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time. I was, I am told, the first professor in theological education to interpret insights from the Willow Creek project to the wider church. My books, such as *How To Reach Secular People* (Abingdon, 1992), *Church for the Unchurched* (Abingdon, 1996), and *Radical Outreach: The Recovery of Apostolic Ministry and Evangelism* (Abingdon, 2003), introduced Willow Creek to many church leaders and (I am told) "legitimized" Willow Creek as a church "worth learning from." Willow Creek decided, early, to omit visual Christian symbols when they built their first facility. Innovative leaders do not get every decision right, and I have never heard or read a compelling argument for the omission of symbols. I suspect that Willow Creek's leaders bought, unreflectively, into the widespread (but unspoken) Evangelical Protestant bias that the sense of *hearing* is the only sense that matters, and that *words* are the main (if not the only) medium of God's revelation. While Protestants are not obligated to replicate Roman Catholic "smells and bells," I submit that all of the senses *do* matter, that multi-sensory communication is often more powerful than what can be achieved through hearing alone, and that the next pioneering churches may show us how to indigenize Christian symbols to the target population's aesthetic—as we have already learned to do with their favored genres of music. In every other major mission field on the planet, we have already learned how to develop indigenous expressions of Christian symbols.

Insights from Communication Theories that Inform Ministry with Pre-Christian Hispanics in the USA

Dan W. Dunn

Abstract

This article discerns insights from three communication theories to inform ministry with pre-Christian Hispanics in the USA. Pearce's Coordinated Management of Meaning theory speaks of the co-construction of social realities in diverse circumstances. Christians have experienced what it is to be diverse and yet through Jesus' love be able to co-construct an identity that focuses on our shared commitment to Him and His purposes. Combining our experience with insights from Pearce would equip us to contribute to the process of identity construction that Hispanics engage in. Baxter and Montgomery's Relational Dialectics Theory could guide congregations in helping families plot a course through the complexities of relationships. Finally, Hammerback and Jensen's theory of Reconstitutive Rhetoric helps us understand the value of inviting pre-Christian Hispanics to embrace a new identity that not only tells them how to act but also who to be.

According to the US Census Bureau, the 2006 population of Hispanics¹ in the United States was 43.2 million, which represents 15.5% of the total population in the USA. Between 2000 and 2006, the growth rate of Hispanics was 24.3%, compared to a 6.1% growth rate for the population as a whole. This rapidity of growth is expected to continue, so that by the year 2010 the Hispanic population is estimated to reach 47.8 million, and by 2020 it will reach almost 60 million.² In 2006 the Pew Research Center conducted a survey of Hispanics and American Religion (they refer to Hispanics as Latinos), and in this survey 7.8% of Hispanics self-designated as being secular.³ Based on the Census Bureau Survey figure of 43.2 million, 7.8% represents 3,369,600 Hispan-

ies with no religious affiliation. Additionally, even though 92.2% of Hispanics say they are religious, only 63% of Hispanics attend religious services once per month.⁴ The remaining 37% would constitute a population of almost 16 million Hispanics. A conservative estimate, therefore, is that among the Hispanics who live in the USA, between 3 million and 16 million of them are currently not experiencing the joy of a life fully invested in Christ and lived in relationship with His people. This represents an enormous mission field to be reached with the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

Effectively reaching these persons represents a difficult task due to the complexity of Hispanic realities in America. The matrix of ethnicity, immigration status, language preference, socioeconomic "place" and other factors makes it difficult to know the "who" for whom a local congregation should contextualize its ministry. However, with the assistance of social science research, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, I believe it is possible to address complex issues well enough to glean tentative insights for effective apostolic ministry with Hispanic pre-Christians. There are a myriad of possibilities for research in these arenas, so it is impossible to deal with all of them in one article. My objective in this article is to focus on three specific theories from the field of communication to gain insights for ministry with Hispanics in the USA.

