

DIDACHE: GENERATIONS
Wilfredo Canales Farfan and Marco Canales

Question #1: What is your current role?

Rev. Marcos Canales

I am currently an ordained Nazarene minister serving as the Pastor of the San Fernando Church of the Nazarene. I am also pursuing my Masters in Divinity at Fuller Theological Seminary.

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Actualmente, soy Presidente del Centro de Estudios Pastorales (CEP), Chicago, Coordinador del Programa Hispano de Maestría en Ministerio en Olivet Nazarene University y Editor General de la revista Reflexiones Ministeriales (dirigida a pastores nazarenos hispanos en Estados Unidos y Canadá).

Currently, I am the President of the Center for Pastoral Studies, Chicago, Illinois. I am also the Hispanic Program Coordinator for the Masters in Ministry at Olivet Nazarene University and the General Editor of a magazine called Ministry Reflections (created for Hispanic Nazarene pastors in the United States and Canada).

Question #2: Why did you choose this Discipline?

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Como es evidente en los roles mencionados arriba, así como en mis años previos de ministerio en América latina, mi campo de estudio y servicio ha estado vinculado con la pastoral, entendida según el recordado misionólogo latinoamericano Orlando Costas, como “todas las acciones misionales que realiza el pueblo de Dios”. En otras palabras, la pastoral implica la puesta en práctica de la misión en un contexto determinado. Por lo mismo, la pastoral no se corresponde con una disciplina específica sino, más bien, constituye un campo que, por propia definición, es de naturaleza interdisciplinaria y de integración.

As it is evident in the roles mentioned above, as well as my previous ministerial years in Latin America, my area of service and study has developed within “pastoral” (understood according to the Latin-American missiologist Orlando Costas, as “all the missional actions carried out by God’s people”). In other words, this involves the practical application of the mission of God in a particular context. Thus, “pastoral” does not correspond to one specific discipline rather it constitutes an area that in its nature is interdisciplinary and integral.

Las razones para que me ubicara en este campo ministerial fueron varias. Primeramente, el llamamiento de Dios al ministerio que, desde el primer momento, lo entendí como un llamado al servicio pastoral o a ministerios vinculados con este servicio. En segundo lugar, el contexto histórico en América Latina en el que ocurrió mi llamamiento, estuvo profundamente marcado por un esfuerzo de la iglesia cristiana (católica y protestante), por redescubrir la naturaleza de una pastoral que respondiera a los graves desafíos de la situación social, política y económica. Estos desafíos, ya los había experimentado como estudiante de ciencias económicas en la universidad (Perú), convertida en terreno de apasionada discusión ideológica. Fue en ese escenario y bajo el ministerio de InterVarsity (Filial Perú), que empecé a tener contacto con las reflexiones de John W. Stott, René Padilla, Samuel Escobar, José Miguez Bonino, Gustavo

Gutiérrez, entre otros, y a buscar relacionar mi propia fe con las demandas de la situación social. Posteriormente, al empezar mis estudios teológicos formales (Costa Rica), fui descubriendo el pensamiento y la acción de varios personajes a lo largo de la historia de la iglesia, cuyos aportes a la pastoral han sido significativos. De manera singular, por mi interés en el ministerio urbano de la iglesia, Jacques Ellul (francés) y Joseph Comblin (belga) me han impactado profundamente. Además, en mis estudios graduados en educación (Costa Rica/México) encontré aportes claves para aplicar no sólo en la pastoral de la iglesia sino, también, en la educación teológica con una perspectiva transformadora. Entonces, mi propia formación universitaria, previa a mi llamamiento, y mi conciencia del contexto social me llevaron a enfocar siempre mi acción ministerial desde una perspectiva pastoral interdisciplinar.

There are various reasons as to why I chose this area of ministry. First of all, I understood God's calling to ministry within the "pastoral" arena of Christian service. Secondly, the historical context in Latin America upon which my calling took place, was profoundly marked by an effort of the Christian church (both catholic and protestant) to rediscover the nature of a "pastoral" response to the vast challenges in the social, political and economic realities. I had already been exposed to these challenges as an Economics major during college (in Peru), so the ideological discussions during this time were very passionate and diverse. Within this scene and under the ministry of Inter Varsity Peru, I began to have contact with the reflections and writings of John W. Stott, René Padilla, Samuel Escobar, Jose Miguez Bonino, Gustavo Gutierrez, among others, and I searched for the relationship between my own faith and the demands of my social reality. Posteriorly, as I began my formal theological studies (in Costa Rica), I discovered the thought and the actions of various influential characters through the history of the church regarding the "pastoral" reality. Particularly, due to my interest in urban church ministry, Jacques Ellul and Joseph Comblin impacted me profoundly. Lastly, as I continued with my graduate studies in Education (Costa Rica/Mexico), I found key contributions applicable to the life and work of the church and to theological education with a transformative perspective. Consequently, my own university formation, prior to my calling, and my social context have led me to focus on the ministerial action from a interdisciplinary "pastoral" approach.

