and were actively recruiting Hispanics to come join their workforce. Owners saw a willingness to work, and loyalty and gratitude for the work, in most Latinx workers that they hired. The Hispanics bring efficiency and profitability to the companies who employ them. A manager said, "They'll give you twelve hours in an eight-hour day. …We get more production, better service, the quality is there, and all the way around, it's just excellence of work."

It is important to reflect on several general aspects that define and explain the US Hispanic experience in the Heartland. These aspects include the concepts of domestic and

immigrant labor force, instrumentalization, invisibility, racial or cultural identification, illegality or criminalization, and exploitation.

General Aspects Behind the Latinx Experience in the US Heartland

Sometimes, an anti-immigrant argument is presented that the Latinx immigrants are "taking jobs away from Americans." Some say that they thought that "American money was being siphoned to Central America," an allusion to the remittances that many immigrants were sending back to their families. The reality is quite different than the argument. The meat-processing plants paid $11 or $12 an hour and were always looking for more workers. For that wage, few Americans were willing to work for that type work in the plants. It did not require higher education, nor, particularly, any English language skills or specific training to be able to perform the work. The work in the meatpacking plants was not desirable, and the jobs there are those that qualify as being "the three D's: Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult." The meatpacking and poultry processing plants themselves were known for having a physical environment that had been linked to a few health issues. In the poultry processing plants, there was a combination of fine dust and feathers that caused lung problems. Since the work was repetitive, often workers developed carpal tunnel syndrome. The work was hazardous with scissors and knives being used. Occupation safety issues were often underreported, and "plant nurses routinely deny that workers' complaints are truly physiological, often blaming factors such as menopause or vitamin deficiencies and treating workers with little more than Advil and vitamin B-12."

This is where the concept of *instrumentalization* begins to appear. *Instrumentalization* was first formulated by Alexandra Z. Dobrowolsky, and it describes where one section of society treats another group as *instruments* or machinery, not as individuals. This becomes the case when undocumented immigrants are dehumanized, categorized as separate from the rest of the

community, and seen in the different industries of food processing and oil production as mere tools to be used. The conditions under which they work are not seen as important. Their health and safety are not taken into consideration. Their productivity is the important focus, and if or when their production lessens, they are replaced as one would replace a broken part or burned-out light bulb. Their status as lacking documentation means that they are considered temporary or transient, and therefore, they will not be settling in the community and can be ignored. Their work was often clandestine or "off the books," and this relegated the Latinx immigrants to the "underclass" of the town.

A related concept to this is *Invisibility*. This happens in two distinct ways. First, there is the invisibility of the person. The undocumented worker who is employed without any legal authorization to work, has no alternative but to accept the wages and the work conditions under which they are subjected. This is because they have no protection (or so they think) under federal, state and local laws. They can be and frequently are knowingly exploited by their employers. They remain quiet and invisible, often working the midnight shifts that no one else wants, merely to keep a job and continue to support their family. A similar exploitation takes place when a worker is basically silenced by the clearly expressed threats of deportation. They often are rightfully concerned that their employer or even a rival immigrant might reveal their undocumented status and their location. Therefore, they try to conform and cause as little notice as possible. They "live in the shadows."

Then, there is the *invisibility* seemingly required by the dominant culture. Although the longtime residents are happy that their town and community are no longer falling in population and diminishing in strength, these residents were not happy with the newcomers who arrived and began moving in. In some Midwestern towns, there is an unwritten prohibition of speaking

Spanish in work, school or neighborhood settings. Teachers discourage or forbid conversations in Spanish among students. Likewise, workers are given instructions only in English and then are scolded when they ask for translation or explanation. In 2002, the state of Iowa passed a law declaring English as the state language and ordered all state documents and forms, with a very few extreme exceptions, to be distributed only in English. The community acted as if English was the only language spoken in the United Sates, that the Spanish-speakers were rejecting "the American Way" and that they were staying to themselves if they spoke Spanish. This belied the fact that there were more Spanish-speakers in the United States than in all but two countries in the world. Conservative estimates put them at 50 million Spanish-speakers living in the United States. However, the word often demanded by longtime residents is "assimilation." The Anglo community in some parts of the Heartland region is waiting for each Latino to learn English, learn the culture and customs of the Anglo community, and assimilate themselves into that worldview. The Anglo community has expressed that the primary goal of the Hispanic should be to speak English. One person interviewed by Katherine Fennelly said, "*Instead of English as a second language it should be English as the first language.*"

This is more than merely problematic. It assumes that all Hispanics are recent immigrants, that all Hispanics only speak Spanish, and that Hispanics have nothing to offer through the Spanish language to the culture and community of the US Heartland. It also assumes that the Latinx person has the time and money to take classes to learn English, and that this bilingual skill can be mastered immediately. Certainly, English language acquisition is probably the most important skill that a non-English speaking immigrant should pursue, and unquestionably, this skill would help the immigrant in multiple ways to assimilate and

acculturate in the new area. However, very few refugees and immigrants around the world have arrived in their new countries with adequate language skills in the new language.

Criminalization and Illegality

There is the multi-layered concept of the *criminalization* of Hispanics. First, without any knowledge of birthplace or citizenship status, a Hispanic might be accused of being illegal merely because he or she was ethnically Hispanic. Labeled an "illegal," this person might be a second- or third-generation US citizen, but the speaker identified them as Hispanic, therefore, an illegal resident. In this case, it is no longer a case of language being the problem; it is a purely visual determination of ethnicity. Illustrative of this criminalization was the case of the ICE raid of the Swift plant in Greeley, Colorado in December 2006. The raid arrested almost three hundred Latinx workers at the plant, including *seventy-five Hispanics who had legal residency permits* but were nevertheless arrested and transported to Texas *before* their personal identification was actually checked.

Chavez points out that Hispanics, and especially Mexicans, have been generally singled out as "illegal aliens" from among immigrants to the United States from all other groups or countries. People immigrate from every country and ethnic group of Europe, Africa, and Asia, but when one speaks of "illegal aliens," the status of these ethnic groups is not questioned. No one would ever think of an Asian or a European as being an "illegal alien." This is not xenophobia, the fear and rejection of all foreigners, this is discrimination based on their physical characteristics. This is racism. They are singled out because they do not look like Anglos.

Chavez wrote,

> "But Mexicans in particular have been represented as the quintessential "illegal aliens," which distinguishes them from other immigrant groups. Their social identity has been plagued by the mark of illegality, which in much public discourse means that they are criminals and thus illegitimate members of society undeserving of social benefits, including citizenship."

This characterization and stressing of illegality entirely sidestep the issue by focusing the attention away from the confusion of contradictory and constantly changing immigration laws. For many decades, the Hispanics were considered an accepted part of the workforce and their immigration status was not questioned. Additionally, the federal and state governments are frequently inconsistent in their immigration policies and citizenship rulings. However, and, in a point that would be good to remember, they *"could just as well have decided to allow migrants to enter under the sanction of law, as legal immigrants, legal workers or guest workers."* The decisions about immigration laws and the labelling the men and women as "illegals" were made and done by those who had the political power to control it at the time. Furthermore, this particular conversation never mentions the role and conduct of the US employers when speaking of illegality. Almost never were the companies considered to be acting "illegally," either in their hiring practices, in their wage pricing, or in the safety of their work environment, but those Latinx workers were considered to be acting "illegally."

Second, in a related way, the Hispanics *themselves* are thought to be criminals. The media depictions of Hispanics and the assumptions of the Anglo community have shaped a narrative that have caused the Hispanic to be feared. Ethnologist Sujey Vega, when interviewing longtime residents in Indiana, was told by the townspeople that they avoided any area where Latinos were present because of the high crime incidence linked to them. When she investigated this claim with the Tippecanoe County authorities, she was told that Latinos had been involved in only 5%

of all criminal court cases each year. In fact, the highest crime rate in the Tippecanoe County annually was that of "White, non-Hispanics." The assumptions had nothing to do with the facts: the Latinx areas of town were safer than other areas of the county.

A third type of the *criminalization* of the Hispanic is where the Anglo assumes that the Hispanic must be "illegal" and must have broken laws to enter the country. It is also assumed that the Hispanic somehow "cheated" to be employed by an American company, and did not apply for residency in the "proper" way. As was noted earlier in the chapter, the majority of Latinx people are naturalized or US-born citizens. Yet, one state representative was interviewed as saying that all the Latinx immigrants were problems because "the first thing you do when you come in the country (is) break the law." Therefore, any and all Latinx immigrants must be criminals. Hallett said that this characterizes the undocumented person's status as "a personal failure and transgression, rather than a structural condition of migrants' lives." This categorizing the undocumented immigrants as "illegals" further creates a power relationship of exploitation where the supervisors, fully knowing the precarious position of the workers, ignore occupational safety standards and effectively squash any complaints from workers about conditions and treatment. Knowing that their families depend entirely on the workers' income only adds to the power dynamic exercised by the supervisors. Almost always the workers yield and submit to the employers, even when they have done nothing wrong and when the environmental complaints are found later to be valid.

The sense of "illegality" is something that every undocumented immigrant feels. In the US Heartland, the subject of citizenship and the requirements for it are a frequent topic by Anglos and the absence of citizenship or permanent residence is the primary basis for declaring a person "illegal" or a criminal. Longtime residents make comments like, "If they're going to

come over here, then they need to be a US citizen, number one." Few people know about the mandatory five-year waiting period of being a permanent resident which is one of the legal requirements of all immigrants seeking US citizenship. Often the immigrants hear the Anglos say, "They have to come here legally, period." Yet, the complexity of the full citizenship process is not known by the Americans. Not only that, it begs the question if the immigrants will ever be given the means to become citizens.

Certainly, criminalization could take many forms. Each form is a part of the environment that presses the Hispanic to use invisibility as a defense, and to work harder than all the others as a strategy to keep safe. Each of the aspects of the Latinx experience in the Heartland, whether at work or in the community, are actually factors that demonstrate a very strong, passionate, yet quiet, underlying determination to succeed. There is a force of will present in many that has been recognized as a general characteristic.

Observations about Latinx Character Values

In researching the context of the Latinx immigrant living and working in the rural areas of the central region of the US Heartland, several authors and researchers quoted businessmen, community leaders and employers who detailed character values that they found were common. The employers gave these as reasons why the Latinx immigrants were profitable to them and why they were recruited and hired. These characteristics were based merely on observations.

Have you ever seen a Latino completely alone? Are not they always somehow connected to friends, family or community? Are not they usually found in a group – whether celebrating at a party, playing sports or picnicking at a park or gathering together in a church? Do they understand the concept of interconnectedness and do they understand better than most the concept of community? Have they uprooted themselves from the land of their origins, moved to

a different land with different cultures, and now are trying to know how to integrate themselves into a new world?

Have ever you seen a Latino homeless or begging? How you ever seen an elderly Hispanic man or woman abandoned or left to themselves? Do they not always seem to be together as families – even as very extended families? Do they seem like "they are all related to each other" somehow? Do they truly understand the concept of family and do they exhibit those values?

Have you ever seen a Latino who did not work? Have you seen one work long hours, even without pay, to fulfill a promise? Have you ever heard one insist on more money or advanced payment? Have you seen one take a second or third job to help their extended family, even back in their country of origin, a place that they might not have seen in twenty years? Have you seen how hard a Latina works for her family? Do they understand the concept of sacrifice and work?

In view of these values, maybe the Latinx immigrants who have left El Salvador, Mexico or Guatemala, or even those who have left Texas and California, to move to the Heartland to work and to raise their families are not as "foreign" as they are thought to be. Each family has a long-term plan and many personal aspirations. The dreams for the future that they harbor are dreams about a better place for their children, their relatives and themselves. They were worried about violence and crime. They sought surroundings that would be conducive to success. They know how to make sacrifices; they know how to work hard and how to "tighten their belts" when finances are tough. In the US Heartland, they want to be good neighbors and they want to fully participate in the life and colors of the new communities in which they have come to settle.

What would happen if they were permitted to put down roots? What would happen if they were invited to make themselves at home? What would happen if they were allowed to become citizens? What would happen if they were included in the decisions made for the town and region? What would happen if their work and contributions were recognized? What would it be like if they were encouraged to share their values with the rest of the community?

What would the US Heartland look like, then?

Overview and Significance of the Latinx Situation in the US Heartland

The Problem and What Caused It

Spanish-speaking immigrant pastors have struggled to find inclusion, understanding, mentorship and resources in the Church of the Nazarene in the US Heartland. That is the problem, simply stated. These Latinx immigrant pastors feel isolated, misunderstood, helpless and rejected.

To conclude this chapter, after considering the peculiarities of the context into which the Latinx immigrant pastors and their families found themselves when they migrated to the US Heartland, several points have been raised that need to be answered to be able to best discern the source of the problem itself. One might be tempted to think that their situation is the result of their immigration. Also, their lack of English language could be the real problem. Certainly, racial prejudice could be their problem. Or, the fact that the Latinx immigrants are so overwhelmingly outnumbered in the US Heartland that they are dismissed as being insignificant and easily exploited. It is possible that their situation is the result of inadequate preparation on their part before their immigration. It could also be the result of the host society being equally unprepared for their arrival. Very possibly, the real issue is a failure by the Latinx immigrant to understand the components of American identity.

People have been immigrating to the lands of the US Heartland for thousands of years, and the Latinx immigrants were not the first. Each state within the region recorded the histories of ethnic groups coming into their specific area, which would be too extensive to be included here. Therefore, immigration, in itself, is not the source of Anglo opposition to the Hispanic. The lack of ability to speak English is undoubtedly involved in the Latinx immigrant situation. The inability to communicate, both to understand and to be understood, surely complicates any exchanges between the Spanish-speaker and the English-speaker. The absence in the US Heartland of people who are bilingual definitely is a factor. However, that does not resolve the issue as there are many second-generation Latinx people who face difficulties, even though they are fluent in English.

Racist attitudes that have been experienced by the Latinx immigrants are undeniably elements that impact their situation. However, the Hispanics are not the only ethnic group to be singled out. Furthermore, although racism is evident and ugly in particular incidents, which will be noted in the next chapter, these events have not been common throughout the region. The sense of being in the tiny minority of the population at first, usually 5% or less, is surely disconcerting. It clearly empowers the Anglo majority to eschew civility and manners on occasion, and some might single out Hispanics for abuse and ill treatment. Yet, these same power dynamics can be found even between Latino and Latino, Mexican-American and Honduran, White and Color.

A strong case can be made that the Latinx immigrant was not prepared for the immigration, nor was the American society prepared for the arrival of the Latinx immigrants, especially in the quantity that were hired by the American companies. Many Latinx immigrants were escaping economic, political or military problems in their home countries, and their haste

may have precluded learning English while in the home country. It also was evident in earlier paragraphs that many Heartland towns were devastated when the meatpacking industry changed its employment policy by laying off most American workers in urban centers to hire immigrant workers in rural areas for much lower wages. When the Anglos moved away and the towns began to shrink, the communities did not think of who would come to replace those who moved away. The towns and companies could have communicated better, but this was a new and untried strategy being attempted by the industry to save itself economically.

A great deal of the difficulty that the Latinx immigrants have faced when dealing with the Anglos in the Heartland can be traced to the distinctiveness of the American self-identity. According to David Stewart,

> Across the world, nationalism began to emerge, investing every people with distinctive national characteristics and divine purposes. In our case, Americans saw opportunity, democracy, and the rule of law as central to their self-identity. …Americans are largely unique in finding our identity in values rather than in customs and traditions. ...When any foreigner immigrates to the U.S., we can accept him as long as he accepts our values.

Part of this argument comes from the fact that the United States is a country entirely made up of immigrants. The unifying aspect of the country is not one singular culture or religion. Immigrants and refugees come from all continents. The explanation is that some immigrant groups appear to the Americans to not embrace the American ideals. This puts the immigrants themselves at odds with the American society. For example, by crossing the border illegally, the Latinx immigrants exhibit a disregard of the aforementioned rule of law. By seeming to accept illegality, the Latinx immigrants look as if they are taking advantage of the system and robbing opportunity from those who correctly follow the law. Likewise, Stewart pointed to Mexican history as a problem for the Hispanics according to the Americans: “Mexico had seventy regime changes in just forty-seven years. Americans believed that growing up in such an unstable

system made Mexicans unable to appreciate democracy and the rule of law, the cornerstones of American identity."

Notably, these arguments echo statements by Anglo community leaders, and even by Church pastors and members in the Heartland. On the other hand, most Latinx immigrants gladly embrace the American ideals, as evidenced by the record number of naturalization applicants and by the successes of second-generation Hispanics.

The Hiddenness of This Problem

The struggles of the Latinx immigrant pastors to be able to minister and to be included as part of the Church in the US Heartland have been hidden for the most part from the eyes and ears of the Americans. The reasons for hiding parallel the causes of the situation: the language barrier, the citizenship or residency status, the cultural differences, racial discrimination, and the possibility of detention or deportation. In each of these reasons, it is fear that motivates the Latinx immigrants to keep a low profile, to avoid certain places and times where police or immigration authorities are present, or to attempt to not draw any attention to themselves. For some, it may be not so much fear as resignation to the circumstances. However, this attempt at continuing in an unenviable situation, in and of itself, implies a hopefulness by the immigrants that the situation will get better with the passing of time. The immigrant will eventually learn English, will be granted citizenship and will be accepted into the community, if only they are given enough time to do so. That is their hope. Unfortunately, by "living in the shadows," the other side of the Church has not been able to see the Latinx pastors' needs as much as they saw the pastors' problems: lack of documentation, lack of English and lack of understanding of American cultural norms.

Another aspect of this semi-concealment is the self-segregation that all recently arrived immigrants do, with or without documents. This is not confined to Latin immigrants but is a natural occurrence among all immigrant communities. At first, all immigrants self-segregate. People stay with those who they know about. They speak only with those who speak their language. They keep with those from their particular culture, and if possible, from their family or closely connected family network of friends. This cultural aspect is even more important than the language aspect because in the Heartland, a Latinx immigrant from Mexico would not normally be found among Puerto Ricans, for example. Their shared language is superficially the same, but their cultures are not the same. There are regional cultural differences even within Mexico that are noticeable among the immigrants and how they congregate and communicate. The self-segregation, nevertheless, contributes additionally to the distancing from the American society. It simply is easier for the newly-arrived immigrant to stay with other Hispanics. There is no language barrier, and the more experienced immigrants are able to easily explain and accompany the newcomer. In the earliest days after an immigrant's arrival, this self-segregation is perfectly understandable and actually is essential to their future success.

Chapter Four

A HISTORY OF ANIMOSITY AND ITS EFFECTS

Introduction

In trying to understand the Latinx Christian experience in the United States, it is necessary to understand the historical background, both of the Latinx and Christian aspects of that experience. Concerning the *Hispanic* experience, the current Latinx-Anglo relationship has included immigrant raids, detentions and deportations, DACA and Dreamer marches and nonstop

discussions about the illegal immigrant documentation laws and racial profiling practices. Many feelings by Americans and many experiences of Latinx immigrants seem to go deeper than mere documentation issues. So, I investigated the influence of the centuries-old enmity between England and Spain. This hostility hardened into a system of mutual distrust and prejudice between English speakers and Spanish speakers. Concerning the *Christian* experience, it has been likewise important to understand the effects of the Catholic-Protestant conflict on the cultures of both Hispanics and Anglos. This conflict began in Europe with the Protestant Reformation but carried over to the New World and it specifically impacted the earliest evangelization of Spanish-speaking people living in the United States. American leaders and writers openly expressed anti-Spanish sentiment and anti-Catholic attitudes, which were targeted toward and experienced by generations of Latinx immigrants and residents.

Tensions between England and Spain

The conflict began with a natural rivalry. In his recent book, *The Story of Latino Protestants in the United States,* Juan Francisco Martinez points out the significance of understanding the conflict between England and Spain. Martinez says: "The tensions between England and Spain are particularly important as they provide the background for later, continuing tensions between the nations born out of their colonial projects in the Americas." The antagonism between the two countries was present throughout the many fields on which they clashed. They were military enemies, fighting on opposing sides of battles and wars on land of three continents and several seas. England and Spain competed with each other for global economic supremacy. Each country sent dedicated teams of naval captains, navigators and soldiers to seek out new lands to claim, new resources to exploit and new routes for trade. Assuredly, their opposition extended to the religious realm as they were the leading voices in the

Catholic-Protestant divide which engaged all of Europe during this time. Martinez directed attention to how the contrasting religious views were part of their colonization efforts:

> Christian faith was an important part of the colonial process for both the Spanish and the English settlers. Both told the story of their expansion into the Americas in religious terms. They saw colonial expansion as part of God's will for them and understood the lands they were conquering as gifts from God. To some extent, people from both countries also saw the ones they were conquering as people they should evangelize.

Ordained Roman Catholic priests were always sent with the companies of Spanish soldiers dispatched to the Western Hemisphere. These priests were certainly present to minister to the Spanish troops, but their primary purpose was to evangelize the native population. Unfortunately, this was probably less motivated by a concern for the spiritual condition of the natives than by a desire to have a compliant, subdued people who would not seek to regain their freedom from Spaniard domination by war. On the English side, the motives for the founding of the original thirteen colonies reveal that the English settlers were primarily concerned with the free expression of their own Christian faith. Many of these colonists were fleeing specific persecution of their religious practices and were seeking a safe place to exercise those practices.

Martinez highlighted that there was a desire by both countries, England and Spain, to prove their moral superiority in terms of religion. He said:

> But there also was a clear sense of religious competition between Protestant England and Catholic Spain. Their various wars, battles and skirmishes often had a religious undertone. Many in each country saw their encounter with each other as a chance to demonstrate that their expression of faith was more correct.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the years when North America was being colonized by England and Spain, religious and theological battles were being fought in Europe in response to the Protestant Reformation. Most certainly, the conflict was more concerned with power and the control of lands and riches. Even so, the nomenclature and vocabulary used to defend or accuse each other were often based on their religious differences. Isabella and

Ferdinand in the late fifteenth century, as the monarchs of Spain, were identified as the *Catholic* Monarchs of Spain. The Spanish saw themselves as the most powerful defenders of Roman Catholicism. During the same years, the English crown and political leadership became more Protestant, openly opposing the Roman Catholic Church, beginning first with the English Reformation with the reign of King Henry VIII. A generation later, Queen Elizabeth I, who was Protestant, solidified her reign as queen of England by agreeing to the execution of her main rival to the throne, her cousin, Mary, who was Catholic and who was trying to reestablish Catholicism and papal authority in England. England remained Protestant, but some of the English population were Catholic. The real concern was not about the Catholicism of the Spanish. David Stewart pointed out that:

> This anti-Spanish sentiment was not, in the early modern period, completely synonymous with anti-Catholicism. Until the First Vatican Council (1868), the Catholic Church had significant on-going debates about the locus of authority. One faction believed the Pope served only to co-ordinate autonomous national churches, while their Papist opponents adhered to the modern notion of Papal supremacy and authority. The Renaissance English very much objected to Papism, believing, for example, that Mary I or Charles I intended not only to re-introduce Catholic orthopraxy and theology, but that they intended to submit to Papal authority.

In reality, this Anglo-Spanish hostility was based more on the fact that both countries were major powers who were building global empires. Also, in contrast to an overly simplified view of this conflict, some twenty-first century historians have offered a subtler and more nuanced estimation of the supposed black-and-white opposition of England and Spain. David Stewart observed that by 1500, Spain was the strongest country on the European continent, and actions and attitudes by the Tudor kings of England through most of the sixteenth century were accommodating to the Spanish royalty, most likely to form an alliance with Spain against their common enemy at the time, France. Stewart noted that the marriage of Catherine of Aragon to Henry VIII in 1603 illustrated the beginning of this alliance and encouraged the cooperative

spirit of the two royal houses. The marriage of Mary I, Queen of England to Phillip, King of Spain united the two houses for a short time. However, there was an increasingly significant dissatisfaction with the national affairs and foreign policy of the English royalty. Stewart wrote:

> Most of England's aristocracy gradually became convinced that, rather than helping England, Spain stood in the way of England's ambitions—any significant colonial expansion, commercial growth, or diplomatic prestige could only come at the expense of the Spanish empire. So, an anti-Spanish sentiment began to develop among the English elite.