The first communication theory that offers promise for our journey is the Coordinated Management of Meaning theory developed by Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen. The central crux of their theory is that "*persons-in-conversation co-construct their own social realities and are simultaneously shaped by the worlds they create.*"⁵ They view their theory as eminently practical because it addresses how we can create a better social world together. As they extend their theory they offer ideas and models to help teachers, parents, social workers, therapists, and many others become more effective in a wide variety of communication situations. Four tenets in particular are germane to CMM:

- The essential social process of human living is the experience of people in conversation.
- How we communicate is often more important than what we communicate.
- The conversation interaction is experienced reflexively, so that we are continually being formed in relationship to our conversations.
- Persons-in-conversation are curious participants in a pluralistic world – curious rather than certain, participants rather than spectators, and pluralistic truth rather

than singular truth.⁶

Because we live in a pluralistic world as curious participants and are continually involved in formational processes, Pearce recommends a style or form of communication he terms as dialogic. An important piece of dialogic communication is that persons distinguish between their personal identities and the relationship that exists between them. This enables persons with different perspectives (each shares his or her own identity) to nevertheless communicate with one another respectfully (honoring the relationship between them as co-participants). As persons engage in dialogic communication they are able to coordinate meaning in the social world they are creating. Coordination is the word chosen because this theory honors that persons will disagree with one another so the goal is not to achieve common interpretation but shared action. The notion of sharing is particularly important because "the reconstruction of contexts, and most other things worth doing, cannot be done unilaterally or in a single act. Social change, just like its apparent opposite, social order, is co-constructed in a recursive process that reconstructs us as persons, relationships, and institutions."⁷

This theory has strong potential for informing our ministry with pre-Christian Hispanics. Due to complex issues such as immigration, language, and identity, Hispanics continually experience the kind of co-constructive process to which Pearce and Cronen refer. Consider identity, for example. I have a friend who moved to America from Puerto Rico seven years ago. He married a girl from Salvador who has been here four years. They are both bi-lingual but are far more comfortable speaking Spanish, and yet they also both work with companies where English is predominant. If they continue living in America, they will experience a constant co-construction of their identities. The "players" involved in this co-construction will include them, their Hispanic friends, their Anglo friends, their co-workers, their bosses, American cultural influences, their work environments, and many more. How will "meaning" in their lives be constructed and coordinated? Who will help them in that process?

Geoffrey Fox has written about the construction of Hispanic identity in the midst of such dizzying complexities. He notes that Hispanics in America are constantly shifting their identities, and he asks a penetrating question: "If identities can be shifted that easily, how deep and important can they be? What is the relationship between my identities and my 'self'? Or are they the same thing?"⁸ I submit that the Coordinated Management of Meaning theory can assist Christians in helping pre-Christian

Hispanics navigate their lifelong journey of identity co-construction. More importantly, as this journey is shared with non-Hispanic Christians, I believe we can remind ourselves that virtually all persons experience lifelong identity shifts. This is not limited to Hispanics. Felix Padilla writes that "people may shed, resurrect, or adopt ethnicity as the situation warrants,"⁹ and Ilan Stavans proposes that "we are currently witnessing a double-faceted phenomenon: Hispanization of the United States, and Anglocization of Hispanics."¹⁰

I suggest that a deeper understanding of the co-construction of social realities could bear tremendous fruit in evangelization. For example, as Pearce develops his theory in more detail, one of the issues he deals with is "consensual rules." He offers three coordination strategies related to consensual rules; casting, mirroring, and negotiation.¹¹ Space does not permit a deeper investigation of these strategies. I simply want to emphasize that there is much gold to be mined in Pearce's work, and Christians would benefit greatly from digging more deeply into his theoretical veins. These kinds of insights could provide wise counsel to Christians in their ministry with pre-Christians Hispanics. As persons united in Christ, we have experienced what it is like to speak different languages or come from different geographical locations or share different ethnic backgrounds and yet through Christ's love be able to co-construct an identity that focuses on our unity in Him and our shared commitment to His purposes. Combining our experience with insights from Pearce would equip us to contribute to the process of identity construction that pre-Christians engage in. Local churches could take the initiative in this kind of endeavor and *proactively* form communities united in Christ rather than waiting to *reactively* respond to conflicts within their communities.

Our second communication theory is the Relational Dialectics Theory, which is designed to help make sense of the "dynamic knot of contradictions"¹² that we experience in our more intimate relationships with family and close friends. Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery note that in these relationships there is "a ceaseless interplay between contrary or opposing tendencies."¹³ The three dialectics that most commonly impact intimate relationships are integration-separation, stability-change, and expression-nonexpression. Baxter notes that these three "families of contradictions" are by no means the only ones which people experience in their intimate relationships, nor are they simplistic entities. Rather, they "have multiple strands of meaning that are constituted differently depending on the particular kind of relating...."¹⁴

In later development, Baxter focused on Mikhail Bakhtin's thoughts concerning dialogue and began to highlight five emphases from his work:

- Dialogue is a constitutive process – communication is not a *part* of the relationship, but is what creates and sustains the relationship.
- Dialogue as dialectical flux – it is complex and messy, so don't expect it to be otherwise
- Dialogue as an aesthetic moment – in the midst of the complexity, we experience those peaceful and exuberant times when we know that we have truly communicated together
- Dialogue as utterance – this highlights that multiple voices are necessary in communication
- Dialogue as a critical sensibility – we must critique dominant voices, we must allow all voices to be heard¹⁵

The theory of relational dialectics provides a sense of relief to some people because it helps them understand that the tensions which they experience in their close relationships are normal. The five strands of dialogue also provide insights that assist people in navigating the complexities of our intimate relationships and experiencing those blessed exuberant aesthetic moments. More recently Baxter has developed a second-generation view of Relational Dialectics in which she has nuanced her understanding of aesthetic moments. She identifies three types of "consummatory [sic] moments" that are experienced in intimate relationships, "the wholeness of temporal continuity with the past and with the future, the wholeness of a relationship forged out of distinct selves, and a sense of oneness with the flow of the conversation or with the immediate surroundings."¹⁶

Baxter's three "consummatory moments" offer fresh possibilities for ministry with Hispanics. Concerning the "temporal continuity with the past and with the future," I am thinking particularly of congregations that are located in communities with a mixture of first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants. Many studies have revealed the changes that occur between these immigrant generations and the resulting problems that can ensue. For example, Helen Ebaugh and Janet Chafetz address the dilemmas that immigrant congregations face in terms of which language(s) to utilize in ministry settings.¹⁷ Recognition of the wholeness that comes when people experience temporal continuity with the past and with the future could prompt congregations to develop events that provide such continuity. If the congregation is comprised of Venezuelans they could celebrate

Venezuelan Independence Day on July 5th, in addition to celebrating America's Independence Day on July 4th. This would provide continuity with their past experience in Venezuela and their present experience in America. To offer a sense of continuity with the future, in conjunction with a new understanding of their identity in Christ, they could celebrate Conversion Days or Spiritual Birthdays. Similar ideas could be generated around the themes of the other two consummatory moments.

Another important facet of the Relational Dialectics theory is the foundational premise that contradictions and the interplay between them are *normal* for people in close relationships. As Christians minister with Hispanics they would benefit from an awareness that the American portrayal of the "ideal family" that always gets along well and seldom disagrees is simply not consistent with reality. This is especially pertinent in regard to the Hispanic cultural value of familialism, which refers to "the importance of relatives as referents and as providers of emotional support."¹⁸ Churches could help families plot a course through the complexities of relationships; a course that honors the esteem they have for one another while at the same time acknowledging that contradictions and disagreements are the norm for relational dynamics and thus are not to be viewed as automatically damaging or sinful.

A spinoff of this part of Baxter's theory is her realization of the role that ritual can play in creating wholesome moments. "Rituals are repeating events in which parties pay homage to some object, often their relationship."¹⁹ Think of what a creative congregation could do with that idea! They could host a Family Day, not just for the church but for the community as a whole. They could have the families express appreciation to one another. They could anoint family leaders with oil and pray a blessing over them. They could highlight the oldest members of the families and also the youngest. They could celebrate baptisms. They could reaffirm marriages. They could connect these and other activities with the Biblical theme of the great cloud of witnesses. An imaginative congregation could use Baxter's concepts as a springboard to create ministries that would have a huge impact in their community.

The final communication theory we will investigate is the Reconstitutive Rhetoric theory advanced by John C. Hammerback and Richard J. Jensen. Based in large part upon the influence of Cesar Chavez upon the Mexican-American population in the Southwest in the 1960s and 70s, they suggest that Reconstitutive Rhetoric moves beyond rhetoric's traditional goal of persuasion to the formation of a new social identity. Persons are not

simply persuaded to adopt a certain point of view, but rather are "reconstituted" in terms of their social identity to the degree that they "act out a new way of life."²⁰ To underscore the critical distinction between persuasion and constitution in rhetoric, Maurice Charland uses "conversion" to describe what occurs in constitutive rhetoric. "The process by which an audience member enters into a new subject position is therefore not one of persuasion. It is akin more to one of conversion that ultimately results in an act of recognition of the 'rightness' of a discourse and of one's identity with its reconfigured subject position."²¹

