

# 3

## Inter-Church and Community Relationships

### INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS CHAPTER EXAMINES PROTESTANT Latino churches in three areas: their relationship (if any) with a denomination; their relationship with other churches, both Anglo and Hispanic; and their participation in the community. Prior to beginning this research, the author had formed set impressions of Protestant Latino churches and these relationships.

These ideas were shaped over nearly twenty-five years of participation (sometimes more active than others) in Spanish-speaking churches and confirmed by a review of the literature about Hispanic churches in the United States. They included observations such as denominational distinctives being down-played among U.S. Latinos and cultural misunderstandings between Anglos and Latinos in both church and community settings. The latter were often accompanied by a sometimes unconscious sense of superiority on the part of the Anglos. These misunderstandings revealed themselves in decisions made by sponsoring churches for Latino churches without their participation, in “importing” successful pastors from outside of the U.S. for Spanish-speaking congregations without grasping the difficulties this entailed, in leaving monolingual Spanish-speaking pastors out of denominational meetings, and in allotting the Spanish-speaking services a small or out-of-the-way space in a building. In sum, the author’s impressions of these interactions were generally negative.

While some of these impressions were confirmed, the author found several surprises as she carried out this study. She learned of denominations native to Central America and the Caribbean, multiple ethnic

minority congregations sharing a building, and a very positive vision of sharing and unity across language and cultural groups for several congregations.

The first section of this chapter presents the data collected in pastoral interviews regarding denominations and denominational ties, coincident with a look at where and when Oregon *evangélicos* converted to Protestantism. A description of several Latin American denominations operating in Oregon follows. Pastors' responses to interview questions about their participation in their denomination and issues of control are presented. Information is presented on pastoral education, both that of the pastors in this study and available pathways of education and preparation for future pastors. This is followed by a discussion of physical meeting places and their impact on the congregations, including descriptions of several congregations that have a vision for a unified church body, albeit with two (or more) languages. Next, the pastors' description of each church's interaction with the broader community (both the Christian and civic community) is presented, including other Hispanic churches and pastoral associations. All quotations are from the pastoral interviews unless otherwise noted, and all translations are the author's.

This chapter concludes with the author's analysis of this data on inter-church and community relationships and a comparison of this information with previous studies, when available. It includes the point of conversion to Protestantism (most often from Roman Catholicism) relative to the time of immigration; the changing importance of doctrine; competition for members; church independence; the impact of denominational ties in terms of size, stability, and longevity; pastoral preparation; building and space issues; and relationships with the broader Christian community and civic society. The final paragraphs discuss what the author considers the most significant finding of this study—congregations with at least two language groups for whom a unified body of Christ is a purposeful objective and practice.

#### TIME OF CONVERSION TO PROTESTANTISM

The majority of pastors interviewed said that most of their congregation were nominally practicing Roman Catholics who converted to evangelical Christianity in their local church. Significantly, this was the case in all of the rural churches, where there are fewer choices of Spanish-

speaking Protestant churches in the area. Only seven pastors, all in the Portland Metro area, said at least half of their congregation were evangelicals prior to coming to that church. (Four of these indicated that conversion happened pre-immigration; one mentioned people moving from other U.S. states where they were attending a Protestant church, and two said about half came from other churches in the area.) Several pastors made specific mention that only those from Guatemala were Protestants before immigration. Three congregations with high percentages of pre-immigration evangelical believers (Iglesia Restauración Elim, Ministerio Restauración Mennonite in Portland, and Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene of Hillsboro) also had sizeable Guatemalan representation in their congregations. The fourth (Manantiales de Vida Eterna) had a majority of Mexicans but significant percentages of Guatemalans and Salvadorans. Pastor Alfonso Rodríguez of the Foursquare Rosa de Sarón noted that his congregation was made up of about 70 percent immigrants from the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico and that all of them were already Christians before immigration.

The pastor of Manantiales de Vida Eterna also said that about 50 percent of his congregation had come to worship there after trying other churches in the area and being rejected: “Muchos han conocido otros lugares y no los han aceptado.”<sup>1</sup>

Five of the pastors interviewed said that many in their congregations were “reconciled” or “restored,” meaning that they had been evangelical Christians prior to immigrating but slipped into a “worldly” lifestyle after immigration, and then found their way back into the fold in that specific church. The period away from any church often included drugs or alcohol, and one pastor attributed it to the disconnection and loneliness resulting from the immigration process itself.

## DENOMINATIONS

In choosing churches for this study, an effort was made to include churches from a broad variety of denominations, geographic locations, sizes, and lengths of existence. While a few of the following churches adamantly denied being part of a denomination, indicating they were “sovereign” or “fully independent,” for classification purposes here the

1. The pastor’s assessment of his congregation as a place for those rejected by others is consonant with the author’s observations made during the site visit.

author will indicate them by the general denominational or doctrinal heritage.<sup>2</sup> This study included:

- one Christian and Missionary Alliance,
- one Mennonite Brethren,
- one Quaker (Friends),
- one Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Movimiento Internacional (Church of God Pentecostal International Movement-IDPMI),
- one Southern Baptist,
- one Christian Church,
- one Church of Jesus Christ with an Apostolic background,
- one Manantiales de Vida Eterna,
- two Mennonite,
- two Foursquare,
- three Assemblies of God (AOG),
- three Elim/El Shaddai,
- three nondenominational churches,
- and five Conservative Baptist congregations.

Given the movement away from denominationalism in the United States and in Latin America, perhaps this prism is not the most adequate for examining the Latino Protestant churches of Oregon. However, it is one with which the author is familiar and perhaps many readers as well, and provides a beginning point for analysis.

In the early years of Protestant Latino churches in Oregon, denominational distinctions were not emphasized. Pastor Victor Vargas described the beginnings of the Woodburn Mennonite church in 1964 as a constantly morphing mixture of all area believers who weren't

2. The classification of churches is extremely complicated, especially when including myriad splits and groups originating in Latin America. See Freston, "Contours," 234–37 for a discussion of several typologies and their challenges. The movement toward non-denominationalism in the U.S. has made categorization difficult in the northern hemisphere as well. Two of the Elim-rooted congregations, one Assembly of God, and the IDPMI congregation became independent since identification of congregations for this study in 2004; one group here identified as Conservative Baptist began with CBNW but became independent in the mid-1990s.

Roman Catholic, most of whom were migrant workers: “dos, tres familias, comenzaron a reunir y luego pues crecía y se deshacía y venían de muchas doctrinas—apostólicos, evangélicos, pentecostales, y otros. Entonces como que el grupo seguía pero ya no se mantuvo muy estable con su membresía.” (two, three families, they started to meet and then later, well, it grew and it came apart and they came from many doctrines—Apostolics, evangelicals, Pentecostals, and others. So it was as if the group continued but it didn’t stay very stable in its membership.)

The pastor of two Foursquare churches in this study attended Ebenezer Bible Institute of the Puerto Rico-based Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, and was later ordained by the Assemblies of God. While this does not represent extreme doctrinal difference, there are multiple other examples. A Mennonite pastor studied first in the seminary of the Guatemalan denomination Monte Basán [Mount Bashan]. The pastor of the Southern Baptist congregation has been ordained by the Conservative Baptists, the Friends Church, and the Mennonite Church. The Friends pastor in this study comes from a Baptist background. In 1987, the author’s husband was enthusiastically invited by Mardo Jiménez to pastor the Madras Bilingual Conservative Baptist Church, although his seminary training, beliefs, and sermons were decidedly Wesleyan. Pastor Jiménez exclaimed, “¡Me has caído como anillo al dedo!” (lit. “You’ve fallen like a ring on my finger”; better understood as “You’ve come at just the right time and are a tailor-made fit”). These examples all indicate that doctrinal differences within Protestantism have been overlooked by many churches in this study.

However, other pastors said that doctrinal matters were important. The Foursquare pastor indicated that a group of Guatemalans had left his congregations, seeking a “more conservative” church. Southern Baptist pastor José González expressed sadness over a lack of sound doctrinal teaching that made people an easy target to be “stolen” by large neo-Pentecostal churches offering an emotional experience and indicated that two of the three founding families of his congregation have left for such churches. Several pastors stated that they rarely join in activities with Spanish-speaking congregations of other denominations due to doctrinal differences or fear that their members will switch churches. There is a sense of competition for members, not with the Roman Catholic Church or “the world,” but between Protestant groups or even churches within the same denomination. Pastor González lamented,

El problema que aquí, como le digo, gente no se queda estable en una iglesia. O Ud. les llama la atención, les dice que cómo están, que debemos de participar, debemos de madurar, debemos de ser fieles a la iglesia local, tenemos que ser fieles y todo, entonces cuando no resisten, se van a otra iglesia. Pero, digamos si es iglesia bautista, a ellos no les importa, se van a otra iglesia bautista, hasta aquel pastor les hace lo mismo también así, se van a otra iglesia bautista. Es interesante, como mucho—será porque no han tenido una estabilidad, o ya son mañosos.

[The problem [is] that here, as I say, people don't stay stable in a church. Or if you call them on something, you ask them how they're doing, that we should participate, we should mature, we should be faithful to the local church, that we have to be faithful and everything, then when they can't handle it anymore, they go to another church. But, say if it is a Baptist church, they don't care, they go to another Baptist church, until that pastor does the same thing to them, so they go to yet another Baptist church. It is interesting how so many—it might be because they haven't had any stability or maybe they are just difficult.]

The issue of flock-stealing or church-hopping is developed further in this chapter in the section on participation in the broader Christian community.

### *Latin American Denominations in Oregon*

Prior to beginning this research, the author was entirely unaware of denominations native to Latin America. Their growth in Latin America is an important trend that U.S. church leaders and sociologists of religion need to track, as many Latino immigrants to the U.S. come with this background. The great majority of them are Pentecostal. According to Espinosa, “Mexican Pentecostals are served by more than 166 Pentecostal denominations, of which approximately 159 are completely independent and indigenous.”<sup>3</sup>

The author identified four Latin American origin churches in this study: Elim (also know as MIEL), El Shaddai, and Monte Basán from Guatemala, and Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Movimiento Internacional (IDPMI) based in Puerto Rico. As many readers may be unfamiliar with these groups, they are described briefly in the following paragraphs, al-

3. “Pentecostalization,” 267.

though the ongoing schisms of Pentecostal churches in Central America make it difficult to trace them precisely.

According to Holland, Elim in Central America began in Guatemala in the 1962.<sup>4</sup> A pastor from the Guatemalan group went to El Salvador in 1977 to extend the movement. In 1983 there was a definitive doctrinal rupture between the churches of these two countries, and since that time, Elim Guatemala and Elim El Salvador have been two distinct organizations. Elim in Guatemala was estimated to have 714 congregations and a total membership of 50,000 in 1994.<sup>5</sup> Elim El Salvador is “modeled explicitly after the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea.”<sup>6</sup> According to Wadkins, Elim El Salvador’s principal outreach is to the “very poor,” and, referring specifically to the church center in Ilabasco, El Salvador, “It has an active membership of over 150,000 and is widely considered the second largest church in the world.”<sup>7</sup> Both national churches strictly adhere to a cell group structure that is innately growth-oriented, and this, coupled with emigration patterns from Central America, has produced many Elim churches in many countries. According to Comiskey, “Elim now has more than 115 churches around the world with about 200,000 attending them. Before Elim officially establishes a church, they wait until there are at least five cell groups fully operating.”<sup>8</sup> Wilson characterizes the Elim church as neo-Pentecostal, that is, “consisting initially of Pentecostalized elements of the historical denominations” that “emphasize empowerment in the form of prophetic authority expressed in emphases on miracles, healing, exorcism, and prophecy.”<sup>9</sup> Freston adds a class distinction between neo-Pentecostal and traditional Pentecostal churches of Central America, noting that the former are “middle-class and elite charismatic churches. . . . privileged city dwellers.”<sup>10</sup>

4. “Chronology of Protestant,” PROLADES-RITA database, [http://www.prolades.com/historiografia/2-Guatemala/guate\\_chron.pdf](http://www.prolades.com/historiografia/2-Guatemala/guate_chron.pdf) (updated March 18, 2011; accessed June 3, 2011), 3.

5. Wilson, “Guatemalan Pentecostals,” 147.

6. Wadkins, “Pentecostal power,” *Christian Century* 123, no.23 (November 14, 2006), 27.

7. Ibid.

8. Comiskey, *Passion & Persistence*, 148–49.

9. “Guatemalan Pentecostals,” 146.