Mark G. Sanchez noted an anti-Spanish attitude, or Hispanophobia, in the English literature of the late sixteenth century, and saw that England increasingly began focusing its attention on Spain. This focus became essential to how England viewed itself. The two countries were competitors in commerce and trade, with each country having a significant naval presence, both commercially and militarily. Both countries had a rich history of fishing and trading, often fishing in the same areas of the Atlantic. They both demonstrated similar expertise in ship building, maritime navigation and sailing. The history of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries is replete with many conquests and discoveries by Spain and England that parallel each other.

This maritime expertise led them into competitive global exploration in an attempt to locate more favorable trade partners and increase their national wealth and individual glory. Ships and sailors from Spain discovered the islands of the Caribbean, the lands and riches of Mexico, Central America and South America. They travelled as far west as the archipelago of the Philippines, claiming it for Spain. Endeavoring to discover more lands and acquire more power and wealth, England was doing the same as Spain. The English navy circumnavigated the world in the late sixteenth century. England’s trading vessels explored from Canada to east Africa, and

eventually claimed territories in India, East Asia, Australia and islands throughout the Pacific Ocean.

Both countries were intent on winning the prize of the New World, the territory of what later became the United States. First, Spanish leader Juan Ponce de Leon landed on the coast of Florida in 1513. Spain founded the city of Saint Augustine in 1565 on the Atlantic in Florida. The city of Santa Fe, in New Mexico was established in 1610. Twenty years later, groups of English settlers landed and began settlements in Roanoke, North Carolina in 1585 and 1587, and in Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. Thirteen years after that, the Pilgrims, from England, arrived at Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. Both countries gladly encouraged settlers to come to North America, the Spanish heading to the southern lands and the English to the northern lands.

Back in Europe, Spain and England were fighting an undeclared Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604). Both countries claimed that their motives were religious in nature. England was actively supporting the spread of Protestantism in the territories of Netherlands and Belgium, which were controlled by the Spanish crown. The Dutch Revolt of 1568-1648 was between the northern Protestant provinces and the southern Catholic provinces. During that same time, King Philip II of Spain sent the Spanish Armada to invade England in 1588, to overthrow Queen Elizabeth I, who was Protestant, and re-establish the Catholic faith in England. The Spanish and the English made both covert and open attempts to cause the collapse of the other. During this time, there were military skirmishes and naval battles, each with significant loss of life on both sides. In 1589, the English Armada was sent by Elizabeth I to attack Spain but was defeated by the Spanish King Philip II. What began as a merely competitive rivalry between a northern Protestant country and a southern Catholic one, continued as a deeply bitter enmity buttressed with an extensive set of alliances which divided all of Central Europe and caused multiple wars

between the two alliances *over the next two hundred years*. Throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the two countries were always facing off against each other in direct wars or on behalf of allies. The repercussions of the Protestant Reformation magnified the situation further because the conflict was often painted in spiritual language and eternal values.

English-Spanish Relations Influence American-Mexican Relations

These centuries of antagonism between England and Spain set the stage for poorer relations between the two most prominent colonies of England and Spain: the United States and Mexico. Educator Raymund A. Paredes specifically says that there was a historical connection between the hostility towards Catholics and Hispanophobia by the English and the antagonism felt towards the Mexican population by the Americans generations later. In his essay, "The Origins of Anti-Mexican Sentiment in the United States," he says:

> The enmity between the two peoples may well have been inevitable but not exclusively for reasons of spontaneous culture conflict and empire building. Rather, American responses to the Mexicans grew out of attitudes deeply rooted in Anglo-American tradition. …Anti-Catholic sentiment and hispanophobia …operated in Anglo-American culture from the earliest days and exerted the most immediate influence on American attitudes. …As every Englishman knew, Spain was the most powerful of Catholic nations and the self-proclaimed champion of the Roman Church. The Spanish military forces – the "papist legions" – were the very instruments of Catholic tyranny. The Catholic-Spanish alliance was regarded by many Englishmen as a partnership conjured by Satan himself and thus one that possessed an unlimited capacity for mischief.

However, David Stewart doubts the intensity of this anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic feeling in the American colonists because they "had little contact with Spain, and even less negative contact…" He wonders about the actual evidence of these attitudes. Most of the English-speaking settlers were not involved in international trade or directly involved in the political dealings during this period.

Paredes sees this differently. He points out that many of the earliest English settlers in the American colonies came from groups like the Puritans who were fiercely against Catholicism. In addition, they were also protective of their lands from any incursions by Spanish forces, or even any commercial ventures by Spain. Paredes believes that the English colonists considered the Spanish as their enemies and were very aware of their proximity to them. He writes, "To a man the settlers were ardent nationalists who regarded their role in the struggle with Spain with high seriousness."

As could be expected, the attitudes of the English colonists towards the Spaniards were expressed in the most contemptuous and defamatory words, as befitting an enemy, and reflecting the language of the times. The characterizations of the Spaniards by the English settlers were completely negative, and had been passed down to them by previous generations. Historian David J. Weber articulates this connection and lists some of the characterizations:

> From their English forebears and other non-Spanish Europeans, Anglo Americans had inherited the view that Spaniards were unusually cruel, avaricious, treacherous, fanatical, superstitious, cowardly, corrupt, decadent, indolent, and authoritarian – a unique complex of pejoratives that historians from Spain came to call the Black Legend, *la leyenda negra*.

In the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, after both the United States and Mexico had achieved their independence from Great Britain and Spain, respectively, during the colonial era, the Anglo-Spanish, Protestant-Catholic antagonism merely converted itself into an American-Mexican one. There were increasing tensions between the two new countries as the colonization of their lands proceeded with thousands of families moving west.

To protect against raids by the indigenous tribes against the towns, Spain had welcomed settlers to colonize North America in the early 1800's. The Spanish territory claimed by Mexico consisted of land all the way to the border with Canada, areas known now as the states of Idaho, California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming and Texas. An important

fact to be remembered in this investigation was that all settlers in this territory were expected to become *practicing Catholics* as they settled in Mexican territories, as Mexico had an established state church, the Roman Catholic Church.

Yet all was not well with the Mexican Catholic Church; it was ill-prepared for the future. After the Mexican Revolution, many priests returned to their home country of Spain, leaving a shortage of Catholic priests throughout all of Mexico. This was especially the case in the northern areas of Mexican territories where the newly arrived immigrants coming from the United States were settling. At the end of the Texas Revolution (1835-1836), there were only *two* Catholic priests left in all of Texas, yet the population was growing rapidly. Furthermore, the Catholic Church had never successfully set up an education system of seminaries or any advanced religious training in the region to prepare future priests. This scarcity of Catholic clergy and the overwhelming volume of Protestant settlers reinforced a policy of neglect of attention by the Catholic Church in that part of the region. What few priests were available were not likely to be sent where they were increasingly in the minority. This situation and policy tempted Protestant church authorities in the United States to venture to quietly send in the first missionaries to the area, covertly. This was completely illegal and violated the citizenship oaths taken by the settlers in Mexican territory.

The English-speaking people who migrated and settled in Texas in the second quarter of the nineteenth century described the Spanish-speaking citizens there in strong invective, even though Texas was still a territory of Mexico at that time. The overall tone of the new settlers was first that of absolute superiority: in intellect, morals, personal industry, skills and discipline. They considered the Spanish-speaking populace stupid, lazy and of questionable breeding. Some of the English-speaking settlers spoke as if the Hispanics were scientifically sub-human. One former

state governor was quoted in 1841 as saying of the Hispanics that “extermination may yet become necessary for the repose of this continent.” This was merely a foreshadowing of what was to come. These American settlers were pressing the Mexican government, who failed to see any reason to notice. To Mexico, Texas was unimportant and far away. There was continual fighting between the Anglos and Latinos, and finally, Mexican government troops were sent to Texas.

Juan Gonzalez, in his book *Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in America*, observes that Americans who fought the Mexican armies were actually immigrants who had settled in the Mexican territory of Texas, and as such, were rebelling against their own government. The fighting that took place in 1836 against the Mexican troops stationed in Texas became extremely bitter and deadly. In no other part of the Mexican territories affronting the lands of English-speaking settlers, from California to Florida, were there any organized military conflicts as occurred in Texas. The historian David J. Weber says, “The bloodshed in Texas at (the battles of) the Alamo, Goliad and San Jacinto, ...hardened attitudes on both sides and left a deep reservoir of Anglo-American hatred towards Mexicans and their Hispanic forefathers.”

The Mexican-American War, from 1846 to 1848, had been a declared war between the United States and Mexico that was fought in Texas, New Mexico, California and Northern, Central and Eastern Mexico. Even earlier, Texas had fought and won its independence from Mexico in 1835-1836, and certain treaty agreements had been specifically made between the two sides. One of the agreements signed was a promise that Texas would not in the future become an annexed part of the United States. However, when Texas declared itself a republic, thousands of immigrants began to pour into its lands from the United States to settle. This propelled Texas more and more into conversations about statehood with the US. Since these decades were

politically consumed with the issue of slavery, and because many of these new immigrants came from the Southern states, Texas was seen as a potential addition as a slave state. This caused strong opposition from the Northern states and broad support from the Southern states. When, in 1844, a slave-owner US Congressman from Tennessee, James Polk, was elected President of the United States, this set certain events into motion. Texas was admitted as a state in the last week of 1845, which clearly violated the treaty with Mexico. When Polk sent troops into Texas in the Spring of 1846, Mexico viewed this first, as a betrayal of its signed agreements with Texas, and second, as an invasion into its former territories. The Mexican Army marched over the border into Texas, attacked and defeated the US troops. The United States responded, declaring war on Mexico, and thereby began a much larger war than Mexico could handle with its troops and its economy. Battles were fought in California, New Mexico, Texas and in Mexico. The death toll of the Mexican side surpassed 25,000 people, and the American side lost more than 13,000. Three years of battles ended when the US troops conquered Mexico City and forced Mexico to surrender. Once again, now on North American soil rather than European soil, Spanish-speaking soldiers and English-speaking soldiers fought each other to the death.

The documents of surrender were the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which was signed by Mexico and the United States. Mexico gave up more than half of its sovereign territory to the United States, from California to New Mexico, including Nevada, Utah and Colorado. Additionally, Mexico was forced to recognize the statehood of Texas. Thousands of Mexican citizens in all of those formerly Mexican territories were automatically made citizens of the United States, and were now under the government and laws of the United States. From the moment the treaty was signed, these Spanish-speaking ranchers and farmers began an uphill and usually fruitless battle within the American law and court system to have the ownership of their

lands and houses recognized and protected. This put them at a huge disadvantage because the rulings of many lawsuits and legal disputes were usually in the favor of the English-speaking citizens by the English-speaking judges and juries. There was great bitterness created by this chain of events.

With this history of United States-Mexico animosity forming the backdrop, it is necessary to investigate the attitudes and actions of the English-speaking Protestant church authorities in the United States as they began the evangelization of the Spanish-speaking people living in the area. It is relevant to this study to understand how they viewed the Hispanics living in the territories that were now under the control or influence of the United States.

Early Protestant Evangelization of the Hispanics

According to Juan F. Martinez, the primary areas of Spanish-speaking communities within the United States' territories in the middle of the nineteenth century were Texas and New Mexico, and so these were the two areas that received the earliest attention of the Protestant denominations and mission agencies.

A Cumberland Presbyterian, *Sumner Bacon*, evangelized all over Texas starting in the 1830's. Bacon tried to be appointed chaplain for the three hundred settlers who came to Texas with Stephen F. Austin, and later, he asked to be sent as an official Presbyterian minister. Both applications were rejected. He was not seen to have enough education and experience, nor was he ordained. Yet he persisted in his desire to serve in Texas. Through the acquaintance of another Presbyterian minister back in Arkansas, Bacon was recognized in 1833 as an agent of the American Bible Society as the Society's first resident agent in Texas. He began travelling and preaching throughout all of Texas, and he gave out over 2,000 English and Spanish Bibles in the first two years, even though this activity was illegal in Texas. In the same year as the start of the

Texas Revolution, 1835, and in spite of his lack of any formal education, Bacon was reluctantly given official credentials by the Cumberland Presbytery of Louisiana, and was ordained. In 1836, Bacon organized the first Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Texas, in a small East Texas town, San Augustine, just a few miles from the Louisiana border and in the middle of a thick pine forest. For the last eight years of his life, he preached as an evangelist, started new congregations and later, officially organized the Cumberland Presbyterian churches into the Texas Synod. At fifty-four years of age, he died in 1844. Today, Bacon is recognized as having been the first resident Protestant minister in Texas.

Bacon's original strategy was to use his mobility as a single, unmarried man to travel extensively and visit each small town in the Texas territory. He distributed Bibles if they were wanted and preached freely until he began to be noticed by the local Mexican authorities. At that point, Bacon would move on quickly to an adjacent part of the territory to avoid arrest and prosecution. An important note to point out is that Bacon was one of the first people to give Spanish Bibles to the Mexicans.

A few years later, the Old School Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions commissioned *William C. Blair* to minister to the Hispanic (Tejano) population in Texas in 1839. Blair worked for thirty-three years planting many Presbyterian congregations and is credited as preparing the Presbyterian mission to Mexico decades later. The Western Presbytery of Texas was organized in 1851, and a year later, Blair founded a college in Goliad, Texas, Aranama College, for the purpose of offering formal education in Spanish. Blair was the first president of the college. The college lasted for approximately 13 years until the end of the Civil War. Blair is considered a key historical figure in the Presbyterian Church (USA) because of this work in Texas.

In 1847, *Melinda Rankin* was sponsored and sent to Texas by the Presbyterian Church as "a missionary to the Mexicans." She was a school teacher who taught Spanish-speaking children in the Rio Grande River Valley in Brownsville, Texas, beginning there in 1852. By travelling speaking in several major cities back in the East, such as Philadelphia, Rankin raised money for and started a school for Mexican girls, the Rio Grande Female Institute, which opened in 1854. She was keenly aware of the strategic geographical position of her ministry, and she was aided by the American Bible Society with Spanish Bibles, evangelistic tracts and Christian literature to minister across the border in Mexico.

During the Civil War, Rankin moved two hundred miles to the southwest into the town of Monterrey, Mexico, where she attempted to start another school. However, the Catholic authorities in Monterrey persecuted her and followed her around as she tried to find a location for a school. In 1866, after another fund-raising tour in the East, Rankin raised $14,000 to buy a building in Monterrey to house the school, and was finally successful in its purchase. Even though the focus of this chapter was the Hispanic ministry in the United States, it was fascinating to see that Melinda Rankin, as a missionary to the Spanish-speaking people in Texas, actually continued her ministry south of the border and established *the first Protestant mission in Mexico*.

Rankin was one of several women missionaries sent by the Presbyterian Church into this part of the United States who went as grade school teachers. The strategy was to provide education and health care for the children of the Spanish-speaking communities. The US and Mexican territorial governments were not financially strong or well-organized during these early days. Furthermore, educating the Latino children was not a priority to the governments on the United States' side of the border, so they did not build schools or provide teachers for the Latinos. These Presbyterian women missionaries saw these two needs and acted upon them.

Classes were free, and since there were no alternative possibilities, many Hispanic parents saw this as the best way to help their children. The women were not seen as religious threats to the Catholic churches and priests because they were not preaching. The federal and state governments at this time had nothing to offer these Hispanic communities and so the Presbyterian schools there were permitted to operate unimpeded.

Years later, when the state governments were financially stronger and began to take more responsibility for the education of all the children under their jurisdiction, public funds were allocated, schools were built, teachers were provided and the Hispanic children were expected to attend. The Presbyterian mission schools became less and less necessary, and, after decades of useful ministry, the schools were closed. The missionary teachers were no longer needed. Yet, at that time, there were still many Hispanic communities without any public health care. The Presbyterian mission board investigated the situation and astutely began sending doctors as missionaries to that area. They began setting up health clinics in the communities. This need lasted for several decades more until the state and federal governments were able to step in and provide community public health clinics in the neighborhoods of highest Hispanic population. It is noteworthy that the two-prong strategy of the Presbyterians of providing education and then, health care for the Hispanic communities in this area was successful for more than one hundred years, even when the strategies of other Christian groups were not successful.

According to New Mexican historian Lawrence Sundberg, *Hiram W. Read* began Southern Baptist ministry to Hispanics in Santa Fe and Albuquerque in 1849. He had been sent from the East to evangelize the miners in California, but became ill on his journey west. He stopped in New Mexico to recover from his illness. While there, he decided to remain there to attempt to start a work in Albuquerque. He began to learn Spanish to be able to reach the

Spanish-speakers in the New Mexico territory. The first New Mexican who converted was Blas Chavez. Chavez went on to be a well-known Baptist Hispanic pastor and evangelist with a ministry of over fifty years in the area.

Benigno Cardenas was a suspended Catholic priest who began a Methodist Episcopal Church (North) in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1853. A rarity, Cardenas was an educated, seminary-trained, Spanish-speaking Latino who disagreed with his superiors and was expelled from the Catholic Church. After being rejected for reinstatement by the Vatican, he came to know the Methodists on his return voyage, and joined with them. When he returned to New Mexico, Cardenas began to speak out against the Catholic Church. He preached extensively throughout Central New Mexico. Additionally, Cardenas also publicly expressed support for the indigenous people and for the poor working class in this part of the Southwest.

With the sole exception of the Latino Cardenas, all the earliest Protestant missionaries who preached and evangelized in Spanish in the former Mexican lands were Anglos. Only Cardenas spoke Spanish fluently. All of the other missionaries were preaching in an acquired language, not their native language. In most of the cases, they were commissioned by a sending board of foreign missions, who, likewise, were either back East or in the Midwest, in the United States. The Protestant missionaries were also frequently involved in distributing Spanish Bibles or New Testaments. The attitudes and philosophy under which they ministered will soon be discussed, but it must be noted that a strong anti-Catholic attack was often used. This attack was the same given by the only Latino missionary, Cardenas, because his message was a harsh critique of the Catholic Church. This criticism was powerfully influential because it came from a former priest, who shared his personal experiences. The other Protestant missionaries also took

up this same message, which will be shown in the next section as we look at their attitudes and motivations.

Missionary Attitudes and Motivations

In the nineteenth century, the English-speaking populace continued a long history of exhibiting an *exaggeratedly disparaging and racist attitude* towards the Hispanics who lived in the area. Paredes connects the attitudes of the eighteenth-century English to the nineteenth-century Americans, and particularly to those who viewed the problem as racial in nature. Paredes states:

> The core of Anglo-American notions about the Mexicans had always been an assumed depravity and certainly the racialists retained this idea. It is striking how closely their depictions of contemporary Mexicans resemble (18th century English historian William) Robertson's portrayal of pre-Conquest aborigines: there is the same indolence, duplicity, melancholy, violence, and cruelty… (These) views of the Mexicans represent a traditional mode of perceiving them that persisted into the mid-19th century with only slight modifications.

The Hispanics were described as being far inferior to the Anglo-Saxon English-speakers. The mission boards and Christian writers of that time vigorously promoted the difference between Latinos and Anglos as being exactly like the difference between Christians and pagans. The Protestant missionaries saw their arrival in terms of being the saviors of barbarian savages who needed not only the Gospel for their eternal souls but who needed to be brought up to the level of well-educated, well-dressed, profit-making, industrious, civilized English-speaking people who, only then, would make good American citizens. The Anglos said that the Hispanics were living in misery because first, they were still Roman Catholics, and second, were still Spanish-speakers who were continuing with their former Mexican way of life. The primary purpose of their missionary ministry was to stop the distress and unhappiness of the Latinos' past life, religion and culture.

Juan F. Martinez also highlights *the attitude of the missionaries* as they ministered to the Latinx population in these areas during that time. The missionaries, who were Anglo-Saxons from the United States, considered the Latinos as not being fit for their US citizenship. Their Catholic faith was judged as being incorrect and it was commonly expressed that they first needed to be Protestants to be good US citizens. Martinez writes, "From the perspective of many of the missionaries and mission agencies, being a good Protestant Christian and being a good American citizen were closely linked. Therefore, their missionary task included both goals."

In addition, the Hispanic workers were seen as far inferior to that of Protestant believers, who were viewed as being busy and productive. The missionaries characterized the Latinos as habitually sleepy or idle. The Latino was thought to be less intelligent. Adult education programs were planned for the Spanish-speaking people, quite apart and secondary to any evangelization, for the missionaries felt this improvement was necessary to make the Latinos "worthier" to be Americans.

This *patronizing attitude* towards the Latinx people to whom the missionaries had been sent was felt throughout the region. It became part of the ministry philosophy of the missionary efforts and prejudiced the reception of the Gospel. Furthermore, for the most part, the mission workers did not prepare themselves beforehand for the work. Sumner Bacon, the Cumberland Presbyterian and American Bible Society colporteur mentioned earlier, refused to submit to a theological education program required by his mission. They examined him and found that he had no formal education and could hardly read and write. The mission board refused to ordain and sponsor him. Yet, Bacon travelled and ministered in Texas, preaching revival services.

Many of these missionaries had little language training in Spanish and had great difficulty working with the Hispanics. Since, at that time, the Hispanics spoke only Spanish, the

missionaries were unable to communicate. Likewise, they did not take the time to investigate the culture of the people in order to better be able to interact with them. This was evident in the reports sent back by the earliest missionaries. Writing their supporting agencies, these first missionaries described the Mexican-Americans to whom they were ministering in deplorable terms, degrading the Hispanics rather than explain their own inadequacies in reaching them. Permeating the missionaries' attitudes was the belief that Latinos were so far inferior that they must be treated like children. Mulder, Ramos and Marti write,

> It is nearly impossible to disentangle the prejudiced attitudes that fueled tensions with Mexico during the Texas Revolution and Mexican-American War from white evangelization efforts to Mexican people in the Southwest. Deeply embedded in these prejudices were beliefs about whites' racial superiority and Mexicans' corresponding inferiority.

Generally speaking, *these attitudes arrested the development of native leadership* and completely thwarted the establishment of any reasonable pastoral preparation programs. An Anglo missionary would never have considered that a Hispanic convert could someday be a leader of English-speaking people. It would be unthinkable. So, leadership opportunities were not available for Hispanics, responsibility was never given to a Latino, even on the lowest levels. All administrative and leadership councils for ministry to the Spanish-speakers were made up solely of Anglo missionaries and church leaders. The missionaries, sent and funded by mission agencies, had the power of church authority and church finances. During this period, the various Anglo missionary leadership groups did not consider the Latino perspective when planning or directing the ministries which were supposedly aimed at reaching and helping them. The Hispanics were marginalized instead of being included. They had neither vote nor voice in the development of ministries to their people. As could be expected, few Spanish speakers were ordained by those church groups during this time.

In this central area during these years, Catholicism, and the Catholic culture that was part of the original Mexican culture, was targeted as the chief problem to be attacked by Protestant missionaries and preachers. Mulder specifically cites by name the four major denominations in Texas, the Presbyterians, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, and Methodists, who were creating this previously mentioned anti-Catholic campaign. This attack resulted in the missionaries being strongly rejected in the Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. It caused the missionaries to be seen as enemies. To a certain degree, the missionaries embraced this as a strategy. Since the traditions of the Catholic Church were familiar and commonplace in the Mexican culture, some *spiritual* events such as Baptism, First Communion, and the celebration of certain saints' days, the Protestant missionaries decided to emphasize the *secular* holidays of the United States, using the Fourth of July, for example, as a celebration to add to the *church* calendar. The previous Catholic celebrations would have been huge occasions for family and friends to travel to attend from miles away, and would have taken place at or near the neighborhood church. The new Protestant celebrations were made without considering any activity with extended families. These new celebrations offered very visible support through church services of the secular US political leadership. Likewise, in their pulpits, the Protestant pastors vigorously promoted the nationalism of the new country to the Spanish-speaking Hispanic population there in the region.

Basically, the missionaries required the Hispanic converts to reject their own Latinx culture which emphasized a much more extensive sense of community and family. The missionaries failed. They did this by promoting and insisting on "proper characteristics" of individualism, personal industry and ingenuity. They preached American citizenship more than the Gospel, actively trying to wipe out community history and substitute a secular nationalism

instead. They failed by displaying a condescending, patronizing attitude of superiority towards the people that they were sent to serve.