Hammerback and Jensen name their theory *Reconstitutive Rhetoric* to convey their particular interest in how rhetoric helps create social identity among a group of people who already have a social identity. They utilize a three-part model to describe the primary dimensions of the theory; the *first persona*, the *substantive message*, and the *second persona*.²² The first persona refers to how the audience views the communicator. Audience perception is influenced by several factors, including the communicator's character, personal history, and intelligence. In situations such as that of Cesar Chavez, personal history can aid in the process of identification as the communicator engages with the audience through shared experiences. The second component of the model is the substantive message, which refers to the central themes, explanations, and arguments that the communicator both shares and embodies. The embodiment of the message by the communicator works in consort with the identification referred to above. If the rhetor can demonstrate that he or she truly personifies what is being communicated in the themes and arguments, and if that rhetor has already achieved a personal identity match with the audience through shared experiences, then "the rhetorical potency of identification is therefore magnified, with both the rhetor and message connecting closely and personally with the audience."²³ The third aspect is second persona, which refers to the rhetorical portrayal of who the audience is encouraged to become. They are invited to reconstitute themselves as someone different from who they are now, and the rhetorician delineates the characteristics and actions of the "new person" or "new group" that they are urging them toward. "By identifying with the rhetor and message, audiences can be adjusted to a second persona that tells them who to be and how to act."²⁴

This model has vast potential for ministry with Hispanics. I am especially interested in the "second persona" concept as it relates to persons' continual search for identity. I believe that Christians could take the lead in their communities to communi-

cate the Biblical portrayal of the "new people" that God is calling them to be. Identity is a complex notion for most people, and even more so for Hispanics in America, because identity is so closely related to ethnicity. George Hicks provides useful insights for discerning the complicated strands of identity and ethnicity. He notes that in spite of past attempts to devalue the role of ethnicity in peoples' lives, it sometimes remains an essential component of human identity. Conversely, however, ethnicity must be seen as only one facet among several that contribute to a person's identity, and it must be considered within its contextual matrix. This perspective allows persons to value and utilize their ethnicity in ways that make best sense to them in the particular roles they assume within particular contexts, which provides them with more flexibility in role choice. "People often have a repertoire of ethnic attributes from which they can select the ones most suitable to a given situation. The possibility is opened for people, as it were, to leap back and forth across several ethnic boundaries."²⁵

"Leaping back and forth" is an appropriate image for many American Hispanics. In *Living in Spanglish* Ed Morales invites Hispanics not only to be aware of the transitory nature of the formation of their ethnicity and identity, but to joyfully embrace it. In so doing, they will discover that "Spanglish is the state of perpetual, chameleonlike flux"²⁶ and "a fertile terrain for negotiating a new identity."²⁷ In conjunction with Reconstitutive Rhetoric's call to portray a second persona for people to embrace, these insights from Hicks and Morales encourage Christians to invite pre-Christian Hispanics to adopt a new identity as people created and loved by God, redeemed in Christ, and both shaped and used by the Holy Spirit. Hispanics are already living "in the hyphen." They are already in "chameleonlike flux." They are already "leaping back and forth across several ethnic boundaries." Let the church not only join them, but guide them, so that the church calls them not to new identities that the world will offer them but rather to their most important new identity as the people of God.

A strong and imaginative portrayal of a new identity as the people of God could have tremendous appeal for many Hispanics, especially if that portrayal includes the Biblical themes of release for the oppressed, help for the poor, and the end of domination and subordination. Daniel Carroll has written an article that is quite pertinent to this discussion. In the face of globalization and its economic impact worldwide, he points us toward a "hermeneutics of responsibility." He (along with many others) contends that globalization has brought greater wealth to

some people, but that it has also widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and "led to pauperization of the masses, cuts in social spending, heavier foreign debt, higher inflation, a worrisome upsurge in unemployment, and greater political unrest."²⁸ This is especially true in Latin America, so he recommends that we attend to some of the emphases found in Latin American liberation theology as we share Christ in this era of globalization. In this context, then, the continual plight of the poor "prods us to seek how globalization might acquire a kinder face as well as to expose its capacity for evil; they remind us that globalization is a finite creation by fallen creatures in a fallen world and that our ultimate hope lies beyond and above this economic system, in the kingdom of God's son."²⁹

There are at least two reasons that Carroll's "hermeneutics of responsibility" informs ministry with Hispanics in America. One is that many Christian Hispanics have been influenced by liberation theology or at least have awareness of its predominant themes. A second reason is that many Hispanics experience poverty, prejudice, and oppression in America just as do their counterparts in Latin America. Following Carroll's guidance, therefore, any portrayal by the church of a second persona would need to include ways to address the social, economic, and political realities of life as Hispanics in America experience it. We cannot ignore those realities and expect to reach pre-Christian Hispanics effectively.