Rev. Marcos Canales

Growing up in the mission field and in a pastor's home, I was constantly in contact with ministry and its diverse challenges. I was not precisely inclined to be in full-time ministry but in the beginning of my senior year of high school, God challenged me to truly be a disciple and to disciple others. This challenge became a calling to minister those within the church and those beginning their Christian journey. A year later, I found myself at Point Loma Nazarene University (PLNU) as a Philosophy and Theology major preparing myself to be a youth pastor. It was during this time that I discovered words to express, describe, and define some of the various ministry experiences that I was exposed to throughout Latin America. In fact, it also led me to begin to build a theological framework to understand the reality and the challenges of cross cultural ministry. After my time at PLNU, the discipline of theological reflection amidst the urban context has proven to be an exciting and formative experience. I can see how the many different countries that I lived in, the different churches that my parents pastored, and the theological education that I received allow me to adapt to the multicultural context of the city. At the same time, ministry within the city, and more specifically within the Latino community,

continues to be a passion that God has been building and shaping throughout all of my previous years.

Question #3: What key contributions does your discipline offer?

Rev. Marcos Canales

Pastoral ministry contributes immensely to the ongoing dialogue of ecclesiology and missiology. I consider it extremely important to regard pastoral ministry as the crossroads between theory and practice, purpose and faithfulness, and mission and the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Understanding the reason as to why the church exists, moves, and “has its being” is crucially derived from its Christology. If we see the role of Jesus Christ as saving us “from something” rather than saving us “to something”, we rob the church of its presence in its physical surroundings. A shift from a church-centered praxis to a Christ-centered praxis will redefine the existence of the ekklesia as those that meet the living God in our neighborhoods and cities. This shift will also bring forth an intentionality in seeing our communities restored physically, emotionally, economically and socially.

Ultimately, pastoral ministry continues to embody the terrain upon which the creativity and the faithfulness of the church join the redeeming movements of our God. The mission of the church becomes that which God has revealed in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, which forms faithful discipleship. This relationship and reflection upon Christ, church, and mission within specific communities and contexts continues to guide the reality and nature of pastoral ministry.

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Hijo, tu planteamiento me lleva a plantear lo siguiente. Primero, estoy totalmente de acuerdo con lo que dices. Segundo, solo sugeriría dejar el término “pastoral” a secas porque, generalmente, cuando lo usamos como adjetivo (ministerio pastoral) se hace alusión al ministerio de una persona o equipo de personas especializadas, desligándose al cuerpo (congregación) de la acción pastoral y su proyección al contexto. Es en este sentido que deviene oportuna una reflexión respecto a cómo se ha ido forjando un enfoque de la pastoral más integrador. La pastoral, tal como se ha ido forjando en la perspectiva latinoamericana, cambió la tipología clásica predominante en el campo de las llamadas disciplinas teológicas, cuyo desarrollo buscaba satisfacer las exigencias de la llamada racionalidad instrumental, indicador más notorio del paradigma de la modernidad. En la tipología clásica se hablaba, mayormente, de la teología “práctica” en oposición a la teología bíblica, sistemática o histórica que tenían la fama de ser disciplinas más objetivas y, por lo tanto, “académicas”. La teología práctica devenía en algo más eclesialístico y operativo.

Son, your approach leads me to propose the following. First, I am completely in agreement with what you have said. Second, I would suggest just using “pastoral” as a noun rather than an adjective. Whenever it is used as the latter it makes allusion to the ministry of one person or a team of specialized ministers, which completely disconnects the body (congregation) from the pastoral action and its engagement with its context. In this sense, it is necessary to opportunely reflect regarding a more integral understanding of the word “pastoral.” “Pastoral,” as it has been suggested within the Latin-American perspective, has changed the classical predominant typology in regards to theological disciplines, which attempted to satisfy the demands of the

rationality and the paradigm of modernity. Hence, in this classic typology, “practical” theology was predominantly seen in contrast to biblical, systematic, or historic theology; which were mostly considered as objective and consequently “academic.” Practical theology was seen as more operative and ecclesiastical.