Robbery and Discrimination

The majority of Spanish-speaking residents were still living in their ancestral home areas in California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas. There were more problems for the Hispanic people in the last half of the nineteenth century in Texas and the central region of the country. While the American missionaries pushed them to give up their language and culture, to learn English, and to embrace the American culture, other newly arrived American settlers began to push them off their own land. Beginning during the years just before Texas statehood (1845), many people came from other regions of the United States to acquire land. However, this area was already settled and the land was legally parceled. Many landowners were Spanish-speaking and bilingual families who had lived in Texas for more than a hundred years. Some of these had fought against Mexico alongside the Texans and the Americans. Nevertheless, the Hispanics were seen by the American newcomers as the enemy. Many were killed or hurt, and most were driven out of their homes. Their houses and lands were taken, either by force or by legal means. As early as 1842, several hundred Hispanic families had left the region.

During the American-Mexican War, this campaign intensified and continued, with many more Hispanics being killed and English-speaking people occupying their homes and farms. After the war, the state legislatures, city councils and courts, all of which were populated by Anglo-Americans, sustained and preserved the ownership of the Hispanic properties by the Americans, and the Hispanic residents were reclassified as “foreigners.” In Texas, New Mexico and California, they were dispossessed of their homes and robbed of their wealth by Anglos using the legal system and imposing new laws. Over the next fifty years, local land boards and

commissions attempted to dispute the ownership and property title of every tract of land in their territories. Without purchasing or compensating the Hispanic landowners, and drawing them into long and costly battles in court, thousands of Hispanics were thus reduced to homelessness and poverty. Land commissioners, English-speaking lawyers, local judges and the local law enforcement agents worked together in collusion. Large ranches of tens of thousands of acres in Texas and California that had been in the hands of Hispanic families for generations were seized, divided up and redistributed to new American settlers. According to one source, by 1900, all the Hispanic landowners in Texas were gone except the small number of those who lived next to the Rio Grande River, the border between Mexico and Texas. The Hispanic residents who remained were low-wage laborers.

"Dirty Mexicans"

These developments of removing Spanish-speaking landowners, by force, threat or legal means during the second half of the nineteenth century changed the environment of the relations between the Anglo and Latinx communities. Hispanics were viewed as unskilled, uneducated and the lowest class, socially. The beginning of urbanization meant that there was a move by thousands of people to the growing towns and cities. Slavery had been abolished and hourly wage workers were needed to replace those who left for the large cities. The Hispanic residents who remained in the rural areas were joined by immigrants from Spanish-speaking countries to be hired at low wages. The United States welcomed immigrants who came from around the world during the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century to be employed in manufacturing companies, mines, and agriculture. The Hispanic population most often were seen as useful only as migrant farm workers, working day jobs, monthly, or seasonally and following the harvest cycle through various states.

Kathy Jurado researched the American attitudes towards the Latinx immigrants and ethnic Mexicans, and notes a particularly disagreeable belief expressed in the beginning of the twentieth century. The Hispanics were considered "diseased and dirty." Jurado says:

> The early 1900s is significant for Mexicans living in the United States because it is at this moment that they are constructed as diseased and dirty. Anti-germ campaigns by the U.S. Public Health Service combined with the regulated delousing of Mexican immigrant subjects at the U.S. Mexican border managed to effectively single out these (people) as suspect, racializing them in the process. Not surprisingly then, the early thirties also brought about large-scale deportation and repatriation drives of Mexicans orchestrated by the U.S. government. Scripted as diseased and dirty, these immigrant (people) were ostracized, marked and ultimately, easily rejected as potential citizens by the powerful associations circulating at the time.

Even though the Latinx worker was recruited and hired to come across the border and work, they were identified and isolated at the border crossings and treated as if they were biologically dangerous or public health problems. Jurado quotes David Montejano, who sees the expression "dirty Mexicans" as referring to much more than a state of cleanliness. For Montejano, it first is an allusion to the darker skin color of the Hispanic. Yet, it could also be simply a reference to the aspect of the Latinx immigrant doing farm labor, working in the soil. Additionally, it illustrates the American opinion of social status of the Hispanic as being the absolute lowest social class, and as living in the most impoverished conditions.

All in all, according to the Americans of the early twentieth century, for social and cultural reasons, for maintaining low labor costs, or for imagined biological reasons, Hispanics were considered undesirable, problematic and, most of all, "foreign." They were not accepted as part of the American society, even those whose families had been in the area for twice or three times as long as the Americans.

Conclusion

While the early parts of this history reveal a story of racial tension and discrimination in the treatment of the US Hispanics, I had hoped to see a totally different story *from the missionaries.* I assumed that those who desired to share the Gospel with the Latinos in the US would be better than the general community. When I heard of the patronizing attitudes and, basically, of assimilation being forced upon those who speak Spanish but who live inside the borders of the United States, I realized that there were deeper and more long-term issues present in the history of the Anglo-Latino relationship that might date back even further.

It is possible to discern a pattern. *A long-term historical enmity* existed between the two countries of Spain and Great Britain, which was at least partially based on the religious division between Catholics and Protestants. The time period of the 1500-1800's was full of wars and fighting. The two sides were exaggeratedly caricatured into *almost unrecognizable enemies*. This directly poisoned the Spanish-English dialogue. The rivalry became bitter and, as *it expanded into the New World*, influenced the interchange of commerce and communication between the successors of the Spanish and British Empires, the newly independent countries of Mexico and the United States of America.

These countries may have been newly formed; however, the ancient antagonism was present in the churches and communities in both countries because they were being led by people who grew up listening and accepting the prejudiced views of their forefathers. The Americans, for their part, sent missionaries who likewise shared those views. The results of the beginning missionary work were meager, by any standard, and the first eighty years of ministry to US Latinx are now considered a failure. White, Anglo-Saxon missionaries, because of prejudice, racism, and attitudes of superiority, were rejected.

However, this is only a relatively small detail in the larger perspective of the Anglo-Latino relationship. Although the central, rural US Heartland did not have a historic connection with Spanish-speaking population, the entire American society seemed to invade, overwhelm, rob and then discard those Spanish-speaking people in their own territories. This discarding proceeded to worsening levels of social ostracization, labor exploitation and racial discrimination. The mistreatment of third-, fourth- and fifth-generation US-born ethnic Mexican-American citizens was as bad as the ill treatment of the undocumented Latinx immigrant. For the Hispanic, the Anglo-Latino relationship in the twentieth century was no better than in previous centuries.

Historian David Stewart rightfully declares that:

> Historically, every immigrant group (in America, in Europe, in China, …) has experienced prejudice and racism (or its equivalent; race is a modern construct). Humans are naturally most comfortable in familiar surroundings. Immigration disrupts the status quo, and forces us to re-adjust our expectations, patterns of behavior, etc. …Before Americans had suspicions of Latinos, we distrusted Eastern Europeans. Before that, the Sicilians. Before that, the Irish.

This is true, of course, and this point shows that immigrants always have an impact on the society and are, themselves, impacted and victimized by members of the receiving community. However, based on even a layman's cursory review of the historical records of the Anglo-Latino relationship, it appears that the opposition between the people from England and Spain was compounded in the succeeding generations between the Americans and Mexicans. The nineteenth century was the worst: the Texas Revolution, the Mexican-American War and the legalized robbery of property owned by Latinx families throughout the former Mexican territories all illustrate this.

The conclusion I see is that the problem is not new but it is far more serious and complex. It reflects hundreds of years of groundless animosity, continued and compounded by subsequent

generations. People accepted and perpetuated false narratives about the other language group. Politicians and national leaders of multiple generations amplified the division, and basically, the English-speaking missionaries tried to completely replace or eliminate the culture of the Hispanics. The parallels between the various time periods and now are unavoidably obvious.

A general distrust of the Americans and an underlying bitterness and resentment would not be surprising considering the volumes of stories of legal double-standards, labor exploitation and insulting behavior by the Americans towards the Latinos over the past two hundred years. A wariness about government plans concerning the Latinx immigrant would be understandable since the laws have alternatively switched back and forth from acceptance to rejection multiple times. Latinos have a right to be skeptical about the genuineness of promises made to them, whether by government, industry, society or church.

At this point, it is necessary to turn to hear what the Latinx immigrant pastors and families have to say in their own words today.

Chapter Five

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In the previous chapters, I introduced the situation of the Latinx immigrant pastors who live and minister in the US Heartland region. I reviewed the Biblical considerations of the Old

and New Testament concerning the treatment of the immigrant. I then looked at who they are, where they settled, and what has been the published record of the immigrant situation in the US Heartland in the recent past. I also examined the distant historical background to understand the attitudes that they faced.

Even before beginning this research, I repeatedly asked what we can do, as a Church, to help the Latinx immigrant pastor who ministers here to a congregation made up of immigrants. If we help the pastor, we help the congregation, and if we help the congregation, we help the community and the larger Church.

As I worked at my role as the director of the Hispanic Pastoral Ministries degree program at Nazarene Bible College, I became acquainted with this group of men and women, because I found them throughout this central region. They chose not to live in the metropolitan Latinx communities of West and East Coasts, settling instead in the central farming regions. They are pastors who are relatively new arrivals in the region themselves, and they face multiple challenges preparing for the pastoral ministry there. They are actively trying to serve but they lack resources. Because of language and cultural barriers, all these Spanish-speaking people find themselves still as outsiders, even after decades here. While this is true in the communities where they live, it is more troubling that it is true in the church. Those pastors who speak only Spanish, in particular, struggle to find inclusion, understanding, mentorship and resources in these rural communities which do not have many Spanish-speakers nor have bilingual support and resources.

To add to the historical and sociological description of the Latinx immigrants in the US Heartland found in the last two chapters, I desired to learn more specifically of the experience of Latinx pastors who were among these immigrants. It was my intention to research their

experiences to understand what the entire experience was like for the Latinx immigrant pastors. I interviewed many Hispanic district coordinators who work with them closely. The coordinators shared some of the experiences that the pastors have shared with them. They revealed major factors affecting the immigrant pastors. Through these stories given through this research, people should be able to glimpse into their lives, into their living situations, and into the things that are challenges for them. This has been necessary for the purpose of understanding what they are going through, so that the Church would be able to help them in their ministry. This research should be a tool that would be used to help the Church understand both the challenges of these pastors in their settings and the God-given strengths and gifts that they themselves have offered to the Church.

This distinctive portion of the US Latinx community has genuinely experienced a totally different reality than the Latinx people who live in Spanish-speaking areas of the mega-cities in the United States. The needs of Latinx families in the US Heartland are unique, and the resources available for them in their communities is nil. Even in the US Christian world, this specific group in this region have been under-researched and under-served.

Qualitative Research Choices

I chose qualitative research instead of quantitative research for the primary reason that this seemed to be the beginning of research about this group. In the past, the Latinx community in the United States was considered to be only in California, the Southwest, Florida and Texas. The Latinx immigrants of the central rural states were stereotyped as being exactly the same as those who live in the Southwest. However, their experiences were entirely different. The fact that this smaller group has been under-researched was because their stories had not been heard or understood. The language difference might account for only a part of that deficiency. As was

noted in the earlier chapters, the Latinx immigrant arriving in the US Heartland was viewed with suspicion as a foreigner not speaking English. It was essential to hear the stories about these pastors. There were things that could only be learned by hearing them tell their experiences as they ministered to other Latinx families in this region. As a statistically small minority in the rural communities, they have not been appreciated, nor have they been honored and respected by being listened to by the Church.

Instead of other qualitative methods, I chose to do individual interviews. The Latinx immigrant pastors who live and serve in the US Heartland are geographically spread out and are in smaller rural towns and communities. Even within a single state, they live in sparsely populated areas and are often separated by hundreds of miles from other Latinx pastors. Their isolation was a singular characteristic of their experience, and contrasted clearly with their Latinx friends and families who live within Latinx enclaves in large metropolitan areas. To attempt to form and research a focus group, or almost any other type of group, from people who live scattered over thousands of square miles of farmlands would have taken an expenditure of funds far beyond school, church or personal budgets. In addition to research limitations, the subjects themselves were usually secularly employed and were themselves limited in their availability in free time. Surveys, questionnaires, or case studies would have required an extended period of time and would have been limited to only one town or district. The experiences of the Latinx immigrant pastors, however, were more universally common throughout the rural regions, which aided the research. The interviewees, because they worked with the various Latinx immigrant pastors who lived in their geographical area, were good representatives who heard the pastors' stories and were trusted by them. In this way, the fourteen district Hispanic coordinators spoke for hundreds of pastors who could not be heard under the circumstances.

Selection of Interviewees

Safety Considerations

I interviewed Nazarene District Hispanic coordinators instead of the Latinx immigrant pastors themselves for safety reasons. In most of the districts of the Church of the Nazarene in the US Heartland, there are district coordinators of Hispanic ministries on the district leadership teams. These are usually experienced, ordained Nazarene elders who minister in Spanish and who lead Spanish-language ministries within the district. Many of these men and women were Latinx immigrant pastors who have been in the United States for fifteen years or more. Their work and residency status were taken care of many years earlier and most, if not all, had US citizenship or were permanent residents. They were completely familiar with the stories and experiences of the Latinx immigrant pastors, because they have led and served them as their district coordinators.

I interviewed these Hispanic district coordinators about the experiences of the Latinx immigrant pastors under their supervision. Not one time, did they share any names or locations in talking with me about the stories of the immigrant pastors. The Latinx immigrant pastors were protected by maintaining a protective distance through anonymity. I combined the stories from all fourteen Hispanic district coordinators, and the general themes and concerns were obvious. All details were removed so as to completely eliminate any possible incrimination of anyone.

Not all of the Latinx immigrant pastors who live in the US Heartland were citizens of the United States or had a permanent resident visa, permitting them complete and permanent status in this country. Almost every one of them had the possibility of qualifying for naturalization through other family members who live here. Many were already in the system because of their

original tourist visa or because of applying for citizenship. Some were in the five-year waiting period. Others did not have the economic means to pursue citizenship.

Many of these Latinx immigrant pastors did not have documentation and were trying to maintain a low profile until their status could be cleared. Undoubtedly, it would have been better to hear first-hand from the immigrant pastors themselves what they have experienced. However, to do so, would have certainly put them at risk. Some of them feared deportation. Some of them were employed clandestinely and could have lost their jobs if it were discovered that they lacked a permanent resident visa. Some of them entered the country without obtaining any visa. For this study, I chose not to interview any undocumented pastors out of considerations for *their* safety. I certainly wanted to learn about their experiences, but I wanted to hear their stories in a way that did not put any of them or their family in any risk.

Criteria

The selection of interviewees was based on three things. The people were living and ministering in the US Heartland. They were recognized as a district Hispanic coordinator or as a Latinx church leader within the Church of the Nazarene. They had been in this ministry on their district for at least five years.

I only interviewed people from the geographic focus of this study, which was the US Heartland. Unlike the US Southwest, Texas or Florida, in this region, there are few historic ties to Spain or Mexico. There was a very low percentage of families in the community who spoke Spanish as the first language. With few isolated exceptions, the districts of the Church of the Nazarene in this part of the country did not have any longstanding history of Spanish-language ministry in their towns. In fact, some of these districts had less than five Latinx congregations.

The coordinators understood this context. They were members of a small minority in their communities. They were pioneers in their area. They knew first-hand the advantages and the problems of this geographical region. Best of all, they knew their pastors, and the congregations and communities that they served. The years of experience of the coordinators enabled them to be excellent sources for this study.

These men and women were the official district Hispanic coordinators on their districts in the Church of the Nazarene. In some cases, it was a full-time district assignment. In other cases of smaller districts or districts which were only starting a Spanish-language work, the coordinators were in a part-time or volunteer capacity. In all instances, they were recognized Latinx pastors/leaders on their districts, because most of them had pastored and served as district leaders for many years. In a few instances, they were former missionaries who had returned to the United States after decades of service in Spanish-speaking countries.

Bias

It was important to be alert for any district Hispanic coordinator who might have felt pressure to defend their district, although there were no interview questions about the districts. As part of the district leadership team, a Hispanic coordinator is often a bridge between the original members of the district and the newly arrived immigrants. The coordinator is usually bilingual and spends significant time translating for both groups of the district, English-speakers and Spanish-speakers. Nevertheless, the focus was not on the districts until a few coordinators in their responses and experiences expressed comments about the districts. I found both defenders and critics of their own districts. Some coordinators were also very aware of the problems in nearby districts among the Latinx pastors.

Because the district Hispanic coordinators already fought hard and made significant sacrifices to obtain their US citizenship, they seemed a little less sympathetic to the citizenship struggles of their immigrant pastors who had recently arrived in the country. They certainly had more comprehension of the documentation situation than a native-born US citizen, but a slight condescension bias was present, nonetheless. There was also an assurance that all the immigrant pastors would obtain their citizenship or residency if they followed the correct procedures and were patient. The coordinators were quite optimistic, even as expressed some of the pain and difficulties that the immigrant pastors expressed to them.

There were subtle indications of nationalistic bias or regional bias because of the home countries of the Latinx immigrant pastor. In the United States, most Latinx immigrants have come from Mexico, even though there are many Spanish-speaking countries in the world. Roughly 80% of the Latinx immigrants are Mexican. Few coordinators, however, were from Mexico, and they did not show a favoritism nor antagonism towards Mexican immigrants or a bias against an immigrant from another country. It was noticeable, however, that nationalities were mentioned.

Similarly, the substantial regional cultural differences were noticeable among the Spanish-speakers. Even though they were "a minority among a minority," the cultural differences between immigrants from Spain and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries, or between South and Central Americans were heard. Vocabulary and expressions, customs and traditions, ecclesiology and church history are surprisingly unique to each group. This was notable and worthy of consideration.

Number

I wanted to interview fifteen participants coming from the approximately thirty-five districts that were considered to be within the limits of the US Heartland. Not all districts had a Hispanic district coordinator or developed a district strategy or support structure for their Latinx ministry. The absence of a district ministry support structure for Latinx ministry was not a true indication of the presence or absence of Latinx immigrant pastors in their districts. In some cases, as well, there were older Latinx pastors who had served as unofficial leaders in this type ministry and were invited to participate in this research, because they were excellent sources of stories from other Latinx pastors.

I sent personal emails to twenty-five district Hispanic coordinators and district leaders, requesting a five-minute telephone conversation to talk about the project. Eighteen people responded, fourteen of whom responded within a week's time, giving me a time and a personal telephone number to call. I spoke with all eighteen. One person declined to participate. One was unable to get back with me until after the time period of the interviews. Two others informed me that their districts had no Latinx ministry at this time. 72% of all the people I contacted responded; 94% of the respondents agreed to be interviewed; all those who agreed were interviewed. Although it would not be permissible to specify which districts responded, it should be noted that over 70% of the states in the US Heartland were represented.

The only change I made to my original plan was an adjustment that I made in the very first interview, which I then proceeded to repeat in every other interview. I noticed that the first general "grand tour" question gave the first interviewee so much latitude that, as the person kept talking, the subject of the Latinx immigrant became less the focus. This first answer usually took a minimum of ten minutes, and several times took about half of the time of the entire interview. My original second question was a general question about the availability of resources for

Spanish-speakers. However, since the first answers were so extensive, I decided to reword the second question in a way that redirected the focus back to the experiences of the Latinx immigrant pastors. Subsequently, in many interviews, this redirecting question helped keep the focus on the Latinx pastors.

Several points of my plan worked marvelously. The telephone call to actually raise the possibility of an on-camera interview was a success because, once the coordinators understood the project and heard the idea, most of them were very eager to participate. Since I was personally unknown to quite a few of these people, the telephone call helped in two ways. Even though I conscientiously avoided the questions of the interview, it was necessary to explain the informed consent form, and the interview procedures, and rules of anonymity and the reasons for protecting the Latinx immigrant pastors. The telephone conversations also gave the people who did not know me the opportunity to hear my Spanish. If I were given the opportunity to do research like this again, I would want to be physically with the interviewees and have more time before and after the interviews. From a distance, it is impossible to fully appreciate the context in which each individual is serving. I am certain that there were much more things to discover.

The inclusion and quantity of interviewees was *convenience sampling,* because those who participated were only those coordinators who responded and allowed themselves to be interviewed. The intention of this introductory research was that of discovery and inclusion of an under-served group of people by listening to their experiences through the ears of people who helped them.

Ethical Considerations

Anonymity

The names and locations of the Latinx pastors and the district Hispanic coordinators were not disclosed in this project, nor given to anyone. To completely protect the Latinx immigrant pastors whom the coordinators were describing, both the pastors and the coordinators are anonymous in the research. No one has been quoted by name, and no district, state or town was identified. Care was taken to make sure no geographical or cultural identification compromised the anonymity. In the published dissertation or in any subsequent articles, I will never include the names of the coordinators or the pastors. All translations and transcripts of the interviews and all field notes about the interviews have been kept on password-protected computers and will never be distributed.

With their informed consent, since I spoke to each of the coordinators via Zoom, it was necessary to record the conversation for the sole purpose of transcribing and translating into English the answers. No one else ever saw or heard these recordings.

Identifying details were omitted.

Any stories that might identify them had significant details changed. Significant details were modified in order to de-identify persons or events in the subject's story for the benefit of those pastors who might have needed protection in the telling of their story. The details about times and locations would have been important if this study were a formal investigation by trained experts in a different field of study. However, that was not necessary for this research. The objective of this study was to hear what the Latinx Nazarene pastors were telling their leaders, to be able to understand what they were going through.

Informed Consent

As is standard, the district Hispanic coordinators, by their informed consent, had complete freedom to answer any question that they wanted, and had the same freedom to decline to answer any question. The coordinators had the freedom to stop the interview and withdraw. The Informed Consent Form, in its original Spanish form and with its English translation, is found in Appendix A.

Interview Questions

I sought to understand, as best as possible, the full experience of these Latinx immigrant pastors. I thought that this should be in their own words. I listened for how they told their story and how they each organized their story. I used a "grand tour" question, and I simply tried to keep them talking about their experiences without putting words in their mouths. I asked exactly the same questions in the same order each time. There were only three questions. For a full listing of the questions asked, see Appendix B.

Interview Methodology

I scheduled a one-time Zoom interview with each district Hispanic coordinator in Spanish about the life experiences of their Latinx pastors. No preparation was needed for this interview; there were no right or wrong answers. It was simply the opportunity to hear the stories that the coordinators had heard about the circumstances, conditions, needs and concerns of their group of immigrant pastors. Each conversation took less than an hour.

The reason that I chose to use a video conference at this time was the coronavirus pandemic which imperiled both the interviewee and the researcher. By using a video conference application, neither person involved was exposed to any contagion. Many states and towns discouraged interstate travel at this time because of the pandemic, and even though at the time of

the interviews there were no official restrictions to face-to-face interviews, the availability of video conferencing via Internet removed any concerns of physical contact.

Video conferencing proved to be helpful to me to the interview process, because it recorded the interviewees comments completely and allowed me the freedom to really listen more carefully *during* the interview and gave me the ability to listen again afterwards, plus check the transcript. Even translating the transcript into English gave me more time to hear what each interviewee was saying and helped me to grasp what they were trying to convey to me.

I chose the Zoom videoconferencing application for two principal reasons. It was a very popular application which cost the interviewee nothing to download and use. It was readily available online, and had been used throughout the pandemic by churches and families, all the interviewees already had it and were familiar with how it worked. The Zoom application clearly asked permission for the host – the researcher – to record the conversation and then, throughout the conversation, the Zoom application indicated that the conversation was being recorded. This transparency was helpful and reinforced the trust between the researcher and the interviewee. The live video also assisted me in focusing on the interviewee's nonverbal communication and general attitude. When interviewees were emotional, it was very helpful. I felt connected with them, and I hope that the feeling was mutual.

I did not detect or notice any drawbacks due to videoconferencing that I think affected the research in any way. There was only one instance where it seemed that the interviewee's Internet connection was problematic. It might have been weather related, but I could not discern the cause. The interviewee made a comment about this being normal, so we continued as best we could. Obviously, being there in person would have avoided this issue.