Daniel Ramirez would strongly agree with this assessment. In an article titled "Public Lives in American Hispanic Churches: Expanding the Paradigm," he urges us to shift our thinking so that we conceive of culture and religion *as* politics. "By taking seriously Latino believers' cultural artifacts and thickly describing the course of their life-in-community, we will arrive at a fuller, more complex understanding of the stakes as they see them at the intersection of faith and civic life."³⁰ We get more assistance from Bryan Stone regarding this issue because he merges the two concepts under discussion. He deals with the need to address social, political, and economic realities *and* the Biblical view of the "people-hood" of God –

Jesus talked about the reign of God as a radically new order that comes to put an end to the age-old patterns of wealth and poverty, domination and subordination, insider and outsider that are deeply ingrained in the way we relate to one another on this planet. But in order for that new order to become a serious option *for* the world, it must be visibly and imaginatively embodied *in* the

world. And if Scripture is a faithful witness, the purpose of God throughout history is the creation and formation of a new *people* whose mission is to do just that.³¹

Resources like Carroll, Ramirez, and Stone offer promising guidance for Christians who set about the task of portraying a new identity for pre-Christian Hispanics that will take them and their life contexts seriously.

An additional issue that must be included in this discussion is the relationship between identity and behavior. Based on my ministry experiences in Latin America and among Hispanics in the USA, I would suggest that too often Christians invite pre-Christian Hispanics to change their behaviors rather than their identities. To use Hammerback and Jensen's language, we tell them how to act without first telling them who to be. We speak with them about the ethical implications of a relationship with Christ much more than about the identity implications of that relationship. I do not propose that we ignore the ethical implications of a restored relationship with God through Jesus. They are of utmost importance. However, if our primary focus is on behavior then we will not touch pre-Christian Hispanics deeply in their "inner core." More than inviting them to stop drinking—start praying—stop gambling—start attending church—stop illicit sexual behavior—start reading your Bible—stop gossiping—start participating in a small group, etc., we could invite them to embrace a new identity in Christ and with Christ's people, and Jesus-honoring behaviors will grow out of that identity.

How specifically contextualized should we portray the identities we ask pre-Christian Hispanics to embrace? I honestly don't know. This is a question which invites wisdom from many persons who have experience with evangelistic ministry among Hispanics. What I believe I do know, however, is that effectively apostolic ministry with pre-Christian Hispanics in the USA will require a strong shift toward an identity-based framing of the gospel and away from a behavior-based framing of the gospel. I invite all servants of Christ who are passionate about reaching these persons with the good news of Jesus' love to pray, observe, research, and develop additional insights along these lines.

To a certain degree we have now come full circle, for our first two communication theories offer insights for how to actualize the "second persona" concept of the third theory. Christians engaged in the process of developing a contextualized second persona would need to commit to constantly manage and coordinate their meanings (Pearce's Coordinated Management of Meaning) and also remember that conflict and contradiction are a normal part of intimate relationships (Baxter's Relational

Dialectics). As they recurrently participate in this co-constructive (Pearce) process they will be embodying (part of the first persona of Reconstitutive Rhetoric) the kind of ongoing journey of identity formation which they are trying to portray, and thus they will both model and experience what it means to be Christ's pilgrim people.

As we conclude our investigative journey, we can celebrate the insights we have gained through this research and we can also celebrate the awareness that we have only scratched the surface of what can be learned from the social sciences to enhance our evangelization efforts. Many new understandings related to Hispanics in America have come to light as a result of social science research, and the church of Jesus Christ must avail itself of these understandings and utilize them to reach pre-Christians with the life-transforming gospel. The Apostle Peter told Christians that "once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God."³² May we commit ourselves to a continual quest for fresh insights concerning how we can encourage pre-Christian Hispanics to accept Jesus' invitation to become a part of the people of God.