En el esfuerzo, primero, del grupo ISAL (Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina), de trasfondo protestante y, después, en la acción y reflexión de varias líneas de la llamada teología de la liberación, predominantemente católica, se fue configurando la acción pastoral de la iglesia cristiana como terreno propio de reflexión teológica, con su propio instrumental de análisis e investigación pastoral y no solo como “terreno de aplicación” de los postulados de otras disciplinas teológicas.

The group ISAL (Iglesia y Sociedad en América Latina- Church and Society in Latin America), from a protestant background, alongside the action and the reflection of various expressions of liberation theology, predominantly catholic, prepared the terrain for “pastoral” action within the Christian church not only as “the place of application” but also as the place of theological reflection, research, and analysis.

Además, el desarrollo de la pastoral como escenario interdisciplinario de investigación, reflexión y acción, produjo otro cambio significativo: el instrumental para el quehacer teológico no estaba constituido, predominantemente, por categorías o métodos provenientes de la filosofía, como era usual, ahora las ciencias sociales se tornaron funcionales al quehacer teológico ya que se trataba de interpretar el contexto y sus desafíos para poder articular una acción pastoral, bíblicamente fundamentada pero socio-culturalmente documentada para cumplir los objetivos del proyecto redentor de Dios.

In addition, the development of “pastoral” as an interdisciplinary realm of research, reflection and action, produced another significant change: the instrument for theological work was not constituted exclusively by categories or methods derived from philosophy, as it was common, but rather the social sciences began to be considered as functional elements of interpreting the context of the church and its challenges for “pastoral” action. Thus, the “pastoral” approach began to be biblically based and socio-culturally informed to accomplish the objectives of God’s redemptive project.

Rev. Marcos Canales

¿En este sentido, esta incorporación de ciencias sociales y fundamentos bíblicos para interpretar el contexto contemporáneo pueden ser muy útiles para responder a la posmodernidad y sus desafíos?

In that sense, this incorporation of social sciences and biblical foundations to interpret the contemporary context can be very useful to respond to postmodernity and its challenges?

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Definitivamente. Considero que la pastoral, tal como se entiende en contextos como los de América latina, Asia o África, está en mejores condiciones de responder a los desafíos, no solo de la posmodernidad en sentido general sino, fundamentalmente, a los rasgos peculiares que la posmodernidad presenta en cada contexto donde la iglesia ministra, sea que se trate de Latinoamérica u otro continente. En otras palabras, para la iglesia cristiana en Latinoamérica o para la iglesia hispana en Estados Unidos, la posmodernidad no solamente es un tema de

discusión académica sino un desafío pastoral que presenta características y demandas específicas a esos contextos y, por lo mismo, requieren respuestas pastorales pertinentes.

Definitively. I consider that the “pastoral”, as it is understood in contexts such as Latin America, Asia or Africa, it is in better position to respond to the challenges, that not only postmodernity poses in general terms, but to the specific concerns that postmodernity presents in each context where the church ministers (be it Latin America or other continent). In other words, for the Christian church in Latin America or for the Hispanic church in the United States, postmodernity is not just an academic discussion but rather a pastoral challenge unique to the characteristics and demands of specific contexts. In turn, this requires very relevant and pertinent pastoral answers to such issues.

Question #4: What is the future of your discipline?

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Considero que, la pastoral, como terreno de acción y reflexión del pueblo de Dios, en el marco de la misión, va a adquirir mayor relevancia debido a su proximidad con los grupos o sectores humanos a los que buscamos ministrar en obediencia a nuestro Señor. Por lo mismo, la pastoral debe discernir apropiadamente lo que constituyen los desafíos principales que debe atender en el contexto socio-histórico particular donde la iglesia sirve. Solo así podrá forjar discípulos de Jesucristo, fieles testigos del reino de Dios. En ese sentido, la pastoral debe preocuparse por dar luz a la iglesia para actuar evangélicamente en el terreno de la ecología, la economía, las culturas, etc.

I consider that, “pastoral,” as the terrain of action and reflection of God’s people, in the framework of mission, it will acquire a greater relevance due to its proximity to the groups of people that we are trying to minister in obedience to our Lord. In the same manner, the interdisciplinary “pastoral” concept must discern appropriately what constitutes the major challenges that need to be address in a particular socio-historical context that the church serves. Only in this way, it will be able to form disciples of Jesus Christ, faithful witnesses to the kingdom of God. In this sense, the “pastoral” must shed light to the church to act and respond as evangelicals in the areas of ecology, economy, culture, etc.