10. Freston, “Contours,” 238.

According to Freston, El Shaddai was founded by a “former lawyer from a prominent family” and attended by former Guatemalan president Jorge Serrano.<sup>11</sup> McCleary and Pesina identify El Shaddai as a result of a 1983 schism from Elim Guatemala.<sup>12</sup> Wilson places El Shaddai in the neo-Pentecostal category and estimated it had one church with 10,000 members in 1994.<sup>13</sup>

Less information is available on the nature and origins of the Monte Basán Church. It was founded in Guatemala in 1968.<sup>14</sup> Wilson characterizes it as “popular Pentecostal” and estimated there to be one hundred organized churches with 10,000 members in 1994.<sup>15</sup>

The Pentecostal Church of God, International Movement (IDPMI) is based not in Central America, but in Puerto Rico. According to Espinosa, a Puerto Rican named Juan Lugo was converted as a result of the Azusa Street revival. He went back to his home in 1916 and began preaching. The Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal was incorporated in 1922 in cooperation with the Assemblies of God, and by 1929 there were twenty-five churches on the island and several in New York City. In 1957, the leaders in Puerto Rico decided to end their association with the Assemblies of God because they perceived discrimination. The church has continued to grow and “is now the largest Protestant denomination on the island.”<sup>16</sup> According to their website, the church now has mission activities in thirty-eight countries around the world outside of North America, and the U.S. is divided into seven ecclesiastic regions.<sup>17</sup>

Two of the congregations in this study stem from what Espinosa terms “native U.S. Latino Pentecostal denominations:”<sup>18</sup> the Iglesia de Jesucristo in Forest Grove and Manantiales de Vida Eterna Church in Gresham. There were Mexicans and Mexican-Americans present at the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles in 1906. While the revival was ini-

11. Ibid.

12. “Religious Competition,” 49.

13. Wilson, “Guatemalan Pentecostals,” 147.

14. Holland, “Chronology of Protestant,” PROLADES-RITA database, [http://www.prolades.com/historiografia/2-Guatemala/guate\\_chron.pdf](http://www.prolades.com/historiografia/2-Guatemala/guate_chron.pdf) (updated March 18, 2011; accessed June 3, 2011), 3.

15. “Guatemalan Pentecostals,” 144.

16. Espinosa, “Pentecostalizacion,” 279.

17. <http://idiospenmi.net/index-4.html#>.

18. Espinosa, “Pentecostalizacion,” 281.

tially multicultural, as churches organized they did so along racial and ethnic lines. The Apostolic Assembly is one such group that today has thousands of adherents and various derivations, including the Apostolic Church of the Faith in Jesus Christ that operates on the southern side of the border.<sup>19</sup> The Iglesia de Jesucristo is part of a group of independent churches that separated from the Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus in the 1970s but keep the same doctrine.

According to Pastor Nelson Reyes, Manantiales de Vida Eterna is a group of Latino-serving churches that began in the 1970s in California. There are only three or four congregations total, all on the West Coast, and his congregation is the only one in Oregon. This church began after the pastor had moved to Oregon for employment and wanted to continue participating in a church like the Manantiales de Vida Eterna congregation he had been attending in Los Angeles.

#### *Denominational Participation*

All the denominational pastors were asked about their congregations' participation in denominational events and their perception of the willingness of their denomination to include them in decision-making.

Pastor Rose Medina of Iglesia del Pueblo explained that the Assemblies of God have a separate governing body in the U.S. for Spanish-speaking churches. For Oregon it is the North Pacific Latino District. She indicated that her congregation participates regularly and enthusiastically in activities organized by this district, and that she presents regular reports to this body on the church she pastors. She said that Latino congregations are increasingly listened to in General Council meetings, since the Spanish-speaking churches are the fastest-growing segment of the Assemblies of God in the United States.

Pastor Carlos Ortiz of Roca de Salvación also enthusiastically endorsed the assistance and role of the North Pacific Latino District of the Assemblies of God, citing its importance as a legal, non-profit entity, but also as a spiritual authority. He indicated that submitting to such a body could prevent the abuses sometimes seen in independent churches.<sup>20</sup> At

19. For greater detail on the history of this group, see Martín del Campo, "Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Christ Jesus" in *Los Evangélicos: Portraits of Latino Protestantism in the United States*, 51–75.

20. Ironically, the author later learned from Flora Vergara that this congregation had become independent from the Assemblies of God. Telephone interview, June 7, 2011.

the time of the pastoral interview, this congregation was still a “mission” church, not fully organized as a sovereign church of the Assemblies of God, but its members participated actively in regional events for women and youth. Pastor Ortiz said that beyond feeling welcome to participate in denominational events, “se nos insta” (we are urged to) and their expenses to do so were paid by the denomination.

Iglesia de Jesucristo in Forest Grove participates regularly with “sister” churches from all over the West Coast. They rent space in a school for their annual meetings, which are attended by as many as 500 people. They send money for missions and literature distribution to a central office in Salinas, California, but this office does not supervise the activities of the churches in any way.

The Oregon Elim churches meet together once a month, and Pastor Jeremías Diego travels frequently to Guatemala where he participates in trainings and other events at the central Elim church. The Oregon congregations do not depend financially or give reports to Elim, Guatemala.

The Reedwood Friends congregation is often invited to participate in joint services with the other Spanish-speaking Friends congregations. They were doing so infrequently, because at the time of the pastoral interview, the pastor indicated that his flock was made up of recent immigrants with many emotional and psychological needs, and that they were not ready for these events. He himself had frequent contact with Pastor Angel Diaz, the director of Spanish-speaking ministries for the Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends. He was giving a monthly report to the Meeting. He did not sense any struggle for his congregation in particular or for the Spanish-speaking churches in general to be included or taken into consideration by Northwest Yearly Meeting.

Pastor Alfonso Rodríguez of the Portland Foursquare churches observed that his two congregations held joint services regularly and that they also participated in denominational activities.

Ministerios Restauración’s pastor met monthly with the pastors of the other four Spanish-speaking Mennonite churches in the area. Members of his congregation participated in national and international Mennonite activities, and he himself has served as president of some of these committees. He described “enough space” for Latino voices within his denomination. Pastor Víctor Vargas of the Woodburn Mennonite congregation confirmed that his congregation also participated often in denominational activities, adding that the Latino churches’s agenda was

heard every year at the conference, their voices were heard, and they had voting rights. He noted that all documents at these meetings have been provided in Spanish and English for the past five years.

Luz del Pueblo members participated in Southern Baptist activities for women and youth as their schedules permitted. They also were sending money to the Southern Baptist central offices to support missionaries. Pastor José Gonzáles indicated that he did not render a regular report to the denomination, because his congregation had become self-supporting and self-governing, but that new churches receiving institutional support needed to do so. He said he felt very comfortable within the Southern Baptist denominational activities and that his participation in annual conferences was paid for by the organization.

The Hood River Iglesia Esperanza y Vida en Jesucristo (Church of Hope and Life in Jesus Christ) Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) congregation participated very little in denominational activities due to cultural and language barriers. The pastor said he was in constant communication with his district office. He indicated disappointment in his denomination for not having “sufficient intent to meet the need of reaching the large Hispanic population in our country with the Gospel.”

The Grants Pass Mennonite Brethren congregation participated in both their regional and national conference activities, as well as activities primarily for Spanish-speaking conference churches. Although not one of the churches included in this study, Pastor Ramón Argüello of Iglesia Ebenezer in Portland wrote that less than a year after starting this congregation, he felt the need to affiliate with a denomination for accountability and spiritual and financial support. After much prayer, they joined the Mennonite Brethren and has continued in this relationship since 1991.<sup>21</sup>

All the Conservative Baptist Northwest (CBNW) congregations regularly sent participants to denominational activities such as Men’s Roundup and youth rallies. The Hermiston, Newport, and Madras churches related that their distance from the Portland metropolitan area sometimes made this difficult. While the Madras and Hermiston pastors indicated a good relationship with CBNW, the other pastors hesitated when asked if they felt their voice was heard. One pastor who has distanced his congregation from the association over the years said

21. “Historia de Primera Iglesia Ebenezer y las iglesias pioneras del área metropolitana de Portland,” (unpublished document, n.d.), 2.

that the growth was becoming a groundswell and that sooner or later the association would have to consider the Latinos' voice. Another who described a very distant relationship with CBNW said he has repeatedly criticized "zero Hispanic presence" in annual meetings. A third said that he had served at one time as leader of the CBNW Hispanic pastors' association but has become frustrated because the plans that were so carefully made came to nothing, due to "lack of interest" on the part of the denomination.

All the pastors were asked if they sometimes felt that decisions were made for them or their congregations without their input.<sup>22</sup> Fifteen of the pastors, an overwhelming majority, said "no." The pastors of Salvados para Servir [Saved to Serve] and Luz del Pueblo indicated that they sometimes felt overlooked or overridden regarding building use, noting that another congregation owned it and had first priority in this matter. The Foursquare and Hood River Christian and Missionary Alliance pastors indicated "rarely" without specifying any situations. Only the Village Baptist and Woodburn Mennonite pastors emphatically replied "yes." Both indicated that this happened at the state or national denominational level. Pastor Rivas elaborated, "Nos toman en cuenta en cosas que a ellos los convienen. Pero en cosas que convienen en nosotros somos ignorados." (They consider us in things that are in their interest. But in things that are in our interest we are ignored.) Pastor Vargas observed that it used to happen more frequently, but that sometimes in the Mennonite Council, leaders who had little spiritual maturity or respect among the Latino body had been imposed or had named themselves leaders.

#### PASTORAL TRAINING

The preparation of pastors can be closely related to the type of church in which they serve. Six of the pastors in this study had completed a denominational course of study by extension or in the local church, and of these, two have gone on to further education. Three of the pastors held college degrees that were unrelated to ministry. Sixteen of the pastors have studied in some type of Bible institute or college. Six of the foreign-

22. Iglesia de Jesucristo in Forest Grove is not included here, as it is independent and does not share a building. The pastor of Ontario Templo Betania was not available for an interview.

born pastors in the study completed pastoral training before immigration. The institutions providing pastoral education were:

- the College for Global Deployment in Vancouver, WA;
- two IDPMI schools: Instituto Bíblico Milpa in Los Angeles and Instituto Bíblico Ebenezer in Chicago;
- an Assemblies of God college in California;
- California Bible University;
- Western Baptist Seminary;
- Río Grande Bible Institute in Texas (for two pastors);
- the Apostolic Bible College in California;
- Salem Bible College (AOG);
- Seminario Baustista in Sonora, Mexico;
- Monte Basán Bible Institute in Guatemala;
- Seminario Anabautista in Texas;
- SETECA (Seminario Teológico Centroamericano, affiliated with Dallas Theological Seminary but located in Guatemala, for two pastors);
- California Baptist University;
- Newburgh Theological Seminary in Indiana (online); and
- Logos University of Florida (online)
- Fuller Theological Seminary.

Several held advanced degrees:

- Pastor Héctor Rodríguez of Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene in Hillsboro has an MA in theology and had completed all coursework for a doctorate in missiology at Western Baptist Seminary;
- Pastor Victor Alvarizares holds a doctorate from the College for Global Deployment;
- Pastor Jeremías Diego of Elim has an MDiv from California Bible University and was working on a doctorate at an unspecified school in 2007;

- Pastor Raúl Giménez of Vida Church has a master's in Christian education from Calvin Seminary;
- Pastor Mario Macías of Reedwood Friends holds an MDiv from Fuller Theological Seminary;
- Pastor Mauricio Rivas was working on a master's through Logos online in 2008.

In contrast to those pursuing more education, another group exhibited little or no formal studies to prepare them for their ministry. Instead, they tended to rely on on-the-job-training or divine inspiration. Two of the pastors in this study had absolutely no theological training, not even through a local church or by extension. One pastors the small Manantiales de Vida Eterna congregation in Gresham; the other leads the large and growing Hispanic ministry at Rogue Valley Fellowship in Medford. Both started out as participants in these congregations and have become pastors. In fact, much of the Medford pastor's sermon during the site visit was anti-intellectual or anti-education. Based on 1 Corinthians chapter 1, he emphasized that those who seem wise by worldly standards are made foolish by God, using statements such as "Los que no saben leer, saben más de Dios que algunos." (Those who don't know how to read know more of God than some.) City Bible has its own course of membership, leadership, and lay pastor training. Pastor Trolese observed, "we don't feel that . . . a Bible College degree or anything is a prerequisite necessarily to full time ministry." The pastor of the Southern Baptist congregation in this study called this lack of pastoral preparation "a great danger," noting that some persons who see no need for pastoral training, preferring to rely on the Holy Spirit alone, have had ethical failures and give a bad name to Latinos. He described the lack of training as being more prevalent in certain denominations or independent churches.