Data Security

Videoconference Data

The videoconferencing recordings of the interviews were stored on my two personal computers, both of which were only accessible by passwords. One laptop was used as the primary storage for the recordings, the other was used as the backup location for storage. I was the only person able to access the recordings.

Transcriptions

After the interviews with the district Hispanic coordinators were completed, the recordings were transcribed by Zoom. These artificial intelligence-generated transcriptions of the interviews were done in less than three minutes each and saved and stored on my two laptop computers. The transcriptions were translated from Spanish to English shortly after the interviews and were carefully archived for future use in the study. All transcriptions and all translations were stored in computer files on the laptops with password protection. Only I have had access to these.

Security of Zoom Application

The Zoom application for videoconferencing had built-in encryption software. Each Zoom videoconference had several safeguards for the privacy and confidentiality of the interviewee and the researcher. Each videoconference had a single-use password given by me only to the one district Hispanic coordinator being interviewed. Each Zoom meeting was unique. It was locked and no one else entered during the interview. The locking of the conversation was to prevent hacking or eavesdropping. However, the interviewee and/or the host were able to stop the interview or leave at any time, but none ever did.

Translation

Interviews in Spanish

The experiences of the Latinx immigrant pastor were shared by the district Hispanic coordinators. All but one of the interviews were done entirely in Spanish. This was necessary because the Latinx immigrants and the district Hispanic coordinators worked, ministered and conversed normally in their first language, which was Spanish. The stories which were told to the coordinators were told in Spanish, and the vocabulary and expressions used both in the telling by the Latinx pastors and the reactions by the coordinators were in Spanish.

Translation

When the recordings of the videoconferencing interviews were transcribed, I used the secure Internet automated data translation service Sonix. These artificial intelligence-generated translations of the interviews from Spanish to English usually took less than five minutes. I then reviewed each translation, checking it with the recording of the interview. I was able to do this because Sonix is an application approved and habilitated by Zoom to use with their videoconferences. My supervision and corrections of the computer-generated translations was another safety precaution because, to best protect the stories of the pastors told to me in the interviews by the coordinators, there were no people involved from outside, such as translators.

My credentials for translating are that I have been speaking Spanish and working in Christian ministry since 1989, over thirty years. I learned Spanish while living and working in Barcelona, Spain, for nine years, working in my secular occupation. I pastored the Barcelona Church of the Nazarene in Spanish for five and a half years as well. I was later a commissioned career missionary with the Church of the Nazarene for ten years, living and working in South

America, where I worked, preached, wrote and taught in Spanish. I wrote eighty-eight pages of a seminary textbook in Spanish on the Biblical bases of worship.

Nine years ago, when I returned to the United States to care for my elderly parents, Nazarene Bible College hired me to establish and lead the degree programs for Hispanic Pastoral Ministries. All courses, student and professor recruitment, scheduling, administration and instruction were entirely in Spanish. I translated or supervised the translation of all forty-four courses for the Bachelor of Arts degree, which included lectures, assignments, course descriptions, administrative procedures, financial aid information, promotional information and educational materials. I planted and pastored for six years a Latinx congregation in Colorado Springs, and two years ago, began with my wife planting and pastoring another Latinx congregation in Kansas City, Missouri.

Analysis of the data

Grounded Theory

The scope and depth of the stories generated from the Latinx immigrant pastors and shared by their district Hispanic coordinators determined the research directions. In this way, I attempted to avoid preconceived assumptions or categorizations. In the course of the interviews with the many district Hispanic coordinators, several themes and concerns appeared as common among the Latinx immigrant pastors. Although, the US Heartland stretches approximately 1,500 miles from western Nebraska to eastern Ohio, the stories from completely distant parts of the region had key similarities. General concerns that were noted by coordinators, old and young alike, were noted and analyzed. The stories themselves established the themes, because I sought to understand what actually were their experiences, rather than trying to prove my own theories or propose my own solutions.

During the interviews, I heard similar stories about similar conditions or challenges for the Latinx immigrant pastors. As I reviewed each translated transcript, I observed these similarities and highlighted each subject by giving it a text highlight color. In the beginning, I did not coordinate the colors, but considered each interview separately. After the initial coding was completed, I returned to each interview to identify and label the subjects that were brought up during that interview. I made a special note in each interview when the interviewee either opened the interview or ended the interview discussing the subject. On a separate master sheet, I went back and combined all seventy-six subjects, and saw where major points were in common. I took the seventy-six subjects and organized them by related groups, such as isolation, rejection and fear.

Limitations of the Design

Secondary information

One of the principal limitations of the study was that many of the stories shared came from secondary sources, the district Hispanic coordinators, not the Latinx immigrant pastors themselves. As was noted repeatedly, this was because many of these immigrant pastors still had documentation issues that they had not yet been able to resolve. They were in a vulnerable position. The efforts to protect them, including, for example, the complete anonymity even of the coordinators, kept them from participating directly in this study.

On the other hand, I was frequently surprised to hear the details that the interviewee shared, all of which sounded very personal. It was certainly probable that the coordinators were including their own stories in and among the stories of the more recent Latinx immigrants. Because of the openness, honesty and humility of each interviewee, the sharing of the experiences was a huge benefit to this project.

Inability to Reach Saturation

There were only a limited number of interviews. There were only a small number of district Hispanic coordinators from the US Heartland, and although they represented hundreds of Latinx immigrant pastors and their congregations, it still was a small minority within the entire region. Data saturation was not reached because of the limited number of possible subjects and because to do more interviews and try to reach saturation was beyond the scope of this study. The more modest goal of this study was to learn what is happening in their particular context and to see how those experiences impacted their ministry.

Reflexivity

I am known as a former Nazarene missionary who served almost twenty years in Spanish-speaking countries. My later experience over the last ten years as a bivocational church planter-pastor of congregations for Spanish-speakers in Colorado and Missouri has put me in constant contact with Latinx immigrants who live in the US Heartland. My full-time job as a director of a pastoral ministries college degree program taught in Spanish has given me the opportunity to visit many Latinx congregations and to know personally many Latinx immigrant pastors, and to know and work with district Hispanic coordinators, district leaders and denominational leaders for almost ten years. My identity and ministry are not connected with the American Church, and they have not been so in decades. My first sermons ever, as a preacher, were not in English, although I only began learning Spanish after I turned thirty-one. My bias is clearly toward the Latinx people. Although I am not a Hispanic, my congregation, students and colleagues all know that I support the Latinx immigrants and try to advocate for them. I think that this advocacy in the church certainly boosted the response from the people I interviewed,

who probably rightfully reasoned that I sought them because I wanted to help them. Although I never said a word of agreement or disagreement in the interviews, no doubt they realized by my presence and my research, that I was already predisposed to accept and support their point of view. When they cried, I cried, too.

If my presence influenced their answers in any way, it probably was because I was an Anglo, but one who understood their language and wanted to hear their story in their words. It would have been obvious to them that I wanted to hear them so that I would be able to share what I heard with other Anglos who cared about them and wanted to help, too. The Latinx immigrants need to be heard, and I wanted to listen to them. This probably gave them the encouragement to say things that were difficult to hear. This probably allowed them the freedom to not have to give a perfectly balanced, equitable, defendable account.

But they did not have to defend anything to me. They did not have to explain a lot of things, because I knew the conditions, had heard the stories, and had seen first-hand some of the things they wanted to talk about. This freedom to express themselves and tell their side of their own story is exactly what I wanted. That is not to say that I personally agreed or disagreed with their perspective in every situation. I have had the opportunity to hear other sides of the same stories. Originally, I wanted this research project to be more of a fifty-fifty English-Spanish bilingual work. That was so that it would help both sides of the Church family. It is needed.

Conclusion

Through this research methodology, the utmost care was taken to shield the Latinx immigrant pastors, safeguarding them personally, while attempting to learn of the actualities of their pastoral ministry and the daily concerns about living in their communities. I interviewed fourteen Hispanic pastoral coordinators over Zoom with their complete informed consent and

then analyzed the data using grounded theory to find the themes that arose in their stories. In the next chapter, we will turn our attention to those themes.

Chapter Six

THE CRIES OF THE LATINX IMMIGRANT PASTORS

Introduction

The interviews for this project were very serious and at times, full of emotion. Sometimes, the pastors expressed anger. In other points in the interview, there were words of disappointment or hurt. The men and women gave voice to confusion and fear. More than a few times, the interview had to be paused to allow for the person telling the stories to gain emotional composure. As I listened for hours to the stories of Latinx immigrant pastors – not just in the interviews themselves, but also in my hours of transcription, translation, coding, and theme discovery, several times I was moved to tears. Many of these untold stories were heartbreaking.

This specific project seeks to sensitize the Church of the Nazarene to the experiences of their own Latinx pastors in this region. It is crucial to hear their voices, through *their* stories. I did not preemptively control the dialogue. The best way to understand their experiences was to humbly listen to what they were saying. In this chapter, we hear the Latinx immigrant pastors speak passionately and profusely. Several themes emerged. I have named these themes from the viewpoint and in the words of the immigrants themselves. The thoughts of these pastors and leaders in these interviews were expressed in honesty and humility. It is my hope that these cries will be received in the same manner. The Church should genuinely listen to her own people expressed here. Otherwise, these stories will remain merely words on a page.

WE ARE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE

"I really felt God's call."

Many of the district Hispanic coordinators that I interviewed said that their Latinx immigrant pastors have a passion and fire to serve the Lord. They were already active in their congregations, they sensed God speaking to their hearts, and they wanted to take part in the ministries of the church. Many came to their pastors, and then to their coordinators, volunteering and offering to get involved as ministers. They felt very strongly that God was calling them, and they had to respond. One coordinator told of his own personal experience:

> Even when I came here in 2003, I felt the call and I wanted to study. I started my lay ministry studies, not in the seminary, but in all this, I was still doing ministry at the same time. I was young and newlywed at the time, too. Really, I was not a pastor; I was not a prepared pastor; And also, I did not have any immigration documents. I could not have received a salary. Really, the fact was that I started the ministry without proper preparation. I really felt God's call was strong. I felt in my heart that I could do it, even going against all those who predicted that I would not be a good pastor because I was very shy and introverted.

This immigrant pastor couple started with nothing, had little training, and did not have their legal documents to work and reside in the United States. The young pastor felt strongly that God called him to pastor. This was even in spite of the limitations of his situation and without having much ministry education. Almost every coordinator interviewed echoed this same situation. There were always Latinx people coming forward asking to be trained and given opportunities to minister. They felt the call and were willing to pay the price to answer the call.

Another interviewee said, "There are more new brothers who are already saying to me, "Brother, where are we going to open the next church? I want to be a pastor, too!"

However, according to the coordinators who were interviewed, throughout the many districts of the Church of the Nazarene within the US Heartland, there has been little or no institutional support for the Latinx immigrant pastor. Without the prospect of a salary from their Latinx congregation and without any financial support from their districts, these pastors have to be bivocational pastors. They support themselves, their families and their ministerial work by finding jobs in the community, all the while pastoring in their spare time. This was part of the personal cost to them to minister.

Seven of the fourteen interviewees mentioned the cost of being a bivocational immigrant pastor. Several more referred to the lack of support financially, either from the local Latinx congregation or from other Church sources. One coordinator spent significant time on this point, giving three examples of how the pastors worked to supply for their own needs.

"We depend on the tamales we sell."

> There are many pastors who sell tamales, or sell frozen "mole." They make and sell the tortillas, but, in this sense, they work clandestinely. There's no work permit either. They could never get a permit from the Department of Health to sell in an official place, because they don't have the documentation to work officially. They depend on the tamales they sell, and some do very well. The good news is that some can sell 800 to 1500 tamales per week. …It takes a lot of work to prepare the tamales. So, they are focused on working hard inside the house, with giant pots that they have, and they cook the tamales. And they already have the places where they are going to deliver them. Usually, they go to construction companies where other Hispanics come out to buy those tamales to have their lunch. Many pastors are in this situation, selling food in this way.
>
> There is a pastor who sells a whole plate of chicken with the salad, rice and beans and wraps the plates in a special way and goes out to sell those dishes and also takes orders at his own house. So, the other Hispanics come and pick up their orders. This one has a 'meal of the day' or 'meal of the week,' and this is how he survives.
>
> Another pastor, to make a living, has learned to cut hair, and he gives haircuts in his home. So, obviously those who come to him are also Hispanic. I mean, these are ideas that they have developed to survive.

In all of these examples, these immigrant pastors, since they could not receive any financial support from their congregations, undertook new careers, learned new skills and established work plans to provide for themselves. They were not trained as cooks or barbers, but they were willing to do this so that they would be able to serve their congregations.

"We cannot receive even an offering from our church."

Another interviewee was very familiar with these financial problems that the Latinx immigrant pastors face, problems which were clearly connected to their legal documentation status. The congregation could not legally pay a salary or officially give offerings to their pastor. The coordinator told me:

> I do know some cases of undocumented people and one of their biggest difficulties …is the fact that to develop their ministry, they do not have the same benefits as those who are documented; they do not receive even an offering from their local church. They don't have access to the resources of their ministry itself for lack of having a bank account. And things like that are a very big challenge. Churches have been very creative in the term of compensation, because it is illegal to compensate a person who does not have documentation, but one can support the ministry that is being developed. And there are ways to develop the ministry so that it is not a heavy burden on the one who is ministering.

Several other coordinators mentioned that some congregations were very creative so that they can give money to help their pastoral families. However, a large majority of pastors simply were bivocational, and supported themselves, their households and their ministries by their own work. They and their families sacrificed to be able to minister.

> These pastors are mostly bi-vocational and work with freelance jobs, often in the area of construction and house cleaning. And I don't know of any that I know (personally) who used false papers to work. But I've heard stories, but I think the vast majority of them, to avoid the issue of false papers, have their own businesses. They are all bivocational and independent, doing construction work and cleaning.

Notable in these stories were the difficult sacrifices of time and energy that the Latinx immigrant pastors made to support themselves and their ministry call. However, the physical and emotional stress of the long hours trying to work and minister, took a toll on the pastors.

"I'm not living, just surviving."

An interviewee commented on this:

> One can also be very critical and say they are illegal and this (activity) is not politically correct, and that you have to obey the authorities and so on. But it is an issue that will not end. The reality of the Hispanic pastor in these middle states, and perhaps many more places, but in these states that you are investigating, the immigration crisis opens the door to the health crisis, the financial crisis, the family development crisis, the intergenerational family problems. And the same is true psychologically and emotionally, because, they say "I'm in a survival mode, not living, but surviving." Imagine what energy this pastor has left to develop a great, powerful ministry as he dreams it should be, when he has to dedicate 40, 50 hours to survive. And that's his dedication, thank God. But is there a door open for him to do it?

The immigrant pastors felt squeezed. The immigration crisis was merely the start of a series of interrelated crises. Each issue added to the previous one, and assaulted the immigrant pastors and their families to various degrees. The pressure to support themselves led many to accept jobs and employment conditions that also took a toll on them physically. Yet, they still had dreams of what the ministry could be. They still wanted to pastor, so they accepted the price.

"We have very rough jobs… we leave work exhausted."

Talking about the price of ministry, one coordinator noticed that most of the available jobs in his area were on evening shifts at factories. However, accepting evening and midnight shifts at the factories made their ministry efforts quite difficult for the pastors. Speaking of this, he said:

> In this area where I've been serving, the jobs that people take are night jobs. So, you hardly can do any services during the week. Sunday is the only service that can be done. The jobs that mostly happen here are manufacturing auto parts. Some of them work in

> cleaning, but they have really very, very rough jobs, and they come out practically exhausted.

The coordinator noted that these late hours not only directly impacted the ministry that they could do with their congregations, it also affected the pastors' pastoral ministry preparation. The classes were strenuous. In addition, the secular jobs that the pastors had were fatiguing. Overall, they always seemed to be exhausted. The price that these pastors were paying was a physical one.

> We tried to open a ministry study center one time, with sixteen students. Then, they all had the night shift again. Do they sleep in the daytime? When do they do their homework? So, when one student would come in, practically any one of them would come to the class and nod off, and fall sleep. There are some of them who really sacrifice hours of sleep in order to be involved in the church.

"We have to work two or three shifts."

A coordinator in another part of the US Heartland saw the same problem, and at first, he blamed the immigrants themselves, who, he said, had changed from the way that they had lived in their home country to another way of living in the United States.

The interviewee said:

> In the United States, our own people change. They're different. It changes their way of thinking, their way of speaking, their way of behaving. And that's where the big challenge is for the pastors. We say that the brother is no longer like he was in Mexico, or in Guatemala, or in El Salvador. They weren't coming to Church, and they always were pretty tired. And then I found out that some of them had to work two or three shifts to be able to afford their expenses, to be able to pay for everything in the United States, the house and the family support, and so on, that they needed to pay. When they came to the United States, they had to spend money to come here: $5,000, $6,000, $10,000. And so, they spend years paying that money.

This coordinator revealed a point that many Americans do not realize: many immigrants incurred heavy debt being smuggled into the United States. This additional pressure on the immigrants drove them to take extras shifts or second jobs to supplement their income and help

them pay off their debts. The coordinator discovered that he was mistaken in his own assessment of these immigrant pastors, because he had not considered their financial commitments and the personal cost of entering the country illegally.

"We prepare our sermons after 60 hours of work."

Similarly, in another interview, a coordinator complained that the American expectations for these bivocational immigrant pastors did not consider their employment situations. He said:

> We once heard a training from an American brother who had a doctorate in preaching, which was great, but he proposed thirty-eight hours for the Sunday sermon that he would preach 35 minutes. It's unreasonable to require 40 hours for the sermon after 60 hours of work. The American pastors do not understand, they are not in touch, empathetically and cognitively, with the problem of the Hispanic pastor. It's definitely not the same situation.

The Latinx pastors face significantly different congregational expectations. Another coordinator stressed the importance to the Latinx community of the relational aspects of a pastor's ministry: "Calling, visiting and physically accompanying the members through key life moments…" are very important in the Latinx church community. These expectations come from outside of the congregation, because the Latinx family unit is much more extensive, even in the isolation of an immigrant's life. Many family members who are not part of the congregation expect ministry on their behalf from the pastors: *quinceañeros*, weddings, christenings or funerals.

"I can't take it anymore!"

A coordinator observed that many districts in these central Midwestern states were unable or unwilling to help their Latinx immigrant pastors. As a result, some of these pastors were

unable to continue. They tried to make the ministry work, but the long extra hours and heavy pressure they felt were too much for them. The interviewee said:

> Sometimes pastors just give up, quit, throw in the towel and say "I can't take it anymore. And that's happened to us a thousand times. The shortage of pastors is incredible, but we are not creating a system for these pastors to thrive either. That's how I see it.

The high price that the immigrant pastors were paying to be able to adequately provide for their families became a secondary matter to many when personal health crises hit them. Several coordinators mentioned this, but one coordinator shared several stories about this.

"I can't pay this doctor bill!"

An interviewee shared the common situation of the immigrant pastors and their lack of health insurance and access to health care. The price to pay was literally too much for them, because they had no money for this:

> I get calls maybe once or twice a month, sometimes more, depending on the season, and someone says, "What can I do with this prescription or with this doctor's bill?"

"I am financially ruined (by a hospital bill)."

An immigrant pastor had a serious medical condition develop. Where could he go and what could he do? The coordinator related what goes through the mind of these pastors:

> Maybe a pastor has to go to a hospital. The pastor suddenly won't be able to work, so now, there won't be an income. He has to be in the hospital for a couple of days. You know the hospital bills here are incredible. They don't have health insurance. This pastor is financially ruined. But, paying $20,000, 30,000 is unthinkable for these pastors. They are in no condition, financially, to do this. …There are many stories that are related to the lack of health insurance.

The Latinx immigrant pastors who had to deal with catastrophic health care costs would be financially ruined. In some cases, mentioned by a few of the coordinators, their districts helped. However, the phone calls with pastors calling about their health needs came "at the rate

of one or two a month." Those pastors who were undocumented had no access to adequate health facilities and doctors, and the most serious illnesses and conditions were the most urgent calls. Latinx immigrant pastors, who are already paying the price to minister, now were paying an even higher price with their health.

One interviewee spoke about the serious need of Christian counselors and social workers to accompany the Latinx immigrant pastors and families. This coordinator gave many stories and many reasons for seeking help: the traumas of their arrival, the stresses of their assimilation into the new culture, the rejection because of their illegality, the racism that they faced, the fears because of language, their economic pressures, the difficulties of their work environment, and the fears that they might be deported, to name several.

> I can tell you about the family pressure, the pressure on the pastor's marriage and the children. You know well that the whole process of acculturation or culture is a process that can take 20 years at any given time. These pastors need counseling, a social worker, a professional counselor because their children speak English and have an American culture, while their parents have not developed English skills, have not become fully involved in American culture. After I'm done talking to you today, a pastor will come and bring me his daughter who has typical teenage emotional developmental problems. But where else could they go? They can't afford a professional counselor. This is the reality of their situation.

"We didn't go to a doctor."

> A woman came to me. Her husband died because of Covid. She is also in a very severe depression, and I said that she should go to a doctor, she should be medicated for the depression she has, because we have risk issues, suicide issues and things like that. Yesterday, I was talking to the pastor who is bringing her, and he said "No, we didn't go to a doctor. We just went to some naturalist doctors and they gave us pills so that she could sleep." All right, that helps, but being able to sleep isn't going to immediately heal her depression. There is the medical aspect. Tim, there are so many stories, it happens every day. I'm sharing stories of things that happen every day here. How can I help these pastors? They don't have the proper documentation. They're not going to make it. The door is closed. Period.

The coordinator interviewed was extremely concerned that the undocumented immigrant pastors were in a serious crisis which became amplified by their health situation. The interviewee was frustrated with the system and bluntly said, *"How can I help these pastors? ...They're not going to make it."*

"Yet, we are firmly fighting for the Lord."

The Latinx immigrant pastors were willing to suffer to serve. They were paying the price of ministry physically, emotionally and socially. But they would not give up without a fight. One interviewee said:

> Even though sometimes they get paid a little bit or sometimes they don't get paid at all, though sometimes they have to deal with family problems, with adverse situations, though sometimes they also face some kind of criticism or problems within the Anglo community of the church, when they share buildings and have to deal with all this, they continue to do so with love and at no time is the message heard that "I want to leave, I can't stand this." On the contrary, they are firmly fighting for the Lord, trying to establish a strong ministry. So, it is to be admired the degree of effort that each one of them makes to succeed in their work for the Lord. I say it because it's true.

Another coordinator described the immigrant pastors, the reason that they serve, how they viewed their ministries, and what they thought was actually taking place in this region:

> It's a blessing to be in this country. With all these problems, it's still a blessing. And the other thing that we also consider a lot is that, in spite of everything, we are talking about people who have been called by the Lord. And not only that they have been called, but they have the humility to say "yes" to the Lord when He calls them. Because no one in his right mind would accept the responsibility of a church on himself or of planting a church. But it is only because the Holy Spirit has done a work in the lives of these people. It is not logical, it is not rational, it is not economically "sound." Do you understand me?

"I'm still staying here. I still see the hand of God."

> This is a miracle in itself. There are many sad stories, but many pastors have told me, for example, "Pastor, I know what is happening here. And I'm still staying here. I still prefer this. I still see the hand of God. I see God's blessing that my church started from scratch,

> that there are thirty of us now. It's a miracle." And that's the blessing. Such is the blessing of serving the Lord. Even if the earthly world and the earthly laws want to prevent it.

In view of the high price that the Latinx immigrant pastors were paying, it was natural to seek answers for help for them from their Church. As was just noted, the interviewees were frustrated. I will now turn to what the Latinx immigrant pastors often heard.

THEY DON'T WANT US

"They tell us, 'We don't want undocumented immigrants.'"

The Latinx immigrant pastor felt rejection and opposition by some Church leaders in the US Heartland. This was sometimes expressed in language describing the immigrant pastor as being evil. Often, there was an immediate shunning or ostracizing by the Anglos. One interviewee said,

> "Once they hear that he is undocumented, it's like they see the devil himself. Then, it seems that they don't need him now, and they cross him off the list. I've been told, "No, we don't want undocumented immigrants; we would get in trouble."