Rev. Marcos Canales

Dad, I agree with your statement regarding the greater relevance that pastoral ministry will have in the near future. However, I would add that this future also depends on the honest and thoughtful reconsideration of the methods and structures that are so prominent in our churches. In other words, in order to truly move faithfully into the future, we need to allow all current methods of evangelization, discipleship, and organization to be reconsidered in light of the heart of God as revealed in Scriptures. As long as we hold on to methods over the holistic and restorative message of God we will have a harder time in adapting to the changing times.

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Sin lugar a dudas, cuando la pastoral discierne los desafíos principales que debe atender, se obliga un replanteamiento respecto a cómo estamos realizando y cómo debemos realizar la misión de Dios en nuestro ámbito particular de acción. Por otro lado, me parece fundamental recalcar que, al final de cuentas, nos enfrentamos con el gran desafío de re-posicionar a la iglesia

local (el “laos”) en su lugar prominente como agente de la misión de Dios y, como tal, en gestora de una pastoral profética en medio de una realidad caótica y desesperanzadora.

Without a doubt, once the “pastoral” discerns the major challenges that it must attend to, there is a revision concerning how we are carrying out the mission of God in our particular context. On the other hand, it is fundamental that we face the great responsibility to re-position the local church (the “laos”) in its prominent place as the agent of the mission of God, and as such, as the prophetic voice in the midst of a chaotic and hopeless reality.

Question #5: What do you see proves a challenge to Wesleyan Higher Education?

Rev. Marcos Canales

Wesleyan Higher Education has the challenge to develop students that are committed to the global *missio Dei*. It also has the challenge of forming students that will serve, appreciate, and seek intergenerational relationships within local congregations.

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Además de lo que mencionas, me parece que la Educación Superior Wesleyana tiene el tremendo desafío de encarnar: a) Un sentido de compromiso con la transformación integral del ser humano y su contexto total; b) Un sentido crítico de la realidad social global, poniendo al descubierto los signos de una cultura de muerte que se opone al Dios de la vida.

In addition to what you mentioned, I consider that Wesleyan Higher Education has the challenge of embodying: a) a sense of commitment to the integral transformation of the person and his/her whole context; b) a critical sense of the social and global reality, exposing the signs of a culture of death that opposes the God of life.

Rev. Marcos Canales

En esa línea de pensamiento, y pensando en la realidad de países como Estados Unidos y Canadá, considero que la Educación Superior Wesleyana tiene el reto de ser más proactiva en su aproximación multicultural. Es decir, uno de los desafíos a los que debe poner atención la Educación Superior Wesleyana es la inclusión intencional de alumnos, maestros, curriculum y material que haga justicia a una realidad multicultural que nos muestre como testigos de aquel legado expresado por Wesley de que “el mundo es nuestra parroquia”.

Along that line of thought, and thinking about the reality of countries like the United States and Canada, I think that Wesleyan Higher Education has the challenge of being more proactive in its multicultural approach. In other words, this challenge should lead Wesleyan Higher Education to pay more attention to the intentional inclusion of students, teachers, curriculum, material, and educational programs that reveals our multicultural reality and that points to our Wesleyan legacy of “the world is our parish.”

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Estoy totalmente de acuerdo y me parece un punto clave en esta discusión que merecería amplia reflexión y acción.

I completely agree with you and I think it is a key point that deserves a greater and more profound reflection and action.

Question #6: Where are you hopeful concerning Wesleyan Higher Education?

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Por lo que has expresado anteriormente, estoy esperanzado respecto a la Educación Superior Wesleyana porque nos nutrimos, históricamente, de una visión global. La célebre expresión de Wesley de que el mundo es nuestra parroquia, no puede ser más desafiante hoy. Si el mundo es nuestra parroquia, la realidad total es nuestro campo de acción y, por lo mismo, la Educación Superior Wesleyana debe tomar en cuenta toda la realidad para que sus propuestas educativas sean pertinentes y adecuados aportes de transformación.

For what you have expressed earlier, I am hopeful regarding Wesleyan Higher Education since we are nurtured and influences, historically, from a global vision. Wesley's infamous expression could not be more relevant today. If the world is our parish, the total reality is the realm of our action, and in like manner Wesleyan Higher Education must take into account the global reality as it proposes educational programs that are relevant, adequate and transformative.

