

From the Editor

As of July 1, 2012, the Hispanic population in the United States numbered 53 million or 17% of the total population. From July 1, 2011 to July 1, 2012 the Hispanic population grew by 1.1 million, while the entire population of the U.S. grew by only 2.3 million, making Hispanics almost 50% of the growth. Of the entire Hispanic population in the U.S., 37.6 million speak Spanish as their first language at home.¹ What does this mean for the Church? What does it mean for Asbury Theological Seminary? What does it mean for the pastors, counselors, educators, and missionaries we train? How do these facts affect the way we structure sermons, worship time, or church ministries? These are key questions that need serious theological thought and study.

Asbury Theological Seminary began to address these questions back in 2001 with the development of the highly successful Latino/Latina Studies Program at the Florida Dunnam Campus, with certificate classes in Spanish to help meet the growing need for Spanish language theological education. The establishment of the Justo L. Gonzalez Resource Center in 2011 was another important step in this direction, and was followed by a partnership with the Evangelical Methodist Seminary-University of Costa Rica in San José, Costa Rica in December of 2011. Discussions still continue on plans to develop a Spanish language MA degree program in the near future. The *Asbury Journal* wanted to celebrate these moves with this special bilingual edition, and add to the growing Spanish language academic literature available for Spanish speaking students.

In this issue we present five articles in both English and Spanish as we attempt to address issues of concern for the Latino/Latina Christian community. Danny Román-Gloró presents an insightful article that examines how Latinos/Latinas in the pews evaluate what is a “good” sermon. Angel Santiago-Vendrell explores the contextual missiology of three key Cuban-American theologians living in exile, and how this exemplifies diaspora missiology. Rachel L. Coleman interviews Latin American mission leaders to learn ways North American missionaries can improve their outreach to Latin America and be more culturally appropriate in that context. Robert Danielson and Mario Vega present a growing trend of transnational church movements that are moving into the United States along with transnational immigrant communities, by examining one such movement from El Salvador. Finally,

Javier Sierra presents pastoral counseling to the Latino/Latina community as a form of ministry that builds on existing cultural values of relationships and advice-giving. These articles are just a small contribution to the growing theological literature on the Hispanic church, but by making them available in Spanish, Asbury hopes to be a part of that growing theological dialog.

I want to give a special thanks to Kelly Godoy de Danielson, our special guest Spanish editor, for all her hard work in translating some and editing all of the Spanish language material in this issue. This issue would have been impossible without her. She is also the photographer of our cover image for this issue, which was taken in July of 2013 in Santa Ana, El Salvador at the local fiesta in honor of Saint Anne, the patron saint of the city and the mother of the Virgin Mary. On the saint's day in many Roman Catholic communities, local groups of men and women take places of honor in carrying their local saint through the city in celebration. With fragrant flowers, bright colored banners, and lively music, the people display the high level of religious devotion found in all parts of Latin America, as well as the beauty and exuberance of traditional types of worship. The church in the United States has much it can learn from the Latin American church and the Latinos/Latinas who live in our community. As this community continues to grow and influence the Church, Asbury has a key role to play in educating future theological educators in both Spanish and English.

End Notes

¹These are just some of the U.S. Census facts listed on their website for the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month in October of 2013. It can be accessed at: http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb13-ff19.html.