The rejection felt by the Latinx pastors was a shock, because they had been told that the Americans were actively recruiting Latinx pastors. However, when the district leaders found a Latinx man or woman nearby who was trained and willing to minister, but who did not yet have documentation, they were rejected and even opposed. Many coordinators were told that no undocumented pastors would ever be considered for congregations who were without pastors. It is hard to imagine this vehement rejection of wonderful men and women, some of whom were ordained, experienced Nazarene pastors arriving to help the Latinx congregations. One respected church leader said, "Maybe as a Church, we see the acceptance of the undocumented pastor like Pharisees who did not want any healing to take place on the Sabbath, so that no laws would be

broken! However, mistreating and rejecting a fellow human being is breaking an even higher law!"

"The Church who ordained us was the one who rejected us."

In some parts of US Heartland, the Church officially rejected and opposed the undocumented Latinx pastors, and refused to let them serve the Hispanic communities where they lived. One interviewee gave this account:

> One of the stories that I have was of a pastor from (a Latin American country) who was with us last year, and who planned (to acquire his papers) to stay properly. He had come on a tourist visa and, believe me, the man had great financial support to plant churches. He was an ordained minister already in the church. He was a pastor who was seminary-trained, had experience and was "ready to go," as we would say. I spoke to the district superintendent here in our district. We had an interview with him. But when we got to the paperwork part, the superintendent didn't want to go any further.
>
> How do we use these pastors? We let them go. …Our church, the one that gave them the ministerial preparation and the one who ordained them, was the one who rejected them when they came to the United States to serve. The Nazarene Church ceases to be the international church for this type of pastor. That really hurts, doesn't it?! We've had to say no to pastors -- as many as five of them. …We could have had five Hispanic churches in this district. But we only have one. Only because of the policy of not wanting to help, not wanting to embrace, not wanting to deal with immigration procedures.

This was similar to what a coordinator was told by another district in the US Heartland, which was quoted in the first paragraph of this chapter: "No, we don't want undocumented immigrants; we would get in trouble." This was not a denominational national stance or policy. There were many other districts within the area of twenty-one states of this research who did not require documentation to pastor a Latinx congregation. This was not the policy of districts in several other parts of the United States. Yet, it was the rule for some districts.

"They tell us, 'You guys are over there. We are over here.'"

One interviewee spoke about feeling rejected by the American Church. It was a particularly bitter experience, because it seemed that the local pastors and congregations originally were very welcoming to the Latinx immigrant pastors and congregations. However, the coordinator felt that this was not their genuine feeling. They really were maintaining their distance and control. He said:

> Some churches will want to start some kind of Hispanic ministry just to say that they have a Hispanic ministry, but they don't fully embrace the congregation. It is always "You guys are over there. We are over here."
>
> I have seen Hispanic pastors who have struggled with a lot of things. And everything has been very divided. They say to the Hispanics, "You know, you are part of our congregation, but you all have your corner, your little room, your old space or whatever, and we get everything else**.** And then we can call ourselves a multicultural, or bilingual church."

This spoke to the coordinator's point of not welcoming the Latinx church people. The Anglo church permitted the Latinx congregation to have an area or a space to use, but that was all. They were not embraced and accepted by the Americans. As he pointed out in the first sentence, it did not seem like they genuinely wanted a Latinx or multicultural ministry.

"They tell us, 'We don't want the Spanish language in our service.'"

The interviewee continued:

> And you hear people who don't want the Spanish language in the service. They don't want the mixture of songs. And they don't want translation in the service, because they don't want to hear us doing both languages. We actually had a church that had a multicultural vision, and they started working. But when they did the switch to become a bilingual congregation, a lot of families left the church just because they didn't like to listen to English and Spanish. So, they decided to find a church that was just wholly in English.

This commentary reflected the rejection by a congregation after they had first envisioned and worked to be a multicultural ministry. However, there came a point when the Americans

realized that they really did not want to include the Latinx immigrants if that meant that they had to listen to Spanish or make any cultural adjustments to accommodate them.

"They began locking us out of rooms in the church."

In some cases, the rejection by the Americans was never openly expressed, but was there, nonetheless. A district Hispanic coordinator shared:

> I had an experience with a pastor who came to the (American) congregation and started to open a (Hispanic) work, and the American church and American pastor said to him, "Welcome." They smiled at him; they were very happy. But the congregation began to grow and began to bring children. The children played here and played there. The Hispanic church were not told anything, but little by little, they realized that the rooms were being locked and they could not open the doors. They couldn't access that room anymore, then, they couldn't access another one. …(The Latinx pastor) came to me and said, "Pastor, last week, the whole church was open. Today, there are now two rooms we can't get into." (Later, he told me,) "Today, we no longer have access to the sound system."
>
> This was because the Americans didn't want their things touched. And the Americans never said anything to the Hispanics. …And so, it's hard to explain. It is difficult to tell them because they say "we are brothers, we are Nazarenes, we are children of the same God. But we're having this situation."

The coordinator concluded this story by saying, "That's one of the most difficult things that I've had to do in the ministry: to explain to the (Latinx) pastors, to help them understand." He was attempting to explain to them why they were openly welcomed and then later restricted, without any communication or word of explanation from their American hosts.

"They said, 'You have three months to vacate the building.'"

Hundreds of miles away in another part of the US Heartland, another interviewee had almost the same experience, but this time, the American congregation simply asked the Latinx congregation to leave:

> The Americans adopted the strategy of letting the Hispanic church be autonomous with the administration of their own resources, but it began to bother them that the Hispanic

> church was growing and had so many children. (That is) because, of course, Hispanic children, unlike American children, are very rambunctious. They run here and there; they open doors, close doors, they get things dirty, and they don't clean up. And then it got to the point where the Americans got so upset that they gave us three months to vacate the building. It was a very difficult situation…

The issue here was likely that the American church had different expectations for the Latinx children's ministry, especially where it directly affected the American church's facilities. The problem could have been avoided by clearly communicated guidelines for use of common facilities. However, it was evident also that there was a cultural difference of expectations for the behavior of the children. The final result of this rejection and opposition was a permanent split of the two groups. In the beginning, it was the strategic decision to allow the Latinx congregation to autonomously supervise their use of the mutually shared building that led to this. However, the underlying issue was that the Americans and the Hispanics had differing standards, culturally, of that supervision. This, ultimately, led to the breakup of a very advantageous partnership.

Additionally, the intensity of the disagreement is evidenced by the immediacy of the eviction: the Latinx congregation had three months in which to find another place to meet and to leave. Implicit in this move was the need for the Latinx congregation to be fully self-supporting. This very short time frame added stress to the situation and plainly demonstrated the degree of unhappiness of the American congregation with the Latinx group.

"They said, 'We have struggled with Hispanic churches.'"

One veteran district leader honestly expressed the sentiment: "We have struggled with Hispanic churches. …We have not fared well with Spanish-speaking congregations." He went on to say that currently they had no one in their district leadership team who could help them. This leader did not say that his district did not have Latinx immigrants present there. He only said that

the district had not been successful in meeting the needs of the Latinx community, establishing any Latinx congregations which lasted, nor currently had a Latinx coordinator who could help.

Many Latinx immigrant pastors expressed great frustration with their districts over this point. They saw how they were treated. They felt the rejection and isolation. They were disturbed over the contradictions between what was expressed or promised and what actually occurred with the Latinx district ministry. One Latinx immigrant pastor said:

> There's no clear vision about *how* to start Hispanic works in this part of the country here. It's a peculiar situation. Here we are in an American world without resources for Hispanic work, and we have to be connected to the vision of the district, the vision of the coordinator or the vision of the Hispanic pastors with the vision also of the American *churches.* That's because the American churches are autonomous, and although the superintendent can say one thing, the American churches end up doing what they want. Then we don't (have a place or have support). Sometimes we have more problems with the Nazarene structure, than winning souls for Christ. So, it's a real problem. The problem is when a church does not want to give the use of its building and wants to charge rent (for that use), and on top of that we have no resources. And if we get stuck in this situation, we're not going to find a way out.

The coordinator was frustrated because he felt that the American congregations and his district leaders were talking about Latinx ministry when actually they only superficially supported the Latinx congregations. He witnessed the unwillingness of the American congregations to partner with Latinx pastors. Few had agreed to work with Latinx congregations, and some of those who did agree, decided that the Latinx congregations should pay rent for the space they used. It was not a partnership, only a financial arrangement. Nor was it an intentional team effort by two sister congregations to reach the entire community.

An interviewee said:

> In reality, what we have done is we tried to start works without finances, without having sufficient help to be able to start Hispanic works. I mean, there is no intention on the part of the organization to start works. They want to start works, but without investing even a single dollar. I mean, how are we going to start a church? There is institutional pressure to start churches, but there is no support to start the churches.

"We feel racism here, even from the pastors themselves."

One interviewee spoke specifically about the racism experienced by the Latinx immigrants in the US Heartland:

> We are in an area where the levels of racism are not equal to or worse than the more (universally recognized) Hispanic areas of the United States. But here, the *social* rejection of the immigrant is very great. I mean, there is racism here even from the pastors themselves. There isn't a connection between the American and the Hispanic congregations, because some of the Americans reject our community."

This was exactly what the Latinx immigrant experienced, according to the interviewees. The rejection was first by the general American society. However, it also was a rejection demonstrated by the disconnection between the American and Latinx congregations, where no connection was made or little interaction was ever sought. There was only a benign co-existence between the two groups who ministered in the same building or who lived in the very same neighborhood. Furthermore, this rejection was evidenced by an antagonism present in some American pastors. This was not a rivalry or competition between two similar-sized groups. There was an overwhelming and obvious majority of English-speaking members. One coordinator said that there were more than eighty American congregations on his district, while he could count the Latinx congregations on his hands.

The response of the Church was noticeably unsympathetic and superficial. The interviewees gave few good examples of Anglo and Latino congregations working together in the context of the US Heartland. The attitudes that the Latinx immigrants faced coming from the general population were even more difficult and were the subject of many stories. I will turn to these, now.

THEY TELL US THAT WE DON'T BELONG HERE

Outside of the Church, the Latinx immigrants faced enmity even more. They were characterized as aliens, foreigners and animals. They were challenged with demands to change themselves, and to do it quickly. Language was one area, but there were many others. They were told that they were not welcome here, unless they changed, but the truth evidenced in several stories was that they were not welcomed even when they learned English and assimilated into the culture.

"They tell us, 'Hey, you're in America, speak English!"

One interviewee said that the following story was common to Spanish-speakers:

> We haven't had many episodes of racism, but we have had some. A pastor's wife was talking in Spanish with other Hispanics (who were with her) in the bank and one of these people confronted them and said "Hey, you all are in America, you have to speak English." And he was upset. It wasn't in the church, it was outside the church, in a bank. …but that experience has been lived by many of us.

The opposition here by the man was over the Latinx people speaking to each other in Spanish in a public place. The American man was vehemently "upset" with their speaking Spanish and that he "confronted them." His anger and conflictive behavior were based solely on the Spanish being spoken. The coordinator explained this reaction as a common experience in this region. The Latinx people often speak Spanish to each other in private conversations at home, work or in private situations. However, since the conversation took place in a bank in the community in his area of the country, the American was enraged by this and challenged them. He felt that the Hispanics were unquestionably in the wrong because, to him, to be in the United States required that they only speak English.

"We came here understanding no English whatsoever."

This language issue was brought up by every one of the district Hispanic coordinators in reference to the experiences of the Latinx immigrant pastors. The fact plainly stated was that very few Latinx immigrants arrived with any English language skills. They came from places where only Spanish or indigenous languages were spoken and written. They left a culture based on Spanish only and only a few had ever studied English while in their home country. According to the pastors, English was rarely a subject taught in the schools of their home countries. According to the coordinators, many of the immigrant pastors never finished high school, and in the rural areas of their home countries, many of them never advanced beyond sixth grade. One coordinator said that all of the first generation Latinx immigrants that he knew came here understanding no English whatsoever.

"We won't minister successfully without learning English."

When they arrived, and, especially in the US Midwest, they entered a culture of only English. Eight of the fourteen coordinators emphasized this as a major point. Three coordinators said that teaching English to the immigrant pastors and congregations was absolutely essential. They said that it should even be a much higher priority than the ministerial training of the pastors. One coordinator said, "This is important because the immigrants cannot minister successfully in the United States without being fluent in English."

"Why should we learn English, if we're going to be deported?"

On the other hand, there was an internal confrontation because of language in the lives of the Latinx immigrant pastors and their children. Language was indirectly connected to citizenship. This conflict within the family was of greater concern that the rejection that they faced outside their homes by the Americans. An interviewee recognized that:

> If a child is born here in the United States, he becomes an American citizen. Therefore, a child doesn't have the same mentality as his parents. A child is thinking that he wants to build his future in this country. But the parents are thinking that any minute they're going to get caught and get deported, so they don't have to (think about staying). That discourages them from learning the language and from inserting themselves in the culture."

Because of documentation and English language ability, the paths to the future of the family diverged. There was one direction for the immigrants' children, because they had American citizenship and, most likely, had English fluency because of their education in the US elementary school system. Contrastingly, their parents' future was in an entirely different direction because of their uncertain legal status and their inability to read, write and communicate in English. This division in the home was the source of much anguish in Latinx families. One coordinator expressed this as a heavy weight added on top of the immigrant family. "This is because there is a conflict in family itself and against the culture: (The Spanish-speaking parents) are not accepted by the Americans. Americans don't want Hispanics in this country. So that's the conflict."

"For us, English was intimidatingly hard."

Ten of the interviewees said that the language barrier and the cultural differences were the biggest obstacles for the Latinx immigrant pastor. The language barrier was intimidatingly formidable for pastors and families. Most of these spoke only Spanish when they arrived as new immigrants, and few had ever attempted to learn English. They simply did not understand anything. They could not follow simple instructions given by people who were trying to help them settle in. More than the cultural differences, the inability to understand English created the most distress and hardship for them.

This inability to understand English also led to a difficult cultural adjustment for the Latinx immigrant pastors. Cultural adjustment included doing very familiar necessary tasks in a completely unfamiliar new way for reasons that they could not figure out without help from others. A coordinator said that there were "so many new things for them to learn in the new culture that it was dizzying." The staggering differences between their former life and their new life unnerved many of them. They did not understand the lack of public transportation. They were not prepared for the prevalent use of computers. Their family routines were upended by finding that the only grocery shopping available was in super-sized stores an hour away. These were examples given by coordinators of the adjustments that immigrants faced. Some returned to their home countries after a few weeks.

The immigrants saw a totally different side of life in the United States than what they thought they would see. As was pointed out in an earlier chapter, few of these immigrants came from cities or metropolitan centers. They sought out the farm lands of the US Midwest because they were familiar with managing the land, crops and livestock. Yet the cultural differences that they found, even in the rural areas and towns, were disconcerting. The customs, habits and practices of the Midwestern communities were similar yet baffling to them. Two coordinators said that, in some cases, the differences were such that the immigrants merely ignored what their neighbors did and attempted to do everything exactly as they had in their home countries. This generated a reaction from the local residents and caused friction between both groups.

"They say that we're either criminals or we came to steal jobs."

Part of the blame for the racism and hostility towards the Latinx immigrant was due to the political rhetoric that was heard regularly during election seasons. One coordinator noted:

> This (federal) government has been very bad for the Hispanic (church) work, it has affected us in many areas, including at the level of local church. It has been proclaimed that "They are either criminals or they come to steal Americans' jobs. They have no reason to be breaking our laws when they enter the border illegally." When a prejudice like that is expressed, the American doesn't ask if that person is illegal or legal, or if he was born here in this country. The American simply calls everyone the same. If you were told that some Hispanics are criminals, you won't say "this one is," and "this one is not." The Americans will label them all the same. This kind of prejudice really affects us.

This person pointed out several things in that interview. His primary critique was a universal assumption by Americans in the region that all Latinx people are criminals. This was a blanket dismissal of an entire ethnic group. Even the fact of criminal activity for immigration was assumed by the Americans. This completely disregarded both the US-born Latinx and the Latinx who had acquired their citizenship or permanent residency. As the coordinator observed, these Americans did not make any distinctions; they presupposed that all Latinx people "…are either criminals or they come to steal Americans' jobs."

"They say that we should go back to where we belong."

The immigrant pastors felt rejected because of their lack of legal documentation. According to the coordinators, this was expressly true in the towns and rural areas of the US Midwest, where they were branded sometimes as *lawbreakers* by the local residents. These residents in the community were vocal in their rejection of these newcomers, even though, as was shown in Chapter Three, all of these immigrants were hired and worked in local businesses and had come to the region specifically to work. The immigrants were fully employed but were illegal. The immigrant pastors told of being ignored, or treated rudely.

Another coordinator remembered hearing a pastor tell of his daughter being told by a person that she and her family "should go back to their country where they belong." The pastor's daughter had been speaking Spanish with a friend, but replied to the person that she "was born in

the United States and had lived here her entire life." The issue was not documentation, but belonging. The American thought that anyone who spoke Spanish did not belong in this country.

"I was singled out publicly because my skin is darker."

A coordinator recalled a story of an immigrant pastor being singled out publicly "because his skin was darker." The coordinator said that the pastor felt the high tension of the moment only because of his race, not his language. That was because the pastor was completely alone and was not speaking to anyone. According to the coordinator, this was a very common experience for many Latinx immigrant pastors.

In a similar vein, a second coordinator referred to his own experience being considered an illegal immigrant simply because he was ethnically Hispanic. The people who confronted him did not realize that he spoke English, that he had advanced university degrees, or that he had been living in this part of the US Heartland for more than twenty years. This type of prejudice was brought up by many of the interviewees. One immigrant pastor met and married an American. He soon saw that many times Americans spoke directly to his wife. They only spoke with her, never thinking that she was standing next to her husband, or even that she was acquainted with him. Unfortunately, these occurrences were not limited to public places such as banks or grocery stores. These types of rejection also happened at district assemblies and events when many congregations would come together mixing language groups. While there might not have been actual racist attitudes behind these incidents, they indeed illustrated the obvious conflict of two cultures.

"They say, 'Latinx people are good at cheating.'"

Four coordinators interviewed spoke out about the rejection that the immigrant pastors explained that they felt was caused by cultural differences. It is a problem when one majority culture dismissively sets aside as being of lesser value the actions or expressions of another minority culture. The dominant culture views this as acceptable, sometimes attempting to justify their rejection by making accusations based on stereotypes. This point has been examined in earlier chapters. One coordinator listed the stereotypes expressed by people: "Latinx men are liars… are womanizers… Latinx people are never on time… Latinx people are good at cheating." These stereotypes are prejudicial, but they continue the false narrative about all Latinx people being bad or illegal. While it is correct to say that many Latinx immigrants in the US Heartland are undocumented, nevertheless, there are Latinx families who settled here decades ago, which was also pointed out earlier. The immigrant pastors, families and their congregations have faced this rejection because of their race or their cultural differences.

WE ARE ALONE AND AFRAID

Many Latinx immigrant pastors and families expressed their feelings about this rejection and isolation. They spoke of fear of being caught and deported. They were stunned that they were excluded by the Church.

"We are not strange animals!"

Some coordinators thought that the isolation and rejection felt by the Latinx pastors reflected their minority status within the US Heartland. They were such a small percentage of the overall population, that they were not seen as belonging there nor needing to be included by the American resident majority. The Latinx pastors were astounded at the level of rejection and

opposition of the Americans. It was as if they were not only considered criminals and outsiders, but considered something worse. One interviewee conveyed this point:

> If I had a chance to speak in front of the entire American church, I'd tell you, “Latinos are not strange animals, are we? We are people created in another culture, shaped in another manner and very differently from many of you here. But we're people like you. We come from the same race. Maybe we have different color because of the circumstances of environment, geography, or by biological issues. But we're not “other” people. We're the same, right? We have values and principles. Perhaps they are according to our culture, but we have our values. We are not stupid or idiots. We're not dummies. We are people who believe that we have intelligence as well and that we can contribute, that we can add value to culture, value to the church, value to the leadership, and we don’t want them to exclude us from their plans. They must not exclude us. We're part of you.

This Latinx immigrant pastor expressed what he felt after dealing with Americans in the US Heartland for more than a decade. It seemed to him that they all had determined that because the Latinx pastors or members were so different from themselves, this relieved them from any responsibility to include or help them. Their *strangeness* was enough of a reason that they were left out of everything. He strongly asserted that the Americans dismissed the Hispanics as being unintelligent, unprincipled, and incapable of contributing to the Church. Yet, the Latinx pastors and churches could contribute and should serve alongside the American Church. In fact, the interviewee saw their rejection and antagonism as ignoring the fact that the Latinx Christians were also a part of the Church, a part of the community and a part of society.

According to a few coordinators, the immigrant pastors felt rejected because of their cultural differences. This is the other side of cultural adjustment in that it refers to the local residents and their response to the different customs being practiced in their presence by the immigrant. The local residents have not had experience with Latinx customs and habits, as was noted in an earlier chapter, and sometimes they reject what they did not understand. Rather than try new spices, flavors and customs, these cultural differences are roughly dismissed or refused

in a scornful manner. Immigrant pastors said that this rejection not only affected them and their family members personally, it hindered their ministry and their congregations, too.

"At no time did I ever feel like a pastor."

However, as was mentioned in an earlier story, the Latinx immigrant pastors felt excluded from participating with the other Nazarene pastors. The interviewee said, "we don't want them to exclude us from their plans. They must not exclude us." This exclusion has already taken place numerous times throughout the US Heartland region with the various districts. The problem was not rejection, it was an ignorant acquiescence or insensitive conformity to continuing stereotypes and isolation. A coordinator told the story of an immigrant pastor who also was the pioneer Latinx Nazarene pastor on his district.

> I want to start with the story of this pastor. He emigrated to the United States and was in the middle of a district where the district superintendent organized a pastors' retreat. This is something very common to do in many districts. This pastor had very little English. He wanted to be present, in fact, he was invited because he came to plant churches (on that district). So, when the time came, he had to pay the fees for the camp, which is something very normal, right? But this pastor had no resources, he had just arrived. He had no work permit, he was still on a tourist visa. His income was minimal, and since he was a church planter, there was no church salary and because it was a new plant, there weren't any offerings. But he still wanted to go. He wanted to be a part of the body of pastors.
>
> And the solution that was decided was that this pastor would wash the dishes in the camp after each meal and that way he would be considered to have paid for the retreat. Well, that was a solution, but what this pastor said was "I wanted to feel a part of the pastors. I wanted to be with the pastors, and after washing the dishes of almost 100 pastors, there was not much time when I arrived at the sessions together with the other pastors. Even with my little English, I couldn't interact much with them. It was difficult because of the language. But at no time did I ever feel like a pastor." That's what he expressed in this way. "I thought that I was going to be among pastoral colleagues. I found myself simply washing dishes."
>
> The interviewee made a commentary on the story:
>
> This story has to do with the fact that, of all things, the solution that they came up with was to put him to work washing dishes. Where was their sensitivity or consideration? Or a sense of being equals, not academically perhaps, but in a sense as ministers before the

> Lord, of being able to open the door to an immigrant pastor who wants to do things right and who has a desire to be even in an American pastors' retreat. Even a pastor with only a little English.

It appeared that two things happened. In an effort to not stigmatize the pastor by mentioning that he was working to pay for his place at the retreat, nothing was said about him at all. No one was told that this Latinx man was an ordained Nazarene pastor who had recently arrived to begin planting Latinx congregations in the district. He was never introduced. It would have seemed that everyone must have thought that he was merely a hired employee. No one who knew the truth ever came alongside him or talked to him.

The second problem was that the pastor never was able to eat and fellowship with any of the other pastors of the district, nor sit with them in the meetings and services, nor actually be a part of the district retreat. The immigrant pastor left at the end of the retreat without having any time with the other pastors. He went back to the new town alone, discouraged and feeling completely left out. He told the coordinator that he thought that he would be able to worship and pray together with the other pastors, but that never was possible. This was an example of exclusion, and the pastor felt left out of the pastoral fellowship.

"We feel totally isolated from everyone."