Six of the Latino pastors in the study received a call to preach before they immigrated. Only one of them was called directly from Latin America to the church he currently pastors. This finding was contrary to the author's previous experiences in the Church of the Nazarene, a denomination not included in this study. According to Pastor Tony Estey of the Hood River Christian and Missionary Alliance, that organization also uses this approach: "developed ministers are recruited from foreign

countries where missions have developed strong ministries that now supply leadership here.”

The remaining Latino pastors had come to the U.S. or Canada for other reasons such as education and were living here when they began pastoring. Pastor Jiroo Kuruda of Newport had emigrated from his native Perú to study for music ministry at Río Grande Bible Institute in Texas, but ended up becoming not only a minister of music for the English-speaking congregation but pastor for the Hispanic group as well. Four of the pastors were born in the U.S. The remainder either accepted or returned to Christ after immigration.

Recognizing the need for more formal education, several institutions have developed programs for Latinos in Oregon pursuing ministerial careers, both in terms instruction and language needs. Seeing few opportunities for face-to-face preparation for pastors in Spanish in the Pacific Northwest, Pastor Felix Rosales began the Instituto Teológico Hispanoamericano (Hispanic American Theological Institute) along with Héctor Rodríguez in 1994 at Western Evangelical Seminary (WES). It provided a diploma in theology that was granted by WES until the latter merged with George Fox University. The courses have continued in classrooms on the George Fox Portland campus, although without university accreditation. In this seventeen year span, over 400 Spanish-speaking church leaders have completed the programs of study.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, many denominations and the large independent churches now have methodical training in Bible and ministry available in Spanish. These include Educación Teológica por Extensión (ETE) through CBNW; the Ladder of Success training through Casa del Padre; and AOG Berean School of Bible (now Global University). Salvados Para Servir and Elim both have intensive Bible study courses and leadership training; the Foursquare churches of Oregon initiated their own denominational course of study in Spanish; the Christian and Missionary Alliance has a International Intercultural Ministries department and several seminaries; the Mennonites have the Instituto Bíblico Anabautista de Formación Ministerial; according to Pastor Mario Macías the Quakers are also offering a course of study online in Spanish; and the Church of the Nazarene offers a complete course of pastoral study leading to ordination in Spanish in Oregon. City Bible offers courses in English through Portland Bible College. Nearly all of

23. Félix Rosales, telephone comm., June 9, 2011.

the pastors indicated some path of study in which they would direct persons who felt a call to ministry. Two of them indicated work under close supervision in the local body as the only training, and a third was unable to articulate any plan for pastoral formation.

#### MEETING PLACES AND CONSEQUENT IMPACT

The following section addresses sharing between various minority groups, the actual issue of space used, the impact the sharing has had on the host congregation and the Spanish-speaking congregation (as reported by the Latino church pastor), and the degree of integration of groups. The section concludes with an examination of eight congregations that describe themselves as fully part of a larger church with no vision for separation. Given the paternalism, racism, and conflict described in the literature on immigrant churches in the U.S. and the author's previous experiences, the latter situation was a pleasant surprise.

##### *Churches with Multiple Ethnic or Racial Minorities*

Several Hispanic congregations share space with other ethnic or linguistic minorities or have done so in the past. Village Baptist describes itself as a multicultural church, with Korean, Spanish-speaking, Chinese, and English-speaking congregations. The Assembly of God building in Gresham where Manantiales de Vida Eterna church meets also houses a Philippine congregation. The Southern Baptist Spanish-speaking congregation meets in a building owned by an Anglo congregation, but a Russian congregation meets there as well. Salvados Para Servir was renting space from a Korean Assembly of God in Beaverton during the site visit, although it has since moved. Casa del Padre in Portland rents from a Russian congregation that has adapted a commercial building for worship purposes, and in the past shared a building with a predominantly African-American congregation. The Beaverton Casa del Padre congregation also shared a building with Indonesians and Koreans in the past and held occasional joint services with the Indonesians.

##### *Churches that Own Their Buildings*

Iglesia de Jesucristo in Forest Grove, Iglesia Menonita Pentecostés in Woodburn, Templo Betania AOG in Ontario, and Iglesia Baustista Conservadora Bilingüe in Madras have their own building which they

do not share with any other congregation. All these congregations have been established for at least thirty years. The first three are in small, older buildings, while the Madras church building is newer, having been built especially for them in 1997. The Forest Grove and Ontario buildings are mostly sanctuary, and the Woodburn and Madras buildings have some classrooms, but they are inadequate for the current congregations's needs. The Woodburn church was in the process of fund-raising for a larger building.

The Madras congregation shared space with the Anglo congregation in a nearby building for many years, starting in a classroom in the basement adjacent to the gym, then moving upstairs to use the sanctuary after the congregation grew too large for the classroom. At a service celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Spanish-speaking congregation, the widow of the former Anglo pastor spoke nostalgically of those years of sharing, of passing in the foyer as one service let out and another began. She remembered affectionately the care the Hispanic group had given her family during her husband's illness, saying of the Spanish-speaking ministry, "We thought we were ministering to you all, but it was always really you ministering to us."

#### *One Building, Separate Identities*

The other congregations all shared buildings with another church body. In the pastoral interview, all were asked what impact they felt sharing a building had on their congregation, as well as on their hosts. The pastors' replies to these questions, as well as observations on the degree of integration between the two groups, follow.

As previously mentioned, the two Casa del Padre congregations met in other church buildings. Casa del Padre Portland met in a commercial building adapted by a Russian congregation for worship purposes, while the Beaverton congregation met in a Free Methodist building. Pastor Alvarizares indicated that he felt this sharing had a positive impact on his congregations as it helped them to "see the Body of Christ beyond racial barriers." Mrs. Alvarizares was present in the interview, and she added that, "Our goal has always been to have that relationship with the [host church] pastors, and the times when we're struggling with something, we know this is not only our congregation, but that the people who we're renting from are going through that." Both Casa del Padre congregations paid rent to use these buildings, and the pastor emphati-

cally told the author that he felt that paying rent was important as it helped the congregation mature:

. . . as Hispanic churches we need to have a healthy self-esteem, that's one of the things I've seen between the Anglo churches and Hispanic churches, they look on us as a mission field, "Let's give them a handout." I've talked to all the pastors that we've had a relationship with, "We're the same as you, the same God that supplies for you supplies for us, so challenge us in that area." In all of the buildings that we've been in, we've always paid rent; that helps us as the body to grow in all the areas. I do believe that God will continue to move in the Hispanics, the biggest growth is in our children being born here, not people crossing the border, we have to be aware of that, and us being seeing as equals, not as people of lower class.

The short-lived Ministerio de Vida Eterna was meeting in a fellowship hall adjacent to a kitchen in an Apostolic church building.

Manantiales de Vida Eterna was meeting a run-down, labyrinthine Assembly of God building in Gresham, after leaving the Damascus area. Pastor Reyes called on the English-speaking pastor, seeking a new meeting place for his small congregation. In the same time period, the English-speaking pastor had been praying about opening a Spanish-speaking ministry, so he welcomed the Spanish-speaking congregation to his building.

At the site visit in 2009, the Latinos had exclusive use of a large upstairs room that they had made into a sanctuary. They also had use of a small kitchen nearby and could request to use other areas of the building if needed. This congregation initially gave voluntary love offerings for use of the space. When the English-speaking congregation went into financial decline, it asked the Latinos to begin making a regular monthly rent payment.

They have been meeting in this building for ten years but are completely independent from the host congregation, neither have they held joint activities with the Philippine congregation that also uses the building. They previously had an annual joint service with the English-speaking congregation up until about 2006. The Hispanic youth do not participate in activities with the Anglo youth group, as Pastor Reyes cited doctrinal differences, indicating that the Anglo congregation was more liberal.

Pastor Reyes postulated that the presence of his congregation may have affected some in the English-speaking group negatively, as they didn't have an open heart towards those of other nations. He stated that there were others with open hearts to obey Jesus' commandment to go and preach the gospel to all nations, who would have been positively impacted by the Hispanic congregation.

The two Foursquare congregations in this study have different situations: one Foursquare congregation rents the sanctuary only from a Presbyterian church and the other uses an English-speaking Foursquare congregation's building. In the latter, they have had joint services with both the English- and Spanish-speaking congregations, as well as provided Vacation Bible Schools together. There have been some scheduling conflicts and disagreements over keeping the building clean.

Iglesia del Pueblo AOG rented space in the English-speaking AOG building in Forest Grove for many years but wanted to construct their own building and purchased land to do so. Feeling both a financial and space squeeze, they moved out of the AOG building to an English-speaking Baptist church in the neighboring town of Cornelius, where they give an offering and maintain the building and grounds in exchange for full use of the building Sunday afternoons. They see this as temporary until they have raised enough money to construct a building on the land they purchased.

The North Portland AOG Roca de Salvación was meeting in the building of Life Fellowship church, where they had full use of the building and used a scheduling process so as not to interfere with the activities of the English-speaking congregation. Pastor Ortiz described how he felt called to minister in North Portland, but there were no Assemblies of God buildings in that area, so he prayed and went knocking on church doors in the area. He saw it as a sign of God's providence when, after consulting with his board, the pastor of Life Fellowship opened the building to them at no cost whatsoever. At the time of the pastoral interview in 2008, Roca de Salvación was giving an unsolicited monthly love offering to the Anglo church and had just purchased its own music equipment so as to not cause so much wear on Life Fellowship's equipment. Pastor Ortiz expressed tremendous gratitude to the Life Fellowship church, but lamented the lack of their own building because he envisioned having many more services for the community such as a food bank, a clothing bank, ESL classes, and a center for translation assistance or orientation

to community services. Pastor Ortiz reported a good relationship with Life Fellowship, being in constant communication via e-mail and occasionally praying together. When asked how he thought the presence of the Spanish-speaking congregation had affected Life Fellowship, he replied that they had told him that Roca de Salvación was a blessing, since Life Fellowship's denomination doesn't have any Hispanic ministries. Sharing their building with the Spanish-speaking congregation was allowing them in some small measure to reach out to Spanish speakers and the mission field in their backyard.

Ministerio Restauración, the Mennonite congregation in Portland, was paying a symbolic rent of fifty dollars per month to the English-speaking Mennonite church for use of the building. They used the foyer and sanctuary every Sunday afternoon for Sunday School and worship service, and had access to the rest of the building except the offices. Pastor Morán characterized the relationship with the English-speaking congregation as "very good," noting that the presence of the Spanish-speaking congregation enabled them to have a hand in the mission of expanding God's kingdom and that the Hispanic church attributed some of the fruit of its ministry to the Anglos as well.

As previously mentioned, Salvados para Servir was renting space from a Korean Assembly of God congregation in Beaverton and had use of the sanctuary in the afternoons and other rooms at times if they made previous arrangements, although the Korean congregation always had preference for usage. The associate pastor characterized the relationship between the two churches as one of mutual respect. Salvados para Servir had its offices in a remodeled house directly across from the church building at the time of the pastoral interview, and the associate pastor commented that, while he considered it a privilege to be renting a building from another congregation, having no classroom space and having to find places for special activities at other locations was difficult. At the time of the site visit, the Hispanic congregants filled the entire sanctuary for the worship service. Within a year after the pastoral interview, this congregation had moved and was renting a larger building for Sunday afternoon services from Portland First Church of the Nazarene, approximately twenty minutes from its previous location. There is very little interaction between the English-speaking Nazarene congregation and Salvados para Servir.<sup>24</sup>

24. Karen Garrison, Executive Administrator, Portland First Church of the Nazarene, e-mail message to author, June 8, 2011.

As noted above, Iglesia Vida has moved multiple times. During the site visit, it was sharing space with another congregation in a commercial building near Highway 26 that had been poorly readapted for use by a church. It now meets in Aloha, paying rent for use of the sanctuary of Life Church, and Pastor Raúl Giménez has an office in the building as well. Although the two congregations are not institutionally tied, Pastor Giménez is considered part of the pastoral staff of Life Church and is in constant communication with the English-speaking church. He stated that the Spanish speakers have felt “very pampered” by their positive reception from Life Church, and that in turn, the English speakers had expressed appreciation for the contributions of the Spanish speakers as far as the church extending to other cultures and in their ethics and care for the building.