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NOTES

1. There is no single term that serves as an adequate descriptor of the population this article relates to. I will use two descriptors interchangeably: "Hispanic" and "Spanish-speaking" (or "Spanish speakers"). I have chosen to use "Hispanic" simply because that is the term the Census Bureau has adopted. I use it knowing that other terms will be preferred by some readers, most prominent of which would be "Latino/a." I have chosen to occasionally use "Spanish-speaking" to honor the fact that not all Spanish speakers that congregations might reach through apostolic ministry will consider themselves Hispanic or Latino/a, and also to acknowledge that amidst complex issues such as ethnicity, immigration status, and citizenship, the most common factor present among the population this project relates to is their preference for experiencing Christian worship and ministry in the Spanish lan-

guage.

2. Census Bureau Power Point presentation titled "Hispanics in the United States," located at www.census.gov.
3. "Changing Faiths: Latinos and the Transformation of American Religion" (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2007) 7.
4. *Ibid.*, 16.
5. Em Griffin, *A First Look at Communication Theory*, 6th ed. (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 2006), 66.
6. *Ibid.*, 70-72.
7. W. Barnett Pearce and Kimberly A. Pearce, "Extending the Theory of the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) Through a Community Dialogue Process" (*Communication Theory*, 10:4, November 2000, 405-423), 421.
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11. W. Barnett Pearce, "The Coordinated Management of Meaning: A Rules-Based Theory of Interpersonal Communication" (*Explorations in Interpersonal Communication*, Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1976, 17-35), 25.
12. Griffin, *A First Look*, 161.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Leslie A. Baxter, "A Tale of Two Voices: Relational Dialectics Theory" (*The Journal of Family Communication*, 4(3&4), 2004, 181-192), 185-186.
15. Griffin, *A First Look*, 167-171.
16. Baxter, "A Tale of Two Voices," 187.
17. Helen Rose Ebaugh and Janet Saltzman Chafetz, "Dilemmas of Language in Immigrant Congregations: The Tie That Binds or the Tower of Babel?" (*Review of Religious Research*, 41:4, 2000), 432-452.
18. Gerardo Marin and Barbara VanOss Marin, *Research with Hispanic Populations*, Vol. 23 in Applied Social Research Methods Series (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1991), 2.
19. Baxter, "A Tale of Two Voices," 187.
20. John C. Hammerback and Richard J. Jensen, *The Rhetorical Career of Cesar Chavez* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1998), 45.
21. Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the People Quebecois" (*The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73:2, 133-150, May 1987), 142.
22. Hammerback and Jensen, *The Rhetorical Career*, 51.
23. Hammerback and Jensen, *The Rhetorical Career*, 52.

24. Ibid., 54.
25. Ibid., 17.
26. Ed Morales. *Living in Spanglish: The Search for Latino Identity in America* (New York: LA Weekly Books, 2002), 5.
27. Ibid., 6 (emphasis added).
28. M. Daniel R. Carroll, "The Challenge of Economic Globalization for Theology: From Latin America to a Hermeneutics of Responsibility," 199-212 in *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity*, Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 202.
29. Ibid., 211.
30. Daniel Ramirez, "Public Lives in American Hispanic Churches: Expanding the Paradigm," in *Latino Religions and Civic Activism in the United States*, ed. Gaston Espinosa, Virgilio Elizondo, and Jesse Miranda, 177-195 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 192.
31. Bryan Stone. *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), 12 (emphasis on "people" added).
32. 1 Peter 2:10a, *The Holy Bible*, New International Version.

The Evolution of Missional Church Characteristics

Derrick Lemons

Missional Church

The missional church movement pivots on the statement that a church in mission is being sent out and called beyond to interact with the outside culture, share Christ, and serve the community (Barrett et al. x, Bevens and Schroeder 8-9). The history of the missional church movement provides an informative starting point for understanding how existing cultures should change to embrace these ideals.

The modern missional church movement began in 1932 with a paper that Karl Barth gave at the Brandenburg Mission Conference. In his paper he said the following:

The congregation, the so-called homeland church, the community of heathen Christians should recognize themselves and actively engage themselves as what they essentially are: a missionary community! They are not a mission association or society, not a group that formed itself with *the firm intention* to do mission, but a human community *called* to the act of mission [emphasis authors]. (Guder, "From Mission")

From Barth's paper Karl Hartenstein in 1934 coined the term *missio Dei* to intentionally make the point that churches do not exist for themselves. They exist to participate in God's mission to the world. After World War II, the missional church movement remerged at a meeting in 1952 in Willingen, Germany. One of the historically significant parts of the Willingen, German meeting was that Lesslie Newbigin began to help guide the discussion about the missional church movement (Bevens and Schroeder 290).