The Latinx immigrant pastors felt rejection as well when there seemed to be no resolution to the interminable documentation process, and their money was not enough to finish or to appeal. In some cases, the immigrant pastors under this particular set of circumstances were in districts where they were permitted to pastor. Yet, the documentation process to which they were carefully attending seemed to stretch endlessly ahead. Additionally, many of those with their applications in process for proper documentation were denied by the government. Then, the

feeling of rejection was not only imagined; it was official. This intensified the sense of separation and isolation that the Latinx immigrant experienced. An interviewee said:

> There are other very particular cases of pastors who have felt at times very alone and abandoned. This is when they find out suddenly that they are not going to get their documents, and that (American) people are kind of harassing them, they just feel more isolated. They feel all alone.

Another coordinator agreed with this observation of a deepening of the pastors' isolation and rejection, and pointed to the problem that it showed. He said that it was partially due to the church leaders in the central part of the country not making much of an effort to familiarize themselves with the plight of the Latinx pastors:

> I want to point out that there is a lack of sensitivity in the church in the middle of the United States, a lack of experience with the Hispanic pastor, and that is what Hispanic pastors suffer every day. They feel alone; they feel very isolated. Obviously, language is a barrier until it is achieved enough to communicate. But with the American pastor or the American district, and even more so when there are district leaders who do not speak the Spanish language or another language, in this sense, the connection is impossible. The feeling is one of distance and total isolation. So many pastors say "Who do I talk to? With whom can I connect?" In my district, they come to me. Obviously, this district is already more developed, but in much of this area that you are researching, this connection does not exist.

This interviewee had the opinion that the Church in the US Heartland region was uninterested in the experiences of the Latinx immigrant pastors. The pastoral teams and leadership in this area were unfamiliar with their difficulties and were unconcerned and unsympathetic. If the American pastors were aware, there did not seem to be any genuine connection between the two groups, a point made repeatedly throughout the interviews. This "lack of sensitivity" to the Latinx pastor added to their hardships. The coordinator specifically highlighted the feeling of neglect and indifference from the leadership that the immigrant pastors felt. He said that many immigrant pastors in other districts had no one with whom to talk about their ministries and no one with ministry experience who could guide them or counsel them in the affairs of their congregation. There were no ministry support structures in place for the

Latinx pastors. If those pastors succeeded or failed, no one was there to notice or help. This lack of connection in some districts between the district leadership and their own Latinx pastors clearly distressed to the pastors. They were looking to their Church authorities for leadership, but were not able to receive it due to a lack of bilingual leaders who could make the connection.

Another coordinator similarly referenced the fact that Latinx pastors and congregations could be in the same town or in the same buildings as the Americans, but feel distant from them and excluded by them. They were left alone to fend for themselves precisely at a time in their ministry when advice and suggestions would be the most helpful. Two coordinators made references to the fact that there were substantial Latinx populations in their areas. However, they lamented that their districts had not been able to get over the hurdle of the language barrier. Besides the coordinators, the district leadership teams had no other bilingual people who could help them reach the Latinx community. This general shortage of bilingual people who could minister to the Latinx ministers has only accentuated the isolation of the Latinx immigrant pastors.

"Some of us do not make it home."

There was the great fear and dread of being caught and deported that many Latinx immigrant pastors and families experienced every day. This was a recurring pattern throughout many interviews. One interviewee spoke about this:

> We can look, I would say, at the fear, the dread in them that today they will have going to work. And I've heard the testimonies about this, many times: praying on their knees before leaving for work, but they don't know if they're coming back. Because all of a sudden, at work, or on their way to work, they are going to be caught by the police. The police, in turn, will turn them over to the immigration authorities, and eventually, some of them do not make it home or some of them do not even make it to work.

"Almost all of us have been in prison."

An interviewee told of unconsciously undertaking a ministry to the immigration detention centers near him because, at first, he was merely responding to calls for help from members of his congregation who had been detained. He was frequently at the prison to visit them, and at various times, many of his members had been detained.

> I remember the years, the decade of 2010, in which our ministry was only seen to be going back and forth from prison. And it was not really because we were going to preach in prison. It was only because we were going to get some people out of jail, to post bail, or to bring them home. It would be two o'clock or three o'clock in the morning and our phone didn't stop. There were even people we didn't even know from the church. They only knew that we were pastors. And there at the prison, they were given the option of who they wanted to call. They said, "Well, I'm going to call this pastor." And I would help them in some way to fight, to get them a lawyer, and to try to give them some legal recourse through the law. I knew the lawyers.

In this particular pastor's experience, the local authorities were very active in pursuing the immigrants of the community. Almost every family had been affected by this campaign. In this case, it was specifically linked to driving without a valid driver's license which could be issued only to fully documented people. There was no public transportation in the small towns, so they had to drive to be able to get to their places of employment. The pastor continued:

> In my community, in our church, I think almost everyone has passed through that bad experience of prison. They don't have licenses to drive. And yet they risk driving, because they have to. They keep doing this perilous thing, even though they were told "don't drive." But these are good people. They are people who are tithing. They're people who are giving.

"We often pray, 'Please, Lord, one more year.'"

The anxiety and fear of the undocumented members were about more than a simple detention. They were worried about being deported and being separated. Some had been separated and could not be with their families. Some were tentatively planning on returning to their home countries, but hoped to stay long enough to make enough money to help their

families. In every case, the immigrants had no security whatsoever. A coordinator interviewed said:

> Today, there's a fear in the people and when they arrive at the church, there is a personal engagement in the worship or there is a real earnestness. There is pain in the midst of the families, pouring their hearts out when they pray. There are those who pray "Please, allow me to be here, Lord, at least one more month. Please, Lord, one more year. I will do so much and then I will return to my family."

The interviewee commented on the pain of separation and worry felt by the immigrants:

> These are people who have left their family, left their wife, and their children. Or sometimes only the wife comes. The husband stayed back for some reason. He couldn't cross the border. This is a pain that is felt throughout the community. A real desperation of not knowing what will happen. "What is going to us happen tomorrow?" And they have their stories. We share their pain. Some people cry and we ask them, "what is happening?" "Pastor," they said. "I remember my family – and you all are my family – but I would really like to sit with my children, with my family, but I cannot." They said, "Right now I'm happy here (at church), but I get to my house and they aren't with me."

The immigrants were afraid of being imprisoned or deported at any time without warning. They were trying to take care of their families back home, supporting them financially by sending them money each paycheck. However, they were greatly impacted by stresses of the separation from their family, the uncertainty of their continuing to be able to work, and overhanging apprehension of being caught and deported. This was evident in their participation in their congregations. This also was mentioned as a common experience through several interviews because, depending on the severity of the local authorities' immigration enforcement, the various communities experienced similar levels of anxiety, and a corresponding sense of vulnerability in the Church.

"It is devastating to us when one parent is deported."

Another coordinator told of the context and repercussions of being deported:

> We are always rowing against the current. And that is the Hispanic reality here in our country and the areas of the Mid-west that you are investigating. We are carefully rowing

> against the current with caution and with the danger of being deported at any time. It's not just saying "Well, they will send him home to his country." You have legal proceedings, you have jail, you have government agencies. The family will have one, two, three months of family separation. The children could be left behind; you could go back. Deportation is not "I'm going with my whole family; I'm going back to my country." It's not that way. It is a terrible emotional and psychological gash that the family feels when one of the parents is to be deported.

The coordinator pointed out several misconceptions Americans have about the deportation process. This was no easy, return ticket home. It was separating a married couple, or breaking up of a family, or both. It was fully traumatic for the family. It was a crisis that could last for years. Although not minimalizing the extensive legal expenses, it was costly in many other aspects, such as the long-term effects of the loss of the major wage earner, the loss of housing, the need for surrogate parents or the intervention of relatives to care for small children.

These aspects were also mentioned by another interviewee:

> There was this pastor who is a student with us: his wife was just deported. He was left here with his son who's about eight years old, a little boy. Why was the wife deported? There was a car accident. She had no documentation to present to the authorities at the accident. The process to deport her in the United States took two months. She has been in Mexico for another three months? No, sorry, Honduras, where she was deported. She and her husband both studied here with us, and they both continue to study. She's still studying online from Honduras the classes they would have been taking here. The lawyers are appealing to the Court of Appeals. They seem to be willing to open the case, but imagine the crisis this family is going through. And she wants to come back and she wants to be with her husband and she wants to minister here in America. But if that doesn't happen, well, they'll all go to Honduras.
>
> That was my advice to them. But this advice is also very relative, because these people came here to work in the first place and they came to give their son a better future. That's why they're here. Sometimes the choice is very drastic, "you have to go with your wife." Many of them think "No, we won't be like this forever; it'll be only until God opens the door," or "let's see what will happen next." But for me it would make perfect sense for him to go and be there with her. However, she said, "No, no, don't come here. I'll try to get there again, I'll try to do it legally, and if not, we will see how else we have to do it, but we will do it." Therefore, we will see. These are pastors.

The coordinator advised one way, and the couple decided for themselves. The child stayed with the father and the mother was sent back to their home country after the initial

detention. Even after a half of a year, the family was attempting to continue the legal appeal process through the Court of Appeals. What is clear throughout the story was the couple's desire and decision to continue on for the sake of the child's future. It was intimated that if legal means were not enough, the wife was willing to try another illegal crossing so that she could rejoin the family and so that they could maintain their dream for the future. This was very illustrative of the motives of many immigrant pastors, explaining why they came and why they take risks. It also showed the strain and upheaval that these families went through.

"We have abandoned our past life."

There are many aspects of family separation or family division that are commonly experienced by Latinx immigrant pastoral families and which are often shared with their district coordinators. Families being separated by deportation or incarceration will be addressed soon in this chapter. On the other hand, almost every immigrant family talked about the pain of the separation they felt when leaving their extended families behind in their homelands. They spoke of the elderly family members that they knew that they would never see again. They told of special family traditions that could no longer be maintained. They even remembered activities at their family cemeteries. All of this contributed to their sense of grief and loss because of the separation from their families brought about by their immigration. This is especially true of the undocumented immigrants because, due to their illegal entrance into the United States, they are unable to return to their home grounds by the same method. Nor for an undocumented immigrant is it easy to board an airline and return by air one-way if they lack valid passports with the proper visas. This likely means, in essence, a complete abandonment of their past life and their extended family. Although it is not necessarily a cessation of contact with them, especially today with the

connections available through social media and the Internet, it does have a personal impact. Every coordinator heard stories of families and the loss they felt leaving behind their former life.

"Some disappeared, and we don't know why."

An additional point was made that some families decided to split up and arrive at different times. This happened when the father and eldest son of the family traveled ahead so that they could secure work and find suitable housing. Then, a few months later, they sent for the rest of the family who followed. Unfortunately, it was a very common story heard by the coordinators that one or both family groups were hindered at some point in the journey. This was especially true of those who are smuggled across the border. Often, the men of the family made it successfully but did not hear from their spouse and children for a long time – the females having been detained or had worse things happen to them on the trail. In some cases, the family made it to the United States but could not locate the family members who had gone before them. Communication during these times of travel among the undocumented immigrants was sketchy at best, and sometimes, all contact between families was lost. The smugglers are not going to answer questions about their disappearance. It was not uncommon to hear of surprise reunions of families many years later because of a chance encounter with a distant relative in another state who knew the whereabouts of the rest of the family. These types of separation were unintentional because the immigrants were generally powerless to respond, were unable to resist, or were afraid of being discovered.

"Some of us die in the desert when we cross."

One coordinator shared the perspective of the immigrants in his congregations:

> Our people here have a fear of going out. How do our people feel when *they're* driving around? Some of them have no documents, no license at all. How do they feel when they

> go to the store and find that there's already a police officer inside? We suffer with them, because we know that they are in a complicated situation, that they are not here for pleasure. They are here because where they lived, in the countries they lived in, they do not have the same opportunities. They can't support their family. Either they die in the desert when they cross, or they starve there. You have to risk it to come to this place.

"Fear paralyzes us, every day."

Another interviewee also remarked about the suffering of the Latinx immigrants because of the raids made by the immigration authorities:

> Practically 90% of the members of the Hispanic Churches of the Nazarene are undocumented and equally suffer. I see their absences when there are raids, when there is movement of ICE, and whenever there is the suspicion of danger. The people don't come to church; they don't come near the church. They suffer a lot of fear of being captured and imprisoned, even though they are people of faith, Christian people. Fear is part of the daily life routine of our brothers and sisters in the Hispanic churches. There's a lot of suffering here. They have no papers, and they are afraid. They're afraid of being caught. And although there has been very little mobilization by ICE here in this area, over in (another state) is where I hear it most. But no, not here.

The immigrants were so suspicious of ICE raids that basically they went into hiding temporarily whenever the custom enforcement agents were heard to be in their area. The interviewee said that this fear of capture was part of their normal existence. Similar to the earlier story of Latinx families praying before leaving for work, this story illustrated how undocumented Latinx immigrants were anxious and exercised extreme caution when the immigration authorities were active in their area.

Another coordinator spoke of this:

> Yes, there is fear. They are afraid, logically, because they go around without a license, they go around taking risks, driving without accident insurance. I mean, it's a really terrible situation. I don't really know how can they survive. Without any documents and without any security when traveling and working.
>
> There have been labor cases in which some people have been bullied, offended, ignored, or were unfairly fired. They're not legally able to seek a defense or a solution. The situations they face are all hopeless because of the same fear. And that is the case even

> though we tell them that no one can hurt them, no one can humiliate them, no one, not a policeman, not a judge, not a teacher, not a pastor, not a boss. They don't even dare to report or accuse someone who has harmed them. But again, fear paralyzes them. That's the truth.

There is paralyzing fear plus a sense of hopeless impotence that characterizes the Latinx immigrants who lack documentation. They have to be doubly protective. They do not want to be caught, but they also have no protection against the criminal or malicious intentions that they commonly experience. They have no one to whom they can turn. They can never go to the police or call for help, even when they are robbed or wronged.

"We have to live in the shadows."

The effects of the lack of documentation were wide spread. Several coordinators recounted that the immigrant pastors often expressed their feelings of fear and panic because of their lack of documentation because they feared being caught and deported. This apprehension is felt throughout the Latinx immigrant community, by the pastors and their families, as well as the church and neighborhood contacts. The anxiety of being questioned about their documentation by the police caused the immigrants to adapt a lifestyle totally unlike their American neighbors, seeking ways to not be noticed at all. One pastor called it, "living in the shadows." This meant going about their daily activity or business during hours when less local residents would be present, such as the earliest shopping hours at Walmart or the last hours before closing at Home Depot. This was not only because they were attempting to not raise the attention of the local residents, but also to escape the notice of any law enforcement agencies.

"ICE agents show up around our churches"

In general, to keep a low profile, many undocumented immigrants will avoid public spaces or highly frequented traffic spots. As was pointed out in an earlier chapter, radio stations

in Spanish in rural towns would give "traffic reports" which were actually identifying the places where immigration authorities were patrolling. A sense of nervousness by the immigrant families was palpable even when a car or vehicle appeared that could be an unmarked police car.

One interviewee told of a time when an American church member who was a policeman once came to the Sunday morning church service (English) directly from getting off his shift. Since he was still wearing his police uniform, several of the Latinx church members saw him from a distance, and immediately they left out the back door and went home. The man was too far away to be recognized as the member of the American church, which met at the same hour. The undocumented immigrants only noticed the police car arriving and a police officer entering the building where both services were soon to begin.

Several coordinators had stories of immigration agents showing up in the neighborhoods near Latinx churches, and they spoke of the fear that gripped the congregations. One coordinator knew of an immigration agency raid occurring *at a* Hispanic church, although it was not one of his. Another interviewee spoke of the common practice of immigration agents watching the Latinx churches in an effort to be able later to identify families and to apprehend undocumented immigrants. The church could no longer be considered a safe haven.

"We could be betrayed by others."

This fear was also manifested as suspicion and distrust of strangers, even of other members of the Latinx community. One coordinator spoke of pastors being afraid of being betrayed to the authorities by someone who already had their residency. This aspect of Latinx differences in regard to citizenship is not often known: all Puerto Rican- and Cuban-Americans are given US citizenship automatically. Cultural tensions, therefore, exist among national groups

of Spanish speakers, some of whom unquestionably have their citizenship and others who will not be considered before completing a long waiting period.

The specter of an anonymous betrayal by others was raised by another coordinator who told of members frequently becoming very anxious whenever disagreements arose between families in the church. The consternation was that the disagreements could escalate until one or more of the men could lose their livelihood since they were employed by another church member, or worse, if someone would call in an anonymous tip to the immigration authorities giving the names and addresses of the undocumented people. It is difficult to minimalize the repercussions of the fear of betrayal from other Latinx families within the church. As mentioned earlier in another section, it is necessary to add to this fear of betrayal the possibility of it by members of the US Church. This was what was felt by immigrant pastors and their church members.

Grounding in the Data

Each of these four major themes, Sacrifice, Rejection, Belonging and Isolation came out in the stories from the fourteen hours of interviews with the district Hispanic coordinators. The themes, found in the table on the next page, can be seen in the heading subjects that preceded each section.

Table 1. Qualitative Findings on Cries of the Immigrant Pastor.

Themes	Grounding in the data
We Are Willing to Pay the Price	*"I really felt God's call."* *"We depend on the tamales we sell."* *"We cannot even receive an offering from our church."*

	"I'm not living, just surviving." *"We have very rough jobs… we leave work exhausted."* *"We have to work two or three shifts."* *"We prepare our sermons after 60 hours of work."* *"I can't take it anymore!"* *"I can't pay this doctor bill!"* *"I am financially ruined (by a hospital bill)."* *"We didn't go to a doctor."* *"Yet, we are firmly fighting for the Lord."* *"I'm still staying here. I still see the hand of God."*
They Don't Want Us	*"They tell us, 'We don't want undocumented immigrants.'"* *"The Church who ordained us was the one who rejected us."* *"They tell us, 'You guys are over there. We are over here.'"* *"They tell us, 'We don't want Spanish in our service anymore.'"* *"They began locking us out of rooms in the church."* *"They said, 'You have three months to vacate the building.'"* *"They said, 'We have struggled with Hispanic churches.'"* *"We feel racism here, even from the pastors themselves."*
They Tell Us We Don't Belong Here	*"They tell us, 'Hey, you're in America, speak English!"* *"We came here understanding no English whatsoever."* *"We won't minister successfully without learning English."* *"Why should we learn English, if we're going to be deported?"* *"For us, English was intimidatingly hard."* *"They say we're either criminals or we came to steal jobs."* *"They say that we should go back to where we belong."* *"I was singled out publicly because my skin is darker."* *"They say, 'Latinx people are good at cheating.'"*
We Are Alone and Afraid	*"We are not strange animals!"* *"At no time did I ever feel like a pastor."* *"We feel totally isolated from everyone."* *"Some of us do not make it home."* *"Almost all of us have been in prison."* *"We often pray, 'Please, Lord, one more year.'"* *"It is devastating to us when one parent is deported."* *"We have abandoned our past life."* *"Some disappeared, and we don't know why."* *"Some of us die in the desert when we cross."* *"Fear paralyzes us, every day."* *"We have to live in the shadows."* *"ICE agents show up around our churches"* *"We could be betrayed by others."*

Conclusion

I listened intently in every single interview. I listened a second time. I read the transcripts. I keenly went over the translations and listened again to the original interviews. What I learned

was much more than I ever expected, and I will share more of that in the final chapter. The Latinx immigrant pastors are struggling. They are paying a high price to pastor and serve. These times are not good times, and, in the US Heartland area especially, there were numerous stories from the Latinx pastors telling of great hardships, fears and rejection. Basically, the pastors have been told that they are not wanted. They have heard that they do not belong here. They feel isolated and not a little bit defenseless. There is no way to minimalize or dismiss the conditions and situations that these Latinx immigrant pastors experienced in the Heartland society, outside in the community *and* inside the Church.

In the final chapter, with the words from these interviews still on our minds, I hope to draw your attention to the significance of these findings, recognize the implications and call for action upon them.

"The cries of the immigrant pastors are reaching the ears of God."

Chapter Seven

DISCUSSION

After establishing a biblical lens through which we can evaluate how the Church should respond to the situation of immigrants, I have sought to offer a description of the current situation through contextual, historical, and original ethnographic research.

In this chapter, I will offer some synthesis of the findings and seek to make suggestions for a way forward in the practice of the North American church.

Major Findings from the Perspective of the Latinx Immigrant Pastor

The situation of the Latinx immigrant pastor in this region of the United States is serious. The sociological studies and the interview data point to this and agree with each other. The past ten to fifteen years have been the period when more Latinx immigrants have come to settle in the US Heartland, as noted in Chapter Three, and when, according to the interviewees, there are more Latinx congregations than ever before. While that lengthy period should have been a time for welcoming and assimilating the newcomers, the reality was that the Anglos were either hoping that the newcomers would go back to where they came from or were waiting on the immigrants to quickly learn the new language, adopt the new customs and change themselves to be more like the Anglos.

Apart from some beautiful exceptions noted in both the literature and the interviews, the immigrants have not been received and accepted by the Church. Their documentation status has not been resolved by the government, and in many places of this region, this has given the Church the excuse to avoid dealing with deep issues like systemic attitudes of division along ethnic lines, control of resources, and participation – not just representation – of minorities in decision-making bodies. It was astounding to read and hear Anglos declare that they were unaware of the presence of Latinx immigrants in their areas, when the local food processing plants in their towns employed thousands of Hispanics. The immigrants had come, but they had not noticed.

Primacy, Superiority, and Ownership

What was dismaying, and what intensified the immigrants' cry, was that when they approached the Church, many times, in many places, the immigrants found little help there either. Rather than be an example to the community of compassion, understanding and unconditional love, many Anglo congregations and pastors merely went along with the dominant

narrative of “Us and Them.” They said to the Latinx immigrants, “You stay over there; we are over here.” Ironically, in the general society of this central rural region, where friendliness, hospitality and a community-wide sense of family are touted by the state tourist associations of the US Heartland, the immigrants were left outside. The Church also had these same attitudes. According to the research and in agreement with the interview data, the Latinx immigrants, pastors and congregations, were looked at as inferior. When the Anglo and Latinx congregations attempted to work together, the immigrants were met with an unacknowledged sense of superiority. They were clearly treated differently, based on ethnicity, color of skin and language spoken. The Latinx congregation was thought to be unable to manage funds. The buildings were begrudgingly shared. English-speakers saw themselves as the ones who controlled everything, who had all of the answers, and who certainly had the final word.

The Latinx immigrants expected the Church would be the group in the new society that would welcome them and help them integrate into the community. They wanted to plant churches, pastor congregations and reach other Spanish-speaking immigrants with whom they worked. Almost universally throughout the region, the Latinx immigrant pastors were very active in evangelism and outreach, even though they were all bi-vocational and were supporting themselves with their jobs. When they began ministering, they were hoping for fellowship and encouragement from the Anglo pastors and leaders, working together in their communities to advance the Kingdom of God. Either because of language barrier or cultural differences, the Latinx immigrant pastors said that they seldom had good communication with their Anglo counterparts. In fact, in some areas, district events were distinctly separated by language groups. Sometimes, when there would be combined events, there were no translators provided, no attempts to accommodate the Spanish-speakers, and no acknowledgement that they were present.

The participation of the Latinx congregations within the district events should have been more than the tokenism of having them sing one song at a combined service or having them provide the food one afternoon. That was not integration. That was not recognizing the God-anointed ministry that they have had. That was wrong.

Furthermore, the Latinx immigrants were pained by conflicts between Anglo and Latinx congregations. In the case of local congregations who ventured to share or support a Latinx ministry, there were significant differences in expectations and financial responsibilities. Also, when the original visionary persons involved retired or moved away, everything changed. This quite often led to disagreement, estrangement and either the termination of the joint project or a complete break between the two groups. Not many districts have teams dedicated to facilitate the two language groups working together. Most of the literature reviewed, unfortunately, corroborated the words of the interviewees that working together in the ministry, with Anglo and Hispanic side-by-side as equals, was a rare exception to the norm. There were clearly deep-rooted issues about power structure and ownership in the Church. It was indefensible to treat ordained pastors with decades of experience and spiritual wisdom as second-class humans, just because they were undocumented or because they had to work in a factory or manufacturing plant. It was inexcusable to view them as inferior because they did not have the advanced education that many Anglos pastors have. Patronizing words and attitudes did not need to be translated; they were felt.