Elim church was also renting a large commercial space during the site visit. It had created a sanctuary and had outlying areas for a bookstore, offices, and classrooms. The sanctuary was filled to capacity during the worship service the author attended. However, during this service the difficulty of paying the lease was mentioned. In a follow-up visit with Pastor Jeremías Diego in 2010, he indicated that they had moved and were renting space from a large non-denominational church called Our Place in Aloha, but he did not comment on interactions with the English-speaking congregation.

As indicated above, the Southern Baptist Luz del Pueblo congregation as well as a Russian congregation use a Southern Baptist church building owned by the English-speaking congregation. Luz del Pueblo pays a sum to help the Anglo church that they do not consider rent but an expression of thanks. According to Pastor José González, these immigrant congregations have kept the church doors open, since the Anglo congregation is mostly aged and dwindling in size. Pastor González indicated deep respect for the English-speaking church and especially its organization and hard work.

Finally, the Christian and Missionary Alliance Spanish congregation pays rent for use of the English-speaking congregation’s building in Hood River. They have exclusive use of the facility on Saturday evenings. Pastor Estey described the relationship between the Hispanic church and the Anglo church as “Excellent . . . though there is little interaction due to the cultural differences.” He indicated that sharing the building had “made them [the Anglo congregation] more aware and appreciative

of their neighbors' culture and role in the local community and in the kingdom of heaven."

While several pastors interviewed acknowledged the challenges involved in calendaring and sharing space with the host church, the dominant theme in their responses was one of gratitude for the use of the space. Only one pastor indicated that there are real difficulties and conflicts between some congregations that share space. It is possible that more pastors held this view but did not feel comfortable sharing it with the author. The multiple moves by other congregations could also indicate inter-group conflicts.

### *Two (or more) Languages, One Church*

In contrast to the above congregations that were essentially separate from their "landlords," the remaining congregations shared space with others, but instead of paying rent or having a separate identity, they considered themselves part of a larger church body. One pastor described it as being one body in which one part just happened to speak Spanish.

Pastor Héctor Rodríguez described Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene as a ministry of Hillsboro First Baptist Church, not as a separate congregation. He is part of the pastoral team and has an office in the building. The Spanish-speaking congregation meets in the gym (having literally moved up from its beginnings in the basement in the 1980s) and contributes financially every month to cover utility costs. While the pastor described the relationship with the English speakers as harmonious and positive because it gave them access to sources they would not otherwise have, there is infrequent interaction between the two linguistic groups. Pastor Rodríguez noted that a few of the Anglos don't feel comfortable with the Hispanics in their building, but that in general, there is a good relationship between the two groups.

Another church that describes itself as a ministry of the larger Anglo congregation but has infrequent contact between groups is the Ministerio Hispano at Rogue Valley Fellowship in Medford. Pastor Santiago Argueta explained how his family and another Spanish-speaking family started attending the English services there, using a translator and headsets, without much success. The church leaders appointed him Spanish-speaking pastor, and he began holding services in a small room in the building, which they quickly outgrew. They have moved through several rooms as the group has grown, and now meet in

the sanctuary on Saturday evenings and in a large room Sunday mornings at the same time as the English speakers hold their services. The Hispanic children attend Sunday School with the Anglo children in English, but the Hispanic teens and Anglo teens do not meet together. The pastor has an office in the building and is part of the pastoral team and attends staff meetings. They have not had joint events, and the pastor indicated hesitancy on the part of the Spanish-speaking congregation to do so, citing a sense of inferiority or shame due to not being able to speak English.

Pastor Ulysses Vela said, “We’re part of Monmouth Christian, except we’re Hispanic.” His congregation does not pay rent and uses the sanctuary for services on Sunday afternoons, and can use any other part of the facility, scheduling it in cooperation with the English speakers. The pastor has his office in the church building and is a paid member of the pastoral staff. Members of the Spanish-speaking group have served on the elder board, and all of the money is held in common. The pastor chooses his own curriculum and makes his own decisions: “I make most choices, I just run it by the elders, and they say it’s OK.” The Hispanic children attend Sunday School along with the Anglo children. The pastor commented, regarding the English-speaking congregation, “They love us a lot. . . . everything they’ve demonstrated so far. I’ve been here since 2000, you know, first of all most churches charge you rent or they give you the ugliest building, most Hispanic pastors don’t get paid as church staff, usually they don’t let you use all the things, from what I’ve seen, they just have been so accepting, it’s true what it [the church mission statement] says, ‘Love God and Love people.’” However, the pastor noted that it has been a challenge to get the two groups together often because of language and cultural barriers, though they have tried several different plans to do so.

The Spanish-speaking congregation is an integral part of the church body at New Hope Community, a Conservative Baptist church in Hermiston. There is a large banner along the roadway in front of the church announcing “Servicios en español” (Services in Spanish). Pastor Genaro Loredo was hired by the English-speaking church elders to begin a Spanish ministry within the broader church context. He has his office in the building and is part of the church leadership team. Bilingual members of the Spanish-speaking group participate in leadership roles for the entire church, such as serving on building or missions commit-

tees. The Spanish-speaking congregation purposely meets at the same time on Sunday mornings as the English speakers, so that the children and youth of both groups can meet together, and Hispanics (mostly second- or third-generation) who prefer to worship in English may do so. They do not pay rent for any facility use, and all funds are held in common. During the site visit, they were meeting for worship in the fellowship hall. This is sometimes a small challenge. A Sunday School class meets there immediately before the Spanish service, and one Sunday a month the senior adults have a potluck in the same room immediately after services. There is pressure for both the Sunday School class and the Spanish service to end on time, but Pastor Loredo said this issue has not become a point of frustration. The church is currently adding an additional wing, and this will provide space for all the groups to work more comfortably. He described the relationship within the broader church as very positive, providing not only economic support, but spiritual and moral support as well:

Yo diría que siempre es buena, bastante buena, aunque siempre hay lugar para mejorar, pero existe una buena relación entre anglos e hispanos aquí en la iglesia. Yo creo que por lo mismo que estamos involucrados en las diferentes áreas de toda la congregación y eso ayuda mucho.

[I would say that it is always good, very good, even though there is always room for improvement, but a good relationship between Anglos and Hispanics exists here in the church. I think it is due to this same thing that we are involved in the different areas of the whole congregation and that helps a lot.]

The author observed this good relationship during the site visit. Prior to the service in the ladies' restroom, an Anglo woman gave a hug to a Hispanic woman and chatted about a topic the two had obviously discussed before. In the hallway, another older Anglo woman was giving out chewing gum and hugs to the Hispanic children and youth as they went in to the Spanish service. Individuals from both language groups appeared to have genuine relationships with one another.

City Bible describes its Spanish service as just one more service of the church. It has worked on unity in many ways. All funds are "100 percent integrated" and no rent is paid for facilities. The pastor is a member of the pastoral staff who was first employed to run a youth internship program and later took on the role of Spanish-speaking pastor.

The Spanish-speaking congregation has a leadership team. According to Pastor Trolese, its members

know that one of their primary job descriptions is to connect with that ministry for the whole church, and likewise that ministry knows it is now their responsibility to provide and cover and help with this. So, I'm always just ensuring that that connection is happening. . . .on that level it has made everyone think, . . . discussing all the fall women's ministry and women's Bible study things, . . . all the other ladies know they have to always be thinking, 'How is this going to work?,' If they are using a video curriculum, is it available subtitled in Spanish, are there Spanish books available. . . .

This church has deliberately not created a separate youth group, as it recognizes that many of the Hispanic youth were born in the U.S. and are more comfortable speaking English and identify more with U.S. culture than that of their parents. The church has encouraged them to participate in the City Bible youth group that serves all youth. The church holds a combined evening service several times a year, and the worship team for the Spanish-speaking group leads bilingual songs. During special services, "they know they will find a whole section of Spanish speakers somewhere in the auditorium." The pastor recognized that a unified mindset had not been reached completely, noting that he often had to remind ministry leaders to think about resources to accommodate Spanish speakers. At the time of the pastoral interview, he was the only representative of the Spanish speakers on the elder board, but he mentioned that several members of the elder board had deep interest and practical experience in missions and ethnic ministry. In fact, when the Spanish-speaking ministry started, only two of the ten or so persons who met regularly and prayed for Hispanic ministries actually spoke Spanish.

Village Baptist is also one church with several languages. The pastor said, "El grupo hispano y la iglesia no es un grupo más, somos una sola familia o sea yo soy pastor de la iglesia Anglo y somos . . . somos para todos y tenemos acceso para todo y todas nuestras ofrendas van para un solo fondo." (The Hispanic group and the church is not another group, we are a single family. In other words I am a pastor of the Anglo church and we are . . . we are for everyone and we have access for everything and all our offerings go to a single fund.) Each language group (Spanish,

Korean, English, East Indian, and Chinese) has a ministry budget. The Spanish-speaking congregation does not pay rent for use of the buildings, and they use any area of the campus according to their needs—Sunday evenings for worship in the sanctuary, some youth activities in the gym, Friday activities in a building known as “North Village.” Saturdays there is a bilingual Spanish-English service. There is a single youth group for young people of all backgrounds. The church had asked Pastor Rivas to identify two from the Latino group to serve on the elder board, but at the time of the pastoral interview, he had deferred this representation, feeling that adequately preparing these individuals first was more important than having representatives. The pastor was called by the Anglo church to lead both a Spanish-speaking ministry and to do pastoral care for the whole church. He has responsibilities to the broader church and is on call several days each week for the needs of anyone associated with Village, regardless of their language. He stated that the church’s multicultural vision was something that takes time to develop, but that was, in his opinion, the biblical model. He described U.S. society as multicultural, noting that public schools must offer services openly to every cultural group, but that they have only been partially successful in doing so. The church’s vision is to emphasize that the gospel is open to all nations, and that this church body must also be so, respecting each group’s cultural differences, but recognizing strength and beauty in a multicultural church.

Newport First Baptist Church (Iglesia Nueva Esperanza) also has a vision for one church, one family, but two languages. Pastor Jiroo Kuroda described it as follows: “Bueno, es bien sencillo. Es una sola iglesia en sí, diríamos la Primera Iglesia Bautista, que tiene dos servicios. Uno en inglés y uno en español. Por lo tanto, en la iglesia contamos con cuatro pastores, entonces los cuatro tenemos la misma autoridad dentro de la iglesia.” (Well, it is very simple. It is one church in itself, we would say First Baptist Church, that has two services. One in English and one in Spanish. Therefore, in the church we have four pastors, so the four of us have the same authority within the church.) Pastor Kuroda serves as worship minister in the morning worship service in English and as Spanish-speaking pastor, and his title is not Hispanic pastor, but associate pastor. The senior pastor, youth pastor, and preschool teacher all attend the Spanish-speaking services on Sunday afternoons to support the ministry. The Latino youth, who are English-speaking, make up

part of First Baptist's youth group along with the Anglos. The Spanish speakers use the entire building as needed and do not pay rent. All the money goes into a general fund and is dispersed as needed to the ministries of the entire church, whether Spanish- or English-speaking. Pastor Kuroda reported that the English-speaking church had accepted the Latinos very well, despite differences such as time, order, and music. He attributed this to the fact that a core group of English speakers had been praying for a way to minister to the growing Latino population in the area over ten years ago. When a new senior pastor was hired, he also brought a desire for a Spanish-speaking ministry. There have been bilingual Latinos on the board of deacons, and the pastor indicated he never felt left out of decision-making. A great effort is made to communicate with all. Missionaries who visit must speak in both the English and Spanish service. Financial reports and building issues are presented in both languages, and the church by-laws have been translated into Spanish. This has helped the Spanish speakers have a sense of ownership and responsibility for the church building and vehicles, and they have participated in remodeling or maintenance days at the church.

This church has a joint evening service every month that there is a fifth Sunday. The worship music is done in both English and Spanish, and instead of a sermon, individuals from both groups share their testimonies, which are interpreted into the other language. This personal storytelling allows members of both congregations to get to know one another. This is followed by a potluck or snack time in which both groups try to visit, in spite of the language barrier. Pastor Kuroda felt that the acceptance and flexibility of the English speakers was seen especially during these services, which are held at 7 p.m. (he deemed this "late for the Americans") and in their willingness to try to sing in Spanish. He indicated that many of the English speakers were older adults, and he particularly appreciated their attempts to step outside their habits to get to know the Spanish speakers. The pastor described these fifth-Sunday services as having successfully broken down the "our church—their church" mentality.