Rev. Marcos Canales

Eso era el mismo punto que iba tratar. Creo que si el llamado Wesleyano nos insta a una actitud y servicio integral y global, entonces puede haber gran esperanza para que la Educación Superior Wesleyana se mueva en esa dirección. Considero que otra de las realidades esperanzadoras de la Educación Superior Wesleyana es que siempre ha incorporado otras áreas académicas como parte de su intencionalidad de enriquecer al individuo. Es decir, la educación superior siempre se ha dado dentro de un concepto integral de la vida y de las ciencias que la estudian.

That is the same point that I wanted to make. I believe that if the Wesleyan call inspires us to an integral attitude and service, then there is still great hope for Wesleyan Higher Education. On the other hand, I also believe that Wesleyan Higher Education has historically incorporated other academic areas within its educational programs. It has intentionally enriched individuals in their learning process and this integral and holistic approach to life has given room for the sciences and theology to inform the human reality.

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Es verdad. También, me parece importante recalcar el hecho de que, especialmente en Norteamérica, la preparación de los ministros se desarrolla en el marco de las universidades, lo cual facilita y promueve un constante diálogo e interacción de los ministros con otros campos del conocimiento humano. Este enfoque, lastimosamente, no se siguió en otras partes del mundo donde la educación ministerial se realiza en ambientes demasiado cerrados y aislados del contacto y diálogo con otras disciplinas.

It is true. Also, I believe that it is important to highlight the fact that, especially in North America, the preparation and training of ministers has been done in the midst of universities within the liberal arts framework. Ultimately, this facilitates and promotes a constant dialogue and interaction between ministers and others areas of human knowledge. This approach, unfortunately, has not be replicated in other parts of the world where ministerial education has been done in close and isolated contexts, apart from other disciplines.

Question #7: Final words for future “generations?”

Rev. Wilfredo Canales Farfan

Me gustaría, teniendo como interlocutor a mi hijo, compartir unas palabras finales a las siguientes generaciones. Recuerda, mi hijo, que somos depositarios de una herencia que no empieza en la generación anterior, sino en el corazón de Dios. Somos parte de un proyecto cuyo artesano principal es el Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo. Tenemos el privilegio de haber sido convocados por el Señor para ser portavoces de una buena nueva que se selló con sangre en la cruz del Calvario y que se revelará en toda su majestad en el día final. De nosotros se requiere ser fieles, dignos de confianza, para sostener y traspasar el estandarte a cada nueva generación. Esto solo será posible si nuestra relación y comunión con Dios es cultivada día a día en adoración y obediencia. Entonces, con convicción, podremos declarar en medio de cualquier circunstancia “Mi Señor y mi Dios, heme aquí, envíame a mí”.

I would like to share few final words to the next generations, using my son as an interlocutor. Remember, my son, that we are entrusted with an inheritance that does not begin in the previous generation, but rather in the heart of God. We are part of a project whose main craftsman is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have the privilege of being called by the Lord to be spokespersons of good news, which were sealed with blood at the cross of Calvary and that will be revealed in all of its majesty in the final day. It is required from us that we are faithful and trustworthy to uphold and to pass on the baton to the next generation. This will only be possible if our relationship and communion with God is cultivated daily in worship and obedience. Only then, with our deepest conviction, we could declare regardless of the circumstance “My Lord and My God, here I am, send me!”

Rev. Marcos Canales

Gracias papi por tus palabras. Me encanta poder tener esto como guía.

Thank you dad for including me in. I love to have this as guide for my present and future years of ministry.

Rev. Marcos Canales

I would also like to share a few thoughts to the future generations. Consider “the great cloud of witnesses” that has gone ahead. Do not lose sight of what God’s intentions and purposes have always been. Remember that the Nazarene church should not only be known for things that you don’t do or that you abstain from, but rather for the practices and issues that you are committed to in the name of Jesus Christ. Remember that Jesus is to be embodied in the midst of your communities, neighborhoods, and then in your church buildings. Continue to cry out for God’s justice on behalf of the widows, orphans, the destitute, the stranger, the immigrant, and the not-so-liked. In your local congregations, seek, listen, and be open to God’s leading. May the Scriptures continue to nurture your creativity in living out principles that honor the Kingdom of God. May you continue to respond to God’s love- as expressed in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ- in humility, servanthood, and mutual love through the Holy Spirit. Every generation has received the grace-filled call to radical and genuine discipleship, will you take on that challenge?