These attitudes were no different than the superiority attitudes of the English-speaking people and missionaries experienced by the Hispanics a century earlier, previously noted in Chapter Four. Today, it is still the same. Very few Hispanics are included in Church leadership positions, outside of specifically-focused Latinx committees or councils. In general, the Latinx

pastors often are missing in lower-level positions where they could gain experience and develop their abilities. This was because they were not considered for the positions. This clearly impedes them from growing as leaders in the Church and from using their experience and perspective to enrich the Church. Few Hispanics have had district or regional positions in the US Church. Some Latinx pastors have spent decades in the ministry in the US Church, but feel that they are only "the token Latino" on district boards because they are never given any real responsibilities or authority. They were never embraced as equals, and were never seriously considered for higher offices of service. The old animosity towards Hispanics still affects relationships today. The Latinx people were recipients of racial messages from the Anglo community, and the worst aspect of this was the negative effect it had on the Latinx immigrant pastors.

Rejected

The Latinx immigrants revealed that they also felt the *disapproval* of the Anglo society and even of the Anglo church. This was true because of several factors expressed. This rejection was often tied to the status of their documentation. The immigrants were considered to be "illegal." The district Hispanic coordinators that I interviewed said that, in their areas, from 50 to 95% of all those who migrated to the US Heartland were undocumented. On the other hand, according to the research cited in Chapter Three, the employment rate of the Latinx workers was the highest of any group. The same society that could not find a way to solve their documentation, could find a way to employ them full time. Of course, this lack of legal documentation automatically closed many doors of help, because it put the Latinx immigrants in the condition of being outside of avenues of federal, state and community assistance. Healthcare, for instance, was a primary concern. Education, housing and transportation were affected by their documentation status. Most of the immigrants were unable to resolve easily and quickly the

immigration issues, and, although they actually were immersed in the years-long process, they were considered illegal. “We don’t want undocumented immigrants,” they were vehemently told by the Church. Their secular employers recruited and welcomed them for jobs. But in the same town where they were employed, the Church turned them away.

The immigrants were surprised that being undocumented caused them to be rejected by the US Heartland in general, and by the Church there, in particular. They thought that, if anyone would understand their hopes for a better life, a life away from drug cartels, gang wars and corrupt governments, it would be the Church. As was noted in Chapter Three, the values of the Latinx immigrants of family, faith and hard work were values that were very important to their farming neighbors and townspeople of the region. However, according to the interviews and supported by the research, there were deeper, darker issues that led to their rejection.

Sometimes, the rejection by the Church and society had nothing to do with documentation. Many immigrants felt disapproval because of speaking Spanish. This was noted numerous times in both the literature and the interview data. The interviewees unanimously mentioned it. Speaking Chinese or Polish was not frowned upon, but speaking Spanish was. Even though English was not required for their employment, the local community felt that the immigrants should be required to speak English. Some states went so far as to eliminate any state information printed in Spanish, material which for years had been helpful to newly arrived immigrants.

Alone, Outnumbered, and Overwhelmed

Throughout the interviews and in the literature, the Latinx immigrant pastors in this region expressed a sense of being completely alone. Their cry was that they felt isolated and abandoned. They were people without a country. They felt caught between their old life in their

country of origin and their new life in the United States. The Latinx immigrants identified themselves as strangers and outsiders. They knew few people when they arrived. In the small towns and rural communities of the US Heartland, they could not find people who spoke Spanish who could help them as they moved into town. They spoke no English, and the Anglos there spoke no Spanish. They found that they had no one, which mirrors the themes found in history in Chapter Three.

The immigrants said they had a sense of being "outnumbered." The Latinx immigrants had come from a situation in their home countries where they were always in the majority to being members of a tiny group in this area. In their home countries, they were part of the mainstream of their society, and as such, felt powerful and in control, to a certain extent. Now, in their new environment, they felt powerless and helpless. The immigrants had left where they had been comfortably established in their previous way of life and where they understood the rules and customs of their home countries. Now, they struggled to learn and understand the new cultural conventions. Before, they had centuries of history: personal, popular, regional and national. Now, they were completely ignorant of the stories and the significance of events and celebrations of the new culture. This amplified their feelings of being isolated and alone in the United States.

There was also a universal sense of frustration, helplessness and being overwhelmed due to the new culture and their attempts to understand it and assimilate in it. There were many difficulties in adapting to the new life in the United States. They were not prepared. They had little support when they arrived, and they did not understand the cultural and societal requirements. The immigrants had difficulty adjusting to life here. Everything was different than where they came from. They were outsiders. Things that they took for granted in their home

culture were no longer true or possible. There were many new customs and laws, new processes and requirements about which they knew nothing. Their previous experiences in their home countries did not serve them here. They worked long hours and had little free time. They were exploited and hard pressed financially with no job security and with little money because of low wages and lack of documentation. The Latinx immigrants came with very little skill in English. The region operates entirely and only in English. The situation for the immigrants was more difficult than they imagined, because there were few bilingual people and very few resources available in Spanish to help them. Since they only knew Spanish, it was difficult to succeed or advance in the community without help. They were unable to understand simple instructions. The American communities were likewise incapable of communicating with the immigrants and were unable to facilitate their adjustment without translators. In addition, the immigrants expressed that they felt very vulnerable living in the area without being able to speak or understand English.

Overall Concurrence in Themes

Looking at the research in Chapters Three and Four, and comparing it with the interview data on the personal experience of the Latinx immigrant pastor, one would have to say that they fully concurred with each other. The immigrant pastors said that they felt great isolation and rejection by the Anglos in the US Heartlands. Katherine Fennelly in her research, and Leo Chavez and Sujey Vega in each of theirs, gave evidence of the same difficulties: social rejection, ostracism and exclusion. Louis Mendoza and Jim Estrada gave numerous examples of discrimination, disparagement and racism. The memorable comment made by the immigrants that they were called out publicly because of their skin color was likewise a point in Melvin Delgado's investigation about Latinx being quite self-conscious about the color of their skin so

as to not attract further discrimination. The Latinx immigrants said that they struggled with cultural adaption because it was new to them. This matches the findings of Fennelly.

Differences in Opinion and Experience

Reviewing the input from the contextual and historical research as they pertain to the Latinx immigrant pastors' situation, it is also necessary to weigh the disagreements among the interviewees to come to a more accurate comprehension.

The Latinx immigrant pastors were in complete agreement on the lack of resources available for them in ministry, in education and in their personal lives, but they disagreed on the reasons for this scarcity and on the correct solution for it. One-third of those interviewed were thankful and happy for the support and encouragement that they had experienced through the Anglo church and church leaders. However, two-thirds of the interviewees disagreed. They said that their experience with the laity, local leaders, district and national leaders was part of the problem of the scarcity of Latinx ministry resources. They spoke of the struggles of ownership, control, patronizing attitudes and rejection they faced. Some questioned the substantial educational requirements for ordination, considering the differences in primary school education, literacy, and the certainty of needing to be bi-vocational pastors. Others were more concerned about the ethnic makeup of the boards who approved or denied the ordination. A ministerial credentials board, made up entirely of English-speakers, would be formidable to a Spanish-speaking ordination candidate. Furthermore, it should be obvious that the examination of a candidate's testimony, experience and theology done crossing languages is fraught with issues. Many Latinx pastors are being ordained each year, but the ordination services are done without translation, which is a concern for the ordinands, their families and their congregations.

The interviewees also disagreed on the solution for the provision of materials and education for Latinx ministries and future pastors. Basically, they disagreed on strategy. Some thought that the US Church should invest much more in Latinx ministries. They thought that pastoral preparation and ministry education should be prioritized. Several expressed the idea of considering the Latinx ministry almost like a missionary effort. Others said that the US Church spent on everything else but the Latinx churches and pastors.

The differences in the stories told by the interviewees also highlighted the distinct differences in their experiences. Approximately one-third of the coordinators shared stories of positive encouragement, empowerment and consistent support by the leaders and pastors of their districts. The other two-thirds told of budgets being eliminated, lack of participation and opportunity, and the closing of churches. Basically, their experiences were different, and so their declarations reflected that.

Silences Pointing to Need for Further Research

At the conclusion of all research and interviews, I wondered if there were important things left out or subjects that I should have expected to be brought up. The historical and current literature never mentioned other ethnic groups, although one Latinx immigrant pastor did. He noted that the Hispanics on his district had excellent friendship and fellowship with the African American and South Asian congregations. In most of the US Heartland, there has been an increase in the refugee population due to problems in the Middle East. Additionally, the crisis in Venezuela has caused tens of thousands of Venezuelans to come to the United States in the past seven years. The hurricanes in both the Caribbean and Central America have caused a major influx of refugees to arrive in the US Heartland. How is the US Church dealing with all of this,

and is their treatment of these other ethnic groups any different than the treatment of the Latinx immigrants?

Of particular relevance to two district coordinators were the stories of moral failings by Latinx pastors and how that affected the Latinx ministry. This seemed to confirm an unfavorable opinion by the Anglo society, and it would naturally create some reaction, and possibly overreaction, by Hispanics who are conservative. However, moral failure does not happen because of race but because of sin. Although this was important to two interviewees, it was not ever discussed in the secular sociological or anthropological studies.

A question not answered in the interviews was, if *Mexican immigrants* constitute 80% of the all US Hispanics, were Mexican immigrants 80% of the Latinx immigrant *pastors* in the US Heartland? That percentage certainly was not true of the coordinators, because almost all the coordinators themselves were from the other Latinx countries. Actually, this anecdotal observation was the same as the assessment of Juan F. Martinez, in *The Story of Latino Protestants in the United States*, who points out that there were more Puerto Rican and Central American *Protestants* than Mexican *Protestants* in the United States.

The Latinx population is growing, and even in the areas of the coordinators that I interviewed, it was said that the population numbers were changing rapidly. In the literature, there were observations that the Latinx immigrants were being sought for employment in areas of the Heartland because Anglo residents were themselves leaving the towns. The *low* percentages of a Latinx minority were changing to higher values, even though the overall population of these states was remaining the same. This will certainly mean that further research in this geographical area will reveal new situations and new dynamics.

It would be very important to further investigate and consider how the Church can speak on behalf of the Latinx immigrants. There were some areas in the US Heartland where it seemed that great strides were being made with Anglo-Latinx ministries working together. However, there are also some areas where it seemed to be difficult. These places were where the interviewees gave stories that were much more severe, and where the community and church responses to the immigrants were problematic. These are the areas where more incidents of deportations were occurring. It was evident in several interviews that federal, state and local enforcement agencies were handling the immigrants completely differently. One state had hundreds of people deported each month, while the neighboring states had zero. Some towns had significantly high number of detentions, while nearby towns of the larger size had less. It would be important to understand *why* they were different. The answers could be demographic in nature. The answers could certainly be political in nature, because almost all of the nineteen states of the US Heartland are more conservative politically. Additionally, there are more Evangelical churches in this region than in any other region of the United States, and yet there were more detentions and deportations. Did conservative and evangelical groups support this treatment, under the guise of accepting the law, instead of compassionately working to solve the situation? Was it about race?

Another large subject to investigate would be where and which Protestant churches are in the region. So far, there is little being written about the other denominations in the US Heartland. What I discovered in my research were only a few topical stories or biographical sketches of individuals written by their own denominations. Also, the preponderance of this Latinx Christianity research was dedicated to the Southwest, to California, Texas, Florida and the large

metropolitan areas like New York City and Chicago. This is because these places are where the majority of Hispanics live.

Another area for further research would be to investigate if there are any other "illegal alien groups." How are other ethnic groups treated in the US Heartland? I suspect that South Asian and African immigrants are mistreated or, at the least, are subjected to rejection by the Midwestern communities. People from the Middle East or North African Muslim countries would likely be recipients of some of the same treatment that the Latinx immigrants faced.

Unexpected Observations

The Level of Their Pain

Even with all my background working with Latinx pastors, I was very surprised at the severity of the situations for some of the Latinx immigrant pastors which I heard from the coordinators in the interviews. It was clear that they had suffered a great deal in multiple areas of their lives. Some had lived through nightmarish conditions in crossing the border. Some had been exploited by cruel employers who knew exactly how to take advantage of the immigrants and who knew that they would never be prosecuted for it. The interviewees freely expressed their pain and anguish. They spoke of earlier days when everything seemed to them to be confusing. They could not follow simple directions in English, and they had no idea what was required of them. They were unable to trust anyone at first, because they only knew one or two people in their town. In a few cases, the people that they originally trusted were found to be exploiting them: former immigrants who were now citizens but who were making great profits by using the ignorance of the newly arrived immigrants to their own benefit.

Over the past ten years, I had heard many personal stories, and I had read many recently published books by or about Latinx immigrants. However, my ethnological interviews were with

fellow pastors and colleagues who were district leaders or coordinators who knew me and trusted me. Their honesty was searing at times. The level of their pain and hurt was deeper and more extensive than I knew before. They were not weeping for themselves, but they wept as they told of the suffering of the pastors and families under their care who were immigrants and who had faced many things.

They expressed that they were surprised by the rejection of the Anglos. They had preconceived ideals of the goodness and kindness of Christian Americans in the farmlands, which probably was based on old Hollywood movies. They were stunned that there was no help for them. They had made assumptions of support by the federal and state governments for their care because that was what they were used to in their home countries. They thought that employers would be better and more just than the employers that they knew from their past. They thought that the corruption they had seen in their home countries would not be present in the United States because of the American values of respect for the rule of law, for human rights and equality. They were not prepared for the realities of their state of affairs in the US Heartland, and their expectations were completely erroneous. Disappointment and disillusionment about their first experiences in the United States were expressed by the immigrants to more than a few interviewees.

The Degree of Their Disconnection with Anglos

Another observation that was unexpected was how disconnected many of the Latinx immigrants were with Anglos in their community or in the nearby sister churches. Many of the undocumented immigrants were living almost as if in hiding. They were employed by local companies and traveled there and back each day, six days a week. Their children went to the neighboring schools and were active there. The parents, however, were much more guarded.

They were not participating in the community events. They did not mix with their neighbors. They stayed hidden from society apart from their work and time at church. They worked long hours, kept to themselves, had very few close, trusted friends, and there was absolutely no interaction with English-speakers.

That they had no connection to anybody outside their trusted friends and family was a surprise to me. But it was something that I had noticed with Latinx immigrants who were not part of the Church. When I came back from living more than twenty years overseas, if I encountered a Spanish-speaking person on the street, I greeted them in Spanish as if they were in their own country. I observed that many acted as if I had spoken to them in English, and they ignored me. Now, I understand the difference. Outside of the Church, it is difficult to trust a Spanish-speaking Anglo. To them, I might be an immigration agent or an undercover policeman.

The Latinx immigrants do not have many friendships with Anglos, nor do they expect to have them because of the language and cultural barriers. Their friends and family members are their support group, and few Anglos, besides people at their employment, will ever approach them. This was revealing to me, and I can see how it could alter how I approach them in the future. My comfort level with them is less important than their trust level of me.

Differences between the Southwest and Heartland Latinx Experience

I was surprised to learn of the completely different experiences of Latinx immigrants who live in the US Heartland than those who live in California, Florida and the large metropolitan areas. The experiences of the two Latinx groups are very distinct. The first aspect is the sense of being a member of a large minority in California or Florida or being a member of a tiny minority of the population of the US Heartland. The sense of existing alone felt by the Latinx immigrant in the Heartland region would be mitigated by a larger Latinx presence. The second aspect is the

supportive multi-generational Latinx communities found in the cities of California and Florida and in the large metropolitan areas like New York and Chicago. The Latinx families in the US Heartland do not have this. There are few bilingual people or resources in Spanish in the rural areas. They are dependent on fewer people who can help them. They have almost no options for healthcare, whereas in the Southwest, for example, there are hundreds of bilingual doctors throughout the area. The third aspect is the political and governmental support in the areas of a large Latinx population. That simply is not the situation in the US Heartland states. The fourth aspect is the easy availability of educational resources in Spanish in the Southwest states, Florida and the large metropolitan areas. The scarcity of materials in Spanish in the US Heartland is well-documented. The fifth aspect is the acceptance of Latinx culture and history. In the US Heartland, there is little history and little acceptance of the culture.

Implications of the Findings

If we, as the US Church, understand that the situation of the Latinx immigrant pastors, families and congregations is serious, and we have taken the first step by actually listening to them, which was one purpose of this research, then we have to take heed of what they told us. They said that they were not accepted by the Anglo Church. They said that they were not welcomed and received. Why were they not received by the Church? It is said that there are barriers. In every case, certain barriers can be brought down when it becomes sufficiently important to everyone to successfully overcome them. Language can be learned; documents can be given; cultural differences can be explained. However, it has been pointed out that an immigrant can have citizenship, can speak English fluently and without accent, and can totally conform to the customs of American society, and *still not be welcomed*. Evidently, citizenship, language and American customs are surface issues and barriers that the American Church can

hide behind. The deeper issue was that many Anglos did not accept Hispanics. This revealed something much worse than a mere insensitivity to foreigners. The deeper issue was a prejudice of Anglo church members and pastors against the Hispanics based solely on their perceived ethnicity. It is easier to dismiss someone who does not look like us, if we think that they are inferior. We cannot, as Christians, think of anyone as inferior. We might excuse ourselves from the responsibility of helping our neighbor in need, if we think that they are strangers and foreigners. However, Jesus pointed out that everyone is our neighbors, and if they are in need, we have responsibility to help them.

Two of the four messages that the immigrants received loudest and clearest from us were: *"We don't want you!"* and *"You don't belong here!"* The first implication of finding this is that we must take responsibility for this. It is like what Jesus said in Matthew 25:43, *"I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in."* We cannot deny that we did not do what we were called to do. The Latinx immigrants were not welcomed. They were not invited in. They were not protected, provided for, or loved. Instead of understanding their difficulties, like learning the language, or figuring out the citizenship process, we added more problems for them. Instead of rejecting them, why was not the Church a strong voice in Society speaking on their behalf to find a way to solve their documentation issue? We kept to ourselves. We self-segregated. We could only envision our worship services in separate language groups: *"You're there; we're here."*

In view of all the stories that were shared from our brothers and sisters in the previous chapter, in view of the historical record of abuse and robbery, plus, the contemporary studies which say that discrimination is still common in the US Heartland, the injustice of the situation in *our Church* must be clearly denounced. Anglo congregations should not look down on their Latinx brothers and sisters. The Anglos should not think or act as if they are superior. All

decisions should not be made only by the Anglos, and all aspects of leadership should not come from only the Anglo perspective. The actual opposition, in some cases, towards the Hispanic ethnic group and the Latinx immigrants is unconscionable. The Church cannot have an attitude that any ethnic group is lesser than another. This is heartbreaking because it shows that the Church is no longer acting in love. By its attitudes and actions, it is hurting people for whom Christ died (Romans 14:13-17). These attitudes affect the Anglo, too, because they are evidence of a hardness of heart and spirit. Both Anglo and Hispanic are dehumanized. The Church cannot be silent about any second-class treatment of minorities. The regional and national Church need to help the district and local congregations understand this systemic sin and agree on solving this situation. The rejection must stop. The walls must come down and the doors unlocked and opened. This cannot be merely a short-term project to increase percentage of ethnic participation. This must be genuine recognition, genuine care, genuine listening and genuine humility. It must be a Church-wide effort of self-emptying service one to another.

In view of the contextual research and the experiences shared by the interviewees, the most substantial implication of this research is the urgent need to listen to each other. Whether ethnical, cultural or language differences are the causes, the result is a lack of genuine and respectful communication between the Anglos and Latinx members of the Church in this part of the United States. Being considered a “foreigner” or “stranger,” to seek the input of the Latinx immigrants, including them within the conversations of the Church, was considered “unnecessary,” and their opinions, “inconsequential.”

This is what I have been hearing from my Latinx brothers and sisters. These ethnological interviews revealed deep feelings. The sharing of their experiences only happens when we take the time to listen. We, as a large faith community and church family, are called to love and care

for one another, and it should be the norm to respectfully listen and pay attention to each other. We should be especially accommodating to those who are not in positions of majority power. The people of God should be conscientiously attentive to those who are newly arrived among us. That is who we are as a Body, with a richly diverse. By our genuine listening to their concerns and by lovingly acting upon those concerns, the Church serves the needy and welcomes the stranger.

As a Church, we need to ask ourselves, "how are we listening to each other?" Where and when do we actually get together on a consistent basis to listen to each other? Do we respect the new perspectives that they bring? Are we willing to learn from them? Are we really hearing what they are saying? Do we positively act upon what is being said? Are we moving away from attitudes that divide the Church into "Us and Them"?

Out of this listening, to move forward, my suggestion would be to build Church structures that specifically would encourage us and enable us to listen to each other in the local church, and on the district, national and regional levels. I believe that the Church must establish and create a framework to listen to all of its own ethnic members. An example of this would be a convocation, regularly convened, whereas mutual communication would be facilitated.

Imagine a series of tables where, at each table, everyone was represented, where every ethnic group was included equally. Because listening to each other was the priority, every voice would need to be heard equally. This would require intentionality on the part of the leaders, because they would be inviting very culturally diverse people together for the purpose of dialogue. All ethnic groups, majority and minority, would need to reconsider the perceptions of power within the conversations. The majority ethnic group would need to consciously accept a more passive "listening" role, rather than assuming upon their numerical advantage or cultural

assertiveness. The purposes of this convocation would be (1) listening, (2) sympathy/empathy, (3) understanding, (4) *koinonia*, (5) the airing of grievances/complaints, (6) the honest working-through of issues (big and small), and (7) unity. This type of genuine listening to each other requires building trust between people who have not had the time or inclination to do so before. However, it is surely evident from this research that the Latinx immigrant pastors and congregations were willing to talk when they were given the opportunity. This should encourage both groups to pursue this type of listening.

This project has only been an initial attempt to describe this problematic situation, and if I were to try to suggest the solutions to it, I would undoubtably fall short. All of the solutions are beyond the scope of this beginning research. I can only offer a few initial suggestions. There should be ways that the national Church could and should agree to help the immigrant pastors. If it is possible, in most of the districts found in the nineteen States of the US Heartland, to accept the immigrant pastors, why could not it be possible in all of the districts? If it were possible in all of the districts, then could this be a regional or international recommendation for the Church, since there are millions of people throughout the world who are refugees and immigrants who cross borders. Compassion for the immigrant and refugee is often a theme for global missionary work, and outstanding ministry is being done by many national Churches "over there." Could not there be unified agreement by this national Church to do the same "here?"

To fight the feelings of isolation and rejection that many of the Latinx immigrant pastors face every day, the Church must make a better effort to "welcome the stranger and foreigner." The Church must make every possible effort to include the Latinx pastors and congregations in Church activities. The idea of "welcoming" means to help the newcomer or stranger to feel comfortable and safe. It is not only allowing them to merely be present, but it means going much

farther on their behalf. They need to feel a part of the family of the Church. They need to be brought into the fellowship. They need to be participants, not observers only. This applies to large gatherings, joint projects, district boards, local church boards, and united services and activities. To welcome other language groups, such as Spanish-speakers, would be a sacrifice. It would require translation for those who cannot understand. It would work both ways, because as they participated, Spanish-speakers would have to consider the English-speakers and translate for them, too. Everyone would need to be generous with their time, efforts and resources. Everyone must care about everyone, no matter the ethnicity.

To take this one step further, the Church needs to hear the voices and words of Latinx pastors. To remove the sense of "Us and Them," there needs to be a united spirit of "We." The Latinx part of the Church has been faithfully serving here in the United States since the beginning of the denomination. There are very talented, anointed preachers and teachers, young and old, to whom the Church must listen. They have a message that is worthy of respect and attention. The Holy Spirit has been working through them, too! There are messages from God that can best come through them. It is extremely problematic and harmful to the Church to refuse to listen to anyone but those like ourselves. It is harmful to the Latinx immigrants to be constantly ignored as having nothing of worth to contribute, which is the case, if they are always being dismissed. Their leadership could be inestimable now and in the future. It is arrogance to think that only Anglos can lead and teach.