Reedwood Friends is yet another congregation that describes itself as one body with two language groups. The English-speaking congregation had desired a Spanish-speaking ministry for several years. The Anglo pastor spent his childhood in a missionary family in South America, and is bilingual in Spanish and English. Pastor Mario Macías

spoke at length about his positive experience with the senior pastor and the congregation:

tengo que hablar mucho porque este ministerio es algo completamente diferente, por mi experiencia como pastor en otras iglesias en Los Ángeles en California. Nosotros aquí con el pastor Ken, tenemos la misma visión y el mismo sentir. Lo que yo creo como ministro, hago énfasis en una palabra que no somos mediocres, que somos personas importantes, hablando espiritualmente. . . . cuando hablamos de visión, de tener un mismo sentir, o hablar de la palabra armonía, yo incluyo a los anglos aquí, porque esa es la visión de nosotros aquí como iglesia. Aquí somos dos culturas, latinos o hispanos, pero somos una sola iglesia, con los anglos. Y los anglos nos han abierto la puerta, que es otra experiencia que yo nunca había tenido en más de 20 años. Que la iglesia no solamente está comunicando a nosotros que somos una iglesia sino que son hechos. Entonces la mentalidad de este grupo está a ese nivel, no somos un grupo. . . no somos “invitados” no somos de segunda clase, sino que somos igual.

[I have to say a lot, because this ministry is something completely different, in my experience as a pastor in other churches in Los Angeles in California. We here with Pastor Ken have the same vision and the same views. I, as a minister, emphasize the phrase that we are not mediocre, that we are important people, spiritually speaking. . . . When we talk about the same vision, having the same views, or speak of the word harmony, I include the Anglos here, because that is our vision here as a church. Here we are two cultures, Latinos or Hispanics, but we are just one church with the Anglos. And the Anglos have opened the door to us, which is another experience that I had never had in over twenty years. That the church is not just telling us that we are one church, but they show it with actions. So the attitude of this group is at that level, we aren't a group . . . we aren't “guests,” we aren't second class, but we are equal.]

This congregation was meeting in a small chapel area on Sunday mornings during the site visit, but the pastor anticipated moving to the sanctuary when the congregation grew, and indicated that they had access to any part of the building and did not pay rent. The pastor described the entire church (English and Spanish speakers together) as undergoing a “metamorphosis” as they sought together to become one church, something he had never experienced in his previous years of

ministry. The English speakers frequently invited the Spanish speakers to participate with them in events, and the pastor indicated that the Spanish speakers did participate about 60 percent of the time. The author made two observations in accord with the pastor's effusive remarks on the desire for unity in the body of this church. During the pastoral interview, a poster was prominently displayed in the main church office with the statement "No human is illegal." Second, the English-speaking congregation was engaged in Spanish classes taught by the Latino pastor, actively seeking to be able to communicate more with the Spanish-speaking congregation.

The last congregation that described itself as "one church, two languages" is New Hope Bible Church, a Mennonite Brethren congregation in Grants Pass. Both Spanish and English speakers meet jointly Sunday mornings. About half of the congregation are Latinos. The worship music was projected in both languages for some songs and in English only for others. There were both Spanish and English hymnals in the pew—the number of the hymn was announced for both, and congregants sang in the language they preferred. The musicians included an Anglo pianist, three Hispanic guitarists and a drummer, and both Latino and Anglo vocalists. Several times during the service individuals addressed the congregation in their native language and someone interpreted for them (prayer, prayer requests). The sermon was preached only in English, with a bulletin handout that had most of the sermon text on it. Pastor Lowell Stutzman can "reasonably communicate" in Spanish but does not preach in it. Both the English speakers and Spanish speakers seemed very comfortable with each other and with this arrangement for the worship service. Pastor Stutzman indicated that there are "very strong associations between members of the different cultures. We truly are family." He did note that the decision to have joint services "has presented challenges with translation, worship songs and styles, and length of services." This church has a board with ten members, three of whom are from Mexico.

#### INTERACTION WITH BROADER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Moving from the building situation emphasis, the concept of involvement in the church community at large was explored. In the interview, pastors were asked if they worshipped with other Spanish-speaking churches besides those of their own denomination, if they felt included in the broader Christian community, and if they participated in a pas-

toral association. Their responses are presented below. Although the author did not ask specifically about interdenominational events for Spanish speakers, several pastors offered information on them, and these are also included in this section.

In Washington County, Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene, Iglesia del Pueblo AOG and Village Baptist all occasionally joined with Spanish-speaking congregations of other denominations for activities. The pastors of the former two have known each other for years, and their two congregations have shared many activities. Iglesia Vida also infrequently shares events with a few other congregations whose pastors have known each other for many years. Pastor Mauricio Rivas of Village Baptist limits participation in events with other congregations to those that do not include doctrine, such as concerts. The two Casa del Padre congregations have also interacted with other churches with similar goals, mostly for concerts. Forest Grove Iglesia de Jesucristo, Elim, and Salvados para Servir do not join with Spanish-speaking congregations of different denominations. The associate pastor of the latter indicated that “Nosotros tratamos de lo mejor posible de irnos de la Palabra de Dios y mantener la santidad dentro de la iglesia. Y si algún otro ministerio puede, pensamos que puede, dañar la vida espiritual de nuestros miembros tratamos de evadirlo.” (We try as much as possible to go with the Word of God and to maintain holiness within the church. And if some other ministry could, we think it could, damage our members’ spiritual lives, we try to avoid it.)

In Multnomah County, Luz del Pueblo Southern Baptist, Manantiales de Vida Eterna, and Ministerios Restauración Mennonite participate in activities with Hispanic congregations of other denominations very infrequently. Pastor Ortiz of North Portland AOG Roca de Salvación said that he was open to doing so, but also mentioned a sense of competition among Spanish-speaking churches for believers. Reedwood Friends’ Spanish-speaking pastor did not feel that the new Christians in his incipient congregation were ready to participate with other churches often.

Iglesia Bautista Conservadora Bilingüe in Madras did not participate in activities with non-Conservative Baptist churches. Regarding the central coast area, Pastor Kuroda noted, “No hay iglesias hispanas o hay grupitos pero son grupitos que no. . . . en vez de tener comunión parece que quieren o guerra o algo. . . . [una iglesia de] línea Pentecostal, el-

los tienen servicios en inglés traducidos al español simultáneamente, y claro algunas familias se han encargado de sacar a las familias de aquí. Por eso, uno desea tener comunión pero cuando la gente actúa de esa manera, se roba la bendición.” (There aren’t Hispanic churches or there are little groups but they are little groups that don’t. . . . Instead of having fellowship it seems that they want war or something. . . . [A church of] Pentecostal type, they have services in English translated to Spanish simultaneously, and of course some families have taken it upon themselves to take families away from here. That is why, one wants to have fellowship but when people act like that, the blessing is stolen away.) Pastor Vela of Monmouth Christian said, “What I’ve noticed about Spanish churches is they’re real jealous. I’ve had an event, a concert. I invited eighteen Hispanic churches and guess how many showed up. Zero. Two of ‘em called. And it was free. It was on a Sunday, I understand, lot a churches you know, struggle with finances, but once a year? I don’t understand that.” The Hood River Christian and Missionary Alliance church indicated joint events three or four times per year with churches “with the same vision.” The Grants Pass Mennonite Brethren congregation is part of a local fellowship of churches known as Church of the Valley and participates in its events. The Woodburn Mennonite church mostly participates in Mennonite activities but occasionally joins in events related to the Northwest Hispanic pastoral association. Pastor Santiago Argueta reported that the Spanish speakers of Rogue Valley Fellowship in Medford joined with a few other area Latino congregations twice a year for campaigns.

Eight of the Portland-metropolitan area pastors said that they did not perceive a struggle for them or their churches to be included in the broader Christian community. Two said that they were often invited but did not participate. Pastor Medina indicated that in her years in ministry she has seen a change toward more acceptance of Hispanic pastors and churches. She added that she had been invited to the pastors’ appreciation event sponsored by Portland Christian radio station KPDQ. Pastor Alvarizares said that he felt welcomed but that people were sometimes hesitant, due to a perceived language barrier (ironic in his case, since he speaks fluent English).

Four pastors in the metropolitan counties indicated some type of struggle for acceptance or welcome in the broader Christian community. The Elim pastor said that he wished to participate more but had

not found a way to plug in. Pastor Rivas of Village Baptist said that it has been a “struggle” but that events like the Luis Palau campaign were unifying the churches (implying both Anglo and Latino cooperation). One Multnomah County pastor said that he has felt excluded, not due to language or cultural differences but because his church has different doctrinal beliefs and practices. Another Multnomah County pastor indicated conflicting visions and contradictory messages: “The Anglo pastors say they want to start a Hispanic work but then they change their minds. They promise a salary that never materializes. There is cultural conflict between congregations. We need more than just them opening a building. Many churches reject having Hispanic ministries. We need mediation.”

Two of the rural pastors said that there simply have not been events such as a mayor’s prayer breakfast or other ecumenical meeting in which to participate, although it is possible that they were unaware of such events. One of these indicated that the Hispanic community and Anglo community were strongly divided and never came together. Three rural pastors said that they felt very welcomed in the broader Christian community, while two said they saw a struggle. The Hood River pastor, himself an Anglo, noted that the Anglo church community was, in his opinion, missing the point: “I believe that the Anglo churches don’t grasp the opportunity for missions work in their own backyard. The problem that I have observed over more than twenty years of Hispanic ministry is that the Anglo Christian community assumes that the Hispanic Christians should assimilate into the Anglo church without regard for the richness of the Hispanic cultures and languages, and their need for their own cultural experience in the evangelical faith.”

Woodburn has the densest Hispanic population of any city in the state, and it has been a place where many churches sought to begin Spanish-speaking ministries. The Woodburn pastor in this study related difficult experiences in the local Christian community and with the pastoral association many years ago, again bringing up the theme of competition between churches for participants:

porque algunos grupos anglos quisieron establecer obras hispanas porque era la moda, entonces muchos dividieron nuestras iglesias, nosotros perdimos miembros, porque les daban más facilidades, les daban dinero, les daban comida, y se para un pastor de la asociación pastoral . . . y dice, ‘ya tenemos 30 miembros

hispanos en . . . nuestro departamento hispano, pero no trabajaban ni evangelizaban nada, son miembros que agarraban de otras iglesias. . . . me dolió mucho en el corazón y nunca más volví a participar. Me han invitado, pero no quiero perder una hora de hablar del amor Dios o del Espíritu Santo mientras los pastores y los líderes están robando a ovejas de nuestra congregación.

[because some Anglo groups wanted to establish Hispanic works because it was in fashion, so many divided our churches, we lost members, because they made it easier for them, they gave them money, they gave them food, and a member of the pastoral association stood up . . . and said, "We already have 30 Hispanic members in our Hispanic department," but they didn't work or evangelize at all, they are members that they grabbed out of other churches. . . . that hurt me deeply and I never participated again. They have invited me but I don't want to lose an hour to talk about the love of God or the Holy Spirit while the pastors and leaders are stealing sheep from our congregation.]

Several pastors brought up their participation in interdenominational events. One was a Luis Palau campaign held in Spanish for two days along the Portland waterfront. Pastor Mauricio Rivas of Village Baptist was a principal organizer of this campaign, and he commented, "Unificó a la iglesia. Estuvimos casi diez mil personas en dos días. Yo estuve muy cerca del evento, trabajando y unificando amistades entre pastores con denominaciones. Fue una actividad inter-denominacional y vimos a toda la iglesia apoyando." (It unified the church. There were almost ten thousand people in two days. I was very close to the event, working and unifying friendships between pastors and denominations. It was an interdenominational event and we saw the whole church supporting [it].) Hillsboro's Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene, Iglesia del Pueblo AOG in Cornelius, and Ministerios Restauración Mennonite in Portland all actively supported this Luis Palau campaign.

Willamette Celebration was an evangelistic event held in 2010 in Albany, sponsored by many area churches. Newport Conservative Baptist Nueva Esperanza and Monmouth Christian church pastors reported that their congregations worked actively in this bilingual, non-denominational event. The Monmouth church also participates in the town's annual community church service held on July 4th.

Popular Spanish worship leader Marcos Witt came to Portland several years ago. According to Pastor Carlos Ortiz, when members of his

church asked to be included in this event, they were told that since Roca de Salvación AOG and Pastor Ortiz did not participate in the Hispanic pastoral association, they would be unable to do so.