Working Together

Dr. Jerry Porter told of suggestions that he and Dr. Tom Nees made to all congregations that wanted to work together. Both leaders had already worked with multicultural congregations,

and they saw back then some of the same issues that the Latinx immigrant pastors face now. Porter and Nees recommended "how two ethnic congregations could share one facility." They suggested to have:

- Clear responsibilities regarding shared utility and maintenance expenses.
- Quick, open, early conversations about issues or potential problems.
- Intentional bridge building between congregations: quarterly communion together, quarterly joint board meetings, quarterly pulpit swap, quarterly United services, etc. Whether the minority congregation is a separate church or a ministry of the majority congregation, these intentional relationship building strategies are important.
- (Clear commitment to the future) When the majority church is in pastoral transition, the incoming candidates understand clearly from the board and DS that this shared facility is "a given." Otherwise a small group of disgruntled "hosts" may "poison" the waters with the new pastor and push for the minority group to be sent away.

These guidelines were noteworthy for several reasons. First, they recognized the role of both congregations in a collaborative partnership. Many times, the Latinx pastors remarked that they were not included nor invited into any conversations about working together, because the Anglo congregations owned the buildings. Nees and Porter advocated for sharing expenses and clearly defining the responsibilities of each group. Second, these guidelines acknowledged the fact that issues occur with interactions and shared usage of facilities, and they have the potential to become problems. The suggestion was to address these issues quickly, early and openly. This point naturally requires full communication between both groups. These steps also illustrate the conscious, intentional effort by both congregations to maintain this relationship. Nees and Porter specifically used the terms "bridge building" and "intentional relationship building." This concept concerns the gap of understanding that was addressed in earlier chapters, a gap that requires the purposeful, intentional stepping across and over communication barriers. Building "bridges" of relationship is not accidental nor instant. Relationships are strengthened when there are multiple opportunities made and taken to become better acquainted with the other people. These opportunities give both groups personal experiences that are shared together. They

naturally produce better understanding, and they chip away at cultural stereotypes and racial caricatures. When each group gets to know each other, they work and serve better together. Nees and Porter basically were calling for doing more things together which would facilitate more inclusion and acceptance: the "outsiders" would become genuine partners, and the "strangers" would be seen as *members of the same family*.

Another related aspect of including the Latinx immigrants and combating the sense of isolation would be to help the Anglo congregations and leaders to understand the dynamics of living as a member of a small minority. Unfortunately, many of those in the majority are completely unaware of this. In the US Heartland region, this is especially the case. The Anglo people are never outnumbered. They are never conspicuously, visibly different from all the rest, a truth that causes insecure feelings on a daily basis for Hispanics. Anglos in these rural central areas are not familiar with being uncomfortable, self-conscious and closely watched by everyone in the room because of being a minority in that setting. This creates tension and a desire to escape. The tendency of most people in a minority setting is to self-segregate with the few people that are from the same group. This self-segregation further exacerbates the feelings of isolation of those in the minority and intensifies the rejection by those in the majority. Stewart said,

> The more immigrants self-segregate, the more Americans will find their negative stereotypes confirmed. And because these stereotypes are unconscious, it is hard for either the immigrant or the native to confront them. …Self-segregation of Hispanics, though, cause their neighbors to view them negatively.

"Welcoming" those who are in the minority would reduce this tendency. Stressing the things that all people have in common would incorporate the immigrant. Several interviewees said this same thing. In actuality, people are very similar to each other.

Ways to Welcome

It is important to question why the Latinx immigrants felt rejected by their American neighbors and by the Anglo Church. This would be necessary to be able to investigate the ways to answer the rejection and to help resolve it by better determining the steps to acceptance. One of the primary issues given by both the Anglos and the Latinx immigrants was the need for the resolution of acquiring correct documentation. Contrary to what many Anglos think, almost all Latinx immigrants want citizenship. Many are involved in the process of legalization or naturalization. Some have been waiting for many years. The process takes a long time, and can be expensive. A few interviewees expressed the frustration of the immigrants being delayed in their processing by the constant changes in immigration laws. A huge first step towards acceptance would be for the Anglo congregations to learn about and understand the legalization and naturalization processes in which their Latinx neighbors are engaged. As was noted in earlier chapters, this process battle has been politicized and extreme positions have been taken which helped no one, and did not resolve the issue.

Certainly, districts, congregations and individuals could work together to help the Latinx immigrants with their processing by accompanying them, or at least, by encouraging them. Aside from getting involved in the political part of immigration laws and enforcement, there would be many ways to assist the immigrants. Some districts and congregations offer US citizenship classes. This is more prevalent in the big cities and areas of the country where there are more Hispanics. However, developing something locally or sharing resources from the other areas would greatly assist the immigrants and would increase the interaction between the two congregations.

Another way to welcome is to improve communication between the Anglo and Latinx people through language. The Latinx immigrants could teach Spanish to the Anglos and the

Anglos could teach English to the Hispanics. The complaint is valid by both groups that they cannot understand what each other is saying. Therefore, a mutual drawing together by learning from each other would naturally happen as the two groups developed skills in both languages. Since many problems simply arise out of miscommunication, and since translators or bilingual people often are not present, especially in the US Heartland, I suggest that the two groups look to each other for the answer to this dilemma. The research confirmed the experiences of the interviewees that this issue was substantially more important than any other to the success of the immigrant. The Latinx immigrants need English to be successful in the Anglo society and culture, plus improving English skills would certainly improve their understanding what was happening around them. The Latinx immigrants could teach basic Spanish and could explain culture differences. This would immediately improve understanding. Latinx teachers helping Anglos learn Spanish and Anglos who would be willing to help the Latinx immigrants learn basic English would be bridge-builders between the two groups. The Latinx immigrants expressed that there were no people who would help them with the language. Strategically, this simple suggestion could reap the greatest result in the lives of the Latinx immigrant and in their ministry, and would be rewarding, very helpful and sincerely appreciated.

As was pointed out earlier, self-segregation, or the tendency that cultural groups stay together instead of mixing with other groups, is not helpful for either group. It is natural and understandable, but it does not improve the situation. There needs to be conversation and interchange. People from both groups need to talk to each other, informally. They need to listen and learn from each other. Culture is extremely strong, and it will require hard work by both groups to achieve new levels of partnership.

An example of this welcoming was mentioned in the earlier chapter by one of the interviewees. The coordinator commented with admiration about the sense of unity of multiple ethnic groups that he saw in the Roman Catholic congregations. The presence of two or more language groups in each service did not seem to make any difference. Neither were there any complaints about priests speaking with foreign accents. There were no intimations of the ethnicity of the church itself: it was not "American" or "Latinx" or "Vietnamese" or "Filipino." It was simply "Catholic." There was a sense of unity and togetherness evident. It was not based on the priest who led the service because that changed often. It was not based even on the particular church building, because the interviewee said that it was the same in every parish. It was based in the region, because this was noticeable throughout other countries. One could remark theologically that the focus was on "the Presence of Christ," not on the ethnicities of the individuals present. To the point, there was no sense of nonacceptance of anyone by anyone. There was only a unified sense of community, a multi-colored ethnic mosaic that seemed to be strengthened by the diverse groups. Everyone was accepted. There were no strangers, outsiders or foreigners there. If this is evidently possible with Catholic congregations, then the issue of rejection is not really a question of ecclesiology, but of nationalism or ethnicity issues, and within the evangelical Church, not the entire Body of Christ.

A Genuine Commitment to Each Other

To combat the feeling of the Latinx immigrant of being disconnected from the Anglo Church, there is the need for a genuine commitment to each other by both the Latinx immigrants and the Anglo Church. The commitment could not be to a multicultural program imposed by church leadership, nor could it be to a project for the celebration of ethnic diversity. It should be a genuine commitment on an individual level to people that we know personally. A program or a

project will be soon forgotten or laid aside, but a neighbor is to be loved (Mark 12:31). That neighbor, who lives in the same community, deals with the same local issues, sends their children to the same school, and goes to the same places in town for the same needs, could be a Latinx immigrant or an Anglo long-time resident. Both live side by side. Both might work in the same workplace. The point is that their commonalities are more than their differences. To connect with the Body of Christ first means to recognize that we are all members together of one body, the Church (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Romans 12:4). The various analogies used to illustrate this truth all point to the same high value estimate of the worth of each person in God's sight. Each Christian must recognize the value of the other, whether that person was a descendant of the founder of the town or was a recent arrival who was hired at the local factory yesterday. Each person should be valued, accepted and allowed to prosper. Their participation in the church and community could prove indispensable, and a genuine commitment to them and to their success would make that contribution possible.

There need to be streams of genuine love and compassion flowing in both directions as part of this commitment to each other. The Latinx immigrants need patient understanding as they learn and make the adjustments to their new surroundings. Stewart said that the immigrant's process of adapting and adjusting to the new environment usually takes ten years, considering all the factors of language, culture, age and education. Cultural adjustments are difficult because they not only include learning new things, but also include readjusting the thoughts about old things. The tenacity with which we hold on to old things sometimes inhibits our growth in new ways. This is certainly the case with acculturation. During the time of adjustment, and all the while still learning the new language, there will be confusion and questioning between the Anglo and Latinx neighbors. Life is complex; life in a new country is very complex; life in a new

country and in a new language is extremely complex. Some things that are taken for granted by the Anglos, have never been used before by the Latinx immigrants, a point that was made in earlier chapters. It takes time to learn new things. This is part of the commitment to each other. This is not a question of superior-inferior, because anyone immigrating to the home countries of the Latinx immigrants would find their situation equally perplexing. The element discussed here is the commitment by both groups to embrace each other and assist the recently arrived immigrant to be able to freely participate. This participation by the Latinx immigrant in the Church in the United States is absolutely essential in the mission of God to bless all creation.

The impact would be significant on the entire ministry of the Church in the US Heartland if a conscientious, determined and sustained effort were made by Anglo Nazarene pastors and congregations to completely include the Latinx immigrant pastors and their congregations. No longer "strangers and foreigners" but as essential and valued partners in ministry, they could teach many things from their own experience and perspective. There would be dynamic implications of enlisting devoted, hard-working, tested Latinx men and women who have already braved many storms and battled many adverse circumstances. The Latinx congregations and pastors would respond powerfully when they are trusted and treated as part of the family. They would prove to be passionate in compassionate outreach ministries to the community. They already have an informal network that literally spans the hemisphere. They have already proven to be economically resourceful, even working full time and receiving little or nothing in salary as pastors. They understand the importance of evangelism and church planting, as evidenced by their engagement with the regional church planting training. They have planted more churches than any other group. They also already understand church leadership and authority. "We are just like you," they said in the interviews. *They should not have to ask to be included*. If there was a

genuine commitment to them, they would genuinely commit themselves to a national vision for the Church. They recognize the signs of the times. They have witnessed evil and atrocities firsthand in their home countries, which is why they left and brought their families with them. They realize that estrangement or division in a Church is fatal. By excluding the Latinx immigrants, the Anglo Church hurts itself, and turns away from God's mission.

Recommendations

The situation has been hard for the Latinx immigrant pastors. The reasons that they felt rejected and therefore isolated were because of their unresolved issue of documentation, their inability to communicate in English with their neighbors, and their lack of familiarity with the customs and traditions of their new home.

I recommend that Anglo churches concretely improve their relationships with the Latinx immigrants by recognizing the inestimable value of each person, no matter what their ethnicity. Each person has been created by God. Each person is loved by God. Each person can be saved, sanctified and called and used by God for His glory. There are no distinctions between people. There can no longer be a sense of "Us and Them" in the Church. We are all one family in Christ Jesus. This situation can no longer be viewed as a relationship between a "superior" and an "inferior." That is unacceptable and dehumanizing. There cannot be paternalistic attitudes. Even the denotation of teacher and student is unhelpful because the teacher always can learn from the student. The exchange goes both directions because they are standing on the same level together, as equals. The Anglo pastor has much to learn from the Latinx pastor. The mutuality of the relationships needs to be fully embraced.

I recommend that Anglo churches concretely improve their relationships with the Latinx immigrants by increasing the interactions between the two groups. Establish friendships between

the congregations. These are brought about by shared experiences together. Be creative and innovative in ways to minister alongside of each other. This could be done out in the community. A side-by-side ministry with an equal participation and visibility in the community would be a powerful witness to the difference between the Church and the world. Build trust with each other, and learn to depend upon each other. Communicate constantly with each other. Learn the language of the other. Figure out ways to familiarize each group with the other. The more that they know each other, the sooner that the barriers will come down. Emphasize commonalities not differences. There are plentiful examples of things in which all Anglo and Latinx families are alike. Pray together. Have combined group prayer meetings every three months. Enjoy worship together. Both groups love music. Enjoy being together. Both groups love to celebrate. Enjoy eating together. Enjoy the flavors of the two cultures. Learn from each other. Listen to each other. Outdo one another in showing respect and honor for each other. Remember that both groups are part of *one family*.

Final Words

We were created to enjoy living in a wonderfully expansive family with a network of relationships of brothers and sisters from every country and language group. Drs. Nees and Porter stressed intentional bridge building between the congregations. This is not a superficially multicultural event once every four years. This is not a united worship service every six months with a multicultural dinner afterwards. That is simply not enough for knowing each other, learning from each other, and genuine growing together. This is construction work that takes time and intention. The pastors need to share the same vision together so that both church boards and both congregations understand and embrace it. Districts need to provide good examples and recruit and elevate young ethnic leaders, and listen to them. There needs to be a genuine

compassion for each other. We need to know each other and understand the trials and situations of each other, and we need to receive from each other.

It would be easier to remain separate and never consider other perspectives, and never grow. It would be easier for each person to live solitary lives, each in their own room. However, we were created to live in a family. Anything less than full acceptance, equality and mutual service to each other is not in keeping with God's mission for His family. This sense of family togetherness and unity of purpose cannot wait for a supernatural fulfillment in heaven; it must be done intentionally, obediently and humbly by God's people, starting today. It cannot be excused or delayed, because it is clear that God demands this of His Church. He said in Isaiah 56:6-7:

> *"Also the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord,*
> *To attend to His service and to love the name of the Lord,*
> *To be His servants, every one who keeps the Sabbath so as not to profane it,*
> *And holds firmly to My covenant;*
> *Even those I will bring to My holy mountain,*
> *And make them joyful in My house of prayer.*
> *Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar;*
> *For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."*

We must remember that *we are all foreigners* who have joined ourselves to the Lord.

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Appendix A Informed Consent Form (Original)

DOCUMENTO DEL CONSENTIMIENTO INFORMADO

Título del Proyecto: Descubriendo los efectos en la preparación pastoral de la experiencia de pastores inmigrantes latinos en el corazón de los EEUU rurales

Soy el Rev. Timoteo McKeithen, un estudiante en el Nazarene Theological Seminary y estoy realizando un estudio investigativo para un título de Doctor en el Ministerio.

En este documento, le explicaré en detalle el propósito del proyecto y los procedimientos que voy a utilizar. Me puede preguntar cualquier pregunta que tenga para que le ayudaría a entender el proyecto. A continuación, se presenta una explicación básica del proyecto. Por favor, lea esta explicación y hable conmigo sobre cualquier pregunta o duda. Si usted decide participar en el proyecto, usted siempre tendrá el derecho de negarse a responder a cualquier pregunta o para retirarse de la conversación libremente en cualquier momento y sin penalización.

- La naturaleza y propósito del Proyecto:

Este proyecto de investigación trata sobre pastores latinos que han emigrado y ahora ministran en la región central de los Estados Unidos. Muchos inmigrantes de habla hispana se han mudado a las ciudades rurales del corazón de los Estados Unidos. Decidieron no vivir en las comunidades latinas metropolitanas de las costas occidental y oriental. En cambio, se establecieron en las regiones agrícolas centrales. Los pastores latinos que ministran a estas personas recién llegadas se enfrentan a múltiples desafíos que se preparan para el ministerio pastoral allí. Debido a las barreras lingüísticas y culturales, todas estas personas hispanohablantes se encuentran todavía como forasteros, incluso después de vivir décadas aquí. Si bien esto es cierto en las comunidades donde viven, es más preocupante que sea cierto en la Iglesia. Los pastores que solamente hablan español, en particular, luchan por encontrar inclusión, comprensión, mentoría y recursos en estas comunidades rurales que no tienen muchos hispanohablantes ni tienen apoyo bilingüe y recursos bilingües.

- Una explicación de los procedimientos:

He invitado usted y otros quince líderes a participar en este proyecto porque todos ustedes son reconocidos por su iglesia y su distrito como líderes de pastores latinos. Usted conoce personalmente a estos pastores. Debido a sus años de experiencia y liderazgo, usted puede darnos una mejor comprensión de su situación, al mismo tiempo que les permite permanecer anónimos debido a la confidencialidad para protegerlos. Me gustaría programar con usted una entrevista Zoom de una sola vez en español (a menos que prefiera inglés) sobre las experiencias de vida de sus pastores latinos. No se necesita preparación para esta entrevista; simplemente quiero escuchar las historias sobre su experiencia, situación y desafíos de este grupo especial de pastores. No habrá una respuesta correcta o incorrecta. Toda la conversación debe tardar 40 minutos o menos.

Para referencia solamente, comenzaré pidiéndole su nombre y su posición de ministerio, que nunca será mencionada otra vez. Entonces, le preguntaré sobre las experiencias de los pastores latinos inmigrantes en su área. Para proteger a las personas que usted describe, tanto ellos como usted serán anónimos en la investigación. Nadie será nombrado en la investigación publicada y ningún distrito será identificado. Se tendrá cuidado de asegurarse de que ninguna identificación geográfica o cultural pondría en peligro el anonimato.
Con su consentimiento, ya que estaremos hablando entre nosotros a través de Zoom, grabaré nuestra conversación con el único propósito de transcribir y traducir al inglés las respuestas. Nadie más verá ni escuchará estas grabaciones. Todas las historias serán analizadas como la parte de la investigación para entender el cuadro entero y para escuchar las preocupaciones que tienen

los pastores latinos y qué recursos ellos piensan que necesitan. Esta información será compartida en mi disertación.

- La confidencialidad y el anonimato:

Usted actuará solo como una fuente secundaria, compartiendo los tipos de historias que usted ha escuchado a lo largo de los años cuando su gente compartió sus experiencias con usted. Nadie de quien usted hable será nombrado en el estudio, y se tendrá cuidado de ocultar cualquier detalle que podría permitir a la gente averiguar de quién era una historia. También se pueden cambiar detalles significativos para desidentificar a las personas o eventos en sus historias.

- Antes de firmar:

Este documento ha sido escrito para ayudarle a decidir si le gustaría participar. Depende de usted, y usted solo, si desea participar. Si realmente decide participar, siempre será libre de retirarse en cualquier momento sin proporcionar una razón, y sin consecuencias negativas. Asegúrese de que cualquier pregunta que tenga sea respondida a su satisfacción. Si usted consiente en participar en este estudio, una copia del estudio será puesta a su disposición.

_____ _____
Firma de Participante Fecha

Nombre en letra de molde: _____

_____ _____
Firma del investigador Fecha

Appendix A Informed Consent Form (Translated)

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: Uncovering the Effects of the Latinx Immigrant Experience in the US Heartland on Pastoral Preparation

My name is Rev. Timothy E. McKeithen. I am a student at the Nazarene Theological Seminary conducting an investigative study for a Doctor of Ministry degree.

In this document, I will explain to you in detail the purpose of the project and the procedures that I will use. You may ask me any questions you have to help you understand the project. A basic

explanation of the project is written below. Please read this explanation and discuss with me any questions you may have. If you choose to participate in the project, you always will have the right to refuse to answer any question or to withdraw from the conversation freely and without penalty.

- The Nature and Purpose of the Project:

This research project is about Latinx pastors who have immigrated and who now minister in the US Heartland. Many Spanish-speaking immigrants have moved into the rural towns of the U.S. Heartland. They chose not to live in the metropolitan Latinx communities of West and East Coasts. They settled instead in the central farming regions. The Latinx pastors who minister to these new arrivals face multiple challenges preparing for the pastoral ministry there. Because of language and cultural barriers, all these Spanish-speaking people find themselves still as outsiders, even after decades here. While this is true in the communities where they live, it is more troubling that it is true in the church. Spanish-speaking pastors in particular struggle to find inclusion, understanding, mentorship and resources in these rural communities which do not have many Spanish-speakers nor have bilingual support and resources.

- An Explanation of Procedures:

I have invited you and fifteen other leaders to participate in this project because you all are recognized by your church and district as leaders of Latinx pastors. You know these pastors personally. Because of your years of experience and leadership, you can give us a better understanding of their situation while allowing them to remain unnamed because of confidentiality. I would like to schedule a one-time Zoom interview with you in Spanish (unless you prefer English) about the life experiences of your Latinx pastors. No preparation is needed for this interview; I simply want to hear your stories about the needs and concerns of this group of pastors. There is no right or wrong answer. The entire conversation should take 40 minutes or less.

For reference purpose only, I will collect your name and your ministry position, but this will never be used again. I will then ask you about the experiences of the Latinx pastors in your area. To protect the people you are describing, both they and you will be anonymous in the research. No one will be named in the published research and no district will be identified. Care will be taken to make sure no geographical or cultural identification would compromise the anonymity.

With your consent, since we will be speaking to each other via Zoom, I will record our conversation for the sole purpose of transcribing and translating into English the answers. No one else will ever see nor hear these recordings. All of the stories will be analyzed as part of the research to understand the entire picture and hear the concerns that the Latinx pastors have and what resources they need. It will then be published in my dissertation.

- Confidentiality and Anonymity:

You will act only as a secondary source, sharing the kinds of stories you have heard over the years as your people shared their experiences with you. No one you talk about will be named in

the study, and care will be taken to disguise any detail that would let people figure out who a story was about. Significant details may also be changed in order to de-identify persons or events in the subject's story.

- Before you sign:

This sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will always be free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason, and with no negative consequences. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of the study will be made available to you.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Printed name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B Interview Schedule

Original Spanish

- Queremos entender cómo es toda la experiencia para los pastores inmigrantes latinos. Creo que hay muchos en nuestra Iglesia que no han escuchado sus experiencias. Me gustaría que usted tenga la libertad de contar las historias de estos pastores inmigrantes latinos, sin usar sus nombres, para que podamos oír las voces de ellos. Todo esto proyecto sería para que supiéramos cómo trabajar para acompañarlos mejor. Entiendo, hermano/a _____, que usted ha estado trabajando con pastores en esta categoría por muchos años. Usted es el experto y por eso le pediría que comenzara donde quiera y me dijera, ¿cuáles son algunas de las experiencias que usted ha escuchado de estos pastores? No le voy a interrumpir. Voy a solo escucharle mientras comparte lo que han oído.

- ¿Qué recursos sienten los pastores que necesitan? ¿Qué recursos desean tener? ¿Cuáles recursos piensan ellos mismos serían útiles?
- Aprecio sus comentarios y agradezco las historias que usted está compartiendo porque realmente me ayudan a entender. Antes de que terminemos, me gustaría saber, de todas las cosas de las que usted ha hablado hoy, ¿qué piensa que es lo más importante que la gente debe saber sobre la experiencia de estos pastores?

Translated English

- I'm very interested in understanding what the entire experience is like for the Latinx immigrant pastors. It seems like there are many in the Church who haven't heard about their experiences. I would like to tell their stories, without using their names, sharing on their behalf but protecting them, so that people can begin to see into their lives, hear their experiences, find out about the things that are challenges for them. All of this would be so that we would know how to work to help them. I understand that you have been working with pastors in this category for many years and so I would ask you to begin wherever you would like and tell me, what are some of the experiences that you have heard people having? What are the major things that are affecting them? I want to sit and listen to you as the expert as you share what you have heard.
- What resources would be helpful? What resources do they feel that they need? What resources do they wish they had?
- I appreciate your comments and the stories that you are sharing because they really help me to understand. Before we finish, I would like to know, of all the things that you have talked about today, what do you think is the most important thing for people to know about the experience of these pastors?