When asked about the Asociación Evangélica Hispana del Noroeste (Northwest Evangelical Hispanic Association), the pastors of City Bible, Village Baptist, Reedwood Friends, and the Foursquare congregations all indicated they participate. The pastors of Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene of Hillsboro, Luz del Pueblo in Gresham, Ministerios Restauración Mennonite in Portland, Vida Church in Aloha, and Manantiales de Vida Eterna said that they used to participate in the past, but they no longer do so. Some said they didn't have enough time, while others felt excluded because of their doctrine, and others tired of what they described as constant requests for money. Pastor Rose Medina said that her husband often participated prior to his death, but that she does not due to time concerns.

Outside the metropolitan area, only Pastor Vargas of Woodburn participated in the Portland-based Hispanic association. He indicated having had very negative experiences with the Woodburn pastors' association that included English-, Spanish-, and Russian-speaking congregations. Another rural pastor termed the Northwest Evangelical Hispanic Association "muy cerrada" (very closed), noting that if he wanted to know about an event, he was always the one to seek out the information instead of receiving an invitation to participate. The Medford pastor said that several Latino pastors in the Rogue Valley area met together regularly, but this group had not yet become an official organization or pastoral association. Few rural church pastors participated in local (English-speaking) pastoral associations, and the Newport pastor indicated that such an organization had existed for a very short time in that area.

#### PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC COMMUNITY

All the pastors were asked if they or their church members participated in the community in non-church-related activities. Several said that certain individuals did out of personal interest but not as representatives of their churches. Three of the Washington County pastors said they did not at all, as did one of the Multnomah County pastors. Six of the pastors, including three from outside the Portland area, said that they or

their church members did volunteer in the community, without indicating specifics.

The Elim congregation was doing jail visits and indicated a desire to be more involved in the community but uncertainty as to how to proceed. Village Baptist and Roca de Salvación members have helped clean local schools. The Mennonite church participates through its Council in providing immigration services. Luz del Pueblo Southern Baptist participates in food distribution, as did the Hermiston Nueva Esperanza church through its association with Agape House. Hermiston also supports the local crisis pregnancy center. Luz del Pueblo, Roca de Salvación, and Madras Iglesia Bautista Conservadora Bilingüe all have participated in a community fair. Roca de Salvación gave out backpacks with school supplies there, while the role of the Madras church members at the church fair was to wash cars. Iglesia Menonita Pentecostés in Woodburn, Roca de Salvación AOG, and Monmouth Christian had church members on the school board (although the latter was referring to representatives from the entire church, Anglo and Hispanic). Monmouth Christian's pastor volunteered often at his daughter's elementary school, and the senior pastor and youth pastor have coached youth sports in the community. The Newport pastor lamented the lack of community activities. He mentioned a "help center" for Latinos that was not well-regarded by the Hispanic community, and that he has often done translation or interpretation for community members. The Woodburn Mennonite church has a long-standing relationship with the local chapters of both Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous. The associate pastor of Salvados para Servir indicated that they taught the congregation to "be conservative and defend the faith" if it came under attack politically, and also to provide for themselves, to not look to the government for handouts. Finally, the pastor of Manantiales de Vida Eterna encouraged the congregation to vote Democrat, "otherwise they'll send our children to war."

## DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

### *Time of Conversion to Protestantism*

Only four of the pastors in this study indicated that most of their congregants were Protestants prior to immigration. Since the majority of Spanish-speaking immigrants to Oregon are from Mexico, and Mexico

is one of the least Protestant nations of Latin America,<sup>25</sup> these findings are neither surprising nor out of line with research on the U.S. as a whole: “15 percent of all Mexican immigrants arriving in the U.S. are Protestant or Other Christian.”<sup>26</sup> Several pastors made specific mention that only those from Guatemala were Protestants before immigration. Three congregations with high percentages of pre-immigration evangelical believers (Iglesia Restauración Elim, Ministerio Restauración (the Portland Mennonite congregation), and Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene in Hillsboro) also had sizeable Guatemalan representation in their congregations. The fourth (Manantiales de Vida Eterna) was majority Mexican but had a significant proportion of Guatemalans and Salvadorans. Two of these churches are Pentecostal, the fastest-growing type of Protestantism in Latin America.

The small number of pre-immigration *evangélicos* in Oregon is important to bear in mind. It makes previous church participation less likely to affect current behaviors and could make Protestantism more closely related to their status of immigrant in the minds of the congregants. Additionally, the transnational nature of some U.S. Latino churches described in some studies<sup>27</sup> was found in only three congregations: Restauración Elim with frequent contact with Guatemala, Rosa de Sarón Foursquare with three sister churches in the Yucatán Peninsula and continuous movement back and forth by Yucatán Christians, and Luz del Pueblo Southern Baptist. The latter supports a mission church in Oaxaca, pastored by the brother of one of the Portland church members. None of the other churches have ongoing contact with congregations south of the border. These two factors suggest that studies of religious trends in the Latin American nations may be limited in their usefulness when applied to Oregon congregations.

#### *Latin American Denominations in Oregon*

The growth of new forms of Christianity in the global South and their impact on Europe and the U.S. has been mentioned by various authors.<sup>28</sup>

25. Garrard-Burnett, “Christianity and Conflict,” (panel presentation, National Defense University, Washington, DC, April 6, 2006).

26. Espinosa, “Pentecostalization,” 268.

27. See, for example, Vasquez, “Pentecostalism, Collective Identity,” and Ebaugh and Saltzman Chafetz, *Religion Across Borders*.

28. Sanneh, *Whose Religion*, 76; Jenkins, *Next Christendom*, 99, 107–8, 191–92, 204, 208–9.

Jenkins in particular predicted changes in the U.S. Protestant landscape caused by missionary efforts from churches indigenous to Latin America as well as ongoing immigration.<sup>29</sup> The present study shows that four Latin American denominations influence church life Oregon.

Pastor Morán of Ministerio Restauración, the Spanish-speaking Mennonite Church in Portland, was trained at the Instituto Bíblico Monte Basán in Guatemala. He was ordained, pastored, and became a superintendent in this denomination prior to coming to the U.S. and working with the Mennonite Church.<sup>30</sup> The researcher did not identify any Monte Basán congregations in Oregon, and the phone number for a Monte Basán Christian bookstore in Salem had been disconnected. While there may be more Guatemalans with this background in Oregon, it appears that Monte Basán has not made any institutional inroads in the state.

Elim, El Shaddai, and Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, Movimiento Internacional, however, have greatly impacted Oregon. The three largest congregations in the study began as part of these three denominations: Salvados para Servir (formerly IDPMI) with 400 in attendance, Elim in Hillsboro-Aloha with 390–400 in attendance and daughter churches in Beaverton and Salem, and Casa del Padre (formerly El Shaddai) with 225 attending in Beaverton and 150 in Portland. They did not start as official mission churches, but rather began as people who had participated in the large congregations of these churches in the Los Angeles area moved to Oregon and desired to attend the same denomination. They called pastors from the California churches to Oregon. All three are Pentecostal, but only Elim has a majority of members who were practicing Protestants prior to immigration.

### *Denominational Participation*

These Latin American origin churches operate in financial and administrative independence. Two (Salvados and Elim) are strikingly independent, not participating in any ministerial association or joining with other local or Spanish-speaking churches for events, even though they both currently use buildings owned by English-speaking congregations.

29. Jenkins, 204, 208–9.

30. Allyn, Bobby, “Pastor Samuel Moran came to Portland to lead exploding Hispanic Mennonite community,” *Oregonian*, June 24, 2010.

Elim is the only church in this group that still maintains ties with the denomination in Guatemala; the other groups had separated from their denominations in 2005 or 2006 but maintained the same doctrine. None of the pastors interviewed wished to elaborate on their reasons for splitting from the parent organization.

The author suggests that the cultural realities of operating in the U.S. as a minority- and immigrant-serving church created tensions with the home church. However, it is entirely possible that these bodies were merely continuing in a long tradition of Pentecostal church independence or division described in the literature in chapter 1, named “chronic fragmentation” by Espinosa.<sup>31</sup>

Movement toward independence was also seen in several of the churches with U.S. denominational backgrounds. Iglesia del Pueblo AOG in Cornelius and Madras Iglesia Bautista Conservadora Bilingüe moved out of a building shared with an English-speaking congregation of their denomination. Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene in Hillsboro, Village Baptist, and Nueva Esperanza in Newport all reported distancing themselves from the Northwest Conservative Baptist Association, the latter two preferring responsibility to and support from the local congregation. Roca de Salvación in Portland left the Assemblies of God and became independent between the time of the pastoral interview and this writing. Manantiales de Vida Eterna and Iglesia Vida worship in an Assemblies of God building but have no plans to join the denomination.

In addition to these independent churches with denominational ties, Monmouth Christian Church, City Bible, Iglesia de Jesucristo in Forest Grove and Rogue Valley Fellowship in Medford are independent, not depending on or responsible to a parent organization. The Southern Baptist model followed by Luz del Pueblo is self-governing and self-supporting. Thus, though the research design sought to study churches from a variety of denominations, spread out geographically and of varying periods of existence, approximately half of the congregations were independent of or separating from a denomination in some way. This theme of division confirms what previous studies have found, as noted in chapter 1.

Prior to undertaking this study, the author had the distinct impression that denominational ties were strongly negatively correlated to church size. The information collected throughout the research period

31. Espinosa, “Pentecostalization,” 276.

confirms this hypothesis, although not overwhelmingly. Eleven of the churches had regular attendance of less than one hundred persons. Nine of these eleven were denominational churches. Six of the churches had 170 or more regularly attending. One of these (Elim) maintains strong ties to its Guatemalan denomination, one has always been nondenominational and independent (City Bible), and the other four (Salvados Para Servir, Village Baptist, Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene in Hillsboro, and Casa del Padre in Beaverton) began with denominational ties or support but have stepped away from them significantly. Village Baptist, Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene, and Newport Nueva Esperanza continue to participate occasionally in CBNW activities but do not see themselves as accountable to it.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Oregon Corporation records indicate that many Hispanic churches are short-lived.<sup>32</sup> It appears that denominational ties contribute to stability and longevity of Latino Protestant churches in Oregon, as all the churches in this study that existed prior to the “boom” of Hispanic church planting that began in the 1990s are denominational. They are:

- the Mennonite Iglesia Pentecostés of Woodburn (1964);
- New Hope Mennonite Brethren’s Hispanic ministry in Grants Pass (1970s);
- Iglesia de Jesucristo in Forest Grove (1973);<sup>33</sup>
- Ontario’s Betania Assembly of God (1980s);<sup>34</sup>
- Madras Iglesia Bautista Conservadora Bilingüe (1980); and
- Iglesia del Pueblo Assembly of God in Cornelius (1982).

Hillsboro’s Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene began as a Conservative Baptist church in 1985 and is still meeting in the same building although it has since become independent of CBNW. As described in chapter 2,

32. Based on a business name search of the Oregon Secretary of State, Corporation Division’s online records, using search terms “Iglesia” and “Templo.”

33. Pastor Luis Ramirez indicated that this church is not part of a denomination but it has an extensive fellowship of sister churches. Interview, September 2007.

34. Pastora Flora Vergara indicated that the Spanish-speaking Nyssa and Ontario Assemblies of God were the oldest in the state and that she visited them thirty years ago. At that time the Ontario group was meeting in a house. Telephone communication, June 7, 2011.

the Conservative Baptists of the Northwest were purposeful in starting Hispanic churches. Pastor Flora Vergara of the Assemblies of God indicated that Ray Meza was a pioneer church planter for that denomination's Spanish-speaking churches in the state. The other early churches mentioned here were not denominationally orchestrated but began due to circumstances of individuals or individual churches.

One might argue that it is having a network of like-minded churches and leaders and not denominations *per se* that contributed to the longevity of these churches. This may be true in the case of the Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene and Iglesia de Jesucristo. However, all the other "old" churches except Iglesia del Pueblo are in rural areas and were (and still are) geographically isolated from their denominational counterparts. Perhaps the structure and accountability provided by an umbrella organization make for a longer existence. Financial support in the initial period certainly had an impact, but all the pastors of these churches indicated they are now financially independent of the denomination.<sup>35</sup>

The author also originally thought that denominational links contributed to stability of meeting place, which in turn might contribute to church size. The evidence in this study does not strongly support this theory. For example, the Ontario Betania AOG church, New Hope Grants Pass, and Iglesia de Jesucristo in Forest Grove have existed for at least thirty years and meet in their own building, but are among the smaller congregations in the study. Iglesia del Pueblo AOG moved out of the space provided for it in an English-speaking AOG building, seeking their own space, but has moved twice and is now sharing a Baptist building in a neighboring town. It is also one of the smaller congregations in the study, though founded in 1982.

Elim, Salvados Para Servir, and Casa del Padre in Beaverton and in Portland have moved several times in the past five years, and Casa del Padre has changed its name, yet these are three very large congregations and only Elim is denominational. However, Vida Church in Aloha is one congregation for which this lack of institutional support (that

35. The pastor of Ontario's Betania Assembly of God was unavailable for interview, thus the author does not have information regarding denominational support of this very small congregation. New Hope Mennonite Brethren Church's Spanish- and English-speakers are fully integrated into one self-supporting body, so there is local, but not denominational, financial support. The Madras Conservative Baptist Church still receives two hundred dollars monthly from the English-speaking congregation, but not from CBNW.

could have provided a meeting place or consistent funding to secure it) has impacted the church size. The author has tracked this pastor and a small core group since its inception in 1993. It has met in three different church buildings in Portland, three in Beaverton, in various homes, and is now sharing building space with Life Church AOG in Aloha without forming any denominational affiliation. The congregation has grown and dwindled and grown again, certainly due to a variety of factors, but the multiple moves have had an impact.

Previous publications on Latino Protestant churches in the U.S. have emphasized a sense of disenfranchisement or lack of voice in their denominations, as described in chapter 1. Two of the denominational pastors in this study openly and emphatically agreed that Latino churches are not included in decision-making at the denominational level. It is possible that others held this view but were hesitant to share it with the author. The tendency toward independence among many of the churches with past denominational ties may also be evidence that Latino pastors do not feel heard at the denominational level, and thus seek to distance their congregations from these organizations.

### *Pastoral Training*

The lack of training for Pentecostal pastors has been observed in several studies. Regarding Latin America, Williams writes: "Pentecostals are constantly reminded that their communication with God is direct and does not have to be mediated through an ordained minister. . . . although some of the larger denominations now require that their pastors complete a minimum period of training and apprenticeship, in most of the smaller independent churches members can aspire to become pastors with little or no formal training."<sup>36</sup> Soliván describes an "absence of formal training in the [Pentecostal] movement";<sup>37</sup> and Vasquez mentions "Pentecostalism's long anti-intellectual tradition," quoting the pastor of a mostly-Salvadoran apostolic Pentecostal church in Washington, DC as saying, "We work with our hands, not with books."<sup>38</sup> Brazilian sociologist Francisco Cartaxo Rolim asserts a deeper meaning for the lack of educational requirements for Pentecostal pastors: "[P]entecostalism . . .

36. Williams, "The Sound of Tambourines," 195.

37. "Hispanic Pentecostal Worship," 50.

38. "Pentecostalism, Collective Identity," 627.

breaks with the traditional differentiation between qualified producers of religious discourse and practice (the clergy) and mere consumers of these religious products. In pentecostalism [sic] every believer is a direct and legitimate producer of his or her religious world. They thus defy not only the traditional way of doing religion, but the very structure of a classist society.”<sup>39</sup>

While utter lack of training never crossed the author’s non-Pentecostal WASP mind prior to initiating this study, she did have concerns that there was no systematic plan among U.S. denominations for identifying and training Spanish-speaking pastors for Latino churches, and that this led to the poorly-conceived practice of importing successful pastors from Latin America for congregations in the U.S. This had been her experience in the 1980s and 1990s with at least four pastors in the Church of the Nazarene in the Northwest. It was also observed by Lara-Braud: “The time-honored practice of relying on imported pastors is a reflection of the difficulty denominations have had finding and training pastors born and raised in the United States.”<sup>40</sup> In this study, only one pastor had come to Oregon under these circumstances, though the CMA pastor acknowledged that his denomination also follows this practice. Nearly all the pastors have completed or are pursuing training through their denominations or through a wide variety of educational institutions, some to the doctoral level. Nearly all were able to describe a method of preparation for others who sensed a call to ministry. There are multiple opportunities for pastoral training in Spanish both in the Portland area and through local churches. Given that most of the pastors in the study became pastors after immigration, this availability is significant. It appears that denominations no longer have trouble identifying pastors from among the Hispanic population already in Oregon.

#### *Meeting Places and Consequent Impact*

Several publications on U.S. Latino Protestant churches identified the placement of these congregations in the basement or other out-of-the-way areas of an Anglo church building as a subtle form of discrimination. Indeed, the author has attended Spanish-speaking churches that were housed in the basement or fellowship hall of an English-speaking

39. Sepúlveda, “Pentecostal Movement,” 72.

40. “A Profile of Hispanic Protestant Pastors,” 256.

congregation. In 2009 she had a conversation with an Anglo pastor who wanted to start a Spanish-speaking ministry. During the building tour, he proposed a small classroom in the basement as the location for this group, indicating its proximity to a kitchen and restrooms. When the author asked why the sanctuary would not be available to the Latinos, the pastor said that this would require turning on the heat (apparently acceptable for the Anglos but not the Hispanics).

Though these attitudes still remain, locational discrimination did not surface as directly in the churches in current study. The poorest-quality meeting place was that of Manantiales de Vida Eterna, reached via a circuitous and smelly route of hallways and stairs with worn and stained carpeting, though the classroom-cum-chapel itself was attractive and full of light. However, the entire church building seemed poorly-maintained both inside and out, leaving the author the impression that all the congregations meeting there were on equal footing.

Soliván asserted that Pentecostal Latino congregations face special challenges for meeting places: “. . . most Hispanic Pentecostal churches are located in the poorest of the urban barrios. Whereas mainline churches worship in buildings intentionally designed for Christian worship, most Hispanic Pentecostal churches worship in storefronts, or in other buildings rehabilitated for use as a place of worship. A growing number of Pentecostal congregations meet in the underutilized facilities of mainline churches in need of income.”<sup>41</sup> Ontario’s Templo Betania AOG was in a very rundown neighborhood, although Ontario could not be termed “urban.” Manantiales de Vida Eterna was meeting in a poorer area of East Portland. Casa del Padre in Portland met in a remodeled commercial building, as did Vida Church and Elim Restauración, although the latter two later moved to share space in a church building, and these were not mainline churches. Only two pastors mentioned that their financial contribution for the space shared with an Anglo church was significant to the financial health of that church: Luz del Pueblo Southern Baptist and Manantiales de Vida Eterna. Neither of those Anglo congregations were mainline; the only mainline church renting to any of the congregations in this study was Grace Presbyterian in East Portland, where Rosa de Sarón Foursquare uses the sanctuary.

Several pastors mentioned occasional difficulties due to sharing or renting space, and some of these congregations moved during the pe-

41. “Hispanic Pentecostal Worship,” 45–46.

riod of research, seeking more adequate facilities. Most of the congregations met in the sanctuary, but those that didn't seemed comfortable in the smaller spaces they were using and indicated that when they desired to move to a larger room or the sanctuary, they would be able to do so. Though not included in this study, Pastor Juan Bonilla of Forest Grove Hispanic Church said that his small congregation would have felt even smaller in the large sanctuary of the building where they meet, and were quite happy in the diminutive chapel where they met. This seemed to be the case with the Reedwood Friends congregation as well.

Several building-sharing arrangements came to light in this study that have not been described in previous studies of Latino Protestant churches in the U.S. In Oregon, several linguistic or racial minorities share a building. In some cases, it would appear that certain English-speaking churches have been especially open to sharing their building with linguistic minorities in their community. In others, different minority congregations have opened their buildings for use by Spanish-speaking congregations, perhaps finding some common ground in their experiences.

Though the possibility of a united church with two or more language groups is recognized in previous studies by the Protestant Council of the City of New York,<sup>42</sup> Montoya,<sup>43</sup> and Machado,<sup>44</sup> each points out that such an approach is fraught with difficulties. González<sup>45</sup> poignantly describes the lack of connection that a Latino fully competent in English can experience in an Anglo worship setting. Furthermore, Montoya<sup>46</sup> and the very popular *Purpose Driven Church* movement urge separation into culturally-similar groups.<sup>47</sup> No successful multilingual or multicultural congregation was set forth in the literature on Protestant Latino churches in this country.

Given the negative experiences of the author in Anglo-Latino church relations prior to beginning this study and those described in the literature, the nine Oregon church bodies with both a vision and practice of unity were truly a revelation. In choosing a purposive

42. *Report*, 89.

43. *Hispanic Ministry*, 67–78.

44. "Protestant Establishment," 85–106.

45. "Hispanic Worship," 16–17.

46. *Hispanic Ministry*, 147–48.

47. Warren, *Iglesia con Propósito*, 182–89.

sample, the author was unaware of this model and did not use “unified body” as a characteristic in determining which churches to study. It is possible that because the researcher is a member of the majority community and identified herself as a fellow believer, the pastors were not completely forthcoming with their criticisms of a unified church experience. However, several of the pastors were especially emphatic about their positive experiences as part of a larger church body. Moreover, the very existence of these nine churches as part of a unified vision over time speaks to the sincerity of their words.

For the analysis that follows, Iglesia Evangélica Cristo Viene in Hillsboro and the Hispanic ministry of Rogue Valley Fellowship are set aside, for though they describe themselves as one with the English-speaking church, share a building, finances and some decision-making, they have very little fellowship between groups.

The other seven churches had much more extensive mutuality, with New Hope Bible Church, the Mennonite Brethren church in Grants Pass, having the most radical model of integration. It is unusual in many ways, including that it has an Anglo pastor who doesn't preach in Spanish and that none of the Mexican congregants are recent immigrants. They all have at least some ability to understand spoken English. The sense of acceptance by the English speakers of both the Mexicans and parts of the service in Spanish was remarkable. The author postulates that this denomination's historic commitment to marginalized groups may be a factor in this church's vision for itself.

Aside from the Grants Pass congregation, having bilingual and bicultural pastors seems to be a key factor in the development of a church with a vision for unity. The pastor of Village Baptist left his native El Salvador for Canada as a child. The City Bible pastor (an Anglo) had been a missionary child in Central America. The Hispanic pastor at Reedwood Friends has lived in the United States for at least twenty-five years, and the senior pastor (Anglo) also had been a missionary child in South America and speaks fluent Spanish. The Hermiston pastor has lived in the U.S. since childhood and speaks English fluently, as does the pastor in Newport, although the latter immigrated at a slightly older age. The Mexican-American pastor of Hispanic Ministries at Monmouth Christian was born in the U.S. and is completely bicultural and bilingual.

Five of the eight rural churches had this vision of “one church family in two languages.” One of these pastors mentioned that he often felt

isolated from denominational activities due to distance. It is possible that this geographic isolation has made cooperation between linguistic groups more necessary or attractive. Proximity has overruled language and cultural barriers to unite those of a common faith.

Why has this vision and practice of church unity not been described in any previous study? The author originally thought that it was an emerging model, as some of the first churches of this type that she visited had only been in existence for three or four years. However, as she continued to research, she discovered others that have existed for more than twenty years, disproving the idea that they were ephemeral and would eventually give way to separation.

One plausible explanation for the unified Latino-Anglo churches is that Oregon is one of the least-churched states in the country.<sup>48</sup> According to O'Connell Killen, "The defining feature of religion in the Pacific Northwest is that most of the population is 'unchurched.' Fewer people in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska affiliate with a religious institution than in any other region of the United States."<sup>49</sup> Perhaps the sense of Christian unity in Oregon is more important than racial, ethnic, or linguistic backgrounds, as Christians of diverse national origins band together in a non-religious majority society.

#### *Interaction with Broader Christian Community*

Several pastors indicated that doctrinal differences within Protestantism have been overlooked by Oregon Latino churches. This finding is very similar to what Aponte described regarding the evangelical churches of Philadelphia prior to the 1950s:

The recollections of surviving participants emphasized an absence of denominational partisanship within this early Protestant community in the face of the shared context of larger challenges, i.e., the difficulties of urban life in general, as well as the presence of a much larger Roman Catholic Hispanic population. In those early days when First Spanish Baptist Church was the only Hispanic Protestant congregation in Philadelphia, all *evangélicos* (i.e., Protestants) participated in the congregation while continuing to affirm their differing doctrinal positions. Baptists and non-

48. Gallup, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/125999/mississippians-go-church-most-vermonters-least.aspx>, accessed November 6, 2011.

49. *Religion and Public Life*, 9.

Baptists, Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals were all members of this one church. . . . [I]n the social context of that time they had all found it useful and acceptable to be involved together in the First Spanish Baptist Church.<sup>50</sup>

However, based on input from several pastors, it appears that the Hispanic churches of Oregon have entered into a new phase of existence in which creedal differences are more important. In the early days when the Hispanic population was very small until just after the initial immigration spurt in the 1980s, there were few evangelical churches and even fewer Spanish-speaking pastors. This lack of options forced Protestant Latinos to band together. At the present, the variety of evangelical churches has greatly expanded, as have the programs for pastoral training and the number of pastors.

The competition between Protestant churches for members was not a recurring theme in previous studies of U.S. Latino churches, but Freston observes a similar fluidity among Protestants in Latin America, stating “religious identity may include comings and goings.”<sup>51</sup>

#### *Participation in Civic Community*

The churches in this study could be described as occasionally involved in their communities, but only the Mennonite and Salvados para Servir churches indicated any political involvement, though the pastor of Manantiales de Vida Eterna indicated from the pulpit how his congregation should vote. They gave no other indication of being involved in community development or advocacy. Unlike their Catholic counterparts that supported the development of organizations such as Centro Cultural in Cornelius and the short-lived Colegio César Chávez described in chapter 2, the Protestant Latino churches of Oregon appear to limit their community and political involvement.

Armendariz observed a similar phenomenon in his study of eight congregations, although they represented mainstream denominations not included in this study of Oregon.<sup>52</sup>

50. “Hispanic/Latino Protestantism,” 387–88.

51. Freston, 227.

52. They were Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Church of Christ congregations.

“these congregations do not deal efficiently with the communities in which they are located. One particular survey . . . indicated, overwhelmingly, that its own members recognized their lack of involvement in the issues affecting the community. Part of the reason is that most members of these congregations do not actually live in the community. A large majority of the members of these sample congregations live outside and thus become commuters to church activities.”<sup>53</sup> This cannot serve as an explanation for the lack of civic or political involvement for the Oregon churches, as only the Woodburn Iglesia Menonita Pentecostés pastor indicated that a majority of his parishoners lived outside the city of Woodburn.<sup>54</sup>

Latin Americans have a long tradition of participation in mutual aid societies, traceable back to the Spanish colonial period. Miller describes the development of these *mutualistas* in the 19th century in the U.S. southwest, heavily populated by Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.<sup>55</sup> Aponte notes that the in Philadelphia, “In a situation of growing social instability and decreasing public resources many Hispanic Protestant churches have stepped into the gap. . . . Hispanic Protestant churches have become agents of stability and hope in neighborhoods where the people . . . face a host of social ills.”<sup>56</sup> Many Oregon churches, particularly those organized by cell groups, “take care of their own” and thus serve as a type of insular mutual aid organization.

Recinos described a loss of identity and purpose in relation to society for the mainstream Latino congregations in the Washington, DC area. He suggested that new waves of immigrants could serve as the impulse for changes he believes are needed in this area: “As Latino newcomers like the Salvadorans revitalize Hispanic mainline Protestant churches’ belief and practices, these faith communities may be equipped to deal critically with the Latino community’s history of conquest, colonization, racial oppression, poverty, family fragmentation, migration, and exile.”<sup>57</sup>

53. “Protestant Hispanic,” 240.

54. Other pastors said that a few families commuted from their homes in other communities, but the majority of church-goers lived in the area surrounding the church building.

55. Miller, *Latinos and Development of Community*, 21.

56. “Hispanic/Latino Protestantism,” 396.

57. “Mainline Hispanic Protestantism,” 197.

This would be a process in which the needs of the newcomers cause the settled Hispanic population to engage in activism.

Maduro observed that a large percentage of Hispanic political leaders in New York have Pentecostal backgrounds, but these presumably are bilingual Latinos who are at least second- if not third-generation immigrants or bilingual Puerto Ricans.<sup>58</sup> Vasquez' study of La Gran Comisión, a Pentecostal congregation in Paterson, New Jersey, indicates that it has a long history of civic involvement. It was founded in 1943, has around 600 members, and serves Latino immigrants from multiple nations, as well as their children and grand-children.<sup>59</sup> Aponte also observed that the Latino Protestant churches of Philadelphia (many of which were established in the 1940s and 50s) became more engaged in community issues as time went on: "these congregations all found themselves increasingly called upon to address the social conditions of their members."<sup>60</sup>

Undoubtedly an important factor in the lack of political participation is the relative youth of Oregon's Latino Protestant churches. Many are concentrating on consolidating their organizations. Most churchgoers are first-generation immigrants for whom English is a struggle, making communication with the broader public difficult, let alone influencing groups or public policy. The coming years will reveal whether or not these congregations become active in the community like some of their older counterparts in the Eastern part of the country.

There are mixed reports of the influence of Protestantism on political and civic participation in Latin America. While Wilson characterizes members of the neo-Pentecostal churches of Guatemala as "activists with the means and the desire to engage in public life, [who] have a strong sense of civic responsibility and support schools, social service programs, and, inevitably political activities,"<sup>61</sup> he concludes his study of their political participation with the prediction that due to the relative newness of the movement, the inexperience of its members and its notorious fragmentation and independence, "political participation . . . is likely to be personal, pragmatic, and tentative."<sup>62</sup> He describes Pentecostalism

58. "Religion and exclusion," 45, 50.

59. "Pentecostalism, Collective Identity," 622, 632.

60. "Hispanic/Latino Protestantism," 390.

61. "Guatemalan Pentecostals," 146.

62. *Ibid.*, 155.

in El Salvador as being similarly non-politically involved, noting that the *Reglamento local*, the Assemblies of God's church operations manual used in most of Latin America, includes a membership "pledge to respect civil authority and to refrain from political involvement."<sup>63</sup> He also suggests that Pentecostals' other-worldly focus may preclude them from working with secular community organizations.<sup>64</sup> Costas concurs: "Los que participan en el culto se niegan, en gran parte, a participar en las actividades comunales, a involucrarse en cuestiones políticas, a servir al necesitado, etc., y si lo hacen, es con un propósito ulterior: ganarlos a la fe." (Those who participate in the worship service refuse, in great measure, to participate in community activities, to get involved in political matters, to serve the needy, etc., and if they do, it is with an ulterior motive: to win them to the faith.)<sup>65</sup>

Freston observes that Latin American *evangélicos*' political involvement "is not recent. But since the 1980s, it has increased tremendously, especially with the involvement of Pentecostal denominations."<sup>66</sup> However, his comments refer principally to Guatemala and Brazil.<sup>67</sup> Brazilians were not included in this study, and while there are Guatemalans in the Latino churches of Oregon, the majority of them arrived in the 1980s, fleeing violence in their homeland, prior to the time of the growth of Protestant political activity. Those evangelicals that remained in Guatemala in the early 1980s under the rule of leader Ríos Montt may feel betrayed or co-opted by his violent policies mixed with evangelical rhetoric and hesitate to mix their faith with politics again. Espinosa observes that "Protestant growth has translated into political power" in Central America and claims that in Latin America "we are

63. "Sanguine Saints," 8.

64. *Ibid.*, 2.

65. "La realidad de la iglesia evangélica latinoamericana," 49.

66. "Christianity and Conflict," (panel presentation, National Defense University, Washington, DC, April 6, 2006).

67. Chile is another Latin American country where numbers of evangelicals have grown dramatically and their presence is becoming noticed by politicians. One example of this is the unanimous legislative vote and subsequent declaration by former president Michele Bachelet of October 31 as National Evangelical and Protestant Churches's Day in 2008. The number of Chileans in Oregon is negligible, so their political activism as evangelicals is not germane to this study.

starting to see Catholics and Pentecostals begin to work together on key moral, social, and political issues on behalf of the Latino community.”<sup>68</sup>

It is evident that scholars do not agree on the effects of religion on civic and political participation in Latin America, and that it varies from one country to another and between denominations. Furthermore, given the small percentage of Oregon Latinos who converted to Protestantism prior to immigration, trying to apply trends seen in Latin American churches to Oregon is questionable. For example, the *Reglamento local* was used by the AOG in Mexico, home to the majority of Oregon’s Hispanic immigrants, but the percentage of evangelical Christians in Mexico remains so small that its influence on the political activity of Oregon Latino Protestants must be negligible.

Other factors certainly affect attitudes toward political and civic participation among evangelical Latino immigrants in Oregon. They are in the minority, not part of a growing majority as in Guatemala. The undocumented wish to call as little attention to themselves as possible, so participation in public meetings like a political rally is unlikely.

Although these factors were also true during the organization of the migrant health clinics, Centro Cultural, and Colegio César Chávez, the current social climate is significantly different. It appears that these agencies benefitted from the northward spill of the *Chicano* movement of the 1970s, whereas anti-immigrant sentiments flare across the nation at the turn of the twenty-first century. Since these organizations received significant Catholic support, it is also possible that the type of Christianity makes a significant difference. In Latin America, Catholic clergy “called for the direct and active involvement of church organizations with labor unions, human rights groups, and peasant and neighborhood organizations.”<sup>69</sup> It is also possible that U.S. Latino Catholics may be more willing to participate in broader society than their Protestant counterparts.

There is mixed evidence regarding the influence of church creed and tradition on Hispanic community activism. Pentecostals supposedly steer away from involvement in this temporal world, but Puerto Ricans of Pentecostal heritage, if not practice, provide political leadership in New York.<sup>70</sup> Mainline churches such as Presbyterians and Lutherans

68. “Pentecostalization,” 292.

69. *Ibid.*, 50–51.

70. “Religion and exclusion,” 45, 50.

have not hesitated to advocate for change in U.S. society, but Recinos claims that established Hispanic mainline congregations need to be prodded out of their complacency by seeing the needs of recent refugees from Central America.<sup>71</sup>

These contradictory findings make predicting social involvement for Oregon Protestant Latinos difficult. Mainline churches do not seem to have Hispanic ministries in Oregon.<sup>72</sup> It is likely that some churches will urge their members to stay aloof from political activity while others become increasingly vocal as times goes on, due to a variety of social, economic, and doctrinal factors, just as the Latin American churches have done.

### CONCLUSIONS

The Latino churches of Oregon are young, compared to those in many areas of the country. Most of the Protestant Hispanics in Oregon, with the exception of those from Guatemala, began attending Protestant churches after immigration. Three denominations indigenous to Latin America are very active in Oregon, along with better-known denominations with roots in Europe or the U.S., such as Baptists, Mennonites, and the Assemblies of God. There are also many independent churches. Mainline churches have few, if any, Spanish-speaking congregations in Oregon. Denominational ties have contributed to the stability and longevity of Latino Protestant churches in the state. Most of the Hispanic pastors have participated in Bible or theological training, and opportunities for on-going studies in these areas, in Spanish, are available in the state and on-line.

As more options become available for Protestant worship in Spanish, creedal and doctrinal distinctions have become increasingly important. Oregon pastors report competition between Spanish-speaking congregations for participants. Those who do participate in Protestant Latino congregations are not very politically involved, regardless of their doctrinal background.

Few Oregon Latino churches have their own building. Most share with or rent from an English-speaking church. More than one third of

71. "Mainline Hispanic Protestantism," 197.

72. For example, "there are no Hispanic PCUSA [Presbyterian Church USA] churches . . . in the Cascades." Aleida Jernigan, Co-Executive Presbyter for the presbytery of Cascades in e-mail message to author, Sept. 28, 2011.

the congregations in this study described being part of a unified body, sharing and interacting in significant ways with the Anglo congregation. This report of unity is in stark contrast to the paternalism, racism, and divisions described in previous studies of Hispanic churches in other parts of the country. It is possible that the sense of Christian unity in Oregon is more important than ethnicity, as Christians of diverse national origins and languages join together in a non-religious majority society.

# 4

## Congregational Composition and Language Use

### INTRODUCTION

REGARDING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN IMMIGRANT churches, several themes are prevalent in previous studies. First, many researchers point out that these churches are very internally diverse, much more so than outsiders perceive. This diversity in Latino churches can be traced to different countries of origin and regional differences within countries, urban vs. rural backgrounds, and educational and socioeconomic differences. In most places in Latin America, being indigenous or *mestizo*<sup>1</sup> or Afro-latino defines social groups. Legal status in the U.S. is another divisor. Finally, length of time in the U.S. and generation of immigration, coupled with fluency in English, Spanish, or an indigenous dialect cause further distinctions.

Second- and third-generation immigrants, who are mostly youth in Oregon, often speak little Spanish. Responding to their needs and including them in the Latino church is a challenge described by several researchers. Related to this issue are questions of assimilation into the host culture.

This chapter examines the composition of each congregation in terms of:

- country of origin, including a brief section on non-Hispanics attending Hispanic churches,
- ethnicity,

1. In simplest terms, of mixed European and indigenous ancestry. The complexity of this word's meaning is summarized by González in his introduction to *Alabadle*, 14–16.